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Religious and Scientific FALSE THEORIES OF GOD'S PLAN Gleanings

PRESBYTERIAN MINISTERIAL UNBELIEF.

The New York Presbytery not long since licensed Rev. N. M. Thomas to preach the Gospel as a representative of the Presbyterian denomination. The vote granting the license was thirty-four against ten who protested—and the ten are not active Pastors in charge of Churches. The mental attitude of the Presbyterian Ministers of the New York Presbytery is, therefore, reflected in the faith of Rev. Thomas, which may be judged from the following items of protest:

"He did not accept the authority of Holy Scripture as the only infallible rule of faith and practise as sufficient to finally determine his faith. This appeared in his repeated refusals to affirm his faith in the Virgin birth of Christ, the raising of Lazarus from the dead and the raising of Christ's own body from the grave.

"Second, in answer to questions, he twice declared his readiness to lead a congregation in the repetition of the Apostles' Creed, including the phrase 'born of the Virgin Mary,' which he had told the Presbytery that he really did not believe."

From this it appears that it is no longer Presbyterian doctrine in New York that we have a sinless Saviour—"holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." (Heb. 7:26.) Indeed, it is safe to assume that these ministers are Higher Critics, who have no use for the Bible, and do not believe in Jesus as a Saviour, because they have abandoned the theory that man fell from God's image and likeness and needs to be redeemed. They have probably all accepted the Evolution theory that Father Adam sprang from a monkey, and that his race has been doing nobly since and needs no Redeemer. They would probably acknowledge Jesus as a noble sample of manhood for His time, but not up to our day and standards, which are to be sought, rather, amongst college professors.

Is it any wonder that Christian character, unsupported by a message recognized as Divine and upheld merely by expediency, is crumbling everywhere? What will the end be? The majority of Presbyterians will follow their leaders and soon Christendom en masse will be without God and without hope. Faith in a nature god and in laws of nature can have no such influence upon heart and life as has faith in a personal God, a personal Redeemer, a personal salvation and an inspired Bible.

Thank God that the terrible confusion and anarchy which the Scriptures show to be imminent will be speedily followed by the inauguration of the Kingdom of God's dear Son, a reign of righteousness backed by power Divine, as well as by Love and Justice. In that strenuous hour nature as a god will not succor and faith in the Nature-God will not comfort. But evidently, as the Scriptures show, all the "blind eyes" will be opened; all the "deaf ears" will be unstopped; and the wisdom of man, in contrast with the wisdom of God, will be manifested as foolishness.

INCIPIENT AGNOSTICS.

The Methodist Recorder notes the lament of Rev. Thomas Payne, D.D., respecting the mischief wrought by the theory of Evolution, especially among the young, and of the teaching of other false doctrines in Sunday schools and Bible classes and from many pulpits, as well as by professors in schools and colleges:

"He asserts that owing to this many young men have given up their reading of the Bible and other books of a religious nature, and gives instances in which young people from Christian families have come home from schools and colleges of this description incipient Agnostics. His avowed object is to help such by leading them back to faith in God and confidence in His Word. He charges the theory of Evolution with being the chief cause of most of the erroneous teaching of the time; and to its unquestioned acceptance and hasty application he traces the mischief that he laments."

WHAT IS THE SOUL?

A postal request will secure a free copy of this paper in which this interesting subject is treated in a manner sure to satisfy. Address, Bible & Tract Society, Brooklyn, N. Y.

"And the angel sware * * * that the time should be no longer [delayed]."—REV. 10:6, 7.

OUR text, with other Scriptural statements respecting the end of the world (for instance, St. Peter's statement, "The heavens being on fire shall be dissolved"), have led Christians in general to accept the theory that God has decreed that shortly, or at some time, our earth is to be burned. The early Church expected and prayed for the Second Coming of Messiah, to establish the Kingdom of righteousness, to overthrow sin and to release mankind from its bondage and weakness and from the power of death, and thus to bless the whole earth, restoring all things to the glorious condition represented in miniature in Eden: man in perfection, with a Paradise home.—Acts 3:19-21.

But as centuries passed without the manifestation of Messiah's Kingdom, those expectations yielded to another suggestion, namely, that Jesus had not meant what had been understood, but meant that the Church should convert the world, under His supervision, during a period of a thousand years, and that then He would come and give their work His stamp of approval and wind things up by taking all the saintly to heaven, setting fire to the earth to entirely consume it.

Catholics and Protestants Confused.

Both Catholics and Protestants have been operating in harmony with this erroneous thought. Catholics claim that the Kingdom of Messiah was set up long ago and that the popes and cardinals are representatives of Jesus and the Church. They claim that the Pope is Christ's Vice-gerent—that is to say, He reigns instead of Christ, as His representative. They claim that "the thousand years" is already in the past, since 1799, and that we are now in the "little season" mentioned in Revelation 20:3, in which Satan was to be loosed, at the close of the thousand years.

Many of them understand that Protestantism in general, and particularly, Socialism and Free Masonry, are organizations of Satan, which will soon be destroyed in the burning up of the world.

Protestants are also much confused on the subject. They claim that we are in the reign of Messiah, but they are not sure when it began or when it will end. Before Luther's day the Catholic view prevailed, but according to Luther's preaching the Papal claims were false, and later the Papal system was branded as Antichrist. Since then Protestants are in confusion. Some recognize the Church of England and its kingly head as God's Kingdom in the earth, but they admit that it has not yet conquered the earth, nor is God's will done as in heaven, even in the British Isles. The Church of Russia makes a similar claim to being the Kingdom of God, and honors the Czar as the reigning representative of Messiah. Emperor William of Germany also has on his coins the legend that he is reigning "by the grace of God"—that his kingdom is a part of Messiah's Kingdom.

But all these theories Catholics and Protestants are now ignoring. In the light of our day none dare preach such theories. With present-day enlightenment it seems foolish to declare that the various kingdoms of Europe are Messiah's Kingdom, and that they are establishing a reign of righteousness. The costly preparations for war made by these very nations discredit entirely the claim that they are parts of Messiah's great Kingdom of righteousness and peace.

All denominations engaged in missionary work are professing the thought that soon the world will be converted; that, the Second Coming of Christ will then take place, and then will come the consummation, and the burning of the world. How strange, how illogical! The heathen, according to reliable government statistics, are twice as numerous today as they were a century ago. Six hundred millions there were then; there are twelve hundred millions now. How long would it require, at this rate, to convert the world? And if the heathen were converted to the same condition of civilization enjoyed in Europe and America, could we claim then that God's will was done on earth as it is done in heaven? Assuredly not.

Thank God, the Second Coming of

Messiah will not delay until the world is converted and God's will fully done and the plan of salvation ended. Quite to the contrary: His coming is for the very purpose of bringing all things into subjection to the Father's will. He comes that He may reign as King of kings and Lord of lords, in association with His Church. He will not reign through a representative or vice-gerent, but personally, and "unto Him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess" to the glory of God. In His day the righteous shall flourish, and the evil-doers shall be cut off. The faithful Church, sharing in her Lord's resurrection, the First Resurrection, to glory, honor and immortality, will be His associate kings and priests, to reign for a thousand years.—Revelation 20:6.

Fire Symbolical of Destruction.

Let us examine some texts which seem to teach that our earth will be destroyed by fire, and note that they are symbolical. "Fire" is frequently used in the Scriptures as a symbol of destruction. Thus the Church is exhorted to mortify or kill the fleshly nature, and is told that the fiery trials of life will assist them in this work. The opposition of enemies is to be destroyed by works of mercy and kindness, which, figuratively, will be "coals of fire upon their heads." St. Peter mentions special trials and tribulations coming upon the Church, designed to purify her—purge out and destroy the dross. He says: "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you."—1 Peter 4:12.

St. Paul refers to special trials upon the Church in the end of the Gospel Age, which will consume false doctrines, human traditions, etc., and all false faith, but which will leave unscathed the true Faith and true characters. He says: "If any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest, for the Day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire."—1 Corinthians 3:12-15.

These various Scriptures do not prove that the world could not be destroyed by fire in a literal way, but they do prove that "fire" is very frequently mentioned in the Bible in a figurative or symbolical manner. We might multiply the instances: "Our God is a consuming fire"—as regards everything contrary to righteousness; the symbolical "lake of fire," in the book of Revelation, is explained to signify the Second Death, utter destruction, without hope of recovery.

World Burning Unscriptural.

The supposition that the earth will be destroyed by fire, either soon or ever, would be contrary to the statement that "the earth abideth forever," and the declaration that God formed it not in vain, but formed it to be inhabited. (Isaiah 45:18.) One of the very strong passages which seems to teach that the earth will be devoured by fire is found in Zephaniah 3:8: "Wait ye upon Me, saith the Lord, until that 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 the whole earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy"—anger.

That the fire of God's anger which will come upon the world will not destroy the physical earth, with all its inhabitants, but will destroy the evil of present institutions, is shown by the succeeding sentence, which declares: "Then will I turn to the people a pure Message, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord to serve Him with one consent." If the fire of this text were literal, the earth and its people would be no more; but as symbolical fire it is perceived that it is a burning against unrighteousness, iniquity, sin, the overthrow of all institutions of evil, and the awakening of mankind and preparing them to hear the Voice of God, the language of the Truth, the Divine Message.

What we have seen prepares us for the somewhat more difficult statement of St.

Peter: "The Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up. * * * The heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for a New Heavens and a New Earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Peter 3:10-13.) To harmonize these words of St. Peter with other Bible statements, we must consider the "fire" here mentioned to be symbolical. Not only the earth is to be consumed, but the heavens also. The "heavens" will take fire first and be dissolved.

What heavens shall we suppose are here referred to?—not the literal, starry heavens, nor even our atmospheric heavens, nor yet the heaven of Divine Presence and glory. The church systems, the ecclesiastical powers, are symbolically referred to as the "heavens," at the present time, supervising and overruling the temporal and social arrangements which are represented by the "earth." The "earth" represents organized society, as in contrast with the "sea," which symbolically represents disorganized society, the uncivilized and all who are rebellious against governments. When the "heavens" [ecclesiastical powers] of the present time shall be "dissolved," it will be with a great noise, with great confusion, commotion. Ecclesiastical institutions of the present time are in a very troubled condition, though they are in no danger of immediate collapse. The principal outcry is that few attend church services, and that the collections are small.

St. Peter's words indicate a crisis in ecclesiastical affairs still future. The Scriptures show us that a great Federation is seemingly bringing Ecclesiasticism into greater power than it has exercised in years. Other intimations of Scripture lead us to expect that that federative organization will attempt a rigid control of the world through affiliation with political and civil power, and that a considerable measure of success will lead to intoxication on the subject and an attempt to take away the liberties of the people entirely, the result of which will be a great explosion, or a great "earthquake," in the symbolical language of Scripture. It will be then that the "heavens" will take fire and be consumed with a great noise, commotion, disaster, etc. And the commotion will include the social order. The elements will melt with the intensity of the heat, the strife, which will then be engendered. The elements of society are those mutual advantages and assistances of good people, upon which the stability of government rests.

The Bible clearly intimates that the condition of affairs symbolized by the melting of society and the disintegrating of its elements in the great heat of strife at that time will be the result of superstition and fear. The end will be anarchy, or as the Bible declares, "Every man's hand will be against his neighbor." Selfishness will be the predominating, ruling principle.

The Symbolic Fire Useful.

The question arises, Why should God permit the fall of our Christian systems, which certainly have done much that is morally assistful to the world? And why should He permit the overthrow of the present order of things, which certainly is much more advantageous than anarchy and disorder? The Bible answer is that God is not forcing this issue, but is merely allowing mankind to work out these results. The trouble and disaster will come as the natural result of ignoring the principles of Divine Law. Ecclesiasticism is unauthorized to claim that it is God's Kingdom, invested with Divine power and authority to rule the world. This fallacious claim and the attempt to enforce it will bring upon it the "fire" which will consume.

The world, neglectful of the Golden Rule, and obeying the false standard that "might makes right," will overthrow society by precipitating a conflict between the two great parties—the capitalists, trusts, kings and princes on the one hand, and labor unions and the masses on the other hand. Each will feel that a death struggle has been reached and that the battle must be fought. Each will feel unwarrantably self-confident of victory. According to the Bible, the result will be the complete wreck of our

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

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CONSCIENCE IN ACCUSATION.

It is a fact that in their offensive tactics many of our public men are deficient either in conscience or in manner, or in both. They make charges against their opponents recklessly. They say things which they cannot prove and which it is only charitable to their intellectual standing to assume they do not believe.

It seems to be the idea that if you throw enough mud some of it will stick, and none of it will spatter yourself; that if you throw enough clubs some will land, and none return, boomerang fashion, on your own head.

We say this notion is wrong. We believe that men who are careless in their words are equally careless in their acts. The man who, without justification, calls another "a rogue," is the man who will bear watching, for too often he credits the other man with the same motives that control himself, and assumes that the other man has done what, with the same opportunities, he would do himself.

Bearing false witness, however, is more than an unfavorable symptom. It is itself an offense almost equal—in the scales of eternal justice probably held entirely equal—to the offense charged.

The habit is not even good politics. It goes against average human nature, which is sportsmanlike and fair; and even the brutalized atmosphere of the ringside instinctively hisses the foul blow. What does it profit one to exhibit himself as a man eager to win, regardless of everything else? There is real chivalry in human nature. Every manifestation of it has a universal response. Why should it be considered bad politics?

Maybe we are wrong, but our theory is that conscienceless accusation derives as much from ignorance as from malice. Many public men conduct campaigns on personalities because they have not qualified to conduct them on issues. It is easier to accuse, to clamor, to rail, than it is to get clear to the bottom of a political or economic issue, understand it yourself, and then so present it that others can understand it.

The most sobering thing in the world is adequate knowledge of a subject, an appraisal of it from all sides. Those who achieve this knowledge necessarily speak words of truth and soberness. They have neither the inclination nor the time to utter anything else.—N. Y. Evening Mail.

The lack of conscientiousness noted by the Mail amongst politicians seems equally noticeable amongst theologians and others who, in professing the name of Christ, imply that they respect the standards of God's Word, while their words and conduct give the lie to their professions.

CONDEMNNS SOCIALISTS.

The German Chancellor is quoted as using the following language: "The revolutionary character of the Socialist Party becomes more pronounced and brutal in its character. Dr. Carl Liebknecht, a Social-Democrat of the Prussian Diet, in an address delivered in the United States, said that the conditions in Germany were such as might cause the German Crown to be blown away in a single night, just as was the case with Portugal. Our nation must have a clear answer to expressions of such character. The Socialists and all those teaching the masses that prosperity can come to them only after the overthrow of the present form of government, are responsible when the masses draw practical conclusions from such teachings. For this reason I hold the Socialists responsible for the excesses that were recently committed and the strife in Moabit, Berlin, and elsewhere. 'Whoever sows wind will reap a whirlwind.'"

KAISER SEES MONARCHISM'S END.

"My son will be the last of the emperors. That is why I am bringing him up as I was brought up—under firm discipline. He must be a credit to the house of Hohenzollern and to the thrones that, after his, will cease to be."

Emperor William thus expressed himself to the historian, Karl von Kroon, in a recent talk following his inspection of the Berlin School of History and Literature. His majesty predicted that the end of monarchism is in sight. "All the world will be republican within 50 years," he said. "Germany will be the last of the empires. It is inevitable."—Schenectady (N. Y.) Union-Star.

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

This article was published in Vol. I, No. 3. The great demand for copies of it has been remarkable. A sample copy will be mailed to any one free. Address, Bible Society, 17 Hicks Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.

(Continued from 1st page, 4th column.) present society symbolically pictured as "fire."

But the Lord through the Prophet Zephaniah points out that, following this time of "fire" and trouble, will come a blessing to the earth. So also He declares through St. Peter, that following the symbolic fire, will come "a New Heaven" and a new earthly condition, the basic principle of which will be righteousness; and the Prophet Zephaniah says that then God's "message, in its purity, shall reach the people. Both statements are true. On the ruins of our present civilization, when mankind will be sick at heart with the failure of what they had considered to be the Brain Age, they will look to the Lord, to whom they should have looked sooner. They will perceive the coming reign of righteousness and will say, "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him and He will deliver us." (Isaiah 25:9.) Then the Prophet declares, "The desire of all nations shall come."—Haggai 2:7.

All nations are desiring blessing, prosperity, and God desires that all shall have these very favors, and they will be obtainable through Messiah's Kingdom. Then the blessing of mankind will begin. The Messianic Kingdom, invisible but All-Powerful, will be thoroughly

manifest in its dealings and its righteous judgments will have control. The blessing will come through Israel, extending to and including "all the families of the earth." How grand the thought that the New Heavens will be the new ecclesiastical powers—the glorified Church—Christ and His Bride in glory and power! The New Earth mentioned by the Apostle will be the new organization of human society, along the lines of righteousness—the Golden Rule.

We have not forgotten our text. What we have said is in line with it. It requires the addition of one word to make its meaning clear. The Mystery of God, which has been kept secret from the foundation of the world, shall be finished, completed, no longer a mystery. "And the angel sware * * * that the time should be no longer [delayed]." (Revelation 10:6, 7.) This has no reference to the end of time; time can never end. Other Scriptures show that we are living very near the finish, the completion of the Church, which is the "Mystery." (Ephesians 3:3-6; 5:32.) With the completion of the Church (the "Mystery") will begin the fulfillment of all the glorious promises of the Bible respecting the lifting of the curse from the earth, and the Divine blessing upon all earthly things.

CHRIST DIED FOR SINNERS

*"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you * * * how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day."—1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-4.*

SO complete a statement of the Gospel in so few words is wonderful. Without inspiration St. Paul, like the rest of us, would have said more—would have said too much. Let us analyze the text and see what it contains.

First of all, it teaches that we are sinners and that our sins are beyond our own power to wash away or eradicate. This is a fundamental, important matter. Failure to realize that we are imperfect, born in sin, "shapen in iniquity," has hindered many from seeing the necessity for a Redeemer, and therefore from accepting Jesus as their Saviour. To say that we are sinners implies a time when righteousness prevailed in our ancestry. We do not speak of brutes as sinners, because the Scriptures say that "sin is transgression of the Law," and God would not give a law to a brute, which could not comprehend that law. Similarly the perfection of our first parents was implied in this term, because God would not give a law to a being not sufficiently intelligent and capable of keeping that law. Thus this very simple statement, we are sinners, implies the thought of a fall, just as the Bible declares,

"Christ Died For Our Sins."

For Christ to die for our sins implies that our sins had a death penalty attached to them. This again implies that at the time that death penalty was imposed it was a just one, because a just God would not punish unjustly. The God would not punish unjustly. The degree of intelligence on the part of the sinner and that he was in a condition in which he would not have needed to die if he had not sinned.

This statement, "that Christ died for our sins," further implies that Christ was not of the fallen race, for had He been a sinner, how could He have died for sinners—how could His death have been of any profit or advantage to them? Thus our text teaches that Jesus was indeed "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," that God sent His Only Begotten Son into the world that we might not perish but have everlasting life. The whole force and import of this text is that human salvation is secured by the death of Christ and His resurrection. Were we not sinners and dying we would have needed no one to die for us. Were it not to rescue us from sin and from death God would not have sent His Son.

The Death Penalty Stated.

Here let us notice the force of the word death in our text. It did not mean life in torment to our Redeemer, for the Scriptures bear clear testimony, not only that He died, but that He arose from the dead on the third day. And the Scriptures declare that He was not alive anywhere during those three days. This contradicts the thought of some who claim that He was the Heavenly Father Himself and could not die—that He merely got out of the body on the cross and let the body die and afterwards pretended that He had died, when He said, "I am He that liveth, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore."—Revelations 1:18.

We have a genuine Redemption, a real Sacrifice, and the Redeemer is yet to become the Great Deliverer of the world, whose deliverance from death by resurrection cost the Redeemer His life. As by a man came death, by the Man Christ Jesus comes the resurrection of 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.

He Arose the Third Day.

Great importance attaches to the fact that the One who died for our sins did not remain dead. He descended into Hell—Sheol, Hades, the tomb—but His

soul was not left there, as the Scriptures declare. God the Father raised him from the dead on the third day. The importance of Christ's resurrection is manifold. It shows that He did not die a sinner, but, on the contrary, maintained His relationship with the Father—"holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." It shows that He kept the Law; otherwise He would have remained dead like the remainder of the Jews.

More than this, the fact that He was raised from the dead to a higher nature, a spirit being, "partaker of the Divine nature," proves that His sacrificial death was very pleasing and acceptable in the Father's sight; hence His high reward. And all this proves that the Heavenly Father's great promise to Abraham is in process of fulfillment. Our Lord's resurrection to the plane of glory demonstrates to us the greatness of this Seed of Abraham, and His preparation for the great work foretold—the blessing of all the families of the earth.

From this viewpoint we see the importance of His death and of His resurrection, co-related. The death was necessary as man's Redemption price. His exaltation to power and great glory was necessary for man's deliverance from sin and death. Here we have, then, the Gospel which St. Paul received and which he, in turn, dispensed—the true Gospel of which he was not ashamed. As he wrote to the brethren at Rome, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth—to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

Gospel in a Nut-Shell.

As a great oak may be said to be in an acorn, so the great Gospel Message may be said to be in our text, as St. Paul declares. Every time we look at it, it seems a little larger and a little more beautiful than before. We can almost see it grow—not that the Gospel is growing, for it is the same that God purposed in Himself before the foundation of the world. It is our appreciation of the Gospel that grows, in proportion as we grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Divine Plan and in the Spirit of our Lord; for without His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, to enlighten our understanding and to enable us to appreciate the testimonies of the Word, we would not be able to comprehend "the deep things of God."

How plainly the Apostle states this, saying, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God * * * neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned; * * * but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."—1 Cor. 2:14-10.

We have merely seen the root of the Gospel as it centers in the promise made to Abraham and in the redemptive work accomplished by our Saviour. In Romans 11:16-24 St. Paul uses the illustration of an olive tree, and declares the branches of the tree to be the members of the Body of Christ, which is the Church. From these branches will come abundant fruitage by and by, of "olive oil" for the light of the World.

St. Paul points out that the natural Israelites were the natural branches and that the Jews therefore had the first right, privilege and opportunity of becoming the members of the Body of Christ, the Church. As a matter of fact, all privilege and opportunity was excluded from the Gentiles until Israel's time of favor was complete—three and a half years after the cross.

During those years the Lord's providence so blessed the Jews that they were all brought in contact with the Truth under most favorable conditions. We remember that thousands were converted and blessed at Pentecost and other thou-

sands a little later on. We may be sure that every worthy branch in that tree was accepted of the Lord—every "Israelite indeed in whom was no guile." St. Paul tells us that then the unbelieving Jews, the natural branches, were all broken off, separated from the Divine favor in which they had previously been. Then began the work of calling, preparing and engrafting Gentiles, whom the Apostle represents as of a wild olive tree.

This work of engrafting the Gentiles into the Jewish stock and making them fellow-heirs with the Jews of the original Divine promise made to Abraham has progressed for now nearly nineteen centuries. This is the same Gospel, because it all springs from the same gracious promise. It was "good tidings" when as a message it was given to Abraham. Its value was intensified when God made oath to its certainty of fulfillment. The fulfillment began in Jesus, continued through the Jewish disciples, and now has accumulated a considerable number of the Gentiles—probably the foreordained number is completed. When the Elect number shall have been tested and proven and shall have been accepted in the resurrection change and passed beyond the veil—then this most wonderful feature of the Gospel will have been accomplished.

Jewish Share of Gospel.

The completion of Spiritual Israel will be followed by the establishment of Messiah's Kingdom and the beginning of the blessing of all the families of the earth. We are to distinguish here between the Church and the families of the earth, for the Church in their consecration and acceptance of the Lord and begetting of the Holy Spirit become members of the new nation. They are no longer humans. As St. Paul declares, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." (Romans 8:9.) The Church not only receives eternal life, but that life is on a higher plane—as spirit beings. Theirs will be glory, honor and immortality, in joint-heirship with their Lord.

Amongst the families of the earth to be blessed by Messiah's Kingdom the first place will be given to Natural Israel. In all things the Jew was to have pre-eminence, for this is the Divine arrangement. As the Jews got the opportunity of becoming members of the Body of Christ before it was offered to the Gentiles, so Fleshly Israel will be the first nation to be granted the opportunities and blessings of Restitution to human perfection under Messiah's Kingdom.

Provision has already been made for this. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the Prophets of old have the testimony that they pleased God and that they are to have a better resurrection than the ordinary. They cannot be members of the Bride of Christ, nor sharers in the spiritual privileges and the Heavenly Kingdom. They lived before the High Calling, before the Heavenly Calling was opened. Jesus was the Captain, Leader and Forerunner in this, and His joint-heirs all follow Him. None of them preceded Him.

"Princes in All the Earth."

But the Messianic Kingdom, itself spiritual, will need earthly Representatives, and they are provided for in those Ancient Worthies. Their testing having been completed, they will be raised perfect human beings, as Adam was in his perfection, and Jesus in His, while on earth. Their superior powers of mind and body will soon grasp all the wonderful things which Divine providence has arranged for since their day, and they will be quite masters of the situation. Naturally, perfect men will be Princes amongst imperfect ones. But these will hold the title from the Great Messiah. This is prophetically stated: "Instead of Thy fathers shall be Thy children, whom Thou (Messiah) shalt make Princes in all the earth."—Psalm 45:16.

Assuredly the new order of things will appeal to the Jew first. His lessons under the Law will make him specially amenable to the new condition of things, for during that thousand years all mankind will be judged, not according to

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* * *

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their faith entirely, but specially according to their works. Faith will be easy when knowledge will be so complete and so general. Good works will be gradually more and more possible as they shall be blessed and restored to perfection under the Kingdom arrangements.

The Scriptures intimate that the world at that time will be in a dejected condition. The great "Time of Trouble" with which Messiah's Kingdom will be inaugurated will cut a deep swath in earthly hopes and ambitions, and all nations will be in the condition to desire the Messianic Government, and then, "The desire of all nations shall come."—Haggai 2:7.

"Come, Let Us Go Up."

The Scriptures prophetically foretell that as the Divine blessings of Messiah's Kingdom go more and more to Israelites, other nations will take note of this and be inclined to entreat a share of the Divine favors, saying, "Come, let us go up to the mountain (Kingdom) of the Lord's house; He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His paths." The whole world, every nation, people, kindred, tongue, needs just the blessings of healing and life eternal which the Messianic Kingdom is to offer them. And the terms will not be impossible, but quite the reverse. Messiah is to be, not only a Great King to rule, but also a Great Priest—and the Church with Him is promised to be a Royal Priesthood.

However, God will not accept any other nation than Israel. All of His blessings are to go to the Seed of Abraham. And as Abraham's Seed spiritual in the resurrection becomes "as the stars of heaven," so his Seed natural will increase to fill the whole earth, and are compared to

"the sand of the seashore." Nor will this be an arbitrary matter. It means the greatest good to all. Note that the first members of Spiritual Israel came from Natural Israel, and that the Gentiles were grafted in.

Similarly the first fruits of the world will be Natural Israel, but all nations will have the privilege and opportunity of being engrafted into and becoming members of Israel—much after the same manner that people of all nationalities coming to the United States may enjoy citizenship here under certain Covenant conditions. The New Covenant conditions inaugurated with Israel (Jeremiah 31:31-34) will thus be open to all mankind, because all will be permitted to become members of Israel. Thus, as the Scriptures prophesy, Abraham eventually will be "a father of many nations."—Romans 4:17.

Eventually, all the willing and obedient will be glad to enter into this New Covenant relationship with God through Christ and to be counted members of "the seed of Abraham." Eventually, all others will be destroyed in the Second Death, so that then all the earth will be blessed as Abraham's seed. Here we have the Gospel in its fulness, expanded from the original promise made to Abraham, and taking in all the features of Divine grace and mercy and eventuating in the most wonderful blessings possible for the human mind to imagine! And all this centers in the work of Jesus, in His death for our sins and in His resurrection for our deliverance and the execution of the Gospel Program. Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift! Hallelujah, what a Gospel! Hallelujah, what a Saviour! Hallelujah, what a God!

Paul, addressing the Elders of Ephesus, counseled that they "feed the flock of God, which He had purchased with the blood of His own Son." There is a point here that perhaps is too frequently overlooked. If all of the Lord's followers could realize that the message to St. Peter is the same as comes to all of us, perhaps it would make a change in most of our preaching.

Our Mistaken Methods.

Have not Christians in general overlooked this important lesson, namely, that the chief work of the ministers and under-shepherds of the Lord's flock during this Age is to "feed the flock?" Is it not true that comparatively little feeding is being done? On the contrary, the thought usually received by new converts is, Now you are saved; go, evangelize, and bring others to Christ—especially bring money, for with plenty of it we can convert the world. Work for Jesus by soliciting funds for church expenses, extension, etc., etc.

If the inquirer has thoughts or feelings is it not too often the case that his instructors know not how to answer them, but merely say, "Stop thinking, and go to work?" Alas, that this is so true! The "lambs" should be fed until they become "sheep." The sheep should be tended, cared for, guided, instructed, and the sheep should also be fed with the stronger meat than that which the lambs could appropriate. St. Paul gives this thought when on one occasion he urges his hearers to desire "the sincere milk of the Word that they may grow thereby."

But few seem to copy the great St. Paul in respect to their methods. Few seem to realize and apply to themselves the Master's words to St. Peter, "Feed My lambs," and "My sheep." As a consequence, the Church of Christ is in a languishing condition. Many, sincere at heart, know not what they believe. Many would find it impossible to follow St. Peter's admonition, "Be ready to give a reason for the hope that is within you, with meekness and reverence."—1 Peter 3:15.

The Neglect of the Doctrines of Christ.

There are two reasons which have led up to the neglect of "the doctrines of Christ"—the teachings of the Bible. These two reasons fully explain why so many are telling new believers, Never mind the doctrines of Christ, but go out and convert somebody.

The first of these reasons is the erroneous thought which gained ascendancy during the Dark Ages, namely, that from Pentecost until the Second Coming of Jesus is the time allotted by the Heavenly Father for the world's conversion, and that this is the commission which He gives to His people, and if the world be not converted the responsibility for their eternal torture will fall upon His people.

All of this is a mistake. Not a word of Scripture tells that the Church was commissioned to convert the world before the Second Coming of the Lord. Quite to the contrary, the Scriptures show that at the Lord's Second Coming the world will be unconverted. The Apocalypse particularly tells us that when the Lord at His Second Coming shall establish His Kingdom, the nations will be angry and Divine wrath will come upon them, thereby introducing the great "time of trouble" with which this Age is to end, according to the prophetic Word.

These testimonies do not signify that holiness will perish, nor that all of the Lord's people will be unfaithful, but they do signify that the world in general will not be the Lord's people, they will still be enemies, Gentiles, unconverted. Nor are we urging that the Church has nothing whatever to do with the world. Quite to the contrary: while she has not been given the mission of converting the world in the present Age—while that work remains for her to do in the coming Age in connection with the Lord and His Kingdom—nevertheless she was commissioned to do a work of witnessing in the present age.

The Church's witness was to be the telling of the Message of God's grace to those having an ear to hear, although they be but few. Secondly, she was to witness to the world by her faithfulness to the principles of righteousness, and thus to show forth the praises of Him who called her "out of darkness into His marvelous light." But this witnessing was not in order to the converting of the world, but in order to gather out of the world the number necessary to complete the Divinely foreordained elect Bride of Christ.

The Second Reason.

As the first error was in respect to the world's conversion to the Lord, the second error was in respect to what would happen to the world if they were not converted to the Lord. When the erroneous idea gained credence that every one who does not accept the invitation and become a member of the Bride of Christ is to be eternally tormented, can we wonder that it led many good people to a frenzy of error respecting what should be done to save their families and neighbors and the heathen millions from a supposed eternity of torture?

It was because of this supposed urgency that those coming to a belief in Jesus were exhorted not to stop to feed, and to grow strong in the Lord and to study His

Word, but to be moved by a frenzy of zeal to bring others to the Lord. This frenzy in turn led to most unreasonable teachings and practices which we are only now gradually getting rid of as we realize that a great mistake was made.

How strange that we did not stop to think of the absurdity of our position and how it misrepresented the Heavenly Father in a most detestable light! How strange that any should ever think that when the Heavenly Father sent out the call to those who have the hearing hear, to joint-heirship with Jesus Christ their Lord, He would consign to eternal torment any who would decline to accept the admittedly stringent rules and conditions appertaining to this "call"—the "narrow way" of the footsteps of Jesus—self-denial, etc.!

Well do the Scriptures assure us that the saints "wrestle not with flesh and blood merely," but rather "with wicked spirits in high positions" of influence. (Ephesians 6:12.) Well does the Apostle tell us that it is the god of this Age who hath blinded the minds of those who believe not. (2 Corinthians 4:4.) Well can we see how he put light for darkness and darkness for light during the Dark Ages.

Another Lesson We May Learn.

We must not leave out text without calling to memory a most wonderfully instructive lesson concerning the proper way to reprove and rebuke our brethren when the same is surely necessary. So far as the record shows, the three inquiries which our Lord made of St. Peter respecting his love for Him were the only rebukes ever given him as an offset or punishment for his shameful denial of the Master on the night in which He was betrayed.

Had many of us been in the Master's place we would have felt that it was necessary to make St. Peter very humbly apologize before we would have anything further to do with him. We would have been inclined to speak of his weakness, of his ingratitude, of how he knew better, etc., etc. Our sense of justice would in many instances have entirely overshadowed our sense of mercy and sympathy. But not so with the Master. He knew the loyalty of St. Peter's heart. He knew that he had already gone out and wept bitterly over the matter. He knew what a sense of shame would be upon him and how much courage it would mean for him to think at all of meeting the Master whom he had denied.

Surely it was on account of this sympathy for St. Peter and this appreciation of the tendency he would have to become entirely discouraged that led our Lord to mention St. Peter first amongst the Apostles on the morning of His resurrection, saying to Mary, to whom He first appeared, "Go and tell My disciples, and Peter"—don't let Peter think that he is an outcast. Let him know that I think of him and love him and sympathize with him and have forgiven him, because I know he did it under stress.

We Should Copy the Master's Methods.

And if our Lord and Master has set us such an example of benevolence and forgiveness without request, how are we learning this lesson? To what extent do we forgive others their trespasses and to what extent do we go more than half way to let them know that we harbor no resentful feelings towards them? To what extent do we send them word that we think of them kindly, generously? And when the appropriate time comes and it is proper for something to be said, can we not take a lesson from the Redeemer's loving forbearance and gentleness in His merely asking the erring one if he had a proper kind of love, and when he confesses special love, then to ask him if he were sure that he had the special love?

No doubt our success as the Master's servants in feeding the brethren, the flock, and helping instead of hindering them, will be in proportion as we remember and copy His style and methods. So, then, while feeding His flock, let us have continually before us the great Shepherd's example of how the flock should be dealt with.

WAS HE A FAILURE?

"He kept his soul unspotted
As he went upon his way,
And he tried to do some service
For God's people day by day;
He had time to cheer the doubter
Who complained that hope was dead;
He had time to help the cripple
When the way was rough ahead;
He had time to guard the orphan, and
one day, well satisfied
With the talents God had given him, he
closed his eyes and died.

"He had time to see the beauty
That the Lord spread all around;
He had time to hear the music
In the shells the children found;
He had time to keep repeating
As he bravely worked away:
'It is splendid to be living
In the splendid world today!'
But the crowds—the crowds that hurry
After golden prizes—said
That he never had succeeded,
When the clouds lay o'er his head—
He had dreamed—'He was a failure,'
they compassionately sighed,
For the man had little money in his
pockets when he died."

GENTLE REPROOF MOST EFFECTIVE

"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?"—JOHN 21:15-17.

THE context shows that these words were addressed by the Redeemer to St. Peter on the occasion of His third manifestation to His disciples after His resurrection. This was presumably three or four weeks after the Master's resurrection from the dead. His manifestations to the women on the morning of His resurrection and His later manifestation to the two as they went to Emmaus are evidently not counted, but the manifestation the same evening in the upper room, when all the disciples except Thomas and Judas were present, is counted the first. And the manifestation a week later, Thomas being present, is counted the second.

The delay in giving this third manifestation was evidently for the purpose of testing the faith of the Apostles and of leading them to reach a conclusion respecting their future course, which Jesus wished to correct. So far as we can understand the record at least two Sundays passed without any further manifestation of Jesus to His disciples, and then, giving up hope, they decided to return to the fishing business and did so. The journey to Galilee and the resumption of business presumably took another week.

During all those thirty days the mental attitude of all the Apostles and the other disciples can be better imagined than described. They were perplexed; they had indeed had evidences of the Master's resurrection; they had had the Scriptures called to their attention which proved that this was necessary and that God had previously so arranged. They had hoped for further conferences with Jesus and that He would have told them definitely what to do.

Instead, left to themselves, the disciples were thoroughly disheartened. They had left all to follow Him, to tell the people that He was the Son of God, the long-promised Messiah, and that He would soon set up His Kingdom, which would bring blessings, primarily to Israel and, secondarily, through Israel, to all the families of the earth in harmony with the Abrahamic Covenant. Now apparently all of these hopes were dashed, frustrated. How foolish they thought it would seem for them to try to convince the people that a man, crucified as a malefactor, as a blasphemer, was indeed the Messiah! How foolish it would seem to tell of His resurrection! They felt that they could do nothing else than abandon the ministry as a lost cause; and the resumption of the fishing business was the logical conclusion.

They Toiled All the Night.

Their first night was a discouraging one—they caught nothing. It looked indeed as though God was punishing them for the course they had taken in becoming disciples of Jesus—that everything was going wrong. But not so; they were merely being taught needed lessons.

In the morning they beheld a stranger on the shore who beckoned and shouted to know if they had any fish for sale. They replied, No, they had made no catch. The stranger suggested casting the net on the other side of the boat. And although the suggestion seemed a foolish one, having been so unsuccessful, yet they did so, and immediately the net was filled with fishes! It did not require long for them to learn the lesson. They knew, instinctively that the unknown stranger upon the shore was none other than their Master. They remem-

bered a very similar experience at the time they were first called to leave their nets and to become fishers of men.

All interest had just centered in the fishing business, but now boats and fish and nets all lost their value in the estimation of these fishermen. Here was their risen Lord, for whose third appearance they had been waiting now nearly three weeks. Fearing that the Master would disappear, even before he could get to him, St. Peter plunged into the sea and swam ashore. To his surprise the stranger already had fish and had them cooked, and all were invited to join in the breakfast on the shores of Galilee.

The stranger had not the clothing by which they had known their Lord, neither did He have the marks of the nails in His hands and feet, that they might thus identify Him. This was a different manifestation. They knew Him as did those with whom He walked to Emmaus, who recognized Him in the blessing of the bread, and not by His features or clothing or wounds. They recognized that none other than He could have performed such a miracle. They did not ask who He was; they felt a restraint; as we read, "None of them durst ask who He was," but all knew that He was the Lord.

"Lovest Thou Me More?"

The stranger addressed St. Peter particularly, saying, "Lovest thou Me more than these?"—these boats and nets, etc., pertaining to the fishing business? St. Peter answered, "Lord, Thou knowest that I affectionately love Thee." He used a word expressing fondness of love. Jesus replied, "Feed My lambs."

Then came the question a second time, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" A great pressure was felt by St. Peter. Why did the Master so particularly question his love? Why should He put this question more to him than to the others? Was it because he had been the first of the disciples to suggest the resumption of the fishing business? Was he to blame for this? But he answered, "Lord, Thou knowest that I affectionately love Thee." Jesus this time replied, "Tend My sheep." For the third time Jesus said to St. Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, dost thou affectionately love Me?" Here Jesus used the same word that St. Peter had used, as though He questioned the affection and depth of St. Peter's love. Ah! the third time must have sent the memory of St. Peter back to the scene in Caiaphas' Judgment Hall, when he denied his Master the third time, even with cursing. And now Jesus for the third time had asked him respecting his love and whether it was really a love of affection! St. Peter's choking reply was, "Lord, Thou knowest all things! Thou knowest that I affectionately love Thee!" The Lord's reply was, "Feed My sheep."

In harmony with these words of the Master to St. Peter the chief work of His followers has been to minister to the needs of the spirit-begotten sheep. It is in full harmony with this that St.

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FIERY EXPERIENCES NECESSARY

"Saved so as by fire."—1 CORINTHIANS 3:15.

WHILE we cannot accept the Catholic Purgatory as Biblical, we do find certain threads of Bible truth in the purgatorial theory. We can even fancy how those Bible truths gradually became distorted during the many centuries styled "The Dark Ages."

During that time, not only were the common people illiterate, but printing had not been invented, and Bibles were costly. That was the period during which Councils of bishops from time to time met and decided for the people what should and what should not be believed. In other words, they formulated the creeds. We do not question the sincerity of those spiritual leaders of the darker days, but we do challenge their conclusions and, comparing them with the Bible now in the hands of the masses, we know, accepting the Bible as true, that we must necessarily condemn many of their conclusions as false, and when we speak of the Bible, we include the Catholic as well as the Protestant translations of it in various languages.

The Voice of the Church.

Many, both Catholics and Protestants, tell us that we should receive the message of Councils—the creeds which they formulated—as of equal inspiration with the Bible because, say they, these Councils were composed of bishops of the Church and, under the law of Apostolic succession, these bishops had equal authority with and Divine inspiration equal to the twelve Apostles. Hence the theory says that if any conflict exists between the Bible and the creeds the latter should have the greater weight in our minds, as being a later production.

From this we dissent, and are glad to note that we are in better accord with the views of the present Pope, Pius X., whose recent proclamation urges upon all Catholics loyalty to the Bible and its study. If all Christians, Catholics as well as Protestants, would accept this suggestion, we believe that the resultant untrammelled study would soon bring to Christendom in general the one unity and harmony which all desire and are striving for.

Whatever the Pope may have once believed respecting the doctrine of Apostolic succession, and the equal inspiration of the bishops of today with the twelve Apostles appointed by our Lord, he sees that the people have not full confidence that the living bishops are inspired to the degree of infallibility, as were the twelve Apostles. And we would say that to our understanding this is the right thought. The Scriptures everywhere recognize the twelve Apostles of the Lamb—no more, no less. They recognize the fall of one of these, and that another took his place—St. Paul. But there were to be no more additions.

The choice of Matthias by the Apostles, before they themselves received the Holy Spirit, was invalid and without authority. Jesus, in His last message to the Church, pictured her as a "woman," having "a crown of twelve stars." And again He symbolically represents her future glory as the New Jerusalem with but twelve foundation stones, and in those the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb—no more.

The more thoroughly this Scriptural fact is discerned the more surely will God's people turn reverently to the inspired words and interpretations of the Divinely appointed Twelve, respecting whose teachings Jesus said, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth (as necessary, obligatory) shall be the same that are bound in heaven. And whatsoever ye shall loose on earth (as not necessary) shall be the same that are loosed in heaven." No other teachers in the world's history were so thoroughly set apart to be the oracles of God; and their testimony is one—harmonious.

Not Present But Future.

We remarked a moment ago that there is a thread of truth in the doctrine of purgatory. That thread connects up with our text. Indeed, our Catholic friends acknowledge that there is no positive statement in the Bible respecting purgatory; they merely infer it from certain texts, which do not use the word, and our text, which says, "Saved so as by fire." This is one of their strong texts supporting the theory of purgatory. It certainly does imply that fiery experiences of some kind will come to some of God's people, and that these will be designed to have a purging effect.

Nothing in the text, however, gives a single suggestion to the effect that such purgatorial trials are now in operation. On the contrary, the Apostle points down to the future, saying, "The fire of that Day shall try every man's work of what sort it is." Those who have built with the wood, hay and stubble, even though upon the good foundation of Christ's redemptive work, will suffer loss. Only those who shall build with the precious Divine promises, the gold, silver and precious stones of the Divine Word, will pass unscathed through the fiery experiences of that Day.

Nevertheless, says the Apostle, those who will suffer the loss of their entire faith structure of wood, hay and stubble—false doctrines and theories of their own and of other men—will themselves

be saved, because they built upon the Rock Christ Jesus. But, he adds, "They will be saved so as by fire"—saved through fiery experiences. Search as we will we find no reference to any such sufferings after death and before the resurrection. Thus we see that the Apostle is in full harmony with what the Bible everywhere teaches, that the dead are not consciously alive to experience either joy or suffering between the time of death and the resurrection. But, on the contrary, they all "sleep in the dust of the earth," awaiting the awakening of their souls in the glorious morning of the New Age.

St. Peter's remarks to the faithful in his day have been applicable throughout the Age, and are still applicable to us. He says, "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, a though some strange thing happened unto you." (1 Peter 4:12.) Here again he is not speaking of a purgatorial experience after death, but of a purgatorial experience in the present life. God could protect His children from every foe, from every trouble, from every sorrow, from every one of Satan's darts, but instead of doing so He permits these fiery trials to test their faith, their loyalty to Him, to the Truth, to the brethren.

Purgatory in the Present Life.

Did not Jesus thus have purgatorial experiences?—not to purge away sin, for He had none—being "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners"—but to demonstrate His loyalty to God; as the Apostle said, "He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." And did not the Apostles have purgatorial experiences, which were needed, and which we all need? Is it not in respect to these purgatorial experiences that the Apostle urges us to remember that God is faithful and will not suffer us to be tempted, tried, more than we are able to bear, but with every temptation, trial, provides also a way of escape?

He also assures us, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." And is not this the very picture the Scriptures give us respecting our present trials, namely, that our Lord sits as a Refiner and Purifier of silver to take from us the dross and to purify us as New Creatures in Christ Jesus, and to make us ready for the Kingdom?

It is in full accord with this that the Apostle declares of the Church that if we judge ourselves—judge our own conduct and properly criticize ourselves for errors—we will not need to be judged or chastened with fiery trials by the Lord. But if we neglect to thus judge ourselves, and become careless, the Lord will give us chastenings, fiery trials and stripes—purgatorial experiences—to the intent that we may not be condemned with the world.

The World's Condemnation.

In this statement, to the effect that the Church is now chastened that she may not come into judgment with the world, we should understand the word world to mean all outside of the Church—both Jews and Gentiles. The Church is composed, not of any sect or party, but of all those who have come into covenant-relationship with the Father through faith in the Lord Jesus, and a full consecration of their lives to walk in His steps. The reward of the Church will be joint-heirship with the Saviour in His Kingdom, for which we pray, "Thy Kingdom come."

The Bible teaches us that shortly the Kingdom will be established in the midst of a great "time of trouble," and that through its blessed reign of righteousness the whole world, of every nation and kindred and people and tongue, will be blessed with light, with knowledge, with opportunity. "The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His beams," ushering in for earth the New Day, which all the Prophets of God have for so long foretold—the period which St. Peter styles, "Times of Restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy Prophets."—Acts 3:19-21.

Since we have learned that the Bible teaches that God has blessings in store for the world under Messiah's Kingdom, we are the better prepared to understand how and why the Messianic Kingdom is to usher in the "Times of Restitution" and blessing. And we learn at the same time that God has purposed, first of all, to deal with the Church, call, test, prove, discipline them with fiery trials, before He begins His dealings with the world. We perceive that the Church is to be dealt with first because it is the Divine declaration that the Church shall share with Jesus in judging the world—in disciplining the world, giving to the world purgatorial experiences, which will be helpful and uplifting.

The Great Time of Trouble, which our Lord declared should be expected at about the time of the completion of the Church, will be a time of special discipline upon the world—the beginning of the world's purgatorial experience. Harken to Jesus' words, "Watch ye (disciples), therefore, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all those things coming upon the world." Describing

those things our Lord said, "Men's hearts will be failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth, for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." Many of us believe that we are in that very time now.

The Churches Have Lost Their Power.

Surely men's hearts are failing them as they look about and see the surgings of socialism and anarchism, and the threatening of these "waves of the sea," that they will ultimately swallow up the present social order of things. Many of the rich and great are looking to the Church at this time, hoping that as of yore ecclesiasticism will be able to control the masses. But ah, it will be different now; for, as the Master said, "The powers of the heavens will be shaken"—the ecclesiastical powers will be shaken. From every side the cry goes up that the churches are becoming more and more empty, that collections are falling off and retrenchment must be the order of the day or ruin will result.

St. Peter refers to the coming trouble, under the symbolism of fire, and declares that not only will it consume the "earth," the social fabric, but the "heavens" also will be on fire and "shall pass away with a great noise"—a great commotion. Not the physical earth will burn, but the social earth; not the physical heavens will burn, but the ecclesiastical heavens.

The great and the rich have been so busily engaged in amassing wealth that they have not noticed until recently that the churches of all denominations have lost their power over the masses, and now "their hearts fail them for fear" as they come to perceive the weakness, the nothingness of ecclesiastical power as compared with the strength of socialism and anarchy amongst the masses. No wonder their hearts fail them for fear. Poor people! How we wish we could make clear to all the glorious prospects which the Bible holds out—that out of this, the most awful trouble of the world's history, God graciously intends to bring the greatest blessing imaginable, the one for which we have been praying so long.

We are sure that the present Pope, Pius X., who has taken such active measures to repulse the higher critical and revolutionary theories in the Catholic church, would fully agree with our sentiment when we say that many of the great and rich of our day have been unwittingly helping forward in the overthrow of religious faith and in the awakening of socialistic infidelity. They have given freely of their millions to the great

colleges of the land, which in turn have fostered unbelief in God's Word, and indirectly unbelief in a personal God. Their influence has extended to all the principal pulpits of Protestantism and is rapidly percolating through the various strata of Protestant church membership. Thus the churches and their treasures are being emptied and the number of unbelievers is being augmented daily, hourly.

The World's Purgatory Begins.

If time permitted we could marshal many texts of Scripture showing that the time of awful trouble now impending is in the nature of a Divine judgment upon the people of our day—because we have not more wisely and more generously used the present inventions and blessings that have come to us as foregleams of the Messianic Kingdom—because of our selfishness. In this trouble, according to the Bible, there will be a general reckoning and settlement of accounts between Justice and Humanity (aside from the weaknesses and imperfections of heredity, which will be excusable and forgiven through the merit of the Redeemer's sacrifice).

The settlement of accounts now will leave the slate clear for the New Dispensation. Furthermore, the plowshare of trouble will prepare men's hearts all over the world for the enlightenment and blessings which the glorified Redeemer will shed abroad. Since all human hearts are hard, selfish through the fall, it seems quite necessary that all should be broken, humbled, but the glorified Redeemer—both King and Priest of that New Age—will then say to the world, as He now says to the Church, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And "whoever will not obey that Prophet," that Great King of Glory, the antitype of Moses, "shall be destroyed from amongst the people." (Acts 3:23.) Again, Peter declares that all such shall perish like brute beasts.—2 Peter 2:12.

The glorious result of Christ's Reign of righteousness, and the purgatorial experiences which it will administer to those requiring them, will be to help all to rise eventually to perfection, so that every knee will bow and every tongue confess to the glory of God. But the Purgatory of the Bible is so very different from the Purgatory conjured up by good men in the Dark Ages, and pictured by Dante and Dore, that the latter are now seen to be gross travesties on the Divine arrangement, not only misinterpreting the time of the purgatorial experiences, but also their character.

THE PEACE OF GOD

"The peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."—PHILIPPIANS 4:7.

GOD'S LAW represents God's will. All who are right minded, rightly disposed, will rejoice in having God's will well done. Originally, God's will was written in man's nature. After sin had effaced it there, God wrote it upon tables of stone for Israel. It is the righteousness of this Law that Christians obey (the Divine regulations, the Divine requirements, whatever they may be) so far as possible. We delight to do God's will.

To love God's Law, then, would be to appreciate the fact that God has a great purpose; to take delight in finding out what God's will is; and to have full confidence in His Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power. Great peace have all those who so do. They do not understand every dealing of Divine Justice, but their faith holds to the fact that He is too wise to err. Thus they have peace in confiding their interests to Him.

In this text the Apostle differentiates between the mind and the heart. The heart represents the affections. The Apostle urges not only that we should have good feelings in the matter, but that our minds should be at rest. If, after we have made a consecration of ourselves to the Lord, we should do something to violate our conscience in some respect, we would feel estranged from Him. Then our hearts should know that we might draw near to the Lord again; and we should endeavor by prayer to get back into harmony with God and thus to effect a reconciliation. Our Lord has made provision on our behalf that we should have an Advocate with the Father. (1 John 2:1.) He who appeared in the presence of God for us at first is the same One who ever liveth to make intercession for us. So we come to the Lord through the arrangement which He has made; and we rejoice that we may obtain forgiveness and grace to help in time of need.

The text does not refer to our own peace, but to the peace of God, the peace which comes to us through a realization of God's power, of His goodness and willingness to hold us by His right hand as His children. This peace stands guard continually, as a sentinel, to challenge every hostile or worrying thought or fear. It so keeps the Christian's mind that he at heart has peace with the Lord, fellowship, communion; and it guards his mind also, his reasoning faculties, instructing him and assuring him respecting the Divine power, wisdom and love.

We should make request increasingly for grace and wisdom and the fruits of the Spirit, for opportunities for serving the Lord and the brethren, and for grow-

ing more and more into the likeness of God's dear Son. Under these conditions the promised "peace which passeth all understanding" will guard our hearts and our thoughts. Selfishness and ambition would find little room in hearts so filled. Even when in "deep waters" Divine peace can dwell in our hearts and keep them.

The Apostle's thought seems to be that those whom he addresses have come into harmony with God through acceptance of His terms. Turning from all opposition, they have become the children of God through faith, obedience, self-sacrifice and consecration to death. The Apostle urges that God's peace should be in these and should continue. They should be guarded by that peace. The expression, "through Christ Jesus," suggests that, as we entered into this peace through our great Advocate, so we can continue in this peace only by His continuing to be our Advocate; otherwise, through imperfections of the flesh, we would get out of harmony continually.

"Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:16.) Thus as we come daily and say, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," we abide in the peace; for we have this great Advocate. Therefore, this peace abides—a continuing supply of grace through the great Advocate.

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