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Religious and Scientific Gleanings THOUSAND-YEAR DAY OF JUDGMENT

"God hath appointed a Day in the which He will judge the world."—Acts 17:31.

sand years of refreshment, reinvigoration, upbuilding, restitution.—Acts 3: 19-23.

"The Mystery of God."

ALFALFA AS AN AIR COOLER
In the West, says the Kansas City Journal, many of the farmers are planting patches of alfalfa on the south side of their homes. They have found out that a field of growing alfalfa cools the temperature from ten to twenty degrees on a hot day. Alfalfa is filled with moisture and is death to hot winds, which usually come from the South. For the very opposite reason the farmers do not aim now to plant their wheat on the south side of their homes. Winds passing over wheat stubble after harvest time will raise the temperature from ten to twenty degrees.—Scranton (Pa.) Tribune-Republican.

It is not today fashionable in civilized communities to worship images; and yet in another sense it is still fashionable. There is still a great worship of man throughout the civilized world, but in a different form from that of old. No longer do we bow before wooden images, but before inward images—the images of our minds, our mental aspirations—with some, wealth and fame; with others, ease and pleasure, and with still others, the creed idols of our forefathers, miserable misrepresentations of the true God.

The Day of Judgment.

St. Paul on Mars Hill preached Jesus and the resurrection—Jesus as the Redeemer from the death sentence, making possible the resurrection of the dead by satisfying the demands of Divine Law against the sinner—the resurrection as the means or agency through which the blessing of the Savior's death will reach Adam and all the families of the earth. As we follow St. Paul's thought we will surely be blessed by his view of the Gospel.

Addressing the Gentiles, the Apostle explains that for a long time God had "winked" at Polytheism and image worship, "but now," he says, "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent." Let us note the meaning of these words. How did God "wink" at sin and idolatry? And does He still "wink" at it? And why did He change and when did He begin to command all men to repent?

The answer is that for four thousand years idolatry prevailed and God "winked" at or took no notice of it. He did not "wink" at the idolaters' dying in their ignorance and say to the devils, "Take these poor creatures who know no better! Roast them to all eternity!" Nothing of the kind. Our forefathers merely imagined that and by false reasoning convinced themselves, and twisted some texts of Scripture which they did not properly understand in support of this theory; and then they handed it down to our perplexity and to the testing of our faith in God.

God "winked" at idolatry and sin for four thousand years in the sense of not noticing it, making no comment on it, sending no reproofs, leaving the heathen in their ignorance. The only exception to this was God's dealings with the little nation of Israel. To the Jews He gave a Law Covenant which offered eternal life on the condition of their thorough obedience to the Divine law, the measure of a perfect man's ability, which they were unable to comply with; and hence they died the same as did the heathen. All went to the Bible hell—to the tomb—to sheol, to hades, the state or condition of death—an unconscious state, a "sleep."

Jesus the Redeemer.

God was in no haste to send the Redeemer; 4,128 years elapsed before Jesus was born, and thirty years more before He began His ministry. Had it been true, as some aver, that millions, for all those centuries, were blindly stumbling into eternal torture for lack of a Divine revelation, we may be sure that our gracious God would not have left them without it. Who can think of a just and loving God as winking at the going of millions of His creatures to eternal torture? But since they merely "fell asleep" in death, He could very well "wink" at the matter in view of His future plans, which we will consider shortly.

The fact is that no real offer of release could possibly be made until the Redemption price had been provided for the original sin under which they were condemned to death. This is the Apostle's argument, viz., that "now God commandeth all men everywhere to repent." The now implies that He did not command men previously to repent; and the reason why He did not do so is manifest, for all the repenting they could do and all the righteous living possible to them would not have saved them—they would have died anyway. Hence there could have been no message sent to them, for if the messenger had come and had said, "Repent, and live contrary to your fallen tastes and appetites," the people might properly enough have said, "Why, for what reason should we practice self-denial, self-restraint? Would it bring us any blessing of everlasting life or harmony with God?" The truthful answer

would have been, "No, because you are already under a death sentence and alienated from God as sinners."

Hence, God merely overlooked or "winked" at the ignorance and superstition of the period from Adam to the close of the 4,161 years. But as soon as Jesus had died, "the Just for the unjust," to make reconciliation for iniquity—immediately the message went forth—God offered forgiveness and reconciliation to those who would believe in Jesus and would accept the Divine terms. Such have their sins forgiven. Such may come back to fellowship with God. And, in the next Age, such may eventually attain full human perfection by restitution processes, up, up to all that was lost in Adam and redeemed at Calvary.

God's Appointed Day.

Let us note carefully what the Apostle says respecting God's appointed Day for the judging of the world. He says that the command to repent now goes forth to all men everywhere, "because God hath appointed a [future] Day, in which He will judge the world." The Apostle does not refer to that Day as already begun, but as merely appointed or arranged for in advance. He means that in arranging that "Jesus, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man," God was arranging that every man might have a judgment or a trial, to determine whether or not he will be worthy of this blessing which Jesus' death provides him an opportunity to secure. The Day was future in St. Paul's time, and it is still future, because God has other work which He proposes shall be accomplished first, before the world's Day of Judgment or trial shall begin.

The world's trial Day or period of judgment, or testing as to worthiness or unworthiness for everlasting life, will be one of the thousand-year days mentioned by Peter, who said, "A day with the Lord is as a thousand years." The same period is called elsewhere the "Day of Christ," the Day or period of Messiah's glorious reign. By the righteous ruling of His Kingdom, by the suppression of Satan and sin and the scattering of darkness, ignorance and superstition, by the shining forth of the Sun of Righteousness with healing in its beams, that glorious Day will bring blessing to the world in general—opportunity for each individual to come into judgment or trial, the result of which will be either the reward of life everlasting or the punishment of death everlasting—"everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power."

That great thousand-year Day is still future; and, meantime, the Apostle's words respecting mankind are still true: "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together"—"waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God." (Romans 8:22-19.) If the nineteen centuries' delay in the introduction of this great Day seems long, let us not forget that it is less than half as long as the period which preceded—the period prior to the coming of Jesus and His dying, "the Just for the unjust." Nor is the entire period long from the Divine standpoint. For as the Prophet declares, "A thousand years in God's sight are but as yesterday," or even shorter, "as a watch in the night." The six great Days of a thousand years each, in which sin and death have reigned, are to be followed by a great Sabbath of rest from evil—a thousand-year day.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS
All Christians have wondered respecting this parable. When taken literally it seems unreasonable. Why should a man suffer torture merely because he was rich, well clothed, and bountifully fed? And why should another man be carried to glory simply because he was sick and poor and a companion of dogs? In the clear light now shining, this parable is luminous and beautiful to such an extent that one is compelled to laugh at his own foolish misunderstanding of it in the past. The full explanation of this parable is given in another number of this paper, which we shall be glad to send you, free of charge, upon postal-card request. Address, Bible & Tract Society, 17 Hicks St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

A DEADLY WAR WEAPON
The Krupp, who supply guns to the German Empire and to half of the world besides, have now invented a terrible weapon known as the bomb gun. It fires a huge, very brittle bomb containing 160 pounds of chemicals. As it bursts it fills the air with poisonous gas in which no human being can live. The gases from one bomb will kill every one within a radius of 500 yards. This weapon apparently will make it impossible for soldiers to remain in the open trenches. In experiments on animals it was found that the fumes turned them green.—Exchange.

A LIBRARY OF ONE BOOK
The Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and the Sermon on the Mount contain all the law that can be found in a library of 5,000 volumes containing all the reports of decided cases printed in the English language, and all the textbooks ever issued.

There is not a statute in the California codes—political, criminal or civil—the genesis and inspiration of which cannot be found in the Bible. It has been well said: "The child who has been trained to learn and obey the Ten Commandments will acquire an uprightness of character and steadfastness of purpose attainable in no other way. The man who takes the Bible as his chart in life will be a law-abiding citizen."

The Lord's Prayer contains in its every sentence something that refers to human experience and meets human needs. In the introduction to the Sermon on the Mount "we are taught humility, soberness, meekness, holy desire, mercifulness, purity, peacefulness." In the rest of the Master's great sermon which follows we have the higher meaning of the moral law expounded and illustrated, and by its use we are enabled to understand and teach more fully the meaning of the commandments.—Los Angeles Times.

CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT BIBLES
It is a very common mistake amongst both Protestants and Catholics to suppose that their Bibles are materially different. They are practically alike. The Editor has both versions in his study and uses both to advantage.

Anyone desirous of comparing the two Bibles can do so readily enough by calling at the Brooklyn Tabernacle book room, where both are supplied side by side at wholesale cost prices. Surely much of the prejudice formerly existing between Catholics and Protestants is dissolving for the oncoming day of more faithful investigation. More than half of all the troubles of the world are the results of misunderstanding.

Now that the Pope is calling upon Catholics everywhere to study the Bible, we urge upon those Protestants who have not already drifted into infidelity to begin a fresh investigation of God's Word, which through our greater intelligence and more general education is shining brighter and brighter—and this surely is a fulfillment of St. Peter's words, "We have a more sure word of prophecy, to which we do well to take heed, as unto a light which shineth in a dark place until the day dawn."—2 Pet. 1:19.

The new day of Divine blessing which the Bible so long foretold is dawning, and the manifold blessings and inventions of our day, both in temporal and spiritual matters, are but foregleams of the coming glory, which will transcend our brightest dreams. Satan will be bound. An evil influences will be brought under Divine control and the true knowledge of God shall fill the whole earth with light, joy and peace to all those who will yield submission to it.

The purpose of the nineteen centuries between the time when Jesus died as man's Redeemer and the time when He will take His Throne as the Restorer of Adam and his race is spoken of as a Mystery, because the great work of grace herein accomplished is measurably hidden from the world. The Jews do not understand it; they expected that Messiah's Kingdom and their own national exaltation would have come long ago. They cannot tell now why they have been for eighteen centuries outcast from the Divine favor. It is a mystery to them.

The Scriptures tell us who may know or understand this Mystery and when it will be finished. They say, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His Covenant." They tell us that in the days of the voice of the Seventh Angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, which He hath kept secret from the foundation of the world. St. Paul refers to this mystery, saying that it was "hidden from past Ages and Dispensations," and that it "is now revealed to the saints." He explains what it is, namely, that we should be fellow-heirs and of the same Body with our Redeemer.—Eph. 3:6.

This clearly means that the entire Church class, sometimes called "the Body of Christ, which is the Church," and sometimes styled "the Bride, the Lamb's Wife," is to be sharer with the Redeemer in the sufferings of the present life and in the glories of the future. The nearly nineteen centuries of this Age, therefore, according to the Scriptures, have been for the purpose, not of giving the world its trial for everlasting life or death, but for the trying, testing, the electing or selecting of the Church, and her perfecting with her Lord as sharers in "His resurrection," "the First Resurrection."—Philippians 3:10; Revelation 20:6.

We have in the past made two serious mistakes respecting the Divine purposes. One was that we assumed without Scriptural authority that the whole world is now on trial for eternal life, failing to see that it is merely the elect Church, the consecrated class. The other mistake is that we reasoned as though the Church were part of the world and, therefore, that the trial of the Church meant the trial of the world. But hearken to the Scriptures respecting the Church: "Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world!" "I have chosen you out of the world!" and again, "Let your light so shine before men that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven," "in the day of (their) visitation."—1 Peter 2:12.

Two Different Rewards.

We should notice also the wide difference between the reward promised the Church and that proffered the world. In both cases the reward will be everlasting life. In both cases this will mean full harmony with God, because, "All the wicked will God destroy." And again we read that "Whoever hath the Son hath life, and whosoever hath not the Son shall not see life." So, then, the attainment of everlasting life, either by the Church class or by the world, will mean coming into full harmony with the heavenly Father and with the Lord Jesus, by the merit of Christ's sacrifice. It will mean a full turning away from sin and a full devotion to God and to righteousness.

The difference will be as to nature. The reward for the world will be earthly nature, human nature, with everlasting life in an earthly Paradise or Eden—worldwide. Man never lost a spiritual or heavenly condition through Adam's disobedience, or in any other manner. He never had such a condition or nature, nor a right to it, that he could lose it. He was made man, "a little lower than the angels." His crown of glory and honor was an earthly crown. His dominion was over the birds of the air, over cattle and over the fish of the sea. This which he lost Jesus paid the redemption price for at Calvary; and these things lost are the very things which Jesus and His elect Bride will restore to mankind during the thousand years of the Messianic Kingdom. Thus we read: "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost."

Partakers of the Divine Nature.

The reward of the Church, eternal life. (Continued on 2d page, 2d column.)

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WANING CHURCH LIFE

Wesleyans, in Common with Others, Losing Many Adherents

The leaders of Wesleyan Methodism are naturally greatly perturbed about the continued steady decline in their church membership.

For six successive years there has been a serious falling off, amounting in the aggregate to 15,575. Try as they will, those holding the strings of management seem powerless to arrest this apparent decadence, with the result that in some quarters the future of the Church is viewed with no small degree of alarm.

What are the causes which have led to the present position? A Daily Dispatch representative recently discussed this question with the Rev. Dr. Waddy Moss, of Didsbury College. "First of all," he said, "this decline in membership is general amongst the churches, evangelical and non-evangelical, Roman Catholic and Unitarian, as well as the Church of England. It is general, and therefore the cause must be general. As far as the general causes can be suggested, the choice lies between the spirit of indifference to religion and the competition of so many interests leading to a decay of the consciousness of church responsibility. That means that in everything, except in organized religion, the country is becoming increasingly Socialistic, but in organized religion increasingly individualistic."—Manchester (Eng.) Dispatch.

HOT AIR PATCHES ABOVE THE EARTH

Chief Willis L. Moore, of the Weather Bureau, who is head of the National Geographic Society as well, has advised the House Committee on Agriculture that during the past summer months "we found warm patches of air far above the earth."

"We have found," said Prof. Moore, "as a result of sending up balloons—and our observations are verified abroad—one of the most wonderful things in meteorology. All our physics have assumed that temperature gradually decreases with elevation until in outer space there is no temperature. We sent up balloons from Omaha and Indianapolis above the storm stratum, which is six miles deep, rising and falling with the seasons.

"Above the storm stratum there is an entirely different atmosphere, floating upon the storm element like oil on water, with an easterly velocity of only half that of the lower air. From the storm stratum up through this there is a slight rise in temperature. We call it an equally heated stratum—the isothermal. In this constant air ocean there are no storm eddies; in it the minutest rays of light are absorbed. We are living in a thin skin of air, illuminated, and all the rest between us and the sun is darkness."—Halifax Herald.

VARYING MARRIAGE FEES.

In Mexico, when ex-President Diaz came into power, the marriage fee by the priest was \$500. In sharp contrast with that price is the announcement in the New York American of April 16th that the Rev. Wm. H. Lynch, rector of St. John's Roman Catholic Church of Lambertville, N. J., has not only offered to perform all marriages during the year 1912 without charge, but to give a present to the bride.

The improvement is a good one. The high charge in Mexico led to immorality and the birth of thousands of illegitimate children, whose parents at Confessional were required to have high mass or to suffer in purgatory. Conditions are much improved since then in Mexico, and indeed, in this respect, are improved also in Spain, Italy, France and Austria. We congratulate the Lambertville priest for having gotten to the head of the procession.

\$2,800,000,000 TO TEAR DOWN

"If some one comes along and wants your boy to enter some kind of good work, don't get mad. Let him find what he wants to do. Fifty per cent. of the fifteen million between the ages of 15 and 35 years are misfits, and many are going to their daily task to support the folks at home. Ten out of every 100 go to church; six out of every 100 are church members and only four do any church work. Two million dollars were spent last year for temperance, \$15,000,000 for missions, \$200,000,000 for schools, \$850,000,000 for tobacco and \$2,800,000,000 for whisky. In other words, \$217,000,000 to build up and \$2,800,000,000 to tear down."—J. L. Schofield, Y. M. C. A. Secretary, Bloomington, Ill.

(Continued from 1st page, 4th column.) perfection and harmony with God, will be on the spirit plane—wholly different from the human. Man in perfection will again be a little lower than the angels; but the Church, as the Body of Christ, will share with her Lord in His exaltation, "far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named"—the divine nature. This reward comes to the Church under a special covenant of sacrifice, which the Bible specifies.

This Church class, like her Lord, must sacrifice the earthly nature, earthly interests, hopes and aims, and must be begotten of the Father to a heavenly, spirit nature, in order to be a sharer in the First Resurrection; and she must enter into her reward before the Messianic Kingdom can be established for the blessing of mankind in general—the saving of the world from sin and from death.

Thus the Apostle wrote that the groaning creation "waits for the manifestation of the sons of God." (Rom. 8:19.) "Now are we the sons of God, but it does not yet appear what we shall be (how glorious, how great), but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him." Our resurrection change will make us like the Savior; as it is written, "We shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," because "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of heaven."

"Commandeth All to Repent."

Come back again to St. Paul's words. He does not say that God commanded the Church to sacrifice, for if sacrifice were a command it would cease to be a sacrifice. Nowhere are God's people commanded to

present their bodies living sacrifices, nor to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, nor to take up the cross and follow Him. To the saintly these sacrificing features are set forth as a privilege—as an opportunity. If they do these things the Divine arrangement is that through the imputation of Christ's merit their sacrifice will be holy and acceptable unto God, and they will be granted a share with the Redeemer in His high exaltation—the reward of sacrifice, of self-denial, of loving, voluntary service to God, the truth and the brethren.

But to the world in general the Lord issues a command, viz., Repent; turn from your sins; come back to Me; seek My face; seek to know and do My will. The basis of this command is the Divine declaration that God's grace has provided redemption in the blood of Jesus, a reconciliation through His blood, and that by and by the whole world will be on trial for life or death everlasting, in a great Day of trial, which God has ordained and over which Christ and the Church will supervise, as Judges.

Whoever comes to a knowledge of this great Divine arrangement through Christ has an incentive to live righteously, soberly and godly in this present time. Whoever hears and heeds this command is laying up for himself a good treasure of character and preparation for his life or death trial in the great Judgment Day of the Messianic Kingdom. Whoever ignores this knowledge and "sows to the flesh" will find himself reaping to the flesh further weakness, further degradation and severer stripes or punishments in that great thousand-year Judgment Day.

LOVERS OF PLEASURE MORE THAN LOVERS OF GOD

"Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. From such turn away."—2 TIMOTHY 3:4, 5.

OUR text could scarcely apply better to present-day conditions if St. Paul had written the words this very day. The world seems to be going pleasure-mad. Very evidently we are in the "perilous times" mentioned in the context. It is proper that we investigate this tendency toward pleasure and formality as respects religion. What is the cause of this condition? It is not because mankind have naturally more desire for pleasure than for God. On the contrary, Phrenology shows us that the very highest organs of the human mind are those which relate to spirituality and reverence. Under normal conditions, therefore, all mankind might reasonably be expected to have their chief pleasure in spiritual things, in harmony with a proper reverence for their Creator and His will.

What has changed this natural condition, and turned the hearts of men away from reverence for God and spiritual things to sensuous pleasures, with merely an outward form of piety? The answer is that man's reverence for his Creator and for spiritual things has been taken advantage of by Satan. God has been pictured to men's mind as All-Powerful and devilish. These false doctrines, St. Paul declares, are "doctrines of demons." (1 Timothy 4:1.) These misconceptions, formulated into multitudinous creeds, became their idols. Each idol creed contained a little nucleus of truth, around which monstrous errors were aggregated. For a long time we blindly and stupidly worshipped our creed-idols, fighting for ourselves and against others. Contributing our money to the point of sacrifice and self-denial, we built costly temples, each party for his own idol.

We were kept so busily engaged in thus fighting and working and building, that we did not stop to carefully notice the horrible outlines of these idols, nor to consider their blasphemous misrepresentations of the true God of Justice, Wisdom, Love, Power.

The Day Dawn Is Upon Us.

The Apostle says, "They that sleep, sleep in the night, and they that are drunken are drunken in the night." Many thus have been asleep and have dreamed terrible things respecting the future which our Heavenly Father has ordained for His creatures. Various hallucinations and nightmares have afflicted us. Many have been drunken with the wine of false doctrines, mentioned in the Apocalypse, which tells us that this "drunkenness" or stupefaction of error has extended to all nations of Christendom.—Rev. 18:3.

We may well thank God that "the night is far spent and the day is at hand." "The Sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in His beams" (Malachi 4:2). The result will be the complete scattering of

darkness, superstition and error, which for so long have more or less beclouded the minds of many of us to the true character of our God and the true teachings of His Word. It is because we are in the dawning of the New Day that we are beginning to see, as never before, the horrible features of our creed idols.

The majority of Christians have not yet discovered the real character of the Almighty. They are in a transition state. They no longer worship their idols as formerly, yet they still worship them. We can direct them to worship the true God, but the idols so monstrously misrepresent the God of all Grace that the worship is necessarily faint and half-hearted; or, as the Apostle declares, it is merely "a form of godliness," without the power, the force, the strength which should accompany the worship of the true God, rightly understood and properly revered.

A Revulsion of Sentiment.

The dawning of the light of the New Day of Messiah begins to waken us from the nightmares of the Dark Ages. We have begun to doubt our creed idols. Many have ceased their worship altogether. Many others respect them merely as fetishes of the past. Some are afraid that if the masses cease to worship the idols all reverence for holy things will pass away and the world will lapse into heathenish darkness. We should remember, on the contrary, that we have been in heathenish darkness, and are merely now escaping from it. The heathen has had his idol of wood and stone while we have had more ethereal ones. The heathen's idols are ugly enough, yet far less horrible than the creed idols of civilized lands. No excuse will longer maintain idol worship of any kind.

Looking for the Truth.

The great difficulty with the masses is that, repudiating the idols, they are lapsing into agnosticism—doubt. They know not what they believe. They are looking for the Truth. They find the leaders of the creeds still bowing formally to the idols, but privately repudiating them. Such leaders are unworthy of confidence and only partially honest. Hungry and thirsty for something to satisfy the craving of their hearts, the famishing people are turning toward pleasure. "They are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."

Comparatively few any longer believe in purgatory or everlasting torment, but they believe that these doctrines have a Scriptural foundation, which they proportionately discredit, and charge with being the source of all their ignorance and superstition in the past. With faith in the Bible gone, the masses know not where to go nor whom to trust respecting enlightenment regarding the future. They are reaching the conclusion that everything is a big guess, and that they may as well do their own guessing as to pay a minister to do it for them.

The situation is a deplorable one. As we have already intimated, humanity is so constituted that religion holds the very highest place in his mental organism—the seat of power and control in all the affairs of his life. With no fixed conviction, men are drifting. The learned are going into infidelity, under the more refined name of Higher Criticism. The poor and less learned are going into doubt respecting any intelligent Creator or Supervisor. As a matter of fact they are saying not only that there is no God who would tor-

ment mankind eternally, but apparently, There is no God who takes any interest in humanity.

In this frame of mind Socialism appeals to them. They propose to bring about "Paradise Restored," by the power of Socialism. They say to themselves, "We are without a God, without a future hope, and without confidence in our former views; 'Let us eat, drink and be merry'—let us enjoy life—let us get all that we can of pleasure out of present existence, for we are hopeless respecting a future one." Is it any wonder that the Apostle foretold that, under these conditions, the masses would become more and more pleasure-mad?

Thus we account for the great lament that is going up from all churches that the pews are empty, and the collection boxes empty, and that the system would go down except for the benevolent wealthy, who really do not believe in the creed idols, but who desire that others shall believe in them and worship them. In a word, the crowds which once flocked to the churches, with their nickels and pennies, now make for the theatres and crowd the hard, rough "bleachers" of the ball grounds. They have become lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, because the representations of God in the various creeds are too repulsive, too irrational, too devilish, to be longer believed in or worshipped. What the people need is a general smashing of all the creed idols and the unanimous return to the study of the Bible, and to the worship of the true God, which the Bible sets forth.

Preachers Are in Perplexity.

No men in the world are to be more sympathized with than the preachers. The creed idols have been richly endowed by well-meaning votaries of the past. The interests of the clergy are all wrapped up with the interests of the creed idols—not only their financial interests, but their honor, dignity, titles. The question with the clergy to-day is, How can we smash the creed idols? How can we destroy them without ourselves perishing with them? If we tell the common people plainly what we believe, they will all leave the creed idols. They will ask us, How long is it since you came to this conclusion? If we tell them that we have not believed in our creeds for many years, will they not call us hypocritical and lose their confidence in us? And, besides, what could we offer them instead?

It is no secret that the great majority of the educated clergy are total unbelievers, not only in the creeds which they profess, but also in the Bible—they call themselves "Higher Critics" and "Evolutionists." They have nothing that they could teach the people, except their doubts, their misunderstandings. Having lost faith in the creed idols, they are seeking for the true God, in whom the masses believe little enough as it is. They are bound to God and religious things by a very slim cord composed of three strands—ignorance, superstition and natural reverence. The ignorance and superstition will soon break, and all that will be left will be man's natural reverence. Now is the time for replacing ignorance with knowledge, and superstition with loving obedience to the true God.

"A Famine In the Land."

When Pastor Russell was in Boston some time ago delivering a discourse on this very subject, according to the newspaper reports the largest opera house of that great city, seating thirty-six hundred, was crowded; four hundred more were behind him on the platform, besides those who stood, and hundreds were turned away from the doors. The next day the editor of a religious journal called on the Pastor. His leading question was: "Pastor Russell, how do you explain the fact that the people of all creeds, and of the world, come in such crowds to your meetings? I was present yesterday at the Boston Theatre and witnessed that vast concourse of intelligent people. As I looked at them I asked myself the question I am now asking you, 'How is it that such crowds attend your services, even in this sultry, summer weather, when the summer resorts and seashore pleasures would call them elsewhere, and while many of our leading and able ministers, supported by talented choirs, have small attendance—twenty, forty, fifty or so? What is your explanation?'"

Pastor Russell's reply was, "My brother, I believe we are witnessing a fulfillment of the Scripture which says, 'There shall be a famine in the land! Not a famine for bread, nor a famine for water, but a famine for the hearing of the Word of the Lord' (Amos 8:11.) The public are getting their eyes too widely opened to ever again respect the God whom Brother Calvin pictured—a God, All-Wise and All-Powerful, but thoroughly unloving, who foreordained and predestinated a saintly

THE THIEF ON THE CROSS.

What did Jesus mean by His words, "Verily I say unto thee to-day, thou shalt be with Me in Paradise"—if Paradise, lost 6,000 years ago, will not be restored until the Second Coming of Jesus and the establishment of His Kingdom? The full answer to this question we will be pleased to send you upon receipt of postal-card request. Address, Bible & Tract Society, 17 Hicks St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

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handful to glory, and the unsaintly thousands of millions to an eternity of torture. We once believed those things, but the new morning of God's grace in Christ Jesus is gradually scattering the darkness.

"Neither can we longer believe with Brother Wesley that our God is good and loving, and would like to save everybody if He could, but was unwise in His creation of man, and is lacking in power to direct the matter now. The people are hungering for something better—for something consistent and rational and in accordance with the Bible declaration, that Divine Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power are co-ordinate—that God is Love, and is as just and wise and powerful as He is loving. The people need to be shown a theology which will accord with this Divine character and with the Divine statement that 'known unto the Lord are all His works from the beginning of the world,' and again: 'My Word that goeth forth out of My mouth shall not return unto Me void, but shall accomplish that which I please,' saith the Lord, 'and shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.'"

Bible Doctrine of Election.

Christian people need to believe the Bible doctrine of Election, but must see it in a different light from that which Brother Calvin threw upon the subject. They must see election from the Bible standpoint—the election of a saintly Church, a "little flock," "a royal priesthood, a holy people," to be the Bride of Christ, and His joint-heirs. They must see that this "elect" Church, with the Redeemer, is God's appointed channel for the blessing of the non-elect world. They need to be shown clearly that the saintly few, gathered first from the Jews, but subsequently completed by additions of those of saintly characters of all nations, are with Christ to become the great Seed of Abraham, the great Messiah, Abraham's spiritual Seed, "like the stars of heaven." It must then be shown why this spiritual Seed has been "called," "elected," selected from amongst mankind—that it is for the very purpose of blessing the non-elect, the masses of Adam's race, in harmony with God's promise to Abraham—"In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

St. Paul refers to this spiritual Seed, saying, "And to thy Seed, which is Christ," and, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed, and heirs according

to the promise" (Galatians 3:16-29). All these are Heirs of the great promise that has not yet been fulfilled. The fulfillment waits until the completion of a foreordained number, an elect "little flock" of the saintly few. Then these, changed by the power of the First Resurrection, from human nature to divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), will constitute the glorious Kingdom of Messiah. The Kingdom blessings will go first to Abraham's natural seed, and through them to all nations.

God's character is so great, so grand, that, if seen by men, it would be revered. God's Plan of Salvation is so grandly beautiful that, when rightly understood and comprehended, it proves more fascinating than any novel.

The world has been kept away from God and from the Bible by the machinations of the Adversary. He has had much to do with the formation of our creed idols. Seeing men breaking away from error, in the Reformation time, and groping after the Truth, Satan presented himself "as an angel of light" and misguided our fathers into the formation of their various creeds. This is corroborated by St. Paul's words: "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the glorious light of the goodness of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord, should shine into their hearts" (2 Corinthians 4:4). The Adversary did not wish us to see with "the eyes of our hearts" the glorious character of our Creator, His love for mankind and His glorious provision for us. He wished, on the contrary, to blind us with prejudice, to turn us away from God and from the Bible. And surely His plan has been measurably successful.

Nevertheless, Satan has gained no real victory, he has in no way hindered the finding of the "elect." Rather, we may assume that these various, blinding influences and stumbling stones have but served to prove, to test the love, loyalty, faith and obedience of the "called and chosen and faithful."

If we have seen why the world is going pleasure-mad, and if we have seen the steps which should be taken to guide the well-intentioned into the ways of the Lord, let us not only be faithful ourselves to the Lord's way, but let us lift high the Royal Banner of our God and of our Savior, and "show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light."

THOSE WHOSE PRAYERS ARE HEARD

"Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."—MATT. 26:41.

WATCHING AND PRAYING are both necessary to escape entering into temptation. But first it is proper that we inquire who are addressed. Who are to watch? Who are to pray? Who are to escape entering into the temptation? We reply that this prescription is not given by the Great Physician to the world in general. True, our dear Redeemer called sinners everywhere and at all times to repentance, but He has no dealings with them until they respond to that call.

It were well if the entire world could realize our Lord's attitude toward them—that while not unsympathetic toward them in respect to their weaknesses and blemishes of the fall, He, nevertheless, has closed up all methods of reconciliation, all avenues of approach to Himself and His favor except one, namely, the door of repentance and faith.

Regenerate and Unregenerate Prayers

Manifestly there is not only justice but wisdom in this Divine arrangement. For the Lord to undertake to hear the prayers and to care for the unconsecrated would be to discount and to make void His own arrangement, which assures us that there is no other Name given under heaven and among men whereby we must be saved—whereby members of Adam's race, all sinners, may be reconciled to God and enjoy in any measure, here or hereafter, Divine favors—save the Name of Christ.

And not only has the Lord made gracious provision for the unjust as well as the justified during this Gospel Age, for the evil as well as for the good, but He has made general provision for all in His great plan, in that He has provided "a ransom for all," the great atonement for the sins of the world, and has assured us that in due time every member of the race shall enjoy a full privilege and opportunity of benefiting by that redemption, and, if they will, to come fully back to reconciliation with God, fully back to all that was lost in Eden, fully back to all that is meant by the words, "In the image and likeness of God created He him."

We see, then, that God's refusal in the present time to hear the prayers of the world in general is not through any evil sentiment or grudge that He bears against them, not through any narrowness or animosity, but because in His great and glorious Plan of salvation there are two parts. The first of these, belonging to the present time, the Gospel Age, is for the special class who can and will and do exercise faith in Him and seek to walk, not after the flesh, but after the spirit; and, second, a place for the world in general in the next Age in which all, however degraded, however lacking in

faith, however prone to sin, shall have the fullest assistance for their uplift and restoration to all that was lost, and more—greater knowledge, and, to those obedient under test, eternal perfection.

"Lord, Teach Us to Pray"

True, there is in the unregenerate at times a desire to pray to God—usually in times of distress or fear. This is a natural trait, the result of certain mental qualities in combination: First, veneration, and second, fear. But it is not the Divine purpose to encourage such a combination, but rather a combination of veneration, faith and conscience. For the natural man to approach the Lord in prayer, with the selfish motives and instincts of the old will, would mean that his prayers would be of a wrong kind, from the selfish standpoint.

Our Lord clearly marks out the kind of petition which His people will offer, the kind of petition which He will be pleased to entertain and surely grant and answer at some time. Describing this proper prayer He says: "If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:7.) Ah, yes! If the Lord's words abide in us it will imply our love for them, and diligent study to know the words of the Lord and the will of the Lord expressed in those words; and if we abide in Him it will mean that we abide loyal to His will, and are desirous of having His will done in us and not our own wills.

This will signify in turn that not only will the Lord's disciples abiding in Him be searching to know His will through His Word, but that they will be striving to apply that will and Word according to His guidance and direction—according to His will and not according to their own wills, according to the Spirit of the Truth and not according to the spirit of the world, according to the spirit of love and not according to the spirit of selfishness.

Prayers, Public and Private

Some may ask, Did not the publican pray, and was he not heard? Yes; but he prayed as a sinner and merely asked for Divine mercy, and his request implied his desire to escape from sin, his resolution

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to do so, and his desire for the Lord's assistance in this matter. Moreover, the publican belonged to the nation that God had accepted through faith, belonged to His adopted nation, Israel after the flesh, and to this publican, therefore, pertained the promises and blessings which up to that time had been extended by the Almighty to that one nation alone. For the publican to return to God was represented in the return of the prodigal son in the parable; the relationship was already there and he had merely disregarded it for a time.

What and Why We Watch

Let us now look at the other ingredient in this prescription which the Lord gave for our benefit and which so many of us have proven to be beyond price. If we pray, why should we watch? For what should we watch? On another occasion our Lord intimated that the reason, the necessity for watching as well as praying, lies in the fact that we have an Adversary, an invisible foe, who seeks to seduce us, turn us aside from our vows of consecration to the Lord and His way of righteousness.

Our Lord says that this Adversary is the Devil, and we understand that the Devil is not only a personal being, but that he has many minions or associates, the fallen angels, who kept not their first estate when on trial before the flood. (Jude 6.) Not only so, but Satan has millions of representatives and agents in the world—millions who are his agents without really being aware of the fact. According to our Lord's testimony on one occasion, we may understand that the whole world of mankind is divided into two hostile camps, the one a little flock, under the guidance and control of Jesus, their invisible Lord and Head, whose will they seek to do; the other the remainder of the world, who unwittingly are in the service of Satan because they are in the service of sin, and because, as the Apostle expressed it, "His servants you are to whom you render service."—Rom. 6:16

From this standpoint, with this view before our minds, how many agents our great Adversary has who unconsciously are working for him, working for sin, working against the Lord, and hence are the opponents of the few who have tasted of the grace of God, who have accepted the Divine conditions and who have consecrated themselves to walk in the footsteps of Jesus! No wonder we are urged to "watch" as well as to "pray," to watch against these various seductive influences of the Adversary, through the world and its spirit operating through social, financial and churchianity channels, to draw us away from that full consecration to the Lord and to the Truth to which we have already pledged our lives.

True, the Lord could answer our prayers by defending us from every adverse influence, by shielding us from every temptation, by making us immune to all manner of temptation. But for Him to do this would be to change His own plans, and hence He will not do it. And when we come to understand what the Divine plans are, and how the watching and resistance of sin are a necessity to our proper development as the Lord's people, we will no longer be expecting to be "carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease, while others fought to win the prize and sailed through bloody seas."

Our Lord's object in the special call of the Church during this Gospel Age is the development of a class of people into the character-likeness of His dear Son, our Redeemer. This means a condition of heart that will be in opposition to sin, that will have its special delight in opposing sin, that would die rather than yield to sin. We must remember, however, that we have this treasure of a new mind in earthen vessels, our mortal bodies (2 Cor. 4:7); we must remember that to will is present with us, but that the performance is another matter.

Everyone that is begotten again wills to do right, wills to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. But with all our willing we have difficulty in performing, because of the adverse conditions of our own flesh and because also of the adverse conditions of the world about us. So, then, the present life, with its praying and watching, is the Lord's time; in it He tests us respecting our faith and our obedience to Him and His principles.

If we realize the temptations about us and have faith we will surely appeal to the Lord for His promised assistance. We will surely not neglect the Throne of grace. If we do neglect it, it is a sign that we are lacking in faith, that we are in that respect not fit for the Kingdom, because all who are inheritors of the Kingdom must have faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith."—Heb. 11:6; 1 John 5:4.

The New Nature's Pickets

While our obedience cannot be perfect because we are still in the flesh, and because we have only the imperfect mortal bodies through which to act, never-

theless our efforts toward obedience must fully demonstrate the positiveness of our will for righteousness, must fully demonstrate that if we had perfect bodies there would be no question whatever respecting the perfection of our word, thought and deed. The realization, then, of our weaknesses and imperfections, and that the whole world and its spirit are adverse to the Lord and His Spirit and His Message, will lead the Lord's faithful people not only to appeal to Him, but also to watch against the snares of the Adversary.

They watch themselves not only by taking heed to the admonitions of the Lord's Word for the resistance of these temptations, but also they watch their own weaknesses, failures, shortcomings, that they may protect themselves along the lines of their weaknesses—that, as the Apostle says, they may make straight paths for their feet, lest that which is weak or lame be turned out of the way. They may be overtaken in a fault, because attacked from some new quarter; they may discover a weakness in their own natural makeup of which they had not previously been aware; but with these to discover their weakness will mean not only an appeal to the Lord for assistance at that point, but also energetic endeavors for defense against the inroads, the seductions, the snares of the Adversary.

The point known to be a weak one should be doubly picketed by the new mind, lest it should be overtaken unawares and should again meet defeat. To this class of true disciples, watching and praying, a temporary defeat at some point does not spell disaster, but rather renewed energy and a stronger character because of the setting up of defenses at the point found to be weak. Thus, throughout life, those who watch and pray are gradually making stronger their characters along every line of defense, and in thus building up character they are demonstrating to the Lord the transformation of their hearts, their minds, the sincerity of their vows, and their loyalty to the principles of righteousness set before them in His Word and in the glorious example of their Redeemer and Leader.

The Lord's Jewels

These eventually will constitute the Lord's jewels. At the beginning of their course their hearts were honest and loyal for righteousness, but character had not been developed. The trials, the difficulties, the contacts with the world, the flesh and the Adversary, all developed character by leading them to exercise faith, which manifests itself in prayer, and loyalty to righteousness, which manifests itself in watching against the various temptations and besetments to which they are exposed.

The latter part of our text is in full accord with the foregoing: "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." This does not apply to the world, but only to those who have accepted the Lord and turned their backs on sin.

We must surely expect that from every standpoint of opposition there will be more or less seductive allurements on the part of the flesh seeking gratification. Our safety is in watching and in praying, not that we can hope that by watching and praying we can fully escape temptations, but that holding fast to the Lord and being covered with the mantle of His love and mercy, these temptations will all be overruled for our good, developing us in heart and character in the likeness of our glorious Master and thus will fit and prepare us for participation in the first Resurrection, "His Resurrection." (Rom. 6:5; Phil. 3:10.)

By that glorious change all those who constitute the very elect will be made absolutely perfect, for they will there receive their perfect or spirit bodies, which will be in full harmony with the changed characters already attained by the Lord's grace through obedience to the Word and the watching and praying which He directs. For that glorious attainment we are to strive, and the method is to be through the watching and praying—the watching of the Word, the watching of our hearts, the watching against temptations, the prayer of faith and the exercise of faith in Him who loved us and bought us with His precious blood.

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FAITHFULNESS—THE GREAT CHARACTER TEST

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."—1 Pet. 1:7.

WE live in a day when Mammon, wealth, is almost worshiped. At its shrine time, talent, honor, principle, life itself are being sacrificed by thousands upon thousands. The Apostle wrote that "Charity covereth a multitude of sins," but in the judgment of the world to-day wealth will cover almost anything. On the other hand, it may be said that there never was a time when there was so much "muck raking," so much exposing of graft and grafters as now, and some point to this as an indication of a higher standard of morals than was ever before attained. Without stopping to discuss the question of general standards, we hold that it is a self-evident fact that the reason why so much "muck raking" is possible to-day is that the majority of humanity are grafters or would-be grafters to the extent of their ability.

While strenuously opposing those grafters through whom they suffer, the majority seem willing enough to profit by the graft whenever it comes within their reach. Truly and wisely the Apostle wrote that the love of money is a root of all evil, and never was money so plentiful as now, never were the masses so awake as to its value, and never were so many striving with might and main for what they denominate their "share of it"—perfectly willing to grasp a little more rather than a little less.

At a time when this spirit of Mammon worship and craze for wealth seems to be sweeping the whole world before it, it is well for the Lord's people to take notice that many things that are highly esteemed among men are an abomination in the sight of the Lord, and to thus instruct their own hearts, and, to the extent of their ability and opportunity, to extend the instruction to their children, relatives and neighbors. True, the world has not forgotten the Scriptural statement that "a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches," and hence there is a great endeavor to preserve the good name by outward manifestations of honesty where both heart and head are wrong and justice and love are wrested and twisted if not entirely ignored.

At such a time as this it is important for those who desire to maintain their favor with God to look well and carefully to the principles laid down in His Word and to be more vigilant than ever in conforming their lives thereto, realizing that there are trials and difficulties along this line such as were unknown to their forefathers in the more quiet times of old, when character had so much to do with a name and when wealth could not cover so great a multitude of sins as at present.

Faithfulness the Standard.

Faithfulness is the standard by which character is to be tested and determined, and this test applies not only to God's consecrated people, called in the Scriptures saints, but in large measure it applies to every man everywhere according to his light and opportunities. Nearly every parent can witness to the fact that children of to-day are less reliable, less faithful—have less character—than those of his childhood days. Nearly every employer of servants can witness to the fact that servants are less reliable than in years gone by—that they have less character, that wages and pleasure are their chief consideration; and since there is a great demand for service of every kind, principle, character, faithfulness, seem to have little weight in the minds of the employed.

Storekeepers can testify that the employes in whom they can place confidence for faithfulness to duty, watched or not watched—in whose honesty they can thoroughly rely, and in whose loyalty to principles of righteousness and honor they can have confidence—are much more scarce than formerly. While with some the secret of this loss of character is the love of money, with others it is a love of pleasure, of show, of dress, of amusement—"lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." With the present demand for the services of all healthy, intelligent people, there comes a test of character, of faithfulness to principle, unknown a short time ago when situations were more difficult to obtain. Even those who hold situations very frequently cannot be relied upon, but prove unfaithful, lacking in character, and when called to account content themselves with saying, "Cancel my engagement; I will find another situation."

Thus we see that present conditions are destructive of character—unfavorable to the cultivation of the principles of righteousness in the mind of the average man or woman, boy or girl. Parents cannot place as much reliance upon their children as formerly, nor children upon their parents; husbands upon their wives, nor wives upon their husbands; teachers upon their pupils, nor pupils upon their teachers; pastors cannot so thoroughly rely upon the character and principles of their congregations, nor can congregations so fully rely upon the fixed characters of their pastors. Every now and then they have the confession of some minister that he has long been preaching a creed which

he did not believe, and they have reason to doubt whether there be not other equal inconsistencies in these men and in others of the "cloth."

"Awake to Righteousness and Sin Not."

This appeal of the Apostle is especially appropriate to-day, and it should be the effort of all of us to lift up the proper standard of righteousness, not only in our teachings, but in all the acts and affairs of life—"Lift up a standard for the people."

This standard of character, as we have already remarked, is faithfulness. Every messenger of the Gospel should realize that he has taken an obligation, not only to God, but also to the congregation that he serves—to minister to them the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. How any can satisfy their consciences with less than this is difficult to understand, but the fact is borne in upon us from day to day by their public utterances, in which many of them seem to glory in their shame—in their confession of years of disloyalty to the Truth and to their confiding flocks. Such men should not be trusted in the future; not a word of theirs should be believed until they bring forth fruits in their lives, evidencing a thorough reformation—truth in the inward parts.

Every professed Christian should arouse himself to ascertain clearly, positively, what creed he has professed. He should re-examine it in the light of the Divine Word, and either reapprove and freshly avow it, if found to be true, or he should reject it and pronounce it no longer his, if found to be untrue. How can we have honesty or faithfulness in our dealings with our fellow-creatures or with ourselves if we are deficient in this quality in respect to the things of God—if we handle the Word of God deceitfully, and draw nigh to Him with our lips while our hearts are far from our professions, or while our minds reject them—how can we expect to have the Divine blessing and enlightenment?

As the Apostle says, "Lie not one to another, brethren"—neither falsely misrepresent the views and teachings of another, nor falsely misrepresent your own. Let us be thoroughly honest and, beginning with honesty in our religion, let us allow this quality of faithfulness to pervade all the avenues of life. As parents, with children, be honest, truthful, faithful to your trust, not shirking the same, but at the sacrifice of time and pleasure do your duty toward those to whom the laws of nature and the Word of God tell you you have responsibility—toward your offspring. As children, forget not your responsibility in the sight of God according to the laws of nature—"If any provide not for his own, specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel."—1 Tim. 5:8.

As employers, as teachers, as superintendents, let us appreciate more and more the responsibilities of life, the duties of life; let us develop character by attending to these duties—by faithfulness. As pupils, as employes, as servants, clerks, let us learn that there is a principle involved in even the slightest affairs of life; that whoever is obedient to these principles is making character, and whoever is neglecting them is undermining character. Loyalty to God must come first, but loyalty to obligations as pupils and servants must certainly be remembered and practiced if we would grow in character-development. Our Lord's words apply in all these cases most specifically: "He that is faithful in that which is least will be faithful also in much."

If we do not learn to be faithful and conscientious in respect to the small affairs of life we will not have the character which will make us faithful in the larger duties and responsibilities that may yet come to us in the present or in the future life.

"Called—Chosen—Faithful."

These are our Lord's words and in His own order. Faithfulness is placed as the finality, the culmination, the test. It is not sufficient that we have been called of the Lord; it is not sufficient that we have accepted that call and come under its terms and conditions, and thus have been accepted of the Lord as His chosen ones. It is necessary that beyond this we shall develop character, and, as the Apostle expresses it, become "copies of God's dear Son," ere we can be counted of the Lord as faithful. And without this character-development, faithfulness, we cannot hope to inherit the Kingdom. Faithfulness is thus made the test of the graduation of the Church from their present position and condition to the glorious station to which as the Bride of Christ they have been called, to be heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, their Lord, if so be that they suffer with Him that they may also be glorified together.—Rom. 8:17.

The suffering here referred to by the Apostle as necessary to the Church's share with Christ in the heavenly glory of the Messianic Kingdom is presented in the Scriptures from the two following

standpoints: (1) It represents our sacrifice, our participation with our Lord and Master in His sacrifice—suffering with Him. (2) This suffering is held out before us in the Scriptures as a necessary condition to the attainment of the Kingdom, because the suffering is attendant upon, or incidental to the trial of our faith.

This is referred to by the Apostle in our text when he declares that the trial of the faith of the saints is much more precious, much more carefully done than the trial of gold in the fiery furnace. He explains to us the reason why this should be so—because, although gold is one of the most precious metals, it is nevertheless a perishable thing; its value is comparatively unstable. It may have greater value at one time and less at another, and the Scriptures assure us that the time is coming when by reason of the change of Dispensation gold will have no such value as at the present time. Hence the Apostle contrasts it with the character of the Christian, whose value will increase, because, when the present testing time is ended, all the faithful, those who stand the trial, will be changed by the power of the Lord from earthly nature to heavenly nature, and become of inestimable value as inheritors of the exceeding great and precious promises and their reward, the divine nature.—2 Pet. 1:4.

"Gold Tried In the Furnace."

When we read in the Scriptures of the trial of our faith, the thought is that of trying out impurities, refining. This is shown by the illustration. Gold tried in the furnace is gold that is melted under the proper heat to separate the dross from the pure metal. This cannot be done without the heat, and yet if the heat were not regulated the effect would be the burning of the gold and its evaporation as gas. Hence in all furnaces where gold is tried or refined all the arrangements are very carefully made, and the refiner is a person of great skill, lest any of the precious metal should be destroyed, so that the proper purification may take place without destruction.

And this is the thought which the Lord everywhere holds out to those who are His consecrated people during this Gospel Age. He informs us that we have been accepted of Him through the merit of Christ; that our faith is counted to us for righteousness; that our good endeavors are counted as though they were the actual accomplishment of all that we strive to accomplish; that our unintentional weaknesses and frailties are all considered by the heavenly Metallurgist who has charge of the refining process.

The refiner of gold first ascertains what are the peculiar characteristics of the dross with which it is combined, and then he arranges such fluxes in his furnace as will best combine with those elements of dross in the ore, so that the heating process be not in vain. Thus it is with the Heavenly Refiner, who knows His people individually, particularly, and who so arranges for all those who have consecrated themselves to Him and who willingly abide in His care, that the difficulties and vicissitudes of life to which they shall be exposed shall be "fiery trials" so combined and regulated as to most easily dissolve and separate their dross—to the intent that when the trying or purifying process is complete they may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing—fully acceptable to the great Father of Lights.

Saints Forming Character.

We come now to the crux of our lesson. We have already seen how desirable it is that the world should form character, how great a loss it experiences if it fails so to do. We may well imagine and well remember, too, that every point of character lost by the world will be one that will need to be regained with labor in the life to come if they would attain at any time to Divine favor; and every point of character gained in the present life will be that much of an aid in the future life to their attainment of Divine favor under Christ's Kingdom. But now we notice the still more important testing which belongs to the Church—not the nominal church, but the real Church—those who have made a covenant with the Lord by sacrifice of time, talents, influence, life itself, to Him and to His service.

The refining process means, O, so much to these, because having been enlightened more than others, having tasted of the "heavenly gift," having been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, having come into this special relationship with God, there is a trial, a testing for either life or death! Should they not attain character that will be pleasing to God, and insure them a share in the heavenly condition, it will prove that they have "received the grace of God in vain."

Because of this relationship to the Lord they are in the furnace of trial at the present time. If they submit themselves willingly to the Lord, proportionately less of the fiery trials will be necessary to separate their dross; but if, unfaithful to their covenant of sacrifice, they cling to their sins and weaknesses and imperfections and fail to develop character it will require the stronger heat to release these impurities, and if still they are recalcitrant the still greater heat of the furnace will be applied, which, as the Apostle explains, would consume them as adversaries of God, adversaries of righteousness, adversaries of the principles for which God stands and for which they had

agreed to stand as His children and followers of His dear Son, their Lord and Redeemer.

"Think It Not Strange."

Those who have become the Lord's "peculiar people," by making a "covenant of sacrifice"—surrendering earthly interests and prospects for the heavenly—are admonished by the Apostle that they are specially in the school of Christ for the development of character, so as to constitute them "copies of God's dear Son" in their hearts, though they cannot come up to His likeness in the flesh because of their imperfections. Writing to such the Apostle Peter says, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that shall try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice; that when His glory shall be revealed ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."—1 Pet. 4:12, 13.

All of the "beloved" must have just such experiences of fiery trials. Indeed these trials are a mark or sign to them that they are the Lord's beloved. As the Apostle Paul declares, the heavenly Father "scourgeth every son whom He receiveth," all need such scourging or chastening for the development of their characters. All need thus to be tried with fiery trials so as to purge from them the dross of this world—self-reliance, worldly wisdom, earthly ambition, etc., to purify their faith in the Lord, in His promises, His power, His grace all sufficient. Instead of thinking these fiery trials strange we learn to consider them most reasonable and indispensable.

What Christian of experience has not found that some of the very best developments of his character have come through fiery trials? How else would he learn to exercise heavenly patience, forbearance, sympathy for others, love for the brethren, compassion for the world in its troubles and trials? How else than in the furnace of affliction have the Lord's people learned the great lessons of faith, humility and love? Nor is it for us to say when we have had a sufficiency of trial, when the fiery trials shall cease. It is for our faith to accept the Divine assurance that our Lord cares for our interests and "will not suffer us to be tempted, tried, above that we are able, but will in every trial provide a way of escape" from whatever portion of it would be too severe for us.

We may be sure when we come into touch with some Christian brother who manifests great faith in the Lord and in His Word, and great love for His cause and for the brethren that we have come in contact with one who has been in the fiery furnace, who has there learned of the Lord these valuable lessons, and that because of these experiences he has been able to "put on Christ"—to put on the spirit or disposition of the Master and to be more and more conformed to His likeness.

We see the reasonableness of the Divine arrangement and that it is not an arbitrary matter on the Lord's part, but a necessary arrangement for our benefit, to assist us in making our calling and election sure. When we hear the Master's voice saying, "Through much tribulation shall ye enter the Kingdom," it would cause us terror did we not know Him and did we not remember His assurances of His loving protection of our welfare—that He is the great Refiner who looks for His image in the molten metal and who skilfully withdraws it from the fire ere it be consumed, just in time to fully separate it from the dross.

Faithfulness—Character-Making.

Let us then renew our determination that our lives shall be marked by great increase in character-formation—that we will be faithful to our natural duties and responsibilities and also to our obligations and vows. Seeing that faithfulness is the character approved of God, let us resolve on its increase—that we will be more faithful as parents to our children and as children to our parents; as husbands to our wives, and as wives to our husbands; as employers to our employes and as employes to our employers. Above all, let us remember that the center of faithfulness is toward God.

And as for us who have consecrated our all upon the Lord's altar in harmony with the Apostle's injunction, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God and your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1), let us remember that we have an additional obligation to faithfulness—that our covenant of sacrifice implies still more than an avoidance of sin, that it means that we will seek opportunity to use our every faculty to show our appreciation of the prospect of becoming joint-heirs with His Son in the heavenly Kingdom. "Faithful is He who has called us, who also will do it," writes the Apostle, and the conditions are that we shall fulfil our covenant and be not only called and chosen, out also faithful. Let us not forget, either, the Master's words that he that is faithful in that which is least will be faithful also in that which is greater; that he who is unjust in that which is least will be unjust, unfaithful in that which is greater. With this in view let us not forget the little things of life and that the Lord is specially judging of our professions and heart desires by these rather than by the greater things.