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RELIGIOUS AND SCIENTIFIC GLEANINGS

DESERTS NO LONGER KNOWN.

How Modern Man Has Successfully Removed Nature's Obstacles.

Fulfilling Isaiah, 35th Chapter.

Nature has set up four kinds of barriers to man's conquest of the earth—mountains, forests, deserts and rivers. The first he cannot remove, so he bores holes through them for railways. The second he has, most unwisely, largely cleared away altogether. The third he is beginning to treat like the forests. The fourth he is shifting to suit his purposes and to regulate their flow at will.

Man flies now over all boundaries. He cuts through isthmuses to remove the barriers between the seas.

Into the deserts man sends railroads, telegraph lines, irrigation engineers. The "Great American Desert" marked upon the atlases of our fathers has ceased to exist. The vast "desert" of northwestern Canada has become a boundless prairie of waving wheat. The Landes of Gascony are now much more than half covered with pine trees. In 1902, 22,000 square miles of the Algerian desert had been made fruitful by artesian wells. The "Australian desert" is rapidly being irrigated and turned into grazing land. Almost 70,000 square miles of "desert" in India has been reclaimed. Sir William Willcocks is now engaged in reclaiming 19,000 square miles of the delta of the Tigris and Euphrates and more than 4,000 square miles of the Gezireh plain between the Blue and White Nile are being transformed into cotton plantations.

Thus is man, by obliterating natural barriers, improving upon nature.—*Exchange.*

THE SLANDERER.

The *Christian Leader* contained the following:

"Against slander there is no defense. It starts with a word—with a nod—with a shrug—with a look—with a smile. It is pestilence walking in darkness, spreading contagion far and wide which the most wary traveler cannot avoid; it is the heart-searching gagger of the dark assassin; it is the poisoned arrow whose wounds are incurable; it is the mortal sting of the deadly adder, murder its employment, innocence its prey, and ruin its sport.

"The man who breaks into my dwelling or meets me on the public road and robs me of my property does me an injury. He stops me on the way to wealth, strips me of my hard-earned savings, involves me in difficulty, and brings my family to penury and want. But he does me an injury that can be repaired. Industry and economy may again bring me into ease and affluence.

"The man who, coming at the midnight hour, fires my dwelling does me an injury. He burns my roof, my pillow, my raiment, my very shelter from the storm and tempest. But he does me an injury that can be repaired. The storm may indeed beat upon me, and chilling blast assail me, but charity will receive me into her dwelling; will give me food to eat and raiment to put on; will timely assist me, raising a new roof over the ashes of the old, and I shall again sit by my fireside, and taste the sweets of friendship and of home.

"But the man who circulates reports concerning my character; who exposes every act of my life which may be represented to my disadvantage; who goes first to this and then to that individual, tells them he is very tender of my reputation, enjoins upon them the strictest secrecy, and then fills their ears with hearsay and rumors, and, what is worse, leaves them to dwell upon the hints and suggestions of his own busy imagination—the man who thus 'filches from me my good name, does me an injury which neither industry nor charity nor time itself can repair."

THIEVES IN PARADISE.

Text:—"Verily, I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."—Luke 23:43.

THE theology which came down to us from the dark ages was wonderful in its extreme. It pictured Divine wrath as unsatisfied with anything short of an eternity of torture for the sinner, and in the next breath assured us of a Divine mercy which would take the vilest sinners to an eternity of glory without character development, merely at their request. One would suppose that neither of these doctrines could command support amongst reasoning, intelligent people, but they do; and the only explanation of the matter is that by reason of the fall the balance of human judgment, on moral questions particularly, is sadly undone. It is fair, however, to suppose that the majority of intelligent people have never so much as given these subjects consideration. Receiving them through the various creeds from childhood's hour, they have swallowed them without reflection, taught that to doubt them would bring the doubters under Divine displeasure, and make sure that Divine mercy should never reach them.

Bad Effect of Error.

It is difficult to measure the bad results which have flowed from the misinterpretation of our text. (1) The Divine character and Government have thereby been traduced and measurably brought into contempt as unphilosophical, unreasonable, arbitrary, instead of wise and just. Two vagabonds gambled and quarreled, drew their revolvers and shot each other. The more contemptible of the two killed his antagonist instantly, while he himself lingered in consciousness for a few minutes, during which he had opportunity to say, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" The creeds of Protestantism tell us that the one who used the magical words was instantly ushered into heavenly glory and companionship with the pure and holy throughout eternity. The other, we are told, though less vile, went instantly to eternal torture and despair, without a single ray of hope.

Is it any wonder that such unreasonable conclusions have driven many of the brighter minds of Protestantism into infidelity, and led others back to the teachings of the Church of Rome, which, to say the least, are more consistent, in that they would put both of the culprits into "Purgatory," where after centuries of torture and instruction in righteousness they might be prepared, either or both of them, for heavenly glory. We are not advocating either infidelity or Romanism; we are defending the Bible, but incidentally must admit that our Protestant views of some portions of Holy Writ have been very unsatisfactory and very baneful.

(2) Who can measure the evil effects of this doctrine upon thousands, leading them to believe that whatever their crime, a few magical words of repentance will straighten it all out? Can it be doubted that this wrong theory is accountable for much of the wickedness committed by those who know better, who reside in civilized lands? First of all they doubt the doctrine of eternal torment, being unable to imagine how any one could burn forever and yet not be destroyed. Secondly, if there be such a place of eternal torment, they reason, it is quite improbable that they will die so suddenly as not to have time to offer a petition for mercy—a petition which, if offered, will surely be heard and answered, and bring them safely to the regions of the blest.

The True Interpretation.

The further reasoning is, that while Heaven is certainly desirable, it is useless to seek it via the strait gate and narrow way and self-sacrificing experiences of Jesus and the Apostles and all the saints. The reasoning is, that these saintly ones may indeed occupy a higher position in Heaven than those who are saved after a life of sin and carelessness by a momentary prayer in the dying hour; but the philosophizing is, that the pleasures of sin for a season more than compensate for the higher glory of the saints, since even the sinners are to get to Paradise at the small cost of nine words—the supposed teaching of our text.

Before proceeding to discuss the prin-

ciples involved between the right and the wrong interpretation of our Lord's words, let us notice what He really did say and really did mean, and how it happened the true meaning was lost sight of and the erroneous one adopted generally. The Bible teaching that "the dead know not anything," together with the doctrine that the resurrection of the dead is the Divine provision, has long been lost sight of. Our Lord's own words that "No man hath ascended up to heaven" have been overlooked, and so has His teaching respecting His Kingdom—that the blessing of the Church and of the world awaits His second coming, when He will establish His Kingdom under the whole heavens in power and great glory. Losing sight of these truths has led directly to the acceptance of the general error respecting our text.

Let us begin the investigation by noting what the dying thief requested. He had heard his companion berating our Lord, saying, "If Thou be Messiah, save Thyself and us." He had sufficient character to realize the dishonesty of classifying our Lord with evil doers. He spoke up, reproving his companion; and then turned to Jesus, and, as a reward, asked, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom." He did not ask to be remembered in heaven, nor that day, but when our Lord, who was then being crucified, should attain to His Kingdom.

As the thief's request was a reasonable one, our Lord's answer was no less reasonable. He said, in the words of our text, "Verily (truly) I say unto thee today [this day of My agony and rejection by Israel, and crucifixion by the Roman soldiers; this day, when I seem to be an impostor and not at all the Messiah; nevertheless, truly I tell you today] thou shalt be with Me in Paradise. I do not tell you when you shall be with Me, nor have you even asked Me to tell you. You have asked to be remembered when I come into My Kingdom, when I shall have fully taken control of the Kingdom under the whole heavens, when the speedy result will be that the entire world will become a Paradise, and you have asked My assurance that you may be there, and I will remember you.

Punctuation Not Inspired.

It will be noticed that this different interpretation makes necessary the changing of the comma from before "today" to after it. We remark that the punctuation of our text was surely not inspired, for punctuation was not invented until centuries after our Bible was written! Our interpretation, with the comma after "today," makes this entire passage reasonable and harmonious—consistent with all the remainder of the Bible, and logical.

Further, be it remembered, that Jesus was not in Paradise on the day He died; nor has Paradise lost, yet been restored. Jesus was dead, and St. Peter declares He "arose from the dead on the third day." He then declared to Mary, "I have not yet ascended to My Father and to your Father, to My God and to your God."—John 20:17.

As a matter of fact, the other thief also will be in Paradise. All mankind, redeemed by our Lord's sacrifice, will have the privilege of the Millennial blessings. As we read, "All that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and come forth." The Church will come forth to the heavenly glory and condition, for which they have been prepared by the trials, the disciplines, the lessons, the chiselings, the polishings, of this present life. Theirs will be the instantaneous change, or resurrection, from earthly to heavenly conditions. Those of the spirit-begotten ones, all who wilfully walk after the flesh and not after the Spirit, having had their trial in the present life, will be accounted worthy of the Second Death. All the remainder of mankind, not having come to a knowledge of the Truth, not having incurred, therefore, the responsibility of this Age, will come forth during the Millennium, when Messiah's Kingdom shall be established and His rule of righteousness shall have brought the earth to the condition of Paradise. Both

of these thieves, and all other thieves and all other evil doers, "all of the heathen, all who have not in the present life come to a clear knowledge of the Truth, and sinned against light, against the Holy Spirit, will be there—there to be blessed, to be enlightened, to be brought to a knowledge of the Truth, and if they will, to be helped out of ignorance, superstition, sin, weaknesses—mental, moral and physical.

Not Luck, but Character.

The attaining of eternal life will not be a matter of luck, but a matter of character. It is true at the present time that chance, or luck, would seem to be associated with many of our affairs, except as we are able to view them in the light of Divine revelation. Some of us were fortunate to be better born than others—born of religious parents. Some are fortunate in being born in religious communities, and in a land of liberty and enlightenment. Some are unfortunate in being born in heathen lands, of heathen parentage, etc. But the Scriptures show that during this present time God is exercising His sovereign power in electing a special class of special characters, and assures us that a majority of these are being called from amongst the mixed peoples of Europe and America, and that proportionately few are being gathered from other nationalities.

If all of the non-elect were consigned to eternal torment, or even to Purgatory, a grave injustice would be chargeable against the Almighty Elector. But this is not the case. The Lord is no respecter of persons, but is taking out from the world of mankind, from every nation, those with suitable characters, those upon whom His Truth and Grace exercise a transforming influence. The non-elect, not worthy of a blessing amongst the faithful of the first class now being selected, pass at death to the tomb, to the prison-house of *sheol, hades*, where there is no wisdom, knowledge nor device, as the Scriptures declare (Ecclesiastes 9:10). Although unworthy of a share in the blessings now being dispensed, God's love and mercy pursue after these through Christ, and in their interest the Millennial Kingdom will be established. Under its domination Satan will be bound, every influence of evil will be restrained, and every good influence will be brought into activity, to the intent that all those at present non-elect, and unworthy of the present salvation, may be brought to a savable condition through the rewards and punishments (judgments) of the Millennial Age. The result of the purifying influences of that time upon the willing and obedient will be *full human perfection*, and the reward of everlasting life in Paradise restored—world-wide, under the whole heaven. The result to the unwilling who will resist God's grace and merciful provisions will be eternal death—extinction—the Second Death—Gehenna.—Revelation 20:14, 15.

Character a Prerequisite.

The Bible, in harmony with sanctified common sense, teaches that character is a prerequisite of Divine favor and eternal life. Whoever is called during this Gospel Age and fails to develop character, will fail to attain the reward of life eternal. Similarly, in the world's trial time, or Day of Judgment, the Millennial Age, character will be the test. All the influences of the great Kingdom of Messiah will be exercised with a view to the development of character, and only those properly exercised thereby will get the reward of *earthly life eternal*.

The question properly arises here, What kind of character will meet with the Divine approval and be granted the reward of life everlasting? We answer that God has but one standard, which is fully set forth in the Scriptures. The Law of God is the standard. That Law standard is, "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy being, with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself." As our Redeemer testified, on these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets; all the Divine blessings and promises and covenants are to those who develop the character here described.

World Actually Attains.

The poor, fettered race of humanity, "born in sin and shapen in iniquity"—in sin did their mothers conceive them—are "prone to sin as the sparks to fly" (Continued on page 2, column 2.)

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ILL DEEDS AND ILL WORDS.

Thinking lightly, one might suppose that ill deeds would reach further and strike deeper than ill words.

But it is not so.

An ill deed may only scratch the skin, while ill words sink their barbs to the very heart.

The serpent bites much more poisonously and incurably with its tongue than with its teeth.

Flesh wounds may pass unheeded and soon heal.

But rancor and venom imparted to the blood impair the very source of life itself.

The light and idle word has embittered more lives, wrecked more homes and excited angrier passions than has the bullet.

It is constantly the cause of the greatest heart burning, trouble, distress and despair to those innocent of wrong doing or wrong intent.

Jealousy, envy, malice are wilful murderers.

But the evil word, spoken without thought or intent, is a deadly blunderer that often strikes deeply and fatally in the back of a trusting friend.

There is nothing more detestable than deliberate slander that springs from envy and malice.

Yet, because it so often overreaches and because it usually bears an unmistakable brand upon its face, it does less harm than does mere carelessness of speaking.

Impertinence and curiosity, an itch of talking and meddling in the affairs of other men, a desire not to seem ignorant or what is going on among other people, continually impel the idle and thoughtless to let slip from their tongues poisoned words that their own judgment would not sanction were it consulted.

The shallow and vain and spiteful are incapable of estimating the injury that slander can do.

They know not the inestimable value of a good reputation, nor how delicate a thing it is and how easily injured.

Gossiping and the habit of detraction come largely from the desire to talk when the mind is empty, and the persons and things with which shallow persons are the best acquainted are neighbors and their doings.

But such gossipers, like the malicious kind, are usually recognizable at once and thus they lose their fangs.

It is the man or woman of standing and who ordinarily speaks carefully, but now and then inadvertently drops an unkindly word of another, who does most harm, for his utterance is taken as unquestioned fact.

It is he who has character and reputation of his own who should be most careful how he speaks of others.

—Springfield Record.

LIGHT AND HEAT IN BOTTLES.

Bottled light and heat for use anywhere, in any climate, at a minimum cost is now possible through a discovery of a method of liquefying natural gas by Dr. Walker A. Snelling, a government chemist.

The discovery paves the way for the commercial use of millions of cubic feet of natural gas which goes to waste in the petroleum fields of the country.

THE BLOOD-BOUGHT ROBE.

"The blood-bought robe I gladly wear,
'Tis one my neighbors, all, may share,
A robe so perfect, pure and white,
Its very folds reflect the light.

"'Twill also fit each form and size,
Such wondrous virtue in it lies;
Every deformity 'twill hide,
And deck the wearer like a bride.

"This robe cannot with gold be bought,
However much it may be sought,
Titles of earth, genius, or fame,
No share in it can ever claim.

"But those who, counting all but dross,
Bow low before the Saviour's cross,
Believing He will hear their cry,
And on His promises rely;

"Who claim no merit of their own,
Trusting in Jesus' name alone;
This robe will cover, comfort, bless,
For 'tis Christ's robe of Righteousness."

(Continued from page 1, column 4.)

upward." Steeped in degradation they will require years, if not centuries, of determined resistance of sin and cultivation of the principles of righteousness to develop in them absolutely the character required by the Divine Law—Love supreme for God and Love for the neighbor as for oneself.

During the Millennium the weaknesses and imperfections of the race will be conduced by the great Teacher, Christ and the Church—Jesus the Head and the Church His members. The more degraded the will, the more undermined the character, the more perverted the conscience and judgment, the more difficult will be the ascent of humanity from the horrible pit of sin and death, even with the assistance of the Redeemer. The less degraded the mind, the less perverted the conscience, the stronger the will for righteousness, the easier will be the ascent along the Highway of Holiness, of which it is written, "The redeemed shall walk thereon." (Isaiah 35:9.)

The laggards will receive the "stripes" of correction for their assistance; the zealous will receive the smiles and blessings of the great High Priest, the great Teacher and Mediator like unto Moses, of whom it is written, "And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear (obey) that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people" (Acts 3:23). All the reformation must be

made during the allotted time—the thousand years of Christ's reign. Sin must be put down—not only outward sin, but inward sin, even in the very thoughts and intents of the heart. Sin must be eradicated, even to the extent of the destruction of the wilful sinner.

If the thieves and liars and evil doers in general would realize that they are either making character or undermining character every day, what a helpful influence it would have upon the social and political and financial life of the world! The effect would be the very reverse of that which is now made by the false interpretation of our Lord's words to the thief, which we are seeking to correct.

If every pernicious word uttered were realized to be so much of an undermining influence, if every pernicious thought were similarly recognized, with what carefulness would mankind come to guard their thoughts and their words, as well as their deeds. They would attentively learn the great general lesson set forth in the Scriptures, and also in the book of nature, namely, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." Who shall say that there would not be less "sowing of wild oats" if all were assured that a proportionate crop would be unavoidably reaped, and that no mere prayer of repentance would constitute an "open sesame" to heavenly glory to the one who had lived a life deserving reprobation and punishment.

SIN ATONEMENT

Better Sacrifices than those of Bulls and Goats

"Without shedding of blood, there is no remission."—Hebrews 9:22.

What the Bible Teaches.

Now as the electric lights supplant the tallow dip, concordances and other Bible study helps assist us to a proper understanding of God's Revelation. One Scripture throws light upon another; and thus gradually the errors of gross darkness and superstition which prevailed so generally in "the dark ages" flee away, and the Lamp of Divine Truth gives forth a brilliant ray which fully satisfies our heads and hearts, and glorifies our Creator.

In the light of this newly-trimmed Arc-light of Truth, God's Word, we may now see that the real penalty for sin is not a coming eternal torment at the hands of fire-proof demons, but instead the reign of sin and death. Now we may see how disobedience on the part of Father Adam brought upon him a death sentence, a dying condition, and that these, transmitted from parent to child, have increased the calamity, century by century, until to-day, amongst the most civilized, one out of every one hundred and fifty adults is in an insane asylum—mentally dead to the extent that he is unable to care for himself.

Millions more of our race are in prisons and penitentiaries because of moral blemishes, because "born in sin and shapen in iniquity," they have inherited vices which have been accentuated by association with each other. All over the world, too, we have hospitals and infirmaries and cemeteries. The reason is exactly what the Word of God teaches, namely, "The wages of sin is death." "The soul that sinneth it shall die." The great disease of sin, started by our first parents in Eden, has spread as a plague amongst all their children, blemishing some specially in one particular and some in another, but corrupting the whole and bringing death to all.

Sin Atonement.

Our minds agree to the foregoing. We agree, too, that it is proper that the Almighty God should be a just God, that Justice should be "the foundation of His Throne," His Government. We inquire as to what is possible in the way of sin-atonement, by which original sin might be offset and Adam and all his race, who fell through disobedience, might be brought back to Divine favor and be made again holy and happy, as the angels, and recipients of Divine favors, including eternal life. The Scriptures answer this inquiry, telling us that we are right in feeling that we are sinners; that we are right in believing that Divine Justice must be met before reconciliation can be effected. But they tell us that God has moved first in this matter—that He did not wait for man to appeal to Him for mercy, but that, "while we were yet sinners," He sent His only begotten Son to be our Redeemer, to bring us back into harmony with God.

The Old Testament is full of assurances that God's mercy will ultimately be manifested to mankind through that Redeemer and through the nation of Israel, upon which He will confer the special privilege and honor of bearing the Truth to every other nation. The New Testament contains the record that when our Redeemer came, the world and His own nation knew Him not. It tells that, in crucifying the Redeemer, the people of Israel really fulfilled the Divine intention as foretold through the prophets: that they thus slew the great Sin-Offering, "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." And

as we learn how to bring the various testimonies of the Scriptures into harmony with each other, they tell us that the Redeemer, before blessing Israel, will accomplish another work not generally known—the gathering of Spiritual Israel. This the Apostle styles "The mystery of God."

The Restitution of All Things.

The result of sin-atonement and the return of man to God's favor does not mean a changing of men to spiritual beings, nor the giving to mankind of a heavenly Home, but rather Restitution. The Eden home first provided for Father Adam was Paradise, but it was lost by his disobedience. The proposition of the Scriptures is that the great Redeemer will restore Paradise and enlarge it, making it world-wide, the home for not only Adam, but his now multitudinous progeny of twenty thousand millions. The Scriptures abound with promises that Israel shall be re-gathered and restored to Divine favor and be made the instrumentality of the Lord in spreading the blessings to other nations. The Scriptures tell us how the paradisaical condition shall be brought about. They explain that the wilderness shall blossom as the rose and the solitary place be glad. St. Peter points us down to the Second Coming of Christ for the fulfillment of all these great restitution promises. He tells us that then will come to earth "times of refreshing." He assures us that "the Times of Restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began" will then find accomplishment.—Acts 3:19-21.

Better Sacrifices Than Those.

But now we inquire why this delay in bringing in the "times of refreshing," the "times of restitution." Why did not the great Redeemer begin at once to accomplish the work secured by His death at Calvary? How can He bear to delay, since He loved the world so that He died for all, and since He fully admits that the whole creation is in pain, waiting for the great deliverance made possible by His sacrifice (Romans 8:19-22)?

The Scriptures answer the question. They tell us that the gathering of the Elect Church during this Gospel Age as a feature of the Divine Program must precede the bringing of Restitution blessings to the world. They tell us that God has imposed special crucial tests upon those now called and chosen. Their invitation is to joint-heirship with Christ in a heavenly or spiritual nature, to a share with Him in the Millennial Kingdom and glory, and in the work which these will accomplish for the world.

The Scriptures tell us that those who will be accounted worthy of this exaltation to glory, honor and immortality, will first be required to prove their loyalty to the Lord to the extent of sacrifice. This does not mean a putting away of sin, for that would not be sacrifice. It does mean the laying down of earthly rights and privileges, after the manner and example of the Redeemer, who knew no sin. Believers are exhorted thus to sacrifice. The Apostle says to them, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, your reasonable service."—Romans 12:1.

Many Scriptures inform us that God has attached the glories of the future to the sufferings of the present and that "if we suffer with Christ we shall also reign with Him," and "if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him." Thus we see this entire Gospel Age is a period of sacrificing. Our Lord began the sacrificing, and in accepting believers as His members, it is on condition that they will be sanctified, separated from the world, and present their bodies living sacrifices.

Thus the saints throughout this Gospel Age have been suffering with their Lord and Head, and, as St. Paul declares, "filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." (Colossians 1:24.) The merit is in the sacrifice of their Lord, but He passes that merit through the believers of this Gospel Age, to the intent that they may share in the glories and honors of His Millennial Kingdom, which will be established as soon as the last member of "His Body" shall have finished the sufferings of the Christ.

St. Paul, after pointing out the typical sin-offerings under the Jewish arrangement, shows us that the sacrifices of Christ and the Church are the anti-types of these sin-offerings—offered year by year under the Jewish economy. These he styles the "better sacrifices than those."—Hebrews 9:23.

The Day of Atonement.

We recall the time of the year when our Hebrew fellow-citizens are accustomed to celebrate their great Day of Atonement. They celebrate it, however, in a meaningless manner. Those of them who are acquainted with the facts know that the whole procedure is a farce. In the confusion which God has permitted to come upon them they have no Priest. Since their rejection of Messiah their priestly records are lost, so that no Jew in the world can make claim to the position of High Priest or dare to perform

the functions of High Priest in connection with the Day of Atonement sacrifices. They have no Tabernacle or Temple, nor dare they erect one; for if one were consecrated, an unauthorized priest would risk his life in attempting to pass through the Second Veil.

As a consequence our Hebrew friends deserve our sympathy. The tenth day of the seventh month was their appointed Day of Atonement. By the sacrifices of that day, properly performed, reconciliation for their iniquities was made for the ensuing year, at the end of which they would again become unclean and need another Atonement Day. As the Apostle says, the arrangement God made for them for the forgiveness of sins was "year by year continually," and the yearly repetition indicated that the sins were not really cancelled, but merely covered for the year.

It is a part of Divine providence that our Hebrew friends have no Priest and that no sin-atonement sacrifice is possible. Now when the anniversary of the Day of Atonement comes they bemoan their sins and fast and pray; but they have no Priest to offer the bullock of a sin-offering and then to take its blood into the Holy and Most Holy and to sprinkle the same for the cleansing of the priestly tribe. They have no Priest to come later on and take the sin-offering of the goat and do with it as he did with that of the bullock, taking its blood into the Most Holy and sprinkling the Mercy Seat for all the other eleven tribes of Israel. The Priest does not come out of the Holies to bless them, as of yore, and to tell them that their sins are forgiven through the merit of the sacrificial blood.

No! After waiting the entire day, and knowing that they have no right to offer the blood, having no Priest, no Advocate, no Intercessor, no Sin-bearer, at the close of their Atonement Day they endeavor to be cheerful and happy and to suppose their sins forgiven; or, rather, they endeavor to forget all about the matter in worldliness.

The Antitype of This.

Would that all our Hebrew friends, as well as all Christians, could understand the true antitype of that great Day of Atonement, which the Jews celebrated annually in a typical manner. Its antitype is this Gospel Age. At the beginning of this antitypical Atonement Day our Lord Jesus offered up Himself—the Antitype of the bullock. (Leviticus 16.) When He "ascended up on high," He applied the merit of the Sacrifice to the antitypical Levitical tribe—the Household of Faith of this Gospel Age, for the Royal Priesthood. Since Pentecost the second part of the Day of Atonement sacrifices has been in process. "The Lord's goat," antityped by the Church, has been in process of sacrifice. The great High Priest has been accepting consecrated believers as members of His Body and has been overseeing their sacrificial sufferings. "Now is the acceptable time" for such sacrificing.

This procedure has gone on for now nearly nineteen centuries and, according to our understanding of the Scriptures, is nearly complete. Soon the last "member of the Body of Christ" will have suffered with his Lord and Head. Soon the blood of this secondary sacrifice will be sprinkled in the Most Holy on the Mercy Seat—the blood of the members of Christ. Jesus' blood passed through them. Soon the acceptance of it as the pardon-price "for the sins of the whole world" will be acknowledged by the Father. Soon the great High Priest, Head and members, will come forth, clothed in the glory, honor, dignity and power represented in the garments of the typical high priest of Israel, and will bless the world. Soon will come the time for the lifting of the hands of the Priest, the display of His power. Soon as a result the blessing will fall upon all of the people—upon natural Israel first. Soon will shouts of rejoicing arise from the people as conditions of sorrow and pain shall pass away, giving place to praise, as men shall seek to glorify God and to lift up holy hands in His service.

CLOTHING TO KEEP WEARER AFLOAT.

"A remarkable demonstration was given recently near Berlin of a new fabric designed to make clothing so buoyant that it will keep its wearer afloat in the water. The composition of the invention which brings about this result is a well-guarded secret. To don a garment lined with it is to become unsinkable.

"On the occasion mentioned, infantrymen, in full marching kit, clad in uniforms lined with the material, which rendered the clothing neither heavier nor thicker than usual, threw themselves into the water, and not only did not sink, but were able to 'march' in the water and to fire. At the same time, coffee was served to a party in the water, waiter and guests being clad in the special fabric.

"It is reported that recently the inventor, wearing his suit, jumped into the water before the Kaiser's steamer to demonstrate the value of his device, and that the police arrested him for impropriety."

—Exchange.

Flies in the Ointment

"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."—Mark 16:15, 16.

THERE is wisdom in the Proverb which says that dead flies cause precious ointment to stink. This is particularly true in respect to the Bible. It is a precious ointment of sweet odor, but certain "flies" have gotten into it whose corruption have destroyed the perfume of the Divine records in the estimation of many—an intelligent and growing number. Some of these "dead flies" were mistranslations; some of them misinterpretations, and some of them, including the text, were interpolations—unauthorized additions to the Scriptures as originally written.

Many Use Spurious Texts.

All of the sixteenth chapter of Mark, from the ninth verse to the end, is now well known to all scholars as an addition made to what St. Mark wrote. It has been known for years to all Bible scholars that the two oldest Greek manuscripts known to the world end the Book of Mark with the preceding verse (8). And these two oldest manuscripts belong to the Fourth Century. Evidently, therefore, this addition to the Scriptures was made about four hundred years after St. Mark's death.

Why the ministers of Christendom fail to inform the Christian public of what they all know or should know we do not here pretend to say. Why many of them use these spurious verses as texts to sermons without explaining that they are spurious is not for us to judge. We would say, however, that some use these verses because they suit their theories as no other verses in the Bible would do.

Some zealous Christians use this text as a club upon other Christians, claiming that if they are not baptized with water they will surely be damned, millions of them even claiming that it must be by an immersion in water. And by "damned" they mean eternally, everlastingly tormented by fire-proof devils! They go further and make this spurious addition to God's Word the basis of the theory that the Church is responsible for the Christianization of the world, and that every heathen who does not believe and who is not baptized—some say, immersed—will be damned to eternal torture for his unbelief and lack of baptism. Thus this spurious statement dishonors God, antagonizes all sensible minds, and makes narrower and harder those who can and do believe.

Ability to Drink Poison.

Many Christian people have their faith shaken in respect to their own relationship to God because of the statements following this text—to the effect that all believers would have the power to cast out devils, to speak with new tongues, to handle serpents without injury, to drink deadly poison without injury, and to lay hands on the sick and cause recovery. Many worldly-minded people, reading these statements, declare them to be "buncombe," or else that the Church of Christ has lost a power which it should still possess. And yet intelligent ministers quote these spurious words instead of informing the people that they are no part of God's Message and that they are not true.

The Scriptures do teach that miracles of tongues, healings, etc., were permitted in the days of the Apostles for the purpose of establishing the infant Church. But it is true that such powers were communicated, according to the Scriptures, by the laying on of the Apostles' hands; and hence, as soon as the Apostles were dead and those upon whom they had laid their hands, and consecutively those who had received the Apostolic blessing and gifts of the Holy Spirit were dead, all those miracles and healings naturally ceased, as St. Paul foretold.—1 Corinthians 13:8.

"Let Him That Hath an Ear Hear" the Good News.

While the Gospel is to be preached in every nation, it is not with a view to converting all of mankind, but, as many Scriptures show, as a witness to the world and for the selection from among the world of a "little flock" of saints—"called, chosen and faithful"—to constitute Messiah's associates in His Mediatorial Kingdom, which shortly is to bless humanity with glorious opportunities of knowledge and uplifting influences, which will restore the willing and obedient to full harmony with God, full release from sin and death, sorrow and pain, to life eternal as perfect men in a world-wide "Paradise restored."

The object and purpose of the Gospel everywhere—not to the Jew only, but to every people—can be easily demonstrated to all having faith in God. To claim that God intended the Gospel to convert the world, and to know that it has not done so, is to destroy faith in God and to destroy hope in respect to any glorious outcome to the Divine Plan of Salvation; for those who claim that God intended the preaching of the Gospel to accomplish the world's conversion must admit that

it has accomplished no such purpose, and if God's Plan has been a failure for eighteen centuries what hope could any one have that it ever would be a success?

On the contrary, however, the Scriptures declare that the purpose and object of the Gospel is to gather out an "elect" or select class from amongst humanity—to test and approve this "little flock" as to their willingness to follow in the footsteps of their Redeemer, and to glorify these by the power of the "First Resurrection" in the end of this Age, when the foreordained number shall have been selected. This, the proper view of the Gospel of Christ, is fully upheld and substantiated as true by the history of eighteen centuries. Thus we are seeing fulfilled the Divine Message through the Prophet, "My Word shall not return unto Me void. It shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." It is sent to gather the elect and it will accomplish the Divine intention.

When Sin and Death Will Cease.

After the Gospel Message shall have selected the saints, and after God shall have glorified them as joint-heirs with Christ in His Kingdom, a totally different salvation will begin and operate along quite different lines! No longer will matters be left to the stammering tongues and to the dull and deaf ears and blinded eyes of the understanding! No longer will sin and death reign! No longer will darkness, ignorance and superstition cover the earth! On the contrary, then the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His beams. The whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God. The King shall reign in righteousness on the spirit plane and His Princes in all the earth.

END OF THE AGE A PERILOUS TIME

"In the last days perilous times shall come; men shall be traitors, heady, . . . lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."—2 Tim. 3:4.

THE expression, "the last days," refers, not to the end of the world as many expect this event, but is a Scriptural designation of the present time, the end of this Age, when the Reign of Righteousness is about to begin. "The Harvest is the end of the Age." (Matthew 13:39.—Diaglott.) The warning given by the Apostle is that, instead of the world's being converted to God at this time, the reverse condition will prevail. It will be a time of great peril for those who have started out to follow Christ. It will not be so perilous a time for the world.

The only ones who are on trial for life or death are those who have been released from the Adamic condemnation. To these the time described by St. Paul will be one of severe testing. The whole course of the world will be turned aside from the high standard that might have been expected. Men will be traitors. Only as long as it will be of advantage to them to perform a contract will they do so. It will be a time when every man's hand will be lifted against his neighbor. Selfishness will be rampant. There will be manifest headiness and self-conceit. Men will be "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." This condition is to be a sign of the end of the Age.

Prevalence of These Conditions.

Every thoughtful person must perceive that this condition of things is prevailing now. Whenever a contract is found to be unsatisfactory—whether it be a marriage contract or a business contract—the dissatisfied contractor is liable to break the agreement. This party to the contract then assumes the attitude of one who declares, "Force me to keep it if you can." The Lord's people will be firm for principle and true to their contracts, even when these prove disadvantageous. This attitude is pleasing to the Lord.

We find headiness of spirit in the world everywhere—a loss of respect for authority. No doubt there has been too much respect for authority in the past. Now there is none. This condition has been brought about by a lack of reverence for God—the inevitable result of loss of faith in the Bible as the Word of God. As people lose faith in the Bible, they lose faith in God, and become more selfish and more self-willed. This condition of affairs has been brought about by false doctrine. People think that God is purposing to do them harm.

The Higher Critics have been seeking to put away what they consider the absurdities of religious thought, and to this end have done away with the Bible. Bible students see that the absurdities have been brought about by the creeds and not by the Bible. But the world, losing confidence in God, are becoming more heady than ever before. Even the

SWIFT-WINGED PUNISHMENT.

"When the Judgments of the Lord Are Abroad in the Earth."

"It was always terribly dangerous to commit a crime. 'Be sure your sin will find you out' is a saying more than three thousand years old. The truth it expresses is as old as the human race, as old as Cain and Eve.

"But to-day, with all the resources of modern science trained upon wrong-doers, the ways of the transgressor are doubly hard. For example, here is a newspaper clipping telling how, down in Florida, two of the most recent marvels of science combined to bring a fugitive to justice. He was a hotel employee who had stolen some jewelry and had escaped with his spoil on board a boat. The boat got out to sea before the loss was discovered, and the presence of the thief on board was known. At once the hotel authorities, by means of the wireless telegraph, communicated with the ship's captain, made sure that the thief was on board, and learned that the boat was detained off Cape Florida by low tide. Then the pilot of a Curtiss flying-boat was called in, set off in the air in spite of a rain-storm, and dropped down in the sea alongside the boat in less than half an hour. A detective was on the hydro-aeroplane. He quickly made his arrest and flew back to the hotel with his prisoner, the entire flight occupying less than an hour.

"With the empty air whispering his secret, and with pursuers dropping down upon him out of the clouds, the wrong-doer of to-day is certainly hard pressed."

"Let us rejoice in it all. Let us continue to make it as difficult as possible to do wrong and as easy as possible to do right. Machinery will never make character, however; and, though all the mysteries of the physical world are laid bare, it still will remain true that 'out of the heart are the issues of life.'"

—The Christian Endeavor World.

reverential fear which once held them in departing, and there is a disposition to doubt everything. People are in the condition of mind where they say, "Let us eat, drink and be merry"; nobody knows about the future; the preachers are all confused. Everything has come about by evolutionary processes. Let us enjoy the present. Let pleasure be our aim in life. This would seem to be the attitude of the world. They are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

These conditions of our day make it a perilous time for the Church. Do you ask, Would not the Church, on the contrary, be more than ever led to love God? And would this not guard them and keep them from danger? We answer that some of God's people are becoming more and more immersed in the world. The spirit of the world surges all around them. With great difficulty could these come to realize that the whole world is astray in their ideas and ways. The tendency of all such is to have the mind of the world, even though they be spirit-begotten.

This worldly spirit, the Apostle suggests, will affect the Church to some extent. Consequently some of the Lord's people will thus come into special peril at this time, because of neglecting their Covenant with the Lord. Others will watch and pray, and, for this reason, develop in mind and heart. But these are few.

The Great Company class, while still loving the Lord, are becoming immersed in the spirit of the world. Even those who are living nearest to the Divine standard will be more or less imperiled through this spirit, unless they continue diligent in prayer and the study of God's Word. What we see going on about us seems natural to our minds. The way in which other people spend time and money is a temptation to the Lord's people which must be steadfastly resisted.

The Subtle Test.

The Lord's people spend and are being spent in His service, according to opportunity. They are living lives of consecration. The world now has an eight-hour day. The Lord's faithful people would, on the contrary, make theirs a sixteen-hour day. But all these present-day conditions constitute perils. For us to devote to the Lord's service only what the world considers a reasonable day's work, would not be fulfilling our Covenant. Those who seek merely to do right will obtain a place in the Great Company.

But the Little Flock will serve the Lord with such delight that they will scarcely know how to cease their efforts. They recognize that their bodies are fully consecrated to the Lord, and they are daily putting them to death. In view of these perilous times, let each ask himself, *To which class do I belong?*

Pictures of the Kingdom

"The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."—Rom. 14:17.

LET us keep in memory that the Master's parables of the Kingdom of Heaven relate to the class of people whom he is calling out of the world of mankind to be associated with him in his Mediatorial Kingdom soon to be inaugurated. Let us remember that sometimes this class is spoken of as including, nominally, not merely the saintly, the wheat class, but also, to some extent, the tares, as shown in our study of last week. These different parable-pictures represent the same subject from different standpoints, just as we take a photograph of a building from the north, the south, the east and the west, internally and externally.

Like a Grain of Mustard Seed

As a mustard seed is very small, yet produces a large bush, so that the fowls of the air may lodge in its branches, so this illustrates how the Gospel of the Kingdom would, from a small beginning, attain to a considerable size. Its size would not be great among the trees, but great among bushes or herbage. Thus the message of Christ received at first only by the poor and the few of Israel, has finally grown to such important dimensions that the fowls like to gather in its branches. But let us remember that the fowls, according to our Lord's interpretation of a previous parable, represent the servants of the Wicked One.

So then the teaching of this parable would lead us to conclude that the Church of Christ, at one time, was so unimportant in the world that it was a shame and a dishonor to belong to it, but that ultimately it would become honorable and great and the Adversary's servants would have pleasure in its shade. This development the Scriptures represent as being Babylon, declaring that, as a whole, with the various branches and denominations, the nominal Church of Christ is Babylonish. Hearken to the Lord's words: "She has become the hold of every foul spirit and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird." (Rev. 18:2.) The intimation is that there is a large outward development of the Church which is not to her advantage and glory but contrariwise. Nevertheless, this is, nominally, the Church of Christ. However his spirit may have been misrepresented and there may have been an improper development, ultimately the great Head of the Church will bring order out of chaos and confusion and will glorify and use his "elect."

"Leaven Hidden in the Meal"

The parable of the "leaven" (V. 33) illustrates the process by which, as foretold, the Church would get into the wrong condition. As a woman would take her batch of flour for baking and put leaven (yeast) in it and the result would be that the mass would become leavened, so it would be with the Church of Christ; the food of the entire household would become leavened or corrupted. Every portion would become more or less vitiated with the leaven of false doctrines which would permeate the entire mass. Thus today nearly every doctrine inculcated by Jesus and his Apostles has become more or less perverted or twisted by the errors of the dark ages.

Treasure Hid in a Field

The desirability of obtaining joint-heirship with Christ in his Messianic Kingdom, is pictured in the parable of "the treasure hidden in the field." The finder, realizing its value, desired it for himself and had such faith in it that he disposed of all his property in order to buy that field, which he believed to contain the precious treasure. Only those who will appreciate the Gospel message will gain its glorious promises. If we love the present life with its joys and prospects, its hopes and ambitions, then we will labor for these, but if we intelligently hear and, by faith, believe the Gospel offer of this age of a share with Christ in his Mediatorial Kingdom, then in proportion to our faith and appreciation will be our self-sacrificing zeal to attain that prize. Whoever believes the message of the Kingdom will find his faith an inspiration, indeed a necessary inspiration, to the attainment of the prize, for it will cost all that he has of earthly blessings; and unless he has faith that

he will find the prize, he will surely be unwilling to sacrifice all he has for it.

The field belongs to God. He has put the treasure there. He offers it for sale to any willing to pay the price. The buyer is the Lord and those who accept his invitation to join with him in the sacrifice of their earthly interests that they may be sharers with him in his heavenly glories—in the work of the Age to come, to unearth all that treasure in the blessing of the world of mankind. The hiding of the treasure is necessary; as our Lord said, "Cast not your pearls before swine"; they will not understand you, they will think you foolish, and in their disappointment may do you injury. "Hast thou faith, have it to thyself before God." Make your sacrifice of earthly things to him and he who seeth in secret will reward you openly.

The Pearl of Great Value

Pearls were much more in vogue in ancient times than now. Pearl buyers traded in these gems and carried them to market, where they were highly estimated. The parable represents one of these pearl merchants as coming across the finest pearl he had ever seen. He considered it so priceless that he was quite rejoiced to sell or trade all of his other pearls and property that he might become the owner of that pearl.

This parable represents the Gospel offer of a share with Christ in his Kingdom as being superior to all other propositions of the world. The honor of the world, of name and fame, position and wealth, are indeed desirable; as the Scriptures say, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches"; but when our eyes behold "the pearl of great price," the Kingdom offer of joint-heirship with our Lord Jesus in his heavenly glory and the association with him in his work of blessing all the families of the earth, we realize that this is a priceless thing, worth more by far than all the honors and dignities and pleasures of the world.

Those worthy to buy this pearl will gladly exchange all earthly things therefor—even their good name, and this will be necessary, as the Master forewarned them, saying, "they shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake; rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets who were before you" (Matt. 5:11, 12). He that is not willing to have the Kingdom at such a cost is not worthy of the Kingdom. The Apostle said, "Through much tribulation must we enter the Kingdom" (Acts 14:22); and only those who willingly endure such tribulations for righteousness' sake—for the sake of the truth, in obedience to the Heavenly calling—are overcomers.

The Net Gathered of Every Kind

Another parable of the Kingdom represents the gospel message as a "net." Only one kind of fish is desired, but the net gathers every kind. Not every kind will inherit the Kingdom as joint-heirs with Christ Jesus, hence the end of this age will be a sifting, separating time, as represented in the parable. The desirable fish will be gathered into vessels, the remainder will be cast back into the sea as unfit for the Kingdom, but not necessarily unfit for any purpose. During Christ's Mediatorial reign that class unfit for the Kingdom will be dealt with and blessed and, if possible, made useful and fit for eternal life.

Here, as in the parable of the wheat and the tares, the furnace of fire, and the weeping and gnashing of teeth in connection therewith, symbolizes the great time of trouble with which this age will end, giving place to the Mediatorial Kingdom, the Kingdom for the establishment of which upon the earth the Church has been praying so unceasingly for nineteen centuries, "Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven." What a Kingdom that will be! It will be a Kingdom entrusted to a "Little Flock"—"Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom"—and it will be fully empowered to establish the rule of heaven among mankind!

Without a Parable He Spake Not

"The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."—John 6:63.

WITHOUT a parable spake he not unto the people." What the Prophet had declared of him was true, "He shall open his mouth in parables and dark sayings." It is important that we remember this. Many noble Christian people have inferred that our Lord's words were all simple, and that they presented the truth in a manner easily understood by everybody. Nothing is further from the truth. If our Lord's parables and dark sayings be taken as plain, literal statements of truth, they will lead to all kinds of errors and misapprehensions. Let us remember, therefore, the Apostle's declaration, "Without a parable spake he not unto the people."

There is absolutely nothing in the words of Jesus without a deep significance. How many have stumbled over our Lord's parables by taking them to be literal statements of facts! How absurd the conclusion drawn from the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, for instance! How absurd to conclude that simply because a man was rich, fared sumptuously every day, and was garbed in fine linen, that he must suffer through all eternity! How equally absurd to interpret the poor man Lazarus, who lay at the rich man's gate, as representing, literally, poor and diseased beggars! How unreasonable to think that only such as have had an experience of this kind, with dogs to lick their sores, and hungering for the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table, would experience the joys of heaven, according to the Divine program! How foolish to think of Abraham's bosom, which could hold only two or three, as being the portion of blessing for all who would be saved.

A Parable Never the Thing Meant

Note afresh the parable of the wheat and the tares, the gathering of the former into the garner and the burning of the latter. Neither represents literal experiences. In the parable the wheat is not literal wheat, the tares are not tares. The wheat symbolizes the inheritors of the Kingdom; the tares symbolize the offspring of error—children of the Wicked One. The gathering into the barn of safety symbolizes the glorification of the Church on the spirit plane, and precedes the shining forth of the sons of God in the glory of the Messianic Kingdom, for the blessing of the groaning creation; as the Apostle declares, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God." The whole creation is waiting for the shining forth of the sons of God in the Kingdom, and their shining forth in truth and righteousness will scatter all the darkness of sin and error and awaken and revivify the world of mankind.

Eventually all the willingly obedient may enjoy the blessings of eternal life. On the other hand, the description of the burning of the tares, instead of referring to a literal burning, has, evidently, a symbolic significance; it means the destruction of the tare class—not their destruction as individuals, but as "tares," as imitations of the "wheat" class.

The parable of "the sheep and the goats," taken literally, has caused confusion to many. They think of the separation of the sheep and the goats as now in progress, failing to notice the Scriptural declaration that the parable shall find its application "when the Son of man shall come in his glory and all his holy angels (messengers) with him. Then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another as the shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."

We thus see that the application of the parable belongs to the Age to come. All through that age the work of Christ and the Church, his Bride, seated with him upon his throne, will be a work of blessing to the world of mankind. And the manner in which those blessings will be received will demonstrate the sheep-like or goat-like character of every individual of the human family. The sheep-like will come to the right hand position of favor, the goat-like to the left hand position of disfavor. The conclusion of the thousand-year Judgment day will bring the

expression of the Lord's favor towards the sheep-like, rewarding them with eternal life, and the expression of his disfavor towards the goat-like, destroying them in the "second death." This is symbolically represented by the statement, "Depart ye cursed into the lasting fire (a figure of destruction) prepared for Satan and his messengers (followers)." The reward of the righteous will thus be everlasting life. The "everlasting punishment" of the unrighteous will be everlasting death, for the "wages of sin is death and the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."—Rom. 6:23.

"I Thank Thee, Father"

Evidently some wise and gracious purpose stands connected with the hiding or secreting at present of the Divine purpose from mankind in general. While the Scriptures declare it is a mark of special favor to the Lord's people that they are made acquainted with the Divine Purposes, yet nowhere do they declare that all those from whom God's plans are secreted are doomed to eternal torture, or to everlasting destruction. Thus our Lord Jesus prayed: "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

Had the hiding of the Divine counsel from mankind signified eternal torture for those from whom it was hidden, there surely would have been no ground for thanking the heavenly Father for this act. We can thank him, however, that although many of the worldly wise are not privileged to know of his glorious plans, nevertheless those plans are sure. For the world to have known of the Divine purposes in advance would doubtless have been injurious, because in their blindness they would have attempted to thwart these purposes and therefore would have gotten themselves into a worse condition of condemnation.

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