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God Commendeth His Love.

“God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

HOW many there are in Christian lands who have no proper idea of God or real faith in the message of the Bible. Even yet in this day of enlightenment the general conception of God is that He is terrible, austere, vengeful, and seeking occasion to condemn. How different is the Bible view of Jehovah, the one true God, whose nature is love, who is perfect in wisdom, exact all righteousness—justice—and all powerful. He is able to do all His good pleasure—”There is nothing too hard for Him.” “With God all things are possible.”

How we rejoice to find that the almighty God is kind and good. Life would indeed be unbearable if He were cruel and vengeful; if He took any pleasure in causing suffering, life would be a calamity instead of a privilege and pleasure. But Jesus Christ manifested the character of God so perfectly that He could say, “he who hath seen Me hath seen the Father also” (John 14:9); and Jesus is the noblest, truest, kindest, and, while firm for righteousness, the most merciful character that humanity has ever known. With such a character as an example of the disposition of the Heavenly Father, we surely agree with the Apostle John, when he declared, “God is love.” It is a beautiful thought expressed by the Psalmist when he speaks of the Lord as looking down from heaven to see who there is that may be feeling after Him. “The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand and seek God” (Psalm 14:2).

How numerous are the teachings in the Christian world that have grossly misrepresented God. Probably many of the Lord’s people have been painfully misunderstood and slandered, but none can have been more misrepresented than the great Creator. How many have taught that God, instead of looking down in mercy, was just watching to see every mistake, and to punish the sinner. The teaching has been that God was going to give eternal life to the wicked, in order that they might suffer eternally, and that all the millions of men and women who have died without ever having heard about the way of salvation were forever lost.

The Bible, however, tells us of a God of love, “who is the saviour of all men, especially of those that believe” (1 Tim. 2:3-6, 1 Tim. 4:10), and that He appeals to men to consider how much He has done for them—He recommends His love to us. “God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). How beautiful it is to think of the great God, “the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; dwelling in the high and holy place with Him that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isaiah 57:15). So the Bible represents the Lord as looking clown upon this sinful world, with a longing heart, commending to us His love that we should think about it, for God has given us reasoning ability and says, “Come, let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow, though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:18).

The Word of God is full of such expressions of love. What a beautiful picture of the Heavenly Father Christ gave in the father of the Prodigal Son. The parable recorded in Luke 15 is familiar to all. The son had requested and gone off with his portion of the inheritance and wasted it all in sin and folly. Then in miserable want he became repentant and returned to his home, The father could justly have said, I have given you all there was coming to you; you have taken your own wilful course and must accept the consequences and make the best you can out of the position. Possibly he might have allowed him, as requested, to be a servant instead of a son. How differently did the father act. How at once, on hearing of his coming, he went to meet him and received him with great rejoicing. -He clothed him in the best robe, put a ring on his finger, and killed the fatted calf for the feast (Luke 15:20-23). It is just so with God, He "so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever 'believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.'" "He willeth not the death of the sinner." "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die" (Ezekiel 18:23).

Some one may say, "Did not God arrange that the wages of sin is death, that the soul that sinneth it shall die?" Yes, indeed, (God is righteous and just, and yet His justice is in accord with His love. It is easy to see that it would not only be unjust, but unkind, to allow the wilful sinner to continue to live forever. There is no happiness in sin. The "pleasures of sin" are but fleeting, and consist mostly in excitement and sensations only for a short time, which leave the mind and heart dissatisfied, the physical health impaired, and often in a wretched and pitiable condition. The wicked could never be happy themselves, nor could the happiness of the righteous be complete while sinful conditions existed about them. For the wicked to be allowed to live forever would mean a blot on the great Creator's work. It would mar the beauty of earth as the home of mankind.

God is righteous—just—and it is wise and just and kind that all who so love wickedness, after having the full opportunity of being assisted up the high way of Holiness, as to knowingly and wilfully refuse to obey God's righteous laws, should die and be as though they had not been.

The Divine purpose is that the earth shall be filled with a perfect human race, everyone able to reason, and to appreciate the principles of righteousness, and having a sincere reverence towards God and love for all His creatures. All will have perfectly free wills, which, controlled by hearts and minds loyal to God and the beauties of His arrangements, will 'always be exercised along proper lines in accord with wisdom, justice and love.

The Apostle in Hebrew 2, recognising the wonderful purpose of God, says, "We see not yet all things brought under Him (Christ)." No, indeed, sin still reigns, and even those in Christ find they cannot do the things they would, and often do the things they would not. All are born into this world weak and sinful, even under a sentence of death. How could we be expected to live righteously, and how can it be just that we are condemned before we are born? Why should we not all have been created perfect and had the opportunity of being- obedient to God and so gaining eternal life?

It is just here that we observe the Divine wisdom and kindness. Had all been so created and given the opportunity of our first parents, how many, we ask, would have remained obedient? How many would have avoided sin, of which there had been no experience? Probably all will agree that most would have done no better than our first parents. Then for every one who sinned under such individual trial a separate redeemer would have been required, to give a ransom if they were to be redeemed from death, which is the penalty for sin. God in His mercy concluded all in sin in order that He might have mercy on all in one, that "as all in Adam die, so all in Christ shall be made alive" (Rom. 11:32) ;

1 Cor. 15:22). The principle of justice demands an equivalent—pound for pound—eye for eye—hand for hand—life for life. Human life was forfeited by "one man's sin," and God's only begotten Son covenanted with the Father to become flesh and die, the just for the unjust, the Father promising a great reward to His Son for such loyalty and loving sacrifice, namely, that He should be highly exalted above every name in heaven and earth, and that unto Him every knee should bow.

"Whom God hath set to lie the propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for

the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness, that He might be just, yet the justifier of them that believe in Jesus” (Rom. 3:24-26).

The first three chapters of Genesis inform us of the creation of man, of the entrance of sin, and the sentence, “Thou shalt surely die.” The race has ‘been dying ever since, and if there had been no sacrifice, which Christ gave on Calvary, there would have been no resurrection; we should have died without any hope of life beyond the tomb. But all through the Bible we find it emphasised that “without the shedding of blood is no remission of sin,” and, “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3), and in the last three chapters of the Bible the result of that redemptive work is shown in beautiful figurative language. The happy time of the resurrection and opportunity of life under perfect conditions is spoken of, when the whole earth shall be as the Garden of Eden, and God’s bountiful love will be appreciated, and His will shall be done on earth as in heaven.

There is no discord in the Bible when rightly understood, but a perfect theme winds itself through all the various books of Moses and all the prophets and apostles, all in beautiful harmony, sounding the glorious message of love in Divine wisdom, justice and power.

Oh, how that message of love, the gospel of “good news, which shall be to all people” (Luke 2 • of peace and good-will towards God and man, that Gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation,” has -been twisted and marred and misrepresented by church dogmas and creeds of men. The harsh old teachings of hell, torments and purgatory, have belied the God of love. There is nothing in them of love or joy or peace, nothing in them to commend, but “God commends His love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners. Christ died for us,” that we might have life. God’s message to the world is as full of love as it is of wisdom and justice. How much there is speaking of His gracious purposes, of His yearning for His erring creatures with a compassion as of a parent. “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him” (Psalm 103:13). How long suffering He was with Israel, all His punishments were corrective, and the prophet represents God in the yearning appeal, “Oh why will ye die, oh House of Israel.” Again, “I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but rather that he turn from his wickedness and live.”

It may be asked why the long delay, of Ages during which ignorance and sin have so prevailed; when the wicked have seemed to prosper most and the righteous have suffered; when the world has been and is full of envy, strife, greed, war and calamities. Oh, what a sad world it has been and still is. Why the long delay?

Briefly stated, God has allowed man to take his own course and to learn the hard lesson of the results of sin.

“God has suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, winking at their ignorance.” Yet He has been preparing the remedy. “In due time Christ died,” and since then God has been selecting a church class, members in Christ to be joint heirs with Christ in His Kingdom (Act 15:14-17; Rom. 8:17, Rom. 11:25-27).

The time will soon come when He will establish His Kingdom and speak peace to the people, and cause righteousness and truth to spring out of the earth.

Then the angel’s message, “Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people,” will be fulfilled, and the promise to Abraham, which is just as wide and good—“In thee and in thy seed, (Christ and the Church (Gal. 3:16. 29), shall all the families of the earth be blessed (Gen. 22:17-18). “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as in heaven. Such is the Gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation.

What does it mean to us? Is it just a matter that we reason it out and accord” that it is right, and just and good. and that it enables us to see the foolishness of the many systems of religion and the creeds of the dark ages? If that is all, then we have failed to grasp its fulness, its beauty. If the love of God

for mankind has been so revealed to our hearts, it can have none other effect than that we shall desire to be in perfect harmony with God, we shall desire earnestly that the love of God be shed abundantly in our hearts. We shall desire to have that same spirit of God operating in our lives, leading us to mould our characters, influencing our thoughts and words and actions, so that we may, to some extent, manifest our Father in Heaven, and be used in His service to sound His praises, and to tell forth the glad message of His love and of His gracious plan of salvation for all the willing and obedient.

EXCERPT FROM “STRANGE FIGURES,”

BY J. NEIL, M.A.

“WHERE two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them. Lo, I am with you all the days, even to the end of the age.” Many earliest believers, among them a large portion of that body known as “The Brethren,” take these words literally and actually teach that the Lord Christ, as well as the Holy Spirit, has ‘been personally present in all the gatherings of His Church. But other plain scriptural statements contradict this view. After the Lord’s ascension Peter, speaking of Jesus the Christ, says: “Whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restoration of all things (that is, the end of the age) of which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets, since the world began.” To the stunned and sorrowing disciples who had seen Him depart the angels say, “This same Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as ye beheld Him go into heaven.” That is clearly at His second advent, but they give no hope of His coming personally before that time, or in any other way. He Himself said of leaving His people, “Days will conic when the Bridegroom will ‘be taken from them. It is expedient for you that I go away; I go to my Father and ye see Me no more,” etc. In keeping with this we read that when Stephen in the extremity of martyrdom was comforted with a vision of Christ, he saw Him not here, not down by his side on, earth, ‘but far above on high, for he cried, “I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.” All the texts that speak of His ascension and His present session at the right hand of the Father, “to appear in the presence of God for us,” point to His personal absence from His waiting Church, and so do such allusions to Himself as He makes in the parable “a certain nobleman” who “went into a far country to receive a kingdom and to return” . . . Now these, at first sight, apparently contradictory statements of His presence and absence here on earth during this dispensation are both fully, practicably and most comfortingly met if we hold that the presence of Jesus with His people has been represented by the Holy Spirit, unlimited by any bodily conditions, that can be and is literally present wherever the Lord’s people meet in His name. This is the meaning of the Master’s words, “I will pray the Father and He will give you another comforter that Ire may be with you for ever. . . .” When, therefore, lie adds immediately these words of comfort, “I will not leave you orphans, I will conic to you,” we cannot help perceiving that His coming here is figurative and is spoken of His coming by and through the agency of His spirit, the Paraklete or Advocate, that He has just before promised. “What a world of mysticism this simple explanation sweeps away ! How it cuts down at the roots Rome’s monstrous doctrines of transubstantiation and transaccidentation, or the change of bread and wine in the Lord’s Supper into the Body and Blood of Christ.”

Many failing to realise the actual personal absence of Christ during the Gospel Age, and that He has but been represented by the Holy Spirit—the Comforter which He had promised to send from the Father—are unable to recognise how He could come at His second advent and be unseen by any and unknown to all excepting those watching—the “Brethren who are not in darkness.” Yet the statements are so plain that “in the days of the Son of Man,” at His second presence, the world would be ignorant of the fact (Matt. 24:37-39).

It is so clear that the Lord at His second coming first deals with His people (Matt. 25:14-30). The affairs of this age must be cleared up and other preparations made, and then Christ is to be revealed to all, the Kingdom established, and justice put to the plummet and righteousness to the line.

Accustom yourself to think vigorously. Mental capital, like pecuniary, to be worth anything, must be well invested— must be rightly adjusted and applied, and to this end careful, deep and intense thought is necessary, if good results are looked for.

M.A.

True courage is not incompatible with nervousness: and heroism does not mean the absence of fear, but the conquest of it.—H.V.D.

PEOPLES PAPER.

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While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord's Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression „sed, either in the correspondence or in the sermons reported.

A Cross (x) on the wrapper indicates that the Subscription to “ Peoples Paper” is overdue.

The close of the year

At this, the close of the year, happy surely all will be who can look backward through it and realise that safe and secure in the city of refuge, which God has provided for us as His people, We have been prospering, rejoicing, growing, under His favor and guidance in the school of Christ in preparation for the glorious work of the Millennial Kingdom.

We trust that all will find much of encouragement as they look back. If we can see that We have faithfully sought at every step to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, amidst the experiences and trials of the past year, there will be special cause for rejoicing; and if it is seen, On the contrary, that some of our steps have been crooked and perverse, and if we mourn for such digressions from the narrow way, we may be sure that the Lord is Very pitiful, of tender compassion, ready to forgive, to heal, to help. It is for this very reason that He provided this city of refuge, and for this very reason that we must needs abide in it continually—abide in Christ, under the cover of His merit and His robe of righteousness.

It will comfort our hearts, in any event, to remember the suggestion of the Apostle, that if God so loved us while we were yet sinners, that He gave His only begotten Son for our redemption, much more does He love us now, that we are adopted into His family, and seeking to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, however imperfectly our good desires may be accomplished.

There is need to make fresh resolutions continually along the way, and now at the close of the year is a favourable time for this. Not that we liberate ourselves in any degree from the everlasting covenant into which we entered with our Lord, but that, recognising its permanence, we strengthen ourselves by re-asserting it to the Lord, telling Him of our good desires and intentions in respect of faith for the future, and taking this occasion of the beginning of another year, for a reiteration of our loyalty and of our confidence in His faithfulness.

I am the Resurrection and the Life (John 11, 25).

“That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection” (Phil. 3, 10).

Oh, let me know
The power of Thy Resurrection;
Oh, let me show
Thy Risen life in calm and clear reflection;
Oh, let me soar
Where Thou, my Saviour Christ, art gone before;
In mind and heart
Let me dwell always, only, where Thou art.
F. R. Havergal.

Correspondence

Dear Brother,

Our subscriptions to the “Herald” and “People’s Paper” are about expired, so am enclosing postal note , for renewals for another year. Any balance you nay place in the Tract Fund.

We trust this finds you all well. As time goes on we realise more how rich God’s blessing is towards us. His love and care seem to become more real to our eyes of faith, and our feet planted more firmly on the great foundation Christ a ransom for all. The present seems

more than ever to us to be a time of patiently waiting oil the Lord in faith and trust. We cannot see before us, but we can trust in God’s promises, He is faithful.

As the darkness seems to close round, and the earth seems to languish, the truth becomes more beautiful and precious. How wonderful to think the long night of sill and death is nearly over, and the glad day, so long foretold, is near at hand.

Am pleased to note the “People’s Paper” maintains a good and helpful standard, and the “Herald,” too, is always so good and helpful, and they both continue to point us to the one standard—the one Head, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and away from all things human and earthly.

“Our hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.”

We trust that the little Christmas -convention proves a blessing to you all. We would have liked so much to have been with you, but it seems now that we will be unable to come. The conditions here, as everywhere. are such that it places the trip beyond us.

With Christian love to you all. The Lord bless you and keep you.

Yours by the Lord’s grace,

Dear Friend,—

I am writing to let you know how pleased I am with Foregleams, which I have read, and greatly appreciate the way the truth is conveyed and made so easy for one to understand. It has certainly enlightened me on many subjects which I never understood. In fact, I may say that I have been far from a Christian until I commenced to read your papers. But now I hope that, in future, I will serve our Lord to the utmost of my ability, as since I have read your papers and books, my whole ideas and views of life in the future are changed. I may here add that, as a lad, I attended the protestant Church, but their teachings and doctrines seemed to be too complicated for me to understand, and, therefore, I never took the trouble to go any further with religion, with the exception, that I always had a fear of going to everlasting torment when I died. But limy, thanks to your books, I see things very differently, although there are some points on which I am not too clear. The first is that of eating meat on Friday; can you please tell me if this is God's law, or is it only one of the Roman Church's many errors? Secondly, which day should we keep as the Sabbath, as I recently became acquainted with some people who claimed Saturday to be the correct day. Thirdly, with reference to meats, clean and unclean, Deuteronomy 14:4, 9, 11; should these laws still be observed? I would also like to know if you have any books suitable for children, between the ages of 7 and 11, as I have four children, and would like to bring them to understand God's Word much clearer than I did. I shall, also, be very pleased to receive some more papers, as I have read those you so kindly sent me.

Hoping to hear from you again soon,

Yours in Hope,

F.W.S.

This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith (1 John 5:4).

Faith knows no defeats. Absurd as this sounds from a human standpoint, yet this is true. Faith surmounts all trials and difficulties, it overcomes in every kind of circumstances and surroundings. This is the victory—Faith. Faith counts on God and this is the victory. It stands firm where everything and everybody else would fail. Faith glories in the Cross of Christ. The Cross of Christ meant untold suffering. Read Hebrews 11 and see what faith conquers and triumphs in. Faith is the victory.

Selected.

STAND FAST.

“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit Ye like men, be strong” (1 Cor. 16:13).

(Continued from December Issue) .

WHILE we take heed to this admonition, we would generally look to the examples of steadfastness in the past, so that we may understand what it exactly means to stand firm. We know our Lord Jesus was holy, harmless, and separate from sinners, and we might feel our absolute insignificance. when compared with Him; but when we see such wonderful stability in one of the fallen human race, as the Apostle Paul, we can see what can be accomplished; and as we also read his words in Hebrews 13:7, “Remember your leaders. those who have spoken to you the Word of God; and viewing attentively the result of their conduct, imitate their faith” (Diaglott), we stand in awe before such an example of moral heroism as we find in him.

As we follow him from city to city, we mark his faithful labor and care, his patient endurance of persecution, his untiring devotion and zeal for the truth, his patience in instructing and bearing with the weak and ignorant, and all his sufferings for Christ’s sake, and then hear him say, “None of these things move me.” He was standing fast upon the rock, and we can feel that we are indeed contemplating a sublime character. See how in every city bonds and afflictions awaited him; mobs and stripes and imprisonment were his constant expectation. Then read his epistles, and mark his fervency of spirit. His deep insight into the things of God; his care for the churches, and his deep solicitude for their spiritual welfare, his earliest exhortations and his loving example. Read till you are filled with the inspiration of his noble example, and behold in him a miracle of divine grace. No ordinary hopes and ambitions could inspire such a life. His eye of faith was fixed on the things as yet not seen. He was a man of superior advantages and blessings, as well as of peculiar and almost unprecedented trials, he himself said, “I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me,” and that it was the power of Christ that rested on him. And as we look upon his shining course we see Christ in him; and reason says, if one who thus saw the Lord, and heard His gracious voice, and who lived in such close and constant fellowship with Him, was so inspired with hope and joy, and -so nerved to cheerful endurance of hardship, pain and loss of every earthly treasure, the reward itself must indeed be glorious.

Let us mark the noble examples of our Lord and of Paul, and let us run with patience in this race, having this object before us, as did Paul, and looking to Jesus for all needed strength and consolation. He said, “I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). There was .no compromise of the truth with him, no mixing of it with human philosophies to make it more palatable to either Jews or Gentiles. or to avoid persecution.

We may note, also, his faithful warning against false teachers, who would surely develop in their midst; against wolves in sheep’s clothing, who would not spare the flock, while selfishly seeking their own temporal advantage. The Apostle did not counsel the handling of these wolves very gently, as perhaps some of our day would advise. He did not say that we should call them all:brethren, and tell them they are probably as near the truth as we are, and that we must have a broad charity for all sorts of vain philosophies, and tell them we should all love one another, at the expense of justice and truth.

If we are determined to stand fast we will need to keep particularly close to the Word, which makes no allowance to compromise with any error, often clothed under a robe called love, a love of individual preference, which makes a show in the flesh, but has no standing before God. We must remember that the Lord does not raise up rulers from among our .brethren in the body of Christ, but he does raise up faithful leaders to whom earnest heed should be given, and whose faith and example should be imitated.

Another admonition of the Apostle Paul is to “put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Eph. 6:11). Before we could stand fast, we must lie fully aware of what is required, so as to be able to stand. ‘Pile wiles of Satan mean his methods, his cunning frauds; and we may understand that these will be subtle, as, if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect. Every person on earth is doing service for one or the other, for the Lord’s army or for Satan’s army. There is no middle ground, as the Apostle puts it, “his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness” (Rom. 6:16).

Each one must fight the good fight of faith and be victorious before he can attain to the position of joint-heirship with the Lord, and each one having the Master’s spirit will fight, together with all the other members of the body, to maintain the spirit of unity in the body. All such must fight under the leadership of their Captain. Again St. Paul says, “Only let the lives you live be worthy of the Gospel, that we may know who are standing fast in one spirit and one mind, lighting shoulder to shoulder for the faith and good news. Never for a moment quail before your enemies” (Phil. 1:27-28), (Weymouth),

To a soldier who engages in war, it is of the greatest importance that he should know who his enemies are, their number and force. A good soldier will study to know what will be the method of attack by the enemy, and seek to strengthen his position of defence, that he may repel every assault. In the Christian warfare this is even more vital.

In Eph. 6:1 1-1 2, the Apostle particularly warns the Church concerning our enemies. Weymouth’s translation renders it, “For ours is not a conflict with mere flesh and blood, but with spiritual beings in unseen places, despotisms, empires, the forces that control and govern this dark world, the spiritual host of evil, arrayed against us in the heavenly warfare.” It is important that we take heed to the Master’s method of meeting these attacks. God governs the entire universe by fixed principles, and everyone who is governed contrary thereto is governed by passion. Perhaps many do not fully understand what is meant by principle. Seemingly they think it is whatever they themselves may consider to be right when guided by their conscience, or by the argument of someone else. Principle means a settled rule of action, the governing law of conduct.

This rule of action, or governing law of conduct, is set forth in the Bible, and all who are governed by the Word of God are governed by principle. Passion means the capacity of being affected by external agencies, to be susceptible to control from external influences. The new creature must avoid passion and be governed always by principle. If we are influenced or swayed in our judgment or conclusion about anything, reason of what others may say or do, we are governed to that extent by passion. If we prayerfully and diligently seek to know what is the Lord’s will, and what His Word says on the matter, and are governed by that, then we are governed by principle. The spirit of the world is to follow methods that make outward show of great piety to attract attention. Any attempt on the part of a Christian to attract attention to himself is a manifestation of the spirit of the world, and a violation of principles, and out of harmony with God’s methods.

All temptations are the effects of the adversary’s influence. He employs various methods in order that he may deceive. He makes some believe that they are not receiving the proper consideration to which they are entitled. This leads into a wrong course. St. Paul emphasises the fact that the conflict of the Church in the end of the age will be particularly with the evil spirits. The Scriptures indicate that the real battle of the Christian is in the mind, therefore the attack of the evil spirits will be expected along this line. According to information from one who was long subject to the influence of these demons, their method of attack is first by suggestion. By this is meant that they first intrude evil thoughts upon the mind.

All Christians realise that they have a conflict in keeping out of the mind thoughts that are improper, and that it is a constant warfare to keep them out. But where one indulges in evil surmising, judging another, he is filling his mind with evil thoughts. Such are yielding to suggestions, which, if persisted in, lead to the second stage, which is designated “abbreviation.” This word means to cut short. It here

means lack of continuity of thought, or lack of concentration of thought, upon the Lord's Word.

One who finds himself given over to evil surmising and evil thoughts, will find great difficulty in concentration of mind upon the study of the Lord's Word. Attempting either study or prayer the one finds his mind suddenly turned away from his subject, or turned to or set upon evil things. Thus continuing, he loses sight of principle, namely the great truths of God's Word, and this leads to the third stage designated as "impression," which means that one is moved to act from sources other than the Word of God. It is the result of influence exerted from without in words controlled by passion and not by the Word. "fake aim instance where one would say, "I am moved to take this course because of what I have heard, or what influence another has brought to bear upon me," at the same time entirely ignoring the Word of the Lord on the subject. This persisted in leads of the fourth stage, namely "possession," whereby it is understood that the evil spirits take possession of the mind of the person and control his conduct.

The Apostle tells us. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble-minded" (1 .5:5:5 1. From this we would understand that humility of mind and heart would be a special protection provided by the Lord; and that anyone manifesting spiritual pride or ambition would forfeit His protection, and thus evil spirits would have special power over them.

Now we believe these evil spirits use human agencies to attack members of the Body of Christ. We may reasonably expect that all of the Lord's servants who are actively engaged in the closing hours of the harvest will be attacked through 11(1111011 agencies by these wicked spirits. We may expect that all manner of charges and attacks may be made by such, against the character and reputation of those who are zealously engaged in the Lord's work, which will constitute a test to all the brethren as to whether they will be governed by passion (outside influence), or whether they will be governed by the "principle" of God's Word.

Let each one examine his own heart carefully and see to it that his own conclusions are based upon right principles, namely, God's Word, and not upon outside influence. No other course is safe. All the Scriptures bearing upon the point indicate that the conflict will be more severe as we near the end. Referring to this time. St. Paul says, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and the power of His might" (Eph. 6:10). The clear inference here is that each soldier of the cross must have special strength in order to stand at this time and to repel the combined attack of Satan and his coadjutors.

If we look at it from one standpoint we would become dismayed and despair of winning, but looking at it from another viewpoint, we know that He who is for us is greater than all who can be against us; and he being for us none can prevail against us. We are now in the evil day. Now, then, may we have the strength needed ! The Apostle tells us to put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand (resist) in the evil day, and having done all to stand (remain a victor), (Eph. 6:13).

The Apostle says in 2 Thess. 2:15. "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions Which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle." And, also, he speaks in Rom. 6:17, "But God he thanked that ye have obeyed from the heart, that form of doctrine which was delivered you." Our Lord lays special stress upon obedience. He says, in John 13:17, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." -Many seem content simply to know these things. How many there are who stop with a knowledge of God's plan, as it is now revealed and understood, seemingly unmindful of the latter clause of this verse. Their lives are not conformed to -the Word, nor to the likeness of Christ.

It would seem at first that some really desire to be fashioned into the image of our Lord, but they go no further. They are not willing to pay the price of obedience; are not willing to endure self-sacrifice and self-denial. How prone we are to desire and acquire knowledge, forgetting that "knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth." Knowledge alone does not produce happiness. Obedience does. Let us not disregard our Lord's words, that not just knowing these things will produce character, but. "happy are ye if ye do them." (Concluded).

Dispensational Changes.

THE PASSING OF THE PRESENT ORDER.

SO many prophecies of the Scriptures are having fulfilment to-day, of which Haggai 2:6-7 is an evident example. "Yet once it is a little while and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory." That there can be no question that this prophecy has not been fulfilled in the past we have the Apostle, in Hebrews 12:26-27, quoting it as being of then future fulfilment. Further than this, both the prophet and the Apostle indicates that, as a sequence to the great shaking and removal of those things which can be shaken, the Lord's kingdom, the "desire of all nations" shall come, and the House of the Lord, the Temple or Tabernacle of God (Rev. 21:3), shall be filled with glory.

All should be able to see what is meant by the "earth" that is to be shaken, also what the "heavens" refers to. There have been great shakings of the literal earth in past and recent years, that have wrought terrible destruction of life, and changed the formation of countries. Such occurrences, however, are not the fulfilment of these words of the prophet and the apostle, but they are used simply to illustrate the great social upheaval that will 'break up all systems and organisations of Mankind that are out of accord with equity and justice.

The word "earth" is so used in the Scriptures to designate the social order among men. Thus we read that the "heavens and earth" composing the world before the flood, "being overflowed with water perished" (2 Pet. 3:5-6).

All know that the literal earth did not perish, nor did the literal "heavens" of that time. Noah stood upon the same earth, and looked upon the same heavens when he came forth from the ark as he did before the flood.

As the "earth" refers to things secular, social, national, etc., so the "heavens" refers to things spiritual—religious arrangements.

Up to the time of Noah, angels had been permitted to communicate with men for their instruction and assistance. Instead, however, of leading to holiness and true worship of God, they themselves fell into folly and

God saw that the earth was filled with violence and corruption, and destroyed all mankind, except Noah and his family (Gen. 6:1-13; Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4-5). It was thus that that world, social and religious passed away, and the present world "heavens and earth" began.

This present "heavens and earth" are much more complex than that of the world before the flood, and its social fabric and national institutions, as also its religious systems, have been so long established that the general thought seemed to be that they were like the literal earth, "established that it could not be moved" (Psalm 93:1-2, 104:5; Eccles 1:4). St. Peter had written that such would be the thoughts of men. They would say "all things continue as they were since the fathers fell asleep" (2 Pet. 3:4).

However, we have reached the times of shaking, and one would need to lie blind to conditions and events who could so fold his arms in complacency to-day. Everything is changing and no institution of the social order, no government nor nation, Kingdom or Republic can rest secure. They often change or pass away so quickly. Commercially, and industrially, things are depressed. The strange part being that it is Whet' abundance of everything exists that the poor multiply and poverty increases. This, of course, demonstrates that there is something altogether wrong in the present arrangement for distributing the necessities of life in the social order. Financially the whole so-called Christian world is reaping the results of a long period of debauchery in eating, drinking, dressing and pleasure seeking. This has been as much in respect of the governments as of individuals. To blindly live

beyond the means is sure to bring a reckoning day, whether the culprit be an individual or a government.

What changes have come al suit in the world during the past few years. There has been the overthrow of despotism in various countries. Russia is probably little better for the change, having but replaced one form of despotic cruelty for another, and one which seems bent on crushing ally kind of organisation for the worship of God. China has been suffering the tortures of civil war between rival war-lords since her ancient monarchy was cast aside. India is seething with fomented discontent, and clamouring for independence. Egypt appears once more as a kingdom with constitutional government. Palestine is again occupied by Israel, but nowhere is there peace. The whole creation still “groaned” and travaileth together in pain, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God” (Rom. 8:22. 19). Conditions are still such in the “earth” to-day that more than ever we still earnestly pray, “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth,” when “Peace on earth and good will toward men “ will prevail.

The state of the “heavens”—matters spiritual—or the religious elements, is sad indeed, yet again, it is but as predicted by the prophets, the Lord and the Apostles.

Christ said, “when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?” No, for as the Revelator declares,

“The nations shall he angry” when He comes to take His kingdom (Rev. 1 1) . Every religious system—the whole “heavens” is having its shaking, including the heathen religions, the Mahommedans, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and Non-conformists. All kinds of new theories are promulgated, but confidence in the so-called orthodox Christian religion has been shaken in various ways. There have been the “higher critics,” who, professing to ,be exponents of the Bible, undermined the faith of their congregations by their ridiculing portions of Scripture, which they did not understand, even “denying the Lord Who bought them” (2 Pet. 2:.

There is another way in which faith is attacked to-day, without mentioning the false reasoning of Christian Scientists, Theosophists, and the deceptions of Spiritists, and which has more the semblance of earnest faith. It is what is called faith healing, and the Pentecostal movement. These people seem to mistake feelings for faith, and sentiment for holiness, and certain religious phrases and expressions are taken as indicating holiness of life.

This all seems to be along the line of the deceptions that would, “if it were possible,” deceive the “very elect.”

Any deception which would have weight with God’s elect must be something that has the semblance of truth, something that, while “darkness,” would be so presented as to appear “light,” or some light made to appear to be darkness.

Thus we realise that these present day systems, religious, social or national, are being shaken, and -the result of this shaking will be, so says the Apostle, the removal of those things which can be shaken. The 46th Psalm graphically describes this transition period, and gives the comforting assurance respecting the outcome of the great time of trouble and_ confusion. “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, therefore will we not fear though the earth be removed, and the mountains (kingdoms) be carried into the sea (anarchy), though the waters (peoples) thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river, the streams thereof make glad the city of God, the holy place of the Tabernacle of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early. The heathen (nations) raged, the kingdoms were moved, He uttered

His voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge. Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He hath made in the earth: He maketh wars to cease

unto the ends of the earth: He breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder: lie burned) the chariot in the fire. Be still and know that I am God, I will be exalted among the heathen (nations), I- will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.”

The kingdoms of this world will then become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ. The Church completed with Christ—the antitypical Temple—the habitation of God—shall 'be filled with the Lord's glory, and embued with the power to bless all nations, and to fill the whole earth with the knowledge of the glory of God, as the waters cover the great deep. Righteousness and truth. shall spring out of the earth, peace and goodwill toward God and man shall abound, and God's will shall be done in earth as it is done in heaven.

BE PATIENT, BRETHREN.

We sometimes wonder why our Lord doth place us
Within a sphere so narrow, so obscure:
That nothing we call work can find an entrance
There's only room to suffer, to endure.
Well, God loves patience! Souls that dwell in stillness,
Doing the little things or restful quite,
May just as perfectly fulfil this mission ;
Be just as useful in the Father's sight
As they who grapple with some great evil,
Clearing a path, that every eye may see,
Our Saviour cares for cheerful acquiescence
As much as for a busy ministry.
And yet He does lave service—where it is given
By grateful love that clothes itself in deed;
But work that's done beneath the scourge of duty,
Be sure to such He gives but little heed.
Christ never asks of us such heavy labor
As leaves no time for resting at His feet;
The waiting attitude of expectation
He oftentimes counts a service most complete.
He sometimes wants our ear—our rapt attention
That He some sweetest secret may impart,
'Tis always in the time of deepest stillness
That heart finds deepest fellowship with heart.
Then seek to please Him, whatsoe'er He bids thee—
Whether to do, to suffer, to lie still;
'Twill matter little by what path He led us
If in it we sought to do His will.

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