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Divine Justice In The Deluge.

WHILE to-day there are those who deny the teachings of Genesis respecting the creation of man and the deluge, we have the words of Jesus in Matt. 24:39 stating that the flood came and took them all away; proving that God permitted the deluge and that He was just in blotting out the human family with the exception of righteous Noah and his family.-2 Pet. 2:4-10.

We should remember that God's covenant with Adam was based upon the fact that he was created perfect (in God's image and likeness), and was to be granted ever lasting life on conditions that he would maintain this image and likeness by continued obedience to his Maker. When Satan obsessed the serpent and guided it to eat the fruit which our first parents were forbidden to eat, he produced thereby a temptation. Mother Eve saw that, so far from the serpent being poisoned by the fruit, it was the wisest of animals. She reasoned that humanity was so much superior to the brute creation that the increased wisdom would make her husband and herself like gods. She thirsted for knowledge and power, and only the Divine command seemed to stand 'between her and the highest ideals. She partook of the fruit and recommended it to Adam, who was not so deceived (as the Apostle informs us), for he knew that death would surely follow disobedience. Nevertheless, he disobeyed, thinking he would rather perish with his wife than live on for ever without her.

The disobedience led to expulsion from Eden, and the beginning of the gradual execution of the sentence' which reads, "for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," or as worded in the margin. "Dying, thou shalt die." - - Up to this time Adam was not dying by any means,-. for sin alone brought death through separation from the life-giving groves. And according to the Divine pronouncement, he died within the day in which he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Apostle Peter informs us that a day with the Lord is a thousand years, and Adam died when nine hundred and thirty years old. His race has inherited his dying conditions and sinful tendencies. Thus all humanity are under the curse, condemned, not to eternal torment, but to death in Adam. Whatever, therefore, may cut short human life is no injustice to humanity, because whatever life is now enjoyed is just so much more than the human race has title to. Hence the deluge was merely a quick means of executing against Adam's family of sinners the death sentence already expressed sixteen centuries before.

HOPE FOR THE ANTEDILUVIANS.

There is the same hope for these as for all the remainder of the human family—the hope of a fresh trial for life lost in Adam. This means not merely a hope of being awakened from the sleep of death, but a hope of restitution, a hope of returning, if they will, to the full measure of human perfection; the image of God in the flesh. This hope rests first of all on God's gracious promise that all the families of the earth shall be blessed in Abraham's seed. Secondly, it rests in the assurance that Jesus is the Head and the Church the members of that spiritual seed of Abraham which, as the Elect of God, will soon be completed and glorified with her risen Lord and Saviour.

In the Messianic kingdom, this great "seed" will accomplish the world's blessing foreordained. St. Paul emphasized this, saying, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise made to Abraham." See Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:29.

DIVINE PATIENCE MANIFESTED.

As we review the situation we are amazed at the exhibition given of Divine patience. We are reminded of St. Peter's

word that God is not willing that any should perish. How easily He could have blotted out of existence our first parents and have created another pair. How easily He could have hindered Satan from presenting the temptation. How easily He could have warned the angels against a course of disobedience and have shown them His full power at any time. These incidents illustrate to us a general principle of Divine character and Divine dealings. God had indeed a glorious dominion before sin entered the world. And He could, of course, have hindered any spread of disloyal

ambition of Satan by destroying him, or God could have coerced him into obedience as a slave. But the Almighty has the very highest ideals in respect to His Government and all His subjects. All His work is perfect, as the Scriptures declare, and every variation from that perfection must be the result of disobedience; while the disobedient shall perish. Whoever does not learn to love righteousness and hate iniquity will be counted unworthy of everlasting life. And so we read that, after the coming of Christ, "Whom the heavens must retain until the times of restitution of all things," and that shall then come to pass that "every soul that will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people, destroyed in the second death and not preserved in a place of torment."

MAN'S EXPERIENCE A LESSON.

God not only foreknew that the conditions under which man was created would result in sin, but without causing the temptation and without giving any excuse for the disloyalty He determined to permit it, but only for a very limited space of time. The reign of sin and death is only to last for six thousand years. Then, by bringing in the Messianic kingdom, God will abolish sin and death, lifting all the willing and obedient to human perfection and life everlasting in Eden restored.

He put the death penalty upon humanity, knowing at the time that it would require the death of an obedient sacrifice for human redemption, and purposing in advance that He would provide a Redeemer such as would willingly become man's surety by paying the ransom price. Thus the permission of evil has resulted in the manifestation of God's love, in a manner that otherwise would hardly have been revealed. The infliction of the death penalty for so long has, likewise, demonstrated the persistence of Divine justice. The recovery of the dead by a resurrection will prove, as nothing else could, the wonderful power of our God. And when the entire plan of God shall have been outworked and shall have been made known to angels and men, it will demonstrate the wisdom of God, as it never could have been known, had He not adopted the plan of temporarily permitting a reign of sin and death.

MANY SONS TO GLORY.

Another thing made possible by the permission of sin has been the special call to joint heirship with Christ in the heavenly phase of the Kingdom. The Bible declares that the Elect Church are begotten of the Spirit throughout this age, and are promised that they shall be born of the Spirit in the first resurrection. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." The need of a Redeemer opened the way for Him Who was the "Word" to become flesh. He was then in the position to demonstrate His obedience unto death, even the death of the cross.—Phil. 2:8. And this great sacrifice constituted not only the ransom price for Adam and his race, but also the basis on which the Heavenly Father highly exalted His Son far above angels to the Divine nature.—John 5:26. Similarly the exaltation of the Church to be the Bride of Christ and partaker of the Divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4) was made possible by the permission of evil. The Heavenly Father could justly permit members of the fallen race, of the same disposition as Jesus (having the mind of Christ), to sacrificially lay down their lives as members of the Body of Christ, and by thus suffering with Him to be accounted worthy of reigning with Him in glory.—Rom. 8:17.

HALLELUJAH! WHAT A SAVIOUR.

As the Psalmist exclaims, "Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised." Infinite in wisdom, justice, love and power.

Is it any wonder, in view of this work, that God has outlined for His Son and the Church glorified, that He should consider it necessary to give us tests of faith in loyalty and obedience, Is it any wonder, in view of the work which He has for us to do for mankind, that the Redeemer Himself was given experiences in suffering, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in the things of God in relation to humanity. Since having gained a better understanding of the Bible, we see that the redemption which God provided through His only Begotten Son is to be world-wide in its effect. The race was not condemned individually, but as a whole in one man, on account of Adam's sin. Similarly, the race has been redeemed as a whole by the Man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a ransom for all.—1 Tim. 2:5, 6; Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2.

The fact that God did not deal with any of the human family, except the Hebrews, for four thousand years, does not mean that He cared for the Hebrews only, nor that they alone are to receive the Divine blessing. It simply means that, during that time, God dealt with the Hebrews to select from among them some especially loyal characters to be sharers in His future work, when He will deal with the world in general.

The fact that all this work of selecting one class of servants from Hebrews, and another class from every nation during the Gospel Age, has required six thousand years, is no argument against God's purpose to bless all Adam's children ultimately. We are glad to see in the light of present truth that it is in the eternal interests of all mankind that the past and present elections have been proceeding. The fact that a long time has been consumed in getting ready the instruments of Divine mercy shows the greatness and the thoroughness of the Divine Plan in respect to the race as a whole. Let us then avail ourselves of the glorious opportunities for Bible study and for growth in grace and love. Let us walk worthy of the light, and rejoice in Him Who bought us with His precious blood.

STILL THERE IS ROOM.

Day is declining and the sun is low;
The shadows lengthen, light makes haste to go;
Room, room, still room! Oh, enter now.

The bridal hall is filling for the feast;
Pass in, pass in, and be the Bridegroom's guest.
Room, room, still room! Oh, enter now.

It fills, it fills that hall of jubilee.
Make haste, make haste; 'tis not too full for thee.
Room, room, still room! Oh, enter now.

Louder and sweeter sounds the loving call—
Come, lingerer, come; enter that festal hall.
Room, room, still room! Oh, enter now.

PEOPLES PAPER.

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NOTES ON THE VOYAGE FROM. SOUTH AFRICA TO ENGLAND

LIFE on board a large vessel with over 500 passengers, travelling some of them for seven or eight weeks together, seems like a miniature picture of the western world, and demonstrates the utter failure of the so-called Christian civilisation. How sadly true it is that Were all heathen nations converted to such a condition they would but be "twofold more children of Gehenna." and in double need of a further conversion. In most cases, it would seem "the heathen in his blindness" was a better man, morally and often physically, in his native state. He was also more likely to turn from his idols to the one true God and only Saviour, Jesus Christ. The more quickly and earnestly, when the due time comes for the Lord to "Turn to the people the pure language" the truth unadulterated by human dogma, forms and hypocritical ceremonies and professions. Is it any wonder that we hear of the Hindus, Bhuddist and Mahomedan saying "We want Christ, we love His principles and teachings, but we did. not want Christianity."

On the boat may be found various nationalities, English, Scotch, Irish, Welsh, French, German, Hollanders, Norwegians, Swedes and Colonials, Americans and negroes. All grades of society, educated and ignorant, South and uncouth, and all shades of thought on religious, political and social questions, and men and women of all sorts of occupations, some full of hope and ambition, and many evidently content with the position attained. There are all ages from a few months into the eighties of years.

There are still those who have high standards of life, some who are trying to live the Christian life, while many count nothing of religion at all. There are those still believing in eternal torture for all outside of Christ. There are others deluded by "Faith Healing," Christian Science, Theosophy or Spiritualism. Probably the majority have a slight idea of godliness.; so that they like to have a formal church service on Sunday mornings, if the sermon is very short. The captain stipulated that the address must not be more than five minutes, but the congregational minister gave him, anyway, ten minutes.

The service over, the day became once more like any other day, spent in careless indifference to anything but selfish appetite and pleasure, and as though with design to crowd out any opportunity of an evening service, the day was completed by the showing of a comic picture film. "As in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, marrying and giving in marriage, so shall also the days of the Son of Man be."

As the days pass and the voyage. lengthens, more of the sordid side of life appears. All seemed friendly at the beginning, but all have faults, and there are always in ..the world and also on a boat those whose tongues are mottly exercised in the service of the great "accuser," and one needs care to avoid listening to slander and evil-speaking, fault-finding. So often it is easy to see that the fault complained of is quite prominent in the accuser. is very generally the case of the hypocrite, with the beam in his or her own eye wanting -to pick a mote •out of another's eye. One sees what an abominable thing is the loose. tongue, surely there is no sin more easily. to fall into, particularly with those who naturally talk a lot, .for "In a multitude of words there lacketh not sin." To libel or slander another is inexcusable, even among the ungodly, and how' much more terrible is it when, as the Psalmist has put it, the slander is against "one's own Mother's son," a fellow member in Christ. No wonder that 'there is so much New Testament- as well as Old Testament instruction respecting the matter, so that the "unruly: member" of our bodies should be used only in useful service to .- the glory of God and comfort, edification. and blessing of those around us, and not to belittle, wound • or hurt others. "Let my lips speak forth His praise."

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH.

With the passing away of our Bro. Burpee, of South Australia. recently,. another of the Lord's dean .saints have laid aside the earthly tabernacle and entered upon that life more abundant.

While the severing of human ties leaves a wound: that is hard to heal, and while sympathising with the near and dear relatives, we rejoice to know that our Brother's long time of suffering and pain has ended.

To those who visited Bro. Burpee when on his bed of sickness there was manifest the spirit of patient; faithful trust in the Lord, which has. been in evidence during the many years he has walked in the narrow Path Way; and we realise he has proved a faithful servant unto death and gained his reward and blessing with the Lord in His Kingdom, promised to overcomers in Rev. 2:10; .14. —"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give' thee a crown of life."

."Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; that they may rest from their' labours; and their works do follow them."

If there come into your synagogue a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing, and there come in also a poor man in vile clothing, and ye have regard to him that weareth the fine clothing, and say, Sit thou here in a .good place; and ye say to the poor man, Stand. thou there., or -sit under my footstool; are ye not divided in your own mind, and become judges with evil thoughts.—James 11:3. 4. •

“Unto The Pure All Things Are Pure.”

UNTO the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unfaithful nothing is pure; but both their minds and conscience are defiled: they profess to have known God, but by their works they renounce Him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work worthless.—Titus 1:1 5, 16.

Not sinners, not the worldly, are thus spoken of by the Apostle, but those who have enjoyed the truth and who have enjoyed at least the first step in heart purification. namely, justification, and whose hearts have become defiled through a failure to maintain in them the law of love as the ruling principle. Instead of being filled with love, selfishness, with, its defilement, has been received back as the ruling principle of the heart. Such have the • spirit of the. world, and sometimes exercise it with a much greater degree of animosity than the world exhibits. They are specially ready. as the Apostle intimates, to impugn the conduct and motives of others.; being selfish themselves, they attribute selfishness to everyone else; being impure themselves. they attribute impurity to others; having lost the spirit of love which thinketh no evil, their hearts rapidly fill up with selfish, envious, uncharitable. ungodly, unkind sentiments, toward those who are true, sincere and noble.

We have known such to go even to the extreme of impugning the motive of the great Jehovah and our Lord Jesus Christ. Unable to think of love and benevolence as motives for conduct, and accustomed in their own hearts to think merely of selfishness and personal aggrandisement as motives, they view the divine course from this standpoint, and esteem that God was moved by -pride to recover man from sin and death, or by vanity, to show what He could do. They claim that our Lord Jesus was moved by selfish motives, of self-gratification, honour, increase of power. in becoming our Redeemer. They think .of the loyalty of the angels from a ‘selfish standpoint, as in hope of advancement, or in fear. of punishment. Who can bring a clean thought out of an unclean heart? Who can expect benevolence, generous. .feelings, sentiments or words, except hypocritically, from a heart in which selfishness has the control. Who would expect generous considerations in a mind full of envy and self-seeking?

..-The Apostle suggests of such that not only their minds ‘become corrupted, but also their consciences, so that they will do evil, speak evil, think evil, and yet their con-sciences do not reprove them; because their consciences and minds work in harmony, and, as the Scriptures declare they become blinded, self-deceived. What a terrible condition this is, and how careful all of the Lord’s people should be not only to have pure hearts, pure minds, but also to keep their consciences very tender, in close accord with the Word of the Lord. This condition can only be maintained by judging ourselves. and that strictly and frequently, by the standard which God has given us, His law of Love.

“ I want the first approach to feel
Of pride or fond desire;
To catch- the wandering of my will,
And quench the kindling fire.”

As the Apostle points out, those whose minds become impure. poisoned by ambition or pride or selfishness, the spirit of evil, ‘professing to have known God, are apt to profess. .as loudly as ever, sometimes, indeed, becoming boastful of how much thee know of God, and of His Word end of how wise they are as respects its interpretation. Not by boasting of professions, therefore, can we always judge who are of pure minds and of good consciences, and in full harmony with the Lord. Rather by their fruits we shall know them, as the Master said, by their works, as the Apostle here points out. If any. profess to know God, and yet by their works renounce him, we are fully justified in questioning whether or not they may not be self-deceived, whether or not their conscience, as well as their minds, may not have become defiled.

To renounce tile Lord in our works does not necessarily mean a resort to murder, robbery, licentiousness. etc. It means, rather, ill the beginning at least, that from the hitherto good fountain of a cleansed or renewed heart or will, from which issues purity, truth, sweetness, kindness, encouragement and refreshment for all who drank of its waters, in the home and family and neighbourhood. and amongst the Lord’s people. would issue instead bitter \voters, producing bitter feelings, watering and nourishing roots of bitterness, stirring .up malice, envy, hatred. strife. etc.

No wonder the Apostle says of such that they are abominable! All who have the spirit of the Lord must abominate the spirit of evil, however surprised and grieved they may be to find it issuing from one who previously gave forth sweetness, love, kindness, good works.

As the Master declared, if the professedly sweet fountain send forth bitter waters, we may know that there is something wrong, something defiling. in the fountain. and are not to deceive ourselves respecting its waters, and to partake of its bitterness.

Commenting along the same line, the Apostle James declares. “If any man among you seemeth to be religious and

bridleth not his tongue, that man's religion is vain." Because the tongue is the index of the heart, because "out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh," therefore the unbridled tongue, speaking selfishly, enviously, bitterly, boastfully, slanderously, proves that the heart from whose fulness these overflow is unsanctified, unholy, grievously lacking of the Spirit of Christ—hence, whatever religion it may have attained is thus far vain, as that heart is not saved nor in a salvable condition. No wonder the Apostle comments in our text, that such are "disobedient"; only by disobedience to the law of the New Creation, love, could anyone reach such a condition of heart and conscience defilement, after he had been purified through faith in the precious blood, and consecrated to the Lord.

The final statement of our text is that such a one, having lost the spirit of the truth, and having obtained instead a spirit of bitterness, rancour, evil, having a poisoned or defiled mind and conscience, is "to every good work worthless." No matter what work such a one might undertake to do, it would surely be spoiled, because the spirit of evil, the spirit of pride, the spirit of selfishness, the spirit of malice and envy, are so violently in apposition to, every feature of righteousness and goodness and truth and love, that there can be no peace, no cooperation between them. This reminds us of our Lord's words, to the effect that those who are His people and who have His spirit are "the salt of the earth"—preservative, so long as they have this spirit: but, as He suggests, if the salt lose its saltness—if the Christian lose those peculiar features of the spirit of Christ which constitute him different from the world, separate from the world, and a preservative quality in the world—if he should lose these, what? He would be worthless as bad salt, "to every good work worthless." - Titus 1:16.

What Course should be pursued by those who find themselves possessed of impure minds—minds inclined to surmise evil rather than good, envious minds, selfish, resentful, bitter, unforgiving minds, which love only those who love and flatter them? Is there any hope for these? Would God not utterly reject such?

God is very pitiful, and it was while all were thus "in the very gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity" that He provided for our redemption. There is hope for all such who see their defilement and who desire to be cleansed.

"His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood avails for me."

But true repentance means both contrition and reformation; and for help in the latter we must go to the Great Physician, Who alone can cure such moral sickness; and of Whom it is written, "Who healeth all thy diseases." All of His sanctified ones, it is safe to say, were at one time more or less diseased thus, and proportionately "worthless" for 'His service. True, it is worse for those who were once cleansed, if they, "like the sow, return to the wallowing in the mire" of sin—but still there is hope, if the Good Physician's medicine be taken persistently the same as at first.

The danger is that the conscience, becoming defiled, will so pervert the judgment that bitterness is esteemed to be sweetness, and envy and malice to be justice and duty, and the "mire" of sin, to be the beauty of holiness. Then only is the case practically a hopeless one.

SOME OF THE GOOD PHYSICIAN'S' ANTIDOTES FOR HEART IMPURITY.

The Good Physician has pointed out antidotes for soul-poisoning—medicines which if properly taken according to directions, will sweeten the bitter heart. Instead of envy it will produce love; instead of malice and hatred and strife, love and concord; instead of evil-speaking and back-biting and scandal-mongering it will produce the love which thinketh no evil and which worketh no ill to his neighbour; which suffereth long and is kind, which vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, which never faileth and which is the Spirit of the Lord and the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Let us all take these medicines, for they are good, not only for the violently sick, but for the convalescing and the well. The following are some of the prescriptions:

(1) "He that bath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He (the Lord) is pure."--1 John 3:3,

The hope mentioned is that we have been adopted as sons of God, with the promise that if faithful we shall be like Him and see Him as He is, and share His glory. As our minds and hearts expand with this hope, and we begin to measure its lengths and breadths, its heights and depths, it surely does set before us the Heavenly Father's love and the Redeemer's love in rainbow colours, and we more and more love the Father and the Son because they first loved us. The divine form of love becomes more and more our ideal; and as we seek to reciprocate it and to copy it, the cleaning and purifying of our hearts follows: for looking into the perfect law of liberty—love—we become more and more ashamed of all the meannesses and selfishness which the fall brought to us, and once seen in their true light as works of the flesh and of the devil, all anger, malice, wrath, envy, strife, evil-speaking, evil-surmising, 'backbiting and slander become more and more repulsive to us. And finally when we see that such as to any degree sympathise with these evil qualities are unfit for the kingdom and to every good work worthless, we flee from these evils of the soul as from deadly contagion. Our hearts (wills, intentions) become pure at once, and we set a guard not only upon our lips but also

upon our thoughts—that the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts may be acceptable to the Lord.

(2) “Who gave Himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.”—Titus 2:14. We might theorise much and very correctly upon how and when and by whom we were redeemed; but this all would avail little if we forget why we were redeemed. The redemption was not merely a redemption from the power of the grave—it was chiefly “from all iniquity.” And the Lord is not merely seeking a peculiar people, but specially a people peculiarly cleansed, purified. This medicine will surely serve to purge us from iniquity if we are anxious to make our calling and election sure.

(3) “Pursue righteousness, fidelity, love, peace, with all who call upon the Lord with a pure heart.”—2 Tim. 2:22.

We not only need to start right, but also to pursue a right course. We may not follow unrighteousness even for a moment: whatever it may cost, justice and righteousness must be followed. But here a difficulty arises with some: they do not know how to judge righteous judgment. They are too apt to judge according to rumour or appearances, or to accept the judgment of Scribes and Pharisees, as did the multitude which cried, “Crucify Him !. His blood be upon us and upon our children.” Had they followed righteousness they would have seen the Lord’s character in His good works as well as in His wonderful words of life: they would have seen that so far from being a blasphemer He was “holy, harmless, separate from sinners,” they would have seen that his accusers were moved by envy and hatred.

It is just as necessary as ever to follow the Lord’s injunction, “judge righteous judgment,” and whoever neglects it brings down “blood” upon his own head and becomes a sharer in the penalty due to false accusers. For as the Lord was treated so will His “brethren” be treated. The more pure our hearts the less will they be affected by slanders and backbitings and evil-speakings, and the more will we realise that those who have bitter hearts from which arise bitter words are impure fountains in which is the gall of bitterness and not the sweetness of love.

Next comes fidelity, that is, faithfulness. The Lord declares His own fidelity or faithfulness, and declares Himself a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. And even the worldly recognise fidelity as a grace, and by such it is often given first place, for many would commit theft or perjury through fidelity to a friend. But notice that God’s Word puts righteousness first. Fidelity, love and peace can only be exercised in harmony with righteousness, but unrighteousness not being proven against a brother, our fidelity and love and peace toward Him must continue, and indeed must increase in proportion as envy and slander and all the fiery darts of the wicked One assail him “without a cause.” This valuable prescription will help to keep our hearts free from the poison and bitterness of roots of bitterness which the Adversary keeps busily planting.

Justice is purity of heart—freedom from injustice. Righteousness is purity of heart—freedom from unrighteousness. Love is purity of heart—freedom from selfishness.

(4) “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit (the spirit of the Truth) unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart, fervently.”—1 Pet. 1:22.

This medicine is for those who have used the other prescriptions and gotten clean. It points out that the purity came not merely through hearing the Truth, nor through believing the Truth, but through obeying it. And not merely a formal obedience in outward ceremony and custom, and polished manner, but through obedience to the spirit of Truth—its real import. All this brought you to the point where the love of the “brethren” of Christ was unfeigned, genuine. At first you treated all with courtesy, or at least without impoliteness; but many of them you did not like, much less did you love them; they were poor, or shabby, or ignorant; or peculiar. But obeying the spirit of the Truth you recognised that all who trust in the precious blood and are consecrated to the dear Redeemer, and seeking to follow His leadings are “brethren,” regardless of race or colour or education or poverty or natural grace, You reached the point where your heart is so free from envy and pride and selfishness, and so full of the spirit of the Master that you can honestly say I love all the “brethren” with a love that is sincere and not at all feigned..

Now having gotten thus far along in the good way, the Lord, through the Apostle, tells us what next—that we may preserve our hearts pure—“See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently (intensely).” Ah, yes, the pure heart must not be forgotten, else it might be but a step from pure love into a snare of the Adversary, carnal love. But the pure love is not to be cold and indifferent; it is to be so warm and so strong that we would be willing to lay down our lives for the brethren.” —1 John 3:16.

With such a love as this burning in our hearts there will be no room there for any selfish, envious thoughts or words or deeds. Oh, how blessed would all the gatherings of the “brethren” be, if such a spirit pervaded all of them ! Can we doubt that, if it held sway in one-half or one-third or even one-fourth, it would speedily exercise a gracious influence upon all—for righteousness and fidelity and love and peace, and against every strife, malice, slanders and backbitings?

Let all the “brethren” more and more take these medicines which tend to sanctify and prepare us for the Master’s service here and hereafter.

Growing in Grace.

“But grow in Grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever.”- 2 Pet. 3:18.

Unto him that hath Thou givest
Ever “more abundantly.”
Lord, I live because thou livest,
Therefore give more life to me;

Therefore speed me in the race;
Therefore let me grow in grace.
Deepen all Thy work, O Master,
Strengthen every downward root,

Only do thou ripen faster
More and more thy pleasant fruit.
Purge me, prune me, self abase,
Only let me grow in grace.

Father, grace for grace outpouring,
Show me ever greater things;
Raise me higher, sunward soaring,
Mounting as on eagle’s wings.

By the brightness of Thy face,
Father, let me grow in grace.
Let me grow by sun or shower;
Every moment water me;

Make me really hour by hour
More and more conformed to Thee,
That Thy loving eye may trace,
Day by day, my growth in grace.

Let me, then, be always growing,
Never, never standing still;
Listening, learning, better knowing
Thee and Thy most blessed will,

Lighted in Thy holy place,
Daily let me grow in grace.

Question Box.

Question —Are we grafted into the olive tree when justified or when consecrated?

Answer.—Both. That is to say, the completion of justification is at consecration. No one has his justification complete, or full, unless he has consecrated himself. Our justification begins when we turn toward that which is just or right, and away from that which is unjust; and we get more justification, more nearly right (for justification means being right), as we proceed toward consecration. When our justification has progressed to the point of full consecration, only then are we recognised as begotten of the Spirit, and as branches in the Vine, pictured by the Lord in the 15th chapter of John. In the picture of the olive tree the same is true. Only spiritual branches are now grafted into this “olive tree.” The question is doubtless based upon Rom. 11:17, where the Apostle tells us that the Jewish nation represented the olive tree, which had the good root. The root of the olive tree was the definite promise made to Abraham: “In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed” —Gen. 12:3. The promise then began to produce branches. Every individual Jew claimed to be connected with this Abrahamic Covenant. The Apostle tells us that because of unfaithfulness many of these branches were not fit to be kept in, while those that were fit to stay in were “cleaned by the washing of water through the Word,” and transferred from Moses into Christ, and begotten of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle proceeds to say that ever since the Jewish branches were broken off God has been gathering branches out of the Gentiles, and that we are being grafted in instead of those broken off branches. We who were by nature children of wrath, aliens, are now grafted into the real tree through which the blessing is to come.

If we can get into that olive tree we then with Christ become heirs to the promise (Gal. 3:16, 29), but to retain our position we must abide in Christ. There are certain tests applied; and those who do not conform to those tests will not be permitted to abide, but will be cut off. Respecting the Vine or spiritual phase of the Abraham Covenant, the first-fruits, the Great Teacher said, “Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He (the Father) taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”—John 15:2. So, if we have the trimmings and prunings that He gives to the fruit-bearing branches, let us rejoice that we are in the good Husbandman’s care, and are in good condition. If we abide in the true Vine the time is not very far distant when we, with the remainder of the Church, will be glorified and constitute the Kingdom of Messiah, which in turn shall bless natural Israel and, through natural Israel, all the nations of the earth.

Question.—How do we understand “He was tempted in all points like as we are?”

Answer.—The Saviour was not tempted with the desire to steal or with the habits of a drunkard, neither are those the temptations which come to us—His footstep followers. We are to remember that the Scriptures clearly differentiate between us and the world: “Ye are not of the world even as I am not of the world.” “Tempted like as we are” therefore signifies that the temptations or trials which Jehovah permits to come upon His consecrated people are of the same kind as He permitted to come upon our Redeemer. It is important, therefore, that we notice the character of our tests. God is not testing us to see whether or not our flesh is perfect, for He knew all along that amongst men there is none righteous—no, not one. The Father’s tests for those whom He receives as sons are tests of loyalty to Him, loyalty to the principle of righteousness, loyalty to the Truth, loyalty to the Divine methods—a refusal to take our own way or to seek our own glory or our own ease at the expense of the Truth or of the Divine method.

Question.—Please explain Romans 7:11.

Answer.—See American Version: “For sin taking occasion through the commandments, beguiled me, and through it slew me.

Paul is here speaking of himself as though representing Israel. They were sons of Abraham, and, therefore, alive toward God prior to the law. The human race generally were born under condemnation to death on account of Adam’s sin. In view of the ransom which was to be paid Abraham was justified by faith, then his seed were born of faith and in this sense alive towards God, while the rest of mankind were dead in trespasses and sins. Then came the law and its offer of life to those who would keep it. It seemed a way to life—they thought they could keep that Law—gain life—but instead they found their inability, and consequently they incurred the penalty for breach of the Law, which was death. So they were beguiled in the sense that they had not had a proper conception of true holiness and of how great a hold sin had upon them. They, however, learned that “By the deeds of the Law no flesh could be justified, and this should have brought them to Christ to accept the way of grace through faith in His blood.

Correspondence

One of Our Readers writes:—I am now forwarding my subscription to the “People’s Paper,” which has been a great help to me to know more of God’s great plan of salvation. I am greatly interested in the questions asked and answered, and wish you every success with your “Paper.”

Another Reader in Victoria writes am more than pleased to receive each month the “wee” paper. It is a real spiritual letter to look forward to. I hope nothing may hinder, its publication for some time to come, and enclose — for this work.

We may state that so long as it seems the Lord’s will. we will endeavour to continue the publication of the “People’s Paper,” and for the benefit of our readers we may mention that extra copies are printed each month, so that those wishing to have more to pass on to friends may do so, and in this way perhaps increase our subscription list.

We invite the cooperation of all our readers in our service, and in addition to such studies as the “Fore-gleams of the Golden Age” and other Bible studies, we are able to supply at greatly reduced rates “The Divine Plan of the Ages,” and succeeding volumes respecting the second coming of Christ, and the harvest work preparatory to the setting up of Christ’s Kingdom, so that all wishing to extend these valuable Bible helps to others may do so at small cost.

HISTORICAL EXCERPT (Milner.)

THE GENERAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN THE SEVENTH CENTURY.

PHOCAS, the Greek emperor, was deposed and slain by Heraclius in the year 610. He was one of the most vicious and profligate tyrants, and may be compared with Caligula, Nero and Domitian.

Since the days of Constantine, such characters had been exceeding rare. For such was the benign influence of the gospel, that even amidst all the corruptions and abuses of it, which were now so numerous, a decency of character and conduct, unknown to their pagan predecessors, was supported by the emperors in general. Heraclius, the successor of Phocas, reigned thirty years. In the beginning of his reign the Persians desolated the eastern part of the empire, and made themselves masters of Jerusalem.

While Asia groaned under their cruelties and oppressions, and was afflicted with scourge after scourge for her abuse of the best gift of God, an opportunity was given for the exercise of Christian graces to a bishop of a church, which had long ceased to produce Christian fruit.

This was John, Bishop of Alexandria, called the Almoner, on account of his extensive liberality. He daily supplied with necessaries those who flocked into Egypt, after they had escaped the Persian arms. He sent to Jerusalem the most ample relief, for such as were-mined there; he ransomed captives; placed the sick and wounded in hospitals, and visited them two or three times a week. His spirit was noble. “Should the whole world come to Alexandria,” said he, “they could not exhaust the treasures of God.”

The Nile not having risen to its usual height, there was a barren season; provisions were scarce, and crowds of refugees still poured into Alexandria. John continued, however, his liberal donatives, till he had neither money nor credit. He still persevered in hope and faith. He even refused a very tempting offer of a person, who would have bribed him with a large present that he might be ordained deacon. “As to my brethren, the poor,” said the prelate, “God, who fed them before you and I were born, will take care to feed them now if we obey him.” Soon after, two large ships, which he had sent to Sicily for corn, arrived, and he said, “I thank thee, O Lord, that Thou has kept me from selling Thy gift for money.”

From the beginning of his bishopric he maintained 7500 poor persons by daily alms. He was accessible to them on all occasions, and divine faith seems to have influenced his acts of love. “If God,” said he, “allow us to enter into His house at all times, and if we wish Him speedily to hear us, how ought we to conduct ourselves toward our brethren?” He constantly studied the Scriptures, and, in his conversation, was instructive and exemplary. Slander and evil speaking he particularly disliked. If any person in his presence was guilty in this respect, he would give another turn to the conversation. If the person still persisted, he would direct his servant not to admit him any more.

Like Josiah of old, he seems to have been sent to reform a falling church, but he had to leave Alexandria in 616 for fear of the Persians. He died soon after at Cyprus in the same spirit in which he had lived; and with him ends all that is worth recording of the church of Alexandria.

In the same year the haughty Chosroes, King of Persia, having conquered Alexandria and Egypt and taken Chalcedon, Heraclius, who saw the ruin of his empire approaching, begged for peace. "That I will never consent to," replied the tyrant, "till you renounce Him who was crucified, and with me adore the sun."

If one compare Chosroes with Heraclius, their personal characters will not appear intrinsically different. In one is seen a daring blasphemer of Christ, in the other a nominal professor of religion whose life brought no honour to the name. Their ostensible characters in the world were, however, extremely different. The spirit of Hercules was roused, and the Persian King was repeatedly vanquished, though he ceased not to persecute the Christians so long as he had power. In the year 628 the Persian power ceased to be formidable to the Roman empire.

In the year 608 Mahomet had begun to declare himself a prophet, and by the assistance of a Jew and a renegade Christian, had formed a farrago of doctrines and rites, in which there was a mixture of Paganism, Judaism and Christianity, whence he found means to draw over to his party some of the various sorts of men who inhabited Arabia. An age of excessive ignorance favoured his schemes; at this day so senseless and absurd a book as the Koran could scarce move the mind of any person in Europe. But he laid hold of the passion of men, and by promising them a carnal heaven hereafter he contrived a religion more directly adapted to please mankind than any other of which we have heard.

But there are seasons of infatuation, when, for the sins of men, empires and kingdoms are permitted to slumber, and enter into no effectual measures of resistance till invaders, at first weak and contemptible, grow in time to an enormous height. This was the case with Mohammedanism. The time was come when the Saracen locusts were about to torment the Christian world, and the prophecy of Rev. 9:1-12 was going to be fulfilled. The Greeks were idly employed in a new dispute; vice and wickedness prevailed over the East. A few, indeed, mourned over the times, and adorned the truth by humility and holiness, but scarce any Christian writers appeared to make a serious opposition to the doctrines of Mahomet, and, at the time of his death, which happened in the year 631, he had conquered almost all Arabia.

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