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The Law of Retribution

Sowing and Reaping.—Visiting Sins of Parents Upon Their Children.—Justice of the Divine Arrangement.—Grace So Much More Abounds.—Else Were Your Children Unholy.

NO one of experience can question the fact that our text is corroborated by all our experiences in life. However unjust some may claim it to be that the children should inherit the weaknesses resulting from parental dissipation and violations of the Divine law, the fact remains that although atheism may question the existence of God or infidelity doubt the inspiration of his Word, no one can question the two facts of this text, (1) that sin and its penalty can be inherited and (2) that God is merciful to such as renounce sin and turn to him and seek to walk according to his direction. Although afflictions upon evil doers and their children and blessings upon well doers and their posterity may be termed natural laws and laws of heredity, it does not alter the facts because the Almighty is the one who made these laws of heredity.

Under the delusion handed down to us from the "dark ages"—that God had condemned to eternal torment all the children of Adam because of his sin—we are all inclined properly enough to feel rebellious against any such matter and to assert that from the standpoint of human reasoning it would be entirely unjust to torture the posterity of Adam eternally for his transgression—"original sin." But as we get the eyes of our understanding opened to see what is the real penalty for sin, that it is death, extinction, and that our perfect parents, fully informed respecting the Divine will, were culpable, worthy of death, and when we learn further that whatever is enjoyed by Adam's posterity in the way of life, however disadvantageous the conditions, is so much of Divine leniency and mercy and comes so much short of being the full penalty, death, extinction—then we begin to see that life under any conditions and disadvantages is still a boon.

In Wrath Have Mercy, Lord.

Recognizing the wrath of God as manifested in the death penalty (not in an eternity of torture) we can see that the Scriptures everywhere declare that the wrath of God is resting upon our race; that every member of it is subject to this very penalty which came upon father Adam and has been entailed upon all of his posterity.

The Almighty Creator did not wait for us to cry out for his pity and compassion, but from the very beginning, foreknowing our fall into sin, he had the plan arranged for our redemption and ultimate recovery from this condition of wrath, curse, death. We are informed that our Lord Jesus was the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world—in the Divine purpose and arrangement—though only now being made manifest to the Church and shortly to the world. Thus viewed there has been no injustice practised against our race in permitting the children to share with their father Adam in his penalty. Rather they have esteemed it and do esteem it better than the sentence itself, and furthermore in the Lord's providences the world's present experience in the fall and later on in the recovery from the fall in the hands of the great Redeemer during the Millennial Age, is to prove a lesson, a schooling, in the exceeding sinfulness of sin, which the race as a whole will never forget and out of which many (now the Church, later on the world) will draw lessons of wisdom and grace.

Economy of the Divine Plan.

Looking still more deeply into the Divine Plan as it is revealed in the

Lord's Word for those who are his (Psalm xxv, 14), we find a particular reason why it was not only advisable but necessary that this law of heredity should operate in our race, even though it brought in its train a terrible list of experiences. The reason for this is based upon one element of the Divine character—Justice—the very element which at one time we supposed was violated by this law of heredity. As our eyes open to the teaching of the Scriptures we perceive that if God had not permitted his law of heredity to operate, but had permitted each individual of the race to come forth to perfection and to stand an individual trial such as father Adam was subject to, it would doubtless have meant that at least one-half of the race, possibly more, would have deliberately chosen a course of sin as father Adam chose it. To expect more than one-half to be obedient would be unreasonable. Rather, from what we see about us in the experiences of life, we would have been liable to conclude that only a very small minority, perhaps one-tenth, would have been obedient to God, while the remaining nine-tenths would have been disobedient.

Some might ask, "Would not even that have been better than the Divine arrangement as we see it operating now, that the whole race should suffer for one man's disobedience?" We answer, No! not according to the testimony of the Scriptures. The Bible shows us that while this law of retribution has worked such terrible havoc in Adam and his race for now 6,000 years—while 20,000,000,000 have been born in sin and sorrow and pain and after a few years of trouble have died in sorrow and pain, nevertheless in God's due time all of these shall have more favorable opportunities of knowing God's true character and of attaining to a full character-development in his likeness during the Millennial Age. This means that probably more will gain eternal life and blessing under the Divine arrangement as we have it than we could reasonably expect would have been saved had the Lord not provided this law of heredity and condemnation of all, but on the contrary had permitted each to be born in perfection and to stand his trial as between loyalty to God with the reward of eternal life or disobedience punished with death. But we shall see that it means much more than this.

Condemned in One—Redeemed by One.

A great economic law is connected with the Divine arrangement. The condemnation of a race in one man's loins because of his transgression made possible the Divine arrangement that a Second Man should pay the penalty for the first and redeem both him and all who were in him at the time of his condemnation. This is at once a demonstration of Divine Wisdom and of Divine Justice. Suppose, for instance, that the law of heredity had not prevailed, had not been instituted by Jehovah, but that each individual had come forth perfect and had been personally placed on trial and been personally condemned to death. Would

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it not have required an individual savior for each one condemned under such an arrangement? Surely it would. Hence, had one-half of the race proven themselves sinners and been personally condemned, it would have been necessary either to avoid redemption altogether or to redeem the sinner-half of the race by giving a life for a life—a perfect being's sacrifice for or instead of each imperfect life. Estimating the total number of our race at 20,000,000,000, Justice would have been obliged to require 10,000,000,000 of perfect beings to be offered as the ransom price for the 10,000,000,000 of sinners. Under the very best estimate that we can possibly make, this would have required the death of all the perfect ones of the race as redeemers for all the imperfect members, and what havoc that would have implied—with just as many dying as under present conditions, namely, one-half as sinners and the other half as redeemers, ransoms! Besides, we perceive that it would not have been just on the part of the Almighty to compel the righteous ones to suffer for the unrighteous as their redeemers, hence there would have been no assurance even then that any but a fraction of the sinner race would have been redeemed. On the contrary, how wise, conservative and economical was the Divine arrangement that by one man's disobedience under the laws of heredity the many would be born sinners and sharers in his penalty, death, and that then in due time one Savior, one perfect one, the "man Christ Jesus," might redeem Adam and, redeeming him, redeem all of his race from the death sentence, the curse, the wrath of God, and as a result of the redemption obtain the right, the authority, the power during his Millennial Kingdom and in association with his glorified Church of the Gospel Age, to bless all the families of the earth and to uplift as many as would be willing out of all their ignorance, weakness and sinful and dying conditions to all that was lost in Adam.

We have seen that in harmony with the Divine law it would not have been just for the Heavenly Father to obligate the righteous to die for sinners and that hence the redemption of the sinners would have been problematical—very doubtful. But on the contrary the Heavenly Father well knew in advance the loyalty of his First-Begotten, his Only Begotten, who is declared to have been the "beginning of the creation of God" (Revelation iii, 14). He knew not only of Jesus' loyalty but that his experiences with him in glory would every way qualify our Lord for the tests and the sacrifices necessary for the redemption of the race with his own precious blood. The Scriptures assure us, furthermore, that the Father set before him some certain joys, certain blessings, certain promises, in connection with his work of man's redemption; as we read, "Who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down on the right hand of the majesty on high" (Hebrews xii, 2).

Retributive Joys and Rewards.

We are to remember, too, that the Scriptures distinctly teach that the condition of the affairs of our world—sin, retributive punishment, the redemption through Jesus, the call of the Church and their sufferings with their Redeemer and the promises of future blessing and glory both for the Church and for the world—are subjects in which the angels of God are interested. As the Apostle Peter says, "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, * * * searching what, or manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in

them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow; * * * which things the angels desire to look into" (I Peter, i, 10-12). They wondered when all the sufferings of Jesus and the Church would be completed, and when the glory time would come and the recovery from sin and death conditions; when God's purpose would thus ripen and bear fruit in the recovery of those who fell from his favor in Adam's disobedience but were redeemed by the precious blood.

The great lesson of what constitutes disobedience, and how serious a sin it is, and what it would lead to if allowed to take its course, was illustrated in man's experiences; and all the hosts of angels looked on with amazement, no doubt. God's Justice was fully demonstrated in the infliction of the death penalty and the permission of its inroads upon the mental, moral and physical perfection of his creatures, bringing many of the race down almost to brutality. God's Love was manifested in the gift of his Son, in the arrangement of his plan by which for the joy set before him, Jesus might become Adam's Redeemer, and the Bridegroom of the Elect Church and ultimately the great King of Glory who, during the Millennial Age, is to restore, revive and bless and test Adam and all his race.

Christ and the Church Crucially Tested

We cannot wonder if all the holy angels looked on in amazement as they beheld the only Begotten Son of God leave the "glory which he had before the world was" and humble himself to take human nature—to be born a man that he might redeem Adam and his race. It must have seemed wonderful to them not only that the Heavenly Father would arrange such a plan but wonderful also that the glorious "Only Begotten," "First-Born," should be the one to whom the proposition would be made to show his faith and love for the Father, to do his will to the extent of such a sacrifice, not only of glory, but, eventually, of life. They had yet to see a further operation of the Divine law of retribution operating in Jesus for his blessing and honor. So intent were they in looking at the humiliation of the Only Begotten, and then at his death, that apparently they did not so carefully note the fact that the Heavenly Father had set before him great joys, great blessings, great exaltation, when he should finish his work.

Already the Only Begotten was next to the Father in glory and dignity, honor and power; what more of Divine honor could be bestowed upon even the First-Born of every creature? The Only Begotten himself appears not to have thought particularly of the promised glory: the joy set before him, however, seems to have been that he would do the Father's will and thus demonstrate his absolute loyalty even unto death. While, no doubt, it was a joy to the Lord to be the Father's Agent in the rescue of Adam and his race from sin and death, nevertheless we believe that his chief joy in connection with the matter was that thus he might demonstrate to the Father

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Lazarus in
Abraham's Bosom**

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his absolute love by his submission and obedience. Our Lord's own words were, "Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John xvii, 5). He knew of the Father's proposed exaltation of him as a reward, but he did not mention this; he would merely ask of the Father that when he had accomplished the Divine purpose, he might have back the same honor and position and Divine favor which he had laid aside when he humbled himself to become Adam's redemption price, the world's Savior. Such modesty and loyalty are difficult for us to comprehend because of our fallen, imperfect conditions.

The Exaltation of Christ and the Church.

But the Apostle explains to us, speaking under the power of inspiration, that because of our Lord's obedience in leaving the glory and becoming a man and dying for our sins, therefore "God hath highly exalted him and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth" (Philippians ii, 9, 10). Elsewhere in the Scriptures we are assured that our Lord became partaker of the divine nature in his resurrection; that thus he attained a reward far above anything that could have been thought, not only above angels, but also far above his own prehuman condition. In thus rewarding the faithful the Lord is carrying out the spirit of our text—he has been exemplifying what is otherwise taught in the Scriptures—"whatsoever man soweth that shall he also reap" (Galatians vi, 7). Adam sowed disobedience and he and his race have reaped a terrible harvest of degradation, suffering and death. The Only Begotten sowed obedience, as prophetically expressed of him at the time of his baptism, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; thy law is written in my heart" (Psalm 40:8). Laying down his life in harmony with the Divine program was his sowing and the reaping at the resurrection was glory, honor and immortality, the divine nature. How richly Jehovah rewards every demonstration of loyalty to himself and the principles of righteousness!

Responsibility and the decision as to life eternal and death eternal, come to each member of Adam's race as soon as he is brought into a clear knowledge of the Truth. This privilege of coming to a knowledge of the Truth, the opportunity of eternal salvation, is secured to all the families of the earth, to Adam and every member of his race, through the great Redeemer's sacrifice finished at Calvary. While thanking God for the length and breadth and height and depth of his glorious provision for the world in general, we who now hear this message and heed it have the special blessing and opportunity of joint-heirship with Jesus the Redeemer in his great Messianic Kingdom work. Let us not only accept the Divine favor, but let us run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and the One who shall be the Finisher of our faith, seeking for needed aid to make our calling and election sure!

Let us continue to endeavor to walk more and more closely in Jesus' footsteps until we shall hear the sweet "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord."

The Hope of Immortality

This subject which has been so misunderstood, is convincingly and Scripturally treated in PEOPLES PULPIT, Volume 2, Number 4.

Spiritism is Demonism

Its Increasing Influence.—We Wrestle Not Against Flesh and Blood, but Against Wicked Spirits in High Places.

FOR twenty-five years we have sought to forewarn God's people and the public against the influence of the Fallen Angels, the Wicked Spirits in high positions. (Eph. 6:12). The pamphlet we publish treating this subject* has had a wide circulation. We have been much encouraged by the many reports received, showing that its influence has been widely felt for good, not only among the Lord's people, restraining them from "curious and dangerous investigations," but also among those who had been partially ensnared by the "wiles" of these adversaries—some of them "mediums."

We remind our readers afresh that the Scriptures expressly show that the fallen spirits would be held under restraint for a long time, and that those restraints would gradually be relaxed in the closing of this Gospel Age, in the lapping of the Millennial Age. The record is that they were "restrained [in Tartarus, our atmosphere] in lasting chains of darkness unto the Judgment of the Great Day." (Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4.) As now the "Great Day" nears, it is not surprising to watchers to note that the chains are being gradually loosened, and that these "wicked spirits" have greater liberties than ever before.

"Be Not High-Minded, But Fear."

There is still danger to those who "don't believe in spirits," and who regard as superstitious the Bible narratives of how our Lord and the Apostles cast out demons, and how all wizards, witches, necromancers and others who proposed to hold intercourse with the dead were strictly prohibited in Israel. There is more danger to the self-confident, who "dare investigate anything," and who boast "a mind of their own," than of the humbler ones who say, "Let us fear to tamper with what God has forbidden." To many of the boldly self-confident curiosity is the demons' trap. Before they are aware of it they are snared. The beginning of the trap is a bait to curiosity—a visit to a "medium," "a seance" with friends, or a "planchette" at a neighbor's home.

The Scriptures forewarn us that we are no match intellectually for the Wicked Spirits, and need to give heed to the protections afforded us in the counsels of the Lord's Word. In the end of the Jewish Age many were afflicted with evil spirits, and a considerable part of our Lord's work and that of the Apostles was referred to by the latter when reporting to our Lord—"Even the demons are subject unto us in thy name." (Luke 10:17.) So prominent is this matter in the four Gospels that they contain forty-two references to these demons—mistranslated "devils" in our Common Version.

These Are the "Strong Delusions."

The Apostle points out that in the end of this age the Lord will "send," or permit to come upon Christendom, "strong delusions," that they may believe a lie—that they all may be condemned. (2 Thess. 2:11, 12). Thank God, we see clearly that they will not be condemned to everlasting torture. Oh, no! That blasphemous misrepresentation of God's Word is one of the devices of these "Wicked Spirits," by which they would drive men away from God, by which they would blind them to his real character. But we are now in the "harvest," and the wheat must be separated from the tares, and these "strong delusions" will be permitted to demonstrate who have loved and obeyed the Lord's counsel and who, not doing this, are to be adjudged unworthy of the high rewards soon to be given to the "overcomers."

The context shows this, declaring in so many words that the "delusions" will ensnare them because "they received not the truth in the love of it." The "truth" is that the dead are dead, and cannot re-live except by Divine power exercised for their awakening from this death-sleep. This plain truth, so abundantly set forth in the Scriptures, is not relished by any except the truth-hungry. Others tell us that they do not like to believe thus; that they prefer to think of the dead as not being dead, but more alive than ever. Rejecting the plain truth as God presented it, and

*What say the Scriptures about Spiritism?—128pp., 10c.

preferring Satan's lie, "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4), these are easy marks for the demons who are constantly striving to perpetuate the lie which deceived Mother Eve in Eden. They will now be permitted to personate the dead so successfully as to be a "strong delusion," which "if it were possible [if the Lord did not protect them by the 'armor of God'] would deceive the very elect."—Matt. 24:24.

Hypnotism and Telepathy Modern Demonism.

Spiritism cunningly feigns, for a time, that its manifestations are the exercise of human powers. Thus it gains access to the hearts of men and women who dread demonism instinctively. Gradually, however, it comes to be conceded that the spirits are at the bottom of these powers, which are at least partially "occult." For years we have been almost alone in opposing hypnotism, telepathy, etc., as Spiritism in a new form; but now no less a celebrity than Professor J. H. Hyslop, formerly "Teacher of Logic and Ethics" in Columbia University, and now a leading light in The American Society for Psychical Research, seems to concede that spirits have to do with such matters—not demons, but in his supposition "spirits of dead humans."

Prof. Hyslop is quoted in the New York "American" thus:—

"Telepathy is not a matter of thought waves. The solution is so simple as to be astounding. Messages are carried from mind to mind by the spirits. Mediumistic qualities are necessary, but, possessed of these and able to get in touch with the spirit world, telepathy should become as easy of accomplishment as the telegraphing of a message with wires.

"None but scientists should tamper with the weird phenomena of nature represented by telepathy," said Dr. Hyslop. "Every investigation should be made sanely and every experiment approached with a mind clear, impartial and prepared to weigh and balance every fact as carefully as though it were a precious gem.

"Our experiments in telepathy I regard as convincing if not wholly satisfactory in number or in the ability to repeat them at will.

"In these experiments we used Mrs. Piper, who was sent to England in care of the British Society. She was allowed to come into contact with no one not in league with the persons making the experiments. We began our experiments in long distance telepathy in the hope of eventually getting a message across the Atlantic, but failed time after time.

"Finally we scored a success. It was as remarkable as it was unexpected. The message was sent across the ocean in a way to demonstrate perfectly the possibilities of long distance telepathy. The experiment was conducted in a manner to eliminate any trace of fraud or deception. It was sent in English and delivered in Latin."

Communication With the Dead.

In an article over his own signature in the New York "World," Prof. Hyslop says:—

"That there would be great difficulties in communicating, if spirits actually exist, would naturally be taken for granted by intelligent people. The silence of so many incarnate spirits through the ages, if they exist, would be sufficient proof of that fact, as well as what we know of the difficulty of communications between living people when they have no common language as a means of it. But there happen to be additional reasons for this difficulty, and they should be mentioned in order that the layman (I ought not to mention it to the scientist) may see and appreciate the reasons why the communications take the form which they show. The first of these is the abnormal mental and physical condition of the medium, specifically to illustrate, as in the case of Mrs. Piper. But this is not the chief reason that the communications are trivial and confused, or lacking in the kind of information wanted. The reason for these characteristics is deeper still. It is that the communicator is himself in an abnormal mental condition while communicating. It may be compared to a delirious dream, or to certain types of secondary personality in the living, or even to the trance of Mrs. Piper, in some of its aspects."

Rev. I. K. Funk, D.D., "Touched."

Rev. I. K. Funk, D.D., of New York City, the widely known Methodist min-

ister, has had some thrilling experiences with spirits and has published them to the world, asserting, however, what even Spiritualists will admit, that some of the so-called manifestations are frauds; that others are by deceiving or "lying spirits." His investigations, like those of Prof. Hyslop, show the trend of our times, and give a hint of what we may expect when shortly the whole world will turn to the investigation of Spiritism as "the only proof that the dead are not dead."

Rev. R. Heber Newton's Views.

"Discussing psychical science in an address tonight before the American Institute for Scientific Research in the home of C. Griswold Bourne, the Rev. R. Heber Newton made the assertion that the spirits of the dead communicate with the living; that telepathy is a power possessed by many men and women, and that clairvoyance is an established scientific fact. Said he in part:—

"Clairvoyance was nothing but a will of the wisp, but it is now a confessed power of certain organizations. Mollie Fancher, over in Brooklyn, has proved stronger than the incredulity of our savants. The belief in the existence of unseen spirits and of their power of communication with us in the flesh is one of the oldest, most widespread and most insistent beliefs of man, and it has revived strangely in our day.

"For the first time in the history of man these powers have been scientifically investigated in our day. Already the result is that a considerable number of eminent men of science have had the courage to avow that, after allowing for illusion, fraud and every possible hypothesis of interpretation, they have been driven up to the ultimate solution of the problem—the belief in the actual communication of the spirits of those whom we call dead with the living.

"Anyone who walks with his eyes open, ready to hear what men have to tell, will find stories pouring in upon him from men whom he cannot mistrust as liars, and whom he knows to be sane and sensible, which will stagger him. These experiences are not at all confined to the seance and the medium. Their most impressive forms occur in the privacy of the home without a professional medium present."—Pittsburg Gazette.

The standing of Dr. Newton in the Protestant Episcopal Church will carry a weight of influence, and is being published and discussed in every quarter.

Suggestive Facts Noted.

It does not surprise us that Spiritism, like Christian Science, is aiming for the influential. Whatever else the fallen angels may be they are "wily," cunning. The Lord's people, on the contrary, number "not many wise, not many great, not many learned, not many rich, not many noble, but chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith."—Jas. 2:5.

A lady who has but recently come into the light of Present Truth, and who previously was a Spiritist, tells of how she had developed the "clair-audient ear," or the power of hearing the spirits when others heard nothing. (And, by the way, all should avoid everything of this kind as they would avoid a plague; they should, if approached thus, at once turn their hearts to the Lord in prayer for aid to resist the intrusion.) This woman's relatives have been interested for some years in Present Truth, and pointed out to her that her communings were not with dead friends, but with the fallen angels, "demons," and finally got her to the point of reading "Studies in the Scriptures." This displeased the "spirits," who for a time almost prevented her study by an incessant opposition, such as "Don't read that," "That's not true," etc., etc. Gradually she asserted her will, calling on the Lord for help, and we understand that now she is quite free from their intrusions.

Another case which recently came to our attention, is that of a boy of 19 years, in Eastern Pennsylvania, who is terribly oppressed by demons. One of the brethren, hearing of the case, called to see him, taking a copy of the "Spiritism" pamphlet and a copy of "The Watch Tower." The presence of the papers so aggravated the boy that they had to be removed before the brother could talk to the possessed one. The spirits having him under their control nearly set him wild until the books were removed. "The darkness hateth

"WHERE ARE THE DEAD?"

This sermon was published in PEOPLES PULPIT, Volume one, Number 3. The interest aroused, and the great demand for copies of this sermon has been remarkable. A sample copy will be mailed to any one free.

the light." We do not doubt that these evil spirits would do injury to the servants of the Truth if permitted. Evidently they are under some restraint as respects the Lord's people. Later on they may be permitted to operate through others, as Satan entered into Judas before the betrayal.

Experiences in Spiritualism.

We clip the following from an exchange, "The Prophetic News." It may serve to further emphasize the foregoing:—

"I was induced to yield my hand to be controlled by a spirit, in consequence of reading what Mr. Stead wrote in the 'Review of Reviews' about Spirit-Writing. Thus was the first step taken on this forbidden yet fascinating course. I look back on that first step and remember that I never uttered, in the perplexity that filled my mind, a prayer to God. I should have at once sought the guidance of God. Before I thought of so doing, I was seized with the desire to seek this newly-found source of help. I fear much I am not alone in being foolishly misguided by the perusal of spiritualistic literature which is now being circulated far and wide in England.

"The spirit that came and offered me his aid forbade my praying to God, assigning as a reason that I was now under special heavenly guidance, superseding the need of prayer, and that my heavenly inheritance was sure. That was strange counsel, and it was still stranger that I should have for one moment harbored it; but harbor it I did.

"But, in addition, this messenger of Satan forbade my study of the Scriptures, for I had lately commenced a methodical reading thereof. The reason given for this on the part of my evil counsellor was that the work I was now under so strong an obligation to execute, was so urgent that no time could be spared for other mental occupation.

"Under the pretence of aiding me I was now 'interviewed' by other spirits, who declared themselves to be the spirits of departed mortals. One assumed the character of what I might call ultra piety, and warned me from coming into association with and under the influence of a certain minister of the Gospel residing in the neighborhood—one who would certainly have counselled me in my perplexed state of mind with wisdom—but against him my 'interviewer' uttered base slanders. This spirit hindered me greatly by making long discourses

Of an Irrelevant Character.

"Another spirit declared himself to have been the former English ambassador to the nation of these persecuted Christians concerning whose distressing condition my heart was bleeding; and in language befitting a statesman he related his remarkable experience in the executing of his ambassadorial office. Then he desired my work to take a form which I subsequently found to be the worst under the circumstances, and that I should communicate it to an important public functionary. This was so opposed to my judgment that I could not yield assent to it.

"After this the first spirit that came to me under the garb of a guardian angel declared that the spirit of my beloved mother had been permitted to visit me for a few minutes, and that she entreated me to transmit a message to a relative residing abroad, and that, though I was ignorant of the purport of this message, she would herself guide my pen in writing it down. I took the pen into my hand, holding it loosely for her to guide it. A strong wish came upon me to see my mother's form. Then, to my great astonishment, her portrait was instantaneously and with consummate skill drawn on the paper before me. I now watched with breathless interest the writing of the message. It was traced in her well-known (to me) handwriting. Only two words were written, but they were written three times. The words written, with tremulous haste and urgency, were **SAVE SOULS**, and with a quick movement the pen was made to drop.

"Such a message from such a source smote my heart with its deep solemnity. But I could not bring myself to send the message. I felt it would be wrong to send it. The relative for whom it was intended was already engaged in Christian mission work, and somehow I shrank from bringing on his mind the influence of a message from whence I hardly knew. I felt a total disinclination for any further communications from spirits, and I determined to receive no more from so dubious a source. But I was not to be so easily disentangled from this net into which in an evil moment I had deliberately placed my feet.

The Spirits Betray Their Evil Intention.

"In disgust, and as if to take a plunge out of the vortex into which I had been stealthily drawn, I threw into the fire the portrait of my mother and all the spirit-writing. I would not believe that the spirit of that dear Christian—my mother—was wandering on this earth in company with others who gave me such disastrous counsels, and failed in their promise to strengthen and aid me. I even came to the conclusion that these spirits had attempted an impersonation of that departed saint, and had written that solemn message in order to induce me to believe in their celestial character and the sanctity of their intentions, that I might be induced to follow their perilous injunctions.

"To justify their proceedings they were apt in misquoting Scripture. There was a terrible mystery in this,

and it filled me with dire forebodings. I then said to myself, half aloud, 'Can it be possible that there are evil spirits who have power to communicate with mortals and deceive them?'

"A spirit answered, 'Yes,' and added that they themselves would now act evilly towards me and that I was in their power to be punished, since I had sought to obtain knowledge forbidden to mortals.

"With this startling declaration they changed their character and conduct to me.

"I now believed that I had committed a sin in consulting them; but it was done in ignorance (it was a culpable ignorance, nevertheless) and with innocent intent. Surely I could trust in Divine mercy to pardon me.

"But the spirit answered my thought by declaring that the Divine mercy should not reach me, but that he would accuse me before the Recording Angel of this deadly sin—intercourse with spirits—and would call for immediate judgment!

"Let it be remembered that these very spirits by their lying deception had induced me to cease from prayer and the study of Scripture, and had declared that my heavenly inheritance was sure. They left me to execute their threat.

A Remarkable Vision.

"Soon after this a remarkable vision appeared by the permitted instrumentality of these tormentors. One night the wall at the end of my room seemed to vanish, and a large open space appeared. At one side was a dais with steps which appeared to lead up to an exalted throne, half hidden by clouds. Before the dais a number of celestial beings stood in a semi-circle, and apart from the rest, at the foot of the dais, was a terrible form. I knew this was the 'Prince of darkness,' and I instinctively felt he was there as my accuser, and I seemed to have no advocate. This terrible vision at first seemed a confirmation of the spirit's threat, yet there was one essential difference. It was not, as they said, an avenging angel, but Satan, who accused me. I wanted to reflect on this vision and the new conditions environing me, but spirit voices continually interrupted me, so that I could neither think nor pray, but only repeat to myself some such words as, 'O Lord, in Thee have I trusted; let me never be confounded.'

"I could not stop their verbal communications, their small but intensely clear voices followed me everywhere.

"The spirits told me that the torments of hell, in which I had not believed, awaited me, and that in the infernal fires of the earth souls were in torment; and that the intensity of the punishment was proportioned to the guilt of the offender. They declared that I should know by experience the reality of eternal punishment that very night. The fact that I was still in mortal flesh would not impede them; there appeared to be some truth in their threat that they could cause death—or rather, the cessation of mortal existence, for they gave me an immediate and startling demonstration of their power in causing violent spasms and palpitations of the heart, while I was quite calm in mind. Indeed my imperturbable calmness caused them to remark that I was one of the bravest of mortals, but they would yet overcome me with greater terrors. But I ultimately found that they possessed no supreme power over the 'King of Terrors.' They then left me, and in the darkness and the silence of the night I waited, expectantly, believing that a terrible ordeal awaited me, for I knew that my enemies were powerful and malignant.

"The wall of my room again seemed to disappear, and I was conscious that a spirit had entered and touched me, and a voice declared that he who had entered was an administrator of justice in the infernal regions. He demanded of me if I knew

Why He Had Been Summoned to Me.

"I replied that I only knew that my enemies accused me, and that if he was the servant of God I desired him to tell me what it was the will of God that I should now do, for I desired only to know, and do that will.

"He answered in some such words as these: 'You are free; you cannot come within my province. I only punish those who will not obey God, and now I leave you.'

"I was inexpressibly thankful to be delivered from such threatening peril, and that a powerful spirit had acknowledged that Divine Power overruled in hell, and that he acted in subservience to it.

"All these spiritualistic manifestations were far from being the phantasmagoria of dream or fancy; they too evidently belonged to the stern and abiding realities of life. They were manifestations of that great, and potent, and eternal realm of spiritual power which mortal vision may not yet behold. Throughout this ordeal I was calm, and possessed that intensification of consciousness that is aroused by tragic circumstances.

"I resolved that as I had encountered these unique and tragic conditions not from personal needs or seeking personal aims, that the result of this experience should also have a wider range of influence.

"I had more to learn and to endure. I was even to learn that my deliverance from the power of demons, like my faith, was of an imperfect character.

"The remainder of the night I passed in peace. In the morning I recommenced the study of Holy Scripture; it became to me the most important concern of my life.

"But to my great distress the evil spirits immediately returned to me with ceaseless interruptions to prevent my

study. They determined to keep me from the knowledge of a full deliverance.

"They compelled me to listen to their account of an insurrection on earth against Divine power which they had long been planning, but which was ere long to be carried out. They asserted that their mighty potentate and chief had obtained the vicegerency of earth, and that he was the prince of this world, and that he would subjugate it as it never yet had been subjugated to his control, and that he would raise a storm of persecution against the followers of Christ. There was, in fact, to be a new putting forth of hellish influence upon the earth.

"I was compelled to hear from these spirits the unfolding of their diabolical scheme. They brought many proofs to substantiate the fact that their power on earth was already greatly increased and was increasing. The prospects, therefore, that seemed in store for the world overwhelmed me with dismay. They asserted that their great potentate—the god of this world' (Satan) had so subverted Christendom that at least the great ecclesiastical systems known as the Roman Greek, and Anglican churches would more entirely be subservient to him. I was inclined to disbelieve their statements. I wished that they could have been disproved, but facts appeared to corroborate them. I then for the first time observed that the Church of Rome was gaining great power, and as for the Greek Church in Russia, it was then inflicting terrible persecutions on the true followers of Christ—Christians—who would not practise idolatry.

"It was now made apparent to me that these spirits who had hypocritically proffered their aid for the persecuted Christians had themselves instigated idolatrous Churchmen to persecute them. I gathered further that the servants of the great potentate of darkness had sown error and discord freely in the other churches in Christendom, and that these would advance in error and in distance from God; that they had power to distract the attention and to deaden the perceptions of men who otherwise would

Arrest the Progress of Evil.

"The spirits then spoke with sardonic triumph of their school of materialistic philosophy and their teaching on Cosmogony as opposing that of the Book of Genesis—a system that modern science has found so acceptable as appearing to fit in with what the bowels of the earth have displayed, but which entirely leaves out of its thoughts the operation of God's hand in judgment at the fall of man, when not only man was morally and physically ruined, but that which was once pronounced 'very good' fell with the first man, so that the 'whole creation'—material and immaterial—groans for deliverance.

"A spirit calling himself Lord Beaconsfield declared that he would aid me by dictating a work of fiction that should surpass all his earthly efforts and would produce a small fortune for me, and that I should thus obtain the reputation of being a great genius by simply acting as his amanuensis, and he added the more alluring temptation to me—that the spirits could and would confer on me such knowledge and power that I myself should be considered by the world as a brilliant writer, and win fame and fortune.

"Perhaps his offer has been made to and accepted by some of our present writers of brilliant but pernicious fiction, especially those who have popularized and dignified Satan himself; some of whom I know are students of Occultism.

"One spirit professed to be the originator of such systems as Theosophy and Agnosticism. They had previously declared that 'thought-reading' was under their domination and effected by them. I gathered, generally, though it was not very clearly expressed, that mesmerism and hypnotism were likewise agencies in their hands.

The Triumph and Defeat of Satan.

"And now, as another confirmation of the ascendancy the spirits still had over me, they fulfilled their previous threat to call blaspheming demons to madden me. At their bidding these base spirits came and uttered horrible blasphemies until it seemed as if all hell was let loose upon me for a little while. Then the spirits used one last awful device to overthrow me, and nearly succeeded.

"In the midst of all these difficulties and dangers by which I was well-nigh overwhelmed, a commanding voice from an invisible spirit called me, saying words to this effect, 'That I had become so environed and besieged by evil spirits that there was no deliverance for me on earth, and that he—an angel of the Lord—had descended from heaven to bear me this command from the Lord Jesus—that I must die by my own hand to escape my persecutors, and that my soul should then find rest in heaven.' I had so strong a desire for life that nothing less than a Divine command, as I believed it, could have induced me to take my life.

"I did not question the words proceeding evidently from so high an authority. I could not conceive it possible that the spirits would command mortals to die by using the sacred name of Christ. Yet it was the device of the Devil and I fell into it.

"I was perfectly calm in my mind and determined I would obey the Divine command, and trust in the Lord. Then, in the last prayer I thought to breathe on earth, I protested to the Almighty that I took my life believing I was acting at the bidding of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thereupon I drank a poisonous draft and quickly fell into a comatose state, but I did not awake in hell or in

heaven, for I was allowed to recover, though only after much difficulty and suffering.

"But whilst I was recovering, the inexorable voice repeated the previous message, upon which I seized an instrument; the only instrument at hand was a very small dagger, with which, having failed to cut my throat, I severed the temporal artery. Determined to make death swift and sure this time, I endeavored to cut another artery, and with the blood streaming from my head I fell to the ground insensible.

"Again the spirits were foiled in their intention. The noise of my fall instantly brought assistance, and I recovered. My recovery was, I might almost say, a miracle. I am convinced that God did in a very remarkable way interpose his healing hand that I might be

Physically Healed.

"But above all I was delivered from the tormenting presence and persecution of these demons. Christ, who when on earth healed those who were demonized, and 'healed all that were oppressed of the devil,' mercifully healed me; He commanded them to leave me. I recognized the supreme need of a Redeemer. I believed his Word that 'No man cometh unto the Father but by Me, and he that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.' I knew of the Blood of Jesus which cleanses from all sin—of that ONE offering perfected on the Cross by which Christ has perfected His believing people. This blessed knowledge dawned upon my soul despite all the efforts of the powers of darkness to prevent me from obtaining it.

"I beg every reader of this to fly from Spiritualism. Do not play with tools such as 'Planchette,' 'thought-reading,' etc. I feel that my life has been preserved that I might use this personal experience and knowledge of Satanic power that I have passed through, and witness against the snares of Spiritualism, declare its Satanic nature, and the potency of Christ as a Deliverer from it."

The above shows something of the ignenuity and versatility of the demons. To some, on the contrary, they report that there is no hell. To Swedenborg they gave visions of seven hells and seven heavens, which helped him frame a new religion to entrap honest souls. How evidently we all need to "hold fast the faithful Word." The Apostle forewarned us we should specially need this "armor" as the "evil day" draws on.

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Put Away All Filthiness

"Having, therefore, these promises, dearly Beloved, let us cleanse ourselves of all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."—2 Cor. 7:1.

ALTHOUGH the words of our text were not addressed by St. Paul to the worldly, they would, nevertheless, be excellent advice and very profitable to all. In a general way all civilized people recognize that "cleanliness is next to godliness." In a general way the pure, the clean, are recognized as the beautiful; and impurity and filthiness are detested ever by the impure and the filthy. Outwardly at least we are in a time when water is plentiful, when soap is cheap, and when filthiness of the flesh is almost inexcusable as respects the outward man. But filthiness of the spirit cannot be touched, cannot be cleansed, with ordinary soap and water and this is undoubtedly the reason why the Lord and the Apostles have not addressed these words to the world.

"Having These Promises."

Our text tells the difference between the well-intentioned worldly person and the thoroughly consecrated Christian. The latter has heard through the Word of God certain "exceeding great and precious promises," which the well-meaning worldly class have not yet heard—heard in the true sense of hearing, in the sense of appreciating, understanding. The whole civilized world, in one sense, has the same Bible, the same Word of God, the same precious promises, but it has not appreciated these. It has not understood them. It has not accepted them and made them its own by a surrender to the Lord. The Church, on the contrary, is composed of those individuals who have heard the Lord's promises intelligently, and who have accepted those promises upon God's conditions. Those promises of God constitute the power of God, which works in the heart of each of the Church, first to will aright, and, secondly, to do, to the extent of ability, the Lord's good pleasure (Philippians ii, 13).

This is the class addressed in our text—the followers of Jesus. These have heard of the grace of God—that it is the Divine intention to bless Adam and his race through the great Mediator—the Messiah, the Christ. They have heard that Jesus left the glory with the Father and humbled himself to human nature, in order that he might redeem the human race. They have heard that the application of the merit of his sacrifice, when applied in due time, will be sufficient for the sins of the whole world, and that then the Heavenly Father will turn over the world to the Redeemer. They have learned that the Redeemer, backed by Divine authority, will put all things into subjection under his feet, will institute a heavenly Kingdom or rule in the earth, and for a thousand years reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. They have heard that when he shall thus reign, his Kingdom shall be "under the whole heavens," although the King himself will be the King of Glory on the spirit plane, "far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named" (Ephesians i, 21).

They have heard that his Kingdom will prevail from sea to sea and unto the ends of the earth and that eventually unto him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess allegiance and obedience, and that all refusing thus to submit to that reign of righteousness will be destroyed from amongst the people in the Second Death (Acts iii, 22, 23). They have heard that this great Kingdom will not only lift up, raise up, resurrect humanity from its fallen condition, from sin and death, but that it will also bring the whole earth to the condition foreshown in the Garden of Eden, making God's footstool glorious and every way fit to be the eternal habitation of such of the human race as will be saved by that glorious Kingdom for which we pray, "Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven."

But these have heard something more—something that belongs to the present time. They have heard that it is the Divine purpose to select from amongst mankind a "Royal Priest-

hood," to be associated with the great Redeemer in his Mediatorial Kingdom. They have heard that a call went forth to this effect eighteen centuries ago, inviting, first of all, the Jews who were ready and willing to accept this very highest favor of God—joint-heirship with his Son in the spiritual Kingdom which is to bless mankind in general by and by. They have heard that to attain membership in this Royal Priesthood means the attainment of the character-likeness of Jesus, to become copies of God's dear Son (Romans viii, 29). This implies, as its cost, the sacrifice of earthly interests. They have heard the message of the Lord, not only inviting to the glories of the Kingdom, but also informing them that the way to that crown of glory is a narrow and difficult one. They have heard the voice of the Master, saying, "Sit down first and count the cost," before you undertake such a consecration of your life, such a sacrifice of your earthly interests. "No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back would be fit for the Kingdom"—fit for a place on the Throne as a joint-heir with Christ (Luke ix, 62).

"Beloved, Let Us Cleanse Ourselves."

We doubt not that as the Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus so loved the world as to provide the great sacrifice for sin, so St. Paul loved the world—and all others of God's people must have a sympathetic love for the world. But when we think of those who are dearly beloved by the Father and by the Son and by the Apostles and by each other, we think of the special class of consecrated saints who Scripturally are described as of no earthly sect or party, but as "The Church of the First-borns whose names are written in heaven."

These are "dearly beloved" because they have the mind of Christ, which is also the mind of the Father. According to the flesh they are not all lovely or beautiful. St. Paul elsewhere admonishes us that amongst these "dearly beloved" are not many great, not many wise, not many noble, not many rich, but chiefly the ignoble and the poor of this world. Their riches and their nobility are not of the flesh, but of the spirit, of the heart, of the new will, to which they have been begotten of God by the holy Spirit. This is surely the Apostle's thought, for, in the preceding verse, he speaks of these "dearly beloved" ones as "sons and daughters" of the Lord, children of the Almighty—hence, begotten again of the holy Spirit—"new creatures in Christ Jesus" (II Corinthians v, 17). Ah, how wonderful it seems that there should be such a class as this in the world yet not separated from the world, except by their new Spirit. These are in the world, but not of the world, as the Master declared. These have died to worldly aims and objects and have become alive toward God through the holy Spirit and through the quickening influences of God's exceeding great and precious promises given unto them. God's purpose respecting them is that they may be transferred from human nature to spirit nature—from participation with the world in the blessings coming to it to receive instead the divine nature, with the glory, honor and immortality attaching thereto, as "new creatures," sons of the Highest (II Peter i, 4).

Christian "Filthiness of the Flesh."

Having located definitely the class addressed by the Apostle, "the saints" (II Corinthians i, 1), let us note how and why it is necessary that saints should receive such an exhortation. Why should the Apostle write to saints respecting the cleansing of their flesh from filthiness? Could one be a saint and yet have filthiness of the flesh?

We reply that these saints, begotten of the holy Spirit, will not be perfected as New Creatures until they experience the "change" of the "First Resurrection." Meantime they have the treasure of the divine nature, the holy Spirit, the first fruits of their inheritance in imperfect human bodies. It is not the flesh that is begotten again by

the holy Spirit, but a new mind, a new will. The will of the flesh they sacrifice. They give up all earthly rights and ambitions and accept instead the will of God, the will of Christ, the holy Spirit, that they may walk in newness of life. However, from the very beginning of their Christian experience all of these members of the Royal Priesthood, in the present life, pass through difficulties which arise from three different sources:

(1) The Adversary is in opposition to them and will do them all the harm the Lord will permit. Their protection is the Divine promise that they will not be permitted to be tempted above that they will be able to bear—that the Lord will supervise their interests so that with every temptation there will be provided a way of escape.

(2) They are in a world that is dark with sin and selfishness, superstition and ignorance of God and out of harmony with his righteousness. The world and its spirit surge about them every day, from morning until night. Its tides and currents seek to sweep them away from their resolutions of self-sacrifice and loyalty to God and righteousness. In various ways it holds out to them enchanting prospects, pleasures and riches, ease and affluence. These have their weight, even though it be known that comparatively few who follow the world's beckoning and allurements ever receive the fulfillment of the promises held out to them.

(3) The great fight of the New Creature, his closest and most persistent adversary, is his own flesh. The longings of his depraved nature cry out against restraints and insist that he is taking an unreasonable course in that he undertakes to follow the Lord Jesus, and thus to go in an opposite direction from the course of the world and at the cost of the crucifixion, the mortification, of his own flesh and his natural preferences.

In the World, and Yet Not of the World.

Thus viewed, every Spirit-begotten Christian is an object of sympathy from the Divine standpoint, and this should be their standpoint toward each other. But the world has no sympathy. The world sees not, neither does it understand nor appreciate the exceeding great and precious promises which lie behind the consecration of the "saints," "the Church of the firstborns." So much the more, each of these brethren, "dearly beloved," should have sympathy for each other, and should encourage one another, strengthen one another, build one another up in the most holy faith, and by all means, do nothing to stumble each other in the narrow way.

The great work for the Church is the good fight of faith manifested in the putting away of the filth of their own flesh and spirit. Some by nature have more filth of the flesh and spirit, more meanness, more selfishness, more natural depravity, etc., than have others. Nevertheless, "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong"; for the Lord's arrangement with each member of the Royal Priesthood is that he shall be judged according to the spirit or intention, and not according to the flesh. From the time of the Christian's consecration to the Lord he is reckoned dead as a human being and alive as a spirit being. His test or trial is not with a view to seeing whether or not he can do the impossible thing of living an absolutely perfect life in an imperfect body. His trial or test, on the contrary, is to see to what extent his mind, his will, fights a good fight against his natural weaknesses and frailties. "There is none righteous, no, not one." All the trying in the world could not prove this Divine statement an incorrect one. Righteousness of the will, holiness of heart, purity of heart, are the possibilities; for these God seeks and these he will reward in the "First Resurrection" by granting perfect spirit bodies, in full harmony with their pure hearts, their loyal intentions and purposes.

How to Put Away Filth of the Flesh.

If it is impossible for the New Creature to perfect the flesh, what does the Apostle mean by urging the saints to cleanse themselves from the filth of the flesh? He means that we should not, as New Creatures, be discouraged and say that, because we cannot hope to attain perfection in the flesh, therefore

we will make no endeavors in that direction. He wishes us to understand that it is the Lord's will that we fight against the weaknesses of the flesh with a two-fold purpose:

(1) That we may gradually cleanse ourselves—gradually become more and more what the Lord would have us be and what we should like to be ourselves.

(2) Additionally, this fight against sin in the flesh will make us stronger and stronger as New Creatures, in the spirit of our minds. It is this firmness, this determination, this positiveness of the New Creature against sin and for righteousness that God desires. Those who develop it are called "overcomers," and all of their experiences in these trials and battlings against the world, the flesh and the Adversary, are designed to make them "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." Their experiences are so ordered and directed as to lead them to more and more of faith in God and obedience to him. In order to be acceptable, they must reach the place where they love righteousness and hate iniquity—in equity.

Christian Filthiness of Spirit.

The word spirit in the Bible and in ordinary language is used in a variety of senses. In our text it does not signify that the saints, as spirit beings, are filthy and need cleansing. Quite to the contrary, the New Creature, begotten of the spirit, is holy, pure. But as the New Creature must use the body of flesh until it receives the New Body, so it must use the brain or mind of the flesh wherewith to do its thinking and reasoning, until that which is perfect shall be attained in the "First Resurrection." The Apostle's meaning, therefore, is that the saints should not only put away filthiness of words and actions, and all sympathy with impurity of every kind, but that their minds (their thoughts) also should be pure, should be cleansed of everything not fully in sympathy and accord with the mind of Christ. Nor are we to suppose that this work is purely God's work in us. It is his to forgive the sins of the past. It is his to cleanse us from all condemnation of the past. It is his to cover through Christ all of our unintentional blemishes. It is his to encourage by his promises. But it is ours to show our loyalty to the principles of his Word and character by putting away, to the extent of our ability, all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.

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