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Gathering the Lord's Jewels

"What Son is He the Father Chasteneth Not?"

"They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels."—Mal. 3:17.

JEWELS have a value of their own, an intrinsic quality, and no doubt would be appreciated if they were very plentiful, but their appreciation is all the more marked because of their comparative scarcity. The figures and similes used throughout the Scriptures by the holy Spirit are full of significance, and this one as well as others. When the Lord likens his faithful people to the precious stones, jewels, it signifies that there is an intrinsic value or beauty that he appreciates, and it implies also that such characters are, in comparison with the world, very scarce—a "little flock."

Our text points to the close of the Gospel Age, and not only tells us that the Lord will not gather his jewels sooner, but implies also that the only class to be gathered at that time will be the jewel class—he comes to make up his jewels. We have here a contradiction of the ordinary thoughts on this subject: (1) That the Lord has been gathering his jewels all along for the past six thousand years; evidently an erroneous thought, since he has appointed a day, in the end of this age, in which he will gather, or make up, his jewels. (2) It strikes the fancy of the thought that a respectable, half-way decent class gathered to the Lord, and share in his Kingdom; for it distinctly points out that a very exceptional class only will be sought for and gathered.

The class here described as jewels are contrasted with other classes in the context (v. 15), "the proud," who have much of the success of the present time, and workers of wickedness, who tempt God, and are not careful to please and serve him—and such evidently are the majority of mankind. The jewel class is described in v. 16 as "They that feared Jehovah"—that revered him, "and that thought upon his Word."

But, we inquire, Where are jewels usually found? The answer of the figure is that jewels may be found in very unexpected places, as, for instance, the diamonds of South Africa are sometimes mingled with the ordinary gravel, and sometimes imbedded in bluish-black clay. They all require to be searched after, and generally require to be washed from the mire, before being prepared to refract the light. So some of these "jewels," whom the Lord is now seeking out from the world, are found in the ordinary walks of life, and some came from deep down in the mire of sin. In the world of mankind the Lord does not expect to find the jewels in perfect order, shaped, cut, polished and ready for the setting in glory. On the contrary, by one class of his servants he lifts them out of the mire of sin and out of the horrible pit, and washes them, cleanses them from sin through the merit of his own precious blood, and through his Word; and then through other servants and providences he polishes them with divine skill, to the intent that they may reflect and refract the light of the glory of God—the divine character,—justice, wisdom, love.

As the diamond in its rough state, uncut, unpolished, would have no more value than any other common stone for ordinary purposes, so those whom the Lord is selecting and preparing as his jewels are to derive their ultimate value from the cutting, shaping, polishing, of their characters under divine providence; as it is written, "We are his workmanship." (Eph. 2:10.) We cannot suppose the illustration to be perfect in every particular, yet we may readily see that, while divine grace is to be credited with the entire outcome—the beauty and grace of the finished jewel—yet nevertheless divine grace operates according to principles and conditions, under divine law. As the experienced diamond miners reject the soft clay and various of the hard stones,

in seeking for those of the desirable kind, so the great Jewel-Gatherer operates according to a principle in seeking for his jewels.

"Even as Many as the Lord Shall Call"

The hardness of the diamond may be used to represent character, and we are to remember that character belongs to the individual and not to God. Each of us must have his own character, and only in proportion as each has character can he hope to be accepted finally as a jewel, for those without character will not endure the tests. As the diamond-seeker lays hold upon everything in his path that gives evidence of having the diamond quality, so divine grace, operating in the diamond field of the world (Christendom, and wherever the Word of the Lord has gone), lays hold upon all who have anything resembling character. The soft, the pliable, the uncrystallized, are not being sought now, and coming in contact with divine grace are passed by. Only such as give evidence of character are thought even worthy of washing and testing.

The hard crystallization of the diamond corresponds to willingness toward God and righteousness there is none of the jewel quality which the Lord is now seeking. Those whose wills are formed, crystallized, set, determined for righteousness, are they whom the Lord is now seeking. And here we have the imperfection of the simile; for, while all diamonds are alike hard, the great Jewel-Seeker accepts some in whom the crystallizing process is incomplete, and "helps our infirmities," developing in us by his providences the quality of firmness for righteousness, at the same time that he polishes us.—Rom. 8:26.

But even when the rough diamond has been found, as before observed, it would be of no value, except as it could be cut—indeed, of less value than other stones and clay for many purposes. So it is with those whom divine grace finds in the mire of sin, having, nevertheless, will or character desiring righteousness, truth, goodness, justice,—"feeling after God" (Acts 17:27); the great Jewel-Cutter, the great Lapidarist, must really give them all their value, by his wisdom and skill in shaping, cutting and polishing them. Yet, on the other hand, he could not cut, shape or polish that which had not the quality or character, the will for righteousness, essential to the receiving of such a polishing. Those, therefore, who are in the hands of the great Lapidarist, and undergoing his polishing process, must first have passed through the previous experience of having been found of divine grace—found of the Lord Jesus; must first have been washed; and must have been accepted as having wills desirous of harmony with the divine mind. Therefore, they may take pleasure in all the trying experiences and difficulties through which our Lord Jesus causes them to pass as various parts of the grinding and polishing process, necessary to their completion as Jehovah's jewels, to be made up by the close of the Gospel Age, and to be set in the gold of the divine nature, to reflect the beauties of the divine character forever.

It is in harmony with this thought that the Apostle encourages us to rejoice in tribulation, knowing that it is working out for us patience, experience, hope, brotherly kindness, love,—the various facets of the jewel essential to it in the eyes of him who is shortly to gather his jewels. The Apostle again speaks of even the most trying and difficult experiences of the Christian life as being "light afflictions," and he speaks of the present life as being, in comparison to the eternal future, but "a moment," saying, "Our light affliction,

which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."—Rom. 5:3-5; 2 Cor. 4:17.

"Abandon Us Not in Temptation."

The lapidarist takes firm hold upon the jewel which he has already tested and proved to have the requisite jewel quality, and encasing it in a suitable instrument, he presses it against the friction, a lap-wheel, with just the required amount of pressure to cut away the roughness and unevenness, and to effect the necessary shaping and polishing. The process requires great skill, otherwise at times much of the value of the stone might be lost through misshaping; hence only skilled workmen are employed in this department.

For instance, the celebrated Kohinoor diamond originally weighed nearly 800 karats, but in the hands of a poor cutter was reduced to 280 karats. Yet so much of a diamond's value depends on skillful cutting, that more than one-half of its size was subsequently sacrificed in recutting it, to obtain symmetry, beauty, and refractive power, and now it weighs less than 107 karats.

So it is with the polishing of the Lord's jewels; their value depends much on proper cutting; and this is entrusted only to the skilled hands of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom we are assured in advance that he was tempted in all points like as we are—that he himself passed through similar experiences of testings, etc., at the Father's hands. He knows just what we need to perfect us, so that we will be pleasing and acceptable to the Father, to reflect and refract the light of his glory when it shall fall upon us in our finished state. A part of our lesson is to have faith in this great Master-Workman whom the Father has appointed to shape and polish us. We may require much more trimming on some sides of our characters than on others; and the disposition often is to "draw back," to be not fully submissive, to fear that the Lord has forgotten and abandoned us in trial. But infinite wisdom assures us, guarantees us, that this is not so, and that to draw back would leave us "unfit for the Kingdom."—Heb. 13:5; Luke 9:62.

The earthly lapidary imbeds in cement the jewel he is polishing, except the facet which he is grinding, so that neither he nor any other sees it during the operation, except as he lifts it, cools it and examines the progress of his work; but all the while he knows just what is being done, for he has an instrument called a "Lapidary's Dial," which indicates the position of the jewel exactly, and avoids the poor cutting of olden times.

And just so it is with the Lord's jewels: "The world knoweth us not"—it has seen the wheel of discipline which has been cutting the Lord's jewels for centuries, but it has not understood the necessity and value of the process. It may even have caught an occasional glimpse of the jewels, but not to any advantage—not so as to be able to know the real merit of their characters or the value of the cutting and polishing, for even the already finished facets are smeared with the cement and slime from the grindwheel. But the great, loving Master-Workman and Lapidarist-in-Chief knows and has explained it all to the "jewels"; and they know in part now, and by faith are trusting all the remainder, singing in their hearts, "He knows, He knows!" "He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear, but will with the temptation provide also a way of escape." Yes, the Lord knows just how much pressure to apply,—just how much friction is necessary—and will not willingly afflict us, or cause tribulation which he cannot and will not overrule for our good. And being thus assured that all things are working together for good to them that love God,

his living jewels can "rejoice in tribulation," knowing that it is working out in them the peaceable fruits of righteousness—of love, and that such experiences are essential, and that without them they could never be amongst the gathered jewels.

"What Son is He that the Father Chasteneth Not?"

Our text, after speaking of the gathering of the jewel class, drops the figure and refers to the same class as God's sons, saying, "And I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Here we have the distinction always held out, as between those who are servants merely, and those who are serving sons. Moses was faithful as a servant over his house (natural Israel), but Christ is faithful as a Son, over his house (the elect Church)—the house or family of sons, who have received the spirit of adoption, the holy Spirit. Although sons, yet they must learn obedience no less thoroughly than if they were merely servants. Indeed, as sons, it is all the more necessary that they learn the lessons of obedience to the Father; more, much more, is to be expected of a son in his father's service, than of one who is not a son. He is expected to engage in the service in the Spirit of his Father, moved by the same impulses of justice and love, because "begotten again" by that spirit of holiness. As a son he requires no less careful, but more careful, training than a servant; more careful disciplining at the Father's hands; for is he not his representative and to be his heir?—Heb. 3:5, 6; 12:7; Rom. 8:15, 17.

While these sons are not to be spared from the polishing processes necessary to make them acceptable as sons,—accepted in the Beloved—nevertheless they are to be spared from something, our text assures us. Other Scriptures show us that this class is to be spared, (1) from the great time of tribulation which is to come upon the whole world of mankind in the end of this age; in harmony with our Lord's words, "Watch ye, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." (2) They are to escape the thousand years of judgment, or trial, coming upon the world, which has its beginning in the time of trouble of "the time of the end." Thus the Apostle declares that this class of faithful sons, the jewel class, "shall not come into condemnation [judgment] with the world."—Luke 21:36; 1 Cor. 11:32; John 5:24.

Nor does this imply that the world's trial, or judgment, will be an unendurable one; for, quite to the contrary, we are assured that it will be most favorable, that the Lord "will judge the world in righteousness" during the Millennial Age. But for the Church to have share in that trial would mean a prolongation of the period of trial; it would mean also a thousand years of delay in entering into the joys of the Lord in the fullest sense,—a thousand years of delay in attaining to that which is perfect. And not only so, but, as we have seen from other Scriptures, and as is implied in this Scripture, the class now being selected is a jewel class, differing in many respects from the world of mankind in general, all of whom have been redeemed, and for all of whom a way of escape will be provided, from the inherited Adamic sin and penalty, "in due time."—1 Tim. 2:6.

"Afterward It Yieldeth the Peaceable Fruits of Righteousness"

Nor are we to suppose that those who are now pressed against the wheel of tribulation, difficulty, are thereby made miserable. Quite to the contrary, they realize, as the Scriptures point out they should, a joy and peace which the world knows not of—which the world can neither give nor take away. And

"WHERE ARE THE DEAD?"

This sermon was published in a recent issue of THE BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY. 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 BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY

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when it is remembered that their severe experiences and polishings are "but for a moment," as compared with the longer disciplines of those who will be dealt with in the Millennial Age,—when it is remembered also that in proportion to their trials and difficulties they are granted the "more grace," and additionally that the reward shall be exceedingly, abundantly more than they could ask or think, according to the exceeding great and precious promises of the divine Word,—then ye can see that this house of sons, these "jewels" now being prepared by the Lord, are truly highly favored above all men, and may well take the spoiling of their goods (worldly reputation, etc., included) joyfully; knowing that these things are but working out their "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."—2 Cor. 4:17.

In speaking of us as sons of God, the Scriptures declare that we are in the school of Christ (the same thought as the cutting of the jewels); and of those who will ultimately be accepted as sons, they show that they will be such as finish their course with joy,—such as will have complied with the predestinated conditions; viz., that all who will be of that son class (the jewels) must be copies of God's dear Son, who himself is the greatest, most brilliant and absolutely perfect one.—Rom. 8:29, 30.

The process of seeking the house of sons, the jewels, and polishing them, has already been in progress for over eighteen centuries; and the Scriptures indicate to us that now the end of the age is upon us, the time for making up or gathering these jewels, and setting them in the glory of the divine nature, preparatory to the new age in which they shall be exalted as the light of the world. The signs of the times clearly indicate, in harmony with this, that the great time of trouble for the world is nigh, even at the door, to prepare the world for the coming blessings. Hence we see that if we are to be amongst the choicest jewels, amongst the sons who shall be spared from the calamities approaching, we have need to give diligence, and to cooperate with the great Master-Workman, that the shaping and polishing of our hearts, our wills, may be perfected quickly, and that we may be ready to share a glorious part, when he comes to make up his jewels, his loved and his own.

"Then Shall Ye . . . Discern Between the Righteous and the Wicked"

The Lord, through the prophet, indicates that as soon as the jewels shall have been gathered there will be a general change in his dealings with the world of mankind. Verse 15 shows how it is at the present time, while the polishing of the Lord's jewels progresses; the unfaithful and the worldly frequently seem to have the advantage; but v. 18 points out that after this polishing of the jewels is completed, and they have been set in the great crown of rejoicing at the end of this age, "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not."

Now, while evil predominates, while "the prince of this world" (John 14:30) reigns unbound, and while "they that tempt God are even delivered," it would be difficult, by outward evidences, to judge of who are the Lord's favored ones. Indeed, his favored ones, his "jewels," seem to be less favored and to have more afflictions, more trials, more persecutions, more difficulties, a narrower way, than others. And amongst them, consequently, are not found many great or rich or wise, but chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith, and prospectively heirs of the Kingdom (Jas. 2:5). But when these shall be glorified with their Lord in the Kingdom—then there shall be a general change, a turning round. No longer will the wicked and those who tempt God be found in power and in influence and in prosperity, and the humble, the meek, the godly, suffer persecution and tribulation; but contrariwise, of

that time, when Christ's Millennial reign shall be inaugurated, it is declared prophetically, "In his day the righteous shall flourish," and the "evildoer shall be cut off."—Satan shall be bound also.—Psa. 72:7; 37:9; Rev. 20:2.

"They . . . Spake Often One to Another"

But glancing back at the context we see another suggestion respecting the disposition of this "jewel" class during their time of polishing. We read, "They that feared [reverenced] the Lord spake often one to another" (v. 16). Ah, yes! What could be more natural than a desire for communion with all who are of "like precious faith," all who are similarly in the hands of the Lapidarist, undergoing polishing, all who are of the same character, disposition, as respects God and his righteousness? Our Lord points out that "love of the brethren" will be a marked quality in all his servants, for he that loveth him that begat loveth also him that is begotten of God. (1 John 5:1.) And the tendency of the mutual love of the "brethren" is to meet frequently and (personally or through the printed or written page) to speak to each other. The Apostle Paul distinctly calls to our attention the propriety, yea, the necessity, for this class meeting together. He exhorts, "Forget not the assembling of yourselves together, . . . and so much the more as ye see the day [the day of gathering of the 'jewels'] drawing nigh." It is to the same end that our Lord has made some of his promises to his people collectively saying, "When two or three of you are met in my name, there am I in the midst."—Matt. 18:20; Heb. 10:25.

There is a thought also in the word "together"; the sons of God are not merely anxious for a meeting in which the world, the flesh and the devil will commingle—they are anxious specially for fellowship with each other, with those who have similar characters, similar faith in the precious blood, similar consecration, and who are similarly passing through the hands of the great Polisher, to be prepared for association in glory. This desire for fellowship with one another is not selfishness, nor an impropriety; on the contrary, our Lord declares that those who love the light come to the light, while those who love darkness shun the light; and the Apostle inquires, "What communion hath light with darkness?" and he points out distinctly that while Satan and the children of darkness may simulate the table of the Lord and the grace of his truth, yet there is no real harmony or fellowship between their table and the Lord's table, upon which he sets forth the precious truth for his beloved.

When we read that these faithful "spake together," we naturally inquire respecting the topic of their converse, the subject upon which they communicate. It is not stated here, but is clearly stated elsewhere in the inspired Word. The Apostle points out that such "mind heavenly things," and contrasts them with others of the earth, earthy who "mind earthly things," and whose god is their belly. Their converse, therefore, will not be respecting earthly pleasures, food and raiment, the ambitions of the natural mind, the pride of life, etc., but will be respecting "the things which belong unto their peace," the things which are uppermost in their hearts; for these are all seeking "first the Kingdom of heaven and its righteousness," and in earthly matters are "content with such things as they have,"—as the Lord's providence shall arrange for them.

The New Song in Their Mouth.

Neither do they come together to lament the trials and difficulties by the way, although there may be some occasions when the majority may "weep with those that weep." Usually, however, the proper condition is that in which each should live so in the light of the Father's countenance that the trials and difficulties of the present life, which would be terrible and burdensome to the world unstained by divine grace, will be to these but "light afflictions;" and as children of the heavenly King, instead of going mourning all their days, they will rejoice—rejoice in the tribulation and adversity, as well as in prosperity. Accordingly, as the sentiment of this class, it is written,—"He hath put a new song in my mouth, even the loving kindness of our God."

It is quite in harmony with this that the Apostle prays for some, that they may be enabled to "comprehend with all saints the length and the breadth, the height and the depth of the love of God which passeth all understanding." Those who have received this "new song," and have comprehended its meaning, with the saints in general, will have, in this love of God, and in the wide and deep, high and glorious plan of God for the salvation first of the elect Church, and subsequently of the world of mankind—"whosoever will"—an abundant theme, a never-ending theme, a theme above all others, which will fill their hearts and fill their minds. It will crowd out worldly

THE RICH MAN IN HELL

LAZARUS IN ABRAHAM'S BOSOM

A highly instructive and interesting sermon on this subject appeared in Vol. 1, No. 4, of PEOPLES PULPIT. Send post-card for free sample.

topics, as being not worthy to be compared. It will crowd out complainings and murmurings, as being wholly improper on the part of those who have been recipients of so many divine favors, and "much advantage every way," in that we have delivered unto us the divine oracles—and especially in view of our adoption into the family of God as sons and "joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."—Rom. 8:17.

While it would be wholly improper for the consecrated ones to thrust out others who desire to meet with them, or to attempt to judge the hearts of those who profess faith in the ransom and full consecration to the Lord, yet to the extent that those who have received the holy Spirit of adoption let their light shine out properly, and seek to "edify one another," and to "build one another up in the most holy faith," in that proportion the insincere, the unconsecrated and the hypocritical, will find less and less to attract them. And in consequence "those who fear the Lord and who think upon his Word" find all the more of blessed spiritual communion and edification.

The class of whom the Apostle says that they are sensual, earthly, having not the Spirit of the Lord, make disturbance when they come amongst the true sons of God, and do injury, because with them as with others it is true, as it is written, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and their hearts, filled with pride, selfishness, vain-glory and ambition, overflow through their mouths; and communication with such is unprofitable. From such evil hearts come evil words of envy, slander, hatred, malice, strife, selfish suggestions contrary to the Word and Spirit of the Lord. Such edify no one; their influence is always pernicious; they build not up in the most holy faith, but, on the contrary, tend to develop and to cultivate roots of bitterness, whereby often "many are defiled."—Heb. 12:15.

Those who rear up "the Lord's Word, who are seeking to copy his disposition, and to be fashioned under the hand of divine providence, should see to it that the class we have described, of whom the Apostle declares that their envy, malice, hatred, strifes, etc., are works of the devil, do not get opportunities to work their evil works. They should do this, first, by showing their disapproval of all evil speaking and evil works; and those who cannot show their disapproval by words of kindly admonition, pointing out that such things are not from God, but from the Adversary, should at least manifest their disapproval in their withholding any look of sympathy with such a course and by breaking off the conversation, and very generally avoiding the company of such; and by the

more strict attention to their own words and conduct, that therein they may "show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light."

Another thought in this connection that we should not overlook, is that brought to our attention in the words, "And the Lord hearkened and heard it." How often would the sons of God be greatly blessed as they meet together to talk over the divine plan, the divine goodness, wisdom, love, justice, and to help one another, and to encourage one another with psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, and by refreshing one another's minds with the exceeding great and precious promises which belong to them that reverence the Lord,—how much would such be blessed, if they could always have in memory this statement, that the Lord is hearkening, is listening to our conversation when we speak together. He listens to see who, out of good hearts, speak forth those things which are loving, gentle, pure, good, true, as distinguished from those who are careless of the truth, and whose words are vain or frivolous, or worse than this, slanderous, emittous and selfish.

Let all the sons of God remember the importance of honesty, "truth in the inward parts," when they come together as members of the Body of Christ, to study the divine Word, and to help one another, and "let nothing be done through strife or vain glory," but let each esteem the other greater in saintliness than himself,—seeking to see in each other, so far as possible, the good, the noble, the true; and let each seek to watch his own heart, and to know of his own blemishes. Thus let personal humility and love of the brethren keep pace with our growth in knowledge of divine things; otherwise let us be assured that we are in the sifting and separating time, and that all who have not this spirit of humility, patience, gentleness, brotherly kindness, love, will surely be separated.—1 John 2:19.

Some will not be amongst those who are the Lord's jewels, because the Lord will gather will be pure, "first-water" diamonds—stainless. They are to be faultless in love before the Father; and perfect love not only casts out fear, but casts out also selfishness, animosity, evil surmises and evil speakings as well as self-love, pride. Oh, how beautiful will be the Lord's Jewels! How full of meaning is the statement that our Lord Jesus, the great Jewel, polished by the divine hand, and after whose likeness we are to be polished, "shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired [Head and Body] of all them that believe in that day," by all those who, during the Millennial day, come into harmony with God, through Christ, under the terms of the New Covenant sealed by the precious blood.—2 Thess. 1:10.

THIS IS NOT AN ADVERTISEMENT BUT AN EDITORIAL.

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Thieves in Paradise

LUKE 23:43.—This greatly misunderstood text explained in a recent issue of THE BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY.

Thrust in Thy Sickle

"The World that Was"—"The Present Evil World"—"The World to Come"

Text:—"Thrust in thy sickle, and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap."—Rev. 14:15.

Intelligent people appear to reason upon every subject under the sun except on religion. Approach a man upon any matter of industry or social progress or political economy or finance and we find him reasonably alert to the general law of Cause and Effect, but when it comes to religion the same man refuses to recognize or follow such laws. To illustrate: If a thousand religious men and women were asked to give some general outline of the Divine Plan under which humanity is being dealt with by the Almighty, Nine Hundred and Ninety-Nine of them would look at you in blank astonishment as though it were absurd to suppose that God would conduct his affairs along the lines of order, reason and common sense—Cause and Effect. On the contrary the Scriptures everywhere hold that our Creator is systematically ordering the affairs of earth and "working all things according to the counsel of his own will" (Ephesians, i, 11).

St. Peter divides the world's history into three great epochs, which our common version Bible designates as "worlds." The first of these, he says, lasted from the creation of our first parents to the flood. The flood was the harvest time, the reaping time, of that epoch. It was the conclusion to the course of sin which, he tells us, there prevailed. And only eight persons, Noah and his family, were carried over as a nucleus for another great epoch or "world," which St. Peter calls, "the world that now is," and which St. Paul calls, "This present evil world" or epoch, and of which Jesus states, "My kingdom is not of this world (epoch)" while again he informs us that Satan is "the Prince of this world."

Certain things have been in his blessing from the Almighty during this long period of over Forty-three Hundred years. "This present evil world" or epoch is to have a harvest time and its affairs are to be as thoroughly wound up, completed, as were the affairs of "the world before the flood." Then a new epoch or "world to come" will dawn, the character of which is clearly delineated in the Scriptures as being very contrary in every way to that of "this present evil world." It will be "The world to come, whereof we speak," the new epoch, figuratively said to have "a new heavens and a new earth," in which the Lord will dominate human affairs. His elect Church of the present time associated with him as his Bride, will constitute the "new heavens" or new spiritual domination under which human regeneration will bring the "new earth." Under that new dispensation everything will be in accord with the character of its King, the Prince of Light and Righteousness, just as the conditions of "the present evil world" are in harmony with the characteristics of the "Prince of this world, who now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience"—"the Prince of Darkness."

"The World That Was."

The "world" or epoch which ended at the flood accomplished a great work. It was during that period of Sixteen Hundred and Fifty-six years that God first tested Satan by permitting him to have an opportunity to show the traitorous attitude of his heart in connection with our first parents. Desiring to establish himself as an Emperor over earth, separate and distinct from the Empire of Jehovah, Lucifer became Satan, God's Adversary, and has since continued in his opposition to the Divine will. Our first parents, through Satan's lie, were

led into disobedience to God, which resulted in the death sentence on Adam and his race. Subsequently for centuries the holy angels were allowed to have intercourse with fallen men, with a view to helping them back into harmony with God, not that God expected any such results, for he already knew that there could be no recovery of humanity, except through the merit of the Redeemer, whose sacrifice would purchase the world and whose reign as the King of kings and Lord of lords would ultimately restore the willing and obedient of the race. But the angels to all eternity might have supposed that an easier way of saving men was possible; that if permitted they could educate, assist and uplift mankind out of sin and death conditions back to harmony with God. God not only desired to show that all such results were impossible, but also he desired to use the opportunity to test, to prove, the loyalty, the faithfulness of the angelic hosts.

Amongst the liberties granted to all the angels at that time was the power to materialize—to assume human forms. We need not stop to discuss the possibility of this, for we are addressing those who believe the Scriptural record, and to such it will be quite sufficient for us to cite one of the many Scriptural instances; the case of the three men who appeared to Abraham and were subsequently found to be angels—spirit beings. They looked, talked, ate and were clothed like men. Abraham knew not who they were until subsequently they revealed their identity, as we read in the account of Genesis xviii. The Apostle Paul adds his testimony to this incident, saying to the Church, "Be not deceived; for angels in the guise of men are ministering to the good of those who are obedient to the truth." (Hebrews i, 14.)

For long centuries this relationship between the angels and mankind continued. We have no record of any human being receiving an uplift from their ministrations. On the contrary, as God had foreseen, the influence of sin was contagious and ere long some of the angelic hosts became so enamored of the daughters of men that "they took to themselves wives of such as they chose," and preferred to leave their own habitation or spirit condition and to remain in a materialized form and to raise earthly families, although their course was contrary to the Divine arrangement and must have been so understood by them. Divine power was not interposed to hinder them. The error of this sedition, the leaving of their own habitation or plane of spirit being, from a small beginning, spread, and God's non-interference justified the supposition that he was either not able to cope with the situation, or unable to enforce his own Law. Thus centuries rolled by, while the earthly children of "those angels which kept not their first estate" became "giants and men of renown" at a time when maturity was not reached for at least One Hundred years (Genesis vi).

During all those centuries we may be sure that every one of the holy angels had fullest opportunity to participate in the seductive pleasures of sin. And we may be quite sure during that epoch or age God demonstrated fully, completely, which of the angels were in heart and in deed, in spirit and in truth, loyal to him and to all the principles of his righteousness. This work having been accomplished, that "world before the flood" was brought to an end, was overwhelmed by a flood of waters, the Lord declaring that the whole earth had become corrupt through this evil. The influence of the angels along licentious lines

seemingly tended more and more to degrade humanity, so that we read that God beheld that "every imagination of man's heart was evil, and only evil, and that continually."

"This Present Evil World."

"This present evil world" differs from "the world before the flood" in that it is not under the ministration of the angels—but man, in a general sense, is left to himself. Since the flood, the world in general has been going on just as if there were no God, the exceptions, aside from the Jewish nation and the Church of Christ, being the destruction of the Sodomites and the preaching of Jonah to the Ninevites, warning them that they were about to perish. In other words, so far as outward appearance goes, God has allowed the world to take its own course, interfering only when the corruption became so great as to make life injurious rather than a favor.

St. Paul, reviewing the question of human degradation as exhibited in heathendom, etc., explains that the great deterioration in the human family is the result of man's being left to himself as respects the Divine supervision. He says, looking back along the line of Noah's descendants, "When they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful. . . . And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind"—they giving themselves over to things that were not profitable, defiling themselves, etc. (Romans i, 21-28).

This condition of things continued from Noah's day until three and one-half years after our Lord's crucifixion, when the special favor of God toward the nation of Israel terminated and the "middle wall of partition was broken down"—Cornelius being the first Gentile admitted to the privileges of the Gospel.

During the long period from Noah to Christ—Twenty-Five Hundred years—God, as we have seen, had no dealing with the world, but he did have very special dealings with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and then subsequently with the nation of Israel. To those patriarchs he gave an Oath-Bound Covenant, that through their posterity he would ultimately bless all the families of the earth. Moreover, the character of the promise was such that it implied not only the resurrection of the patriarchs, but the resurrection also of all the families of the earth that have gone down into death under the great Adamic sentence (Romans v, 12, 17, 19).

The nation of Israel was segregated from all the other nations of the world and bound to the Lord and he to them by the *Covenant of the Law* entered into at Mt. Sinai. Under the terms of that Covenant it was implied that that whole nation should constitute the seed of Abraham and rule and bless all other nations, but the conditions were the keeping of the Law perfectly. God, of course, knew that, as imperfect men, Israel had undertaken an impossible contract. But he also knew that under his supervision the contract would not eventually be to their disadvantage, but the reverse. He used that nation as a typical people, their jubilees representing the "times of restitution" (Acts iii, 20) coming to the world under the Millennial reign of Christ. Their day Sabbath typified a coming blessing to Spiritual Israel. Their year Sabbath typified a coming blessing to the world, to the universe. Their Day of Atonement for sins typified the day of better sacrifices, of Christ and the Church. Indeed, we may understand that fleshly Israel and all of its great affairs were typical foreshadowings of God's greater blessings to come in after dispensations.

Jewish Favor Culminated.

The culmination of the Lord's dealings with Israel was reached, as he had intended from the beginning, when our Lord Jesus left the glory of the Father on the heavenly plane and was made flesh, being born under the

Law Covenant. Not being a direct member of the human family, but "holy, harmless and separate from sinners," he was perfect and fully able to keep all the terms of that Law Covenant, and did so. Thus under the provisions of the Law Covenant he, and he alone of all the Jewish nation, could claim the rights of the Abrahamic Covenant—the blessings foretold and the rightful authority to bless men, for, as the ruler of earth, he took the place of Father Adam with all his rights and authorities described in Psalm viii, 4-6.

By keeping these rights and privileges as a man our Lord indeed would have been an earthly potentate of considerable dignity, the highest amongst men. But the Father's place for him and for the world was far higher than this. As an earthly potentate he would have ruled over a falling and dying race and would have been privileged merely to counsel, rule and direct their imperfect energies; but he never could have brought them to eternal life. Hence the Divine Plan was that he should die as the Redeemer of Adam and his race, that thus he might have the just, the legal right to lift out of sin and degradation and death all of mankind who would fall in line with the gracious arrangements of the Divine purpose which center in Christ. It was in fulfillment of this feature of the Divine Plan that our Lord laid down the earthly Kingdom, the earthly rights, *all that he had*, as man's ransom price (Matthew xiii, 44). "Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (I Timothy ii, 6).

"Every Knee Shall Bow."

We now have Messiah exalted and in his possession the authority justly, legally acquired, whereby he may bless all the families of the earth—all the children of Adam, by restoring to the willing and obedient "that which was lost"—earthly perfection and dominion. Where will he begin his blessing work? All the prophecies implied that Messiah would begin his work with Israel and that it should progress through Israel to all nations. But the prophecies did not even hint at the fact that before giving the "restitution" blessing to Israel, under the New (Law) Covenant of Jeremiah xxxi, 31, Messiah would first make use of his "restitution" authority for the gathering of a special class of people, "a holy nation, a peculiar people, a royal priesthood." This, as the Apostle tells us, was kept a "Mystery," and, generally speaking, it is still a "Mystery," not only to Israel, but to the world. The gathering of the Spiritual Israelites was the first step in the new program. Those of the Jewish nation at our Lord's First Advent who were of the right attitude of heart when transferred from Moses to Christ, from natural Israel to spiritual Israel. Then, as we have seen, from the time of Cornelius onward, the Gospel message has been free to all who have the believing heart and hearing ear to take it. These, as a whole, as our Lord intimated, are but a "little flock." His words were, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom" (Luke xii, 32).

The Kingdom, the life eternal, etc., which the Lord has to give away, are those of Adam, which were lost through his disobedience and repurchased by our Lord at Cavalry. These he gives to his followers, the "little flock," but not to keep. Earthly restitution blessings are theirs to sacrifice only. Whoever will not accept them on these terms cannot be Jesus' disciples. Such are the terms of the heavenly or high calling, bestowed upon his followers. They must take upon their cross and follow him in the sacrifice of earthly life and earthly restitution rights, if they would share with him the glory and honor that will be his in his exalted station.

"The World to come" merely signifies the epoch to come, the epoch wherein dwelleth righteousness, where righteousness will be in the ascendant, and where sin will be absolutely under the control of the great Redeemer, who then will be the King of glory, ruling, reigning, enlightening, blessing, uplifting, restituting, purging, purifying, and bringing to perfection so many of Adam's race as will heartily respond to the rules of his Kingdom. All others will be destroyed as brute beasts.—2 Pet. 2:12.

WHAT IS MAN?

"What is man that Thou art mindful of him?"
Psalm 8:4.

NOTWITHSTANDING ALL that the Bible has to say respecting the nature of man few subjects seem to be more misunderstood. Science declares man to be an animal of the highest type or order. In this science is in absolute agreement with the Scriptures, which declare of our first parents, "The first man was of the earth, earthy" (1 Cor. 15: 47). Our text agrees with this, declaring that man was made a little lower than the angels—angels being the lowest form of spirit beings, man the highest type of earth beings. A particular account of man's creation is given, and when we examine it we find it in full agreement with what we have seen to be the teachings of other parts of the Scriptures. That account declares that God formed man of the dust of the earth, and it tells us that after man's transgression had brought him under the Divine condemnation of death, his Creator said to him, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

Whence Came Our Confusion?

In view of the facts, which we now have clearly before our minds, how strange it seems that most of the civilized world denies all and declares to the contrary—that man is a spirit being, and that his death is merely an evolutionary step by which he passes on to his real nature as a spirit. This is supposed to be very scientific, because many presumably wise and scientific people thus assert themselves. However, according to these same people, such an evolution, from human nature to spirit nature, at death, instead of being a desirable progression or evolution, is a decided disadvantage, because, as they tell us, the majority of those thus graduated from flesh conditions to spirit conditions will find themselves tortured, either purgatorially or eternally. It would seem, if this be true, that this, at least to the majority, would be a step of **de-evolution** rather than one of evolution.

But upon what are these "scientific" and learned assumptions based? Who will vouch for the change said to take place at death? Who will prove to us that a man in dying becomes a spirit being of a higher order than human?

There is no such proof; the wish is parent to the thought. Yet why should men wish to be spirit beings at death, if they believe, as the creeds declare, that tortures await them in the spirit land—await nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand? Ah, here again humanity does not believe its own creeds. The devilish suggestions are allowed to remain in the creeds, unbelievably by the intelligent, to affright the unintelligent. But alas! these misrepresentations are really blasphemies against our Creator, which misrepresent His Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power. And these blasphemous thoughts are accredited to the Bible, with the result that it is disbelieved and its great Author doubted or denied and thousands of the intelligent of our race are agnostics.

One Voice Only Answers.

Spiritism speaks up to assert that it, and it alone, can furnish proof that man, of the earth earthy, is after death a spirit. It furnishes us mediums at whose instance tables are tipped and rappings are heard and other evidences are given of unseen power; and these unseen powers, we are told, are the spirits of dead men seeking to prove to humans that they are not dead, but that in the moment of death they were transformed into spirit.

And now our scientific men are taking up the subject. They decline to be identified with Spiritism and designate their findings Psychic Phenomena. Mediums and their demonstrations have been subjected to every imaginable scientific test to demonstrate that the results are not fraudulent—that there is really a spirit power, an invisible power which can do and has done remarkable things beyond the power of humanity. Accepting these investigations as scientific, and accepting the results as scientific proof that there is a spirit power or force which can operate and has operated in conjunction with human affairs and especially through mediums, what does this prove? What scientific fact have we here to evidence that these spirit powers have anything to do with our friends who have died?

"Lying Spirits," Says St. Paul.

These spirits operate through mediums, sometimes in trance, sometimes answering by written notes from "nowhere," sometimes mechanically grasping the hand of the writing-medium and using it without her volition; sometimes by rappings and sometimes by ouija-boards, declaring themselves truthful, sincere, honest, desirous of assisting humanity, etc.

But does this prove, scientifically, that they are honest, that they are true? Ask any spiritualist! He

will tell you, at very most, that he believes some of them are honest, or will tell you sorrowfully that some of them have lied to him time and again, and if he be an advanced and experienced spiritualist he will tell that at times some of these evil spirits have made all manner of vile suggestions to him. But he will tell also that at first it was not so; instead, he was at first told that he should pray more and read the Scriptures more. Afterwards he was jeered at and mocked and told that the Scriptures were nonsense and that although there is a God the inquirer is too renegade to hope for any blessing from God.

We have neglected our Bibles too much; we have trusted too much to worldly wisdom. The Bible alone gives the solution of the matter. It alone tells us respecting these spirits—that they are not humans and never were; that they are the fallen angels.

"A Man's a Man For A' That."

The Bible is thoroughly consistent with itself; from first to last it maintains that man is an earthy being. According to the Greek and the Hebrew of the Bible he is an animal soul or animal being in contradistinction to a spirit soul or spirit being. "Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble"; "Man dieth and wasteth away, and where is he? He shall not awake nor be raised out of his sleep until the heavens be no more"—until the present order of things shall have passed away (Job 14: 1-10).

Again we read respecting the death sentence and man's hope of recovery out of death by a resurrection, "Thou turnest man to destruction; Thou sayest, return ye children of men"; "Cease ye from man, whose spirit (breath of life) is in his nostrils" (Psalm 90: 3; Isaiah 2: 22); "If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of mine appointed time will I await until my (resurrection) change come. Thou shalt call and I will answer Thee (awakening from the sleep of death), for Thou wilt have desire unto the work of Thy hands"; "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust" (Job 14: 14; Acts 24: 15).

They are dead, they are not alive as spirits nor in any other sense. They will be dead until God's time for the resurrection of the dead. Resurrection of the living would be unnecessary, and if death brought to man a change to a higher plane of existence as a spirit being, then the resurrection of the dead would not be set before humanity as a blessed hope, for rather it would be a punishment, even to the holy.

Whence Came the Error?

It seems probable that this serious error, which has had so much to do with the world's theological confusion, came about through the misunderstanding of the Bible teachings respecting the Church—the application of things said concerning the Church to the world, to whom they do not apply. Bible students are coming more and more to see, in the light which one passage of Scripture throws upon another, that the Church is a distinctive class, separate from the angels and the world of mankind in general.

The Divine Plan revealed in the Scriptures sets forth one salvation for the Church—on the spirit plane. It reveals to us two classes who will be blessed on that spirit plane. It shows us that one of these classes was typified in the priesthood of natural Israel and that the other class was typified in the Levites who assisted the priests as servants. The remainder of the tribes of Israel represented, typically, the entire world of mankind who will ultimately be saved, not to a heavenly state or condition, but as men, to a restored earthly condition.

It will be remembered that the Priests and Levites had no inheritance in the land, thus typically showing that they represented that portion of humanity which, by God's grace, will obtain a heavenly inheritance and experience a change from human to spirit nature.

As the Levites and Priests represented the first-born of Israel saved at the Passover, so those who will attain a resurrection to the spirit plane are Scripturally designated "the Church of

the First-born," and again, "the first-fruits unto God of His creatures." The elect of this Gospel Age are not, therefore, all who are to be saved, but merely all who are to be saved to the spirit plane. With the completion of the elect Church and her glorification with our Lord in His resurrection, the "First Resurrection" (Phil. 3: 10; Rev. 20: 6), the Kingdom will be established for which we pray.

The Kingdom, per se, will be spiritual, invisible to men, but it will have earthly agents and representatives, and its dealings will be with mankind, to uplift Adam and his race from sin and degradation—not to spirit conditions, not to the heavenly plane, but to make them like the angels, but, as the Scriptures declare, to restore them to human perfection—to perfection of the earthly nature, in which Adam was created and from which by sin he fell and will be recovered by the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

Begotten to a New Nature.

Very long ago the distinctions between those two salvations was lost sight of—the Heavenly Calling for the Church and the Restitution for the world (Heb. 3: 1; Acts 3: 19-21). The Old Testament refers exclusively to the earthly and the fact that the New Testament tells almost exclusively of the heavenly and its promises was overlooked. Thenceforth no difference was recognized between the consecrated Church and mankind in general, and the words of the Apostle, addressed to the Church class only, were applied to all.

For instance, in first Corinthians, the fifteenth chapter, St. Paul discusses the general fact of death reigning through Adam and of the provision, through Christ, of a resurrection of the dead. Then he proceeds to speak specially of the Church class, saying, "this is the resurrection of the dead." The (emphatic) resurrection signifies the special or First-Resurrection class, and the dead similarly marks the special class of dead ones—the saintly dead, the Church of Christ, begotten of the Holy Spirit to a new nature, the heavenly nature.

Not noticing this, commentators and people in general have applied these words to humanity in general and understand them to teach that all that are sown in corruption will be raised in incorruption; that all who die in weakness, will be raised in power; that all who die animal bodies, will be raised spi-

ritual. The Apostle is speaking of a different class, the Church of Christ, who are sown in corruption and raised in incorruption, and who are sown in weakness and raised in power.

And to be fashioned unto the likeness of His Son, that He might deliver us from all unrighteousness, and cleanse unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. "God giveth to every seed its own body"; that is to say, if we sow wheat we expect to reap wheat, if we sow oats we expect to reap oats. The Apostle's argument is that none need expect to be of the wheat class, the spirit class, unless they are of that class when sown in death. In other words, he would have them understand that a natural man, an animal man, in the resurrection, will be an animal man, but those who accept the Divine offer of this Gospel Age, to become New Creatures in Christ Jesus, begotten again by the Holy Spirit—these will not come forth in the resurrection human beings, but, being in full harmony with the begetting of the Spirit which they have received, will in the resurrection be born of the Spirit.

The Hidden Mystery Revealed.

Up to the time of Christ no promise of a change of nature from human to

spirit had been received by any member of our race. The Lord Jesus Himself became the Captain and Forerunner of "the Church, which is His Body," and which, during this Gospel Age, has been walking in His steps of self-sacrifice. The special privilege of this Gospel Age is the sacrifice of the earthly nature in order to the attainment, instead, of the heavenly nature.

This was an incomprehensible matter to those to whom it was preached at first. No Jew had ever thought of anything higher than the human plane and Divine service on the human plane. But the message of the Gospel was a call or invitation to the heavenly nature and heavenly service, as the Bride of Christ and His Joint-Heirs in glory. Of this call St. Paul says that it is a "Mystery that was hidden from past Ages and Dispensations, but that it is now revealed unto the saints" (Col. 1: 26). It was not proper that any but the saints should fully appreciate and comprehend this. "To you it is given to know the things of the Kingdom, but to outsiders these things are spoken in parables and dark sayings that they might not understand."

This Mystery was, therefore, never understood by many because the saints were never many, and thus, later on, when sainthood was at a discount and when nominal Christians became numerous and influential and made the creeds, it was but natural that the Mystery should become more or less befogged. But instead of going back to preach human restitution to the human plane, in a world-like Eden, the misinformed theologians hung their own hopes and the hopes of the world upon the heavenly assurances—just where they did not belong.

Thus it is that, despite our five senses and every plain statement of the Bible, it has become the prevalent belief that humanity is of spirit nature and not earthly, human; that dying is but getting one either to Heaven, Purgatory or Hell. With this confusion the danger all along theological lines has become great, so that practically every doctrine of the Church is more or less confused thereby. This is the secret, this is the reason why the Bible is misunderstood and being cast aside with the creeds of the Dark Ages as no longer worthy of consideration, while the bulk of Churchianity rushes madly toward the ditch of "Higher Criticism, Evolution, Agnosticism"—with little faith in a personal God and no definite hope.

Seek Ye the Old Paths.

"Seek ye the old paths, which we seek the old paths, and that we seek them reverently and honestly." "We have been much searching for the old paths, but we have not been able to find proofs of what we believe and to entrench ourselves in errors handed to us from the past by well-meaning but deceived forefathers. It is time for us to be honest and to search that we may know God's Message to us through His Inspired Prophets and His Son and the Apostles.

It will not do to say that doctrines are unnecessary. The Bible puts faith, proper faith, at the very foundation of Christian character. "We believe and therefore speak."

Let us do this; let us not be content until we know exactly what the Bible teaches concerning "What is man" and respecting the hope, man's restitution, and respecting the high calling, the heavenly calling of the Church. When we begin to see these matters clearly the entire Bible shines as never before, our faith becomes strong as never before. And then, if we are honest, our love for God and our zeal for His service must also increase proportionately.

THE LOVE TO BE DESIRED

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the Truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."—1 Pet. 1:22.

THE word "souls" in this text stands, as usual, for the being, and not merely for the physical being, which is included. The purifying, therefore, refers to a thorough cleansing of the heart (the mind, the will, the actuating intentions, or motives), as the effect of such purification will be manifest in the outward life and conduct.

We purify our souls—that is, our souls are purified (have been purified if we are saints)—by obedience to the Truth through the spirit; that is to imply that it is necessary for us to know the Truth; not necessarily that we know all truth, but necessary for us to know the great truth on this subject—the truth that God condemned sin; to know the truth that the whole world of mankind came under this condemnation; to know the truth that God has provided a way of escape from the condemnation that is upon the world; to know the truth that there is but one particular way in which any can avail themselves of this Divine provision, namely, that of being justified by faith in Christ, and taking up the cross and following in His footsteps. When we presented ourselves in spirit and in

truth, through faith, our sins were forgiven; we were accepted as New Creatures in Christ; our souls were purified; we were started in a new career.

In our text the Apostle proceeds to say that, having had this glorious transformation of character, through the knowledge of and obedience to the spirit of the Truth, we have learned to love the brethren with an "unfeigned love," a love that is genuine, without pretence—not merely an outward profession, to have a smile upon the face or to give a cordial grasp of the hand, but that through this spirit we have recognized that all who trust in the precious blood and are consecrated to the dear Redeemer, and are seeking to follow His leadings, are "brethren," regardless of race or color or education or poverty or homeliness. We have reached the point where our hearts are so full of the Spirit of the Master that we can truthfully say we love all the brethren with a love which is sincere and not at all feigned. We must not only regard them as brethren and give them "unfeigned love," but this should give us great sympathy and a desire to do everything we can to encourage them, to help them.

The Hope of Immortality

This subject, which has been so misunderstood, is convincingly and Scripturally treated in Vol. 2, No. 4.

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