

THE GOSPEL SICKLE

"THRUST IN THY SICKLE AND REAP, - - - FOR THE HARVEST OF THE EARTH IS RIPE." Rev. 14:15.

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For Terms, - - - See Last Page.

"HARVEST."

The reapers sang in the shaded lane,
And the laden wagons came creaking slow,
While the kind farm-mother her table spread;
For the field was bare and the sun was low,—
The sun was low, and the day was gone;
The toll was over, and harvest done.

I looked, and sighed, as the yellow store
Was borne away to the yawning mow,
And I thought of the brimming garner floor,
And the harvester's tanned and sweating brow;
Till I sighed again, in the fading light,
While the tired world slept in the lap of Night.

I sighed for the tender plant that died
When the cold north wind untimely blew;
I sighed for the grain that never swelled,
For the blighted sheaf that never grew;
I sighed for the harvest days that seem
Like the waking mockery of a dream.

I knelt in the dim, sweet summer night,
And whispered a prayer of trembling faith,
That He who nurseth the sleeping grain,
Till life comes smiling from darkest death,
Would not scorn the scant sheaves I had won,
When life was over and harvest done.

—S. S. Times.

Notes and Comments.

NOTICE.—Parties receiving this Paper, not having subscribed for it, may know that it is sent to them by the courtesy of some friend. Do not hesitate to take it from the Office, for none will be called upon to pay for any numbers they have not ordered. We invite candid attention to the Contents of the Paper, and when you have read it, please hand it to a Friend or Neighbor.

PAUL tells us, in Rom. 3:20, why we cannot be justified by the deeds of the law: "Therefore," he says, "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." It is because the law condemns us as sinners that it cannot justify us. If it condemned and justified us at the same time, it would contradict itself, and be unjust. This would be true of the law of our own land. The law cannot justify us, because none of our good works can be better than what the law requires; so that our present and future obedience cannot meet the demands of the law for the past, and cancel our past sins; hence, the importance of believing on Christ, who died for our sins, for justification. But in order to be thus justified, we must repent of our transgressions; and then we remain, by faith, in a state of justification only just so long as we endeavor to render obedience to God's holy law. Christians are created unto good works (Eph. 2:10), and all are to be judged and rewarded according to their works. Rev. 20:12; 22:12.

THOSE who believe that God has revealed a plan of salvation for all men, and that he invites all men to be saved, cannot be consistent with themselves, nor considered as friends of God, unless they do what lies in their power to extend to their fellow-

beings a knowledge of that plan and its conditions. In Rev. 14:12 it is said of a certain class, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." Study the life and character of Jesus, his works of love, mercy, and sacrifice, and thereby learn what his faith in humanity was. If we would know the manner in which we should engage in the spread of the gospel, the example of Christ will tell us. It is such faith as was exemplified by Jesus, both in God and humanity, that his followers should possess, otherwise they are below the true standard. Not that we are to equal Christ's work in the matter of actual results, — that we cannot do, — but that we are to be as faithful, humble, devoted, loving, and sacrificing in our sphere as he was in his. The obligation incumbent upon each one, is according to that which he possesses. "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." 1 Peter 4:10.

IN writing to the Thessalonians, Paul said that he gave "thanks to God always," "remembering without ceasing" their "work of faith." 1 Thess. 1:2, 3. By a work of faith is meant a work showing or evincing faith. Faith is the mainspring of works; works are but the outward manifestation of the faith that is within. It is true, however, that many people fail to manifest in their words and actions, the principles which their better judgment tells them are true and correct. This is because of the perverseness of their natures, or their weakness in the matter of resisting temptations. "While it is true that works do not produce faith, it is true that faith augments as it is put into lively exercise. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Rom. 10:17. As we hear and understand the word of God, it is ours to believe. The word of God should be accepted without reservation, as conclusive evidence in the settlement of any question upon which it testifies. The full acceptance of such testimony constitutes faith; but it cannot be said of one that he does fully accept of the testimony, unless his works shall correspond with the principles laid down. It is in vain for one to claim that he is in possession of faith in its completeness, so long as his life is in any respect out of harmony with the teachings of God's word. The wise will continually examine themselves in the light of God's word, in order to ascertain whether they be in the faith or not.

THE word of God must be its own interpreter; that is, we must allow our statement of Scripture to be interpreted and explained by others, in cases where the meaning is at all obscure. A passage in 1 Tim. 4:10 furnishes a case in point: "We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men." Taken apart from all other statements in the Bible, this would permit one to discard entirely the agency of Jesus Christ in the salvation of human beings. The writer calls to mind an individual who denies the office of Christ as the Saviour of the world, and quotes this text in support of his denial. But by an examination of other statements of equal authority, it is seen that such an interpretation is erroneous. Listen to those words of Peter: "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified,

whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:10-12. Likewise to Paul: "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:24-26. It is true that the real and final work of saving fallen human beings will be done by God the Father; but none will be saved by or through any other agency than that set forth by him; viz., Jesus Christ the righteous.

A CORRESPONDENT of the Church Union asks this question: "Will you kindly inform an old reader of your paper whether a person can really be a Christian and a Spiritualist at the same time?" The reply given by the editor is in these words: "Yes; a man can be a Christian and a Spiritualist at the same time." Spiritualists claim to hold communication with the spirits of their dead friends. This the Bible forbids in the following language:—

"There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord." Deut. 18:10-12.

Webster gives the definition of necromancy as "pretended communication with the dead." And Spiritualists everywhere claim that their spiritual communications are from the spirits of the dead.

"Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards to be defiled by them; I am the Lord your God." Lev. 19:31.

Spiritualists do not deny that their mesmerizing, magnetizing, calling on the dead, etc., are what is called in the Bible, "charming," "enchantment," "sorcery," "witchcraft," "necromancy," "divination," "consulting with familiar spirits," etc. And every Bible student knows that these are declared in numerous places to be "abominations," and are strictly forbidden in both the Old and the New Testaments. See 2 Kings 21:2, 6, 9, 11; Rev. 21:8; Gal. 5:19-21; Acts 16:16-18. Those who embrace Spiritualism, therefore, have to give up the Bible. Both cannot be true.

Brown says: "Necromancers were those who pretended to raise and consult with such persons as were dead."

Dr. Jahn says: "Necromancers pretended that they were able by their incantations to summon back departed spirits from their abodes. They uttered the communications which they pretended to receive from the dead."

Gesenius says: "Sorcerers are those who profess to call up the dead."

Webster says: "A familiar spirit is a demon, or evil spirit, supposed to attend at a call."

In the light of the foregoing, the Church Union has placed itself in rather an unenviable light, by the reply it has given.

Doctrinal Articles.

"Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine." Titus 2:1.

IS MAN BY NATURE IMMORTAL?

THE question of future existence is one of marvelous moment. Concerning it, no one has a right to be indifferent. We live—we die. Who can help entertaining such queries as these: Does death end all? Is there to be another edition of life? or does the life-stream flow ceaselessly on, while death is only an illusion? Is man by nature immortal? Is a life of unbroken consciousness his birthright legacy? If not, is immortality a glorious possibility? Are we now on probation for that priceless boon? What are the conditions of its bestowal? By whom and on whom will it be conferred? When will the bright morning of immortal life dawn upon our suffering and dying race?

It is commonly assumed that man is constitutionally a dual being, made up of a material body and an immaterial soul; that the body is of little account, while the soul constitutes the real man; that the soul leaves the body at death, and continues to exist as a conscious personality; and that every man is destined to live through all eternity, in happiness or misery.

The following definition would generally be accepted by current theology: "The soul is an active, thinking, immaterial substance. It is uncomposed, indivisible, intangible, and indestructible; without exterior or interior surface; is not extended, and can never come in contact with matter."

Such a soul is declared to be immortal. This doctrine is regarded by many as essential to orthodoxy, if not to salvation itself. To doubt it, is to drift into the regions of infidelity. To deny it, is to become a most dangerous "heretic." To denounce it, is to call down the anathemas of the popular priesthood, and to invite dishonor, excommunication, poverty, and persecution. Let us hope, however, that the day of religious toleration has begun to dawn; for while hundreds of pious and scholarly men have suffered all manner of obloquy for daring to repudiate the baptized Platonism of a corrupted Christianity, hundreds more, equally "heretical," are now in good fellowship with various churches, and some of them are filling most responsible positions, with great acceptability and usefulness. Papal traditions and papal intolerance shall not forever prevail.

Having given the whole subject a careful and prayerful investigation,—examining alike the strongest rational and scriptural arguments used to support the dominant view—I am compelled to reject the current doctrine of inherent immortality, for the following twelve reasons. My limits compel me to state them with the utmost brevity. Each one of them might easily be expanded into a book.

1. It has a bad history.

(1.) *Satanic origin.* This doctrine can be traced through the muddy channels of a corrupted Christianity, a perverted Judaism, a pagan philosophy, and a superstitious idolatry, to the great instigator of mischief in the garden of Eden. The Protestants borrowed it from the Catholics, the Catholics from the Pharisees, the Pharisees from the pagans, and the pagans from the old serpent, who first preached the doctrine amid the lovely bowers of paradise, to an audience all too willing to hear and heed the new and fascinating theology—"Ye shall not surely die." When, at length, death actually came, Satan patched up his system by inventing the double-entity theory. He virtually says: "Your friend is not dead in fact, but only in appearance. It is only the vacated house that you behold. The tenant has made a safe escape, and is now really and consciously alive—enjoying a larger liberty, upon a higher plane of existence." The bait took. The beautiful theory was accepted. God was discredited, and Satan believed.

(2.) *Heathen philosophy.* Satan's oily argument won easy victories among the superstitious generations that came swarming down the stream of time. According to Herodotus, the Egyptians were the first who formulated and defended this doctrine. "They believe that, on the dissolution of the body, the soul immediately enters some other animal; and that after using as vehicles every species of terrestrial, aquatic, and winged creatures, it finally enters a second time a human body." Naturally enough, other and succeeding heathen nations imbibed similar notions. But this doctrine was quite as much a philosophy as a religion; and endless confusions and speculations arose. Plato, the leading defender,

coupled the doctrine of immortality with that of pre-existence and transmigration. Are modern Platonists prepared to swallow the whole dose? If not, why not?

(3.) *Jewish belief.* The utter silence of the Pentateuch (covering a period of twenty-five hundred years) on the subject of the soul's immortality is a strong presumption of its falsity. The Hebrew Scriptures are equally silent. Since the Jewish people were chosen to preserve God's truth and promote God's worship, how can such silence be explained? Only on the ground that said doctrine forms no part of the divine system. The Jews took no stock in the dogma of natural immortality till they became corrupted by long association with the heathen during their captivity in Babylon. At the time of their exit, they were divided into two principal sects, taking strangely opposite views. The Pharisees tried to couple the scriptural doctrine of resurrection with the pagan doctrine of natural immortality, while the Sadducees rejected both. Each sect was partly right and partly wrong. They were both badly muddled, and Jesus warned his disciples not to accept the doctrine of either. What a pity that they could not have found the harmony of truth, by accepting the fact of death as a real and radical thing, and then by accepting the resurrection, according to the teaching of Christ, as their only hope of future life!

(4.) *Christian compromise.* Jesus Christ started his followers upon the track of conditional immortality. Well did the apostles and primitive disciples learn this great lesson. Not a discordant note was struck for several generations. The five "apostolic Fathers" bore a clear testimony to the gospel of life and death. But in the second century theological ideas began to be somewhat mixed, and the confusion grew worse and worse for succeeding ages. While Theophilus, Polyrates, Irenaeus, Lactantius, and some others, proclaimed life only in Christ, Athenagoras, Tertullian, Augustine, and others, affirmed the doctrine of immortality for all men, and endless torments for the wicked. This last feature was so revolting that some regarded it as a foul slander on God's character, and settled down in the conclusion that all will be eternally saved. Thus, various and conflicting doctrines arose from the commingled systems of Christianity and Platonic philosophy, which the church, in her too eager desire for numerical strength, tried to harmonize. An easy door was opened for the reception of Platonic converts to Christianity, without requiring them to relinquish their pagan ideas. Thus the cause of God was compromised. The unholy leaven continued to work, until nearly the whole lump was at last infected. Sad enough has been the result.

(5.) *Papal decree.* The Christian church continued to degenerate. With the lapse of ages, ecclesiastical authority became centralized in the pope of Rome. At his instigation great councils were held, and authoritative edicts were issued, to regulate the belief and bind the conscience of the religious world. To fix upon the dogma of natural immortality, the formal seal of the church, and thus make it easier to punish dissenters, the Council of the Lateran, held A. D. 1513, under Pope Leo X., issued the following decree:—

Whereas, Some have dared to assert concerning the reasonable soul, that it is mortal; *we*, with the approbation of the Sacred Council, do condemn and reprobate all who assert that the intellectual soul is mortal, seeing the soul is not only truly and of itself an essentially the form of the human body, as it is expressed in the canon of Pope Clement Fifth, but likewise immortal; and we strictly inhibit all from dogmatizing otherwise; and we decree that all who adhere to the like erroneous assertions shall be shunned and punished as heretics.

Most of the reformers clung to the dogmas of the papacy, rejecting only a few monstrous pretensions relating to penance and purgatory. They were still in a hazy atmosphere, and often exhibited the same intolerant spirit which inspired their persecutors. In less than fifty years from the Lateran Council, the Protestants published their Helvetic Confession, containing this narrow decree: "We condemn all who scoff at the immortality of the soul, or bring it into doubt by subtle disputations." This was hardly less than a second edition of Rome. Too many still linger under its dark shadow.

2. It is at variance with the scriptural account of man's creation.

The history of man's origin will be likely to shed light on his nature. This is the record:—

"The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Gen. 2:7.

Here is a whole system of anthropology in a nut-

shell. The text does not teach that man, or any part of him, is immortal. What does it teach?

(1.) That there is a God. The universe did not create, and does not run itself.

(2.) That God created man. Then man did not always exist. Nor did he come into existence by an evolutionary process. He was a positive creation.

(3.) That God formed man "of the dust." Man was then a material organism—visible, tangible, ponderable.

(4.) That this dust-made man was vitalized with "the breath of life." Now the heart beats, the blood starts, the eyes sparkle, the nerves tingle, the brain thinks. The steam has been turned on, and the engine moves.

(5.) That the whole man, thus vitalized, "became a living soul." Not a word is said about an immortal soul. Nor is it even intimated that the soul was a separate entity, which was put into man after he was formed. A plain man, with no predilections or pet theories, would never deduce the prevalent theory of man's nature, from the first two chapters of Genesis.

3. It clashes with the Bible statement of man's fall.

Our first parents were highly endowed, and designed to exercise dominion over all the earth. But those who govern others must first learn to govern themselves. They must be tested and developed. The chosen test was a simple one:—

"Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. 2:16, 17.

Literally rendered, the last words are, "Dying thou shalt die." In the very day that Adam ate the forbidden fruit, he became a dying man, and through various processes of disease and decay, he steadily and surely went down to death. He was at first balancing between two possible destinies—mortality and immortality. Had he eaten of the tree of life, the scales would have turned in favor of immortal existence. But he ate of the wrong tree, and subjected himself to a death-destiny.

The Adamic penalty will be more clearly understood, if we trace the history of the case a little further. After Adam sinned, he was driven from the garden of Eden, "lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever." God would not allow him, as a sinner, to live forever. It was the hand of love that pushed sinful man aside, and thus cut off all possibility of his becoming immortal in misery.

4. It is opposed to the scriptural doctrine of death.

Popular theology transforms death into an angel of blessing—an emancipator from bondage—a resurrection—a gate to endless joy—a glorious coronation. The Bible tells quite a different story. It represents the dead as having gone into a land of darkness, of silence, of sleep, and of absolute unconsciousness:—

"There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave (sheol), whither thou goest." Eccl. 9:10. "For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" Ps. 6:5. "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence." Ps. 115:17. "His breath goeth forth, he returned to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." Ps. 146:4. "The living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything." Eccl. 9:5. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." 1 Cor. 15:17, 18.

These and many other passages teach that death is a radical change—a negation of life—a state of mental and physical inaction. The life-current is interrupted in its flow. The faculties are paralyzed. The heart has ceased to beat, and the brain to perform its functions. All of this is exceedingly damaging to the current theory that man is immortal—that the soul survives the shock of death, and continues in uninterrupted conscious existence. If this dogma is true, I know not how to interpret those numerous passages that represent the dead as having ceased to live, and as being absolutely dependent upon the resurrection for future life.

5. It is equally opposed to physiological facts.

Truth in nature is just as sacred as truth in revelation. Many facts in science and human experience show that mind is not a separate entity, but an attribute of the living man—the result of vitalized organization. The brain is as truly the organ of thought as the eye is the organ of vision. Otherwise, why were brains ever made a part of the physical organism? Various cases are recorded where persons have received injuries upon the head, indent-

ing the skull and producing sudden unconsciousness, which continued for days, weeks, or months, till a trepanning process lifted the bone that compressed the brain, when consciousness was immediately restored. Sometimes weeks have thus intervened between the beginning and ending of a sentence—a perfect blank in personal history. Can it be that man possesses an immortal soul, endowed with such self-existent energy and lofty powers as are usually ascribed to it, and yet that soul can be paralyzed, and so practically killed that it does not know anything for months—all by a little blow upon the head? It is a gratuitous assumption to say that though one blow may reduce the soul to a state of unconsciousness, two or three blows will thrill it into a more vigorous life than it ever knew before!

6. Immortality is nowhere ascribed to man, in his present state of existence.

This term does not occur at all in the Old Testament and only five times in the New, translated twice from *aphtharsia* and three times from *athanasia*. In the Revised Version the term "immortality" occurs only three times—translated from *athanasia*—and "immortal" is not used even once. But what is the teaching of those passages in which these words occur, even in our common version? The term "immortal," occurring once, is applied to the Eternal King, and not to man, or any part of him. See 1 Tim. 1:17. In relation to *immortality*, we learn: (1.) That God alone possesses it. 1 Tim. 6:16. (2.) That Christ brought it to light, not as an attribute of man, previous to his coming, but as a glorious possibility through himself. 1 Tim. 1:10. (3.) That if we ever obtain it, we must earnestly seek for it. Rom. 2:7. (4.) That "this mortal must put on immortality." 1 Cor. 15:53. (5.) That we cannot put it on till the resurrection morning. 1 Cor. 15:54. Surely the evidence of man's immortality is wanting. It ought to be sufficient to believe what the Bible clearly teaches. *It does not teach the immortality of the soul.*

7. Immortality is a blessing to be sought, and not a birthright legacy.

The last proposition paves the way for this, which makes the argument doubly strong. Jesus Christ is revealed as the world's great Lifegiver. To a race of dying sinners he uttered this sorrowful lament: "Ye will not come to me that you might have life." This implies three things: (1.) Men are dead, either in fact or in prospect. (2.) Christ is the appointed source of life, spiritual and eternal. (3.) To obtain it, men must make personal and earnest application. A multitude of passages might be adduced. I give only two samples:—

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever." John 6:51.

How, then, can man expect to live forever without any connection with Christ?

"This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life." 1 John 5:11, 12.

Here we have two facts: (1.) God hath given to us (Christians) eternal life. (2.) This life is not in us, but in his Son. God has given it to us by promise, and we now have it by faith and hope. But if we "by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality," that endless life will in due time be ours.

8. The doctrine of inherent immortality is opposed to the scriptural doom of the wicked.

What is that fearful doom?

(1.) They shall die.

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Rom. 8:13. See also Deut. 30:19; Eze. 18:4; 33:11; John 6:50; Rom. 6:23; James 1:15; 5:20; Rev. 2:11; 21:8.

(2.) They shall perish.

"The wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away." Ps. 37:20. See also Luke 13:3, 5; John 3:14, 16; Rom. 2:12; 2 Cor. 2:15.

(3.) They shall be destroyed.

"The Lord preserveth all them that love him; but all the wicked will he destroy." Ps. 145:20. See also Ps. 37:38; Matt. 7:13; 10:28; Phil. 3:18, 19; 2 Thess. 1:7-9.

(4.) They shall be burnt up.

"For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." Mal. 4:1. See also Ps. 11:6; 21:8, 9; Isa. 66:15; Matt. 3:12; 13:40-42.

The logic of this testimony is simple and forcible.

If sinners were immortal, they could not perish. But the Bible plainly teaches that they will perish. Therefore they are not immortal.

9. It supersedes the necessity of a resurrection.

Those who lay much stress upon "the immortality of the soul" lay correspondingly little stress upon the resurrection of the body. This is a logical sequence. These two doctrines cannot coalesce. They are natural antagonisms. Many try to believe both, but in the very nature of the case their faith in the one will practically vitiate their faith in the other. This is no new discovery. William Tyndale saw, more than three hundred years ago, that to send men to heaven, hell, or purgatory at death, was to destroy the argument by which Christ and Paul proved the resurrection. The apostles made all future life depend upon a revival of the dead. Modern theologians invest man with the power of continued existence, and make such revival entirely unnecessary.

10. It reduces the judgment scene to a solemn farce.

If the Bible teaches anything, it teaches the fact of a coming judgment, when the verdicts of human destiny will be righteously rendered and faithfully executed. "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." This does not occur at death. There are not ten thousand judgment days scattered along the history of the race. "God hath appointed a day" for this work, and "we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ," who will then "reward every man according to his works." But if men are rewarded in a disembodied state, and as soon as they die, such a tribunal would be nothing less than a solemn farce. Why rally the glorified saints from heaven, or the lost from a penal hell, to pronounce upon them a verdict of approval or condemnation? Is it possible that any of them had gone to the wrong place? The Bible view of rewards and punishments, meted out at the day of judgment, dissipates this fog-bank of error, and justifies the ways of God.

11. It subverts the Bible doctrine of Christ's second coming.

If man has an immortal soul capable of living without a body, there is no necessity that Christ should come to raise and reconstruct the physical organism. If men go to their respective rewards as soon as they stop breathing, Christ has no need to come in the capacity of a judge. And if saints are to find their permanent home in heaven, and sinners in some other part of God's universe, then the time must come when our planet will be entirely depopulated, and practically worthless. In that case there would be no need of Christ's coming to lift the curse, and purify the earth for the saints' inheritance. Why, then, should he ever come? Is it any wonder that those who adopt the current theology should care so little about the Lord's return?

12. It is a prolific source of error.

If we are to judge a tree by its fruits, what must be our opinion of a dogma that has brought forth such a hateful harvest of pernicious errors as the one under consideration? The tree of "natural immortality" has many boughs, well loaded with such fruit as the following: Mormonism, Mohammedanism, Shakerism, Swedenborgianism, Spiritualism, Purgatory, Mariolatry, Universalism, and Eternal-tormentism. All these systems are built upon the assumption that dead folks are alive. This is the warp and woof—the brains, bones, and muscles—the top, bottom, and center of Spiritualism. It is this that induces the priest-ridden Romanist to pay his money to help his dead friends through the pains of purgatory. Convince him that the Virgin Mary has been for eighteen centuries a dead woman, and he will direct no more prayers to her. Universalism is only a natural rebound from the doctrine of endless torment. They agree in saying that all men will live forever, while they differ as to the condition of that existence. Whoever starts out with the assumption of natural immortality, will be compelled to adopt a spiritualizing system of interpretation that really turns the Bible upside down, and opens the flood-gates of damaging error.—A. A. Phelps, formerly pastor of Congregational church at Rochester, N. Y.

THE strongest argument for the truth of Christianity is the true Christian,—the man filled with the spirit of Christ. The best proof of Christ's resurrection is a living church, walking in new life, and drawing life from him who has overcome death.—Christlieb.

The Christian Life.

"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his."

"IN THAT GLAD DAY."

THERE is a hope more sweet than life,
That comes to soothe our sorrowing heart;
It is the blessed promise given,
We meet "to-morrow"—ne'er to part.
Not in the morrow of our days,
But in the resurrection morn,
When in the light of heaven's rays,
We seek our loved, our lost, and gone.
But then, "Our Saviour, blessed King!"
Will be our first glad, joyous cry;
I sometimes think e'en friends of kin
Will fall to catch a loving eye.
In that glad day our all of love
Will find its complement in him;
And all our anxious thoughts will be,
To hasten to be near our King.
And he who trod so long ago
Upon the shores of Gallilee,
Will he not then one glance bestow
On those who long his face to see?
Ah, blessed Saviour! well we know
That all thy followers then will gain
A loving look, a welcome too,
To cheer them for their grief and pain.
Yes; sweetest joy, the King looks down,
And lost in wonder at the sight,
We gaze on him—on him alone—
Our grief is lost in heaven's light.
The one great theme of all our thoughts,
The one sweet joy for all our pains,
The endless songs, the endless shouts,
Will be for joy that Jesus reigns.
—Mrs. William Jones.

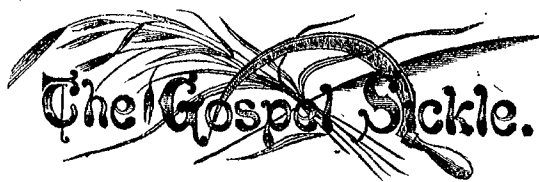
HOLINESS.

MEN pray for holiness as if it were something entirely apart from their every-day life, something that had nothing at all to do with their conduct in their domestic, social, and business relations. They sing, "Nearer, my God, to thee," with glowing fervor, but never think that the prayer can be answered only by the uplifting of their own lives to the plane of God's requirements. Holiness is not a mere sentiment, not a vague vision of glory overhanging us like a heavenly cloud, not a rapture or an ecstasy, not something that God sends down to wrap us like a garment in its radiant folds. If being holy means anything at all, it means being true, honest, upright, pure, gentle, patient, kind, and unselfish. We really have no more religion than we get into our every-day practice. Wherein our devotion is higher than our living, it counts for nothing.—S. S. Times.

"CAST THY BREAD UPON THE WATERS."

"WHATSOEVER a man soweth, that shall he also reap," not in quantity, but in kind. A few months since, while speaking with a good brother, of the way in which God sometimes blesses the humblest efforts put forth in the interests of his cause, he related the following peculiar dream, which I have ever since regarded as a most singular illustration of the familiar text: "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days."

In his dream he was standing on the shore of a great river, having on his arm a basket filled with small crackers, which, as the tide began to go out, he cast upon the waters. Handful after handful he flung on the receding waves, and then, the basket being emptied, he stood watching them until the fast-ebbing tide had borne them all out of sight. And still he stood looking off upon the waters, as if in a reverie, when suddenly, as it seemed to him, the tide began to come in. Wave after wave continued to hasten joyously shoreward, until the tide was nearly at its height. Just then, happening to raise his eyes, it appeared as if the entire surface of the water, in the distance, was covered with strange looking objects, moving swiftly toward the shore. On they came, like an armed and disciplined host, every wave bringing them nearer. The advance guard reached the shore, and swept up the beach, as if to surround him. The rear guard followed, until the shore was lined with them as far as the eye could reach. They piled themselves up about him like a great wall. Retreat was impossible. He was a prisoner! Judge of his surprise, however, when those strange-looking objects which had thus effected his capture, were discovered to be great loaves of bread! He had cast in a few little crackers—food for a few—and, behold, they came back a host of huge loaves—food for an army!—Boston Watchman.



"The fields are white already to harvest."—John 4:35.

BATTLE CREEK, MICH., NOVEMBER 15, 1888.

APPROACH OF THE DAY OF THE LORD.

In accordance with the promise made in our last article under the above heading, the purpose of the present paper is to inquire concerning the overthrow of the papacy. It will be remembered that according to the interpretation given of Dan. 7:24, 25, the papacy was to continue as a persecuting power for 1260 literal years. The date of the full establishment of the papacy has been fixed as A. D. 588. From this, it is an easy matter to reckon 1260 years, and ascertain that the allotted time should end in A. D. 1798. It is now in order, to consult history, and ascertain the facts in the case.

Rev. George Croly, A. M., says:—

On the 9th of February, 1798, the French corps commanded by Berthier encamped in front of the Porta del Popolo. On the next day the Castle of St. Angelo surrendered; the city gates were seized, and the pope and the cardinals, excepting three, were made prisoners. . . . Ten days after, the pope was sent away under an escort of French cavalry, and was finally carried into France, where he died in captivity.—*The Apocalypse*, p. 429, London ed., 1828.

The French army under Bonaparte was seen invading and partitioning the papal territory. The next year, 1798, saw it master of Rome, the popedom a republic, and the pope a prisoner and an exile.—*Id.*, p. 124.

Dr. Adam Clarke says:—

In 1798 the French republican army under General Berthier, took possession of the city of Rome, and entirely superseded the whole papal power.—*Com. on Dan. 7:25*.

Croly on the Apocalypse, p. 100, says:—

On the 10th of February, 1798, the French army under Berthier entered Rome, and took the pope and the cardinals prisoners. Within a week, Pius VI. was deposed. Pius VI. died in captivity. The papal independence was abolished by France, and the son of Napoleon was declared king of Rome.

The "Cyclopedia Americana," under "Berthier," speaks as follows:—

In October, 1797, General Bonaparte sent him to Paris to deliver to the Directory the treaty of Campo-Formio. In January, 1798, he received the chief command of the army of Italy, and was ordered by the Directory to march against the dominions of the pope. In the beginning of February, he made his entrance into Rome, abolished the papal government, and established a consular one.—*Vol. 2*, pp. 80, 81.

Of Pope Pius VI., it says:—

An army, commanded by General Berthier, entered that capital (Rome) Feb. 10, 1798, and on the 15th proclaimed the establishment of the Roman republic, governed by consuls, a senate, and a tribunate. The pope, after this deprivation of his authority, was conveyed to France as a prisoner, and died at Valence, Aug. 29, 1799.—*Vol. 10*, p. 161. Edited by Francis Lieber, Boston, 1854.

The following is found in Thier's "French Revolution":—

On the 22d of Pluviose (Feb. 10, 1798), Berthier came in sight of the ancient capital of the world, which the republican armies had not yet visited. . . . The Castle of St. Angelo was delivered up to the French on the natural condition between civilized nations, to respect religion, the public establishments, persons, and property. The pope was left in the Vatican, and Berthier, introduced at the Porta del Popolo, was conducted to the capitol, like the Roman generals of old in their triumphs. . . . A notary drew up an act by which the populace, calling itself the Roman people, declared that it resumed its sovereignty, and constituted itself a republic. . . . The pope, treated with respect due to his age, was removed in the night from the Vatican, and conveyed into Tuscan, where he received asylum in a convent.—*Vol. 4*, p. 246.

Pius VI., Angelo Braschi, February 15 dethroned by Bonaparte; he was expelled from Rome and deposed in February, 1798, and died at Valence, Aug. 29, 1799.—*Haydn's Dictionary of Dates*, p. 375.

A French corps d'armee under Berthier, having in February, 1798, crossed the Apennines from Ancona, and entered Rome, the tricolor flag was displayed from the capitol, amidst the shouts of the populace, the pope's temporal reign declared at an end, and the Roman Republic proclaimed in strict alliance and fraternization with the French.—*Horæ Apoc.*, vol. 3, p. 370.

Such is the testimony of history. The downfall of the papacy is thereby established beyond controversy as occurring at a time to furnish an exact fulfillment of prophecy. For 1260 years, from A. D. 588 to A. D. 1798, the "man of sin" held sway, and exercised temporal dominion and persecuting power. But the words of prophecy must be fulfilled in its ending, as in its beginning and progress; and true to those words that end was reached exactly "on time." Such was

the field of operations had in view by the apostle Paul in the language that furnished the text of this series of articles:—

"Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin he revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed." 2 Thess. 2:3-8.

We have seen in what consisted the "falling away," the growth and elevation of the papacy, its self-exaltation, its persecuting and blasphemous character, its work in the matter of presuming to change the law of God, and finally, its downfall. We are thus brought to the next feature mentioned by the apostle; and what is that?—The final destruction of the "man of sin," "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." So reads the concluding portion of verse eight, of the chapter under consideration.

Paul kept steadily in view the subject of his discourse; viz., the approach of the day of the Lord. But the papacy has not yet met with any such destruction as is brought to view by the apostle, for the Lord has not yet come. This militates directly against doctrines that are somewhat prevalent (though not as generally advocated as formerly); viz., that Christ's coming is at conversion or at death. Let it be remembered that so long as the papacy is in existence, that fact proves that the second coming of Christ is in the future.

At this point in the investigation of the subject in hand, the question arises, Do the Scriptures furnish testimony concerning the career of the papacy from and after its temporal overthrow, and until its final destruction? The reply to this question will constitute the theme of a future article. G. W. M.

"COMMANDING TO ABSTAIN FROM MEATS."

In the SICKLE of Oct. 15, consideration was given to 1 Tim. 4:1-5, excepting the point mentioned in the phrase that forms the above heading. The position was taken that in the history and practices of the papal communion is seen very emphatically the fulfillment of the predictions contained in the text referred to. Not that none others have manifested the characteristics therein mentioned, but that their most complete fulfillment is seen as stated. We will now give thought to the remaining passages.

Among other characteristics that were to be manifest in those who should depart from the faith, Paul mentions this: "Commanding to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." And then the apostle takes occasion to remark further as follows: "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." This brings up for consideration the food question, regarding which there has been and still is much discussion going on. The fact that the word "meats," as used in this connection, is from the Greek word *brōma*, which means "food," shows our statement to be correct.

For the benefit of inquirers, we will first consider the evidences of the fulfillment of the statement regarding the "commanding to abstain from meats," and then notice the bearing of the apostle's comments upon the food question.

Concerning the fulfillment of the prediction, we quote from Dr. Albert Barnes's "Notes":—

It is not necessary to suppose that there would be an entire prohibition, but only a prohibition of certain kinds, and at certain seasons. That this characteristic is found in the papacy more than anywhere else in the Christian world, it is needless to prove. The following questions and answers from Dr. Butler's "Catechism," will show what is the sentiment of Roman Catholics on this subject:—

"*Ques.*—Are there any other commandments besides the Ten Commandments of God?

"*Ans.*—There are the commandments or precepts of the church, which are chiefly six.

"*Ques.*—What are we obliged to do by the second commandment of the church?

"*Ans.*—To give part of the year to fasting and abstinence.

"*Ques.*—What do you mean by fast days?

"*Ans.*—Certain days on which we are allowed but one meal, and forbidden flesh meat.

"*Ques.*—What do you mean by days of abstinence?

"*Ans.*—Certain days on which we are forbidden to eat flesh meat; but are allowed the usual number of meals.

"*Ques.*—Is it strictly forbidden by the church to eat flesh meat on days of abstinence?

"*Ans.*—Yes; and to eat flesh meat on any day on which it is forbidden, without necessity, and leave of the church, is very sinful."

Could there be a more striking and impressive commentary on what the apostle says here, that in the latter days some would depart from the faith, under the hypocritical teachings of those who commanded to abstain from meats? . . . It applies more appropriately and fully to the papal communion than to any other body of men professing Christianity, and taken in connection with the other characteristics of the apostasy, there can be no doubt that the reference is to that.

So much for the fulfillment of the apostle's prediction. Regarding the bearing upon the food questions of his further remarks, we offer a few suggestions.

The food under consideration is, according to the text, that "which God hath created to be received" for that purpose. We must not go outside this limitation. In the beginning, God provided a bill of fare for the human race, and spoke of it thus: "I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat." Gen. 1:29. It will doubtless readily be admitted that since the earth was cursed in consequence of man's fall, it has brought forth many noxious plants that were before unknown; and certainly no one will claim that the Lord intended to include such in the bill of fare that he gave to our first parents. Whatever God included in that bill of fare was good and wholesome for man to eat; but his statement cannot be taken as license to eat of all forms of vegetable growth that now exist. This must be admitted, for there are many plants and herbs that contain deadly poisons. This statement must be taken with certain limitations. These limitations will exclude tobacco; for it not only has no value as an article of food, but is poisonous in its nature, and seriously detrimental to the human system when taken into it.

We find no permission given to man to partake of animal food until after the flood. Then the Lord gave such permission in this language: "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." Gen. 9:3, 4. The Lord's statement with regard to the use of flesh for food, is subject to the same limitations as that regarding herbs, trees, etc. It is so stated in the text, "Even as the green herb;" that is, according to the same rule. That rule was the fitness of the article to constitute food for man. To claim that the statement should be taken in its broadest sense, would be to claim that all insects, reptiles, creeping things—everything that lives—is good for food. The utter absurdity and unreasonableness of such a claim is too apparent to require demonstration.

We may learn much regarding the scope of the permission given to use flesh as food, by observing the intimations of Scripture. In the Lord's instructions to the children of Israel, plain distinctions were made between clean and unclean animals. So far as relates to the healthfulness or unhealthfulness of the various animals as articles of food, the principle upon which those instructions were founded, holds good at the present time. The specific laws given under the old dispensation regarding this matter, ceased with the expiration of the whole ceremonial system.

In his comments upon the expression, "every creature of God is good," Dr. Barnes says:—

It does not mean that every moral agent remains good as long as he is a creature of God, . . . nor does it mean that all that God has made is good for every object for which it can be applied. It is good in its place; good for the purpose for which he made it. But it should not be inferred that a thing which is poisonous in its nature is good for food because it is a creation of God. It is good only in its place, and for the ends for which he intended it. Nor should it be inferred that what God has made is necessarily good after it has been perverted by man. As God made it originally, it might have been used without injury. Apples and peaches were made good, and are still useful and proper as articles of food; rye and Indian corn are good, and are admirably adapted to the support of man and beast; but it does not follow that all that man can make of them is necessarily good. He extracts from them a poisonous liquid, and then says that "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused." But is this a fair use of this passage of Scripture? True they are good—they are to be received with gratitude as he made them, and as applied to the uses for which he designed them; but why apply this passage to prove that a deleterious beverage, which man has extracted from what God has made, is good also, and good for all the purposes for which it can be applied? As God made these things, they are good. As man perverts them, it is no longer proper to call them the creation of God, and they may be injurious in the highest degree. This passage there-

fore, should not be adduced to vindicate the use of intoxicating drinks. As employed by the apostle, it had no such reference, nor does it contain any principle which can properly receive any such application.

In the interpretation of Scripture, it is extremely necessary to exercise great care that our personal preferences, likes and dislikes, do not creep in, and swerve us from the real intention of the inspired author. In the foregoing remarks on the text that have been considered, the purpose has been to obtain the true intention of the apostle; and it is hoped that the effort may prove of benefit and satisfaction to the readers.

G. W. M.

ORIGIN OF FIRST-DAY OBSERVANCE.—NO. 1.

ELD. J. N. ANDREWS says :—

More ancient than the Christian religion is the festival of Sunday, its origin being lost in remote antiquity.—*History of the Sabbath*, p. 260.

What was it, then, before it was a "Christian institution"? Webster says :—

Sunday; so called because anciently dedicated to the sun or its worship; . . . the first day of the week.

Worcester gives the same definition. How anciently was it dedicated to the sun or its worship? The *North British Review* styles it—

The wild solar holiday of all pagan times.

A pagan is one who worships false gods. Robert Paterson, in "Fables of Infidelity," says :—

The Chaldeans, the most ancient people of whom we have any acquaintance, . . . had among them the descendants of Noah, . . . were probably the best instructed of the heathen. They gave up the worship of God, adored the sun, and moon, and stars of heaven, . . . and dumb idols.

They adored the sun, and set apart the first day of the week, on which to do this service. He further says :—

From this rock we were hewn; the common names of the days of the week, and especially of the first day of the week, will forever keep up a testimony to the necessity of that revelation which delivered our forefathers and us from burning our children upon the Devil's altars on Sundays.—*Ib.*, pp. 12, 13.

This shows how early Satan had the day dedicated to his honor; and that, too, by inspiring them to offer their children to him by burning them on his altars on Sundays.

"Chamber's Encyclopedia," art. Babylon, says :—

Babylon was the first seat of power. The earliest records yet discovered are those of a monarch whose capital was Ur. . . . The monarch's resources are seen in the ruins of the temple of the sun-god built by him. His name in the Accade (ancient Elamite) language would be the Chedorlaomer of Gen. 14 : 5. This king is not the one who built the temple.

This shows how early sun-worship, and temple-building to the sun, had become established. In the days of Abraham, this departure from God, had no doubt become quite prevalent. We can also see why the Lord would have Abraham separate from his "country," and from his "kindred," and from his "father's house." As the departure from God became more prevalent, and Abraham continued to maintain his integrity, God could say: "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." Gen. 8 : 19. And in after years, when Abraham had been "gathered to his people," God could still encourage Isaac, by saying: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." Gen. 26 : 4, 5. It also seems that this sun-worship of those early times, would be what we would call Baal-worship of later times. "Smith's Bible Dictionary," art. Baal, says :—

Cruzer Mouere declares Baal to be the sun-god.

The "Union Bible Dictionary," art. Baal, says :—

The name by which several nations of the East worship the sun.

Prideaux, writing of the tower of Belus, or Babel, says :—

Its foundation must be carried back to the time of Nimrod in the second century after the flood, when the nations said, "Let us build a city and tower, and make us a name." Probably it was even then consecrated to the worship of Baal or the sun, and thus brought down the vengeance of Jehovah upon the builders.—Vol. 1, p. 490.

Reader, if, as Mouere declares, Baal was the sun-god, and the time set apart in which to worship him was the first day of the week, or Sunday, then may we also be sure of another thing; viz., that when we meet with Baal-worship or Baal-worshippers, in the Scriptures, it is an evidence of first-day observance, whether among Jews or Gentiles. Smith, in his "Classical Dictionary," speaking of the religion of the Chaldeans, says :—

The religion of the Chaldeans was Sabaism, or the worship of the heavenly bodies. The priests formed a caste, and culti-

vated science, especially astronomy, in which they knew the apparent motion of the sun, moon, and five of the planets, the calculation of eclipses of the moon, . . . dividing the year into twelve months.

Of Babylon he says :—

Secular history ascribes its origin to Belus (i.e., the god Baal).

Under the word Heliopolis he says :—

Heliopolis, . . . (i.e. the city of the sun), . . . a celebrated city of Syria, a chief seat of the worship of Baal, one of whose symbols was the sun.

Of Helios he says :—

Called *Sol* by the Romans, the god of the sun.

These facts are of great moment, as they show us the apostasy of mankind in the early ages of our world. No doubt this form of departure existed before the flood, and Cain and his posterity in all probability chose another day for rest, than the one sanctified by God, to his father Adam. The "sons of God" and the "children of men," would be, in those times, proper appellations, designating between those who feared God and kept his law, and those who "corrupted his way." This will be noticed too, that when the worship of Baal was practiced by Ahab, it was said to the children of Israel: "Ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim." 1 Kings 18 : 18. Also in 2 Kings 17 : 16, we read: "And they left all the commandments of the Lord their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal." This is true also—if they "left all the commandments," they left the Sabbath; and if they "worshiped all the host of heaven," they worshiped the sun; and if they worshiped the sun, they observed the sun's day.

Prideaux says: "Probably it was even then (second century) consecrated to the worship of Baal or the sun," and if so we see, at how early a time Jehovah's rival began. And if thus doing "brought down the vengeance of Jehovah," we can see good reason for scattering "them abroad." Wonderful indeed has been the departure from God, by mankind, not only in respect to his day of rest; but in reference to the other nine parts of his law as well. Justin Edwards, in his "Sabbath Manual," says :—

If mankind had always kept the Sabbath, there would never have been an idolator in the world.

Then idolatry had its origin in Sabbath breaking. Wonderful! yet no doubt true.

Jennings makes this sun adoration more ancient than the exodus of Israel from Egypt. Of that time he says :—

The idolatrous nations, in honor of their chief god, the sun, began the day at his rising.

They had changed God's order, by beginning the day at the sun rise instead of sun setting. He represents the nations of those times as setting apart Sunday in honor of their chief god, the sun, and says :—

The day which the heathen in general consecrated to the worship and honor of their chief god, the sun, which, according to our computation, was the first day of the week."—*Jewish Ant.*, Book 3, ch. 1.

Then Sunday-sacredness had become general among the nations of those times. We find the Egyptians of whom the Israelites were slaves, honoring the sun. Morar, a first-day advocate and observer, in his work on "The Lord's Day," says :—

We allow the old Egyptians worshiped the sun, and as a standing memorial of their veneration, dedicated this day to him.

This is one reason why God delivered his people from that bondage.

These extracts show the condition of Israel at the time of their deliverance; and we may reasonably conclude they had nearly, or quite, come to disregard the seventh day; if not by free-will, by compulsion, as they were slaves, and in servitude. This, if so, will throw light on Deut. 5 : 15, "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day." Their disregard of the day made it necessary to give the command "to keep it holy." Rev. John Marsh says :—

Probably the children of Israel were made incessantly to labor in Egypt.

God sent Pharaoh word to let his people go, "that they might serve him." He refused, and haughtily told Moses: "I know not the Lord; neither will I let Israel go!" Then the Lord wrought, for his "name's sake: that it should not be polluted before the heathen among whom they were" (Eze. 20 : 9), by sending the plagues upon Pharaoh, for his determination to make Israel work. Ex. 5 : 4, 5. It seems too, that God had threatened to destroy Israel, "in the land of

Egypt" (Eze. 20 : 8), and Moses refers to this in Ex. 5 : 3, when he says, "Lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword." They had the week; for Loehyer, in his "Elements of Astronomy," says :—

The week, the names of the seven days of which it is composed, was derived by the Egyptians from the seven celestial bodies then known.

He then says of their names as distinguished by the Romans, and of Sunday, thus :—

Dies Solis, sun's day, Sunday.—*Ib.*, p. 222.

"History of Christianity," Book 3, chaps. 1 and 4, says :—

The day of the sun would be willingly hallowed by almost all the pagan world.

The "Union Bible Dictionary" (edition of 1855), says :—

Sunday was a name given by the heathen to the first-day of the week, because it was a day on which they worshiped the sun; and *this name*, together with those of the other days of the week, have been continued to our time.

One thing is sure, Sunday is not the seventh day. It has its place as first-day, and always has, any amount of assertions to the contrary, notwithstanding. E. VAN DEUSEN.

THE LOST-TIME QUESTION.

AMONG the many excuses and pretexts for refusing to keep the seventh day, that of probable lost time stands prominent. A loss of time, somewhat general but not world-wide, would still preserve the week and the Sabbath. That a loss world-wide and permanent is utterly improbable, yea, utterly impossible, may easily be proved :—

1. The week and the Sabbath were correctly kept, up to and after the time of Christ's resurrection. Luke 23 : 54-56; 24 : 1; Acts 16 : 18. Why expect and how prove that they have become permanently disarranged since?

2. If the week of one is wrong, the week of all is wrong; but all agree with each other,—including the Jews, who, all admit, were able to keep the week from Moses to Christ—why less able or unable since?

3. Millions and millions of time contracts are constantly falling due,—and always have been since the time of Christ. How could they all lose one or more days *all at once* sometime, and none know it, and such a loss never be repeated or corrected? Think of the dated traffic, law-suits, wars, etc., constantly going on. Were there no mortgages coming due then, or could such a Rip Van Winkle sleep come over money-lenders now?

4. Pagans for thousands of years kept the day of the sun, till Pope Sylvester christened it the "Lord's Day," and together with the Roman emperors, from Constantine, enforced it on the world as the successor of God's Sabbath. Many have kept God's Sabbath from Eden. How could both parties lose at once, and lose just so much?

5. The Sabbath could not be lost, except by losing the week (which none will claim), or by disarranging permanently the days of the week—a thing no man can prove ever happened to a single individual, much less the whole race of mankind.

6. But to record days and weeks is one of the earliest lessons of childhood, and one learned alike by all classes and conditions of mankind, from the cradle to the grave. Aside from one's daily physical needs, there are perhaps no more universal facts.

7. But there is, if possible, still clearer proof. Whence came the week of seven days, if not from creation? and how marked off, save by a rest-day at its close? How came it to be so universal, from time immemorial, if not divine? What source so likely, what measure so fit, as this ever-recurring copy of the creation week, supported by divine command? Says La Place (next to Newton the greatest of philosophers) :—

The week is the most ancient and incontestable monument of human knowledge. It appears to point to a common source whence that knowledge proceeded.—*Craft's Sabbath for Man*, pp. 528, 365.

It [the week] has been used from time immemorial in almost all Eastern countries, and as it forms neither an aliquot part of the year or of the lunar month (29½ days), those who reject the Mosiac recital, will be at a loss to assign to it, as Delambre remarks, an origin having much semblance of probability.—*Encyclopedia Britannica*, art. Calendar.

To the ancient Chaldeo-Babylonians, we owe not only our division of time, but also the week of seven days, dedicated in succession to the sun, moon, and five planets—an arrangement still maintained. And more than all that, there were days set apart, and kept holy, as far back as the time of Sargon of Accade (about 3400 B. C.). There are, however, essential differences between the two [Hebrew and Chaldean Sabbaths]. In the first place, the Babylonians kept five Sabbath days each month, which made them more than one

a week. In the second place, they came round on certain dates of each month, independently of the day of the week; on the 7th, 14th, 19th, 21st, and 28th.—*Ragozin's Chaldea* (Putnam's edition), p. 230.

We find among all the ancient nations,—Chaldean, Persian, Hindus, Chinese, and Egyptian,—that the seven days of the week were in universal use, and each named the seven days, after the seven planets, including the sun and moon. We shall find the probabilities millions to one against its being an accident.—*Planetary and Stellar Worlds*, p. 7.

8. Let us hear the testimony of the languages. Eld. W. M. Jones, of London, a linguist long resident in the East, has published a "Chart of the Week," giving the meaning of the word "week" and of each day, in 160 of the principal languages, ancient and modern. From it we learn the following: (1.) Every one,—Sanskrit, Babylonian, Egyptian, Chinese, etc.—has a week of just seven days. (2.) One hundred and eight of the 160 languages call the seventh day, or Saturday, *Sabbath*, or some word indicating *no work*. (3.) But three call Sunday by any sacred name. (4.) Among those calling the seventh-day the Sabbath are the ancient Persian, Arabic, Armenian, Turkish, as well as the later Italian, French, Spanish, German, Russian, etc.

9. The oldest writings on earth,—the Assyrian inscriptions of 3,000 years ago—tell of a week of seven days, marked by seventh days of rest. Says George Smith of the British Museum, and discoverer of the famous Creation Tablets:—

In 1869, I discovered, among other curious things, a religious calendar of the Assyrians, in which every month is divided into four weeks, and the seventh days, or Sabbaths, are marked out as days on which no work should be undertaken.—*Assyrian Discoveries*, p. 12.

Says the fifth Creation Tablet: "On the seventh day he [God] appointed a holy day. And to cease from all labor he commanded." See *Le Normant's Begin. of History*, pp. 248-9. Rev. James Freeman Clarke says: "This Fifth Tablet is very important, because it affirms clearly in my opinion that the origin of the Sabbath was coeval with creation. Mr. Sayce has recently published a similar opinion."—*Ten Great Religions*, Vol. II p. 554. Says Dr. Crafts in his "Sabbath for Man," p. 527:—

The Chaldean cuneiform inscriptions prove that the weekly Sabbath was observed not only by the Assyrians and Babylonians but by the earlier inhabitants of Chaldea, at and before the times of Terah and Abraham, and was believed to have been ordained at creation.—*See Trans. Soc. Bib. Archeol.*, Vol. V, p. 427; *Sayce's Bab. Lit.*, p. 55 etc.; *Records of the Past*, Vol. VII, pp. 167-170; *Christian Statesman*, July 14, 1887.

If the Sabbath and the week were so well known both to Christians and heathen far back of Moses, and by them always referred to creation (Gen. 2:3; 29:27), it is sheer nonsense to claim, as some do now, that they were first made known to Israel in the wilderness. If they were able to preserve the Sabbath and the week through the times of Abraham, Moses, Nehemiah, etc., to Christ, and later, what reason to expect that the modern world should forget and lose a lesson so useful and universal?—and then somehow *pick it up again*, and all this *unknown to any one*, and unsupported by a scrap of history or experience—or rather, contrary to all history and experience!

10. The science of astronomy absolutely demonstrates that there has been no day lost since long before Christ,—which is more than is needed to destroy the objection.

Johnson's Cyclopaedia, art. La Place, says:—

The earliest authentic observations of eclipse, made at Babylon in the years 719, 720, 721, B. C., show that they occurred 1½ hours sooner than if the present mean motion of the moon then obtained. . . . At each lunation, she approaches nearer to the earth than during the last, by one fourteenth of an inch! . . . The revealing, after many years of study, of the source of the resulting discrepancy between astronomical tables and observation, is regarded as one of the proudest achievements of the author.

Now, if astronomers, by the study of eclipse-tables and observations, can detect a gain of but 105 minutes in 2600 years, what nonsense to talk of a possible loss of years, weeks, or even a day!

11. Again, see how easily astronomy detects and corrects errors in counting time! The Julian year (after Julius Cæsar, since 45 B. C.) counts 365½ days for a year. The Gregorian, or *true solar*, year (after Pope Gregory VIII., since 1582) has 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 46 seconds; or is eleven minutes *shorter* than the Julian year. Thus the Julian almanac would lag behind the sun and seasons three days in 400 years: or get ten days behind from A. D. 325 to 1582, when Gregory ordered it to be set right by commanding Oct. 5, 1582, to be dated Oct. 15, 1582, and the Gregorian year to be used thereafter.

Catholic Europe obeyed at once; Protestant England and her colonies delayed until Parliament ordered Sept. 3, 1752, to be dated Sept. 14, 1752 (the Julian almanac being then eleven days behind the sun), and the Gregorian calendar to be followed. Greek Russia still uses the Julian almanac, which is now twelve days behind the sun, and our Gregorian, or true, almanac; and therefore, while we all keep Christmas on the same calendar day (Dec. 25), Russia observes it Jan. 6! But Rome, England, and Russia alike count the *same* day for Sunday, Monday, etc., and *always did!* Thus does God preserve the week, by making it so simple that a child can measure it. Suppose the people had lost a few days now and then, would not the seasons tell the astronomers of it?

12. Astronomy is the oldest of sciences. It flourished under the clear skies and on the boundless plains of Chaldea and Egypt, thousands of years ago. Says a recent and able authority:—

The astronomers of ancient Mesopotamia . . . had succeeded, by their knowledge of the period of 223 lunations [moons], in predicting eclipses. The most ancient calculation of this kind,—that for March 10, 721, B. C.,—was made by them, and differs from ours by a few minutes only. . . . Thus we have seen two solar eclipses; those of July 2, 980 B. C. and June 13, 809 B. C. are mentioned on the monuments.—*Le Normant and Chevallier's Anc. Hist. of the East*, pp. 316, 448-451.

Says the great Sir John Herschel, prince of astronomers:—

Remarkable eclipses, for instance, now that the lunar theory is thoroughly understood, can be calculated back for thousands of years, without the possibility of mistaking the day of their occurrence. And whenever any such eclipse is so interwoven with the account given by an ancient author of some historical event, as to indicate precisely the interval between the eclipse and the event, and at the same time to identify completely the eclipse, that date is recovered and *fixed forever*. This has been done in the case of four remarkable total eclipses of the sun: *Thales*, May 25, 585 B. C. (mentioned by Herodotus as predicted by Thales, and as causing the suspension of a battle between the Medes and Lydians, followed by a treaty of peace); *Larissa*, May 19, 557 B. C. (related by Zenophon as causing a panic among the Median defenders of that city, thus enabling the Persian besiegers to capture it); *Agathocles*, Aug. 15, 310 B. C. (witnessed near the southern part of Sicily by the fleet of Agathocles, in its escape from the Carthaginian blockade of Syracuse); *Stictlastad*, Aug. 31, 1030 A. D. Too recent for use.—*Outlines of Astronomy*, pp. 683-5. See *Chambers' Encyc.*, *Eclipses*; *Haydn's Dict. of Dates*, *Eclipses*; *Newcomb's and Holden's Astronomy*, p. 183.

Speaking of that of Larissa, Sir John says: "We are thus presented with a datum in those remote times, having all the precision of a most careful modern observation," etc. Of Agathocles he says: "No other eclipse by possibility could have done so."

Says one of the highest living authorities:—

In China the same idea has prevailed from time immemorial; and from the reign of Teheon, 1100 B. C., a court astronomer has been regularly employed, whose business it has been to announce any approaching eclipse. The court then assembled (a custom even in our own day), the emperor solemnly beat a tambour, while the mandarins shot arrows into the sky, to assist the eclipsed luminary.—*Sir John Lubbock, in Origin of Civilization*, p. 231.

The following will explain itself:—

U. S. Naval Observatory, Washington, Jan. 31, 1883.
Mr. L. J. Caldwell,
Battle Creek, Mich.

SIR: To the several questions in yours of the 23d inst., the following answers are returned:—

1. "Did not the ancient nations predict and record eclipses long before Christ?"—*Yes*.
2. "Is not the day of the week on which some of the most noted ones occurred, recorded?"—*No*.
3. "Have not modern astronomers retraced and identified some of them, even to the day of the week?"—*Yes* [as to identifying them], but not as to the day of the week, which could be, however, readily ascertained.
4. "Did the Julian or Gregorian corrections of the calendar disarrange the days of the week?"—*No*.

Very respectfully,

R. S. PRYTHIA, Superintendent.

But if time has been lost, how could astronomers predict, record, and retrace eclipses in all nations for thousands of years, without finding it out? How can one be expected to admit a "may be so," in contradiction to science, history, and all individual experience? Not a scrap of reliable proof can be shown. Is not the "wish father to the thought," since those who cannot find a definite day for the seventh day, can yet find one for the first? Selkirk, Kane, Livingstone, Magellan, etc., lost no time. Are we to believe that once on a time, all the world lost their wits?

LOYD J. CALDWELL.

"HAVE ME EXCUSED."

"AND they all with one consent began to make excuse." Luke 14:18. Almost every one who has studied the Bible in reference to the Sabbath ques-

tion, knows that the seventh day is the only weekly Sabbath that God ever blessed, and commanded to be kept holy, or that the Bible says anything about; but the keeping of it brings such a cross that but few professing Christians have the faith and moral courage to bear it. Hence, when they find that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, like the men in the parable, they begin to make excuses for keeping a day that is more convenient, and brings no cross.

The most common excuse is that it makes no difference which day of the week we keep, so we keep one day in the seven. For the same reason many neglect other Christian duties. It is inconvenient, at first, to pray and have family worship; and I have known professing Christians who did not pray, and others who had once done so to cease, on account of its being so great a cross and so inconvenient. Some refuse to be Christians, giving for their reason these frail excuses. It is hard to overcome the habit of gratifying their appetites, and their desires for worldly pleasure, and to suffer the displeasure and ridicule of those who were their companions in these things. In this way many Christians who have begun well, shrink from inconvenience until their religion becomes only a form, void of the blessings of God that it should bring in this life, and of the heirship to the inheritance in the world to come. Those who have the true Christian spirit will not turn away from what the Lord requires of them, nor will they ask that the cross be any lighter. The familiar hymn expresses it thus:—

"I ask not, Lord, for less to bear
Here in the narrow way,
But that I may thy blessing share
In all I do or say."

What were crosses and inconveniences to the martyrs? Why did they suffer them, and do those things which caused them to lose their positions in business, their wealth, their homes, their relatives and friends, and even their lives, when they might have done that which was convenient and popular, and saved their lives, friends, and homes? Did not the Catholic Church (like the popular churches of to-day) offer them Christ, and say that its greatest desire was to save their souls, on the terms only, that they would keep Sunday, and cease to do that which was inconvenient and unpopular? The whole Christian world knows that the martyrs did right, and that they would not have been doing God's will, and would have lost eternal life, if they had yielded to these worldly importunities. The Catholic Church wondered at their persistence in going contrary to the whole world, and against the wise (?) counsel of its priests, bishops, and the pope. One of Luther's greatest opponents, the famous Roman Catholic, Dr. Eck, spoke of him as follows:—

"I am surprised at the humility and modesty with which the Reverend Doctor undertakes to oppose, alone, so many illustrious Fathers, and pretends to know more than the sovereign pontiff, the conncils, the doctors, and the universities! It would be surprising, no doubt, if God had hidden the truth from so many saints and martyrs until the advent of the Reverend Father!"

We love to sing of how the martyrs suffered:—

"Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
Whilst others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas?"

Professed Christian, could you sail through bloody seas, if such persecution should come in our day? Can you sing "with the spirit and with the understanding also,"—

"Sure I must fight if I would reign;
Increase my courage, Lord;
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by thy word

How much fighting would you do, if you yielded every time you saw an inconvenience in your way? Could you "bear the toil, endure the pain," if you fled whenever it appeared? If you do not believe that the Lord means just what he says in his commandments, how can you believe what he says in his promises? You, of course, do believe both. Then dare to read aright the Sabbath commandment, and believe it, and show your Christian loyalty by practicing to the very letter what it says. Though it may not lead you through seas of blood, be true to him, bear the little toil, endure the slight pain, that may be necessary in keeping God's holy day.

Although inconvenience is a very common excuse, and would seemingly release you from keeping God's holy day (Luke 14:18, 24; Num. 22:12, 19-22), you do not want to be excused; for thereby you would be excused from receiving the reward. It is only those "that do his commandments" who "have right to the tree of life, and . . . enter in through the gates into the city." Rev. 22:14. ISAAC MORRISON.

THE VALUE OF TRUTH.

"For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." The idea is quite prevalent that it makes little difference what a man believes, if his heart is only right. But the Bible teaches men to worship God in "spirit and in truth." The truth, then, is essential, as well as the spirit. The Spirit of God is the "Spirit of truth," and its office is to guide the humble seeker "into all truth." The Scriptures nowhere license a compromised standard or an adulterated faith, but, rather, everywhere insist upon strict conformity to truth. "Sanctify them through thy truth," are the Saviour's words. And again, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. "I am the way, the truth, and the life." "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth." John bare witness unto the truth. "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." "God shall send forth his mercy and his truth." Let "thy truth continually preserve me." "Thou . . . hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law." "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." Let us love—"in deed and in truth." These and scores of similar passages show the stress that the God of the Bible attaches to the truth. There is no room, therefore, for that sentimental cant which extols so-called Christian union at the expense of doctrinal purity, and a consistent platform of Bible truth. "First pure, then peaceable," is God's order. True charity will not complacently fellowship known error; for charity "rejoiceth in the truth," and "thy law is the truth." Therefore, those who have changed Jehovah's law have turned the truth of God into a lie; for if any change is made in truth, it is truth no longer.

It was by accepting the first lie that the human family was hurled to ruin. Satan is "the father of lies." "He abode not in the truth," hence, the record of his subsequent treason and wickedness.

Believing a lie blighted the happiness of a race; departing from the truth drove the highest angel from his seat in glory. Though a man possess honest motives and a sincere heart, if he "err from the truth," he needs to be converted from his error. James 5:19, 20. Paul says that we are sanctified through "the Spirit and belief of the truth." But belief alone will not sanctify or save, else Satan himself might wear an immortal crown. The soul can be purified only through obeying the truth.

While evil men "shall turn away their ears from the truth," the Christian warrior will "buy the truth and sell it not;" he will have his "loins girt about with truth," and "the truth will be his shield and buckler." We read that because the last generation "received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, . . . God shall send them strong delusion, that they shall believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." These prophetic words, applying just before the coming of Christ, show that man had had opportunity to hear and receive the truth, but had turned deliberately from it.

Even in this degenerate age of varied and speculative theology, of ritualistic fog and tradition and trash, the truth can be found by every patient, praying seeker. Of that class who are established in the special truths of the closing age, it will be said, "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in." The truth, believed and obeyed, transports its adherents to the beautiful hills of paradise; but will plunge its transgressors into the depths of blackness and death.

May you and I, dear reader, so adorn our character with the gems of transforming truth, that we may be found at last with those who by keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, shall have gained the right to an abundant entrance to the city with pearly gates. W. C. WALES.

TEST THAT ARGUMENT.

WHEN you think you have discovered a good argument against keeping the Sabbath of the ten commandments, in the fact that the law has been abolished, try it on the other side. If it holds good, releasing you from obligation to refrain from killing, stealing,

etc., doubtless you are released from obligation to keep the Sabbath.

If you think you need not keep the Sabbath, because it is not commanded in the New Testament, whence arises your obligation to keep the first day of the week, which is commanded in neither the New Testament nor the Old?

I once saw a tract opposing the Sabbath of the Lord, the leading and most emphatic objection of which was that the Scriptures do not inform us that the Sabbath is a memorial of the creation. See Gen. 2:3; Ex. 20:11. But the writer found evidence in Deut. 5:15, upon which he asserted most positively that the Sabbath was instituted as a memorial of the deliverance from Egypt. This text makes no such assertion. Therefore, if his mode of argument is good, his conclusion is false. Gen. 2:3 and Ex. 20:11, tell us why the Sabbath was blessed and sanctified; i. e., why it was instituted; while Deut. 5:15 gives those who were delivered from bondage in Egypt an additional reason why they should keep it. See Deut. 24:17, 18.

The writer forgot to try his argument on the first day of the week. That is observed as a memorial of the resurrection of Christ on that day; but where in the Scriptures is the testimony that its observance is a memorial of the resurrection, or that it was ever set apart to be observed at all? If the opponents of the truth would test their arguments, they would hardly have the audacity to use them. R. F. C.

The Theological World.

WHAT CATHOLICS SAY.

HARD QUESTIONS FOR SUNDAY-KEEPERS.

THE first of the following paragraphs we find in a newspaper article credited to the *Palmer Journal*. It is an explanation of the Sunday question by a Catholic, from a Catholic standpoint. This paragraph shows how Protestants are involved in papal tradition by the observance of the day. How can they clear themselves from the charge of recognizing the authority of the Catholic Church? He says:—

The observance of Sunday as a religious festival by Protestants implies a recognition of the authority of the Catholic Church in spiritual matters, as the Bible is silent on that matter. No apostolic command or suggestion has been given for the change of day. Protestant compilers of Bible dictionaries are driven to despair when they come to explain the adoption of the first day of the week in lieu of the seventh-day Sabbath on Bible authority; they usually explain away the change, in words meritoriously brief, by saying that the apostles (Acts 20:7) broke bread on the first day of the week. But as it is not customary for Protestants "to break bread on the first day after the Sabbath," the mere recital of this occurrence has no binding force on them. A Protestant cannot, on any principle of his religion, defend or explain the adoption of Sunday in lieu of the Sabbath of the decalogue.

The following is from James Blake, M. D., another Roman Catholic. In a debate with a Protestant, he drove the latter to the wall with the following unanswerable charges:—

Christ never wrote, but God the Father did. He wrote the ten commandments on the tables of stone, and the only commandment he emphasized, was the one that relates to the keeping of the seventh day. "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy;" and there is no command so often repeated throughout the Old Testament. If the Bible alone be the gentleman's rule of faith, he is bound by this commandment; but does he observe it?—No; he does not. Has he any Scripture authority for rejecting it?—No; he has not. Why, then, does he not observe it?—Because the church thought fit to change it. Here the gentleman admits the authority of the church to be superior to the hand-writing of God the Father. And yet he will look you in the face, and declare that the Bible, without church authority, is his rule of faith.

ROME AND THE BIBLE.

"THE Bible has at all times been accessible to Catholics," so saith the *Catholic Mirror*, as quoted in a recent number of the *Observer*. Much research would not discover another so deft a re-enactment of Joab and Amasa. How gently the left hand fingers the silky beard of Truth; how surely the dagger in the right hand finds the spot under the fifth rib!

"The Bible has at all times been accessible to Catholics." There are three senses in which this is literally and obtrusively true; and there is a fourth sense,—the plain, obvious meaning of the writer in the *Mirror*,—which is as far from the truth as the pope is from a return to the Quirinal.

First, it is literally true that the Bible has been at

all times accessible to Catholics. To how many Catholics?—To the pope and the officials, and to a handful of the laity here and there, one person in tens of thousands. And as these are "Catholics," the *Mirror* has mirrored both the strict and the literal truth in the words, "The Bible has been at all times accessible to Catholics."

Again, the Bible has been a good deal too accessible to Catholics. What is this we see in Toluca not far from the City of Mexico? The plaza alive with people; in the midst of the excited crowd a number of Catholic priests, and out of the midst of the priestly circle a pyramid of flame and a column of smoke from a pile of burning Bibles! Inquisitorial visits from house to house, threats of penance, purgatory, and perdition, have extorted from trembling families their copies of the word of God for the fagot pile! Yes, the Bible has been only too "accessible to Catholics."

Like transactions are taking place all the time, and in every land where Romanism can enact itself outside the range of the Protestant eye. Not long ago, in one of our mission stations in Brazil, a Catholic priest found access to a Bible in a Romish family, and bearing it forth into the street, he expended a good many lucifer matches in the effort to set it on fire and burn it. Finding the book somewhat stubbornly non-combustible, he actually drenched the sacred volume with kerosene, and so consumed it.

This is a venerable sin of the church of the Vatican. During the desolating persecutions in Bohemia and Moravia, when Ferdinand of Styria declared that he had rather reign over a desert than over a population of heretics, the Catholic government year by year made a money appropriation for the burning of Protestant books, and especially the Bible.

Dr. Cattell, while in Prague, saw and handled a precious copy of the word of God. It belonged to a mother in Israel, and one day from her window she saw a party of Catholics approaching, and seeking "access" to it. As she was making bread, she kneaded her Bible in with the dough and baked it, and the inquisitors failed to find access to it. That baked Bible is read in the Bohemian churches to-day.

There is a third sense in which the Bible is ever accessible to Catholics. Any one of their Protestant neighbors will lend them, yes, gladly give them, a copy. The Bible Society, if allowed to do so, will tomorrow despatch their agents to put a Bible in every Catholic family in the land. Yes, Protestants will give them without money and without price, copies of the Romish version of the Bible: so in this sense it is true that the Bible is "accessible to Catholics."

But in the sense intended by the writer, that Roman Catholic peoples in any land under the sun have free access to the Bible, or are encouraged by their church to read it, is even flagrantly untrue. There is a Bible House in Rome, the sign of which the pope can see from the windows of his gorgeous palace across the Tiber, and he curses it every time he sees it. The Rev. Hobart Seymour, of the English Church, while yet the pope had full sway in Rome, asked high papal officials why the Bible was disallowed. The reply was: "It is not disallowed." "But," said Mr. Seymour, "I have inquired in every bookstore in Rome; and in every case the answer was, 'non e permesso.'" The only copy I found was one in several volumes, which cost twenty dollars."

"But," said his interlocutors, "why should the people have the Bible when not one in hundreds can read?"

"Strange," said Mr. Seymour, "that none can read the Bible, when there is in Rome a priest for almost every ten people."

The first thing our missionaries do in a heathen country is, as soon as possible, to give the people the word of God in their own language, and teach the people to read it. Whenever did Romish missionaries do this? In their three centuries of mission work in America, have they ever given one Gospel to the Indians in their own language?

More untruth could hardly be compacted into an equal number of words than lies wrapped up in the sentence, "The Bible has at all times been accessible to Catholics."—*Rev. W. P. Breed, in New York Observer.*

WOULD that we could all imitate the pearl oyster. A particle of sand intrudes itself into its shell, and this vexes and grieves it. It cannot eject the evil, but covers it with a precious substance extracted out of its own life, by which it turns the intruder into a pearl. Could we do so with the provocations we receive from our fellow-Christians, there would be bred within us pearls of patience, gentleness, and forgiveness, by that which else had harmed us.—*Spurgeon.*

THE GOSPEL SICKLE.

Battle Creek, Mich., November 15, 1888.

It was intended to publish in this issue a digest of the proceedings of the General Conference of S. D. Adventists, recently held at Minneapolis, Minn., but not having received the report in full up to the present writing, we defer it until our next issue. The Conference was largely attended, and crowded full of interest.

In the "Doctrinal" department of this issue will be found an article on the question, "Is Man by Nature Immortal?" It is from the pen of a Congregational minister, and as such we commend it to our readers. It is a very complete statement of the case, and we do not see how fair-minded people can avoid giving assent to the positions taken. Although somewhat lengthy, the article is too good to divide, and we give it entire, trusting that our readers will peruse it with care.

As indicative of the change in sentiment that is taking place in the religious world regarding the destiny of the wicked, we quote a statement recently made by the pastor of a Congregational church in this city. In speaking of the various religious doctrines that have become practically obsolete, or as he termed it, "dead and buried," he mentioned that of eternal torment, and said that it was "quietly sleeping in its grave, never to have a resurrection." It is no doubt true that this doctrine has far fewer adherents to-day than it has had for several centuries; and as light continues to shine from the sacred page, that unscriptural doctrine must wane.

An Arran correspondent of a London journal writes of meeting a venerable Presbyterian who was well acquainted with Rowland Hill, and from whom he got this anecdote of the great preacher. One day a comparatively young preacher called on Mr. Hill and said: "Mr. Hill, I've got some new views, and I am sure they are right." "What views?" said Mr. Hill. "Why," was the reply, "I have nothing to do with the commandments at all," and then he proceeded to unfold his system at length. With just a bit of twink in his eye, after hearing him, Mr. Hill called his servant, and said, "John, show this man the door, and keep your eyes on him, for he is free of all the commandments!" —*Sel.*

The insidious, insinuating methods of the liquor traffic are, it seems, to be fully exemplified in the wine crusade recently undertaken by Miss Field. The San Francisco *Chronicle* is authority for the statement that she will not lecture, as has been supposed, "but will depend mainly on her socialabilities and prestige. Her method will be to hold receptions at the homes of leading social lights in the principal Eastern cities, and on these occasions she will discuss the question of wine-drinking in her formal talks, taking ground in its favor. Being a journalist, she will use the press as far as possible to spread her sentiments, and thus she will reach many more hearers than if she spoke in crowded halls."

The *Chronicle* also states that Miss Field is to receive \$2,500 for her services. It remains to be seen what sort of reception "leading social lights" in the East will give to a paid drummer of the California wine dealers. —*Signs of the Times.*

The observer of current events and movements in the religious world cannot fail to notice that a sentiment is growing in favor of a study of the prophecies of the Bible. It is coming to be more generally believed than formerly, that the prophecies can be understood. This is a favorable omen. The Scriptures themselves give assurance that should satisfy all, that the prophetic portions of Inspiration are all-important, and designed for man's use and benefit. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Tim. 3:16. This certainly includes the prophetic portions, as well as others. Prophecies that have been fulfilled may be studied with profit, as demonstrating their divine inspiration, and as revealing the nature of God's dealing with the children of men.

The Lord not only inspired holy men of old to

foretell future events, but he has taken care that history should record the facts concerning the fulfillment of their predictions. In some instances this has been done in a truly wonderful manner. It is noticeable that the Bible itself records the fulfillment of many of the prophetic declarations; and some of these are corroborated with accuracy by profane history. Again, other prophecies have their recorded fulfillment alone in profane history; but given so concisely as not to be mistaken. This is necessarily the case with those prophecies whose fulfillment must be found subsequent to the completion of the compilation of the sacred canon. But we should not make the mistake of thinking that prophecy is of value only after its fulfillment. It is chiefly valuable for the information it is calculated to give concerning coming events. "The Lord will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." Amos 3:7. In Rev. 1:3 are these words: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein." This certainly should inspire confidence and zeal in the study of the prophecies, and especially those relating to future events; for thereby may we be prepared for those things that are coming upon the earth.

In his comments on 2 Thess. 2:7, Olshausen says:—

The referring Antichrist to the pope, or rather to popery, is found as early as the Middle Ages, among those individuals and parties who came out in opposition to the hierarchy; but it is especially since the Reformation that this view has been the prevailing one among the Protestants. — *Commentary*, Vol. 5, p. 325.

Of late years, the sentiment above expressed regarding the application of Antichrist to popery, has undergone considerable change with some Protestant denominations. A few years ago, at the dedication of a Protestant church in Illinois, a leading minister, who was also president of a college, said that he thanked God for the Roman Catholic Church, and his remark was applauded. Think of thanking God for the existence and work of Antichrist! In the *Christian Statesman* (the organ of the National Reformers) of April 4, 1884, occurred this editorial paragraph:—

We cordially, gladly, recognize the fact that in the South American republics, and in France and other European countries, the Roman Catholics are the recognized advocates of national Christian unity, and stand opposed to all proposals of secularism. . . . Whenever they are willing to co-operate in resisting the progress of political atheism, we will gladly join hands with them.

Think of gladly joining hands with Antichrist! Here is still another testimonial in the same direction. Rev. (?) Sylvester F. Scoville, a leading "National Reformer," said in one of his speeches:—

This common interest ought both to strengthen our determination to work, and our readiness to co-operate in every way, with our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens. We may be subjected to some rebuffs in our first proffers, and the time is not yet come when the Roman Church will consent to strike hands with other churches—as such; but the time has come to make repeated advances, and gladly to accept cooperation in any form in which they may be willing to exhibit it. It is one of the necessities of the situation.

Has there been a mistake made in referring Antichrist to popery, or is this willingness on the part of Protestants to join hands with Catholicism, an evidence of apostasy on their part? In view of all the bold assumptions of the papacy, and the blasphemous character of its career, it does not seem possible that any fair-minded Protestant could dispute the application to it of Antichrist. If popery be not Antichrist, where, in all the history of the world, can a manifestation be found that answers to the description supplied by Inspiration?

WINE OR WATER.

A LADY once asked a minister to take wine with her. When he declined on the ground that he was a total abstainer, she said, "Does not the Bible tell us, 'Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving'? You are refusing a good creature of God." The minister, pointing to the wine she held in her hand, said, "Pray, madam, who made that wine?" She answered, "I suppose it was made by man." "And pray," said he, "who made this water?" "God," she replied. "Then," said the minister, "have you not made a mistake in charging me with refusing a good creature of God when I refuse that which man made, and accept that which God made?"

RESPONSIBILITY FOR BELIEF.

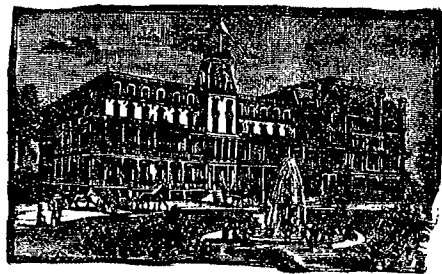
It is often said that a man is not responsible for his religious beliefs, because they are not under his control. The answer to this is, that a man's beliefs are under his control in the same sense that his actions are. A man's beliefs will influence his conduct; but the converse of the proposition is equally true: that his conduct will shape his beliefs. Nothing is more common than for men to make their convictions bend to their practices. Instead of making their convictions square with the law of God, they stretch the law to conform to their inclinations.

Here is a young man, for example, who has been piously brought up. Among other duties, he has been taught to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, to abstain upon that day from secular pursuits, and dedicate its hours to God and the soul. Through the influence of wrong associations, or irreligious surroundings, he is led to disregard the strict observance of the day. First, secular employments are permitted to encroach upon a part of the day. Then attendance at church becomes irregular, and perhaps ceases altogether. A sense of the sacredness of the day wears off, and it is either devoted to business or to recreation. Finally the conviction is reached that the fourth commandment has been repealed, that there is no obligation to set apart one day in seven for religion, and that the observance of the Sabbath as a day of rest and worship is obsolete.

Now, it is obvious that this young man's beliefs or opinions in regard to the Sabbath are founded upon his practices. He has not first asked, "What is the law of God upon this subject?" but he has chosen to pursue a certain course of conduct, and then adopted principles to correspond with it. The only use he has made of his reasoning faculties has been to reconcile his beliefs with his inclinations.

To do as we please, and then convince ourselves that what we please to do is right, is one thing; but to lay down the law, and compel our feet to walk in that line, is a very different and much harder thing. To reconcile his moral convictions with his practices is about the easiest thing a man can undertake to do. When he becomes advocate, judge, and jury, all in one, he is pretty apt to get a decision in his own favor. Such seems to be the account which the great Teacher gives of the reciprocal influences of conduct upon belief. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." —*Sel.*

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