

## An Issue with Popular Religion

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This little treatise enters the vast field of religious literature with the hope of doing some good in the great cause to which our lives should be mainly devoted. Bible history says evil came by disobedience; it was atoned for on the cross; by obedience we can be reinstated.

“It shall bruise thy head,” is the promise that Satan’s power shall be crushed by the One who is the true type of the race for all to follow. “He has all power in heaven and in earth.”

Our First Parents lost their union with God, leading them “to hide from His presence,” yet they were capable of transmitting to their offspring the power of choosing good or evil, which accounts for two classes of people from an early age. Those who chose well are called righteous, the others unrighteous. The first class, Paul says, “were made perfect with us” by the redemption. They lived in the

hope of coming blessedness but did not realize it in their day. We are thus informed that the faithful who lived before Christ's coming realized in the spirit all the blessings of redemption the same as those believers who were in the body when they received the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Heb. 11. 40.) While in the body they worshiped, so did the evil class, of which we have instances in Cain and Abel—the one worshiped acceptably, the other cherished evil and his sacrifice was rejected. (Gen. 4, 5.) The sacrifice of righteous Noah and his family was a "sweet savor." Abraham was called the friend of God for obedience. Isaac and Jacob maintained true worship in the midst of idolatrous nations.

God judged idolatry by destroying Pharaoh and his host. He purged the land of Canaan of its idolatrous inhabitants, and had the Temple at Jerusalem built for true worship.

Heathen influence was detrimental to chosen Israel because they wanted a king like other nations to rule over them, which was allowed with the prediction of its sorrowful consequences. Their first king,

Saul, was unfaithful; David failed; Solomon yielded to idolatry; king after king supported idolatry, thereby losing the blessings intended for Abraham's posterity. The people of God were led into heathen captivity; their Temple was destroyed; their national glory went down as darkness follows the setting of the sun. Jerusalem became a heap of ruins, as the Saviour woefully had foretold. Chosen Israel lost their Temple, their country and their promises!

Although Israel was chosen for a high service, God made no favorite of them when they disobeyed. He will not prosper the unfaithful.

The people whose law said: Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them, violated this plain command, generation after generation, after they had known the plagues and the destruction of life following the idolatry at Mount Sinai. (Ex. 20. 4, 5.)

“The Jews, notwithstanding the many safeguards by which the belief in the one Supreme Being was protected in their religious system, were frequently seduced into the idolatrous worship of the Gentile nations among which they were thrown. It is one of the most remarkable among the anomalies of the history of this singular people, that the great and radical purification of their faith in the unity of God dates from their protracted Babylonish captivity, from which time it was maintained down to the coming of our Lord.” (International Cyclopaedia.)

Their case is a sad example coincident with the religious perversion now popular among the nations; which corresponds well with the figure of the whore sitting upon many waters, which are described to be peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. (Rev. 17. 1-15.)

John the Baptist taught moral doctrines, preparatory for the new birth and the new kingdom, saying: “Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matt. 3. 2.) His preaching was so popular that “Jerusalem and all Judea, and the regions round about Jordan, were baptized of him

in Jordan, confessing their sins." John's mission represents the period of the soul in a state of repentance, willing to renounce sin, fleeing to Christ. John's baptism unto repentance is as distinct from that commanded by Christ, in the names of the Trinity, as their ministries are distinct.

Both John and Christ were under the law until the expiation for the curse, when the handwriting of ordinances was nailed to the cross (Col. 2. 14), which ended all Old Testament authority, according to the testimony, in that he saith: "A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." (Heb. 8. 13.) "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." (Gal. 3. 24.) "It makes sin exceedingly sinful." (Rom. 7. 13.)

There is, therefore, now only one baptism, on faith, which the Apostles observed after Christ's mission was crowned by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, which marks the beginning of the visible Church. When its members fail to bring the fruits of the Spirit their baptism leaves them still in

sin, and the faithful members will withdraw from them. (2 Thess. 2. 6.)

By His miracles the Saviour drew wide attention, many desiring benefits from Him, but withal, those whom He reprov'd hated Him. The evangelist says: "The world knew Him not." (John 1. 10.)

To say that anyone designedly deceives another may not be just, but as Satan is the arch-deceiver he may deceive us and make us servants to work deception on others. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ; and no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed into ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works. (2 Cor. 11. 13, 15.) As the danger of deception is strongly affirmed, we should prayerfully guard against the persistent influences tending to lead us into fleshy indulgences.

The great expositor, Paul, who sounds these warnings, saw the workings of Satan, and says: "We are not ignorant of his devices." (2 Cor. 2. 11.)

The doctrine of eternal life is distinctly recorded in the New Testament, "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." (John 6. 47.)

What we actually believe we sincerely try to do.

At the birth of Christ the angels proclaimed: "On earth peace, good-will toward men." Christ verified these tidings in His life and in all His teachings. Whoever violates peace, without making amends, is in unbelief.

The Old Testament allowances do not overthrow the new doctrine, for Christ is the prophet of whom Moses speaks that we shall hear Him. He is the Head of the kingdom of heaven. His subjects have His spirit and act as He did to the full extent of their ability. His spirit regulates their lives in every relation—in the family, in the community, in the church. Under His rule marriage is never dissolved. Christ says: "Moses, because of the hardness of the heart, suffered divorce," but declares that it was not intended to be so from the beginning. (Matt. 19. 8.)

The church is the fellowship springing from divine love which subdues natural

temper; consequently those having this love will never yield to division in the church. The Head of the church counsels that when two members disagree their difference shall finally be judged by the church, which proves that practical unity is required. To the church are given the keys to bind or loose, which can be used only when there is unity of judgment in the church; otherwise no decision can be reached. At first, the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul. (Acts 4. 32.)

The Apostles labored in unity, for when a question arose at Antioch, Paul and others were deputed to counsel with apostles and elders at Jerusalem by the aid of whom an amicable solution was made. (Acts 15.)

We find difference between Paul and Barnabas about using Mark in a certain course of labor, and they each chose their own assistant, but in this issue no doctrine was involved, and we find that they subsequently labored together. (Acts 15. 39; 2 Tim. 4. 11.)

Christians may differ in judgment; in doctrine they have a record for their guide; by love they are bound indissolubly.

Christ prays for perfect oneness among believers. He assures us that the Father heareth Him. (John 11. 42; 17. 23.)

Oneness, then, is demanded by Supreme Authority, and the demand has not been changed. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another. (John 13. 35.)

Love is as inseparable as the True Vine and the branches. Both the Saviour and the Apostles condemn divisions as carnal, heretical, devilish. (James 3. 15; 1 Cor. 14. 33.) Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation. (Luke 11. 17.)

It should be plain to all Christian professors that in the absence of this mutual interest and devotion to our fellow believers we are arrayed against divine counsel. When fellowship is wanting in a church Christ is absent, and the faithful will be constrained to come out from among such. (2 Cor. 6. 17.)

Following Christ's ascension, "they that gladly received His word were baptized . . . and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2. 41, 47.) Baptism is a confession of unity

with the church, by those who are saved by faith in Christ, bringing them into the relation of oneness with every member, which fellowship imposes the duty on them of withdrawing from disorderly ones. (2 Thess. 3. 6.) The obligations assumed in baptism are sacred and far-reaching.

By justifying division the scripture assertion is ignored that Christ is the Head of the visible Church, and the false theory is sanctioned that the faithful in the many religious organizations constitute the actual Church, which allowance disowns the Saviour's prayer that by the evidence of perfect oneness among the believers the world shall know that He was sent by the Father. (John 17. 23.)

There can be no fixed rule of discipline if we recognize the diversified church views as right, reproof must cease, and looseness of life hold sway. That popular opinion assents to division does not make it right, because many are in the broad way leading to destruction.

Natural reason suggests, it cannot be that all religious denominations are wrong save those who strictly agree; that in all churches failings occur—not one is ex-

empt. We admit the decadency in the churches generally; that the Spirit of the Gospel is despised by those who participate in carnal pleasures, worldly display, litigation, war; that many churches retain disorderly members that should be avoided; that disagreement is not always reconciled and back-biting follows; that church buildings are made houses of merchandise by the money-making schemes enacted in them, that they are profaned by worldly entertainments. (John 3. 16.). Failings occurred in the early church, and owing to the cause given by the Savior, "the flesh is weak," ever will occur, but divine counsel demands correction for transgression, and the separation of the impenitent.

Unity is one of the many virtues produced by the power of the Holy Ghost, yet, in opposition to undoubted scripture evidence, unbelief discards this virtue as being impossible to attain.

Love is the adornment of social beings; it has been dwarfed—in Christ it is restored. He plaintively said: "Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 7. 21.)

In the sixteenth century, when Luther and Zwingli left the Catholic Church, they forsook some of her carnal traditions and modes of worship, reformed the conduct of their own clergy and laity in some ways, but those able men, like the Catholics before them, left the Church linked with the State, same as many now who claim to be Christians are interwoven with worldly government, thereby are affiliating themselves with strife and destruction in violation of the Savior's teaching, "I have chosen you out of the world." (John 15. 19.)

The Reformers had men of war in their churches, which kind of membership now is allowed by many churches, thereby classing themselves with the world. (John 18. 36.)

The Thirty Years' War from 1618-48 was between Protestants and Catholics, the latter being headed by Austria, Spain and Bavaria, the former by Bohemia, Denmark and Sweden. More than thirty thousand families, belonging to the Lutheran or Reformed denominations, were driven out of the country, and their property, valued at more than 40,000,000

crowns, was confiscated. (The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia.)

In this conflict professed Christians robbed and killed professed Christians. This was after the Reformation, giving evidence that their religion on both sides was devoid of love, carnal, and outside of the Kingdom of Christ.

All the Reformers who combined Church and State were of the same worldly class, and those who now serve in Church and State, aiding in measures of violence, are identified with them, for it is impossible to reconcile the doctrines of Christ with the necessities of worldly government. (Mark 7. 9.) The command is: Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God. (Romans 13. 1.) By this the worldly powers are meant. Positively though, worldly law shall not obstruct divine law, which demands harmlessness, love to friend and foe, the service of mercy to all. Had Christ and the Apostles obeyed the will of the rulers their bitter resentment would not have demanded their lives.

When the Savior forbade Peter to use the sword He could not have meant the

prohibition for that occasion only, for He makes the rule general, saying: "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." (Matt. 26. 52.) We do not understand that every individual who uses the sword shall perish with it, but the Savior cites the principle that violence is combatted by violence, which leads to destruction, and as it is the history of all worldly governments to have been sustained by the power of the sword, the rebuke to the Apostle Peter was that as a member of His Spiritual Kingdom he cannot use the weapon which leads to destruction. The Savior taught His disciples, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you let him be your minister." (Matt. 20. 25, 26.) The gospel doctrines are not to alienate, but to lead together the good forces of human nature.

We can choose to suffer passively in obedience to divine rules, as the Apostles and all godly martyrs did, without doing violence against worldly authorities.

Great reverence is due to worldly government and to magistrates, however to God is our first duty. (Acts 5. 29.) The want of adaptation in the Christian to serve in worldly government is plain from his harmless nature portrayed by the symbols of sheep and doves. (Matt. 10. 16.) As he cannot enforce violence, he cannot consistently vote into power representatives who enforce violence. They confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth. (Heb. 11. 13.) Holding this relation to temporal things, true pilgrims will set their affections on higher aims than bodily gratifications and temporal rights and interests.

Some claim that the faithful in the different denominations constitute the true church, while the unfaithful ones are the tares which are to be left in the churches until the harvest time. The Savior explains the field to be the world, not the church, and the harvest to be the end of the world, when the righteous and the unrighteous shall be separated. (Matt. 13.) If the claim stated were correct, then the command of the Savior instructing the church to separate intractable members

would be incorrect, and the charge to withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly would be invalidated. (Matt. 18. 17; 2 Thess. 3. 6.)

The proof is positive that disorderly members are to be reproved by the church for their betterment, and that the high character of the church may be fully maintained, of which Christ is the Head. The fact also is positive that persons who deny such plain scriptures are unbelievers.

Firmness was emphasized when the Savior said to Peter: "Upon this rock I will build my church"; security is assured in the saying, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it"; life is in the promise, "He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life." (John 6. 47.)

The Church came into existence after the Sacrifice was made and the Holy Ghost had descended; and in no other age was inaugurated such a state of human fellowship, to persuade one brother to lay down his life for another that peace may be maintained. (1 John 3. 16.)

Divine power made the multitude of them that believed to be of one heart and of one soul. (Acts 4.) Worship means

the performance of our vow to God, and if the evidence is clear that worshipers do not fulfill the vow we are guilty of violation by bidding them Godspeed. (2 Cor. 6. 17; 2 John 11.)

To us the Creator in His workmanship is incomprehensible in vastness, power, wisdom, excellence, and yet we feel the impress of His gracious influence directing us tenderly unto holiness. Our intelligence is wonderful, bringing upon us a great responsibility who are the agents set over His works. Our inspiration reaches higher than present attainment, proving immortality to be beyond. Then why be earthly-minded? The earth is spontaneous in bringing forth good and evil, so from some cause we are prone to do evil as well as to do good. The necessity of restraint is apparent; effort is needed to do well. The divine account says evil is a curse incurred by transgression. Our experience confirms the account, for we are conscious of the presence of evil until, by hardening our higher sense, perception becomes dull as the earth by neglect becomes barren of good. This evil state is called in Scripture

searing the conscience, or reprobateness. (1 Tim. 4. 2; 2 Thess. 2. 11.)

When people awake to a sense of their sinfulness repentance follows and pardon is sought, which prostrate, sorrowful state of the soul leads to regeneration without the aid of religious rites or church ceremonies. In regeneration, we are as dependent on the Divine Culturist as the earth is dependent on the husbandman to make it produce. The words of the Savior are: "Without me ye can do nothing." (John 15. 5.) Earnest appeal secures the gift of eternal life.

The Savior encourages importunity in asking by using the example of a widow who gained her cause by ceaseless entreaty. His assurance is: "And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily." (Luke 18. 7, 8.)

When regeneration is attained it is to be confirmed by the outward testimony of water baptism. A testimony is not the fact, only a witness to the fact. The visible church is entered by baptism, as the record states: "They that gladly re-

ceived His word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about 3000 souls." (Acts 2. 41.)

Every scripture account given of baptism requires faith, or its equal. While mention is made of a few households being baptized we are not informed of children belonging to them, and as the command is, He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, there must be evidence of faith to justify baptism. (Mark 16. 16.) Infant baptism is without scripture warrant, inasmuch as faith bringing its required fruits cannot be discovered in the undeveloped mind of young children. The practice of sponsorship for infants is an innovation to support human doctrine. (Acts 10. 24, 33; 16. 32.) The claim is that as households were baptized there were likely little children among them. We should not accept evidence founded on doubt. In the saying, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household," no one reading the context would be impressed that little children are of the foes. (Matt. 10. 36.) Of the jailer's household it is said, "They spoke the word of the Lord unto him and to all that were in his house."

Little children could not have comprehended their preaching to receive baptism on their faith. (Acts 16. 32.) When Paul writes of having baptized the household of Stephanas we should remember that teaching always preceded baptism, in other cases, and why not in this? Can little innocents be taught? (1 Cor. 1. 16.) All unsound doctrine is devised by the philosophy against which we are warned, as a corruption endangering our spiritual safety. (Col. 2. 8.) The New Testament does not define exactness of forms, as the Old Dispensation does, wherefore no mode of baptism is prescribed.

The baptism of John the Baptist was unto repentance, not a testimony unto regeneration. No form is expressed only that it was performed in the river Jordan. Jordan was the way of entrance into Canaan, as repentance is our entrance into Christ by faith. The different instances of baptism noted in the Acts of the Apostles give no clue to any mode of performance; even in the only instance when Philip baptized the eunuch in a certain water to which they came in driving in a chariot. There is no clue given of form, for it is

said, "They went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip." (Acts 8. 38, 39.) In this case they both went into the water and both came up out of the water. The writer of this account cannot have been impressed with importance in defining mode or he would have written more definitely. When Peter baptized the centurion and others the question was, Can any man forbid water? (Acts 10. 47.) Here there is an intimation of bringing water to apply it.

The scripture: Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death, is used by some in support of immersion. (Rom. 6. 4.) The Apostle's argument is not on outward ordinances, but on our deliverance from sin by faith, and, in his process of reasoning, uses the symbol of Christ's death, burial and resurrection as illustrative of burying spiritually our carnal body of sin with the sacrificed body of Christ, and coming by resurrection into the renewed spiritual life, as he further applies the figure, by saying: "If we be dead with

Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him." (Rom. 6. 8.)

The subject of mode in baptism being so vague, the basis for argument pro and con is too weak to attempt proof. The sheep-fold protects the sheep—it does not give them life—such is the office of the Church; the ordinances are only testimonies for edification. (John 10.)

There shall be no schism in the body and the members shall have the same care one for another. (1 Cor. 12. 25.) The instruction is to purge the church from those who again give their will to wrongdoing, for it is said a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. (1 Cor. 5. 6.) The Church is responsible for permitting known sinners to go unreprieved. It is called the household of faith and those not living the faith deny their membership. Paul says: "He delivered to the Church the bread and the cup, not the Passover." (1 Cor. 11. 23.) Reasonably so, for the Passover was typical of the True Lamb and it ended when the Antitype was slain on the cross. It was commanded to be eaten in the night when the Israelites were liberated, foreshadowing our liberation from sin

by the slain Lamb. Under this command our Savior ate it in the night at which time He introduced the emblems of His body and blood by the bread and the cup; and the reckoning is that he was crucified on the same day of the month, when the Paschal Lamb was slain in Egypt. As the Lord died in the afternoon we need not be troubled in using the emblems in the daytime.

Washing the saints' feet is coupled with the use of the emblems of atonement, signifying divine washing, our continued need of the Intercessor, willingness to give mutual aid. The Savior observed it the last night He was with the disciples when He broke the bread.

The Seventh Day God ended His works, rested and blessed the day, but He is still active in upholding what He made. Israel in the wilderness observed the day, calling it Sabbath. It is among the Ten Commandments, of which it is said: "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. 10. 4.) The day is to serve us, not to worship it. The Savior did many of His miracles on the Sabbath to the offense of the legal class

of the Israelites. He justified doing good acts on the Sabbath and as an argument against their legality He defends King David and his followers when, in their flight in time of necessity, they ate the shewbread which was alone for the priests to eat. (Matt. 12. 4.) Necessity has a bearing.

He declares Himself Lord of the Sabbath, informing us that He controls it, and that we may follow His example in doing good on all days.

One day of rest in every seven is wisely ordained for worship and health, but to sanctify one special day above all others is legalism.

The Apostles used the Resurrection Day for religious services instead of the Old Testament Sabbath. (Acts 20. 7; 1 Cor. 16. 2.) The Roman emperor, Constantine, sanctioned that custom by legalizing the day; and other civilized nations have followed his example.

Display in dress being forbidden, believers, in earlier times, adopted modest apparel which is still satisfactory to those who do not follow vanity; but to clothe unconverted children with a religious garb

is a false showing. (1 Tim. 2. 9; 1 Peter 3. 3.)

Musical instruments under the law were used in worship; we have no account of their use by Christ's disciples; they are now and ever were used for worldly entertainment. Paul teaches to edify ourselves by psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. (Eph. 5. 19; Col. 3. 16.)

Insuring property in a worldly stock company on the premium plan by which the insured do not become members of the company is a question on which believers may differ, because some may think that God specially cares for our material things while others believe it is our privilege to use available means for restoration of loss. Insuring in mutual companies makes the insured members to participate with the company in litigant actions, for which reason non-litigants could not form alliance with a mutual company.

Where there is no civil law forbidding it, since there is no divine law against the moderate use of spirituous drinks, under such conditions the matter is left to individual conscience, as likewise are the cultivation and use of tobacco; but extremes

and intemperance are violations which the Church has authority to reprove.

Some things are brought into practice by general sentiment, of which the Scriptures do not teach. In such matters the strongest sentiment in the Church should rule, but meekness is the temper by which all differences are reconciled. The Apostle mentions in different places in the First Epistle to the Corinthians that he was informed of disturbed conditions among them. He argues the head cover in woman exhaustively, defining the scale of relations from God down, settling on woman the propriety of showing her place by wearing a sign which he calls power, indicative of her dependence on man's care which she is willing to accept under the divine plan, and of her appointed station in the scale of beings, whether she be married or single.

Man is not to use the sign, since he is the representative of Christ, and is to be woman's refuge, as Christ is the refuge of us all. He is not to oppress, but is to cherish woman. By the cover the hair cannot be meant as both man and woman have hair; it cannot be a part of the garb as the garb is no sign of power. There

shall not be prayer and prophecy without it, and as we should always be in prayer in our dependent state the sign should be continuous.

Some interpret the cover to mean long hair. If that were true then counsel would be unnecessary, for woman has that by nature. He confirms his argument by appealing to their judgment whether "it is comely for a woman to pray unto God uncovered?" Our conclusion is that he knew their judgment would be favorable to his appeal as it was a Jewish custom sanctioned by scripture usage, from which some dissented, most likely the Gentiles, who were in that commercial city. The comparison follows that for man to have long hair is a shame, but for woman it is a glory, as God makes her distinct in that respect.

As allusion is made to the angels in reference to woman's worship the meaning may be that her appointed sphere is to minister as the angels are said to be ministering spirits. The command does not apply to women who have not accepted the faith.

The subject of a coming Millennium occupies the minds of many people. Evi-

dence is drawn from the book of Revelation and from the prophets, which symbols from both sources are very indefinite, so that conclusions on the subject are uncertain.

There are, however, statements outlining a period of time during which peace is to reign on the earth. At our Savior's birth a proclamation of peace was made by the angels. He honored that herald in all his life and teachings. The cause of salvation was entrusted to Him. We have authority that He must reign till physical death will end, when He will submit His reign to the Father. Between His birth and the end of His reign we note a distinct period of time signalized by peace. It may apply to them who have lived in Him. We may call this time the millennial period referred to in Revelation. A special number of years in the Scriptures sometimes seems to mean a full period of time without regard to numbers. The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth. (John 5. 28; 1 Cor. 15; Rev. 20.)

Mercy to the needy is one of the Christian functions, for we are stewards, who become possessors of the earth and the fullness thereof and prosper by abilities and opportunities allowed by God. The Savior bears severely on those who held only to the rites and omitted the spirit of the word, in saying to them: "Ye hypocrites, ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." (Matt. 23. 23.) When the principles of true religion are not practiced its profession is like the form of a dead body without the spirit. (James 2. 26.) It is idolatry, and worshipers divinely imbued can as little be in fellowship with it as they would bow to a formal idol. (2 Cor. 6. 14; 1 John 5. 21.) When the elect sister was instructed not to receive into her house persons having other doctrines the proof is clear against compromise with foreign teachers, of which there were some at that time as now is the case. (2 John 10; Acts 20. 30; Gal. 1. 7; 2 Tim. 3. 5.)

In Christ was life and the life was the light of men. (John 1. 14.) Physically His life seemed like that of all men. His spirit was different, which by earnest desire we all can receive. (Luke 11. 13.)

This gift is a blessing to every one receiving it, bringing an increased state of happiness (Luke 18. 30), in overcoming what is called affliction (1 Peter 5. 9); in reviving the image of Him who has created us. (Col. 3. 10.) Having authority that a change is imperative to promote our happiness here, and to fit us for a glorious life to come, the persuasion is inevitable that all should be children of God by faith in Jesus Christ, "the Prince of the kings of the earth!"

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## Closing Thoughts.

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The most casual thought on the wisdom displayed in this vast creation, of which mankind are the head in this material world, is sufficient to convince us that in us lies a great object. If we had no scripture standard to teach us purity of life, moderation and temperance, a loving

interest in one another, just dealing, forbearance toward the weak, to harm no one in estate, in body or reputation, nevertheless our high instincts, if followed, would lead to the same exalted goal! But we know there is a counter influence which controls many, even many of strong intellect are led astray by opportunities, and those more weakly endowed, in great numbers, go wrong. The doctrine of self-denial has its fountain-head in Christ, and is in accord with the loftiest and purest movings of life in us, which we call conviction.

This part of divinity in us is much stifled, yet struggles for supremacy, and with some prevails. The suppression of it is termed sin, the origin of which is charged to the fall in Eden. Obedience to this higher principle is called righteousness.

This godly element finds expression in worship. Among the heathens it expresses itself, at least with some, in the worship of forms associated with the idea of a higher power. (Rom. 2. 14.) Among the civilized, who have the written record, worship is, by many, abused by flagrant disregard of the spirit and letter of the mes-

sage. True and false worship cannot be reconciled, for one is called light and the other darkness. As natural light has power to dispel darkness, so spiritual light has superiority, and will reprove darkness. All these distinctions are given in the Scriptures, forming a true exponent of life in its many phases.

The Apostle Paul, in referring to the many witnesses of the true life, calls them a cloud of witnesses. (Heb. 12. 1.)

Will those who may read this little treatise give deep consideration to a subject that involves so much of right living here, and is fraught with eternal interests? If a domestic or business proposition, of good promise, were offered, would you not carefully investigate?

In the face of known uncertainty will you delay in securing what may vanish with your frail life?

With a desire for the salvation of all,

BISHOP ELIAS H. HERSHEY.

Lancaster, Pa.

