

enclosure, and had never had any such recognition of being sheep as the Jews had. The Jews esteemed these Gentiles as very unfit objects to receive mercy from God. Even Peter eschewed all idea of polluting himself by feeding on such common and unclean beasts as the Gentiles, as seen enclosed in the net let down from heaven. How much more would the Pharisees scorn equality with such, since their professions were that they were better than other men. They could not tolerate a common man—a sinner—of the Jews even.

In another limited sense it would apply to the Jews, according to their rationality, and to christians too.—They were *all* sheep, that is, *manifestly* so—*had been in the fold*. The lost one takes his journey into a far country—departs from truth and obedience, which affords the only pasture-land for sheep, and goes into the forbidden ways. Sheep are very much disposed to stray, considering what innocent, helpless creatures they are, how utterly unable to protect themselves and really are not disposed to do mischief; and when it is also considered that they have such a kind, good shepherd, and such good pasture land, and withal they love it so well, and enjoy it so much while in it, and hate false ways so much, and are sure to fare so bad when they get in forbidden ground; yet they do stray so much. Witness the younger son who left his father and spent all his substance in riotous living. How quickly he comes to swine's food, yet none pities him. How low he sinks down below his father's level. But how graciously his father receives him.—So there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repents. Yet the brother who never went off raises the greatest objection. Some christians who have remained with Christ all the while and have never strayed (if there be such,) cannot well fellowship a poor erring brother who departs so far from the truth; but, even when he returns and the fatted calf is killed for him—and there is rejoicing, will complain that there was never made any ado over them—that they have always obeyed yet they never received as much as a kid. Well, if they have never transgressed the laws of Christ (I mean after becoming christians), but have always walked orderly, there is no need of killing a calf for them; they have plenty without that; they are all right any way. But the poor straggler is full of shame any way, and needs some great encouragement for him. After all, the obedient, well-behaved christian is far better off, even if there is no great rejoicing over him. All is his. We do not spread a feast every day for our wives, like we would for a visitor, yet we love our wives much more, and they really have all. Those christians that err and blunder a great deal, and fall among wolves and get stripped, and have to be hunted up, and, when found or reclaimed, there is great rejoicing over them, and now and then they get a good feast, but generally are nearly starved, are, after all, nothing like as well off as the good, orderly, well-behaved christians

who abide in Christ, and yet who feel that they have no experience hardly, no kid, no manifestations of love, no joys, &c.

THIRD PART.

Brother J. H. Carter, of Georgia, desires my view of Zech. 13 : 8, 9.

"And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.

"And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God."

Zechariah was a bright prophet, dwelling very prominently on the Messiah's kingdom—both in types, such as the second temple, Zerubbabel, &c., and also in direct declarations of the advent of Christ and nature of his kingdom.

He also refers to the character of the Jews, and the effect of Christ's coming upon them. In the text before us (which I will briefly treat of,) two parts, or a very large proportion of the Jews, at the coming of Christ, shall be cut off and die; while a third, or only a small portion, shall be left or shall be saved. The meaning of which is, that the far greater portion of the Jews would be left desolate.—"Behold your house is left unto you desolate;" would reject Christ and be condemned by his word, and be destroyed by their enemies. But a small number would be preserved, called, and saved, or would find mercy and be brought through the fire and refined. Christ should suddenly come to his temple, and abide the day of his coming, and though all looked for him. He would set as a refiner and purifier of gold and silver, and purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver, that they might offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

Which answers to another prophet; "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord."

When being purged in the furnace of affliction how poor they feel. For the furnace discovers dross and precious metal too. They will not perish, for the Lord will bring the third part through the fire. They shall follow him through the regeneration, and also in a personal, individual quickening, leading to conviction, mourning, repentance, &c., and endure unto the end, like Peter did; and they shall call on the name of the Lord, and he will hear them.

The Lord will own them as his own people; he will not be ashamed of any that call on him truly; and they shall receive the Spirit of adoption whereby they call God Father, and shall say, "The Lord is my God," as Thomas did.

WICKED MARRIAGES--GIANTS--FLOOD.

Brother John Proctor, of Georgia, desires my view of Gen. 6 : 1, 6.

The sons of God I understand to be the sons of Seth, the offspring given in the place of Abel. For when Seth was born then men began to call upon the name of the Lord, and hence they are called the sons of God. But these sons of God were by nature

the children of Adam.

When men began to multiply on the earth, and daughters were born unto them, (that is wicked men,) these sons of God began to marry their daughters, according to their own corrupt choice.

This was wicked: for corrupt marriages have always been a source and flood gate of much wickedness. When christian men or women marry through wantonness, or are joined to ungodly people in the solemn tie of matrimony, merely through lust, it is wicked. See among the Jews what wickedness was committed by unlawful marriages, and what punishments overtook them.

The offspring of these improper marriages was corrupt. The children were giants or mighty men in wickedness. Giants were always enemies to Israel. In early days mighty men, great hunters, &c., were great robbers, great warriors, and great disturbers of the peace of mankind. In this day great men, such as warriors, are great enemies of man. Men of renown are usually men famous for accomplishing ambitious and wicked designs, and who prey thus upon the downfall of others.—Some of the most monstrous corruptions of modern times are the offspring of unholy alliances between those professing godliness and the adulterous daughters of men—or worldly institutions bearing the name of religion. The lamb-like beast was the greatest destroyer.

In consequence of this great corruption, which had spread far and wide,

and twenty years and determined to destroy him from the earth. By these improper marriages, he had become flesh, or had corrupted his way. He was literal flesh before, as much as he was after that: but the meaning is, he had become exceedingly carnal or corrupt, so that every imagination of the thought of his heart was only evil and that continually. So it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. He had no pleasure in such a creature, and said, he would destroy him. Did he know beforehand what man would do? If he did not, how is he God? He knew from the beginning what man would do. But for a wise purpose of his own glory he made him, and for a wise purpose he destroyed him; yet it grieved him at his heart. God is a God of mercy and pity, and takes no pleasure in the death of the sinner.

He changed his administration and destroyed man, &c. He does not repent as men do. He is not a man thus to repent. He never does anything *wrong* or *foolish* to repent of, as man does. No power above him causes him to repent, as man is operated on to do so. But it repented the Lord. That is, he is just as much God and a sovereign in his changing his administration or repenting, as he is in any other of his independent actions.

Yet man's days shall be one hundred and twenty years. The Lord was merciful even thus to give him so much time. It was about that

time to the flood. This was considerable respite, showing the long-suffering of God in the days of Noah.

The flood comes and destroys all but Noah and his family. What a blessing to find favor in the eyes of the Lord. Oh the great blessing for God to lift up his countenance upon us and give us peace.

GIVING NONE OFFENCE.

We sometimes are placed in circumstances where a strictly legal obligation would not require us to do a certain thing; but those opposing us expect us to do so and so; and if we fail to do so they will reproach us for not being honest—and merciful as our professions represent us to be. In such cases we had better suffer wrong, and thus blunt the sharp edge of ridicule or malice. An example for this occurs in scripture. They asked Peter if his Master paid tribute. Peter said he did: (though in truth he was free,) and thus not under tribute. The Savior reminds Peter that tribute was collected of strangers. But Peter's answer the collectors had led to a tribute of him. So Peter went out after a fishing, and when he had the first fish in his mouth he would not give it, and with this thus avoid giving offence, we find in the proper places we would expect to find a blessing suffering in the

WHICH IS WORSE?

To think wrong—or to both think and act wrong? We sometimes hear people say one might as well practice wickedness as to have foolish thoughts which is sin. We are not apologizing for vain thoughts; we should hate them; but it is worse to put them in execution than merely to entertain them. Do they entertain us? If one truly hates vain thoughts he will not harbor them and much less will he execute them; but if one says it is no worse to practice meanness than it is to think of it, perhaps that may be a plea of his in defense of his *bad conduct*.

The things that *defile* a man are such as Jesus enumerates, as evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies. They proceed out of the mouth and come forth from the heart. Of course evil thoughts are the beginnings of defilements, but if they are abhorred and suppressed that is very different from cherishing them and putting them into execution.

After all, a new heart is given to a christian, a clean, sound mind, which hates vain thoughts. What a precious sign of salvation therefore is it if one feels vile and abhors himself for having foolish, wicked thoughts, and feels that it is *as bad* for him merely to have vain thoughts, as it is for another to put them in practice. But very different is the case of the one who practices wickedness, and pleads that it is no worse to do this than to prevent doing it. To the right sort of a person it is wretched to be harrowed with vile thoughts. How could he then bear to practice them? How much better to starve them than to feed and fatten them. It is the things that come out of one's heart that defile him.