

The Prayer of Faith Shall Save the Sick

—[James 5:14-16](#)—

This passage, and one found in [Mark 16:17,18](#), are relied upon as proof texts to show that it is the divine intention that the New Creation should rely upon divine power for healing of sicknesses. The passage in Mark is easily disposed of: it is not to be found in the oldest Greek MSS, hence must be regarded as an interpolation, made somewhere about the fifth century.

As for the statement of James: It is evident from the sixteenth verse, that the sickness referred to is recognized as being a chastisement for sins—not a slight sickness, but a serious one, making it worthwhile to call together the elders of the *Ecclesia*. The implication seems to be that sin lay so close to the door that the sick sinner felt practically cut off from fellowship with God. And under such circumstances we should expect that the *sins would be confessed and their forgiveness prayed for*; and just so the record reads: "The prayer of faith shall save the sick [from the condemnation in which he was] and the Lord shall raise him up [to health—the restoration being a sign of the forgiveness of the sin]—*though* he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him. See verse 15.

If Satan Cast Out Satan His Kingdom Wanes

—[Matthew 12:26](#)—

When at the first advent the Pharisees charged our Lord with casting out devils by Satanic power, his answer clearly implied that such action on Satan's part was possible, but not to be considered probable; and that, should it occur, it would be a proof that his power was on the wane; that he was hard pressed, and that he had resorted to this as a last resort, rather than lose his hold upon his dupes. We advocate no general rejection of healings and miracles as being Satanic; but a careful scrutiny of every person or system seeking to establish itself by miracles. The New Creation should remember the inspired direction, "Try the spirits whether they be of God"—or of Satan. Test them and deal with them accordingly. [1 John 4:1](#)

It is pertinent to this inquiry that we call to remembrance that miracles were used at the beginning of this age to establish the Church, but that no such object can be urged now—after the Church has been established for nearly nineteen centuries and is about completed. It is well, too, that we bear in mind that the inspired Apostle pointed down to our end of the age when indicating that Satan would transform himself into an angel of light (a messenger of peace and health and science, falsely so-called) with every deceivableness of error. The Apostle even implies that God wills to permit this course to have measurable success, so as to deceive all that dwell upon the earth whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life. He says: "For this cause he shall send them *strong delusion* [a working of error] that they should believe a lie: that they might all be condemned who believed not the truth but had pleasure in error." "Power and signs and lying [deceiving] wonders" are to be expected at this time, as tests in this "harvest" time of the age. ([2 Thess. 2:9-12](#)) Let us also not forget our Lord's words: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied [preached] *in thy name* ? and *in thy name* cast

out devils? and *in thy name* done many wonderful works [cures]? And then will I profess unto them, *I never knew you*: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." [Matt. 7:22,23](#)

It is surely time that all—the eyes of whose understanding have been opened to a realization that we are now living in the end of the age, where all these predictions should be expected to reach fulfilment—should be on the lookout for them, and be able to identify them with the seductive teachings and miracle-workings prevalent on every hand throughout Christendom.

But how may we be sure that all of these are Satan's delusions?—that none of them are of God? We answer in the inspired language: "If they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." ([Isa. 8:20](#)) Their digressions from the Word are various—some in one direction, some in another. The great mass of them may speedily be seen to be spurious by noting that they are out of accord with the fundamental doctrine of the Gospel, viz., the *ransom*. They may not claim to deny the ransom; they may even claim to believe in the necessity and efficacy of the great sin-offering finished at Calvary, as the ransom for all and the basis of all forgiveness of sins and reconciliation to the Father. However, the effort to deceive will not long confuse those who remember that the Greek word rendered ransom is *anti-lutron*, and signifies "*a corresponding price*." This touchstone of divine truth will quickly show that evolution is the opposite of the truth, because evolution denies the fall and all need for redemption from it. It promptly condemns Christian Science as wholly unchristian, in that it denies sin and death and all evil, claiming that they are mental delusions. It condemns the theory that God was the instigator, the author, of sin and wickedness, by showing that He has always opposed sin, and has in process a plan for releasing man from its bondage through the *redemption*, whose fruitage will come by and by in the "times of restitution."

But what shall we say of those who blaspheme God's holy name by teaching doctrines of devils—to the effect that an eternity of torment awaits the great mass of the living of mankind, and already has control of the vast majority of the 50,000,000,000 whom the Scriptures, on the contrary, declare are "in their graves," awaiting the promised blessing of all the families of the earth? If such people shall do cures "*in my name*," shall we consider that the Lord is now indorsing their false doctrines? We must not so suppose, now that the Millennial dawn is appearing and with it all excuse for such gross darkness is disappearing. We cannot reckon such as amongst those to whom the Apostle wrote: "Ye brethren are *not in darkness* that that day should overtake you as a thief." It matters not that with their "wonderful works" they proclaim faith in Christ as their coming King, near at hand. With such doctrines of devils in their mouths and hearts we must conclude that their faith-cures and wonderful works are as much works of the devil as are similar cures by Spiritism, Christian Science, Mormonism, etc.

Suppose, however, says one, that they display great zeal in sending out missionaries to the heathen? We reply that this must not alter our general view of the *movement* as a whole (we gladly admit, yea, earnestly hope, that some "caught," "ensnared," by this movement are true children of God, whom we trust he will deliver out of this district of mystic Babylon). Let us call to mind our Lord's estimate of the zealous missionary efforts of his day. He said to the Pharisees (the "holiness people" of that time and nation), "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of Gehenna [the Second Death] than yourselves." ([Matt. 23:15](#)) What advantage can accrue to the heathen from giving them the *false doctrines* of the Adversary? The few who may be reached will have the more to unlearn when the times of restitution begin. It is as true today as it was at the first advent that—"His servants ye are to whom ye render service." Surely, then, Satan is doing a

great business in the nominal churches of Christendom, and especially in their pulpits. No wonder the chief priests, scribes and doctors of divinity today hate the Truth—hate the light and combat it in every possible manner. "Come out of her [Babylon], *my people*, that ye be not partakers of her sins and receive not of her plagues." [Rev. 18:4](#)

Satan is in just the extremity indicated by our Lord's words above quoted. ([Matt. 12:26](#)) The lifting of the veil of ignorance—the general increase of knowledge on every subject—makes it impossible to use the old superstitions as formerly. New delusions must be introduced, else the people would get the Truth and escape from him. He is very busy "as an angel of light"—as a preacher of Evolution to some; as a missionary of eternal torment, bad-tidings, to the heathen; as an Elijah heralding himself as the Restorer of mankind; as a Scientist (?) persuading people to deny their aches and pains, and rewarding their lying by curing them of a physical ailment while the perversion of the truth makes them thereafter unable to discern truth from falsehood. Satan may believe that he is succeeding, but our Lord's word for it, his house will soon fall—and this necessity for his playing reformer and good physician is an evidence that the fall is near. Thank God it will not be long until he shall be thoroughly "bound," restrained, that he may "*deceive* the nations no more"! [Rev. 20:3](#)

Love Righteousness—Hate Iniquity

If we would understand the philosophy of God's dealings with the New Creation in this present time, we must not forget that it is His intention that all who would be perfected on this divine plane of being shall be not only well-intentioned, in the sense that they will prefer right to wrong, but that additionally, through a large experience, they shall clearly comprehend and thoroughly appreciate the comforts and advantages of right—righteousness—and the confusion and disadvantage of wrongdoing. It is for this reason that this New Creation is being subjected to peculiar trials and testings, more pronounced every way than those which have come upon the angels, more pronounced also than will come upon the world of mankind during its judgment day, the Millennial age. So far as we know, no particular test ever came to the holy angels until after Satan's deflection in his ambitious attempt to grasp the rule of earth; but we have every reason to suppose that his fall into sin and the resulting fall of mankind became the occasion for testing, not only to those angels who kept not their first estate, and became demons, but that it was a test also to all the holy angels. It must have been a test of their faith in the power of Jehovah to witness the course of evil and God's apparent lack of power to restrain it and destroy it. Seeing this, each and all must have been tempted, or tried, with the thought that they also might commit sin with impunity; and the fact that they remained loyal to the Lord evidences the fact that their hearts were in a right condition of humility and obedience to the principles of righteousness. They already see the grand outworking of the divine plan through Christ, and shortly will find their confidence in the wisdom, love, justice and power of Jehovah more than justified in the grand consummation of His plan through Christ Jesus and the glorified Church.

This testing of the holy angels, however, was not so crucial in some respects as the testing which comes to the New Creatures in Christ Jesus, in continual contact with human imperfection, trials of faith and patience and love and zeal—even unto death. Similarly the trial of the world during the Millennial age, while it will be crucial and complete, and will demonstrate absolutely who are and who are not thoroughly loyal at heart to the Lord and the

principles of righteousness, will, nevertheless, be different from the testings of the Church in this present age, because with them everything will be favorable to a full and proper appreciation of righteousness and obedience thereto. On the contrary, the New Creature in the present time finds, as the Apostle declared, that "All that will live godly" will suffer. This willingness to suffer for loyalty to the Lord and the principles of his government and the faith that it implies are acceptable to God as evidences of special character. His dealings with the New Creatures during this present age are with a view to perfecting these characters in holiness—up to the very highest mark, to the point of joyfully suffering disadvantage for the Lord's and for the Truth's sake; yea, of seeking to serve the Truth at the cost of earthly comforts, honors, emoluments and even life itself.

It is because this philosophy of the divine plan is not clearly seen that so many are confused in respect to God's providential dealings with the little flock. They see not that, as special fiery and chilling processes are necessary to the tempering of the fine steel implement, so special fiery trials and chilling experiences are necessary to the preparation of those whom the Lord designs shortly to use as His special representatives and instruments in the great work of human restitution, etc. Evil is never good, and God is never the author of moral evil, sin, in any sense or degree. Nevertheless, His wisdom and power are such that He is able to overrule its effects for good. For instance, as we have seen, God did not cause Satan to sin. He created him perfect, upright, pure, and it was one of the very blessings He bestowed upon him, the blessing of freedom of will, which—being exercised contrary to the divine order—constituted the once holy angel an adversary, Satan. It was in the power of the Almighty to have destroyed His adversary instantly; but He foresaw the larger lessons of experience which might come, not only to the angels, but to mankind, respecting good and evil, through the contamination of the latter and the bitterness of its fruit. Likewise with sin amongst mankind: God was thoroughly able to eradicate it at any time, as He will do eventually; but for the time being His wisdom foresaw how the wrath of man could be made to glorify Him. God's children then need have no fear respecting the ultimate triumph of the Lord over sinners and sin in every sense of the word. They may have confidence that neither the arch conspirator nor any of his more or less willful or more or less deluded followers in the evil way will gain an ultimate mastery. The plan of God already is so far advanced as to disclose the end of the great mystery of permitting for a time the flourishing of sin and sinners, and their prosperity in opposition to the Lord and his faithful.

Let us not forget to note that while all sickness and death in the world may, with more or less directness, be traceable and chargeable to the great Adversary, through whom sin entered into the mind of man to his defilement and undoing, yet in the case of the world, as well as with the New Creation, God is overruling for man's instruction and education the various elements of the curse that came upon the race because of sin. As for the world, in a general sense at least, the entire groaning creation is learning something respecting the exceeding sinfulness and undesirability of sin; and as for the Church, the New Creation, her permission to share in the sufferings of Christ includes and implies a share in those sufferings which are common to the remainder of mankind. In the case of our Lord, we are particularly informed that it was expedient that he, to be the great High-Priest for humanity, should be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and this must be true as respects each member of the body of that Priest, as well as of the Head, the Lord. There will surely not be an unsympathetic member of the entire body of Christ. All will have been touched with experiences, and know fully how to sympathize with the poor world when the time shall come for their restitution by judgments, by obedience under

the trials and testings and corrections of the future age. Our Lord, who was perfect in the flesh, and who, therefore, could not have thus been touched had he not expended his vitality in healing the sick, experienced instead of vitality a sense of the weakness and suffering of those whom he relieved, as it is declared, "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." ([Matt. 8:17](#)) Those who are called to membership in the body of Christ have generally little vitality to give off in a miraculous manner; but in sharing the common experiences of the world, in connection with their own imperfect human organisms, these also are touched with a feeling of the infirmities of the race, which enables them to sympathize fully in the general distress.

It will be seen from this that we have no sympathy with the thought advanced by some that the body of Christ should expect to be exempted from the trials and difficulties of the world, physical, social and financial. True, such was the case with the typical Israelites. Their rewards for faithfulness to the Lord and his Law were to be along these lines of immunity from suffering, trials, etc.; but with the New Creation the matter is entirely the reverse, because they are not Israelites according to the flesh, but according to the spirit—they are of the spiritual seed of Abraham. The antitypes of Israel's blessings in the New Creation are spiritual. All things work together for their good spiritually. God's blessings are guaranteed to them so long as they abide in faith and obedience to Christ, so that nothing evil can come nigh their dwelling-place, where they are kept secret, shielded from all that could do injury. Yet their appreciation of this spiritual relationship is continually tested, to prove whether or not they appreciate the spiritual above the natural, that they may enjoy more abundantly the spiritual and ultimately be perfected as New Creatures when the earthly sacrifices shall have been fully completed.

When, therefore, the New Creatures in Christ Jesus find that they have numerous fiery trials, no matter along what lines these may come to them, they are to recognize them as evidences of their faithfulness—as evidences that God regards them as sons, and that they are being tested according to their covenant relationship, that they may be fitted and prepared for perfecting in spirit and the glories to follow. If, therefore, the Lord permits calamities to come upon such, let them not be regarded in the same light as if they befell the world. The world, under the divine sentence of death, is subject to various accidents and mutations, with which the Lord has nothing whatever to do, as explained by our Lord when he referred to the eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and the others whose blood Pilate mingled with the sacrifices, and who our Lord declared were not, on account of these things, to be considered sinners above others and under divine reprobation. ([Luke 13:1-5](#)) God permits the wrath of men and of Satan, within certain limits, in connection with the world of mankind; but in respect to His elect Church it is different. Nothing that befalls them is of accident. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." Not even a hair of their heads can fall without His notice. ([Psa. 116:15](#); [Matt. 10:30](#)) As our Lord declared to Pilate, when he asked, "Knowest thou not that I have power?"—"Thou couldst have no power at all, except it were given thee of my Father." ([John 19:10,11](#)) And this is equally true of every member of the body of Christ, from the moment of his begetting as a New Creature. Yea, we have every reason to believe that in some measure divine providence extends even beyond the New Creation to those whose lives and interests are closely linked to theirs. If, then, the New Creatures experience fiery trials they are not to think these peculiar, as though some strange thing happened unto them, but are to know that corresponding trials have happened to all the members of the body of Christ, from the Head downward, and will happen to all until the last members of the feet class have been tested, polished, accepted, glorified. If these, then, come in the nature of oppositions and persecutions

in the home, or from former friends or neighbors, or from nominal church people, or if they come in the form of financial disaster and poverty, or if they come in the nature of sickness, pain, physical accident, etc., no matter how, the Lord's people are to be content, conscious of the Father's love and providential care in respect to their every interest. To have full confidence in this is a part of the test of faith. To be assured of the Lord that we are children, and heirs, and to be told of God's oversight, and at the same time to be permitted to suffer tribulations, is a severe test of faith in those who are required to walk by faith and not by sight if they would eventually be accepted as overcomers. Let us, then, receive with confidence, love and trust, whatever benefits or troubles the Lord's providence may send us and let us profit by them, learning their lessons.

This realization of the divine care in all of life's interests, earthly as well as heavenly, should not lead us to indifference in respect to our temporal affairs. On the contrary, we are to remember that we are stewards of privileges, opportunities and responsibilities, social, financial, and in respect to health. It, therefore, becomes our duty to do what we can to heal any social breaches which may occur. We are to be kind and considerate, to make explanations, and do all reasonably in our power to hinder misunderstanding of our motives and intentions. We are to seek wisely to avoid everything that might appear to be superstitious and fanatical, and are thus to commend our God, His character, His book and His Church to others. In this way we are to let our light shine. In financial matters we are to use prudence and economy and to be not slothful in business, just as though we had no God, just as though everything depended on our own exertions, yet, nevertheless, in our hearts and in our discussion of matters in the household of faith we are to realize and to express our confidence in the Lord, that because we are His, all of our interests are under His protecting care. If then, in spite of our best exercise of wisdom, prudence, etc., poverty or financial loss shall result, we are to esteem that our heavenly Father has seen that such experiences would be better for us as New Creatures than would greater prosperity. We are to recognize His blessed supervision of our affairs, whatever may be His leadings and our experiences. Similarly in the matter of health: if disease come upon us, our proper stewardship of these mortal bodies would demand that we should use proper energy in applying remedies to the extent of our knowledge and judgment. If the efforts are successful, our acknowledgment of heart should be to the Lord, and not merely in respect to the medicine. If they are unsuccessful, we are not to doubt His power, but instead to look for further blessing in connection with the trials being undergone. Indeed, for every distress or calamity the New Creatures, while using diligence in the correction of the difficulty, should lift their hearts to the Lord in confidence and trust, desiring to know what lesson they may learn from their experiences, and whether or not these lessons are in the nature of chastisement for wrongdoing or in the nature of the rod and staff designed to bring back the sheep from some course leading in the wrong direction, away from the Shepherd's footsteps. "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." The Lord's people are not dependent for their joy, peace and comfort merely upon having an average amount of health, financial and social prosperity, but may rejoice in the peace of God under all circumstances and conditions, and be enabled to rejoice heartily in both the rod and the staff of the Shepherd. With the Prophet of old many of the New Creation can say, "Before I was afflicted I went astray." Many of them have learned that there are great blessings connected with afflictions.

It is written prophetically of the Church, and of the Lord's care over it, "Who healeth all thy diseases." ([Psa. 103:3](#)) Any attempt to apply this to the Gospel Church as respects physical conditions must of necessity be lame and weak. Who does not know that from the Head of the

Church down to the last members of the "feet" the Lord has not been pleased to heal all their physical diseases? Who does not know that many many of the saints have died of their physical disease? According to medical science our dear Redeemer, although physically perfect, was attacked with a disease not unknown to scientists, when he experienced the bloody sweat in Gethsemane. According to the same science, and in full accord with the facts, he who was perfect in the flesh died more speedily than the two malefactors crucified with him because of a disease—the bursting of his heart. Who does not know that the Apostle Paul carried with him to his dying day a "thorn in the flesh," and that the Lord refused to remove it, assuring him that his patient bearing of it would bring a more than compensating blessing of grace? Who does not know that many of the noblest of God's saints throughout the age have suffered from disease, and that so far from having all their diseases healed, and instead of being made perfect, they died? An application of this scripture to physical diseases, then, would be inconsistent with the Scriptures, but its application as a prophecy to the spiritual condition of the New Creature is very appropriate indeed. The New Creation does contend with spiritual maladies, sicknesses, and this scripture warrants them in expecting that every disease may be so healed with the Balm of Gilead, so bound up with the exceeding great and precious promises of the Lord's Word, so offset by the peace and joy which man can neither give nor take away, that disease of heart, unrest, may intrude no longer, where the love and joy and peace of the holy Spirit abide and rule.

Mark 16:9-20 Is Spurious

These verses are admitted by all scholars to be an interpolation. They are not found in any of the early Greek MSS, and are certainly not genuine. It is not true that all believers in the Lord Jesus may drink poisonous things, and be in contact with poisonous serpents, contagious diseases, etc., with impunity; nor have all possessed the power of healing diseases and casting out devils. It will be noticed that the passage is omitted by the Revised Version, and by all modern versions of the Scriptures. Hence, to receive it or to quote it as Scripture, would be adding to the Word of God, and adding to the general confusion on an important subject.

The thought that the Lord's people may be specially favored of Him in respect to physical health and other creature comforts (more than the world) is a delusion and a snare, and contrary to all proper expectations of the New Creation, as shown foregoing. The Lord and the apostles were the exemplars of the Church, and instead of expecting to be freed from the general difficulties which assail the groaning creation, their consecration was to a share in these afflictions, that they might be touched with the feeling of human infirmities. Our Lord repudiated as a temptation of the Adversary the suggestion to use divine power for the relief of his hunger during the forty days' fasting in the wilderness. ([Matt. 4:3,4](#)) When weary he rested by the well of Samaria, while his disciples went to purchase food, whereas he might have called for and used divine power for the restoration of his strength. ([John 4:6](#)) In these instances food was the proper medicine for the pangs of hunger, and rest was the proper medicine for the weariness of the frame, and our Lord used these remedies. We are not informed that he had any chronic ailments, but we doubt not that he would have been free to use any roots or herbs or other remedies as freely as he used the food and the rest. The nervous ailment causing the bloody sweat, and his final malady of heart-rupture came at the close of his ministry. He knew that his hour was come. He who declined to ask the heavenly power for angelic protection

[\(Matt. 26:53\)](#), and who declined to call upon the same power to satisfy his hunger, and to relieve his fatigue, was nevertheless perfectly at liberty to call upon these powers in the interests of his followers, as, for instance, in the feeding of the multitudes, and in the stilling of the tempest and in the providing of the taxes. [Matt. 14:15-21](#); [Mark 4:36-41](#); [Matt. 17:24-27](#)

Similarly, we find that the apostles used no special privileges and blessings which were theirs for the relief of temporal ailments and necessities. True, we have no account of the sickness of any of the twelve except Paul, whose weak eyes ([Acts 9:8,18](#); [Gal. 4:15](#); [6:11](#)—R.V.) the Lord was not pleased to relieve, even upon solicitation, assuring the Apostle that this, which became a messenger of Satan in buffeting him, trying his patience, his humility, etc., would be more than offset by the Lord's "grace sufficient." ([2 Cor. 12:7-9](#)) The Apostle's faith and trust in the Lord have been a source of comfort to all in the narrow way from that time to the present, and yet he did not, like some of these, go to the Lord with requests for temporal good things, money, houses, lands, food, raiment, etc. We have his own word for it that he sometimes lacked, and that in such cases he labored, working with his hands at the ordinary trade of sail and tent making. Some far less holy than he, and far less in touch with the Lord, would not only have disdained so humble an occupation, but, spurning employment would have sought to do what they term "living by faith," that is, living without work, a matter which this same Apostle reproves very decidedly, saying, "If a man will not work neither should he eat." "Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." ([Eph. 4:28](#); [2 Thess. 3:10](#)) Many who thus mistakenly think it the divine will that they should live by faith, while others live by work and support them, are often bold to pray for money, food, clothing, etc., which they will not work for. We do not wish to intimate that all such are wicked; it is our belief that some of the Lord's people are in this wrong attitude of mind because of false teachings and misunderstanding of the divine dealings and of the character of their calling. We are not disputing, either, that the Lord sometimes hears and answers prayers from such, even when those prayers are not in the fullest accord with the divine will. We believe that the proper course for the New Creatures—the one most pleasing to the Lord—is that which follows most directly and particularly the instructions and practices of our Lord and the apostles. Their being counted as New Creatures implies that they recognized the fact that earthly blessings belong properly to the natural man in harmony with his Creator, and therefore, imputedly belong to all vitally justified before God, through faith in Christ; and that these human rights they offered, consecrated, devoted, laid upon the altar, in exchange for the heavenly, spiritual, higher blessings and privileges of the New Creation, whereunto believers are called during this Gospel age. And if these earthly rights have been thus devoted to the Lord, exchanged for spiritual privileges, hopes, etc., by what process of reasoning could the New Creatures ask, not to say "demand," these earthly blessings, already consecrated, or laid down? It is another thing entirely to ask of the Lord such temporal blessings as His wisdom sees best for us, and another matter, also, to ask blessings upon others, including our dear ones according to the flesh, and not according to the Spirit. Nevertheless, in all of our requests the love and wisdom of the Lord should be recognized as superior to ours, and a full submission of our wills to his in every matter should be not only realized, but expressed to Him in such petitions. The New Creature, rightly instructed through the Word of God, and appreciating its spirit, must value its spiritual interests far beyond any temporal welfare, and should surely desire such, and only such, experiences in the flesh as would be most profitable to the new nature's development and preparation for the Kingdom. The New Testament deals more with the experiences of the Apostle chosen of the Lord to take the place

of Judas than with all the others put together, and begins with the time of his acceptance of Christ on the way to Damascus. Looking through his varied experiences we perceive that in exercising the gift of miracles, then with the Church, he used it in many cases upon those coming into the Truth. But so far as the record shows, never once was this healing power used in his own relief, nor in the relief of any of those who are set before us as the saints, the fully consecrated. Nor was this because the saints of that time were free from disease: on the contrary, we know that Timothy had what we would now designate chronic dyspepsia, or indigestion, and Epaphroditus was not hindered from being sick, yea, "nigh unto death," not because of sin, but, as the Apostle explains, "because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death," hazarding his life. ([Phil. 2:25-30](#)) We know not what special foods or medicines the Lord was pleased to bless in the latter case; but in respect to the former one the Apostle neither prayed nor sent a handkerchief or napkin to cure the ailment, but wrote to Timothy, saying, "Use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities." ([1 Tim. 5:23](#)) The wine was recommended, not as a beverage nor as an intoxicant, but purely as a medicine. The point specially to be noticed is, that divine power, so far as we are informed, was neither invoked nor exercised on behalf of either of these two consecrated brethren. They bore their infirmities and afflictions and got blessings out of them, using meanwhile the most suitable foods and remedies of which they had knowledge. And this we believe to be a proper illustration of the course which should be pursued by all of the consecrated, all New Creatures; they should not ask for physical healing, luxuries of life, etc. At very most, our Lord's sample petition warrants such in asking for what the Lord himself may see best for them in the way of daily food; and even while praying for the daily food they are to put forth the labors of their hands, and to expect that the Lord's blessing will be upon the same according to His wisdom as to what would be to their highest profit in character development through experiences, etc. If He shall see fit to grant them only the barest necessities of food and raiment, it will be to them a test of love and patience and faith in Him. If he shall supply them with an abundance, it will be to them a test of the same faith and love and devotion, in an opposite direction—as demonstrating what proportion of these good gifts they are willing to sacrifice in the interests of his cause, in the service of his brethren. Likewise if divine wisdom sees best to give robust health and vigor, the test of faithfulness will be as to whether or not love and devotion will sacrifice and thoroughly use this vigor on behalf of the Lord's cause, or whether or not it will be absorbed in selfish pursuits; or, on the other hand, if the Lord in His providence grants but a limited amount of vitality and vigor, the test of faith and devotion will be from the opposite standpoint, to prove the love and obedience, submission and patience, and the zeal with which small opportunities will be sought and persistently used.

The Nominal Church as an Adversary to the New Creation

Because their first knowledge of the Lord came to them while in the nominal church, or through some of its representatives or agencies, many are inclined to view sectarian systems as their spiritual mothers, and to feel a love and obligation to them accordingly. Such find it difficult to realize that these are earthly systems—Babylon—really opponents of the New Creation. Their difficulty arises because of too close and narrow a view of the subject. They need to lift their eyes higher, and to realize that from the divine standpoint there is a wide

difference between the nominal church and the true, between the tares and the wheat. Tares cannot beget wheat, nor can nominal Christendom produce true Christians. Its tendencies are in a reverse direction. The Scriptures declare that it is the power of God that works in us, to "will and to do of His good pleasure." It is the power of the new life which subsequently develops under providential care. It is not the begetting of the spirit of worldliness that will produce this result. The nominal church, as distinguished from the true, is that class of people who have seen and heard certain features of divine Truth, who have been more or less enlightened in respect to right and wrong, more or less, therefore, brought under a measure of conviction as to what is right or wrong, but who under this information are careless, negligent of the divine will, and disposed to use divine mercies so far as they please, especially so far as they will minister to their personal or social advantage in the present time, and no more. The true Church, on the contrary, as we have already seen, consists of those who have not only heard the Truth, but have consecrated their all to him who loved them and bought them—those who have followed on to know the Lord and to obey him to the extent of their ability, and who, in thus following, count not their lives dear unto them. The nominal church is not the light of the world, but merely a class of people who prefer light to darkness, and who like to have a little of the light shining from true Christians commingled with the lights of heathendom and of the various sciences. The members of the true Church are each a burning and shining light wherever they may be.

The wider the difference between these two classes the better it generally is for the true Church; indeed, the lamps of the faithful light-bearers have usually shone the brighter in proportion as the nominal system was immersed in gross darkness and superstition, and in proportion as the true Church was persecuted by the nominal system—from whom, indeed, all the persecutions have come.

When once we recognize the fact that God is at the helm, directing the affairs of the New Creation in every particular, not only in their call, but also in the difficulties, trials and persecutions necessary to their polishing and preparation for the Kingdom, it lessens our appreciation of the part played in this divine plan by human institutions, which the Lord never organized nor authorized to be organized, but which, in harmony with the Lord's suggestion, we know to be carnal, fleshly, contrary to the spirit. We are not in this claiming that the true Church has not been to some extent in close association with the nominal systems; but we are claiming that even though *in* them they have been separate *from* them, in the sense that they have always been of a different spirit. The begetting of these spiritual children of God, through the Word of His grace, and their being to some extent cherished and nourished and brought forward by these human sectarian tare systems, is well illustrated by certain insects, the young of which are injected into the backs of their enemies, and there warmed, nourished and developed, up to the time of their complete birth and deliverance, which means, usually, the death of the insect which temporarily carried them about. So now, the New Creatures, begotten of the Lord, are more or less closely connected with the institutions of Babylon and have been more or less brought forward contrary to the will of Babylon, but under divine supervision and arrangement, until now the point of deliverance has been reached, and He who begat the New Creation calls to them, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins and that ye receive not of her plagues." [Rev. 18:4](#)

There is a continual temptation to the New Creation by the nominal church system—not only through false doctrines, but also in formalistic piety and hypocrisy, in which they draw nigh to

the Lord with the lips, while the heart is far from Him—while the thoughts, sentiments, words, and deeds are wholly out of accord with the spirit of truth and the consecration which it inculcates. The temptations to the New Creation from the world would be comparatively powerless were it not for the fact that the nominal church combines the worldly spirit, aims and ambitions with the name of Christ and an humble service to him. The ease, honor of men, emoluments, freedom from sacrifice, and sureness of attaining the best things that this world can give, are the baits and allurements, the snares and traps, which Babylon holds out to the New Creation, and that continually. No others of the Adversary's snares are so alluring, so deceptive, so powerful, as this one.