

THE ENEMY

We have been asked what we meant by our sickness being intended for evil by the enemy, and who the enemy is, referred to in our letter, which appeared in October number. At first we were inclined to be surprised at such a question, but when we considered that people have long been taught that sickness and death are manifestations of God's providence, and that it is not an uncommon thing to hear the officiating clergyman at a funeral speak of the "singular providence which has taken the deceased out of the world," we concluded that possibly others might wonder at the statement referred to. To such we reply:

The letter was not worded as carefully as it would have been, had it been intended for publication.

We said we did not under-value our sickness, and pain, and sorrow, and darkness, and gloom, which though intended for evil by the enemy, is among the "all things" working for good.

We suppose, what puzzled the inquirer, was, that we should set a value upon what came from the enemy, or if good, how could it have come from an enemy.

First, then let us make sure that the things spoken of, (sickness, pain, &c.,) are the work of the enemy, Satan.

In the first chapter of Job you will see how Satan wished to have God afflict Job, thinking, doubtless, thus to spoil Job's trust in God. Did God do it? No, but he allowed Satan to do it, while he (God) comforted and strengthened him.

In Acts 10:38, we are told that Jesus healed certain ones "that were oppressed of the devil." In 1 Peter 5:8, it is said "be vigilant because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion, walketh about

seeking whom he may devour." In Hebrews 2:14, we are told plainly that the devil has the power of death. We think this is sufficient to prove that he is our enemy, and that he is the cause of sickness, pain, death, and ought always to have the credit (?) of it. But do you say: how is it that through affliction he does us good? He does not do us good in any sense whatever.

What any of God's agents do, (according to God's estimate, Matt. 5:28, 1st John 3:15), is what they intend to do, and not what they accomplish. If our Heavenly Father were to leave us where Satan has done his work with us, our case would be truly hopeless, but Our Father's infinite love and wisdom takes us out of the ruin, out of death.

Satan's work, disease and pain when finished is death; all tends that way, and is so intended by the arch enemy. It is our faith in Our Father's wisdom and love that sustains us, that causes us to hope, and enables us to profit by our afflictions. This is what Paul meant when he said: (2 Cor. 4:17,18), "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory, while we look not at the things which are seen."

So let us never say, nor intimate by word or deed, that sickness, pain and death are manifestations of God's providence, when a great share of Jesus' time was spent in undoing that same. They are manifestations of Satan's envy and malice. So Satan's **[R424 : page 8]** work is utter ruin, and all our hope is in the resurrection. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

We have a guarantee of the final destruction of the enemy, and of our liberation from death, in the resurrection of Christ, and also in the support which we receive from the Spirit while suffering at the hands of the enemy. This is the "earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the PURCHASED possession." Eph. 1:14. If an

enemy should come along and pull up a young fruit tree of mine, thinking to kill it, and I should immediately transplant it and graft better fruit into it, there would be no thanks due him; he intended to ruin it.

Perhaps some one suggests that Paul says: (Hebrews 12:6), "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Yes, chasteneth, i.e. "instructs, trains up;" he comes in with the comforting influences of his spirit and turns our sufferings into blessings.

But there are times when we wander or neglect to do what he teaches us is duty; we then feel that he "scourgeth every son that he receiveth." We have no rest of spirit; we smart under the rod; we weep and mourn; we turn again and do his will and receive his smile; we have been "corrected." But that our Father administers corporal punishment; that he sends pain and death, we find no warrant in scripture for believing. But does not the prophet say: (perhaps one would ask), speaking of Christ, that "he was smitten of God and afflicted?" No, he says: "surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him smitten of God, and afflicted." Isa. 53:4.

Just so, now those who suffer with Christ, those who bear with patience, pain and sorrow, and are thus disciplined, and accept it as such, and thus fill up the afflictions which are behind," are often thought to be "smitten of God." This is what Job's friends thought.

Now we claim, (and we hope you will examine scripture to see if it is not so), that all physical pain which the "body of Christ" are visited with, comes from Satan, but is turned into instruction and discipline, (chastening), and accrues to the good of the world in the coming age; the future rulers having been touched with a feeling of the world's infirmities.

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