

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS. BORROWING AND LENDING.

QUESTION. – I have neighbors who bother me continually by wishing to borrow of me. I wish to be neighborly but do not like to be pestered by people with whom I have scarcely anything in common. If they were "brethren in Christ," I would think nothing of it, but be glad to oblige them. What is my duty under the circumstances?

Answer. – Our advice is that you bear with them in this matter – for the truth's sake, for the Lord's sake, not directly, but indirectly. In this way seek to make friends with earthly things. You will find little enough that you and your neighbors can exchange along spiritual lines, and in order that what you have to offer of spiritual things may be the more acceptable to them, improve every opportunity to be kind, generous, in respect to the lending of earthly goods – not, of course, carrying matters to an extreme, so as to injure your own interests. Thus the Lord's people may be lenders, but not borrowers, as the typical fleshly Israelites were instructed also. (Luke 6:35; Deut. 15:6-14.) By pursuing a kind and generous course, you will to that extent favorably impress your worldly neighbors, and that at a trifling cost. If subsequently they misunderstand your religious views, they will at least concede you to be a kind and generous neighbor.

It would seem that many of the Lord's dear people fail to see that with our clearer light we should become more kind in word and in action and in thought, and much more generous every way, than our neighbors – peace-able and peace-makers. The majority of people seem naturally to be mischief makers, and do not quickly see that this is contrary to the spirit of the Lord – the spirit of love. The possession of the quarrelsome, selfish spirit gives evidence that the possessor has not been taught of God, or has not properly learned of him who is meek and lowly, kind and gentle of heart. [R2539 : page 264]

MAN'S FREE AGENCY.

Question. – Has man been a free moral agent since the fall?

Answer. – There are two ways of looking at this subject, and the answers accordingly would be opposites.

(1) If by "free moral agent" is meant *freedom of will* in respect to moral questions, we would answer, Yes. Undoubtedly man is free to *will* as he may please on moral questions, altho he may not be able to carry out this will in all the affairs of life by reason of the weaknesses of his flesh or by reason of circumstances and conditions of others with whom he is in contact. Thus the Apostle Paul says, "To *will* is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." – Rom. 7:18.

(2) If by "free moral agent" is meant one who is not influenced or restricted by his environment, the answer should unquestionably be, No; because we are all born in a certain measure of slavery to ignorance, superstition and weakness, the results of the fall. Whoever is *thus bounden* may indeed seem to have full liberty to do right as easily as to do wrong, but in reality he has no such liberty, by reason of his own depravity and that of others, especially "the Prince of this world," who blinds the minds of them that believe not.

If all men had absolute *freedom* from the curse and from the weaknesses which it entails, the present would be the time of the world's trial; but because such conditions do not prevail, therefore God has appointed a "day" (the coming Millennial age) in the which he will judge the world by that "man" whom he hath afore ordained – the Christ. (Acts 17:31.) When that appointed Day shall come, the ignorance now enslaving mankind will be dissipated before the Sun of Righteousness, the unfavorable surroundings will be largely corrected by the Great Prince of "the world [age] to come," our Lord Jesus; and such blemishes as may be connected with the imperfection of the flesh

of those on judgment will be off-set according to the gracious provision of the New Covenant, under which their trial will take place.

With the Church, whose trial or judgment takes place during this Gospel age, the case is somewhat similar. These are specially justified by faith under the New Covenant; their unintentional blemishes and weaknesses all being offset with the great sin-offering, and their knowledge being granted by special illumination of the holy spirit through the Scriptures. Only such as are thus *made free by the Son* are free indeed, – "free moral agents" in this sense and use of the expression.

CONCERNING METEORIC SHOWERS.

Question. – What about the falling of stars predicted in the newspapers by astronomers for Nov. 15-17? It is said that these meteoric showers occur every thirty-three years. How does this fit with the exposition set forth in MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. IV., where the Meteoric shower of 1833 is referred to as a *sign*?

Answer. – It fits well! The fact that astronomers have located the floating star dust which produced the phenomena of 1833, and the fact that they know now that it approaches close to the earth every thirty-three years prove nothing. The original fact remains that in 1833 there was a starry shower such as was never heard of before and such as has never been seen since, tho twice predicted.

Astronomers announced in 1866 that the shower of 1833 would be repeated and that such showers had probably occurred often, but had never before attracted attention and record. But Nov. 14th, 1866, saw only comparatively few shooting stars – a few more than can be seen at other times.

Now that the second prediction, Nov. 15-17, '99, has passed without any remarkable display, it rather strengthens our position and corroborates the thought that the meteoric shower of Nov. 13th, 1833,

was a special one intended as a *sign* and understood at the time as such and that the like never occurred before as it has not occurred since.

The last failure was particularly disappointing to astronomers for they had predicted wonders and had made extensive preparations. The Paris observatory had a balloon by which an ascent was made high above the city's lights and mists so as to obtain good results; but it could report only "about one hundred" meteors. At the Allegheny, Pa., Observatory elaborate preparations were made for months in advance and the largest photographic camera ever constructed in the world was in place to secure repeated photographic negatives of the heavens during the entire night. How different was the original shower intended for, and by many understood, as a *sign*.

Read the testimony of MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. IV., pages 588-600.

IS THE STUDY OF PSYCHIC PHENOMENA NECESSARY?

Question. – I have recently seen a book on psychic phenomena, styled _____. Do you not think it would be well to obtain these for TOWER readers at wholesale rates? **[R2540 : page 264]**

Answer. – We do not so think. We may only put before our brethren of the Lord's flock "clean provender." We can only recommend to them reading along the lines advised by the Apostle, saying: Whatsoever **[R2540 : page 265]** things are *true, just, lovely* and of *good report* – think on these things and stir up each other's minds with these. – Phil. 4:8; 2 Pet. 3:1.

We have every confidence that the devil has plenty of power to produce any variety of psychic phenomena if the Lord permit him; and we have the Scriptural assurance that the Lord will permit him to exercise these powers in a special manner at the present time, to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect, and to bring strong delusions upon many in the nominal church, that they should believe

a lie, because they do not have pleasure in the truth. (2 Thes. 2:10-12.)
Please see booklet, *What Say the Scriptures About Spiritualism?*

We do not think, dear Brother, that the children of light need special instructions along the lines of psychic phenomena, and a thousand other books which have been and will be published, calculated to confuse many. The strongest protection God's people can have is the one which he has provided them – the armor of his Word, his plan. Whoever sees the "plan of the ages," as laid down in the WATCH TOWER publications, clearly, distinctly, will be safeguarded, not only against one, but against all the devices of the great Adversary in this evil day: but it will require that they give careful attention and prayer in order that the study may be satisfactory in its results – in order that it may sink into conviction in their hearts, and establish them so strongly in confidence in the Bible and its inspired statements that all contradictory theories and so-called scientific proofs to the contrary will be unable to move them.

PREHUMAN – MEANS WHAT?

Question. – In the fifth volume of DAWN and also in various issues of the WATCH TOWER you mention the prehuman existence of Christ. Some have taken exception to this statement, holding that you mean that our Lord was human before his existence upon the earth. Please give us a word on this subject at your convenience.

Answer. – The critic has erred respecting the meaning of the word *prehuman*. *Pre* means before, hence pre-human signifies before human. The thought is – that condition in which our Lord was *before* he became a man. At that time he was a spirit being. The critic has taken exactly the opposite to the true meaning of the word prehuman.

CONCERNING PREDESTINATION.

Question. – Is not individual, personal election to salvation taught in Rev. 13:8 and 17:8?

Answer. – We think not. The first of these texts is much the simpler and, it will be noticed, does not say when the names would be written in the Lamb's Book of Life. It does, however, mention that in the divine plan the Lamb of God was slain from the foundation of the world, and that this Book of Life record is one of the consequences of our Lord's death.

The second text is more obscure and reads as tho it had been intended to be a repetition of the former statement, but inadvertently a portion had been omitted, *viz.*, the words, "of the Lamb slain." We do not surely know that these words were omitted, but merely that, if they were there, this passage would be in harmony with the preceding one and in harmony with all of the testimony of Scripture, without allowances or inferences.

Taking this latter verse as it stands, and supposing it to be complete, we should be obliged to understand it to mean that the book or scroll covenanting life to an elect number was prepared from the foundation of the world, and that the names in it have been written as the individuals have made consecration of themselves, coming under the terms of the divine call. In this view of the matter the book or scroll would represent the original divine purpose – God's intention to have a Church, of which our Lord Jesus would be the Head. Such interpretation would be in perfect harmony with the various figures of speech which represent the writing of the names of the believers in the Lamb's Book of Life, and in harmony also with the other records which speak of blotting out the names of such as prove unfaithful to their consecration. – Rev. 3:5.

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