

We know a Baptist who recently cleared \$300,000 by one transaction, yet his subscription to the Missionary Society remains one guinea (five dollars).

"Perhaps the saddest feature of the religious life of our churches is the almost total abandonment of prayer meetings. This, again, is characteristic of every denomination. We know a church where the deacons have held repeated meetings to decide on an invitation to the pastor, yet these meetings were begun, continued and ended without a word of prayer. We know another church where a similar question was decided in a gentleman's library, under the inspiration of whiskey and cigars! Several of our Baptist churches have no week-night prayer-meeting, some never have a prayer-meeting at all. We know of only one church in the town where the deacons meet with the pastor on Sunday mornings to seek in prayer a blessing on the work. If the meetings next week help to destroy our Laodicean self-complacency, and lead us to God in real penitence, they will be forever memorable in the history of Nottingham. God grant that it may be even so."

A STARTLING SIGN.

THE indications of awakening amongst the descendants of Abraham come thick and fast—some encouraging and others most disheartening. Some of these signs look like a great increase in the number of conversions, while others show the certainty of such an apostacy as will open the way for the coming Antichrist.

Recently over 100,000 copies of the Hebrew New Testament have been distributed amongst the Jews of Russia. Strange to say, these books have resulted in raising up a party amongst the Jews in that land called "*Revisionists*." They differ entirely from the Zionists who want to lead the chosen people back to the Holy Land. They take no interest in the land question, but are absorbed in the question "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He?"

Pastor Gurland says that this party take up a different stand from that of the Zionists. They desire a congress of learned Jews, who are to investigate impartially the trial of Jesus, because they are absolutely convinced that it was a judicial murder of God's anointed.

Is this not wonderful? Who knows whether the sons of Israel may not be divided soon into two camps, like France at the present day over another Jew—revision or anti-revision. It may be that Levit. 27 : 40-42 may soon be fulfilled by a

remnant of Israel. "If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they have trespassed against Me; and that they have walked contrary unto Me, and that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity; then will I remember My covenant with Jacob, and also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land."

THE STAR IN THE EAST—THE MORNING STAR.

PASTOR A. J. GORDON.

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea—behold there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying: Where is he that is born King of the Jews for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship Him. Matt. 2 : 1, 2.

TO one acquainted with the Scriptures, the expression "his star" is very significant, for it is a frequent symbol of Messiah in the Bible. It is one of the beautiful things in nature, like the vine and the rock, which he has glorified by identifying it with himself.

We consider it a great triumph of Astronomy, that it is able to foretell the coming of celestial bodies, and to predict the exact time and place of their appearance in the heavens. The "Star of Bethlehem" was a predicted star. Balaam, fifteen hundred years before, had caught sight of it, in prophetic vision. "Falling into a trance, but having his eyes open, he said: 'I shall see him but not now; I shall behold him but not nigh. There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab and destroy the children of Sheth.'" How distinct that prediction, and yet how indistinct. He saw the advent star, but he mingled the first advent and the second advent in one.

I saw a somewhat rare sight in the heavens the other evening. One star lay so directly in the line of the disc of another star, that as I looked at them, they appeared as one, so blended were their lights. Yet the telescope revealed the

fact that there were two bodies, one vastly distant beyond the other. So Balaam beheld the two risings of this glorious orb of light, blending in one—the “star of Bethlehem” which marked the birth of Christ, and the “bright and morning star” which will mark his second coming—yet he did not discern the intervening centuries that stood between them, for he says “There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel. But the sceptre belongs to Christ as King, upon which office He enters at his second coming, and the smiting of the Gentiles belongs to him as Judge when He shall come to execute vengeance. Just as David describes in the Psalms, “Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

And this corresponds with the general character of Old Testament prophecies. They are brilliant and powerful pictures of future events, but are often pictures without perspective. They frequently bring together transactions the most remote into one brief delineation.

We have a striking illustration of this in the Messianic predictions of Isaiah. In the sixty-first chapter the Messiah is represented in a single sentence as coming “to proclaim the *acceptable year of the Lord*, and the *day of vengeance of our God*.” Now “the acceptable year of the Lord,” and “the day of vengeance of our God,” are two periods separated from each other by all the time which lies between the birth of Christ and the second coming of Christ. “The acceptable year of the Lord” is the gospel age, the day of grace in which we are now living. “Behold now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.” “The day of vengeance of our God” is the period ushered in by the coming of the Lord in the clouds of heaven, “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire *taking vengeance* on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” And yet in Isaiah’s prophecy, these two widely separated eras are brought together into one sentence; a single brilliant point of light glitters in the firmament of prophecy, and rapt Isaiah describes it as he sees it.

To what may this star of Messiah be compared? It is like one of those heavenly bodies that comes forth suddenly to flame in the forehead of the morning sky, and then disappears to be seen no more for centuries when it returns in unclouded splendor at God’s appointed time. The first epiphany of Christ has taken place. The second is yet to come. In the first he shone with the mild radiance of love and mercy; in the second, he is to burn with the flaming fire of vengeance. When the star of Bethlehem appeared, the angels, those morning stars of light, sang together and shouted for joy. When the day star of judgment shall arise, those angels shall descend again and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire.

Look back, oh sinner, to that star that hangs above the plains of Bethlehem, and let it guide you to Him who takes away the sins of the world, and then only will you be prepared to greet with joy the brightness of his rising, when He shall come again in the clouds with great glory to judge the world.

I have said that the Star in the East was a predicted star. The place of its rising was foretold seven hundred and fifty years before by Micah. “Thou Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel.” The *exact time* of its appearing had been predicted five hundred and fifty years before by Daniel. “From the going forth of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks and three-score and two weeks;” i.e., weeks of years, which according to Jewish chronology was four hundred and eighty-three years. The glory of its appearing was also most distinctly predicted: “A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.”

Now what are the wonders of astronomy with its minute predictions of the time and place of the appearing of heavenly bodies, compared with the foreshadowings of prophecy? The astronomer with his telescope and his figures calculates the future coming of a comet from the data which he has in hand of its previous visit.

But here we have divine astronomers looking down through the constellations of prophets and patriarchs telling us the place and the year when a star shall burst forth which shall exceed all others in its brightness and ultimately fill all the heavens with its celestial splendor. We are told that there are stars so remote that it takes hundreds of years for their light travelling in a straight line to reach our earth, and that men can measure their distances, and compute their orbits! What emotions ought it to awaken in us to know that there is One so Ancient of Days that He was in the beginning with God, who had no beginning, and yet that the time and place and purpose of his incarnation wherein he should become an infant of days, were foretold as definitely as the mathematician can calculate the appearance of a comet.

This Star is to appear again! Hear the words that stand on the last page of Scripture, "I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star. Behold I come quickly." The Spirit, in the Word, sets us to watching and waiting that we may every moment be ready to catch the foregleams of its coming glory. Not that we should be so absorbed in idle and ecstatic reverie while watching for the advent of the Lord, that we should forget our duties to a present world, and our obligations to personal service. The apostle Peter gives us the perfect ideal of what the Christian life ought to be. "We have a more sure word of prophecy where unto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn and the day star arise." Studying the Bible, but sighting the *Star* to which all the prophecies and promises of the Bible point. You watch the pilot steering his ship in the midnight. He keeps his eye on his compass, but ever and anon he looks up to the star to which its needle directs. The promises are our compass; but every promise points with steady and undeviating directness to the Bright and Morning Star—the coming Christ. "For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come and will not tarry."

All through the Scriptures it is the re-appearing of the Day Star, that constitutes the alluring hope and stimulus to our Christian service. And any theology that takes our eye off of that, and sets us to watching the phases and feelings of our own hearts, is as ill-advised, as it would be for a commander of a ship to tell his pilot to steer the vessel by its own rudder, instead of adjusting the rudder to some fixed and distant goal.

DEGENERATION.

BY REV. C. H. PARKHURST, D. D.

(Continued.)

THE second chapter of human history opens with the advent of young Cain. What he might have proved himself to be if his father and mother had remained true and been allowed to continue in Paràdise we can only conjecture. It is evident that he was both industrially and religiously educated: at least he was taught to till the ground and to worship God: farming and religion. Religion however appears to have meant even less to him than to his parents, for he rushed down even more rapidly than they the precipice over which they had already slipped, quarreled with his brother before the altar and broke the sixth commandment almost before there had been time to enact it. History now might be said to be fairly under way. The last verse devoted to Cain summarizes his history by stating that he "went out from the presence of the Lord." A few lines farther on we discover an advance along the lines of industry, sin and the fine arts and that the generation immediately succeeding Cain were the inventors of iron founders, music and polygamy. All this evinces the pace at which history was transpiring and is itself prophetic of some crisis or other presently to ensue. One chapter more brings us to the time of Noah and to the expedient, quick and effective, by which, practically, the Lord rubbed out all that had been done and washed the earth of its iniquity. Drowning the world is a scheme possessing such merits of simplicity and thoroughness that it might almost seem strange that the Lord has not resorted to it with