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LETTER No. V.

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DEAR BROTHER:

Your second letter in the "Messenger and Advocate," of Nov. last, directed to me, I shall now proceed to answer as the Spirit gives me knowledge. The letter is long and I am aware that my littleness in the presence of God, want of perfection in holiness, and narrow limits of learning, will greatly lessen my ability to do it that justice that the subject merits, and the church might naturally expect, but I shall do all I can, and confide in God for an honorable result.— Time is wanting for me to take up many things therein contained, and a personal interview for many important interrogatories. I will touch a few items to stir up your mind by way of remembrance, and awaken the saints to diligence, and may I hope, call some of the children of men from darkness to light; and then, according to my manner, finish with my hand, *writing to the heart.*

The first thing that attracts my attention, is, "That God never works in vain. This is not the case with men; but might it not be?" I answer *yes*,—but, in order, that men work not in vain, they must turn from Satan to God, by repentance, and become what they once were: **THE IMAGE OF GOD.** Solomon once said: Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions. This is true, and no invention tends to drive man farther from God, and make his works more vain, than their *new methods of worship*, when there is but one Lord, one faith, one baptism. After new inventions, and fame, and wealth, many of the Gentile world have run so far into novelty, daring and danger, that the most of them now are so eager for something *new*, or something *great*, or something *rich*, that millions have forgotten the truth, and all their works are vain.

On looking around the world as it now is, I have to exclaim with the wise man: All is vanity. What is man, that God should notice him? Or, what is life? Surely,

What is life? 'tis to exist

In a world of wealth and woes,
Where the wickedness and death
Makes one shudder as he goes.

'Tis to learn how little that,

Even man on earth has known;
And to watch all other's faults
Then, in weakness, judge his own.

'Tis to come like morning fair;

Rise and rove like ocean wave.
Fall and fade like shooting stars,
Leaving nothing but—a grave!

Without being too minute, your letter goes to show that every generation, and mostly all nations, have been more ready to *garnish* the sepulchres of the *dead* prophets, than to obey

the words of the *living*, though God and religion were, are, and always will be the same. Your foundation is so broad, that when you rear up the edifice, few eyes, in sight, will go by without looking at the place where the Lord lay, and thinking what they suffer, who follow him!

But lest I get into your tracks, I will ask a few questions; and such as are already answered in revelation, may act more immediately upon the mind; and those needing answers, will be for your disposal as the Spirit directs.

Has it, or has it not so happened from the beginning till now, that the people most favored of God; they that have last had the true light of heaven, have been first to stone, or put to death the Lord's prophets and saints? And have, or have not the same people, or those in the same situation, rejected the truth, and become two-fold worse than they that have made no profession of religion? Did or did not Cain murder Abel because of righteousness? Did or did not God take Enoch and Zion up to heaven, because the world was too wicked to live with the pure in heart?

In all ages, have or not the various sects, which pretended to be of God, persecuted and put more saints to death, than all the heathens in the world? I mean that sort of people that make a great noise about *their* religion, wear rich robes, have great meeting houses, and make *long prayers*. Was or was not Jesus crucified, by the very people that had a knowledge of his coming, and who were actually expecting him? Is it or is it not generally the case, that when the light of heaven happiness the soul of the saint, the darkness of hell mystifies the mind of the wicked?— Was or was it not so before the flood; and has continued so since? Did or did not the undoubted "priests" of old, "the Sons of God," that married all they wanted, reject Noah and the truth of God? Were or were not Pharaoh's "priests," (the real "black coats" of Egypt, whose lands were privileged even in a seven years' famine,) the leaders of the great Gentile church in that day, and had doubtless slipped down from Melchisedek's priest-hood to the magicians that were ready to work miracles within *one* of Moses? And if so, were or were they not as ready to stand behind the scene, while Israel's "tale of brick," was daubed without straw, and laugh at the persecution of the children of God, as their *heirs apparent* are, to secretly applaud the outrages against the saints who are now suffering persecution and affliction? And is or is not the present Gentile church in the same predicament, as to the second coming of Christ, that the Jews were in at his first coming? I mean, if the Jews, as the green tree, crucified the Lord of glory, what will the Gentiles, as the dry tree, do?

When the Spirit of God is withdrawn, does or does not that generation suppose itself to be considerably wiser than the past one, and, to show its veneration for the commandments of God, which says thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: thou shalt not kill. &c. garnish the se-

pulchres of the prophets; raise monuments to departed great men, and build churches in the names of the apostles, but if a prophet comes truly in the name of the Lord, they reject him, or stone him, or kill him, for fear he may deceive somebody, as if God was unable to preserve his sacred law from the vanishing touch of mere mortal man? Has or has it not always been the case, that the farther the church or sects, receded from the truth and the right way, the greater were the pretensions to light and sanctification?

Is or is it not apparent from reason and analogy as drawn from a careful reading of the Scriptures, that God causes the saints, or people that fall away from his church to be cursed in time, with a *black skin*? Was or was not Cain, being marked, obliged to inherit the curse, he and his children, forever? And if so, as Ham, like other sons of God, might break the rule of God, by marrying out of the church, did or did he not, have a Canaanite wife, whereby some of the *black seed* was preserved through the flood, and his son, Canaan, after he laughed at his grand father's nakedness, heired three curses; one from Cain for killing Abel; one from Ham for marrying a black wife, and one from Noah for ridiculing what God had respect for? Are or are not the Indians a sample of marking with blackness for rebellion against God's holy word and holy order? And can or can we not observe in the countenances of almost all nations, except the Gentile, a dark, sallow hue, which tells the sons of God, without a line of history, that they have fallen or changed from the original beauty and grace of father Adam?

So many questions for this letter! Now there are other important facts, and doings of God, which might lead all men to repent before judgment, if they were willing to be guided by truth and escape calamity. I mean such facts as would produce conviction in any heart but such as Satan has really case-hardened for a tour in that region where the *smoke* of their torment ascends up forever and ever. That God punishes the nations that forget him, and those that do not fear him, is evident from common history, but especially from Scripture.

From Cain's officiating at the altar, I have no doubt but he was a high priest after the holy order of God, and he, for being overcome by Satan, when he had such great light, was marked and sent to a land of out-casts, to live by his own inventions, and the assistance of the evil one, who might have translated him and his city down to more gloomy regions, for all I know, as an honor for being the first convert, in this world, to endless misery and punishment. Why he has a history in the bible remains to be told.

Perhaps all the nations before the flood, except Cain and his posterity, were enlightened by the preaching of the gospel, for they were destroyed by the deluge, and God rarely destroys a people until they are made acquainted with their situation, and they sin beyond law. The Babelites were dispersed throughout the face of the whole world for their presumption and folly. The Egyptians found a watery grave for undertaking to cope with God, when enlightened by his messengers and miracles. Israel was dispersed among all nations for disobeying the commandments; and I greatly fear, that the Gentiles will

"wax fat and kick" at the fulness of the gospel, and "fill the measure of their glory" with iniquity, and be turned into hell with all their great prototypes, that have singed the locks of their beauty, with the blaze of their own glory, by denying the gift of the Holy Ghost.

While penning your history you will find the two great spirits by which men escape to heaven, or sink to hell, often so nearly alike that, you can only judge which is which, by the power which the pure in heart have in store to overcome the world with. The evil one is a great counterfeiter. He imitates almost every thing but perfection. Having once been in heaven, he knows nearly all, but telling the truth; and he practises arts, sciences, and virtues, besides cunning and cloaking. Go to the family fireside, and his spirit is there, ready to catch a crumb; go to any meeting where the Holy Ghost is not admitted; and it is there for a morsel; go to the court house where even handed justice is not administered to the beggar as well as the banker, and it is there for a share; go to the legislative hall where all men's rights are not held equal, and it is there for a "pound of flesh;" go to the cabinet of kingdoms, where one man sways the sceptre, and if aught swerves him from the course of moral rectitude, it is there for a few "golden opinions" to rule with; go to the holy alliance of emperors, where more power is sought for, and it is there for another link to the chain that holds its millions; yea, where on earth is it not? go to the lover's chamber and it is there; go to the ball-room and it is there; go to the dram-shop and it is there; go to the business places and it is there; go to prison & it is there; go to sea and it is there; go to the banquet of feasting and it is there; go to the house of pleasure and it is there; go to the house of mourning and it is there, watching its prey, seeking in every place a soul for destruction, or a body for sport; yea, go to hell, after its course shall have been stayed on earth, and there it will be, making horrid revelry with the damned, where "their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." On earth it is the essence of trouble and contention, souring happiness and poisoning joy; in hell it is the life of endless venom, unutterable; and if it is in all these places, and so terrible, blasting the happiness of millions in this world, and eternally tormenting the sons of perdition, in the regions of wo, in the nether world to come, where is it not, and who can escape its dreadful ravages? It is not in the celestial city and the pure in heart are beyond its scathing touch; yea, notwithstanding its great fountain head, Lucifer, has drawn away a third part of heaven: has his millions of the children of this world, and, may be, the worst from worlds, yet, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, by the power of his Spirit, will overcome all the enemies of grace and glory, and even death and happiness, and joy, and perfection, and eternal life will roll on in eternity. *an undivided one*: even as a never-ending blessing, before God, to them that have held out faithfully to the end, whether in life or in death: and they are they, the blessed ones. Amen. As ever,

W. W. PHELPS.