

The New Covenant Advocate

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Kingdom Herald

VOL. 34.

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, JANUARY 1, 1943.

No. 10.

A New World

(Continued from December issue.)

WE HAVE pleasure now in presenting the remainder of the Conference Addresses, of which eight were published in December issue; and we trust will prove enjoyable and profitable to present readers as to those who heard them.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the One upon whom all hope of a new world or "kosmos" rests. In the present Gospel Age, the Church is being chosen out, in spite of the fact that this age is rightly called the present evil world.—Gal. 1: 4.

In fact, one of the phenomena attending the selection is that these chosen ones are called from an evil world or order of things; thus demonstrating the power of the truth and of the Spirit of God to find and gather the grains of wheat from the mass of tares, as He illustrated in the parable. Another phenomenon in connection with the calling out of the church is now presented for our edification.

THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

On the day of Pentecost, many Jews from foreign parts assembled at Jerusalem for the feast, and many of them could speak and understand only the language of the country of their residence. The Greek-speaking Jews used the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. On the other hand, the Apostles were Galileans, and spoke a dialect which betrayed Peter's origin despite his strenuous denials.—Matt. 26: 73; Mark 14: 66-71.

Nothing short of a miracle can account for the fact that, on the day of Pentecost, Peter and the other disciples spoke Latin and other languages, correctly pronounced, so that their message was understood by all the nations represented. For we read in Acts 2—

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?

8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia.

10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

Here a dozen or more languages or dialects were spoken with such clearness and force as to command the attention and arouse the interest of the multitude. They said to one another, "What meaneth this?" The miracle had been performed for this very purpose, so that when Peter stood up for a general address he had a large and attentive audience, while he preached Jesus and the resurrection.

The gift of tongues then received was retained by the apostles and the other disciples who had assembled in the upper room to await the outpouring of the Spirit; and by their activities the gospel was quickly and widely spread. For when those who heard it returned to their homes in other lands, they naturally told of the wonderful event they had witnessed. But only the apostles had the power, by the laying on of hands, to impart the gift of tongues and other gifts, and the recipient did not have the power to pass the gift on to others.

Demonstrations at Pentecost and Afterward

The phenomena attached to the giving of the Spirit at Pentecost—the tongues of fire, the rushing wind—by visible demonstration and audible sound served a purpose in convincing the disciples gathered in the upper room that this was indeed the power for which they had been told to look. Such another demonstration was not necessary afterwards, but two special outpourings were later given:

The first when the Samaritans received the Gospel, and the second when Cornelius and his household, who were Gentiles, were converted.

In the case of the Samaritans, the Spirit was not given to the new converts until the apostles Peter and John came from Jerusalem and prayed for them, and then laid hands on them. Then the Spirit came

upon them, and they received it, including the ability to exercise the gifts of the Spirit.

A special demonstration from on high was also made when the first converts from the Gentiles were received into the Church. On this occasion, the Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius and his household while Peter was yet speaking, and without the laying on of his hands. It was a special demonstration from heaven of God's will concerning the preaching of the truth to the Gentiles, and their acceptance as believers, and consequently to be partakers of all the favours God had provided for the Church.

The Holy Spirit given at Pentecost has come down to all believers, to begin in them a new life of holiness, and to guide them into truth. But the miraculous gifts of tongues, healing, prophecy, wisdom, faith, the working of miracles, the discerning of spirits (1 Cor. 12: 8-10) were limited to the early days of the church, through God's arrangement that none but the 12 apostles could impart a gift. It was the privilege of each recipient to use a gift, but they could not pass it on. So, when these believers passed away there would be none to exercise the gifts. Actually, it was not necessary that there should be, as they had served their purpose of establishing the Church as a united body in possession of the truth as a sacred trust to be handed down from generation to generation.

The Purpose of the Gifts

The purpose of the gifts—to accredit the apostles and assist in the establishment of the Church—is referred to in Hebrews 2—

3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

The Holy Spirit is called a gift, but the gifts of the Spirit are here distinguished from the Holy Spirit itself. These miraculous gifts were God's testimony or witness to the genuineness of the apostles and the gospel they proclaimed.

But they served a further purpose, as may be seen by the instructions given by the apostle Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthian brethren, regarding the orderly conduct of their meetings. (Chapter 14.) Wherever the Apostles went they gathered disciples together in groups for mutual edification. In those places where all had but a limited knowledge of the Scriptures, perhaps none was well enough versed in the truth to preach even a brief discourse (called in 1 Corinthians 14: 1 to "prophecy"). To prophesy meant to speak "unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort."

Those who had the gift of tongues could do this in a foreign language, even though they could not understand the meaning of the words they used.

The object of meeting together was to edify one another. Therefore the setting forth of the doctrine, and the offering of prayers in the language understood by the assembled brethren, was very profitable.

But it was better for each to have a thorough understanding of the truth. In that case, both speaker and hearers would be edified. Paul gave

himself as an example. By the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, Paul was able to speak in whatever language was understood by those he met on his missionary journeys and to whom he wished to give the message of truth.

In those circumstances the gift of tongues was most useful.

But, as the Corinthians were placed, in a city where Greek was the prevailing language, they would be more profited by discourses in Greek given with the speaker's full understanding of the truths being set forth by him.

Thus it was apparent that, even then, while the apostles still lived, the gift of tongues was passing away as a useful gift wherever brethren were able to help each other by the gift of prophesying or teaching in the language understood by all present.

It is clear, then, that the special gifts of the Spirit given to the early Church were God's arrangement for the early days, for the purpose of (1) quickly spreading the gospel among people of all nations and languages by this testimony that the movement was of God, and (2) to provide a means by which brethren unfamiliar with the Scriptures might edify one another in the absence of the apostles who had given them their first teaching.

When the truth had been widely circulated, and believers in all nations thoroughly understood the principles of the faith, the temporary nature of the "gifts" became apparent. And when those died who had received gifts by the laying on of hands, then the gifts passed away as being no longer required.

Some people to-day say that those gifts were taken away because the Church was unfaithful. But that is quite wrong. For even if many errors did come in, it is true that the Lord continued to build His Church; He never left Himself without a witness. The fact is that God had arranged the miraculous gifts as an aid for a particular purpose; and, when that purpose had been accomplished, He no longer used them.

The Scripture To-day

We now have the Scriptures of the New Testament—the infallible Word of God—as well as the Old Testament which was available even in those early days. And these Scriptures are a sufficient help, together with the Holy Spirit which has continued with the Church and with which it has been our privilege to be blessed.

We should seek to understand the Word of God by careful reading and earnest study, and help each other by regularly meeting to consider a portion, as we do each week.

"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."—Ephesians 1: 18; also Ephesians 3.

17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

That was Paul's prayer for the brethren all through the age, and may well be our prayer for one another in these troubled times.

—A. J.

The Law a Schoolmaster

THE Epistle to the Galatians contains great truths on the Mosaic Law of the highest importance not only to the Galatians, but also to all Christians of every race and time.

This question of the attitude of the believers in Jesus Christ toward the Law had already in the early days of the Church caused much trouble. There had been conferences at Jerusalem, which had discussed this question, and the decision was: "that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles are turned to God."—Acts 15: 19.

Still the Judaizing teachers would not accept this, but sent men with their false doctrines to all the believers—even to the Churches established in Greece and Asia Minor by the zeal of Paul and his companions.

The Mosaic Law was not, as is often asserted, the 10 Commandments and keeping of the Sabbath, and to be divided into moral and ceremonial precepts. The Law was given to the Israelites at Sinai. (Rom. 9: 4, 5.) It is fully set out in the books of Exodus, Deuteronomy, and Leviticus.

The Law was a complete code of laws, showing what behaviour God required of His people. It clearly defined what sin was, and the penalty; which was death. It provided for a priesthood, for sacrifices, for a tabernacle, for fasts, and for a system of sabbaths or rest days and years. Its ritual and its moral code were all detailed clearly and precisely, and they all must be obeyed by them to the last jot and tittle.

Paul (in his letter to the Philippians: 3: 4-6) gives us his standing under the Mosaic Law. He was, "as touching the law, a Pharisee"; and very zealous. And, as "touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." He was then, by his training and learning in the Law, well qualified to speak and to exhort on this subject. In Gal. 3: 24 he sums up—

"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."

But not as we know a schoolmaster, rather, as in those days a servant or slave whose special duty it was to lead his young master to and from school, and oversee his behaviour.

We can readily believe that the father of a youth would be very careful to whom he gave this important task. The servant would be of good character—pious, and one able to influence his young master for good.

So with the Law. Its aim was to instruct those under it in right ways, and bring them eventually to Jesus Christ, the true Teacher. This is shown in Acts 3: 22, 23. Peter quoted from Deut. 18: 15: where Moses foretold of one who should come, who should supersede him. This Prophet, Jesus, they shall hear and obey.

Seeing, then, that Moses himself prophesied of the Messiah to come, we should not be surprised at the passing away of that law. All of its laws on the Temple ritual, its sacrifices and priesthood, were completely annulled when Jesus died on Calvary. As proof, the Veil of the Temple at Jerusalem "was

rent in twain" at the exact time our Lord died.—Luke 23: 45; Mark 15: 38.

This meant that thereafter the holy of holies could be entered by anyone; it was no longer holy, only to be entered by the High Priest after prescribed sacrifices had been offered. At our Lord's death this typical temple service met its fulfilment. God no longer recognised or accepted any sacrifices made under the law, although He still blessed such Jews as followed the law in faith not being enlightened concerning the cross of Christ. John the Baptist pointed to Jesus, and said—"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh [or, beareth] away the sin of the world." Not the sins of the Jew only, but the sins of all members of the race of Adam, Jew and Gentile, who believe when they hear of this great sacrifice on their behalf.

What need, then, of any other sacrifices? True, the glad tidings were not preached until Pentecost, 50 days later. During that eventful period the resurrection of our Lord and Master took place on the 3rd day, and the bewildered disciples were surprised and overjoyed by the wonderful fact of a RISEN Lord.

The rulers and priests heaped heavy burdens on the people, and would not so much lift them with their little finger. They made the law burdensome with small petty rules, and neglected justice and mercy. They knew not the time of their visitation, and so they perished. Still there were some without guile (John 1: 47) who accepted the Lord as the promised Messiah and learned of Him.

At Pentecost and after, these faithful souls received the Holy Spirit, and, under the New Covenant, became members of the Church. (Acts 3: 38, 39.) Later on, the Gentiles also were offered this new way of life, and Cornelius became the first Gentile convert. And he also received the Holy Spirit.

So the Gospel began to go to all the world, as our Lord commanded.

Paul on many occasions had to combat Judaizing teachers and free the believers under Christ from the shackles of those teachers. (Gal. 3: 1.) So also has there been all the way down the need for faithful teachers in the Church to contend for the Faith once delivered to the saints. Long and bitter has been this controversy, but the truth will prevail and triumph.

We can thus see that in the New Heaven and earth there will be no place for the Mosaic law. While indeed the law was good for its purpose, for it brought a sense of sin, Paul likens it to being chained to a dead body, as the Romans used to chain a soldier to a prisoner to prevent his escape. (Romans 7: 24.) The wages of sin is death. There was no escape from death under the law. Only, thank God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us appreciate what He has done for us, and put our trust in Him.

Only brief mention has been made of various essential points, but sufficient has been said, I trust, to encourage any truth seeker to search deeper and in greater detail into this very important subject. By Faith, not by works of the law, is the Christian's salvation (Gal. 5)—

1 Stand fast therefore in the LIBERTY wherewith Christ hath made us FREE, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. —J. S.

Go Ye into all the World

SHORTLY before He was crucified and had been raised from the dead, our Lord had been teaching His disciples that God was His Father, and that He came from above (that is, from heaven), and that the Jews who persecuted were the opposite—"Ye are from beneath [that is, earthy]; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world [or, order of things]."—John 8: 23.

From these words we learn that our Lord was a heavenly Being and not earthy. We read also in 1 Corinthians 15: 47: "The first man [i.e. Adam] is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven."

His mission was to reveal the Father's great love for mankind, as we read in John 3: 16—

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Our Lord came from heaven to fulfil this purpose; the redemption of mankind from sin and death by the sacrifice of Himself. He informed His disciples before it came to pass, as recorded in John 16: 16: "A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father."

The Lord, who is able to read the hearts of every man, knew that the disciples as yet did not understand these words or His great mission, nor yet the benefits and blessings that they would receive through His sacrifice on the cross.

God having raised Jesus from the dead, He was now able to fulfil the promise that they would see Him again. After His resurrection He revealed Himself on several occasions to His disciples. "Afterward He appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen." (Mark 16: 14.) And He gave them his last message (verse 15)—"Go ye into all the world [kosmos], and preach the gospel to every creature."

We are here again reminded of the word "kosmos," which is translated "world" in the New Testament, as explained at the beginning of this Conference.

The text now under consideration, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16: 15), was delivered to the Jewish believers in Jesus. They would interpret this message—go ye into all the "world"—to mean, go to all the Jews in Palestine and also to those Jews scattered abroad among the Gentiles.

In Acts 8: 5 we read of Philip at Samaria, and preaching Christ to the Samaritans: that the people were in accord, and gave heed to his preaching and miracles which he did in the name of Christ; and that many were baptized, both men and women. The Samaritans were a mixed race, and made claim to the worship of the God of Abraham. The community of Samaritans in its origin was constituted chiefly of immigrants from several provinces of Assyria. Some Israelites were deported there, and later on they mingled with the descendants of the Assyrian settlers

and became a motley people with their religion. A temple was erected on Mount Gerizim, in honour of the Holy places in Palestine, and great hatred existed between them and the Jews dwelling at Jerusalem. This therefore shows us clearly that the gospel went not only to the Jewish world, but also to others—in this case, to Samaritans.

Philip was also sent to meet the eunuch—an Ethiopian Jew—who was returning from Jerusalem after attending the passover, and was reading the Scriptures. Philip, being full of the Holy Spirit, attached himself to the chariot, and explained the Scripture which he was reading. He also explained baptism; for the Ethiopian was baptized; which symbolised his consecration and devotion to God's will. Here, then, we see the gospel going to an Ethiopian.

In reviewing his own conversion, Paul gives a most thrilling account of himself and of his hatred against the believers in Jesus. He threatened to slaughter them, and requested authority of the chief priest to go unto Damascus; and if finding any in the synagogues—either men or women—he would bring them bound to Jerusalem. He was stopped on the way when nearing Damascus (Acts 9: 3-5)—

"... and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me."

"And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

However, Saul's reply was good: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

The vision caused him to be blind for three days. Neither did he eat or drink for that time. The result of Saul's conversion was shown in the Lord's words to Ananias—"Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:" (Acts 9: 15.) Again we see that the Lord intended the gospel to go beyond the Jewish "world."

Acts 10 tells about Cornelius. Cornelius was a man endeavouring to worship God. He did not do this according to the way appointed, but had to be shown. And God, who reads the hearts, realised this need and sent Peter to instruct him.

Cornelius was a centurion of the band called the Italian Band. (Acts 10: 1.) The Variorum Bible footnote states that he was probably a Gentile, though a proselyte to Judaism. However, the gospel message had a great effect upon him and his household, for they were all baptized into Christ.

The book of Acts, in referring to the Samaritans, who were converted by Philip's preaching to the Ethiopian Jew, to Saul of Tarsus, and to Cornelius and his household states definitely in each case that they were *baptized* into Christ. The Jews were members of the two-tribe kingdom; namely, Benjamin and Judah; but the gospel went forth to members of other tribes as well.

Barnabas (one of Paul's travelling companions) is an example. For he was not a Jew, but an Israelite—one of the tribe of Levi.—Acts 4: 36.

These examples should be sufficient to show that our text—"Go ye into all the world"—was not limited to the world of Jewry; the "world" included all Israelites, and Gentiles as well, as Peter told Cornelius—"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:" (Acts 10: 34.) And after referring to Christ's resurrection, Peter added—

"To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name WHOSOEVER believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."—Acts 10: 43.

Thus we see, by the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, that they were part of the vast "world" for whom Christ died. We then, who have received the gospel message to-day, will do our part. We will send out the same gospel message—the gospel of the good news of a Saviour who is ready to deliver all who will come unto God by Him. A Saviour not limited to any one nationality, and a God, our heavenly Father, who is still receiving all those that believe in Jesus.

Secular historians have told how the gospel was spread abroad, as the apostolic epistles also testify. Paul sent letters to the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, and Hebrews. And Peter addressed his first epistle "to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," including in his final greeting a church of believers at Babylon, whom he describes as "elected together with you."—1 Peter 1: 1; 5: 13.

Peter's second epistle was addressed "to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ:"—2 Peter 1: 1.

Thus the meaning of the word "world" includes what is expressed in another place as the whole creation (that is, both Jew and Gentile). The apostle Paul wrote: "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."—Romans 8: 22.

THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION

Consequently this command to go into all the world and preach the gospel comes down to our day—to vast continents of people both Jew and Gentile—though all have not as yet heard the preaching. The gospel comprehends not only the ultimate deliverance of the groaning creation, but includes the taking out of a

people for His name during this Gospel age, of which we shall hear later. So that we can truly say with the apostle (Romans 1: 16)—

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek [or, Gentile]."

The apostle has well said that the Gospel Message is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

We who believe now have experienced that power of God in us by His Holy Spirit. And we rejoice to have this privilege of telling out the Gospel, that others may have the joy of seeing Jesus as their Saviour and Deliverer. May we emulate the example of Peter, Philip, Paul, and others, who were zealous not only in preaching it, but also in living it in their daily lives. As one of our favourite hymns which I desire to read expresses it—

More love to thee, O Christ!
More love to thee!
Hear thou the prayer I make
On bended knee.
This is my earnest plea:
More love, O Christ, to thee!
More love to thee!
More love to thee!

Once earthly joy I craved,
Sought peace and rest;
Now thee alone I seek;
Give what is best.
This all my prayer shall be:
More love, O Christ, to thee!
More love to thee!
More love to thee!

Let sorrow do its work,
Send grief and pain;
Sweet are thy messengers,
Sweet their refrain.
When they can sing with me,
More love, O Christ, to thee!
More love to thee!
More love to thee!

Then shall my latest breath
Whisper thy praise;
This be the parting cry
My heart shall raise;
This still its prayer shall be:
More love, O Christ, to thee!
More love to thee!
More love to thee!

—F. R. McK.



A Two-Fold Enlightenment

IN THE first place, there is enlightenment in the sense of education: learning to read and write, etc.—which is a privilege not enjoyed by many people still living on the earth. Not so very many years ago, education had to be paid for. In our day, in the more progressive countries, education is recognised as essential; it is not only quite free, but compulsory.

Education not only enables us to read the news of the world, and gather other useful information. There is something which stands out above all other

benefits of education; and that is, that one is able to read the Bible, in which the Almighty God and our Father has caused to be written many things which He wishes us to know; for our everlasting benefit.

Even in learning the alphabet, the child is exercising his ability to reason things out. As he progresses, his ability to assimilate information increases, and so he goes on the better able to master the harder problems of his education. Which in turn enable him to more or less success in his business vocation, what ever it may be, and he becomes a more useful citizen.

This is as far as the world looks as a rule; and, finally, where possible, social success.

THE BEST EDUCATION

All the knowledge which can be acquired in all the universities of the world can be useful for only a few years. It cannot bring everlasting health and happiness and contentment *and life*. But there is an education which stands out above all the wisdom of this world; and that is the enlightenment of *the truth*.

The word "education" means "systematic instruction;" and here we have it. The most profitable education one can receive is systematic instruction in God's Word, which is truth. As the little child begins by learning the alphabet and learning to count, so the "babe" in Christ begins by learning the foundation truths of the Word. The Apostle Paul told the Jewish brethren:

For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

Meaning to say that a babe cannot eat meat, but can assimilate milk; likewise the babe in Christ receives first the milk of the Word. (Heb. 5: 13, 14.) And the apostle then explains that the "milk" consists of the "first principles."

"Of the doctrine of Christ" the first principles or essentials are repentance and faith toward God. He then goes on (Heb. 6: 1, 2) to enumerate other items, things more difficult to master—

"the doctrine [teaching] of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."

"And this will we do, if God permit."

As a child exercises his senses in school, so the child of God exercises his senses in the school of Christ. As the Apostle goes on to say (Heb. 5)—

14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Meditating on the simple truths he has learned, the babe in Christ develops, and he then is better able to "eat" the "strong meat" of the Word.

THE STRONG MEAT OF THE WORD

As the child of God persists in the attitude of study and in meditation on things learned, he will be rejoiced to realise that the Lord is blessing his efforts with a deeper understanding of "some things hard to be understood," to which the Apostle Peter refers:

"which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."—2 Peter 3: 16.

There are many dear people who love the name of our Lord and desire to do His will, who do not always realise the fact that our Christian "education" should not stop at the A.B.C. stage.

If a child were to "finish" his "education" on mastering the alphabet, how would he be able to read and write? The only way is to go patiently along, learning more and more, if he is to receive any real benefit.

So also God's "little ones" must not be satisfied with the simplest truths, but must if they are to really benefit *push on*, as the Apostle exhorted the Hebrew brethren. Else we, too, shall be in line for

the rebuke he administered to those brethren; who through lack of zeal and interest developed insufficient *reasoning power* to enable them to *grasp the deeper things* he wished to tell them about the Lord Jesus. Paul wrote of Jesus (Heb. 5)—

10 Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are [or, are become] dull of hearing.

12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age [full grown], even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

The Apostle exhorts Timothy to be *zealous in learning*; using the illustration of a workman who has the necessary skill in the use of whatever tools of trade are his, in turning out a finished article of which he need not be ashamed. Not only Timothy, but we as well, must see to it that we are skilful in the use of God's Word, "rightly dividing" it and rightly understanding it; and not "wrest" (distort or pervert) it, to our own loss. If persisted in, the habit of mental laziness will result, to say the least of it, in sorrow and anguish of mind in the future, *when it is realised* what has been lost by carelessness. The apostle goes on to encourage the beloved brethren: being persuaded better things of them; God would not forget their love and labours.—Heb. 6: 9-12.

REASONING POWERS DEVELOPED

We have seen the usefulness of free education in developing the ability to reason things out, sharpened up, as it were. The hard things of God's Word require to be reasoned out, thought over again and again, if we are to get the deep things into our minds and hearts. We are to-day hearing much about a "new world"—very simple when rightly divided. The Greek word "kosmos" meaning "order of things." God's plan of a new government on the earth is simple in itself, yet requires to be studied and thought over, to get and retain the right ideas.

The Lord has, in these latter days, provided not only means of learning to read; but has also provided marvellous printing machines, that His messages to men contained in the Bible may be printed by the million. This is literally being done to-day. His Word is being circulated over the earth in hundreds of languages and dialects. God has caused the *development of facilities for the mass production and distribution of His Word*, not expecting it at the present time to convert all men; nor indeed that every individual will even hear about the wonderful message of love and goodwill contained in it. Another purpose is being served in the present age, since Pentecost, called on the Chart the Gospel age.

Three chief periods of time, or ages, are mentioned in the Apostle Peter's Epistle (2 Peter 3: 6, 7, 13)—"The world [i.e. order of things] that then was," that is, before the flood:

Then "the heavens and the earth which are now;" from the flood to the time we are living in, called "this present evil world." In this order of things, or

world, in which we live, there are three smaller divisions of time, which we know as the Patriarchal Age, the Jewish Age, and the Gospel Age. In each of these periods, God has been carrying out certain preparatory work in readiness for the great programme which is to be carried out in the Kingdom Age of a thousand years.

TAKING OUT A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAME

Just now we desire to speak of what God is accomplishing in the Gospel age—the time now present. We read of this in Acts 15: 12-18—

12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:

14 Simeon [Simon Peter] hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up;

17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

See also Acts 15: 6-9; Matt. 10: 2; Mark 3: 16.

From verse 1 of chapter 15 is shown the difficulty some Jewish members of the early Church had in realising the fact that the Law Covenant had been completely laid aside; had died, in fact, being nailed to the cross.

About this question Paul and Barnabas and others were sent to Jerusalem to discuss the matter with the Apostles and elders.

Three speakers in this assembly are mentioned by name. Peter reminded them of God's choice of himself, by whom the Gentiles were to hear the word of the gospel (verse 7). God making no distinction, but sending the Holy Spirit upon the believing Gentiles as well as upon the Jews, purifying their hearts *by faith* (not works of the law).

James began his discourse (verse 13) by referring back to Peter's statements, though using different wording, and so clarifies what Peter had said about God's acceptance of the Gentiles; explaining that God's purpose was "to TAKE OUT OF THEM A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAME." Careful reading of the Lord's words in Matt. 24: 18-20 is desirable. After telling that "all power" had been given unto Him "in heaven and in earth," Jesus commissioned them to "teach all nations" (Margin . . . or, make disciples, or Christians, of all nations)—not with the idea of converting every individual of every nation; nor even to convert the majority of all nations. But, as the Apostle James under inspiration explains: to take *some out of every nation*; even those who would believe. This has been proven in fact by observation, that by far the great majority have not become followers of the Lord Jesus. Nor have they even heard about Him and how He died for them all; nor of God's great love for His fallen creatures, which prompted His plan for their blessing, extending over some six thousand years or more.—Rom. 10: 13-15; Matt. 20: 28; 1 Tim. 2: 3-6; Rev. 7: 9, 10.

James goes on to quote the prophet Amos (9: 11, 12), which we have read in verses 16, 17. God's purpose being here defined some eight centuries beforehand.

The tabernacle of David which was fallen down was a reference to the "house" or "family" of David. The angel Gabriel, who was sent to tell the virgin Mary of God's great favor to her, said that she would "bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David."—Luke 1: 26-33.

Grateful indeed are we that our loving Heavenly Father has given us enlightenment on this great subject, enabling us to see Jesus and understand the great work He did, and will yet do, for mankind.

—A. K.



The Lord's Parables

THERE is contained in the Bible a number of the Lord's Parables, each of them containing a special message to us all.

The word "parable" is defined in Strong's Concordance as meaning: "a similitude, that is (symbolically) fictitious narrative (of common life conveying a moral), apothegm or adage."

The parables were designed to assist the disciples to understand the changing over from the many ceremonies, commands and prohibitions of the Law Covenant, to the simplicity of the New Covenant. It must always be kept in mind that a parable must never be used as the basis of a doctrine.

In the parable of the wicked husbandmen recorded in Matthew 21: 33-45, the vineyard represents the Jewish nation—"hedged" around with the Law Covenant, and "let out" to the "elders" as husbandmen, to care for it and make returns to Jehovah the Lord of the vineyard.—Isa. 5: 1-7.

At different times the Lord sent His servants, the prophets, to Israel; but they were made light of, and most of them were badly ill-treated; those responsible for the persecutions being the chief priests and elders, so that the returns, or fruits of holiness, could not be gathered from them.

And the final messenger that God sent was His Son, to receive the fruits. Was He received as the Heir? No! Instead of respecting Him and showing mercy and obedience, as well as making amends for the past, they, the chief priests and elders, conspired to kill Him. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."—John 1: 11.

Then there is the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. (Luke 18: 9-14.) The Pharisee had a good opinion of himself, and expressed it to the disadvantage of the publican. But the publican humbled himself by saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

We can see by these two parables the necessity of being humble-minded, merciful, and obedient to our Lord.

PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

Then there are for our instruction the parables of the Kingdom of Heaven. We read in Matthew 13—

31 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

As there is no interpretation given to this parable, one view is based on the thought that the "birds of the air" should be interpreted the same as "fowls" in the parable of the sower (Matthew 13: 4, 19) and that the growth of the mustard seed represents the growth of Christendom and the evil that has lodged in the system.

The other view, which seems to be rather favoured by Luke's record of this parable (Luke 13: 18-20), shows the mustard seed as the kingdom of heaven, and the fowls of the air as the peoples of the earth.

So the Kingdom of heaven will ultimately give shelter to all who, when they know the Truth, turn from sin unto righteousness.

WHEAT AND TARES

The Lord shows (Matt. 13: 24-30) that the Gospel seed was to be sown by the Son of man. The good seed that grew up and bore fruit represents the children of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of the wicked one. Although the good seed flourishes, the tares also flourish, and it is necessary to gather in the tares and keep them separate from the wheat. The wheat is gathered into the barn, but the tares are destroyed.

This parable covers the entire Gospel age, and it is in the harvest—which is the end of the age—that the true difference between them is thus finally demonstrated. The field is the world (kosmos, or order of things) at the beginning of which the seed is sown.

The "good seed," the children of the Kingdom, were sown in the "field;" that is, sent out into the world, by the Son of man Himself, at the beginning of the age; and so throughout the age the Lord has had His people in the world, wherever He has sown them.

Many people may ask. How does one become a child of the Kingdom? And we answer: By acknowledgment of the Lord Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. Matt. 16: 16-18; 1 John 5: 1.

As we are now living very near the end of the

age, we are eye-witnesses of their developments, and the Lord calls upon us to gather out the "wheat." But first the tares were to be bound in bundles to burn them. That gathering of the tares has been progressing for some time. The tares are imitation wheat, and the bundles in which they are tied profess to be wheat. Great organizations exist professing the name of Christ, but in reality teaching serious errors. These bundles are to be destroyed in a great time of trouble. That binding of tares is not the work of the Lord's consecrated people. The truly consecrated are represented by the "wheat." And it is our privilege with His help to join in this gathering together of the true wheat.

Some Christians think the fire which burns the tares means an eternity of torment. But what it really means is that, while the wheat is approved and accepted, the tares are of no use in the Lord's purpose. The "wheat" will be the overcomers who will take part in the thousand years' reign of blessing all the families of the earth. "Tares" (mere imitations) would have no place in that glorious kingdom.

PARABLE OF THE VIRGINS

Then there is the parable of the virgins who were awake, with lamps trimmed and burning, when the bridegroom returned. (Matthew 25: 1-13.) So should Christians take interest in the Lord's second coming, be active in service, and be ready to enter into the Kingdom when the Master calls.

Other parables concern more particularly the work of the Kingdom age. These also are of value to us, for the true knowledge does away with the false teachings of eternal torment, a never-dying soul that must live somewhere in misery if not in happiness. The Lord will punish the wilfully wicked, but He will first see that they have enough light to be judged by.

As we realize all these wonderful lessons, we can show our gratitude to our Lord for the true light that He has given to us, so that we do not walk in darkness. But, by faith, we can strive to attain to the heavenly kingdom. Let us remember Paul's words

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

19 For the earnest expectation of the creature [or, creation] waiteth for the manifestation [or, revelation] of the sons of God.

recorded in Romans 8: 16-19 and earnestly endeavour to be faithful children of God during this Age while the High Calling is still open to all who will come and serve Him.

—G. H.



The World of Angels

AS already shown by previous speakers, there were and are other "worlds" (or, orders of things), distinct from the new "world" still to come, as the Conference topic—"A New World"—suggests. We have also seen that the word "kosmos,"

used by the Apostle Peter in his second epistle, the third chapter, has several shades of meaning, including "orderly arrangement." In John 14: 2, it is translated "mansions." We read, "In my Father's house are many mansions." And a *Variorum* footnote ren-

ders it: "resting places," or "stations." Showing that the idea of "orderly arrangement" is in all these passages.

There have been other arrangements in the history of the world, some governing large numbers and some smaller groups. And perhaps we could go outside the earth's history, and see that there was still another orderly arrangement of large dimensions, to some extent associated with the world order on earth. And that is the world of Angels. And we inquire, When and where did this world (or, orderly arrangement) of angels originate?

CREATED BY THE LORD JESUS

There are a number of references in the Scriptures on this subject. One of them is to the effect that they were created by the Lord Jesus. Colossians 1: 16 says: "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible or invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him."

We also learn that there are vast numbers of heavenly angels. Psalm 68: 17 speaks of many thousands of them. And in Luke 2: 13 they are spoken of as "a multitude of the heavenly host."

In Hebrews 12: 22 they are spoken of as "an innumerable company of angels." Variorum footnote says, "literally, tens of thousands," and the R.V. "innumerable hosts."

The angels are spirit beings of a higher order than human beings. For God said of the angels: "Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." Yet the Son was even higher than they.—Hebrews 2: 7. And 2 Peter 2: 11 says the angels are "greater in power and might" than human beings. They can travel in the air unseen by men, and they have access to the throne of God. Jesus said of the "little ones" that their angels do always behold the face of my Father, which is in heaven.—Matthew 18: 10.

The Lord Jesus, who was the first of God's creation (Revelation 3: 14), was created a Spirit being, with powers far above those afterwards given to the angels of heaven. And far above the powers given to men, who were to live on the earth.—Colossians 1: 17, 18.

The angels in heaven are in harmony with God, and interested in the unfolding of His great plan (1 Peter 1: 12); and they rejoice as they see the work being carried out.—Luke 2: 13, 14.

ANGELS WHO SINNED

But there were some angels who sinned in the time before the Flood.

There is one reference which gives us to understand that at one time the angels were permitted to assist human beings. In Hebrews 2: 5 we read, "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak."

This privilege which was granted to them before the flood was abused by some of them. Instead of assisting human beings to know God and serve Him more faithfully, they degraded mankind. They had the power to take unto themselves human form, and in this position they wrongfully took unto themselves

wives of the daughters of men. (Genesis 6: 2.) This was contrary to God's will concerning them, as we read in Jude 6—

"And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

This was a different punishment from that passed on the human race on account of Adam's transgression: which punishment was death. But of these angels we are able to realize that their punishment is still being carried out.

Being wicked angels, they still continue in wickedness, deceiving many human beings by impersonating those who have died; and also by professing to send messages from the dead to the living. But, be it noted, the seances are always conducted in darkness; thus showing that they are still bound with those chains of darkness under which they were condemned.—Jude 6.

We know this is so. And, although we are not able to see these wicked angels, there is ample evidence that they still carry on their evil deceptions; and there is no doubt about it.

Equally strong is the evidence that they have a leader, for the Scripture associates them with the devil (Matthew 25: 41)—

"everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:"

We see then that in the World of Angels there are both good angels and wicked angels.

THE GOOD ANGELS

But let us dwell more on the good angels and their interest in men.

As angels or messengers they are ever ready to carry out God's commands. We are familiar with the accounts in the Old Testament of them being used to convey messages to men. Abraham, for instance; how he received the promise of a son by the angels who came as travellers and partook of Abraham's hospitality.—Gen. 15: 1-21.

Lot also received a visit from angels, and by them was warned to leave Sodom. (Gen. 19.)

Balaam received a rebuke from an angel. (Numbers 22.) The ass saw the angel, but Balaam did not. And the ass spoke.

THE ANGELS' CHORUS

At the birth of our Lord the angels brought the glorious message of "good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people."

And later, after our Lord had been tempted of the devil in the wilderness without the devil having any success, we read, "and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him."—Matthew 4: 11.

ANGELS AS MINISTERING SPIRITS

The good angels are also interested in the well-being of God's people at this present time; for we read in Hebrews 1—

14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

What a privilege is ours, that the heavenly angels are commissioned to minister, to assist, those who shall

be heirs of salvation. And they are in close touch with our heavenly Father. In Matthew 18: 10 we read—

"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

In verses 2 and 3 of this chapter, Jesus explains who it is that is under divine protection, in that God has sent His angels to minister for them—

2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them.

3 And said, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Those who have humbled themselves in that they have acknowledged themselves as sinners, and have come by faith to Jesus and received forgiveness. As verse

3 puts it, they were "converted"—turned from their old sinful ways to become followers of Jesus. And "their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

God's interest in His people is so great that He has appointed His angels to minister for them. How often have we been diverted from doing or saying things that would have been injurious to ourselves or perhaps others. How often have we been preserved from injury. Do we appreciate the protection that is ours? Yes, as the angels came and ministered to our Lord after the temptation in the wilderness, so they are ready and willing to help us although unseen and unheard. We have the promise: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

—H. S.



Them That Believe in That Day

"When he [Christ] shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."—2 Thess. 1: 10.

IN THESE WORDS the Apostle refers to two classes of persons in connection with our Lord's Second Coming. The first class is composed of the "saints," or holy ones, who shall be the joint heirs with Christ, and shall sit with Him in the throne. In them our Lord shall be glorified. (Rom. 8: 16-18; Rev. 20: 6.) Reading the text without the parenthetic words, it appears that the second class will consist of "them that believe in that day"; that is, *after* our Lord's second coming.

A great many Christians do not yet realise that there will be an opportunity for any to believe after our Lord's return; but the parenthetic words emphasise that the Apostle means just that. He says to the Thessalonians—"because our testimony among you was believed." That is to say: Paul's testimony in Thessalonica was believed in the face of great persecution and terrific opposition. (Acts 17: 1-15; 1 Thes. 1: 6; 2: 14; 3: 1-5; 2 Thes. 1: 3-5.) The fact that this was so is a very good reason for realising that it will be possible, after our Lord's second coming with Satan bound, and no deceptions permitted for the Thousand Years, it will be possible for the people to believe the truth about God and Christ when it shall be made known to them in fulfilment of God's will.—Rev. 20: 1-4; 1 Tim. 2: 3-6; John 1: 9.

Part of the purpose of our Lord's second advent as defined by the Apostle in our text is that He may be admired in that day—"When he shall come . . . to be admired in all them that believe . . . in that day." Yet the word "admired" is scarcely strong enough in this place. The same word is used in Rev. 17: 6, 7, where it is variously translated, "wondered," "admiration," "marvel." It means "to wonder," and only by implication does it mean "to admire." That those who "believe in that day," will admire the Lord cannot be questioned. But they will also "wonder" at Him; they will be amazed and

astounded, when they fully realise all that He has done for them in giving Himself as the Ransom for all.

By far the greater portion of the human race have lived and died in complete ignorance of God and of Christ. The only religion they have known has been some form of demonism, as variously manifested in the many heathen cults. When brought back to their former estate (Ezek. 16: 53-55) and enlightened, they will "wonder" at our blessed Lord, whose Kingdom will then be ruling over all.

Another considerable portion of our race has in this life heard *something* about God and about Christ. But *what* have they heard? They have been told by religious teachers the most extraordinary fables, a goodly portion of Christendom's teaching consisting, as we know, of adaptations of heathen notions.* The truth and simplicity of the Gospel have never been made known to them. When brought to the knowledge of the truth, as they must be "in that day," these also will "wonder" at Jesus Christ. It is a question who will "wonder" more—the heathen who never knew, or the nominally Christian folk who thought they knew.

Not a "Second Chance"

Some have said that we assume too much in thinking of "them that believe in that day" as including those who have died without having been brought to the accurate knowledge of the truth as it is God's will they shall be. (1 Tim. 2: 3-6.) Then they bring against us the unfounded accusation that we teach a "second chance" for salvation. At the risk of being tiresome to our hearers and readers, we find it necessary again and again to deny this hastily made and very unfair misinterpretation of our teaching. Let us say plainly again, that we neither believe in nor teach the so-called "second chance" for salva-

*For details of this borrowing from heathen religions please see the book, "Daniel the Prophet in the Latter Days," pp. 289ff. Particulars of this volume in Book List.

tion. What we understand the Scriptures to teach on this subject is plainly stated in Scripture language; thus—

"That was the true Light, which LIGHTETH EVERY MAN THAT COMETH INTO THE WORLD."—John 1: 9.

"... God ... will have ALL MEN to be saved, and to COME UNTO THE KNOWLEDGE [*epignosis*—'full,' or 'accurate, knowledge'] OF THE TRUTH.—1 Tim. 2: 3, 4.

"For the grace of God hath appeared, BRINGING SALVATION TO ALL MEN, instructing us"—Titus 2: 11, 12, R.V.

Regarding the first of these quotations one may point out the well known facts that but few of earth's thousands of millions have shown the slightest evidence of enlightenment by the True Light, and that vast numbers of them had come into the world and passed out of it again before ever Jesus Christ, the True Light, began to shine. These facts point to the future as the time when most of those that have come into the world are to be enlightened.

(Continued in February Issue)



To Be Like Jesus

WHEN we are little children, we all have some idea what we would like to be when we grow up. Some boys take their father as a pattern, and copy him in what he does; and some girls take their mother as a pattern, and copy her. Others say they want to be great leaders, like Prime Ministers, or some other great man.

Well now, children, there is some One whom we can all copy, both grown-ups and children, and that is our Lord Jesus Christ, by being obedient to Him; because He obeyed God in everything, even to suffering the death on the Cross, and He did this because He loved us.

Read 1 Peter 2: 21, 22, and we see that Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps, or copy Him and be obedient to Him.

You, children, are always first taught by your parents to do what is right, and when you do wrong you are told what will happen to you if you still keep on doing wrong. It is just the same in your Christian life. Jesus has set us an example for us to follow His steps; that is, to do as He did. So we must first learn to obey our parents, and then we will know how to obey Jesus.—Read Ephesians 6: 1.

If anyone does a wrong deed to us, we should not do a wrong deed to them, but we should show them how they should do right.

We cannot live fully a life like Jesus', because He was a perfect man. But we can try to do all things right, to think only good things, to obey Him, and show love to all our friends.—1 John 4: 11, 12.

We must always be honest and always tell the truth, and be obedient to our parents. And in doing this we will please Jesus, because we will be trying to do what He did in His life on the earth. (Eph. 6: 1-3.) This does not mean that when you grow up you can tell stories, or cheat, and not respect your parents, but as you grow older you learn a lot more about Jesus that you could not understand when you were children.—Read also the parable of sowing the good seed.—Matthew 13: 24-30.

So you see, children, that you must *always* do right, and please Jesus, because you love Him. And when He comes again to set up His Kingdom, we will help Him to teach all the people what a Loving Master they have. Jesus wishes all these things for you children, because He first loved us.—Read 1 John 3: 18.

So my message to you is to always tell the truth, obey your parents, and live a good life, and Jesus will know that you love Him and are trying to be like Him, and He will love you and give you more and more favors.

I want to be like Jesus,
My Saviour and my King;
To follow in His Footsteps,
And put my trust in Him.

To have Him as a Pattern,
And do His Holy Will;
To have Him keep me Faithful,
That I may Live with Him.

—G. H.



Jacob's Ladder

(Continued from December Issue)

The Journey and the Dream

Jacob's journey from Beer-sheba to Haran, in Padanaram, was long, and would probably require ten days to a fortnight to accomplish. The end of the first day's travelling found him at the city anciently called Luz, where he camped, taking the stones of the place for his pillows.—Genesis 28: 10, 11.

"And he dreamed," (Verse 12.) In ancient times

the Lord occasionally visited His people in dreams, and so gave them messages, encouragements, and sometimes visions of the future. But since the Scriptures have been completed, He has not communicated with His people by dreams and visions, because His will is fully expressed in His Word. The Scriptures, given by inspiration, are able to make us wise unto salvation, and are so profitable for doctrine, for re-

proof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that by their means, as the sanctifying power of God, the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.—2 Tim. 3: 14-17; John 17: 17.

But in Jacob's day there were no Scriptures, hence this dream; and we shall find that this experience was not for his comfort only, but also for ours, because it forms part of the inspired Record.

In his dream Jacob saw a ladder, whose base was on the earth, and which reached to heaven. On this ladder the angels of God ascended and descended. Above the ladder stood Jehovah, who now repeated to Jacob the promise originally covenanted with Abraham, and repeated to Isaac—

"I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."—Gen. 28: 13, 14, Am. R.V.

This was the Abrahamic covenant. The fact that it was not made over a sacrifice with Isaac and with Jacob shows that these patriarchs were not parties to the covenant, as Abraham, their ancestor, had been. This is further shown in the manner of stating the promise to Isaac—

"Unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore unto Abraham and thy father; and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these lands; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; BECAUSE THAT ABRAHAM OBEYED MY VOICE, AND KEPT MY CHARGE, MY COMMANDMENTS, MY STATUTES, AND MY LAWS."—Gen. 26: 3-5, Am. R.V.

This is clear. God made a covenant with Abraham; Abraham fulfilled the conditions by obeying God's voice, keeping His charge, His commandments, His statutes, and His laws, and BECAUSE ABRAHAM DID SO, the Abrahamic covenant descended to Isaac, Jacob and others, as heirs of Abraham.

Besides reiterating to Jacob the promise covenanted with Abraham, it pleased God to add an assurance for Jacob individually—

"And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."—Gen. 28: 15.

Jacob was much affected by the dream. He realised that the Divine Majesty had drawn near to favour him, and he was over-awed by the experience. Moved with a sense of gratitude, he made a pillar of his pillow, poured oil upon it, and called the place Beth-el, meaning "the house of God." Moreover, in grateful reciprocation for the promise of divine care and protection, Jacob vowed a vow, that if God would keep him, as promised, he would recognise Jehovah as his God, the pillar just erected should be God's house.

"... and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee."—Gen. 28: 22.

Jacob's acknowledgments of God's blessings would thus be something more than mere formalities, and in this he sets an example of systematic giving worthy the consideration of all of God's people, from then until now. How Jacob fulfilled his vow is not stated, but it is fair to assume that he was faithful to it, and

that all through his life he appropriated the promised tenth to the service of God, and the holding up of the true worship of God among the people with whom he sojourned.

Significance of Jacob's Ladder

The well-known hymn, "Nearer, My God, to Thee," contains an allusion to Jacob's dream, and to the angels, but it does not explain the significance of these.

At the beginning of our Lord's ministry, He called several to become His disciples. Among these was Philip. Endued with the true missionary spirit, Philip seeks out Nathanael, and brings him to Jesus. Jesus recognises him as a man of superior attainments, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile, and so speaks of him.—John 1: 43-51.

In answer to Nathanael's question, Jesus explains that before Philip called Nathanael, and while the latter was "under the fig tree," Jesus saw him; "under the fig tree" is taken to mean that Nathanael had a place in his garden for private meditation and prayer, and that he had been in this secluded place before Philip called him. Possibly he had been praying for a clean heart, and that he might be led aright in the momentous times that were then come upon Israel; for John the Baptist, the greatest of the prophets, was exhorting the people to repentance, and was saying that Another, mightier than he, was shortly to come.

When Jesus showed, in His salutation of Nathanael, and His subsequent allusion to the fig tree, His knowledge of Nathanael's inmost thoughts, the "Israelite indeed" was at once convinced, and he immediately confessed—

"Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel."—John 1: 49.

That which convinced Nathanael was the fact that Jesus had supernatural knowledge. It was to Nathanael a proof of Jesus' claims. But Jesus was not alone in being favoured with miraculous powers. Some of the ancient prophets had been so favoured. He transmitted some of His own authority to His disciples, when sending them on a mission (Matt. 10: 1); and, for a time after Pentecost, all believers in Him were similarly favoured, through laying on of Apostolic hands (Acts 8: 14-17); so that, while Jesus was the pre-eminent miracle worker, He was not the only one. In fact, but few of His mighty works were singular to Himself; most of them—even raising the dead—had been done before by some of the ancient prophets, and were done afterwards by the power of God working through the Apostles and disciples after Pentecost.

Miracles are not the greatest things, although they be very marvellous. When the disciples returned from their mission, rejoicing in the great works they had been permitted to do, Jesus said to them—

Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."—Luke 10: 20.

And so, when Nathaniel confessed, after the manifestation of supernatural perception by Jesus—

"Jesus answered and saith unto him, because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.

And he saith unto him, verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter YE SHALL SEE HEAVEN OPEN, AND THE ANGELS OF GOD ASCENDING AND DESCENDING UPON THE SON OF MAN."—John 1: 50, 51.

Jesus the "Ladder"

This is the lesson of Jacob's dream to us. The ladder which he saw was a representation of JESUS, THE MEDIATOR, the one and only channel of communication between heaven and earth, between God and men. He is the "Way," and there is no other, for He said—

"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."—John 14: 6.

This position is more wonderful than that of wonderworker. As a wonderworker, our Lord was not alone; some of the saints have been such, and will be again, in the Kingdom age. But as Mediator between God and men, our Lord is unique. No saint has been, is, or ever shall be, a mediator between God and men—Roman Catholics and others to the contrary notwithstanding—

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

Who gave himself a ransom for all . . ."—1 Tim. 2: 4, 5.

But if the saints cannot be mediators, they can be—even now, and in the future age still more so—ambassadors to beseech men to be reconciled to God by the only possible way, through Jesus, the Mediator.—2 Cor. 5: 18-20; Rev. 22: 17.

The "greater things" which Nathanael and others were to see were not greater exhibitions of the mighty power of God in working miracles through Jesus. Although Jesus did many mighty works, and cited these as evidences of His credibility, yet these were not the "greater things." The greatest thing of all is the fact that Jesus occupies so honourable a position in God's purposes that no man can come to God except through Him.—John 14: 6.

On account of the entrance of sin into the world by the original transgression, the whole race has been constituted sinners, and they are actually sinful, and out of harmony with God. The race is at enmity with God. The constitutional tendency toward sin affects both the bodies and the minds of men, women, and children, so that the race is not only enemies "by wicked works," but "enemies in your mind," fulfilling, in their course of evil, "the desires of the flesh and of the mind." (Col. 1: 21; Eph. 2: 3.) This, which is true of the whole race, is true of every member of it. Therefore, if the whole race needs the friendly offices of Jesus, to act as Mediator between God and them, the same need, precisely, is part of the heritage of each and every individual member of the race. This thought is peculiarly emphasised in 1 Tim. 2: 4, inasmuch as the text does not say that Jesus is Mediator between God and Man (the race as a whole), but between God and men, each individual being dealt with as though he were the only one.

There are those who, contrary to all Scripture, claim that they need no Mediator between God and themselves, and that they never needed Jesus in the capacity of Mediator or Reconciler, because they

think they were always in harmony with God in their minds. Will such say—in view of Eph. 2: 1-3; Col. 1: 21, and their knowledge of their own inward selves—that they never needed a Mediator to effect a reconciliation between God and themselves? Will such get down on their knees, and thank God that they never needed a Mediator—that they are not as other men? Will they say that to God and rise from their knees justified?

The fact that reconciliation between God and all men is possible only through Jesus—and this by God's own arrangement (2 Cor. 5: 19; Acts 4: 12)—is the greatest thing; it is the grand fact for time and for eternity; for whoever, of all our race, knows this, knows the way to life everlasting. Whoever is ignorant of this knows nothing at all as he ought to know. For Jesus, as the "Ladder," and He only, is the connection between God and men.

"Angels" Ascending and Descending

As the heavens were open at the top of the dream ladder, Jacob being at the foot, so is heaven indeed opened to him who humbly waits at the feet of Jesus, recognising Him as the sole means of communication with God. The angels (messengers) of God are continually on the journey, "sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation." (Heb. 1: 14.) But the favours of God come down, and the prayers of saints go up, only on Jesus, the "Ladder."

"Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."—1 Cor. 1: 30, 31.

"For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."—2 Cor. 1: 20.

"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."—1 John 5: 11, 12.

"As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."—John 1: 12.

"Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."—Gal. 3: 26.

"For the Father Himself loveth you, BECAUSE YE HAVE LOVED ME, AND HAVE BELIEVED THAT I CAME OUT FROM GOD."—John 16: 27.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My Name; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."—John 16: 23, 24.

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him."—Col. 3: 17.

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."—John 14: 13.

In view of the necessity of acknowledging the position of Jesus, let us seek that commendation—

"Thou holdest fast My Name."—Rev. 2: 13.

The Blessing

While Jacob lay at the foot of the ladder, Jehovah stood above it, and gave His blessing. As already noted, this consisted of a repetition of the blessing covenanted with Abraham. The fact that this came down the ladder—so to say—is an intimation that Jesus, the Seed of blessing, is also Jesus, the Mediator between God and men, and that the good

things promised in the Abrahamic covenant need Jesus the Mediator for their proper and permanent fulfilment. Jesus the Wonder Worker, blessed many, but He blessed them only temporarily by His miracles. Jesus, the Mediator, is blessing, and will bless many more, and the blessings thus imparted are permanent in their nature—

"For by one offering He has permanently perfected those being sanctified."—Heb. 10: 14, Diaglott.

"I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."—Gen. 28: 15.

What a realisation this should give us of the vital importance of Jesus' position as Mediator between God and men! All the promises of God, especially that covenanted with Abraham, require the Ransom and the Mediation of Jesus, so that the blessings might be something more than transitory.

The "Ladder" in the Kingdom Age

The promise in both its parts was sent down the dream ladder—both to the Seed and through the Seed to all the families of the earth. The whole of the promise will require until the end of the Kingdom age to finish, and therefore our Lord Jesus is now, and will be, the reconciler between God and men, until the great work shall be completed on behalf of "whosoever will" of all the families of the earth, living and dead. By His death He has obtained lordship of both the living and the dead, and the keys of death and hades, from whence He will call forth all that are in the graves, in order that those not previously blessed may receive the opportunities provided for them.—Rom. 14: 9; Rev. 1: 18; John 5: 25-30.

The grand work of the Kingdom age will be to reform the characters of the obedient believers of that time, extending to them the New Covenant blessings

of forgiveness of sins, mercy to their unrighteousness, reformation of character, and adoption into the household of God.—Rom. 8: 21.

Those who become believers in the Kingdom age (2 Thes. 1: 10), will approach God through Christ, and God will bless them in Him.

"He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God."—Rev. 21: 3.

His law having been written on their hearts, and the original likeness to Himself having thus been restored, the Almighty will again have pleasure in the work of His hands—men made in the likeness of God—and there will be no intervention between Him and them.

Having accomplished the work, and all enemies having been subdued under Him, our Lord will cease to act as Mediator between God and men. He will deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all. (1 Cor. 15: 24-28.) This will be the fitting conclusion of the never-to-be-forgotten work of Jesus as the "Ladder," the Mediator or Reconciler between God and men, according to the loving kindness and good pleasure of God, Who has—

"... made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.—Eph. 1: 9, 10.

"For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell; and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens."—Col. 1: 19, 20, Am. R.V.

"HALLELUJAH! WHAT A SAVIOUR!"



From Near and Far

MESSAGES of good cheer and encouragement have come. The Lord is with His people, and is blessing them in His service. One brother, who recently ordered nearly 200 copies of "The Unshakeable Kingdom," writes—

"Am getting out to —, when permitted, and see and talk with people who are anxious to read the booklet. One lady seemed very thankful to get it, and said she would read it all, missing nothing of it.

"The belief of so many, that the human beings are immortal, and that they go either to hell [meaning a place of torment], or heaven, at death, is a great hindrance to the spreading of the truth."

"Not one vital teaching given out in the N.C.A., and Books, and Leaflets, but what has my firm belief in its truth."

No doubt this is so. It was so in the early days of the Church, when the Lord and the apostles had to contend with the traditions of the scribes and Pharisees, and the doctors of the law, who falsely interpreted the prophecies and warned the people against the gospel—or good tidings—of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Opposition to the truth by leading teachers brings a test to every Christian, as to whether they shall or shall not search the Scriptures for themselves, in the light of explanations differing from such traditions as the immortal (never dying) soul and the eternal torment of the unsaved which are a reflection on the love of God who sent His beloved Son for the very purpose of giving His life a ransom, or corresponding price, for all.

The Lord did not suffer eternal torment to redeem men; thus proving that eternal torment was not the penalty. The fact that He DIED to redeem the race shows that death—i.e. loss of life—was the penalty. Consequently, when we read that all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man and shall come forth, the teaching is plain that they are in the graves—in the condition of death, and not in a conscious condition anywhere.—John 5: 25-29.

With the world-war on—with hundreds of thousands of soldiers being slain on the battlefields and innumerable peaceful folk being bombed in their homes—there should be good opportunity to help the bereaved to the correct understanding of what death is,

and of the Lord's assurance that there shall be a resurrection of the dead.

The times call for renewed energy and activity on the part of us who know the truth, and can defend the character of God from the aspersions cast upon it by the popular errors.

Let us each and all resolve, in this opening month of the New Year, to re-dedicate ourselves to the Lord's service with renewed courage and zeal.

It is a long time since I wrote you. None the less my thoughts are often with you and in your work. I have received all the "Advocates," and find great comfort in their teaching. [Annual subscriptions received.] Please forward to the following address your best N.C.A. on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and His promise that we shall live again. My friend has been lately bereaved, and it may bring her comfort.

With very kind regards, and with prayers for the success of the great work you are doing in the name of our dear Lord, Yours very sincerely,—W. A.

"BEHOLD THE MAN!"

John 19: 5

In Pilate's hall He stood arrayed,
Serene and calm, alone, betrayed,
Whose gracious charm had so thrilled men.
They'd brought the deaf, the lame, the blind,
That He by word and touch so kind
Might heal and make them whole again.

One had been brought by demons driven,
And instantly He gave release.
He spoke the word, the bonds were riven,
There entered in God's perfect peace;
The domination gone of sin,
The mighty Jesus had made clean.

Tempted was He, and sorely tried,
Upon the mountain's rugged side.
With all the wealth of earth in view,
He still determined to be true
And God alone to fully serve,
Nor from the path of duty swerve.

He came to do His Father's will
With noble purpose set apart,
And to all righteousness fulfil;
God's holy law was in His heart.
He came to earth His life to give,
To teach poor sinners how to live.

The crowds had thronged to hear Him speak
His living words of truth and love.
They listened as He bade them seek
To know through Him the Father's love,
And guilty sinners lost their fears,
And sorrowing souls there dried their tears.

Once as the sun at even set,
An eager crowd had round Him pressed;
They brought their sick for Him to heal,
And many who were sore distressed
By evil spirits were made free;
His word had brought them liberty.

And many wondrous works were done
By Him who raised the widow's son,
Who to the blind restored their sight
And turned the darkness into light,
Who made the deaf to hear, the dumb to talk,
The helpless paralytic walk.

The sorrows of a world of sin
Had bowed Him with its weight of woe.
He left His Father's home above,
His Father's love to men to show,
To die to win them back to heaven,
That all their sins might be forgiven.

He knew what for Him lay in store;
The awful death, the hour of shame,
When He who kept His Father's law
Would reckoned be of evil fame,
By men of wicked passions cursed;
The hosts of sin would do their worst.

And still His wondrous love was strong
As in an agony He prayed,
While His disciples slumbered on.
His mind was on His Father stayed.
"O Father, if it could please Thee,
This cup remove, I pray, from Me."

And then came victory as He saw
A sinning world won back to God.
The sweat of blood, the heavy groan,
The cruel death that would atone,
Were all forgotten in that hour
Of anguished prayer and heaven's power.

That hour in dark Gethsemane
Our Saviour prayed for you and me,
And won the glorious victory
To make salvation full and free.
That He who never had known sin,
Might have our guilt all laid on Him.

And then He rose, submissive still,
"Not Mine be done, My Father's will;"
For there could be no other way
The heavy debt of sin to pay,
Heaven's holy justice to suffice,
Himself the priest, the sacrifice.

—A. E. THORPE.

—SINCE OUR LAST ISSUE

EVERYWHERE people are looking for "signs." The nations are watching one another to see which side they lean to in the present world conflict. In September, '41, the "Argus" correspondent in Bagdad wrote of the dissatisfaction of the Iranians (Persians) with their Shah and his government. That dissatisfaction continues.

THE "UNITED Nations" against the "Axis" is a brief way of describing the main antagonists in the present "world war"; the former including 26 nations, of which the British Empire and the United States are the chief. Mexico was slow in taking a stand. And only now (in January, 1943) are the Governments of South America seeing the necessity of taking a stand one way or the other, since Japan threatens the western coast of South America as well as the states of California, Oregon, and Washington in the United States, with Alaska in the North, and also Canada with its extensive seaboard, besides the Islands in the Pacific belonging to U.S.A. and Canada.

THE LORD'S CHILDREN are interested in these conflicts among the nations chiefly because the Lord predicted a time of trouble such as never was which should precede the setting up of His Kingdom.—Matt. 24; Luke 12.

THE BOOK of Revelation is being eagerly studied because it speaks of vials of God's wrath poured out upon the nations. The reasons for His wrath are given, with the assurance that the faithful believers will be chosen out to reign with Christ, under whose feet all opposition will be subdued.

ANOTHER result of the present world conflict has been the preparation of a joint statement by representatives of the Church of England and the Free Church (i.e., other Protestant denominations) as follows, issued Monday, January 4, 1943—

CHRISTIAN FAITH OUTLINED

LONDON, Monday, AAP

"A statement of Christian belief," issued jointly by the Archbishop of Canterbury and Rev. Dr. J. S. Whale, Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council, outlines a Christian faith "to meet what we believed the real need." The statement occupies a column of "The Times" in small type.

"It is generally acknowledged that there is among our people—as gathered in military camps and elsewhere—a widespread ignorance of what the Christian faith is, and failure to see it as an intelligible, coherent view of life," the statement says.

"Christians find in the whole Bible an interpretation of the world and its history, which they try to work out in thought and conduct." The signatories offer suggestions as a basis of Christian co-operation in a variety of fields.

Affirming belief in the Incarnation and in Christ's Divinity, the statement declares that Christianity is not only a form of teaching about life, but a source of power to live by that teaching. "We believe that the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ was nothing less than God's own redeeming presence and purpose actively manifested in historic times; that in Him God the Son became man, perfectly human, yet without sin or self-centredness; that He lived among men, disclosing in a human life that Holy love which is God's nature."

ETERNAL KINGDOM

"We believe that the Kingdom of heaven, which Christ proclaimed and embodied, will be known in perfection only in eternal life, for which life here is preparatory, but that it is our duty to live here and now as citizens of that kingdom; that God is at work in the world to ends which must necessarily transcend this world and all human experience here, but that we are called to work with Him in obedience, trust, and love for realisation of His purpose on earth. This means we must seek first God's kingdom and His justice, not our own interest and comfort, and try to make 'love our neighbour' the rule of all our actions."

The Deficiencies of this Statement are manifest (or, should be) to all who understand God's purpose to set up His Kingdom over all the earth and to bring back multitudes of the dead to be instructed under the rulership of that Kingdom. Readers interested to look further into this subject are invited to send for the special issue of this Journal entitled, "The Unshakeable Kingdom," price 1/-; or loaned free to the interested unable to purchase.

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and Kingdom Herald

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The New Covenant Advocate

— and —

Kingdom Herald

VOL. 34.

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, FEBRUARY 1, 1943.

No. 11.

From Far and Near

MANY of the places that are "Far" by number of miles have been brought "Near" within living memory. The increase of knowledge referred to by the prophet Daniel, which was to take place in the "last days," has had much to do with this bringing "near." And, conversely, the bringing "Near" has furthered the increase of still more knowledge of those formerly "Far" places. Australian newspapers and magazines have been very enterprising. And, of course, the fact that the "Common" or "State" school system of education has given to nearly everyone in English speaking countries the ability to read enables every one to profit by this newspaper and periodical spread of knowledge.

That is, if they are willing to make use of those facilities.

A letter received in November from a friend in the U.S.A. expresses it thus—

Time passes, and it is nearly Christmas time. Best wishes for a happy one, and a cheerful and bright New Year.

We are all feeling more cheerful now, because of the reverses of the Axis powers. A peaceful nation like the U.S. is at first unprepared for sudden and treacherous aggression. But now the results are showing of our almost incredible speed-up in making tanks, planes, other war equipment, and training men.

In helping the British, or, I should say, in co-operating with them in clearing North Africa and re-opening the Mediterranean, our forces are now doing valiant service. And thanks to the Russians for holding our common foe in check under the most frightful conditions. But it will be a long time ahead before the war is ended; for this time we do not want another war in 25 years.

Australian customs, and plant life, and many other features are often the subject of articles in our newspapers. Certainly this war has been a great lesson in geography. Names vaguely remembered from school days become alive. Those far away islands in the South Seas, with the romantic haze about them to stay-at-homes, how close to us they seem now. When we read about the terrible heat and insect plagues of some of them, they do not seem so romantic.

Like the other countries, we have had to do some rationing. Some materials are taken from civilian use for the war industries, and it takes a mighty lot of food for a large

army. Our boys get wonderful meals, well balanced to contain all elements needed by the body. Rationing is the best way for the civilians, then all share equally.
—, U.S.A.

IN sending a greeting from Australia, we are glad to be able to say that this world-wide increase of knowledge on secular things is true also of spiritual things: or—perhaps we should say—knowledge of what God's purposes are in permitting, and perhaps expediting, the present world conflict. The time is drawing nearer for the setting up of God's Kingdom over the earth, for which our Lord taught us to pray: Thy kingdom come, **THY WILL BE DONE**, on earth as it is in heaven. How this Kingdom is to be brought about is explained in the book "Bible Talks for Heart and Mind," which we recommend all interested to have on their bookshelf for their own information and to loan to inquiring friends.

"Hark! ten thousand harps and voices
Sound the notes of praise above;
Jesus reigns and heaven rejoices;
Jesus reigns, he rules in love.

"See, he comes to take earth's throne;
Soon he'll rule the world alone:
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!"

HEAVENLY TRUTH

Praise to Him, by whose kind favor
Heavenly truth has reached our ears;
May its sweet, reviving savor
Fill our hearts and calm our fears.

Truth, how sacred is the treasure!
Teach us, Lord, its worth to know;
Vain the hope, and short the pleasure,
Which from other sources flow.

What of truth we have been hearing,
Fix, O Lord, in every heart;
In the day of thine appearing
May we share thy people's part.

What this Journal Stands For

AS its name implies, this monthly journal, the "New Covenant Advocate," is an Advocate of the New Covenant.

(1) An "advocate" is one who espouses a cause, or takes the part of another. This journal espouses the cause of, and works in behalf of, the New Covenant. We heartily recommend the New Covenant to the consideration of all truth seekers, and of all who desire to flee from sin and to serve the Lord.

(2) The New Covenant is that arrangement which God has instituted, whereby it becomes possible for Him to enter into relations with men formerly alienated from Him by sin.—Heb. 8: 12.

(3) In order to bring about an understanding between Himself and the condemned sinners, it is necessary to employ a mediator, or go-between. Having condemned mankind to death, God could not justly and consistently alter the sentence except on some suitable basis of readjustment.—Gen. 2: 17; 3: 19; Rom. 3: 9, 26; 5: 12, 17, 19; Eph. 2: 1-3; Col. 1: 21.

(4) It was for this reason that God sent His Son to lay the foundation for reconciliation, by the sacrifice of that beloved Son on the Cross. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." He "sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4: 9, 10.) "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5: 8.) "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 3: 11.) See also 1 Cor. 15: 3, 4.

(5) The basis of readjustment being established, it can be said that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. . . ." (2 Cor. 5: 18, 19.) That is, Christ does the reconciling as the representative of God; first He gave His life a ransom for all, thus becoming the Owner of all. And since then He has occupied the office of Mediator between God and the "men" for whom He gave the ransom or corresponding price.

(6) Hence Christ is the Mediator of the New Covenant. As such, He occupies a definite official position; and whoever would approach the Father on any matter whatsoever must necessarily do so through the Son. As He said, "no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." For the Father "hath committed all judgment [that is, all authority to serve as judge] unto the Son."—John 14: 6; John 5: 20-23.

(7) In ancient times an agreement or covenant between men was binding when made over a sacrifice. God recognised this custom in connection with the covenant with Abraham. (Gen. 15: 8-13.) The Law Covenant between God and Israel was ratified over a sacrifice. (Exod. 24: 3-8; Heb. 9: 18-20.) Similarly, the New Covenant was ratified with blood—the blood of Jesus. (Heb. 9: 16—here "testator" should be "covenant-victim.") "For this is my blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."—Matt. 26: 28; Mark 14: 24; Luke 22: 20; 1 Cor. 11: 25.

(8) As Mediator, or go-between, Christ reconciles God to men, and men to God. This is an individual work, each individual being reconciled separately, after having first accepted the Mediator as his spokesman. The Mediator does not act, except for those who desire Him to do so. (John 5: 40; Matt. 11: 28-30.) One so reconciled is considered as being under the New Covenant, to participate in its benefits.—John 14: 6; Heb. 2: 1-3; 2 Cor. 5: 20; 3: 3-18.

(9) Christ's mediatorship is better than Moses' was, and the New Covenant is a much better one than that the Jews laboured under, for it is established upon better promises. (Heb. 8: 6.) It is by means of His office of Mediator, and by the instrumentality of the New Covenant, that our Lord, who is the Seed of Abraham, is enabled to fulfil the promise, and bless all the families of the earth. (Gen. 12: 1-3; 22: 15-18; Gal. 3: 16.) Those who believe in Him, and so become God's children, thereby become Abraham's seed or children. (Gal. 3: 26-29; Eph. 1: 5.) "and heirs according to the promise."

(10) A great benefit which men enjoy under the New Covenant, after the first reconciliation and forgiveness of sins, is to have the Mediator act as their Advocate and Intercessor if and when they sin. (1 John 2: 1, 2; Heb. 7: 24, 25.) Another benefit is to have the will of God written on the mind and heart. (2 Cor. 3: 3; Heb. 8: 10.) We further read—"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"—Rom. 8: 32.

(11) Another special benefit is to receive the Holy Spirit, as a token that sins are forgiven and reconciliation made. (Acts 2: 38; Eph. 2: 13-18; Heb. 10: 15-17.) "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access" into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. . . . And hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us." (Rom. 5: 1-5.) The Holy Spirit thus becomes also a seal of sonship; and, being shed abroad in the heart, enables the believer to cultivate the Christian graces.—Rom. 8: 14-16; 5: 3-5; Gal. 5: 22-25; Eph. 5: 9.

(12) The Holy Spirit is also a Guide into all truth; it brings to remembrance things previously learned, and shows "things to come." (John 14: 26.) The Holy Spirit sanctifies the believer (2 Thess. 2: 13), setting him apart to a holy life. The Word of truth received into a good and honest heart is the mode used by the Spirit to that end. "Sanctify them by [or, through] thy truth: thy word is truth."—John 17: 17.

(13) The Holy Spirit is, furthermore, "the earnest of our inheritance. . . ." (Eph. 1: 13, 14; 4: 30.) It is like a seal, or brand, indicating that this believer belongs to the Lord. (2 Tim. 2: 19.) It is also like a first payment in a contract, a bond

that all will be paid; or, like the first fruits of an orchard, an evidence of more good things to follow.

(14) The inheritance itself is called "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4: 17), we "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5: 2), "the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. 2: 14.) To be with and like Him.—1 John 3: 2; John 14: 3.

(15) The inheritance consists of more than personal glory; it includes the holding of a definite position of responsibility and trust—to sit on thrones (Matt. 19: 28), to be "kings and priests," or "a kingdom and priesthood" (Rev. 1: 6; 20: 6; Rev. 3: 21), to judge men and angels (1 Cor. 6: 2, 3), to shiver the nations (Rev. 2: 26, 27), to participate in giving the blessings of light, knowledge, and opportunity to all the families of the earth.—Rev. 22: 17; Rom. 8: 17-21.

(16) This fullness of their inheritance the saints receive at the Second Advent of Christ, when the sleeping saints are raised, and the living saints changed. (1 Thess. 4: 14-17; 1 Cor. 15: 51, 52.) Then shall they appear with him in glory.—Col. 3: 4; John 14: 3.

(17) From the above the relations existing between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are seen—

God over all, the great First Cause, the Supreme Ruler, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.—Isa. 66: 1, 2; Acts 7: 49, 50; Rom. 11: 33-36; John 20: 17; 1 Peter 1: 3.

Jesus Christ, His Son, who was with Him in the beginning, by whom all things were created and made (John 1: 1-3; Col. 1: 16), who came to earth to taste death for every man (Heb. 2: 9; Phil. 2: 8), and who was raised from the dead: Lord and Judge, King and High Priest over all for whom He died.—Acts 2: 36; 5: 31; 10: 42; 17: 31; Rom. 14: 9; 1 Tim. 6: 15, 16; Heb. 5: 5-10.

The Holy Spirit—the power or influence of God, in ancient times used variously, but since Pentecost sent upon the Church to be an active power in the believers.—Acts 2: 33; Rom. 8: 9-11.

(18) The Purpose of God to send His Son into the world to redeem men from sin and death, while understood between Father and Son from before the foundation of the world (John 17: 4-8, 24; Rom. 8: 19-22), was not put into operation until near the end of the Jewish age, at the time and in circumstances foretold in the Prophets. (Matt. 1: 22; 2: 5, 6; Isa. 7: 14.) Himself without sin, miraculously born of the Virgin, Jesus was the Seed of Abraham through whom all nations should be blessed. He was born King of the Jews, of the house of David, and was accepted by the people at His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. But His mission involved His death as the sacrificial Lamb, as the atonement for sin, as the ransom for the whole race. Not until these important offices had been fulfilled, and He had been raised from death to the Father's right hand, could the "times of restitution [or, reconstitution] of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began" be brought in. (Acts 3: 21, 22.) The Greek word rendered "restitution" in A.V., and "restoration" in R.V., means **reconstitution**; a rearrangement by which the throne of David was established in the heavens (at Christ's ascension) instead of in Palestine. From heaven the terms of salvation under the New Covenant were promulgated; the Lord Jesus revealing to the apostles the spiritual nature of the call of the Gospel age (Heb. 1: 1-9; 2: 3-9), the joint heirs with Christ to be made like Him (spirit beings), and see Him as He is, and reign with Him.

For centuries Christians have been praying for the establishment on earth of the Kingdom—"Thy Kingdom Come." Jesus promised the disciples that they should be rulers in that Kingdom, called also "a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."—Matt. 6: 10; 19: 28; 2 Peter 3: 13; Rev. 21: 1.

(19) The punishment pronounced on our race on account of sin was death. (Gen. 2: 17; 5: 5; Rom. 5: 12.) But Christ died for all, and became Lord and Owner of all. He has the keys of hell [sheol, hades] and of death, and will shortly open them to release the sleeping ones. (Rev. 1: 18.) The dead have not been either in heaven or in torment. (Acts 2: 29, 34; John 3: 13.) They have simply been waiting the voice of the Lord, and when He calls they will come forth. (John 5: 28, 29; 11: 25, 26.) That hour is near.—Rev. 11: 15-18.

(20) With the introduction of the Kingdom comes the time for the resurrection of the dead, both the just and unjust, for all the dead, small and great, must stand before that throne. (John 5: 28, 29; Acts 24: 15; Rev. 20: 12.) Christ as Judge delivers the people from their oppressors of all sorts, and blesses them with peace, truth, and every other blessing. He will be God's instrument to wipe tears from off all faces. (Isa. 9: 6, 7; 25: 8; Rev. 21: 4.) And the reigning saints will assist Him in that great and beneficent work. The incorrigible will be destroyed. (Rev. 21: 8.) The parable of the Sheep and the Goats, distinctly said to refer to the Kingdom Age, gives the reason for their rejection and condemnation. (Matt. 25: 31-46.) All creation will then join in glad praise to God. Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.—Rev. 5: 11-14; Phil. 2: 9-11.

(21) Then the end, when Christ, having accomplished His prescribed work, will deliver up the Kingdom to God, that God may be all in all.—1 Cor. 15: 24-28.

Many more passages might be cited in confirmation of the above statement of what this Journal stands for. Many other details might also have been added. But if readers desire to spend pleasant evenings together or alone, they will find both knowledge and encouragement, as well as stimulation of their spiritual life, by searching out these texts and others confirmatory, and filling in the details of God's glorious purpose. The more we know of Him the more constrained are we to join in the angels' song—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."—Luke 2: 14.

*The words "by faith" are omitted from verse 2 by ancient MSS.

A Lake of Fire

(Conference Addresses continued)

EVERY village, town, and city which takes any pride in its upkeep and beautification necessarily has a rubbish heap. It is also necessary to burn all that is not salvable to prevent infection from decaying matter.

Modern cities have incinerators for reducing to ashes the rubbish and waste brought in by the street collectors from the cans and bins in which the citizens place their refuse.

It is also to be noted that at Jerusalem all animals offered on the altars were first slain. Nothing alive was cast out with the parts not wanted. All waste was burned, and thus the people were preserved from infection.

To Moses the Lord gave particular directions concerning the preparation of animals for sacrifice upon His altar. Included in these was the arrangement of a place outside the holy precincts where the hide, flesh, and refuse were to be burned with fire to destroy them.—Leviticus 8: 17; 16: 27.

In Isaiah 5: 24, fire burning stubble, and flame consuming chaff, are given as illustrations of God's judgments. This does not mean to say that God will burn the people with literal fire. It means that they shall be destroyed by His judgments as effectively as chaff is destroyed when cast into the fire.

Such judgments did come upon Israel when their land was invaded and they were taken captive by the nations. One of the greatest captivities was that to Babylon, and from that captivity God subsequently delivered them.

It is inconceivable that a God who prohibited cruelty of every kind, and who provided for the humane treatment of the animals to be sacrificed on His altar, should have a place prepared in which all men, women, and children who are unconverted should be kept alive to be tormented forever and ever.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16: 19-31) is often quoted as proof that there is such a place of everlasting torment; but rightly understood it teaches nothing at all like that.

A careful consideration of the passage and its context shows that the Lord gave the parable as an illustrative story of warning to the scribes and Pharisees. The rich man and Lazarus represented two classes among the Jews at the time of our Lord's ministry. The Lord said (verse 16),—"The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, . . ."

John the Baptist pointed out the corrupt teachings of the scribes and Pharisees. In our Lord's words, just quoted, Jesus referred to John as marking the separation between the Jewish kingdom and law on the one hand, and the Kingdom of God on the other (Luke 16)—

16 The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth unto it.

The parable was then given as a warning that those scribes and Pharisees would be put out of their position in God's favor, and the repentant and believing

"publicans" and "sinners" would be received.

Hell and the Death State

We are aware that this teaching is not the one usually drawn from the parable, many believing it to be strong Scriptural support for the teaching of eternal torment. They lay particular stress on verse 23—

"And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments," . . .

The word "hell" as used here is a translation of the Greek word "hades." We have seen before that "hades" is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word "sheol"—which is frequently used in the Old Testament; and that both of these words mean the "grave," or the "death state."

The Scriptures clearly indicate just what the state of the dead is—"the dead," we are told, "know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten." "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest."—Ecclesiastes 9: 4-6; 10.

What is a Parable?

What we must have clearly in our minds is, that during His ministry the Lord spoke many parables; and examination shows them to have been the use of ordinary things and circumstances to illustrate moral (sometimes, spiritual) truths. He taught as One with authority. He was well versed in the Scriptures, and besides that He had personal knowledge gained while He was with the Father before He came to earth.—Matt. 7: 29; John 5: 27-47.

The story of the Rich Man and Lazarus is a parable, and the popular creeds simply give a false interpretation to what is admitted to be a parable.

We are told that the rich man and Lazarus were real persons, and that the whole passage is as literal as these two persons. While not desiring to doubt the sincerity of those who hold this view, we must at the same time point out the absurdity of it.

If this passage is *literal*, then in order to get to heaven we must be beggars, full of sores. If, on the other hand, we are rich and live well, then we are doomed to eternal torment. Is that the good news of the gospel?

Furthermore, if this passage is to be taken literally, then "Abraham's bosom" must be taken literally. If Abraham and his bosom are literal, what a large place that bosom must be if there is to be room for the saved multitudes!

The reference to Abraham's bosom shows this parable to be a figurative

Warning to the Pharisees

And not a creed for the Christian Church. We have seen that the word translated "hell" is *hades*, meaning the grave, or death state. The grave cannot be a state or place of eternal torment, for it is to be destroyed: "O grave, I will be thy destruction." Hosea 13: 14.

The Parable then, cannot be taken literally. It is

a word-picture given by our Lord to express the fact that the scribes and Pharisees would lose their then prominent position—would, as it were, die to that position. They would, however, still live on and experience the condition of alienation from God because of their rejection of Jesus the Messiah.

Whereas many poor publicans and sinners would see in Jesus the Saviour sent from God, and would believe; and would consequently be given a place among the faithful believers—such as Abraham.

This truth was expressed to the Galatians, many of whom were Gentiles; among whom Jews lived, and worshipped in their own synagogues (Gal. 3)—

"And if ye be Christ's [i.e. if ye belong to Christ], then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."—Galatians 3: 29.

A New Order of Things

All this would mean a new world to the believing publicans and sinners, as well as to believing scribes and Pharisees and others of that nation. The torment of the flame and the fixing of the gulf referred to the present life of those scribes and Pharisees. Their nation was to be deprived of much of the liberty enjoyed under the Cæsars.

History tells us of the overthrow and destruction of Jerusalem and much of the temple in A.D. 70. We know how the Jews lost their nationhood, and for the past nearly nineteen hundred years have been scattered among all nations.

The Gospel Triumph

But the gospel teaching would go on. The promise made to Abraham was to have its fulfilment.—Galatians 3—

8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before [or, more literally—"preached beforehand"] the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

The promise was several times repeated to Abra-

ham, and on one occasion was confirmed by an oath—"In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."—Genesis 22: 1-18.

Jesus the Seed of Promise

We know that God's word will not return unto Him "void," or empty (Isaiah 55: 11), and we cannot therefore think that this promise to Abraham will be unfulfilled, even in part.

Already an important step has been taken in the carrying out of the promise, in the sending of Jesus, for He is the Seed in whom the fulfilment of the promise rested.

Thus the world—the "*kosmos*"—of Judaism, with its Law Covenant, came to an end; and the new world—the new "*kosmos*"—or order of things in Christ Jesus with its New Covenant has taken its place as God's chosen method of calling out and instructing those who would be heirs with Christ of the Abrahamic promise.

So at the end of the Gospel age another testing time has come. The Church is called the New Jerusalem, and outside is a "lake of fire" (the second death), in which the wilfully perverse will be destroyed.

The second death is the penalty now held out as a warning to all who hear the Gospel and wilfully sin against it.

But—while that is the warning—we have the promise on the other hand—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Also Rev. 3: 21—To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

"Truth, how sacred is the treasure!

Teach us, Lord, its worth to know;

Vain the hope, and short the pleasure

Which from other sources flow."

—H. S. W.

Chosen to Salvation

"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." "And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ."—2 Thess. 2: 13, 14; 3: 5.

Salvation to What?

SALVATION has always two aspects, which may be termed the "from" and the "to." The estimation of the benefit of salvation is not only in what a person has been saved from, but also in what he has been saved to.

Thus the sole survivor of a wreck who lands safely upon a desert island and then dies a lingering death from starvation may be regarded as unfortunate in being saved from the wreck. If, however, a prince were taken prisoner by enemies, and some of his father's soldiers rescued him, and he afterward became king and had a prosperous reign, the salvation in his case may be said to have been a blessing to him, both in what he was saved from, and in what he was saved to.

Viewed in these two aspects, the salvation which we are considering—the "salvation" to which the brethren are "chosen"—may be truly stated as a great blessing. We have already been told what we are saved from, and now we are to turn our thoughts to what we have been saved to.

Attention has been drawn to the previous offer of salvation to the Jews through a perfect conformity to the Law Covenant. The present offer through Jesus Christ did away with the former; and, being based on faith in Christ, it became possible for men to attain to salvation—

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; By whom also we have access by faith unto this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."—Rom. 5: 2, 3.

Saved to Knowledge and Holiness

The Christian is therefore saved to a knowledge of present freedom from sin; and that knowledge, through the leading of the Holy Spirit, creates a desire to conform to the spiritual law of the gospel which is necessary to salvation—"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? . . . But now being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."—Rom. 6: 16, 22.

Saved to Freedom and Service

Freedom from the serving of the law brings the obligation of service to Jesus Christ, as just stated. This is a necessary adjunct to faith. As expressed by James (2: 17, 18)—"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works."

The call of Christ to His followers for service is, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world [or, age]. Amen."—Matt. 28: 19, 20.

Saved to Fruit in the Character

He also assured a blessing to the poor in spirit (the humble and the meek), the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, and those who suffer persecution for His name's sake. (Matt. 5: 2-11.) The doing of these things is not the following of the will of the natural man, but the conquering of one's own nature in doing the will of Jesus Christ.

Paul contrasted the life of the Christian with that of the worldly man when he wrote—

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another."—Gal. 5: 22-26.

To show these fruits in one's conduct towards others requires prayer for guidance, and much meditation. The Christian must examine himself daily to enable him to conform his life to the will of God, and he must further endeavour to understand God's will regarding the kingdom into which the Christian has entered. To accomplish this he must do as Paul exhorted Timothy to do when he wrote—"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."—2 Tim. 2: 15.

From the texts examined it will be clearly understood that those who accept the salvation offered through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ are saved to serve Him as ambassadors of His kingdom, to spread its truths, and by their lives to show forth its reforming influences upon the hearts of men, so that they may act in accord with the injunction—"Let

your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."—Matt. 5: 16.

Saved to an Eternal Weight of Glory

All who try to do the will of God will find, however, that they have to endure experiences which are not pleasing. In this is fulfilled the words of Christ when He said—"In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16: 33.) But the persecuted and suffering Christian has the assurance of Paul that the tribulation is infinitesimal compared with the reward offered for faithful service—

"For 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, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."—2 Cor. 4: 17, 18.

This "eternal weight of glory" is the great gift to be given to those who are faithful unto death in their service to Christ. As we have been told, death comes to all, whether Christian or otherwise, for all die in Adam; or, in other words, because of Adam's sin, they being his children. (1 Cor. 15: 21, 22.) But they are not to be left in death. Confining our present thoughts to the Christian, we have the promise: "be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—Rev. 2: 10.

Saved to Everlasting Life

The Christian must therefore be prepared to pass through death before receiving that which is to be obtained through salvation in Jesus Christ. The promise of being raised from death is distinct. Jesus said—

"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." (John 11: 25, 26.) "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."—John 6: 40.

So it is clear that the follower of Jesus Christ has the promise of being raised from the dead to everlasting life. This salvation then is superior to any other salvation which has been enjoyed by people who in this life have been saved from some dangerous illness or position; because while the enjoyment of their salvation lasted only for the rest of their natural lives, during which time other troubles would intrude, this new life after death is to last for ever.

Saved to Perfection

The second standpoint from which this promised life may be considered is its perfection as compared with our present life. We have all had our sorrows, our pains, our disappointments, and weariness. What a joyful contrast to these human sufferings is contained in the following words—

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."—Rev. 21: 4.

While these words in the Revelation are used to express the salvation which all shall receive who will

be obedient in the next age, after the nations are brought back from the dead, they are equally applicable to those saved out of the present age. For them the new life holds no pain, sorrow, or death.

Saved to Incorruptibility

The Christian's new life after death will be incorruptible, as shown by these words: "for the trumpet of God shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (1 Cor. 15: 52.) This change will be to a heavenly body, as shown by the Scriptures: "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."—1 Cor. 15: 49; 1 John 3: 2.

The promise of being like Christ is indeed great, for of Him the following words are written—

"Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto: whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen." (1 Tim. 6: 16.) "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."—Phil. 2: 9-11.

He is also referred to in Rev. 19: 16 as "King of kings and Lord of lords." His position is, then, greater than any earthly king has had, for He is their King and their Lord.

Saved to Sonship

Viewing Christ in His exalted position, it is most encouraging for the Christian to read the following words—

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of

adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."—Rom. 8: 14-19.

Saved to be Rulers and Blessers

The promise here is that the followers of Christ in the present age shall take part in His glory, and that the creature—or, as we understand this word, the "creation," that is, the whole of mankind, waits for these joint-heirs with Christ to be made manifest. When they are made manifest, they shall be ruling with Christ on His throne. He promised a throne to each of His twelve disciples. (Matt. 19: 28.) Paul wrote—"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. 6: 2, 3.) Christ's words to us are—"I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."—John 14: 2, 3.

Having considered these words, out of the many which may be quoted from the Scriptures to show the wonderful salvation offered to those who follow Christ, may we be encouraged to go on to the end of our journey, placing Christ first in all things, and with our eyes and hearts fixed on the goal for which we are striving. Let us be encouraged by the firm faith of Paul who, contemplating this glorious salvation for himself and us, expressed himself in these words—

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."—2 Timothy 4: 8.

—R. T.



Them That Believe in That Day

(Continued from January Issue)

In regard to the second quotation, one can see that since it is God's will that all men shall come unto the accurate knowledge of the truth, our response must be "Amen! Let God's will be done! God speed the day! Why should any one think differently?"

Respecting the third of these quotations, one can see in it at least a partial explanation why the first two have not yet been fulfilled. The grace of God is truly "bringing salvation to all men." This grace of God "hath appeared," but as yet its operation is limited to "instructing US." Who are "us"?

Answer: The US are the people whom God is taking out from among the nations for His Name, according to prophecy and the explanation given in Acts 15: 14-18. This is the class of "saints" in whom the Lord is to be glorified for His great grace in exalting them to joint heirship with Himself, while those

who have not been enlightened in the past will "wonder" at Him with the greatest amazement when, after being enlightened, they "believe in that day."

We trust that what has just been said makes clear that, in pointing out that the opportunity of most men for salvation is to come in the future because they have not been enlightened in the past, we are not teaching "a second chance." It is one thing to say—"you are to be fully instructed next term, and will then have to pass examination." It is quite another thing to say—"You were instructed and examined in a former term; you will have to go through it *again* next term." The latter statement we emphatically deny: the former illustrates what we understand from the Scriptures will be the experience of most men. They will be fully instructed and will have to pass an examination in the next term of the school of Christ—"in that day."

Paul's Hopeful View of the Resurrection

It has been urged that in 2 Thes. 1: 10 the Apostle said nothing about the prospects of those who had died unenlightened and, we add, therefore unsaved, for it must be remembered that without enlightenment none can believe, and only believers are promised salvation. Some Christians, interested in our Lord's Second Coming, can see a good prospect in the Kingdom age for those who will be on earth at the beginning of that age, or who may be born during that age; but they can see no blessing whatever for those who were so unfortunate as to die unenlightened in all the thousands of years in the past. But why do they think thus?

Why should those who live after the beginning of the Kingdom age be enlightened and given the opportunity to believe and live for ever, while the most of those who through no fault of their own were born and died before the beginning of the Kingdom age are left to perish (or worse, some fear) in their unenlightenment? Do not those who think this way tacitly accuse God of partiality, and respect of persons?

It is true that in 2 Thes. 1: 10 the Apostle does not in so many words mention the unenlightened dead. But what is not explicitly mentioned in this place is clearly brought out elsewhere, and must therefore be understood as belonging here also. When he defended himself before Felix, the Apostle used the following exceedingly suggestive words—

"And have HOPE toward God, which they themselves [the Jews] also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, BOTH OF THE JUST AND UNJUST."—Acts 24: 15.

The suggestiveness of this statement lies in the use of the word "hope" to define the Apostle's expectations in respect of the resurrection of both the just and the unjust dead.

Hope is "desire accompanied by expectation." The word is never used of a gloomy or undesirable outlook. Therefore, since the Apostle used "hope," and no other word, to express his anticipation in regard to the resurrection, in which he expressly in-

cludes the unjust dead as well as the just, we are bound to believe that such a master of language, guided, we believe, by the Holy Spirit (Luke 21: 12-15), was indicating that the resurrection prospect of the unjust dead is *distinctly hopeful*. Many Christians may feel timid about believing this, because their minds are in the shackles of tradition. Such are urged to consider well these words of the Apostle Paul. His words are true and faithful. Being the words of one whose name is written in the foundations of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21: 14), they are words of authority which command our most respectful attention. The words of an apostle of the Lamb cannot be disregarded by any who claim to be Christians; such words are to us the end of all controversy.—2 Peter 3: 1, 2.

As the Apostle spoke and wrote of the hopeful prospect of the resurrection of the unjust as well as the just, we are bound to do the same. But this does not necessarily imply that the same hope is to be entertained on behalf of both classes. The hope on behalf of the "just" is that they shall be raised to life, and shall have positions of authority under Jesus Christ in the Kingdom age.

The hope on behalf of the unjust dead is that they shall be raised to judgment. Their destiny has not yet been determined, but will be decided by their conduct in that judgment time. As the Lord hears, so He judges, and His judgment is just. (See John 5: 29, in which, instead of "damnation," the Revised Version has "judgment," which is correct, and is consistent with the use of the same original word in v. 30, where it is translated "judgment," also the verb form translated "judge" in the same verse.) The result of the judgment may be favorable or unfavorable, but it will be just.

The point is, that those people (the unjust) are to be enlightened with the truth after their resurrection, and judged according to their attitude after enlightenment. From the language of 2 Thes. 1: 10 we have already seen that the prevailing sentiment among those who "believe in that day" will be "wonder." They will be astonished and amazed; they will be delighted and happy.



Imputed Righteousness

WHEN considering the theme of Imputed Righteousness we have on the one hand the Creator and His glorious holiness, and on the other the human creature in his fallen and imperfect state, and under the penalty of death. The testimony recorded in Rev. 4: 11, of the four and twenty elders seated round about the throne of God, is:

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

This was God's purpose in creating man in His own image, that man should, of his own free will, please God by his perfect obedience and his honour and praise. But his disobedience estranged man from his Creator, so that it became impossible for him to

worship his Maker in the beauty of holiness; for "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."—John 4: 24.

We have all, probably at some time or other, when thinking over the imperfections of our being, looked back longingly to the days when our first parents dwelt in perfect happiness in the Garden of Eden, and were accustomed to meet their God in that paradise when He came to converse with them. The fall or, rather, the consequences resulting from the fall has taught the wise the bitterness of sin; but, far greater than this, it has given them an opportunity of comprehending the wonderful love of God. Taking the parable of the prodigal son as an illustration, while he lived in the house where he had been born and nurtured

he felt that his life was far too circumscribed. He longed to exercise freedom of choice and action, and so he claimed from his father certain goods to enable him to travel to a far country.

Not until he was in want did the prodigal realize the comfort of his father's home, and so he decided to return. It was when the father met him while he was yet a great way off, and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him, that he realized the great love of his father. And it is when, by the grace of God, our spiritual eyes are opened that we are able to understand something of the great love of God our Father towards us. We then can endorse the words of Romans 5: 8—

But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

And also 1 John 4: 9—In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

Man having shown, through the Jews' failure to keep the law covenant, that he could not, by his own effort, regain perfection, it remained with God alone to provide the way whereby man could be regarded as righteous before his Creator. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ the Holy One is the means provided by which man can return to God and have righteousness imputed unto him. This is clearly set forth in the words of Paul of Antioch—

38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Repentance and Sincerity

But before a man can obtain forgiveness through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ and have righteousness imputed unto him, certain definite things are necessary.

(1) He must first realize his own sinful condition and estrangement from God. When Christ came unto His own, they received Him not; because their spiritual darkness was so great that they failed to recognize in Him the fulfilment of the promises. They were misled into believing that being the blood descendants of Abraham they were in harmony with God. But Christ told them that, while they outwardly appeared righteous unto men, within they were "full of hypocrisy and iniquity." (Matt. 23: 28.) Jesus came to seek that which was lost, and it is first necessary that the individual realize his lost and hopeless position, before salvation offered through the death of Jesus Christ is of any value to him.

(2) Recognizing his sinfulness and estrangement from God, the next qualification necessary is penitence. The message of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, was one of repentance. After Christ had given Himself as the true sacrifice for sin, Peter preached—"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out," . . . (Acts 3: 19.) In 1 John 3, we have a clear teaching that sin is of the devil; that he who continues in sin is of the devil; and that he who would have righteousness imputed unto him must turn away from evil and seek after that which is of God. Jesus said,

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. (Matt. 5: 6.) These words apply to those who, being conscious of their sins, turn in a spirit of repentance to seek after righteousness, realizing that this is attainable only through being in harmony with the Divine.

(3) Having turned towards God, the next condition which must be complied with is, to seek Him through the appointed way. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14: 6.) The inspired testimony of Peter is—"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4: 12.) The reason why we must approach God through Jesus Christ is because, being sinners, we are under the penalty of death, and have no righteousness of our own to plead as a claim to reconciliation and life. God having accepted the sacrifice of Christ on behalf of mankind, we must plead His sacrifice as the basis of our justification; and "we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.—Heb. 10: 10.

Justified by Faith

Let us, therefore, rejoice in that great and wonderful fact, that, while we are imperfect creatures born in sin, and unable of ourselves to attain to righteousness, God has accepted the perfection and sacrificial death of Jesus Christ as an all-sufficient ransom for the redemption of mankind, and as the true sacrifice for our sins. And so, all that now come to God through Him have righteousness imputed unto them, conditionally upon their coming in faith.—Heb. 11:—

6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

So we must believe in the existence of God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. We must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, who came as the fulfilment of the promises of redemption for mankind. That He lived to reveal God unto the world. That He died for the sins of the whole world. And that He was raised for the justification of them that believe on His name. (See Romans 3.) The result (Romans 5)—

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

By whom also we have access by faith* into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.—Romans 5: 1, 2.

Having obtained the forgiveness of our sins through faith in Jesus Christ, we are born again not of flesh and blood, but into the liberty of the children of God. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5: 17.) He has become a "new creature" because he is freed from the

*The words "by faith" in Rom. 5: 2 are omitted from some ancient MSS.; but they express the correct thought, since the favor of the high calling as well as justification comes to us now by faith and in no other way. Faith, or confident belief, is required for the acceptance of any and all God's favors through Christ. Hence in quoting this passage no violence is done to the sense by using these words as in the Authorized Version.—Editor.

bondage of sin. The majority who died before the resurrection of Jesus Christ passed away with their sins unforgiven; and, as taught clearly in the Scriptures, they are to be brought back to earthly life again, in order that they may have an opportunity of accepting the salvation offered through Jesus Christ. (See Isaiah 25: 6-9; Ezek. 16: 53-63.) But since Christ paid the ransom price, whilst death still works on in our members, we can be released from the bondage of sin by having our sins blotted out. So while the failure of the Jews to keep the Law Covenant in its entirety proved that man of his own efforts was unable to attain to righteousness, God has been pleased to provide this wonderful way whereby men may come to Him and have their sins forgiven, and so have righteousness imputed unto them.

Wonderful Truths

These are but simple words, but they contain truths far more beautiful than anything contained in the writings of the world's most brilliant authors outside the Bible. To the man who has been condemned to death in a worldly court of justice, the news of his release would be a joyful message. But that would not stay the coming of a natural death to him in due time. So his release from death would only be, as it were, temporarily.

Yet how overjoyed he would be.

And as we contrast his position with that of the sinner who is released from the sentence of death, by the assurance that while natural death is inevitable, he shall after death be raised again to die no more, and, more wonderful still, to be raised as a son of God, and as a joint-heir with Jesus Christ to sit and reign with Him over the whole earth, how great should be the joy in the hearts of those who hear, understand and accept this glorious gospel! Is it possible for us to comprehend the full meaning of this message? Can we measure the love of God who has planned this for creatures of His own handiwork that have been alienated from Him by reason of their own sin? The love of God is greater than the limits to which man's mind can reach, but we thank God that he has enabled us, by His Holy Spirit's guidance, to comprehend His love as the fulness of a mighty ocean in which we can see our transgressions against Him sunk into the depths of oblivion, and sufficient depth therein to cover the sins of the whole world. As it is written—

9 . . . Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

We Love Because He Loved Us

Love begets love, and God desires that we should show our thankfulness to him by acts of obedience and service. (1 John 4: 7-19.) Instead of our following after worldly desires which emanate from selfish motives, and those things which are contrary to the will of God, He expects us to cultivate the spirit of love, meekness, purity of thought and action, and such attributes as were manifested in the life of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Paul entreats those who have entered upon this new life in the following words—"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Eph. 4: 23, 24.) The adversary of men's souls still tempts us through our inherent weaknesses, but God bestows His Holy Spirit upon us to lead us; and while we strive earnestly to follow after righteousness we have the assurance—"And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;" (1 John 2: 1.) So that God's plan of salvation arranges not only for our cleansing from the sins which are past at the time we first believe (Rom. 3: 25), but it also enables us through continual prayer and supplication to continue to appear righteous before Him, because:

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—1 John 1: 9.

Herein is a further demonstration of the love of God the Father, for which we should thank Him daily. Our lives are also due as a thankoffering to our Saviour Jesus Christ for His condescension to man's estate, for His perfect obedience to God's will, for His death upon the cross, and for His advocacy on our behalf before God's throne. We can never repay His great love to us. May we not let these words go through our minds as a passing emotion, but may we cherish these thoughts and strive daily by our lives and actions to walk worthily before God and His dear Son our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The contemplation of these wonderful truths should lead each one of us to say, as an act of consecration—

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

—R. T.



New Jerusalem Coming Down

A CITY in Bible times, even as to-day, was a collection of houses, the homes of a considerable population. A city was larger than a town or a village, and in those days was surrounded by a wall for protection from mobs and foreign invaders. Its rulers exercised authority over the surrounding smaller settlements, and over the farming community. In case of invasion the families living outside the city

were to flee to the gates for protection; the guarded gates being cautiously opened for their admission. Once inside, they were considered safe, so long as the walls were properly manned.

On the walls were also lookout towers, so that the watchmen would be able to discern the invaders a long way off, and make preparations to resist, or even to make sorties against them.

Bows and arrows, spears and sharp knives were the weapons in those days. But the people were afraid when the Philistine giant, Goliath, came out against them. Finally, the Lord used David to demonstrate that God was with the Hebrews. For with a stone from his sling David slew the giant, and rallied the forces of Israel—notwithstanding Saul's jealousy and opposition.

In Jerusalem was the Ark, protected by a tent, in front of which the sacrifices were offered, and the blood was then taken into the most Holy, to be sprinkled upon the Mercy Seat.

Later on, the magnificent temple was built; large groups of priests and Levites were in attendance; and the worship of God was still to be carried on in the manner prescribed by the Law.

Jerusalem, therefore, stood not only as a symbol of political power, but also as a symbol of God's willingness to forgive sin, and in every way watch over them for their good.

So the Jews rapidly became an important nation established in Palestine; and the Law, together with the religious rites at the temple, gave them a superior standing among the nations, who still remained idolators, and who continually endeavoured to lead the Israelites astray.

The Old Testament history shows how—after a time—ten of the tribes revolted against God and the temple worship, leaving only the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with a remnant of priests and Levites, to carry on the true worship of God. And in the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other prophets we see how God endeavoured to preserve the people by sending His prophets to reason with them and warn them of the vengeance to come if they continued rebellious.

Jesus Came to the Temple

God had foreknown the perfect keeping of the Law to be beyond the capacity of imperfect human beings, but the Law served a useful purpose in demonstrating that fact. In addition the exceeding sinfulness of sin was impressed upon them by the regular offering of the sacrifices which could never take away sin, for they were continually repeated year in year out for hundreds of years. In the meantime the prophets, as well as the offerings, foretold the coming of the Messiah, Jesus.

Jesus was perfect and sinless and corresponded to Adam before he sinned. Hence Jesus was appointed to give Himself to die on the cross as "a ransom [or corresponding price] for all," and also as the perfect offering for sin, given on behalf of Gentiles as well as Jews. And so the separation between Jew and Gentile was done away, and the one way of serving and pleasing God was opened up. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

Hence the apostle states the case exactly when he says that Jesus took away the law, "nailing it to his cross." Thus putting an end to the law. And by His death on the cross another service was performed, for He gave himself a ransom for the whole of mankind, and is now serving as Mediator. 1 Tim. 2: 5, 6: "For there is one God, and one mediator between

God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, . . ."

It is therefore not difficult to understand that the "new Jerusalem" which John saw "coming down from God out of heaven" (Rev. 21: 2) is to be a new ruling power, far superior to that law which the Jews groaned under, and which Jesus nailed to His cross and took out of the way. As Paul wrote to the Colossians (2)—

14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

17 Which are a shadow of good things to come; but the body [i.e. the substance, the antitype of the shadows] is of Christ.

Bricks, Stones, Mortar

The question then arises, Is the new Jerusalem which is to come down from God at the beginning of the reign of Christ—is that city to be an immense walled city of stones? Our answer is that the description of that holy city—given in Revelation 21: 9-27—must be taken as figurative. The beasts and the dragon of Revelation 13 are readily recognized as symbolic pictures predicated political powers and governments which should arise in the earth during the Gospel age.

If, then, we recognize that the old Jerusalem stood for the Mosaic law and government which ruled over the Jewish nation, and which Jesus nailed to His cross, we see the emphasis that should be placed on the word "new" in Rev. 21: 2-8. Verse 5 says, "And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."

God's care over and patience with the Jews was great, and the prophet Isaiah (ch. 54) describes Israel (figurative) as the wife of God, so great was His love and so tender His dealings in the effort to make them a holy nation. However, Israel's failure was foreseen, and the inadequateness of animal sacrifices for sin was constantly referred to. The real sacrifice for sin was to come near the end of the Jewish age. For the perfect Jesus came and offered himself as the sacrifice for sin and the ransom for all men. He bought all with His precious blood.

The Bride of the Lamb

And so when the Jews as a nation were rejected from being God's people, the Gospel message called on individual Jews to come into the new body of believers of which Jesus Christ was to be Head. And also the Church is described as His bride. At the second advent Jesus would call forth from the grave the faithful members of the Church, to constitute His Bride, to live and reign with Him the Thousand Years.

Rev. 20: 11-15 presents another picture of the Kingdom age rule. The dead small and great stand before the throne, being called forth from death and hell; that is, from the state of condemnation to death and from the actual death into which the majority of the race have gone during the ages from Adam on-

ward. Hell is not a place of torment, but the state of death, in which there is no knowledge nor device. The grave aptly describes the condition, in view of God's purpose to call forth the dead to stand before His throne.

New Jerusalem Coming Down

In Revelation 21 we have the description of the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down. This is just the opposite of the generally accepted ideas of heathen nations, as well as of many believers, for the general thought is that the righteous dead go to heaven when they die.

See Rev. 21: 1-7. There will be testings, and the dead called forth will be expected to fall in line with the Kingdom rule of Christ and His joint heirs.

Chapter 21, verse 9—the angel says to John, "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." In the Old Testament the Jewish people was called the wife of Jehovah, because of the tender relation existing between them so long as the Jews were obedient to the Law. But for persistent rebellion the Jews were rejected as God's wife, as the Lord said when He wept over Jerusalem, saying—

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

The names of the apostles are in the twelve foundations, indicating that there will be nothing in the Kingdom age rule to contradict the apostles, who insisted that consecration to God and holiness are necessary in order to obtain eternal life.

Like the cities of old, and like old Jerusalem, the new Jerusalem has a wall great and high to keep out all intruders. Gates are provided. That is, certain terms must be met before admittance can be granted. And these terms will be consistent with the teachings of the twelve apostles.

The whole picture is against any thought of universalism. God is not a God who cannot be happy or contented without the salvation of every individual who has ever lived.

Some have thought that Acts 3: 21 applies to the Kingdom age. It says of Jesus—"Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things." But that passage refers to our Lord's pre-existence; to His life with God before He became a man. Jesus was God's agent in creation, and He remained with the Father until the time His life was transferred, and He was born of the virgin. Instead of "restitution" some translators say "restoration." But "reconstitution" is the meaning. Jesus remained in heaven with the Father until the time for His entry into the world as the ransom and sacrifice for sin. From then on *the reconstitution* has been in progress. And the reconstitution work was begun when Jesus came and gave Himself a ransom for all.

In Rev. 22: 1 we read: the river of the water of life will flow from the throne of God and of the Lamb. And there will be an invitation to come and drink at the fountain. But each individual will act on his or her own responsibility, and those who refuse to comply will not receive the life. Hence their portion will be the second death.

The City Coming Down

Because this city is described (Rev. 21: 2) as new Jerusalem coming down, some have thought that a literal stone city will come down out of heaven and be established on the site of old Jerusalem; with the old temple service renewed, together with observance of the law and of animal sacrifices on the altar, etc., etc. Some also contend that the seventh day sabbath will be again observed.

Hence it is necessary to note exactly what is said: NOT old Jerusalem coming down, but NEW Jerusalem—descending out of heaven from God. Not a half city, or a partially built city, as though in need of additions; but a complete city: A city requiring no alterations or suggestions by men according to their own faulty and sinful ideas. These wrong ideas have been sufficiently expressed in the old idol temples. Many wrong ideas were adopted by early Christians from ancient philosophies, such as the doctrine of an immortal soul which must live somewhere, and hence the false religions invented a place of eternal torment, the threat of which kept their people in fear and trembling.

Hence the significance of the Holy City New Jerusalem coming down a complete and powerful Government. No one asked to suggest alterations or new theories of life and salvation. In the past people have invented new religions. But in the Kingdom age the New Government will establish the true religion.

And it had a wall great and high—no admittance except through the gates. And a new foundation—Twelve foundations with the names of the *twelve apostles of the Lamb*—consequently not related to the old Jerusalem of the Law.

No Temple Therein

"And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."—Rev. 21: 22.

But John saw in the vision a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.—Rev. 22: 1.

Yet—like the ancient walled city—the New Jerusalem (the new Government of Christ and the Church over the whole earth) will have walls well guarded and too high to be scaled. No admittance except by the appointed way, which is faith in Jesus and in His precious blood.

This is well represented in Rev. 21: 2—"And I John saw the holy city, NEW JERUSALEM, coming down from God out of heaven, . . ." And (verse 7) "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

While outside the city is the Gehenna, the anti-type of the valley outside old Jerusalem where the rubbish was burned. So the persistent wilful sinners of the Kingdom age will be utterly destroyed.—Rev. 21: 8.

In the past many religions have been invented. But such invention will not be allowed under the powerful government of the New Jerusalem. Men will not be asked to vote on this or that, or to plan alterations and improvements (so-called).

Frequently now we hear people say, Oh, I have my own ideas. I am sure to be saved because I do not say or do what other people say and do. To this we

reply: Even absolute heathen can make such assertions.

But no: the Holy City, the New Government, is a perfect whole. No one will be asked to criticise or alter its provisions. Salvation is of God, and must be accepted on His terms. That is true now, and will be true in the Kingdom age.

The arch enemy, Satan, will be bound for the thousand years. (Rev. 20: 1-3.)

All the dead, raised and instructed, will be allowed to make their own choice of obedience or disobedience to God and to the Government He sends down as a complete whole without consulting their pleas to be allowed to continue their old sinful ways. Or to suggest some other means of salvation than faith in Jesus Christ.

The second death is the punishment in store for Satan and other wilful sinners, we read in Revelation 20. They will come up against the Holy City, and fire will come down from God out of heaven and devour them. No eternal torment, no life in misery, but the second death—absolute extinction—is God's will for them.—Rev. 20: 12-15.

Rev. 22: 16 repeats that Jesus sent his angel to

John, and that Jesus' own position as Lord of all must be acknowledged. "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."—Verse 17.

The city—the New Jerusalem—coming down is a Government—a powerful Government with God behind it, and with Jesus Christ as King and Lord of all, and the Church as His joint-ruler. That Government must be accepted as a whole if eternal life is to be received. God will not alter the terms to please fallible men.

For a thousand years that Kingdom will rule. The New Jerusalem will be established as a definite whole, and a thousand years will provide ample time to instruct the myriads of the dead raised from the grave, as well as those who happen to be living on the earth at that time. It comes down as a whole city, a complete government, giving light, knowledge, and opportunity. As verse 19 states, anyone who tries to alter the terms and conditions will have his name blotted out. The New Jerusalem will be an everlasting triumph for God, for Jesus Christ, and for righteousness. Thank God it is soon coming in power and glory, to rule over the whole earth!

—R. B. H.



Forgiveness Seventy Times Seven

Question.—Concerning punishment for sin after enlightenment: I have difficulty in harmonising several passages of Scripture. Heb. 10: 26, 27; Heb. 6: 1-6 are hard to reconcile with such as "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," and "forgiving seventy times seven." There seem to be so many texts telling of forgiveness of the vilest sinner, and everyone knows that sin is wrong.

A man may have been living in sin many years and suddenly have the light of the Gospel. He may rejoice in the light for a time and live in harmony with his Maker, and then slide back into sin; later on he may repent, and still later slide back again into sin. According to the passages cited from Hebrews he may think, "Well, I've lost my chance, so whatever I may try to do in the way of good living now is useless, as I have had the light and I have sinned knowing that I've done wrong." Somehow I can't think that God would turn a deaf ear to that man.

After having the light, he may know that he is doing wrong, and when temptations come he may not have the will to resist, and he knows that if he indulges in the sin (whatever it may be) he is guilty, and he may immediately be sorry for what he has done and resolve to do better in the future. Do you think that God will forgive as often as this, or must the man take the consequences? To me it seems that if he is really repentant he will be forgiven if he continues in the truth.

I have in mind one who was once a "drug fiend," and whose experience is as here outlined. I have wondered if he will still have the opportunity to make good, as he is now trying to live straight.

Answer.—One of the circumstances which has developed from man's fall into sin is that many suffer

from a weak will; others are self-willed and heed no good advice or warnings. Others are self-centred and find most pleasure in self-indulgence of various kinds. Others are treacherous, or deceitful, or given to lying. Some who would not steal money do not hesitate to steal reputations. Then there are hosts of "faults and failings" which we must all as human beings confess to. As the Question intimates, anyone coming to Christ for forgiveness and receiving it has much to overcome, and if he be not resolute may now and again slip back into former wrongdoing. One whose will has been weakened beyond the usual by drink or the drug habit may have a specially hard struggle to resist temptation. And he will need the sympathetic help and patience of his friends. From the Scriptures quoted we learn that the Lord wishes us to forgive our brother who errs until seventy times seven—that is, indefinitely—so long as his repentance and confession are sincere, which implies also an effort to overcome the fault. We agree with the Questioner that God, who gave us this command to mercy and forbearance, will not be less merciful and forbearing.

In fact, God has arranged in the New Covenant for the forgiveness, through the precious blood of Christ, of all our faults, sins, and backslidings when they are sincerely repented of and confessed. The New Covenant recognizes that the forgiveness of the sins that are past, which comes to us when we first believe, is not enough; we need forgiveness daily as we go along. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." But, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—1 John 1: 8, 9.

This readiness of God to forgive is to be continually availed of, but must not be imposed upon. We must not allow His forbearance to become our *excuse* for sinning, for that is not its object. Its object is, by helping us over one fault or transgression, to make us stronger to resist the next temptation. We are to think of ourselves as in a partnership with God and Christ to get the better of Sin, the great Taskmaster, as portrayed in Rom. 6. When we come into Christ by faith, He becomes our Master, and Sin is ousted from that position. What remains to the believer is largely a matter of loyalty to the New Master. Paul asks, "How shall we, who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6: 2.) On the other hand, How can we who have come into Christ, and into the new life of righteousness, refuse to do righteousness? (Rom. 6: 17, 18.) We must make a decided choice at the beginning of our Christian life, or we would not be accepted at all.

But that is only a beginning.

After we have definitely and absolutely given ourselves up to the new Master, Christ, and the Lord has accepted us, we are His; and His we remain until by His discipline and training we are made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light; or until (which God forbid) by our wrong conduct and apostasy we forfeit His love and favour and lose the reward of the high calling set before us.—John 15: 1-6; Heb. 12: 3-13; Heb. 10: 38, 39; 2 Tim. 4: 10.

We assume that the Questioner wants to know *at what point* the believer may turn from an accepted child of God into a permanently rejected reprobate. The answer, we believe, is found in 1 John 3: 9—

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

This is not a contradiction of 1 John 1: 9; 2: 1, which shows that sincere believers sin and require forgiveness. Its meaning would be clearer, however, if it were rendered—"Whosoever is born of God doth not *practise* sin"; that is, he does not willingly and continuously do what he knows to be wrong. If he did, he would lose his standing as born of God. But so long as his heart is right toward God, the "seed" of God will remain in him, and James (1: 18) says that the seed whereby the children of God are begotten is the *word of truth*—

"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures."

So long, therefore, as the word of God which in the beginning begot the penitent believer to a new life in Christ is retained, respected, and lived up to as far as possible, the standing as a child of God is maintained; and the privilege of forgiveness is retained also. To sin wilfully and continuously will be foreign to the new mind, and the faults and failings which inadvertently occur will be quickly repudiated, including those failures attributable to a weakened will. Furthermore—

"He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning."—1 John 3: 8.

"In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."—1 John 3: 10.

While the whole world lieth in the wicked one, and all are sinners, the above texts seem to refer to those

who have become believers and yet persistently and continuously sin, after the manner of the devil, who has been sinning for ages, and who for that reason is considered the father of all wilful sinners. (John 8: 44.) The sin persisted in may be of any kind. No murder or other crime is so black but God can forgive it if it be truly repented of. On the other hand, a comparatively mild form of sin may by continued practice become the cause of rejection from God's favor. Such persistent "practice" of sin will lead to the rejection of the word of God, to despising the blood wherewith the erring one had been sanctified, to a seared conscience, and finally to that state of mind which the Apostle in Heb. 6 describes as "impossible to renew unto repentance."—1 Tim 4: 1, 2.

Both Heb. 6: 1-6 and 10: 26, 27, which the Questioner cites, wherein those who continuously *practise* sin are condemned, are thus seen to be in harmony with the other passages which tell of God's long-suffering toward and forgiveness of His true children who mourn and confess and seek forgiveness when they are overtaken in a fault.

The Sin Unto Death

That those who have been once forgiven and accepted by God as His children can lose that position and be condemned to the second death is plainly taught in the Scriptures. John makes a distinction between sin which is "unto death," and sin which is "not unto death"—

"If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin; and there is a sin not unto death."—1 John 5: 16, 17.

According to this statement the brethren acquainted with the facts in any given case should be able to distinguish between sins unto death and sins not unto death. For the latter they may join the erring one in prayer, in full confidence that the transgression will be forgiven. While in the former case the brethren would recognize the uselessness of praying for one so determined in a wrong course. Verse 17 agrees with what we have just said. All unrighteousness of every kind is sin, whether committed by a believer or by an unbeliever; whether by a penitent or by a reprobate. The difference is not necessarily in the nature of the sin itself, but rather in the heart and mind of the transgressor and relative to the degree of light sinned against. A South Sea Islander was a cannibal through ignorance and custom. For a Christian to kill and eat a man would be an entirely different thing. Before he could get to the stage where such a crime would be possible he would have persistently sinned in a thousand minor matters over years of his life.

The apostle James also refers to the possibility of recovering brethren who have seriously erred—

"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."—Jas. 5: 19, 20.

Obviously the death here meant is the second death, which would be the punishment toward which the

erring brother was tending by reason of his having the truth and departing more or less from it.

Where sickness was experienced on account of transgression, the prayers of the brethren in conformity to Jas. 5: 14-16 would be answered by the healing of the sickness as well as by the forgiveness of the sins.

Denying the Lord That Bought Them

Peter tells of false teachers who bring the truth into disrepute by bringing in "damnable heresies" and misleading "many." (2 Pet. 2: 1-3.) Verses 10-22 describe the character of these, verse 18 stating that they "allure through the lusts of the flesh." Those who for a little while had "escaped from them who live in error," and are thus again drawn away into sin, are not excused for their weakness. Their latter end is described as worse than their beginning; they are as a sow returning to wallowing in the mire. Peter does not say that none of these misguided dupes can be recovered; his words indicate that they would need another thorough cleansing. But the false teachers are so completely corrupt that for them is reserved "the mist of darkness forever." Here again we may see how some sin "not unto death," while others more confirmed in wickedness (while professing the name of Christ) sin "unto death."

Heb. 6: 4-8 undoubtedly refers to those who sin "unto death." They have been enlightened, have tasted of the heavenly gift (Jesus, through whom they obtained forgiveness), were made partakers of the Holy Spirit (an indication that up to that point they were sincere, or the Holy Spirit would not have been given). In addition they have "tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world [age] to come." For such to fall away indicates that they love sin and despise the sacrifice of Christ. They put Christ to an open shame by turning against Him after having once followed Him. Instead of bringing forth good fruit, the fruit of holiness, love, joy, meekness, etc., they bring forth evil fruit—pride, selfishness, tyranny, deceit, unfaithfulness, etc. Therefore they are rejected.—Matt. 24: 48-51; 25: 30.

Heb. 10: 29-31 also refers to those who sin "unto death." They do not sin through either ignorance or weakness, but through perversity—after enlightenment and experience of the "spirit of grace," and after having been sanctified by the blood of the New Covenant. They tread under their feet the Son of God, and count His blood "an unholy thing." This may be done while still using His name and professing to be His follower. The blood of Jesus was shed for sins, and to seal the New Covenant. For anyone once enlightened on the subject to speak of His blood as common, as of no more value than the blood of others, is a serious offence. This would in all probability include those of our own day who hold that the blood of Jesus is not alone in being the blood of the New Covenant, but consider themselves as shedding some of the blood required. Thus the blood of Jesus is made "common," or not exclusive, which is the literal meaning of *koinon*, translated "unholy," in verse 29. For this treachery they shall suffer the vengeance of God, say vs. 30, 31. But even among these the final judgment rests with the Lord, who we

may well believe will distinguish between those who are wilfully perverse and those who confidently follow leaders in whom they have confidence without realizing the enormities they are being led into. For more on this subject please see "Bible Talks for Heart and Mind," chapter "Salvation and the Covenants;" also "Everlasting Punishment," last chapter.

Brethren who are seeking to be "overcomers" can help one another by example and precept, and can assist in restoring any who trespass—

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."—Gal. 6: 1, 2.

Loyalty to Christ

Where there is difficulty in overcoming bad habits and faults, and especially when the will has been weakened by drink or drugs or other indulgence, continual prayer is needed for help from on High. Also it is well to divert the mind from the thing craved for by harmless substitutes;* and the nervous system may be built up by fresh air, nourishing food, etc. In other words, drunkenness and the drug habit should be treated like any other disease by building up the resistance of the body.

But the greatest aid, besides prayer, comes from our mental attitude. Instead of limiting the question to Shall I do this, or that? Shall I eat or drink what I crave that I know will not agree with me? we may enlarge it to one of loyalty to Christ in the great fight against sin. We will then not only seek to avoid anything that would bring reproach on His name, but also everything which in any way would impair our health, or weaken our will, and thus interfere with strict obedience to our new Master's orders. As His servants we must keep ourselves as fit as possible, mentally, spiritually, and physically, that we may render the most effective service, and be also an example to others—as Paul wrote to Timothy—

"Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation [i.e., conduct], in charity [love], in faith, in purity. . . . Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt save thyself, and them that hear thee."—1 Tim. 4: 12-16.

As others see the brethren more and more freed from the power of the slave-driver Sin, they gain courage to dispute his authority over them, and so Sin is shown up as a losing power, and Christ is magnified as the great Conqueror; and the more Christ is magnified the more courage in turn His people acquire, until they are able to say—

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."—Phil. 4: 13.

"Who is he that condemneth? Shall Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."—Rom. 8: 34-37.

*At the St. Louis World Exhibition a few years ago a former drunkard had a stall for the purpose of helping others by advertising the remedy which had benefited him. This remedy was no less than *apples*—plain everyday apples. Whenever the craving came he ate an apple. Apples might not suit all cases, on account of acidity, but here is a hint to appease cravings with fruit or other food, which each victim might select according to his own taste and the results in his own case.

A Dreary Dread or a Blessed Hope?

THE TEACHING of Scripture that Christ Jesus would come again and receive His disciples to Himself has given to the Church a "blessed hope." All through the age the faithful have looked forward to that time, but generally with mixed feelings, for current theology often proclaimed that day as something to be dreaded instead of longed for. These mixed feelings have found expression in the hymns and spiritual songs written from time to time by God's children, as well as in the sermons to which they listened, and in the manner in which lay members have been taught to gather together certain Scripture texts—some dwelling most on the fact that wrath is due to come on the world, while others enlarged upon the prospect of blessing.

Isaac Watts has been referred to as "the father" of English hymns. He wrote "Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun," in 1719. To the Rev. Charles Wesley, "the king of English hymn writers," we owe "Come, Thou Long-expected Jesus," and "Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending," which were composed in 1744 and 1759 respectively.

To Philip Doddridge we are indebted for "Hark the Glad Sound, the Saviour Comes!" written in 1735, and "Ye Servants of the Lord, Each in His Office Wait," composed in the last year of his life.

"Hail to the Lord's Anointed" was written by James Montgomery, and recited by the poet at a missionary meeting in Pitt Street Chapel, Liverpool, in 1822. Dr. Adam Clarke presided on that occasion, and begged for permission to print it in his Commentary, where it first appeared.

Dr. Horatius Bonar composed "The Church has Waited Long Her Absent Lord to See," in 1845, and the Rev. S. Baring Gould wrote "On the Resurrection Morning," in 1864.

We are indebted to Dean Alford for "Ten Thousand Times Ten Thousand," which was composed in 1867, and was sung at his funeral; and to Bishop Bickersteth for "Till He Come," which was written in 1870.

"Thou art Coming, O my Saviour," was composed by Frances Ridley Havergal, at Winterdyne, in 1873, which she says was "a year of unprecedented blessing"; while we are indebted to P. P. Bliss, who was killed in a railway accident in 1876, for "I Know Not the Hour When My Lord Will Come," and "Down Life's Dark Vale We Wander Till Jesus Comes." Fanny J. Crosby bequeathed us "On that Bright and Golden Morning When the Son of Man Shall Come," and "When Jesus Comes to Reward His Servants."

—SINCE OUR LAST ISSUE

THE FACULTY of hope continues to exercise itself in all parts of the world. How can that be, some one may ask, when there is trouble and distress everywhere? It is because the ability to hope, like every other good quality we possess, was planted in the human mind at creation, way back in Eden. Even the animals have hope, as we may see by their keenness in watching for prey; or, if domestic animals, by their interest in the food placed within their reach.

THE HONEST man hopes for the success of his business plans and domestic arrangements; while the dishonest man hopes just as keenly for the success of his evil schemes. And so it happens that the prodigal who spends all he has in riotous living is still open to a sense of loss and a feeling of regret that he ever left the good farm or the honest business which a generous father had been ready to give his son.

And so the Lord gave the parable of the father's willingness to receive him home again, to illustrate God's willingness and desire to receive and bless those of mankind who will repent and turn to Him.

For further explanation on this parable and others of equal interest, see the book "The Parables of our Lord," described in Book List.

THE JEWS thought they were the only chosen people. But God gave hope to the Gentiles, also, of a place in the Kingdom the Messiah would set up in due time. The selfish Jews could not see this in the prophecies. They would not receive the Messiah when He came to them as the chosen nation. And it was hoped that the sending of the Gospel to the Gentiles would wake them up to a sense of their own loss and re-awaken the hope of remaining the chosen people by accepting the One whom God sent in the person of His own Son Jesus.

O JERUSALEM, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!—Matt. 24: 1-38.

YET, even so, hope was still held out. For some would yet have their eyes opened and their hearts warmed so that they would say (verse 39)—"Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

HOPE still in the 20th Century? Yes! The heathen nations have gone on hoping in their gods of wood and stone, and in the philosophies of their "wise" men, as may be seen in the Chinese fidelity to their religion. Always hoping for blessing from their gods in reward of their devotion to their temples and worship.

NEW religions of the Gospel age, such as the Mohammedan, still hold out hope to those who become followers of Mohammed and take the Koran for their guidebook.

THE PROTESTANT movement of the Gospel age, which recovered the Bible by having it translated into the language of the various nations who listened to Luther and Zwingli and were awakened by the Protestant leaders in English speaking countries, brought fresh hope of salvation to believers in Jesus in the British Isles and Colonies. A great feature of the Reformation being the bringing to the people in their own tongue what had been previously kept from them by the clergy.

THE whole world of Protestantism still rejoices in the beauty and clarity of the King James' version. To which have been added commentaries by various eminent

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ministers of the Gospel, some of which we regret to say have not in every respect correctly interpreted the Lord's Word. But they do hold up Jesus as the Son of God and the Saviour sent to deliver men from sin and condemnation.

A FRESH AWAKENING to the study of prophecy came along, and a renewed conviction that the Lord Jesus would return and receive the overcomers to Himself. But even this gave rise to fresh errors. For some contended that Jesus would come as a man in the flesh and live again at Jerusalem, and restore the Jews to their own land. Others said that every conversion was a second coming of Christ, and that the faithful did not sleep in the graves but their souls went direct to heaven when they died. In fact, the teaching of an

IMMORTAL SOUL became the foundation of most of the Christian denominations, with teaching that the good went direct to heaven, while the not good went direct to a place of eternal torment, presided over by the devil. But why the evil devil would torment his own adherents was never explained. In the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries the

TEACHING OF WESLEY brought new ideas of conversion and the means of salvation by faith, as distinct from "election," which was the foundation of Presbyterianism; the elect could never be lost; the non-elect are lost for ever and ever. But neither of those denominations had given the prominence to the Lord's second coming which it deserved, and there arose bodies of Christians calling themselves—

ADVENTISTS, who have done world-wide preaching—in both print and oral sermonizing—on the personal return to earth of the Lord Jesus to live again as a Man at Jerusalem, which would be the headquarters of God's Kingdom on earth. Thus the Scripture teaching that Jesus is to dwell in heaven, with the overcomers, and rule from there has been clouded over. What then remains?

POLITICALLY the nations have been drawing together, as shown by the present growth of Democracy; but also as shown in the alliance of 76 nations for the prosecution of the present war—the largest combination of great and small powers ever known. Is it to be the last war? Or will there be an interval and then another world war? As we go to press the news from Europe is that the chief State in the Axis powers is being pressed as never before. But we do know that the last word will be the Lord's when His time comes to make His triumphal entry.

SEARCH the Scriptures is what remains for every sincere child of God and believer in Jesus, as well as for the unbelievers who desire something better than worldliness. The Lord said He would return and set up His Kingdom over the whole earth, but this does not mean that He will be dethroned from His position in heaven at God's right hand. He and the Church will rule from there. And He will use the overcomers of the previous ages—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and others as human rulers on this earth. For it is God's purpose that the earth be forever inhabited by the nations who will conform to His requirements.

WARS lose their terror when we come to understand that the millions and millions slain in battle and the other millions slain in our own day by the modern bomb from an airplane, are kept in memory by the Lord, and will in due time be called forth from the grave to everlasting life on the earth if they will be obedient when the terms are placed before them for their intelligent examination in view of the evidence all around them that the Kingdom of God is indeed in possession of all power. A few will be so perverse as to decline and will go into the second Death. But the Scripture assures us that the vast majority will fill the earth with praise to God for His wonderful plan and loving mercy toward them. Thank God!

New Covenant Book List

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Kingdom Herald

VOL. 34.

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, MARCH 1, 1943.

No. 12.

Seven Stars, Candlesticks, Lamps, Eyes

STARS, CANDLESTICKS, lamps, and eyes are all familiar objects, and they immediately convey to our minds the idea of light, which is one of the principal things of life. Light is one of the very essentials of life.

There are at least two kinds of light with which we are acquainted. One is the natural physical light associated with such things as stars, lamps, etc. The other is light in the sense of reason, knowledge, or enlightenment of the mind. And we are also acquainted with two kinds of darkness—the natural physical darkness, which is the absence of light; and darkness in the sense of ignorance, lack of knowledge, or the presence of sin and evil in the mind.

True light comes from God. He arranged first of all the natural physical lights, which illuminate the earth, radiate heat, and energise the forces of nature. And He gave man light in the sense of reason, intelligence, knowledge, and understanding.

If there were no natural physical lights at all, the whole world would be enveloped in dense black darkness, and in such a condition life would not endure very long. If there were no light at all in the world, in the sense of true knowledge and understanding, that is, if there were no real spiritual truth in the world, then it would, in such a condition, not endure very long.

But as the lights which God set to give light and life to the earth abide, and fulfil their work constantly and regularly, so the light that He gave to illuminate the path of His people remains, and shines more and more, as He gives the increase, and the perfect day approaches. It is God who gives the light, it is the privilege of the children of light as ambassadors of Christ to carry its life-giving message throughout the world.

The book of Revelation was given as a light for God's people, that they might be instructed and blessed by the things written therein. Though the signs and symbols may not be fully understood, there is a blessing to be gained even in the reading of it. And constant reading and comparing with other Scriptures reveal tremendous truths, in a wonder-

fully picturesque, and often very beautiful, manner which is a source of constant delight.

The four things under consideration are used as symbols in the Revelation, and we shall now seek to learn their meaning.

Seven a Symbol of Completeness

Please read Revelation 1: 13-20; 4: 5; 5: 6. The first noticeable thing is the association of the figure seven with each symbol. This figure as used in the Scriptures seems invariably to convey the idea of completeness. The figure itself is a very noticeable one. It is in itself a complete number. It is the highest numeral not divisible by any other whole numeral except itself and one. The other prime numerals are two, three, five, but seven is the highest. Four, six, eight and nine can be divided, but seven is complete in itself.

As used in the Scriptures it conveys the idea of completeness because: The creative days were a cycle of seven. The week of days given to Israel was a cycle of seven. The seventh day was ordained to the Jews, a complete rest day. The seventh year was a sabbath year. Seven lamps stood in the holy of the tabernacle. And in the New Testament it is used in connection with stars, candlesticks, lamps, eyes, vials, trumpets, seals, etc., etc., to indicate the completeness in itself of each series.

The Seven Candlesticks and the Seven Stars

The vision of Revelation 1: 13-16 is of Messiah's glory, as may be seen from a consideration of vs. 18, the words of which are not applicable to any other person but Christ. The vision represents the Lord as being "in the midst" of the candlesticks and reminds us of the Jewish high priest who tended the seven-branched lampstand in the tabernacle. As explained in vs. 20, the seven candlesticks represent the seven churches; in other words, the complete church in its various phases.

The church as a light in the world is tended, trimmed, and kept in order by the Lord. Christ is the founder and builder of the church; and, though

The New Covenant Advocate

— and —

Kingdom Herald

Vol. 34.

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, MARCH 1, 1943.

No. 12.

Seven Stars, Candlesticks, Lamps, Eyes

STARS, CANDLESTICKS, lamps, and eyes are all familiar objects, and they immediately convey to our minds the idea of light, which is one of the principal things of life. Light is one of the very essentials of life.

There are at least two kinds of light with which we are acquainted. One is the natural physical light associated with such things as stars, lamps, etc. The other is light in the sense of reason, knowledge, or enlightenment of the mind. And we are also acquainted with two kinds of darkness—the natural physical darkness, which is the absence of light; and darkness in the sense of ignorance, lack of knowledge, or the presence of sin and evil in the mind.

True light comes from God. He arranged first of all the natural physical lights, which illuminate the earth, radiate heat, and energise the forces of nature. And He gave man light in the sense of reason, intelligence, knowledge, and understanding.

If there were no natural physical lights at all, the whole world would be enveloped in dense black darkness, and in such a condition life would not endure very long. If there were no light at all in the world, in the sense of true knowledge and understanding, that is, if there were no real spiritual truth in the world, then it would, in such a condition, not endure very long.

But as the lights which God set to give light and life to the earth abide, and fulfil their work constantly and regularly, so the light that He gave to illuminate the path of His people remains, and shines more and more, as He gives the increase, and the perfect day approaches. It is God who gives the light, it is the privilege of the children of light as ambassadors of Christ to carry its life-giving message throughout the world.

The book of Revelation was given as a light for God's people, that they might be instructed and blessed by the things written therein. Though the signs and symbols may not be fully understood, there is a blessing to be gained even in the reading of it. And constant reading and comparing with other Scriptures reveal tremendous truths, in a wonder-

fully picturesque, and often very beautiful manner which is a source of constant delight.

The four things under consideration are used as symbols in the Revelation, and we shall now seek to learn their meaning.

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The Seven Candlesticks and the Seven Stars

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The church as a light in the world is tended, trimmed, and kept in order by the Lord. Christ is the founder and builder of the church; and, though

bodily invisible. He promised to be "in the midst" where two or three were assembled in His name. (Matthew 16: 18; 18: 20; 28: 20.) Throughout the age He sanctifies and cleanses the church "with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."—Ephesians 5: 26, 27.

The Lord is represented as holding the seven stars in his right hand. V. 20 explains that "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches." The right hand is generally recognized as a symbol of favor, power, authority. The word "angel" means messenger, and in the present case refers not to heavenly angels, but to human messengers. The angels are the messengers of the church as a whole. Everyone therefore who carries, or has carried, or may yet carry, the good tidings as a messenger of Christ, from the earliest times to the very last day of the church's witness, is represented under the symbol of the seven stars, and is assured of the favor, supported by the power, and goes forth with the authority of Christ the Lord. Among the many rich promises He gave to this effect are: Matthew 28: 20—"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" [literally, "age"]. And Matthew 10: 29-31. "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." This (vs. 30) reveals the particular care which the Lord exercises over each and every one of His messengers.

The Seven Lamps and the Seven Eyes

We come now to the consideration of the seven lamps and the seven eyes. In Revelation 4: 5 we read—

"And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices; and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God."

Here also seven means completeness. The Spirit of God is undivided; it is complete, perfect, and performs all that is required of it. The seven lamps before the throne are symbolic of the one Spirit, and their place before the throne shows that the Spirit is subject to God, an instrument to be used as and when He will. As taught in Acts 2: 33, the Spirit originated in God.

But God gave the Spirit to His Son, as we read—"having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost." This giving of the Holy Spirit by the Father to the Son is represented in another vision given to John—

Rev. 5: 6—"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth."

The "Lamb as it had been slain" had seven eyes—

a symbol of the Holy Spirit; and seven horns—a symbol of power and strength, indicating the position of authority now occupied by the risen Lord. He has all authority in heaven and in earth, and so is able to send the eyes "into all the earth." The use of the eyes is to be seen through reference to other Scriptures, such as—

Proverbs 5: 21—"For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, And He pondereth all his goings." This indicates the omniscience of the Holy Spirit, and the fact that God reflects on the doings of men.

Proverbs 15: 3—"The eyes of the Lord are in every place,

Beholding the evil and the good."

This again shows the omniscience of the Spirit, and that the Lord is well aware of evil.

Proverbs 22: 12—"The eyes of the Lord preserve knowledge,

And He overthroweth the words of the transgressor."

By the Spirit the Lord preserves the truth, and discerns error to overthrow it.

Habakkuk 1: 13—"Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity:" reveals the fact that God will not always tolerate evil, but will eventually banish it from the universe.

The "Lamb" uses the seven eyes of the Holy Spirit, therefore, to behold the state of the children of light, to watch over them (and when necessary interfere in their behalf), to preserve the light of the truth in them, and cause the overthrow and confusion of lies and false teachings.

The exercise of Christ's power represented by the seven horns, and the influence of the Spirit sent forth by Him (represented by the seven eyes), are not, however, confined to this age and His care over the Church. As the crowned Lamb His dominion is over all the earth, and will be exercised with political power and undiminished manifestation of His Holy Spirit in the Kingdom age. He is "King of kings, and Lord of lords," and He must reign until all enemies are put under His feet. All his work will be done in harmony with the Spirit of God, and will be to the glory of God.

By the Spirit as the servant of Jesus Christ the will of God is revealed to men. By it the truth has been made known to us (1 Corinthians 2: 12)—"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."

We will, therefore, walk as children of light, having full assurance and confidence in the strong right hand of the Lord that upholds us. And we will trust in His care and oversight, to preserve the truth in us, and to deliver us from every snare and evil. Let us ever remember the words of the Master (John 8)—

12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

—C. S. H.

The Lord's Coming

THE ADVENTIST movement which began early in the 19th century was briefly referred to in our issue of September, 1936, pages 127, 128. That the Lord would come again had been held

more or less by Christians of all denominations who believed the Lord's promise to come again and receive His disciples to Himself. But, with many, much of the Scripture was beclouded by the teach-

ing that every death of a Christian was a coming of the Lord to receive that one to his reward.

The Adventist teaching that Jesus would come as a man and set up His kingdom on earth was accepted by a few in the various denominations. Had no teachings on other Biblical subjects been involved, they could—and many did—have remained in their various denominations. But William Miller and others set dates for the Lord to appear to their natural eyes, and exhorted all who desired to be saved to separate themselves and be ready to meet Him when He came. And, in addition, other teaching on the soul, the state of the dead, and the resurrection was made obligatory as part of the true faith.

Thus disturbing elements entered the churches, driving some out by the force of conviction that Adventism was true, and that those who waited for the Lord should assemble together in a new organic body.

Those who separated themselves from the old denominations adopted in whole or in part these views on the state of the dead, Christ coming in a body of flesh, to set up His kingdom on earth, and to raise the saints to live again on the earth, being given everlasting life and positions of honour in the kingdom; the wicked to be destroyed. Some taught that the earth would be burned up, or at least the surface burned over, to make a new earth for the righteous to live in.

With new ideas of political freedom becoming widespread, new ideas on the relations of employer and employee, new inventions multiplying on every hand, and new religious teachers springing up outside the old denominations, it is easy to see how church members began to give themselves more liberty to think and at the same time stay where they were, with fellow church members thinking very different thoughts.

The churches of the various denominations then became not so much a solid phalanx of rigid contenders for some one creed against all others, but a comfortable place in which to accept salvation on very much one's own terms and let others think as they please. And "if they are sincere (the saying went, and still goes) the Lord will accept them, whether there is a place of endless torment or not, and whether the Lord Jesus is coming soon or possibly not till some distant time." While others who still held to the immortal soul teaching said that "perhaps it will not be necessary for Him to come at all, especially since we can so readily go straight to Him when we die."

This seeming broadmindedness among church members was due to failure to search the Scriptures with sufficient diligence. Had they done so, they would have found definite teaching on God's plans and purposes, and would have noticed the exhortations of the apostles to seek for and hold fast to the true faith; not to compromise with error, and at the same time to be ready to receive more light on such subjects as the Second Coming.

Where Adventists Failed

Zeal for the Lord's return to set up His kingdom and to take the faithful to himself was commendable. A special blessing had been promised to all them "that love his appearing." (2 Timothy 4: 8.) But Adventists failed to give due weight to important portions of Scripture and hence came to wrong conclusions; as evidenced by Miller's erroneous expectations concerning the Lord's appearing in 1844, etc. Later Adventists, who admitted his mistakes on time, still retained wrong ideas concerning the object of the Lord's return, and also concerning the call of the church to behold His heavenly glory. On many doctrines they have cast aside old errors merely to take on new ones. As, for instance, those developments out of early Adventism which have crystallized into associations or churches denying the pre-existence of the Lord Jesus, denying His absolute sinlessness and perfection when He became a man, and denying His present position as a Heavenly Being in the Father's image. Other Adventists deny the resurrection of the masses of humanity, whereas Jesus said all the dead should hear His voice and should come forth. And that the previously unenlightened shall be enlightened under the rule of His Kingdom on earth is plainly taught in Scripture.

The Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven

It would be of interest to examine separately each of the texts in which the word *parousia* (many times rendered "coming" in the A.V.) occurs, and show how the correct translation ("presence") would have been helpful to truth seekers in the early years of last century, with its newly awakened interest in the Lord's coming again, following on the wider distribution of the Scriptures by Bible Societies.*

Instead, however, of looking for the sign that Christ was present dealing with the "man of sin" as predicted by the Apostle (2 Thessalonians 2: 8), enquirers were taught to look into the sky for a sudden appearance of Jesus and His holy angels for the purpose of destroying in a few hours or even minutes the whole of the physical earth with all upon it, with the single exception of the few believers who were looking for Him. And although many leaders and teachers in the Advent Movement could see that figurative language was used with great frequency in the Scriptures on other subjects, such as *Gehenna* fire, they failed to realize that the "fire" spoken of in connection with the return of Christ is used as a symbol of trouble and destruction; "earth" also being used symbolically of the social order on the earth, and "heaven" as a symbol of ruling powers and authorities (ecclesiastical and political), with all of whom Christ must deal in order to fulfil the prophecies. (2 Peter 3: 7-13.) They mistook "the sign of the Son of man in heaven" for the Son of man himself, whereas our

*For list of passages in which the Greek word *parousia*, meaning "presence," occurs, please see the book, "Christ's Promised Return," pages 24-26.

Lord was giving the disciples to understand by these symbols that He himself would be invisible.—Matthew 24: 29-33.

The "tribulation of those days" (vs. 29) refers to the tribulation on the saints while in the hand (symbol of power) of the Papacy for 1260 years (Daniel 7: 25), and not to the very last trouble of the age, as some think. Immediately after the end of the 1260 years the "sun" and the "moon" (great lights in the spiritual "heavens") were darkened; "stars" fell, that is, leaders and teachers lost their interest in spiritual things and became worldly-minded, and the "powers" were shaken, are still being shaken in this year of grace 1943. The tribes or nations of the earth mourn as their institutions are "shaken," and the clouds of obscurity and trouble conceal the presence of the Son of man. Few can understand, and therefore men's hearts fail them for fear. But those who do understand lift up their heads and rejoice.—Luke 21: 25-36.

The "sign" of the Son of man is not only the fact of His dealing with "the man of sin," but also the sending out of His messengers "with a great sound of a trumpet [or, "with a trumpet, and a great voice"—marginal reading], and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (Matthew 24: 31.) From every quarter of Christendom, wherever the Gospel has been preached and converts made, the "elect" are being gathered. First, they are being gathered into closer fellowship with the Lord and granted increased enlightenment by the spread of "present truth" and into oneness with other true believers the world over. And, second, they are being gathered to the Lord in the manner described in 1 Thessalonians 4: 15-17.

It may be that the wrong idea of "coming," which prevented Christians of the century following the French Revolution from recognizing the events of their day as "signs" of His *presence*, formed part of the "clouds of heaven" spoken of in Matthew 24: 30. Truth has been wonderfully obscured by error, not only on that but on every other subject. But all should be able to see the gathering together of the "elect" now proceeding in this, our day.

Gathering the Elect

Never was there a time of greater communication from one end of the world to the other. The religious and the political, the social and the financial elements are uniting in huge combinations of capital, immense labor organisations, enormous political leagues and pacts embracing most of the countries of the world, church organizations and missionary enterprises exercising worldwide control. And all the world is joined by a network of railways and steamship (also motorship) lines, postal unions, telegraphs, cables, and wireless. And in the last few years aeroplanes and airships capable of circumnavigating the globe in a few days.

All this intercommunication facilitates the double work in Christendom of gathering the "wheat" into the "barn," and binding the "tares" into bundles to burn them. (Matthew 13: 30, 37-43.) The wheat

—the true saints, the "elect"—are gathered out of all the complications and confusions to the Lord, in whom they rest and rejoice while waiting for their call to be with Him in glory. Let us observe this "sign" of His presence, and keep it well in mind.

The gathering of the elect into oneness of faith and hope, and to be changed and made like Him in glory, is part of the work now proceeding. The "1290 days" reached to the time of great revival of interest in the Lord's promise that He would "come again." The "1335 days" were to bring a special blessedness (Daniel 12: 9-12), and it may well be that the blessedness referred to is that events in connection with the Lord's presence had so far progressed that the sleeping saints were called forth to meet Him "in the air," for "the dead in Christ shall rise first." It may be also that, reaching the limit of the 1335 years, the time came for the "change" of the living saints—"we which are alive and remain unto the presence of the Lord."—1 Thessalonians 4: 15; 1 Corinthians 15: 49-52.

This change of the saints from flesh to spirit is not observable by their friends, because it is the privilege of all the saints who follow in their Lord's footsteps to be *faithful unto death*. The very last of the members living under the Laodicean conditions described in Revelation 3: 14-21 must be "overcomers"—like their brethren who preceded them into death—before they are granted to sit with Him in His throne. But since the flesh body is laid down, as stated in 1 Corinthians 15: 50—"flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," the resurrection "change" of the overcomers into the likeness of Christ, to "bear the image of the heavenly," is not perceived by our friends.

The sad spectacle of millions of believers in the Lord's personal return looking for Him in mistaken ways is one of the signs of our time. In addition, we see them holding tenaciously to errors set forth by various teachers: some, like the author of the *Emphatic Diaglott*, going so far as to deny the virgin birth of Christ. Let us who see the truth emphasize the importance of the confession made by Peter: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And confessed by others after Pentecost.—Matthew 16: 15-19; Acts 9: 20; 1 John 4: 15; 5: 5. On another page will be found an article entitled "The Child Immanuel," which we commend to all who desire the evidence that the birth of Jesus as a perfect human being was an extraordinary provision of God by which the One who had been with the Father from before the world was came down to rescue men from sin and death by giving Himself a ransom for all, of opening the way to reconciliation with God, and making possible the granting of everlasting life to those who believe the glad tidings.—Hebrews 2: 9.

We commend for further reading on this subject, the book "Christ's Prophecy on Olivet"—a complete study of Matthew 24 and related sayings of our Lord, and "The Lord's Promised Return," a briefer consideration of the Second Advent. See Book List for prices. Any who wish to read these,

and cannot well afford the cost, will be supplied free. See also "Bible Talks for Heart and Mind," chapter "The Lord's Return."

Then Shall They See

After all that has been said here and in our other publications, many Christians still have difficulty with such statements as Mark 13: 26—"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory." Verse 25 reads literally, "And the stars of heaven shall be falling, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken." Hence when the Lord said, "And then shall they see," He referred not to His disciples, but to the powers and great ones in the political and ecclesiastical ruling positions. And we should note that the Lord does not say that they shall see Him, but "And then shall they see the Son of man coming." It is His coming that they shall see, and that coming shall be "in the clouds"; that is, obscured by "clouds," for the "clouds" are used figuratively, as are the "sun," "moon," and "stars." They see the "clouds" of obscurity and trouble, and they do not know what they mean. Trouble in the social order ("earth") is bad enough, but trouble and obscurity in the ecclesiastical and political domains is worse, inasmuch as the people generally place confidence in their religious leaders and governmental authorities, and have peace when they think all is going well. But now some are disturbed by the conflicts among the great powers and by the "falling away" of trusted religious teachers into worldliness and unscriptural theories of all sorts, as may be seen by reports of sermons delivered in supposedly Christian pulpits.

The apostles wrote under inspiration to inform God's people what that great new power is, which is now seen among the other powers. But the other powers themselves would not believe it if they were told.

A few illustrations would perhaps serve to make this clear.

But, first, we should say that the Greek word here (Mark 13: 26) rendered "coming" is not *parousia*, as in Matthew 24: 3, 27, 37, 39.

In Mark 13: 26, 36; 14: 62; 15: 21; Luke 21: 27, the word is *erchomai*. And the idea in Matthew 24: 30 and similar passages seems to be that a new power (moving freely in the ecclesiastical and political "heavens") will appear, whose inner propulsive force will not be recognized—nor yet the objects it aims to accomplish—by "they" (the other objects in that "heavens"), nor by any who see only from their own point of view. The other powers of the "heavens" are "shaken," but do not understand why.

The judge granted the woman's request, "lest by her continual coming [*erchomai*] she weary me." The woman was free to come, and she moved with a purpose; and persisted till she accomplished that purpose. Yet, strictly, the "coming" was the approach to the judge.—Luke 18: 1-7.

So we may say in regard to our Lord's "coming" which these great ones in the heavens "see." They

see that something is moving up and down and around among them exerting a strange—or at any rate unexplainable—influence in the religious and political sphere. Things do not go as they expect. They cannot account for the "shaking," the failures in their diplomacy and scheming.

But the enlightened among God's people can tell them what it is. It is the Lord's coming, *erchomai*; His approach to the critical time when He will fully take over control of the "heavens"—both political and religious—by completely casting out those powers which for a time were only "shaken."

The Lord has confided to His own people that it is He, whose "presence" or *parousia* began about the period 1789-1799, when both the Papacy and the feudal systems received a great "shaking." But the great ones of politics and ecclesiasticism must wait for an understanding; they will learn later that it was He who conducted the large-scale operations that brought them to nought, and who purposed to set up His own Kingdom on the ruins of theirs; or as expressed by Daniel, when theirs have been broken up and blown away.—Daniel 2: 31-45.

The whole of the diplomacy and intrigue of the Papal hierarchy, even in this comparatively enlightened era, is directed to perpetuate and enforce the Pope's claims to both sacerdotal and political rulership over all mankind, as the vice-regent of Christ on earth. Were they wise, they would seek to discover Who is in the "clouds" that obscure their vision and interrupt their plans. But they are not wise with the true wisdom, and they will not learn until 2 Peter 3: 10 is fulfilled—

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night: in which the heavens [ecclesiastical and political] shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth [social order] also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

This will not mean the destruction of the physical earth, for Peter's prophecy goes on—still using "heavens" to represent governmental and religious control, and "earth" the social order—

13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness

Thus again are we informed that the God of heaven through His Son our Lord Jesus, having punished and removed the unworthy systems and institutions of this evil world, will set up His own kingdom over (in control of) the new social order, wherein righteousness will be the keynote.

How many people in that day, after the kingdom is set up and the whole course of events has been explained to them, will be constrained to say, "Ah, we could see Him coming in the clouds, though we did not discern Him; at the time we did not know that the clouds of obscurity and trouble and counter diplomacy were largely of our own making. Too infatuated were we with our own selfish and grandiose schemes to grasp the fact that our best move would have been to fall down at His feet and worship Him, the Lord of Glory and Saviour of mankind!"

The word *erchomai* occurs also in John 1: 29, "John seeth Jesus coming unto him," and in John 1: 47, "Jesus saw Nathaniel coming to him." In these instances there was no question of being covered

or obscured, they could be plainly seen "coming." All the more reason, then, that we should recognize the force of our Lord's description of "clouds" obscuring His "coming" from "the powers of the heavens;" obscuring His "coming" also from the "earth" or masses of peoples under the domination of these "heavens," who work sometimes with and sometimes against the governmental and religious

powers, while equally ignorant concerning all that is involved in the ups and downs and circumlocutions of world affairs in the present time.

Thank God the day is near when the Lord will exhibit His trophies and all the world will acclaim Him the mighty Conqueror who will prove to be also the Prince of Peace!

CONFIDENCE

"In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust."—Psalm 71: 1
Trust Him when dark doubts assail thee,
Trust Him when thy strength is small;
Trust Him when to simply trust Him
Seems the hardest thing of all.

Trust Him, He is ever faithful:
Trust Him for His will is best;
Trust Him, for the heart of Jesus
Is the only place of rest.

Trust Him, then, through cloud and sunshine,
All thy cares upon Him cast,
'Till the storms of life are over,
And the trusting days are past.

"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"
"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"—Rom. 8: 31, 32.

—Selected.



The Atonement a Covering Price

THE ATONEMENT as a covering price ("Kopher") is a most interesting and important feature of Old Testament symbolism, and therefore deserves the careful consideration of every Christian. Philologically the English "cover" and the Hebrew "Kopher" are the same word, being built upon the same consonant skeleton—

English—c (k)—v (ph)—r.
Hebrew—k (c)—ph (v)—r.

The meanings of these two words in their respective languages are also the same, with like shades and similar variations of usage and application.

The Hebrew noun "Kopher" is derived from the Hebrew verb "*Kaphar*," a primitive root, meaning, according to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance,

"to cover (specifically with bitumen); figuratively, to expiate or condone, to placate or cancel." In the Authorized Version, "*kaphar*" is translated—"appease, make (an) atonement, cleanse, disannul, forgive, be merciful, pacify, pardon, purge (away), put off, reconcile, make reconciliation."

The noun Kopher therefore means, "a cover, that is (literally) a village (as covered in); specifically bitumen (as used for coating), and the henna plant (as used for dyeing); figuratively, a *redemption-price*." It is translated in the Authorized Version—"bribe, camphire, pitch, ransom, satisfaction, sum of money, village."

It is thus seen that the Scriptural use of this word is seldom in its primitive or literal sense, as covering with pitch, but mostly in its figurative sense, as a price or satisfaction.

The English word "cover" has, among others, the following definitions in the "Standard Dictionary"—"To overspread or overlay with something so as to protect or hide; to meet the extent or requirements of, compensate for." In the sense of the last definition our English word "cover" is often used in such an expression as the following—"a price to cover

all." This agrees precisely with the most frequent use of "Kopher" in the Bible.

Illustrations of "Kopher" as a Covering Price

In the following texts, all of which have to do with atonement between God and men—the typical, of course, foreshadowing the real—"Kopher" is translated "ransom," it being a covering price—

"When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom [Kopher] for his soul unto the Lord. . . . to make an atonement [kaphar] for your souls."—Exodus 30: 12-16.

The ransom (Kopher) here mentioned was the giving of something by each one for the deliverance of his soul from death. It was a strong way of teaching substitution, the price being given in exchange for the thing purchased. The "covering price" referred to in Exodus 30: 12-16 is a grand type of the man Christ Jesus, the real "ransom"—corresponding or covering price for all.

The fact that each individual must for himself acknowledge the real Ransom as having been offered for himself personally, if he would be freed from death, was indicated in the type by each man having to pay the same money—the rich no more, the poor no less—"that there be no plague among them."—Compare I Timothy 2: 4-7.

"Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom [Kopher]."—Job 33: 24.

"None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him."—Psalm 49: 7.

No member of Adam's race could offer himself as a ransom or covering price for his brother. All were alike condemned; therefore in the Psalm our Lord Jesus is foreshadowed as the "Kopher"—the covering price—to come in the fullness of time.

"Kopher" is rendered "ransom" in Job 36: 18; Proverbs 6: 35; 13: 8; 21: 18; Isaiah 43: 3, having reference to other subjects than atonement between God and men.

Kopher—Satisfaction

The impossibility of providing a ransom, or covering price, in certain cases, was noted in the Law—

31 Moreover, ye shall take no satisfaction [Kopher] for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death; but he shall be surely put to death.

32 And ye shall take no satisfaction [Kopher] for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest.—Numbers 35.

Kopher—Sum of Money

"If there be laid on him a sum of money [Kopher], then he shall give for the ransom of his life whatsoever is laid upon him."—Exodus 21: 30.

In the above quotations every occurrence of "Kopher" in which it has reference to atonement has been cited. Other occurrences of this word, in which it is translated "bribe, camphire, pitch, village," have not been cited, because not germane to the present study. The conclusion is that "Kopher," when referring to atonement, signifies the covering price paid to God by Jesus on behalf of sinners. Because of the "Kopher" He paid when He gave himself a ransom for all, our Saviour owns the race. Whenever any individual member of the race (now or in future) believes that Jesus paid the "Kopher," and acknowledges that as having been done on his behalf, he is freely justified from all his past sins; that is to say, his past sins are forgiven. (Romans 3: 25.) Provision is also made for the forgiveness—on account of the same "Kopher" or covering price—of such of the believer's subsequent sins as arise out of his descent from Adam, when they are repudiated and confessed. All are "covered" by the one price or offering made "once for all" by our blessed Lord Jesus on Calvary.

"Kaphar"—Make Atonement

The verb "kaphar," from which "Kopher" is derived, occurs many times in the Old Testament. It is nearly always translated "make (an) atonement." It stands for the *action*, while "Kopher" is the noun. In the great atonement chapter (Leviticus 16), the verb "kaphar" occurs 15 times and in twelve instances is rendered "make an atonement;" once "make the atonement," once "make atonement," and once "made an atonement." Here the blood sprinkled was the "covering price" for the sins that had been committed throughout the year.

"Kaphar"—Make Reconciliation

One of the most significant of the texts in which "kaphar" occurs is a prophecy of Messiah's first advent, where it describes His sacrifice for sin, the covering, by payment of the price, for iniquity in which the whole race of mankind is involved—

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation [kaphar] for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy."—Daniel 9: 24.

This shows that the purpose of the sacrifice was not to make a covering for sin, the sin meanwhile remaining. On the contrary, it was to make a complete satisfaction, by paying the required price, so that sin

and death may be forever removed from each one who accepts that sacrifice as having been offered for his sins.

The Apostle wrote of Jesus—

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, . . . that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."—Romans 3: 25, 26.

Here Jesus as the propitiation, or propitiatory offering on the mercy seat, is shown to have given the *covering price* by the payment of which forgiveness of sins was made possible. As the atonement offerings of the day of atonement (Leviticus 16) were regarded as expiatory, by payment of a price, and the blood of the victim was sprinkled in the Divine Presence, and this was accepted by God as satisfaction for the sins of the people, so the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ is represented in the New Testament as sprinkled in the presence of God as the real and ever-efficacious satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. (Hebrews 1: 3; 10: 12; 1 John 2: 2.) This thought is strengthened by the use in the Old Testament of the word "Kippur."

"Kippur": Expiation

The noun "Kippur" is derived from "kaphar," and means *expiation*. (See Concordance—Strong's or Young's.) It occurs only 8 times, as follows, being always rendered "atonement"—

- "a sin offering for atonement."—Exodus 29: 36.
- "the sin offering of atonements."—Exodus 30: 10.
- "atonement money."—Exodus 30: 16.
- "a day of atonement."—Leviticus 23: 27, 28.
- "the day of atonement."—Leviticus 25: 9.
- "the ram of the atonement."—Numbers 5: 8.
- "the sin offering of atonement."—Numbers 29: 11.

"Yom Kippur"—Day of Expiation—is the Scriptural phrase (Leviticus 23: 27, 28; 25: 9) in use among Jews to this day to describe the annual day of atonement, when the sin offerings were made in expiation of the sins of the nation of Israel.

The reader should study all of the above texts, reading "expiation" for "atonement," in order to get the thought well in mind that *satisfaction by payment of a price* is God's plan for atoning for sin. That price was the life of His well beloved and Only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, which was offered up on the cross. Christ "died for our sins."—1 Corinthians 15: 3; Hebrews 9: 14.

The One Offering Once for All

In harmony with what we have found about "Kopher" and "kaphar," the New Testament declares that Jesus is "the PROPITIATION for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John 2: 2.) And as showing that the expiation is not made in instalments, one being the sacrifice of Himself personally, and the other the sacrifice of Himself by proxy, the New Testament is most explicit in declaring that the complete sacrifice, for us (the believers) and for the whole world, was given "ONCE FOR ALL, when he offered up himself."—Hebrews 7: 27; 10: 10, 12, 14, 18; 13: 12, R.V.

Thanks be unto God for His wonderful plan of

redemption, and to "our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation" (R.V.), through acceptance of the fact that He, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man, thus being the

Ransom ("Kopher"), the "covering" price, the equivalent or corresponding price, for all.—Romans 5: 11 (R.V.); 2 Corinthians 5: 20; Hebrews 2: 9; 1 Timothy 2: 4-7; Matthew 20: 28; 1 Peter 1: 10.



Plant Growth Hormones

THEIR NATURE AND THEIR USES

HORMONES and vitamins both play their part in the normal growth and functioning of the animal organism. They have much in common, for a very minute amount of each is required to ensure health and development. The distinction between them is that the hormone is produced in one organ of the body, and carried in the blood stream to another organ, in which its effects are manifested, whereas the vitamins are ingested in the food.

Pasteur considered that yeast would develop normally in a medium composed of sugar and certain inorganic salts; and, although "wild" yeasts will do so, highly cultivated strains will neither grow nor produce fermentation unless malt wort or a similar extract is added. The term bios was provisionally given to the unknown substance necessary for their development in the synthetic medium. Bios was soon known to be complex. In 1928 one of its constituents was found to be meso-inositol, a sugar-like substance which had been known for a long time. In 1930 aneurin, or Vitamin B₁, was recognised as a bios component, and in 1932 Professor Kogl, at the University of Utrecht, succeeded in isolating a third factor, to which he gave the name of biotin. It took him and his collaborators five years to produce 70 milligrams in crystalline form, and he estimated that 360 tons of ordinary yeast would yield only a gramme. It is one of the most potent physiological substances known, and its effects in promoting growth can be detected in a dilution of one part in 10-11 parts of solution. Meso-inositol, aneurin and biotin must all be present for plant growth to proceed, but in most cases one or more are produced by the plant itself, and not required from external sources.

An interesting instance is that of two parasitic fungi, one of which supplies biotin, but is deficient in aneurin, the other furnishing aneurin, but not biotin. They will not grow separately in a synthetic medium, but develop normally when inoculated together—a true case of symbiosis. Experiments are now being extended to the higher forms of plant life, which can be expected themselves to produce all the essential hormones. The addition of biotin and aneurin to the medium in which pea seedlings are growing causes a definite degree of stimulation, although the seeds themselves contain both of these hormones. Aneurin is essential to the animal organism, and its absence from polished rice gave rise to beri-beri, and so directed us to the first clue which led to the discovery of the Vitamin B. It is as essential to the rice plant itself as it is to the animal that eats it—we do not know yet whether biotin is also essential to our human well-being.

The next group of plant hormones are known as the auxins, and the study of these has centred round the coleoptile, or young growing tip of the oat seedling. The rapid upward growth of the seedling is caused by elongation of the cells, and this cell extension is controlled by the auxins, which are secreted by the cells of the growing point at the tip, and, diffusing downward, cause the cells to lengthen. If the tip is cut off growth immediately ceases, but if on the cut surface we place a spot of agar jelly containing auxin, at once the shoot commences to grow again. Auxins have been obtained from many sources, and at least 50 substances are known to have growth-promoting properties.

The chief natural auxins are auxin A, found in quantity in human urine, and auxin B, from malt and maize germ

oil, which are so active that one milligram would produce detectable effects on 50,000,000 oat coleoptiles. Another hetero-auxin, found in yeast, proved to be indole-acetic acid, which can be made in the laboratory. Auxins A and B have not yet been synthesised, although their structure is known.

Practical application of the study of these growth-producing substances depends mainly on the use of indole-acetic, indole-butyric and naphthyl-acetic acids, since these can be made synthetically, whereas the auxins cannot, at least at present. They cause a rapid swelling of the tissues of young stems, and it has been suggested that they may thus assist the union of grafts. They change the shape of flowers, as in the experiments reported in 1937 by Dr. Warne, of Manchester, who found that if a chrysanthemum bud which was just opening was sprayed with naphthyl-acetic acid the petals would change from the spreading to the incurved type.

Mainly, however, these substances have been employed to encourage the rooting of cuttings, and here they have proved of practical value to the nurseryman. It is a little unfortunate, however, that, whilst the rooting of cuttings that strike fairly readily is much encouraged, those which are difficult to propagate show a relatively less satisfactory response.

The cuttings stand in glass vessels containing a solution of naphthyl-acetic acid, in a concentration of only from 10 to 100 parts per million, for periods from four to 48 hours. The stems are then rinsed in clean water, and the cuttings planted as usual, when a species which is normally slow in rooting will show a successful response in about 50 per cent. of the cuttings.

Seeds which have lost some of their germinating capacity as the result of long storage have been stimulated by growth hormones, and Gustafson, in America, has succeeded in producing fruit of normal size and appearance from unfertilised flowers by touching the stigmas with naphthyl-acetic acid. The most recent applications of these substances is the result of field experiments by Grace in Canada, which suggest the use of plant hormones for increasing the growth of ordinary crops, such as lettuce and wheat. Grace had the novel idea of applying the hormone mixed with tale or a similar powder, and dusted over the crop, and the active substance required for this treatment amounted only to an ounce for 50 acres.

It may be even better to add the naphthyl-acetic acid or other substance to the copper carbonate powder or formalin solution, which is often used in pre-treating the seed as a preventive of fungous diseases. Grace has shown that there is no loss of activity in these mixtures, and that seed so treated shows increased root development when compared with controls.

Although the hormone substances are very expensive, the quantities required, approximating five parts per million of dust, are so small that they do not add appreciably to the cost of treatment. It is evident that our knowledge of the nutrition of the plant is only in its infancy. There is much that finds analogies in our modern knowledge of the food requirements of animals. One thing is now clear to the scientist and the farmer alike, and that is the superiority of animal manures, rich in the hormones of plant growth, over the phosphates and nitrates from synthetic sources, which supply essential minerals, but starve the plants of their essential "vitamins."

—E. I. R., in Melbourne "Age."

Foretelling the Future

TO foretell the future is without the scope of human power except in the limited degree of reasoning on the past and the present and thence to possibilities and probabilities. Never is it possible for a human being of his own knowledge and foresight to predict a certainty. Many have tried, and all have failed. At the present time with many widely posted observation stations and the use of telegraph and wireless it is possible for the Weather Bureau to predict the weather for a few hours ahead. But even so there is no absolute certainty, for unexpected currents of air may arise at any time to dissolve or alter the course of a high or low pressure and an expected rain or storm.

So uncertain is the future that it has passed into a proverb—"It is the unexpected that happens." In one's own life, sickness or accident or some other circumstance may alter its whole course in a moment. Often in political and military crises great men fail or are stricken down, and so their valued help is lost to their cause when most in demand. Surprises of various kinds occur to alter the political situation or change victory to defeat or vice versa. So there is another proverb—"Who can tell what a day may bring forth?"

Nevertheless, and notwithstanding general inability and ignorance, there have been from the earliest times men who foretold the future with exactness. They were able to do it because they received their information from a higher Source. One such was Noah, whom God so enlightened that he was able to predict the Flood years before it came to pass, and to save the lives of himself and family by preparing the ark in the face of great opposition and ridicule.—Genesis, chapters 6 to 9; Luke 17: 26, 27; 1 Peter 3: 20.

God is the only one in the whole universe who can foretell the future with certainty. And the proof of this is found in the events of history. God can foretell absolutely, because He not only has the vision but the power to bring to pass. Take, for instance, the Flood already referred to. Who but the Almighty could have opened the windows of heaven and broken up the reservoirs of the deep to cause it to rain for forty days and nights and produce a flood of waters to cover the highest mountains? Another instance: He could promise a son to Abraham and Sarah, and it came to pass because He had power over the lives of mankind. He could send Moses to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt with the certainty of accomplishment because He had power to deal with Pharaoh and his hosts.

Although mankind fell into sin and was condemned to death, as we are told in Genesis, God has desired men to repent and serve Him, and to this end has given a revelation of Himself and of His claims to their obedience. To assist them in loyalty He has given also promises as incentives to forsake sin and practise righteousness, and set up a standard of righteousness for them to measure up to. This standard has differed in detail from age to age, but its main features have been the same throughout—justice,

truth, and holiness; qualities which He himself possesses and exhibits in His dealings with men. Being a just and loving God it follows that promises of good things were given to those who would serve and obey Him, while necessarily punishments were reserved for the disobedient.

This granting of rewards and infliction of punishments was carried out on a systematic plan under the covenant He made with the children of Israel at Sinai. If they would be obedient and keep His commandments they would be blest in basket and store, in crops and herds, in health and long life. If they went contrary to Him these things would fail and they would in addition suffer invasion at the hands of their enemies. He had the right to cut off transgressors without warning, yet He did not do so. In every case He sent warnings and pleadings to turn from their evil ways. Those who carried these messages of reproof and appeal were called prophets. Of them He says—"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." Not that the prophets should keep the secrets or predictions to themselves, but that they might tell the people and warn them of impending calamities if they did not reform.—Amos 3: 1-8; Jeremiah 7: 12-14; etc.

The prophets whose writings appear in separate books of the Bible, in addition to the Psalms, are the four Great Prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, and the Twelve Minor Prophets—Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. The reason for calling them "minor" prophets is not quite clear, since the messages they gave out were important. Though some of them are very brief, others are of considerable length, and contain important Messianic predictions in addition to those of local application. It is our purpose to take up the Minor Prophets in order during the next few months (D.V.), and we believe they will prove profitable studies to us all.

The attitude taken by some Christians, viz., that these prophecies are of no value to Christians, having been given to the Israelites, is untenable; for the apostle wrote that all Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3: 14-17.) What befell the Israelites are examples to us, and are written for our admonition, he says in 1 Corinthians 10: 1-12. We are also told to take the prophets as patterns of patient endurance and faith. (James 5: 10; Hebrews 11: 32-34.) This we could not do if we did not read the history of their times and study their prophecies. Our faith in God and in His Word is strengthened by noting how the prophecies have been fulfilled in the past, and this gives us confidence to believe that prophecies still unfulfilled will come to pass in due time and without fail. Holy men of old spoke and wrote as they were moved by the divine Spirit, and God pledged Himself to their fulfilment that the glory of His omniscience might become known and His name

be honoured throughout the earth.—2 Peter 1: 20, 21; Isaiah 41: 20-23; 42: 8-12; 44: 6-8, 24-28; 63: 12; Daniel 9: 11-15; Exodus 14: 18; Nehemiah 9: 10.

Hosea the Prophet

The first of the Minor Prophets as arranged in our Bibles is Hosea, though he was not the first in point of time. Little is given of his life history—the mere statement that he was the son of Beeri, and that he prophesied in the day of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel. Hosea therefore prophesied at a time when wickedness was great in both Israel and Judah, but his messages were chiefly to the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, predicting punishments which were soon inflicted upon them by invading armies of Gentiles. These invasions and the final carrying away of the ten-tribe nations to Assyria are recorded in the books of Kings and Chronicles. See also Hosea 11: 1-5.

Our purpose in the present study will be to consider those portions of Hosea's prophecy which are referred to and applied in the New Testament. For we look upon the New Testament as the key to the Old, the apostles having been inspired to interpret it. The Holy Spirit moved the Prophets to write, and hundreds of years later inspired the Apostles to explain and apply them. And by studying these apostolic applications we shall be preserved from making mere guesses as to their meaning.

My People and Not My People

The first of Hosea's prophecies quoted and applied in the New Testament is found in 1 Peter 2: 10—"Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." (Compare Hosea 1: 10.) And the next of similar import, in Romans 9: 25. (Compare Hosea 2: 23.)

In order to make the prophecies interesting and impressive the Lord often caused the prophets to carry out certain actions by way of signs to the people. In the present instance Hosea was instructed to name his children for signs. As these children grew up and were repeatedly called by these names the people would be reminded of what the Lord had foretold through the prophet.

Lest some should misunderstand Hosea 1: 2—a favorite controversial point with attackers of the Bible—we may say that we do not understand the Lord to have commanded Hosea to marry an impure woman. The whole of the ten-tribe kingdom was said to be in a state of whoredom because it had turned from the true God to idol worship. God had continually spoken of himself as the husband of the twelve tribe kingdom of Israel because He had performed a husband's part in preserving and providing for them. In these circumstances it was the duty of the Israelites to remain true to God. This "marriage" (figurative) had been entered into at Sinai when the Covenant was agreed to. When the ten tribes revolted and formed a separate kingdom it was in contravention of the Covenant. And hence association with Gentile idols and practices was (figuratively) "whoredom." This is plainly stated in

Hosea 4: 12-18. Hence the "wife of whoredoms" Hosea was instructed to take was not necessarily personally immoral, but belonged to the kingdom which was unfaithful to its husband, God. It is inconceivable that God should direct His prophet to enter into a marriage which the law condemned. Priests and prophets were to set an example of separateness from sin in all its forms. But looked at in the way above suggested the command is understandable. The lesson or sign or figure was not in the woman Hosea married, but in the children and the names given them.

These children represented three stages in God's dealings with Israel. The firstborn son Jezreel represented the apostate ten-tribe kingdom, and the name means "God scatters." The event thus predicted by a sign was accompanied by a plain statement—"I will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel." This was fulfilled when the Assyrians took them captive.

The name of the next child—a daughter—was Loruhamah, and its significance is stated in Hosea 1: 6, 7. Mercy will be removed from the ten-tribe kingdom, but continued to Judah the two-tribe kingdom, which still carried on (though perfunctorily) the true worship at Jerusalem.—Hosea 11: 12.

The next child—a son—called Lo-ammi—represented God's refusal to be called the God of Judah. This was the next step in God's dealings with His people, for Judah in turn proved as idolatrous and hard-hearted as the ten-tribe kingdom. (Hosea 6: 4-11; 12: 2.) Hence Lo-ammi, "not my people."

Here then comes in the great prophecy quoted in the New Testament. (Hosea 1: 10.) God purposed to have a people; and the Israelites, "both the houses of Israel," proved unfaithful, and were rejected. (Isaiah 8: 11-15.) Where, then, could God find a people? For he had said that the children of Israel should be as the sand of the sea. The Jews thought God could have no other people but them. This prophecy shows, however, that God was at no loss for a people because they ceased to be His. There were others who up to that time had not been His people—the Gentiles. God would call some of them to become His people; and so, after all, God would not be without "a people." Other Scriptures show that a remnant from the Jews and from the other tribes was also called to be His people, but this time under the New Covenant—the covenant of mercy, as Peter says—"which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." (Compare Hebrews 8: 12.) These believers constitute the "living stones" in the spiritual house God is now building. (1 Peter 2: 1-10.) Through Jesus the mercy is given, and through Him they are built up as God's true and faithful people.

This great truth is further expounded in Romans 9: 27, where two prophecies of Isaiah are interpreted, also showing that God will have His people, composed of believing Jews and Gentiles.

A remarkable prophecy indeed! More than seven hundred years before it came to pass, God through Hosea foretold the rejection of stiff-necked Israel and Judah and the pouring out of mercy upon the believing remnant of Jews and upon the Gentiles who

would believe when the Gospel was preached unto them.

Who but God could tell an event hundreds of years before it came to pass or the people were born who should receive the benefits of His mercy?

Chapter two is in harmony with the above explanation concerning Hosea's children. The conditions and threats they represent are asked to plead with Israel to return to God; not that Hosea's wife should return to him, for there is no evidence that she left him. The whole picture refers to the relations subsisting between God and the Israelites; a picture for "the latter days," as Hosea declares in chapter 3, verse 5.

Called Out of Egypt

The remainder of the book contains further pleadings and reproofs, the other prophecies cited in the New Testament being inserted in the midst of more immediate predictions. The next of these New Testament citations is found in Matthew 2: 15—"Out of Egypt have I called my son"—a quotation from Hosea 11: 1—"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt."

This statement as it is used in Hosea is the mere repetition of an historical fact well known to those whom he addressed. God's care over them as a separate nation was manifest throughout their bondage in Egypt, and finally He called them forth, taking the whole nation to be to Him as a son. Moses was commanded to say to Pharaoh—"Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn. . . . Let my son go, that he may serve me."—Exodus 4: 22, 23.

But in Hosea's statement of this historical fact was hidden a prophecy concerning the only begotten Son of God, who for a while lived in Egypt to avoid molestation from Herod. Certain signs were given whereby the Jews (and others) might recognise the Messiah when He came, and this, according to Matthew, was one of the signs—that He should be for a time in Egypt.

Mercy and Knowledge

Hosea was used by Jehovah to declare that He preferred mercy to sacrifice, and desired knowledge more than burnt offerings. Another prophet inspired to say the same thing was Micah. (6: 6-8.) Some have thought that if this were the case God might have dispensed with the animal sacrifices long before Christ came. And others ask, Why, if He did not desire them, did God appoint them and repeatedly reprove the children of Israel when they did not present them?

In answer we would say that God did desire sacrifices and did appoint them to be offered, as recorded in the writings of Moses. They served several useful purposes, one of which was to make types. But God did not desire the maimed and the diseased which the Israelites frequently brought instead of the best of their flocks and herds. Nor did God appreciate the offering of sacrifices by those who did so as a mere form, and were at the same time indulging themselves in all manner of wickedness. (Micah 6: 10-12; Malachi 1: 7, 8, 13, 14.) The fact that our Lord quotes Hosea's words in reproof of the Pharisees when they objected to His eating with publicans and

sinners (Matthew 9: 11-13) is evidence that Hosea's words were a hint that God had something better in view than the Covenant given at Sinai which required such offerings. It was a prophecy pointing to the Messiah, who alone would be able to deliver them from the Law Covenant and teach them by some other means those qualities of heart and mind which He desired to see in them.

This provision God made in the New Covenant, which our Lord Jesus sealed with His precious blood. We have already seen from Hosea's first "sign" that God purposed to have mercy upon Gentiles who had not, like Israel, had previous experience of it (except in the provision of food, etc.—Acts 14: 17), and here we have a prophecy that God will require to see mercy in any whom He accepts. Those who experience the mercy provided in the New Covenant are expected to exercise the quality of mercy toward others. It was not accidental that our Lord said in the Sermon on the Mount—"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy," and emphasized that if we do not have mercy on those who trespass against us God will not have mercy on us and forgive us our trespasses.—Matthew 5: 7; 6: 14, 15.

Again, when the Pharisees found fault with Jesus for allowing the disciples to pluck and eat corn (wheat) as they passed through the fields on the sabbath day, our Lord quotes Hosea—"But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless." (Matthew 12: 1-8.) The Lord was merciful to the hungry disciples, however, and even though it was a slight labour (in the Pharisees' eyes) to pluck the corn He allowed them to do it. For "it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days." He said on another occasion.—Matthew 12: 12.

God's mercy to us is exhibited through His dear Son. In compassion God sent Him to die for our sins, to be our great Physician, with healing for our sin-sick hearts. One of the first of His miracles was to raise up the sick of the palsy, but His mercy went beyond the physical need. He said also—"Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." (Matthew 9: 1-13.) And that same mercy He is ready to extend to all who will recognize in Him the propitiation for their sins—our mercy seat, as Paul says.—Romans 3: 23-26; 1 John 2: 2.

The parable of the debtor is appropriate to be read and pondered in this connection.—Matthew 18: 21-35.

Death and the Grave to be Destroyed

Of the things which concern us most, aside from the fact of being born and more or less alive, Death and the Grave take first place. And sin is the reason Death and the Grave are inevitable, unavoidable by the human race.

Through Hosea God foretold that mercy (which He had shown to them—"showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments"—Exodus 20: 6) would be extended to others who had known it not. That mercy was required chiefly because of sin, repeated sins requiring repeated manifestations of divine mercy. And now Hosea was honoured by being made God's mouth-piece to announce the greatest and grandest good

news that could possibly be imagined. God would find a way to deal with Death and the Grave as well; in fact, He had found the way, and the Instrument of deliverance was already arranged for. So He said—"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes."—Hosea 13: 14.

That this is more than emotional exuberance or extravagant language of the prophet's own choosing we are assured by the apostle Paul's use of the words in that wonderful 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians, verse 55—"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" As we said before, the apostles were the divinely guided interpreters of Old Testament prophecy, particularly of the prophecies fulfilling in their day and of those to be fulfilled in future from their time. And the application the apostle makes is to death and the grave in general as they affect all people, and not merely the children of Israel to whom Hosea addressed the message. For with it Paul associates a quotation from Isaiah (25: 6-8)—"Death is swallowed up in victory." (1 Cor. 15: 54.) And if we read the connection in Isaiah 25 we find the following—

6 And in this mountain [symbol of kingdom, in this case God's Kingdom] shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, . . .

7 And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering east over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations.

8 He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it.

Again we see that God only could have foretold such an extraordinary event as the swallowing up of death, because He alone had the ability, the might, and the power to bring it about. In this matter men are absolutely helpless, and it is a strange thing that though people groan under the tyranny of death and these promises have stood in the Scriptures for hundreds of years, while the Bible is being read from one end of the earth to the other, very few have ever noticed that God not only predicts the end of Death, but also the end of Hell. So that the popular theory that "hell" is a place in which men will suffer torments forever is a pure invention on man's part. God has something better in view—something much better.—Isaiah 55: 8-11.

I Will Ransom Them

Death was the punishment (prescribed in Eden) which has been inherited by all Adam's posterity. It was a just act on God's part because sin is incompatible with His holiness, and sinners cannot be permitted to flout His will. Nevertheless, God had from the beginning a plan and purpose to deliver mankind from the consequences of their own folly, provided they prove amenable to His terms. From this standpoint Death is viewed as an insatiable monster, an enemy seeking man's undoing by taking away his life. And the Grave is another monster with ever open jaws waiting to swallow its victims.—Proverbs 27: 20; Isaiah 14: 9-11; Habakkuk 2: 5; Proverbs 1: 12.

Death and the Grave are so personified in Hosea 13: 14. They are tyrants that have all mankind in their grip. The theory that Death is a friend, a bright angel to carry us from this earth to heaven, is but fiction. Nowhere in God's Word is Death so spoken of. On the contrary, we read that Death is a punishment, a deprivation of life, a return to the dust out of which man was taken.—Genesis 2: 17; 3: 19.

When Death has had its way men are in the Grave. No matter what the form of death—by disease, by accident such as being blown to pieces or by drowning, or in any other way—to the Grave is where they go. Both good and bad go there, rich and poor, high and low. There are no exceptions: Death passed upon all men.—Ecclesiastes 9: 4-6, 10; Romans 5: 12.

How forcible, how full of meaning, then, is God's promise—"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death:" A ransom is a price paid to secure the release of a captive taken by brigands, to redeem a person from some obligation, or to secure exemption for some object. Thus the Jew under the law was compelled to pay "a ransom for his soul" on certain occasions; property could be redeemed on payment of a price. Always there is involved a payment of some kind to secure freedom, or the word "ransom" is not appropriate.—Exodus 30: 12-16; Leviticus 27: 1-34.

The need of a ransom from death and the grave has been recognized from the first by the sacrificial offerings, and the Psalmist refers to it when he says—"None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him . . . that he should still live forever, and not see corruption." That is to say, the rich cannot prevent death overtaking them by paying a ransom and thus buy themselves out of Death's power. "Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them. . . . But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave."—Genesis 3: 21; Psalm 49: 6-20.

The hope of a future life was instilled by the promises given to the fathers, and David here expresses his faith that God would ransom him from the power of the grave. Hosea at a later day voices God's purpose to do that very thing, not only for David and the patriarchs but for many more besides, as will be seen when we consider the price paid and for whom laid down.

A Ransom for All

That long-awaited-for ransom was paid when our Lord Jesus Christ laid down His life on the cross. By this price God ransomed the whole race of mankind, for He it was who arranged the plan and gave His beloved Son to be our Saviour. And our dear Lord offered himself gladly for the purpose, as He said—"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many"—literally, "the many." (Matthew 20: 28.) How could Jesus ransom the many? Because He was the proper "price." He was the lamb without blemish and without spot, and His blood was more precious than silver or gold or any other offering that could be made.—1 Peter 1: 18, 19.

The Apostle Paul sets this forth clearly in Romans

5: 15-19; 1 Corinthians 15: 20-23; and Hebrews 2: 9. The whole race having been condemned in the one man Adam, the entire race could be ransomed by the one man Jesus Christ, who was the exact equivalent of Adam and Eve and their at that time unborn children. And the full extent of the purchase effected by the payment of the ransom is definitely stated in 1 Timothy 2: 6—"Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time"—literally, "a testimony in due time." Jesus came in God's due time: "in due time Christ died for the ungodly." (Romans 5: 6.) And His giving of himself as the long-promised ransom was a testimony to the truth of the Scriptures, to the faithfulness of God to His promises, and to the fact just previously stated that God our Saviour "will have all men to be saved [that is, preserved from utter extinction], and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."—1 Tim. 2: 4.

Until the ransom was paid men had only hazy conceptions of its kind and value, and how its payment could result in relief from the great Bandits—Death and the Grave (Sheol, Hades, Hell).^{*} But now we can see how the death of one perfect man Christ Jesus could be and was the corresponding price for all who had sinned in Adam.

The Lord of Dead and Living

And do the prisoners go absolutely free because the price was paid? No, the absolute liberation of a race of sinners would be of no profit to them; they would only repeat their past and go from bad to worse. The object of redemption is the uplift of sinners, and that is accomplished by giving them into the hands of Him who gave himself as the ransom price. This is God's arrangement, and He had a perfect right to arrange it so.

For the payment of the price is not all men need. We need also help in discarding sin, and first we need to have past sins forgiven, and in order to do this we need Jesus as our Mediator, as the apostle says—"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all." (1 Timothy 2: 5, 6.) God has given Jesus this position of Mediator

that He may mediate between God and men, such of men as are willing to accept His intervention as Mediator.

But Jesus as Mediator is more than a disinterested third party. He is the Owner of those He bought. "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living." (Romans 14: 9.) As Lord He has us all absolutely in His power, and it is wise on our part to surrender to Him, acknowledging with loving gratitude all He has done for us.

The Destruction of Hell

Death and Hell have been conquered by our Lord, and He has the right to deal with their prisoners. (Hebrews 2: 14, 15.) To release the prisoners takes time. A few who have had faith have been *reckoned* as passed from death unto life. (John 5: 24.) But actual release from the grave is not due until the resurrection day—which will last a thousand years. Then "all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." They will come forth to be dealt with—the righteous rewarded, the ignorant enlightened and brought to the exact knowledge of the truth, and finally the incorrigible will be separated and punished.

With the release of the prisoners, Death and Hell will be emptied, and will be utterly destroyed, as the Lord through Hosea declared—"O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction; repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." God will not reverse His determination to destroy Death and Hell. (Revelation 20: 14.) Through His beloved Son Jesus He has drawn the sting of death, which was sin, and brought an end to the Law Covenant, which gave strength to sin. (1 Corinthians 15: 56.) And now under the liberal terms of the New Covenant God is forgiving our sins and remembering them no more, and offers us life everlasting and many other blessings besides. "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."—1 Corinthians 15: 57.

A few have heard the good news in this life. The vast majority will hear it in the resurrection life; for they have gone down into death without the slightest knowledge of God and His love. Thank God for all His mercies, and that we who were not His people but aliens and strangers are now His people—a peculiar people—a people for a purpose—to show forth His praise. (Ephesians 2: 12, 19; 1 Peter 2: 9, 10.) And to think that all this was foretold over 2,500 years ago!

^{*}Hebrew **Sheol**, Greek **Hades**, and Old English **Hell**, all mean the same; namely, the grave, the state or condition of death. For explanation of all passages containing these words, please see book "Everlasting Punishment," mentioned in Booklet. Another helpful book on the subject is "The Dead—Where are They?" Either or both will be sent post paid on receipt of price, or loaned to any unable to pay.



The Jubile

A Shadow of Good Things

"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, . . ."—Heb. 10: 1.

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."—Col. 2: 16, 17.

"Now all these things happened unto them for examples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."—1 Cor. 10: 11.

THESE SCRIPTURES, and others which might be quoted, give us to understand that the Law Covenant, under which the Israelites were accepted as God's people, contained shadows of good things to come, thus intimating the superiority of the things themselves over the shadows which prefigured them. This was true, not only of the sacrifices which typified the true sacrifice for sin, Jesus

Christ, as referred to in Heb. 10: 1-10, but also of the Sabbath system of holydays mentioned in Col. 2: 16, 17. In addition, the baptism of the whole nation into Moses, the punishments sent upon them for disobedience, as well as the blessings sent when they repented and turned again to the Lord, and also the wonderful provisions made by Jehovah for their preservation and guidance through the wilderness, were all examples to us. They teach that the Christian believers are baptised into Christ; that we should follow Him as our Leader, that "we should not lust after evil things," but should be admonished and take heed, lest at any time, when we think we are standing, we should fall.—1 Cor. 10: 1-12; Rom. 6: 1-6.

We are justified, then, in looking into the Sabbath system of the Jews (1) as a matter of historical interest, and (2) to learn what it prefigured or foreshadowed of "good things to come."

The Shadow and the Substance

In looking into any matter of historical interest, it is desirable to have accurate information. Where the historical incidents or arrangements have a typical or shadowy significance, accuracy of data is doubly imperative, since any error in apprehension of the "shadow" must produce error in understanding the "substance."

Further: Were we in studying the "shadow" to depend solely on our own judgment in determining the "substance," we should most likely go astray; for the Jews themselves, a clever race, failed to understand the meanings of the types, requiring special instructors; namely, first John the Baptist, then our Lord Jesus Himself, then the inspired apostles. The eunuch studied in vain, until Philip preached to him Christ—as the "sheep" led to the slaughter. The Bereans had to search the Scriptures daily, because Paul told them things they had not found for themselves. (John 1: 29-37; Matt. 23: 16-38; Acts 8: 30-35; 17: 11; Heb. 9: 8-15.) Even then the majority of the Jews were dull of comprehension—seeing they did not perceive, and hearing they did not understand. Why? Because their hearts had waxed gross.—Matt. 13: 11-15.

That which is hid from the wise and prudent is revealed unto babes, because the babes are willing to acknowledge their need of instruction and are ready to learn from the Lord and from those commissioned by Him as His apostles and teachers. (Matt. 11: 25-30; Matt. 28: 19, 20.) Let us then inquire what the Scriptures say concerning the Sabbath and the Jubile—how they were to be observed, and of what they were the shadows.

A System of Sabbaths

In Lev. 23: 1-3 we read—

- 1 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,
- 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts.
- 3 Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation: ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings.

The remainder of Lev. 23 and all of chapter 25 continue the Lord's instructions concerning the sabbaths, and show that the weekly, monthly, yearly, and

other sabbaths, together with the jubile, formed part of a regular system of sabbaths. All were imposed as obligations upon the Jews, with definite promises of blessings for observance and definite threats of penalties for non-observance; and all, according to Col 2: 16, 17, were shadows of things to come. The weekly and other sabbaths were ordered to be observed "in all your dwellings" and "throughout your generations." (Lev. 23: 3, 14, 21, 31.) The sabbath year is called "a sabbath of the land," "a sabbath of rest unto the land," "a year of rest unto the land" (Lev. 25: 2, 4, 5), and the fiftieth year, or Jubile was a time of rest and blessing to both people and land.

List of Sabbaths

Every 7th day was a sabbath.—Lev. 23: 1-3; Exod. 20: 8-11; 31: 15; Deut. 5: 12-15.

The 1st day of unleavened bread or Passover (the 15th Nisan).—Lev. 23: 6, 7.

The 7th day of unleavened bread, or Passover.—Lev. 23: 8.

The 50th day from the day following the first Passover sabbath.—Lev. 23: 15, 16, 21.

The new moon, or the 1st day of each month.—Num. 10: 10; Amos 8: 5.

The 1st day of the 7th month, which was the first day of the civil year.—Lev. 23: 24, 25.

The 10th day of the 7th month, the day of Atonement.—Lev. 23: 27-32; Lev. 16: 29, 30.

The 15th day of the 7th month, being the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, called also the Feast of Ingathering.—Lev. 23: 34, 35, 39.

The 22nd of the 7th month, being the 8th or last day of the Feast of Tabernacles.—Lev. 23: 36, 39.

Every 7th year was a sabbath.—Lev. 25: 2-4.

Every 49th year was a sabbath.—Lev. 25: 8.

Every 50th year was a sabbath.—Lev. 25: 9-13, 17-22.

Characteristics of the Sabbaths

All the sabbaths, from the weekly sabbath to the Jubile, had four features in common: (1) No servile work was to be done; (2) holy convocations or gatherings were to be held; (3) the people were to sanctify themselves, or set themselves apart to special worship, extra deeds of benevolence, etc.; the priests were to offer special sacrifices, and the Levites were to use the occasion for instructing the people out of the Law; (4) the people were to feast, and be merry (with a single exception, the Day of Atonement, when the people were to fast and afflict their souls. This day, though a sabbath, was not in any cycle of sevens).

Rest from Servile Work

On the tables of stone, and in the book of the law, it was made plain that six days out of seven were sufficient in which to do all kinds of work for self, family, and business. Some Christian writers on the Sabbath infer that the seventh day was intended to be one of absolute idleness; others contend that as the command is to rest on the seventh day, the other six must of necessity be work-days. Such fail to see the distinction mentioned in Deut. 5: 13—"Six days thou shalt labour, and do all *thy* work." The command is not that they shall do no work of any sort

on the sabbath, but that they shall do none of the customary works of household or business. This cessation of selfish or gainful occupations is further emphasised by the command that all servants, and also all beasts, should be relieved of usual duties.—Exod. 5: 14.

Throughout all their experience as a nation they were to remember that God was their Creator, who made heaven and earth in six days or epochs, and rested thereafter; that they had been slaves in the land of Egypt where no rest was allowed them; that, God had delivered them from Egypt "through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm." The keeping of one day in seven as a day of rest and worship and benevolence would help them to remember these things, and would serve to deliver them from the habit of slave-driving, which they would have learned in Egypt, and which was common among all the nations around them.

(Continued in April Issue)

THE MEMORIAL SUPPER

Easter falls this year on Sunday, April 25, and is celebrated all over the world among Christians, in commemoration of our Lord's resurrection. The new moon occurs on April 5. In the book, "The Church and Its Ceremonies," will be found the reasons for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper, in commemoration of His death. Let us all, who love Him, and appreciate all He has done for us, arrange to observe the Supper, Tuesday night, April 20.

From Far and Near

Enclosed is my subscription and to help some others who will be interested and desiring to know more of God's good purposes and plans for this groaning, suffering world. It is a great comfort in these troublous times to have the Lord's promises in His Word, and that in His time all these troubles and trials will be over and His glorious Kingdom set up, and the nations learn war no more.

With love and continued prayer for you and all the dear friends, Yours in the same blessed Hope, ———, *Tasmania*.

Our representative at Bristol sends an encouraging report of subscription renewals and donations for the upkeep and circulation of the truth. One reader of 72 wrote, after an illness: "and I desire to see how the world's conflict ends—almost the whole world at war, two great camps, each representing totally different ideas. Yet the Lord's time will come and the earth make way for the Prince of Peace. Trusting all that are His may be strengthened and fortified to accomplish His will."

I am corresponding with an interested one up North, who thinks he can dispose of books.

Referring to reprisal air raids experienced at Norwich, Bath, and other cities, our brother says better protection is now given—barrage balloons and anti-air guns installed, and a second raid was not so severe.

We in the southern hemisphere thus far free from raids are thankful, and our prayers go up for sufferers in other spheres.

The present state of the world is an object lesson—illustrating the difference between man's rule and what God's rule would be. Doubtless part of His design is to draw to Himself those who believe in Jesus and who desire to know what His plans and purposes are in allowing the tumult and trouble to develop, and thus quicken interest in the promises of His Kingdom as a powerful Government to take hold of affairs, and in His own time speak the promised words—"Peace, be still."—Isaiah 9: 6, 7.

The following received at Melbourne is also encouraging; the Lord has earnest believers and truthseekers in West Africa—

"My dear beloved soldiers of the cross, and fellow gospel workers. Greetings to you in Jesus' precious name, who is mighty to save and strong to deliver, and mighty to keep; praise His wonderful Name. Amen.—Psalms 91, 133.

What a blessing and happy we feel after reading your splendid tract, "Planning a World," and your magazine "The New Covenant Advocate," Nov. 1, 1939, which a Christian brother from U.S.A. sent to us. In fact, these came to us as cold water to a thirsty soul from a distant country. Hallelujah, What a Saviour!

We are enjoying the blessing that we inherit in your good tract and magazine, and we pray for the wide distribution of the Gospel of Christ in these last days. Your teaching of three Worlds is sound; and God's perfect thoughts which He said, "Let us make man in our own image," is very interesting and profitable to a real child of God to think that he is in the image of God, also that he must keep himself pure (1 Peter 1: 15, 16).

Now the Word of God is doing its own work, we are brethren in Jesus' holy name, and we ask Him to well protect us in this day. We are trying to bring young people the knowledge of God. Do not your hearts go out in love and pity. And we feel led to ask for the monthly New Covenant Advocate, and we need books dealing with the prophecies. And favour us with a copy of "The Parables of Our Lord" and other Biblical books.

May the Lord of harvest bless you and the work you are doing. Marvellous. 1 Thess. 5: 23. ———, *West Africa*.

—SINCE OUR LAST ISSUE

FAITH supports the children of God through all the ordinary affairs of life. Does it support them in the difficult times in which we are living now? Yes; because

THESE TROUBLES were predicted by Jesus Himself, who came to deliver men from sin and death—two of the greatest burdens upon the human soul. Accepting now the Gospel, with the forgiveness of sins, we receive peace of mind in a troubled world. But more than that. We receive

INSTRUCTION that enables us to understand the whys and wherefores; that God has a definite plan that He is working out; and that plan includes allowing men to choose their own way and indulge their own natural propensities—up to a point. As an illustration take

HIS DEALINGS with the Jews. He called them out of the captivity in Egypt, and promised them a land of their own, with every necessary aid both religiously and morally, as well as in temporal affairs. For centuries He watched over them; raised up leaders such as Moses, and religious instructors in Aaron and the priesthood. Gave them peace and plenty when they were obedient, and let their enemies assail them when they were disobedient and required chastening.

FINALLY the Law was demonstrated to be ineffectual to give everlasting life, because imperfect men could not keep a perfect law. There followed

CENTURIES of Christianity in which the Divine Purpose was to "take out" a people for His name; those who would accept Christ as their Saviour. And these have been tried and tested, while the world in general carried on in its way. Then came the period when the Church sought and

Obtained Political Power. It claimed to rule in the name of Jesus. The Bible was suppressed, and the Church gave out its own interpretations or creeds for submissive acceptance by each and all. Then, after a time, came the

GREAT REFORMATION and the rise of Protestantism in an endeavour to place the Word of God in the hands of the people, by translation of the Hebrew and Greek originals into modern languages. This led to the establishment of Protestant governments, some of which claimed the right to make certain creeds compulsory.

In Germany the Lutheran, in Britain the Anglican, and later the Presbyterian, and so on. Still later other Protestant creeds. And the question arose—Should there be a Protestant State Church?

THE METHODISTS rose up and said, No: Religion should be according to conscience and the Scriptures, and not according to a political test. Holiness was one of their main objectives, as it was also of Presbyterians. And early in the 18th century fresh interest was stirred up by the

RISE OF ADVENTISM. This brought closer study of the Scriptures and the teaching that the soul is not immortal. That death is the portion of all until the resurrection day, when (they said) Christ would return to earth and would call them forth, the good on His right hand to live forever, and the evil to be returned to death—in their case the second death.

WARS have done their part in stirring up thought and rivalry in religion as well as in political theory. Certain sects have claimed the right not only to make the laws, but also to suppress those whom they called "heretics." Many were the martyrs under those combined political-religious governments. Then came

FRESH ASSERTIONS of the right to study God's Word and for each believer to hold what he or she believed the Bible to teach. Some of these claimed to have no creed in the compulsory sense. But, nevertheless, unless these certain teachings were accepted the person concerned would be forever lost. And the further claim was made that those who had died unbelievers would remain dead forever. Thus, according to their theory, only a very few would be saved.

THE OPPOSITE view, that all who had ever lived would be saved whether believers or unbelievers—the creed of Universalism—asserted itself, claiming since Christ died for all, then all must be saved. In the meantime a few sought to find

IF GOD had a Plan. And found that as Christ had died for all, all were His, and that He was authorized to enlighten all—if not in this age, then in an age to come, when

HIS KINGDOM would be set up. Then, What of the dead? They would be raised and given the opportunity to hear the glad tidings of the Saviour, and to believe in Him. Thus faith remained the basis of salvation, no injustice was done to any. As to

HOW AND WHEN these multitudes of the dead would be raised and given the Light of the Cross and the opportunity to believe and receive God's favour, and forgiveness and life—please see the Books in Book List. The prices are within reach of most. But any unable to buy are asked to write to us at once, stating the fact, and we will gladly send them free reading matter on these glorious subjects.

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The New Covenant Advocate

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Kingdom Herald

VOL. 35.

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, APRIL 1, 1943.

No. 1.

Making The World Better

FACING FACTS which are patent to all persons of discernment and discrimination, it must be admitted that there are many things in this world that sorely need improving. What these things are will certainly not be defined alike by all; the king will have his view, the merchant his, and the peasant his, and most likely the views will be very divergent. Nevertheless, all recognise the need for *some* improvement, even though they cannot agree as to the nature of the need, nor as to the means by which the desired good should be achieved.

Each from his standpoint recognises some of the imperfections of the present arrangement. Some leaders think that the masses of the people are acquiring too much influence in the governing of their respective countries, and many of them, if not all, would favour measures curtailing the liberties and the influence of the people. In desiring such measures these leaders persuade themselves—and seek to convince others—that they have at heart only the best interests of all concerned. This is the “improvement” desired by kings, nobles, and conservatives generally, including those in high positions in the various religious systems of Christendom.

On the other hand, the people are moving in the direction of greater power for themselves, as distinguished from those who suppose that they occupy high position “by divine right.” The powers and privileges of kings and nobles are being diminished; so that in some cases royalty is described as a mere “figure head,” while others, more radical, openly speak of kings as being merely “tolerated,” such speeches being made in monarchical countries. In some countries, kings have been dethroned, and republics have been set up, in the endeavour to carry out the “improvements” desired by the people.

Some among the people would go much further than anything yet realised, and would have all forms of industry controlled by the whole people for the benefit of all, under regulations suitable to the circumstances. Others—anarchists—would do away with all regulation and subjection, leaving everything at the discretion of the individual. Both these notions

would result in forms of despotism at the last, the one a despotism of the community over the individual, the other a despotism of each individual over as many of the others as he could cajole or compel. Yet despotism is the very thing these movements among the people are supposed to avoid!

“Divine Right of Kings?”

All of these antagonistic elements in church and state seek to make it appear that the Almighty is on their side of the controversy—that is, if they have God in their thoughts at all, which many of them have not. On the one side we hear of the “divine right of kings.”

Undoubtedly, Christians are commanded to be law-abiding; and to render due respect to the rulers of the people is also a Christian duty, as well as to pray for them that are in authority, to the end that God's people might “lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.” (1 Tim. 2: 1-3; Rom. 13: 1-7; 1 Peter 2: 17.) But it is nowhere stated that the Almighty has placed, for example, the Ameer of Afghanistan upon the throne, divinely endowing him and his family with certain inalienable rights to rule over the people of that country.

“Vox Populi Vox Dei”

On the other side, we are told that “The Voice of the People is the Voice of God.” But it must be recognised that the voice of the people—even of God's people—has not invariably been the Voice of God, not even when their voice was unanimous. When Israel in the wilderness murmured against Moses, they were not thereby expressing the will of God, but the contrary. So much was this the case that on several occasions God would have destroyed the people. Many instances of this are related in the books of Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. When the Israelites in Palestine desired a king, their expression being more unanimous than the expression of the popular will by any referendum of modern times, the voice of the people was *not* the voice of God. Notwithstanding the plausibility with which the elders of Israel broached the subject, the unanimous desire of the

people was nothing less than a rejection of the Almighty.—1 Samuel 8: 1-22.

Again, when we hear the same Jewish people as it were with one voice crying "Crucify Him!" we are certain that the murderous voice of the blood-thirsty people was not the voice of God, even though in these circumstances a portion of the divine counsel was being accomplished. Again, when in more recent times we find that for some hundreds of years western Europe was unanimous in its acknowledgment of the Pope of Rome as the vice-gerent of Christ, we are sure that the voice of the people was not the voice of the Deity. "Vox populi vox Dei" is very euphonious, but it is not very truthful.

The voice of God has not been the voice of popular assemblies, much less of clamorous mobs. When it pleased God to express His will, He caused holy men of old—prophets, apostles, and His own dear Son (2 Peter 1: 21; Matt. 17: 5; John 8: 40) to speak and write of the divine things, giving them, by the Holy Spirit's power, words and wisdom better than their own. The desire of a king or the clamour of a nation is not in and of itself the voice of God. The "improvements" in the present condition of things which they severally desire are not, therefore, infallibly right.

Various Remedies Proposed

Some earnest souls believe that popular education is the solution of all the great social, political, and industrial questions that vex the world at the present time. But will education turn a rogue into an honest man? Will education purge out selfishness? An educated person with criminal tendencies is more dangerous to the community than an uneducated criminal. It is evident that education, excellent and desirable though it be, cannot provide the complete remedy for the problems which confront the world to-day. Indeed, education, as far as it increases desire without diminishing selfishness, is an innocent contributory cause of many of humanity's difficulties being in their present acute condition. In saying this we are merely stating a fairly well-known fact, which very few—least of all the educated—would question. For all this, we should not advocate a return to the dark ages, but should like to see enlightenment more general, if possible.

Others think that the prohibition of strong drink would go far toward ridding the world of its woes. Most certainly it would. But the question always recurs, would selfishness assuredly go out with strong drink? And the answer is, No. It is well known that some abstain from strong drink for purely selfish reasons, and that others are most liberal when in a maudlin state. Evidently, then, the abolition of strong drink would fall very far short of doing for our race all the good that is so sorely needed. And what is true of this most desirable reform, and of education, is equally true of all the other cures proposed by the hundred and one reformers of all parties. While possessing many excellencies, every one of these "cures" is deficient in at least two outstanding points—

1. Not one of these remedies can cure the disease of Sin and Selfishness;

2. Not one of these remedies can abolish death and give life instead, without which education and every other blessing are but fleeting.

Now, these disputes and questions as between the governed and governing classes of humanity are by no means new. They have often been up in the centuries past. New features there are at present in the dispute, no doubt, and the agitation now is worldwide, whereas heretofore its range has been limited. But the root questions are still the same. For this reason, some, reading the present in the light of the failures of the past, have given up the hope of a settled state of the social order, believing that it is not in the power of man to govern himself properly as long as selfishness is the mainspring of conduct and the arbiter of relationships. Seeing no way to get rid of selfishness, these well wishers of the race are reduced to despair. And some scoff.—2 Peter 3: 1-4.

Truly, if the failures of the past were the only light available to illuminate the imperfections of the present, one might well consider our problems soluble only in the ultimate destruction of humanity in and by means of its disputes. But there is a better light: it illuminates the whole question so completely that despair is turned to hope, and the spirit of gladness and joy takes the place of sorrow and heaviness. Under the influence of this better light on these subjects, the pessimist becomes an optimist, and even the scoffer may remain to pray.

The Better Light

The Christian, if his religion be to him more than the sounding brass and tinkling cymbal of an imposing ritual, is as thoroughly alive to the world questions of the present day as the most ardent reformer could wish to be. Such a Christian, instructed not by the command of an earthly king nor by the voice of the people, but by the voice of God, expressed in His Word, is in the best possible position to realise what will be the outcome of the present agitation. He also realises what many do not, that inherent selfishness must, under present conditions, always frustrate the best desires of even the least selfish members of our race, and render impossible a satisfactory determination of the difficulties.

Many philosophers have expressed the conclusion that the only form of government suited to our race of variously imperfect beings is an unselfish, benevolent despotism in the hands of a perfect ruler. But to state this is to their minds merely an exhibition of our impotence; for they ask, Where is such a perfect ruler to be found? And, if found, would he be strong enough to enforce his unselfish, benevolent will against the tremendous opposition that would certainly arise? Appreciating this ideal, while admitting the total absence of the material necessary for its realisation, the philosophers know not which way to turn; they have no hope.

But the well-instructed Christian, who keenly realises the imperfections of our race, and the difficulties which these imperfections place in the way of the approximation of the excellent ideal of the philosophers, is not hopeless or in despair. He has hope.

The ground of this hope is not in himself, nor in the human race as a whole. Neither is his hope based on

expectation that perfect success will crown the labours of those zealous men and women who are continually exposing themselves to hope-deferring, heart-sickening disappointments, in their efforts to make the world righteous.

The Christian's Hope

for better things is based on the inspiring promise of God. Said Peter—

"Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."—2 Peter 3: 13.

This is the better light enjoyed by the Christian. This is the ray that illuminates the gloom and preserves him from despair. He apprehends from these promises that the need of the human race is noted by the Almighty, and that suitable provision has been made to meet that need. God, Who has all power, is interested, and has made an immutable promise that there shall be a reign of righteousness. And because He was willing to give a more abundant exhibition of the steadfastness of His purpose, He swore to it by an invocation of His own Name—there being no greater;—so that by these two immutable things, the promise and the oath, the heirs of salvation might have an abundance of hope and consolation.—Heb. 6: 13-19; Gen. 22: 15-18; 12: 1-3.

On account of this promise the Christian prays, as instructed by the Lord Jesus—

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."—Matt. 6: 10.

The Kingdom of God, which is to come, is the "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," for which "we, according to his promise, look." We are not to expect a new planet, and new starry heavens, but we are to "look for" a new order of things; because God's will is yet to be done here, on this earth, which has been the stage of strife and violence, and of doing everything but the will of God.*

Praying? or Making?

It is very necessary to observe, and at all times to remember, that the Master instructed His disciples to pray for the coming of God's kingdom to earth, but He never told them that their efforts were to make it come sooner. There is a time appointed in the divine counsel for the coming of God's kingdom to earth with power and glory, to accomplish its destined work of causing God's will to be done here. Until that time, God's people are to pray earnestly on this behalf, thus exhibiting and intensifying their own interest in the promised blessing. And, while earnestly praying on this behalf, God's people are not to be idle; they are to show by their good works, doing good unto all as they have opportunity, the sincerity of their prayers. Otherwise, their faith is dead.—Galatians 6: 10; James 2: 14-26.

Character of the Promised Kingdom

The Kingdom of God, which is promised, will not be established by a referendum of the people, nor by the consent of the present kings of the earth; nor by

*For further Scriptural references concerning the new order of things that is to be established on earth, please see "Bible Talks for Heart and Mind," a 354 page book, handsomely bound, which we shall be pleased to supply for 3/-; paper covers, 2/-; postage extra.

the voluntary surrender of Satan, who is the prince and god of this world. The latter must be bound, so that his "goods" may be spoiled. (Matt. 12: 29.) The kings of the earth must be dethroned and their kingdoms carried away as the chaff of the summer threshing floors, so that God's Kingdom may fill the whole earth. (Dan. 2: 35.) And, as definitely declared in Psalm 46: 6-10, the people will be permitted to rage and storm themselves to exhaustion before the divine fiat shall go forth, commanding—

10 Be still, and know that I am God:
I will be exalted among the heathen,
I will be exalted in the earth.

In order to accomplish all this, God's Kingdom must be strong. In fact, it will fully realise the ideal of the philosophers already mentioned, because it will be an unselfish, benevolent despotism, in the hands of a perfect Ruler, Jesus Christ, Who is commissioned by the Almighty to attend to this business, with all authority in heaven and in earth, and Whose unselfish benevolence is fully attested by the fact that He, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man. (Matt. 28: 18; John 5: 19-30; Heb. 2: 9; John 13: 34.) Under the strong rule of this Kingdom, shepherded with its iron rod, the nations shall learn war no more, shall learn righteousness and holiness, and shall be thoroughly reformed out of their selfish ways, if they will submit themselves to the Truth with which all shall then be perfectly enlightened. Those that are in the graves shall also participate in this blessing. (Rev. 2: 27; Isa. 2: 2-4; John 1: 9; 1 Tim. 2: 4-6; Ezek. 16; 44-63; Isa. 25: 6-9.) If any will not obey the Truth, but will persist in disobedience, the consequence to such will be "everlasting destruction" from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;—2 Thess. 1: 9. 10.

"How Long, O Lord?"

A perfectly natural and reasonable question is, If God be interested in the welfare of the human race, if of His grace He has provided the Unselfish, Benevolent Despot needed by us to repair the ruin wrought in Eden, why has He allowed all these years and centuries to pass without overturning the evil and establishing the good? Why has He not long ago established His strong Kingdom in the earth to cause His will to be done here as it is done in heaven? Why are the efforts of reformers to make the world better apparently allowed to languish? A satisfactory explanation of this problem would be very much appreciated.

The answer to this is supplied by the Scriptures. They tell us that since the first advent of Christ, or, more accurately, since Pentecost, the divine program has been the visiting of the Gentiles to *take out* from them a people for His name. (Acts 15: 14-18.) The

*For full examination of this subject, with quotation and explanation of every Bible text in which the words "Sheol," "Hades," and "Gehenna" occur, together with full explanation of the "Lake of Fire" and other symbols and parables wrongly supposed to teach eternal torment, please see the 112-page book on "Everlasting Punishment." It is an appeal direct to the Word, and will satisfy both head and heart. In cloth binding, 1/- (25 cents) per copy, postage 2d. (4 cents) extra; in paper covers, 6d. (10 cents) postpaid. Order it now!

selection, or election, of this people, which in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God (1 Peter 2: 7-12), is conducted according to fixed principles. Faith in Jesus as the sacrifice for the sins of all, and particularly for the sins of one's self, is necessary; for He is the only means of approach to God. (1 Cor. 15: 1-4; John 14: 6.) Following this, the virtues of the Holy Spirit must be added to the foundation faith, if one would secure the prize offered in this, the High Calling.—2 Peter 1: 5-15; Phil. 3: 7-14.

And what is the prize? Nothing less than joint heirship with Jesus Christ, the Unselfish, Benevolent Despot, if we first suffer with him. (Rom. 8: 17.) This is the way the Scripture, the voice of God, expresses it—

"Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."—2 Thess. 2: 14.

"That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory."—1 Thess. 2: 12.

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him."—2 Tim. 2: 12.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."—Rev. 3: 21.

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of my Father."—Rev. 2: 26, 27.

"... and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."—Rev. 20: 4.

From the above and many other Scriptural testimonies that might be referred to, it is evident that it is part of the divine purpose that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Unselfish, Benevolent Despot, shall have some assistants in the great work of the thousand years of the Kingdom age, and that the time from Pentecost to the end of the Gospel age is set apart for the selection and qualification of these assistants or joint heirs, sometimes called the Church, His body or bride. The realisation of this supplies the answer to the question—"How long, O Lord?"

The general blessing, under the rule of the righteous Despot, will not come until the particular blessing shall first have been given to those who are making their calling and election sure to a place in the throne. So the Apostle says—

"So when this corruptible shall have put on Incorruption and this mortal shall have put on Immortality, THEN shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."—1 Cor. 15: 54; Isa. 25: 6-9.

Until then, making the world better must seem—to many—a task beset with tremendous difficulties.

When the right time comes, however, the good things which we all sympathise with and long to see accomplished will be gloriously brought to pass not by the will of present princes or peoples, but by the invincible power of God's Despot.

The time for this is now very near. But until then the proper work for God's people is not to seek to impatiently go ahead of God's program, undertaking what He has not authorised us to do, and what we are not now fit to do. Rather, let us give all diligence to make our calling and election sure to a place in that glorious throne with the Unselfish, Benevolent Despot. Let us also endeavour to assist one another in the race for the prize of our High Calling.

And let us diligently preach this Gospel of the Kingdom in all nations for a witness to them.

Those who do this may confidently believe that even now they are helping to make the world better, not only in the reforms accomplished in themselves and in the help they are able to give to others in the race for the prize, but also in the fact that the work of the present age is an essential preliminary to the work of the future.

Let us be up and doing! Then having won by His grace, we shall be Reformers indeed, duly authorised and empowered to co-operate with our blessed Lord in His appointed work for the Thousand Years, of "Making the World Better"—Better—BEST! the beautiful home for evermore of a happy race, loving and serving God with all their hearts.

—E. C. H.

ARISE AND SHINE

Lift up, lift up thy voice with singing,
O earth, with strength lift up thy voice!
God's kingdom to the earth is coming,
The King is at thy gates—rejoice!

And while the earth with strife is riven,
And envious factions truth do hide,
Lo! He, the Lord of earth and heaven,
Stands at the door and claims His bride.

Lift up thy gates! bring forth oblations!
The Lord of earth His message sends;
His Word, a sword, will smite the nations;
His name, the Christ, the King of kings.

He's come! let all the earth adore Him;
The path His human nature trod
Spreads to a royal realm before Him,
The Life of life, the Word of God!

Rachel Weeping For Her Children

"Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,

"In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not."—Matt. 2: 17, 18.

WHEN the infant Jesus was born, and the report was spread abroad that he was "born King of the Jews," Herod was troubled and

all Jerusalem with him. Herod feared a rival, and took the usual Oriental method of ridding himself of a claimant to his throne, by ordering the murder of the infant. But since the particular infant whose life was sought could not be located, Herod commanded the slaughter of all the children in Bethlehem and roundabout, from two years old and under, in the hope that among them the young King would

be slain.—Matt. 2: 1-16.

So while God in His mercy, and in furtherance of the great plan involved in the sending of His beloved Son into the world, miraculously preserved the life of that Son by sending him away safely into Egypt, while warning the wise men to say nothing to Herod (Matt. 2: 12-15), He did not similarly preserve the little ones of Bethlehem from the destroying sword. Was Jehovah indifferent to these children? Was the God of Israel unmindful of the sorrow and weeping of the mothers thus deprived of their dearest treasures? No, He was not. God did care. He cared for the children, and He cared for the weeping mothers. How much He cared is shown by the fact that He inspired Matthew to apply to this event the comforting message of the prophet Jeremiah. Though Matthew does not quote Jeremiah's prophecy in full, he quotes a part of it, and says, "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken." He quotes and applies that portion of the prophecy which was fulfilled at that time; and the weeping mothers, by referring to the prophet, would find the message of comfort for themselves therein contained.

"Because They Are Not"

The mothers in Bethlehem wept because their children were not. Does not this give us a clear idea of what death is? The infants slain by the sword did not go to heaven; for Peter at a later date said that even David, the great king and sweet singer of Israel, was not in heaven. Our Lord said, "And no man hath ascended up to heaven." (John 3: 13.) Nor did they go to a place of eternal torment or conscious suffering of any kind, for there is no such place. The Scriptures declare, and the Jews believed, that the dead sleep until the resurrection. They rest quietly in *Sheol*, the grave, the Greek equivalent term being *Hades*. The expression "they are not," or "he is not," as meaning that the person or persons referred to are dead, was in frequent use among the Jews, and even before the Jewish nation was formed. It was much like the expression "passed away" now used in referring to the dead, the meaning of which everyone understands, while it has the advantage of sounding less harsh and cold than to say one is "dead." Thus when Joseph inquired of his brethren concerning the sons of Jacob, they replied that "one is not," for they confidently believed that Joseph was deceased, as they later on explained, using the word "dead."—Compare Gen. 42: 13 and 44: 20; Acts 2: 34.

Of Enoch also it was said, he "was not." All the days of Enoch were 365 years, we are told; consequently his death must be meant when the record says he "was not; for God took him." God did not take him to heaven, but took him out of the company of the living in what was at that period of the world's history the prime of life, since his contemporaries lived to more than twice his age. (Gen. 5: 22-24.) In Hebrews 11: 5 we are told that Enoch did not "see death"—which we take to mean that he felt none of the approaching pains of death, but died peacefully, perhaps suddenly or in his sleep, while in the full vigor of manhood.

Comfort For Weeping Mothers

The bereaved mothers in Bethlehem would not be comforted. They mourned and wept and lamented. Did they do wrong to weep? Should they each have said, "My child is a product of the flesh, 'born in sin and shapen in iniquity'; it has never come to an enlightening knowledge of God, and I am satisfied that God has no interest in it. Therefore I should not weep, but should harden my heart and say, I do not care." Is that the way the Scriptures instruct mothers to regard the murder of their little ones? God forbid!

Rachel's refusing to be comforted was the manifestation of God-implemented mother-love. With the birth of a child there comes to the mother a most wonderful love and affection for the newborn. The child is a part of herself; it is a part of her dearly-beloved husband. In this child wonderful hopes are centered; its future is pictured in glowing colors; it is shown in pride to admiring friends and relatives. Mother-love envelops the child to protect it, to feed and clothe it, to care for it in illness, and rejoice in its growth in health. Mother-love is one of the deepest and most beautiful of human emotions—so beautiful and wonderful, in fact, that when God sought a human illustration of the depth and fidelity of His love for Israel He compared it to the love of a mother for her child; the love, too, that clings even to an erring child in the hope that it may in time see its error and retrace its steps—

"As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you;" "Upon the arm shall ye be borne, and upon knees shall ye be dandled."—Isa. 66: 13, 12; cf. Leeser's trans.

God is also likened to the loving father who carries in arms the helpless infant—a "nursing father," as tender as any mother.—Num. 11: 12.

God in His creative wisdom provided tears for the relief of human woe, particularly for women, whose nervous systems are delicate, and who need something to avert or assuage what is medically known as "shock"; the effect of which is, when severe, the complete breakdown of the nerves and consequent invalidism, perhaps for years, of the sufferer. Where no tears are shed, and no relief given to the emotional nature, insanity often follows. There is something useful, after all, in those weepings and wailings which savages employ in public, but which polite society now reserves for the solitary closet. But while in the first agonies of grief the bereaved now, even like the mothers in Bethlehem, refuse to be comforted. They cannot at once be comforted over their great loss, much as those who have faith try to accept comfort from God and His promises and from sympathising friends. The Bible is a wonderful book, and in nothing more wonderful than in this understanding of a mother's heart; but indeed this is not surprising, since, as already said, God made the mother's heart. He gives the mother-love, and therefore it is not strange that He understands it.

Not once in Scripture is a mother censured for weeping over the loss of her children. The only time weeping was not in order was when special punishments were meted out to perverse persons under the Jewish law. Even there it was a grief sympathising with the wrongdoer that was out of place, rather

than that natural flow of tears which mourns their loss and bemoans the erring course of the wicked. (Deut. 21: 18-21; 22: 21; Lev. 10: 1-6.) In the case of father and mother compelled to bring the perverse son to be stoned, they would in all probability have shed all the tears they were capable of before being compelled to give him up to death. So also the widows of the wicked referred to by Job (27: 13-15), and by the Psalmist (78: 64).

A Good Hope

Our blessed Lord while on earth sympathized with the sorrowing. His own grief over the death of Lazarus found expression in very human tears. He did not reproach the mourners by the stricken bed-sides, nor even ridicule the custom of hiring paid mourners to make the lamentations more hideous. (John 11: 33-36.) His question on another occasion, "Why make ye this ado, and weep?" was to emphasize His mission as the One who could raise the dead, and thus remove the occasion for their grief. (Mark 5: 38-41.) He came with the same comfort as that held out to weeping Rachel, and which we believe all Christians are authorized to hold out to the bereaved (Jeremiah 31)—

16 Thus saith the Lord: Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy.

17 And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border.

The Jews of Jeremiah's day would take comfort from this passage, hoping (as did occur) that some of their number would return to Canaan from various captivities in foreign lands. But in many cases individuals—men of faith who believed the promises—did not return, for they died in captivity. Numerous children were born and died in captivity, and never saw the borders of Palestine. But Matthew informs us that there is a greater enemy even than Babylon; and that is Death, which has taken captive all mankind.

He assures us that "the land of the enemy" referred to in the prophecy is death, and that weeping "Rachel" represents the mothers in Bethlehem mourning for the children destroyed by Herod. Unless we take the New Testament as the interpreter of the Old, we should never be able to distinguish between prophecies of local application and those which pointed forward to Christ and His mission.

In the first paroxysms of grief Rachel cannot be comforted. But the Lord speaks gently: Refrain a moment from weeping, and listen to this good news: "they shall come again from the land of the enemy"; "thy children shall come again to their own border." If weeping mothers will but dry their tears and give heed long enough to take in this comforting message, they will be encouraged to dry them permanently. They will realize that their children are parted from them only for a short time; and with the hope of meeting them soon again they will be able to think of their little ones in the grave much as they do of the sleeping child in the next room.

The Queen of Sheba

The resurrection was the hope of the Jews; and, as Paul states in his speech before Felix, that hope em-

braced a resurrection of the unjust as well as of the just. (Acts 24: 14, 15.) They received this hope from the reading of the law and the prophets; and Paul, in preaching the Gospel, was saying nothing different. Paul enlarged on this truth: he did not contradict it. Now, where would the Jews have received their hope of a resurrection of the unjust if it were not from reading the prophecies, where they saw that while special rewards were offered to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the faithful, there were general statements which had not had a fulfilment in the past and, consequently, since the people concerned were dead, must have their fulfilment when those peoples are raised from the dead? And why speak of the resurrection of the unjust as a *hope*, if no good were to follow their bringing forth from the dead? Hope inspires a belief in something good; hope includes both desire and expectation. And this hope, desire, and expectation concerning the unjust dead is sanctioned by the Gospel, which proclaims Christ as Lord of all the dead as well as of all the living. (Rom. 14: 9.) In our Lord's own words—

"Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment."—John 5: 28, 29, R.V.

The Queen of Sheba came from the uttermost part of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and was amazed; yet there is no evidence that she ever became a Jewish proselyte. After a time she returned to her own country and her own customs. The Lord, when addressing the scribes and the Pharisees, took for granted their hope in a resurrection, and tells them that the Queen of Sheba shall rise in the judgment and condemn "this generation"—thus showing that not only the heathen Queen would rise in the judgment, but also that evil generation of Jews. The one heeded Solomon, the others rejected the Lord. But neither ended their probation for ever when they died, because in the judgment with the Lord Jesus as Judge, He will call them forth from the grave and have further dealings with them. The Queen of Sheba could not claim eternal salvation on the ground that she respected Solomon and his wisdom; she would need instruction concerning the "greater than Solomon"; and the inference is that having been open-minded in the one case she will be so in the other; while that generation of Jews, to the extent that they were wilful rejectors of light, would be that much less in a condition to acknowledge the Lord in that future day.—Matt. 12: 42.

The Men of Nineveh

"The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment [this should read, in the judgment] with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here."—Matt. 12: 41.

The Ninevites were a heathen people who worshipped many gods, and under certain of their greatest kings they went up against the children of Israel and Judah. It is not surprising, then, that Jonah hesitated to visit them and proclaim the message which God gave him to deliver. After various vicissitudes, related in the book of Jonah, he arrived at that great city, and began to proclaim, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."—Jonah 3: 4.

The effect of his message was that both king and people repented, and fasted in sackcloth and ashes, and turned from their evil ways. Therefore God did not destroy their city.

This success of his preaching, and consequent failure of the people to bring down the wrath of God on their heads, vexed Jonah. Perhaps he would have felt himself more of a personage if something spectacular had happened. It seemed to him that God was having a game with him, and that his long journey and terrible experience in the sea had been quite unnecessary. He reproaches God, saying—

"I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled to Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil."—Jonah 4: 2.

This, of course, was not quite fair on Jonah's part; for doubtless God would have destroyed the city as He said He would in the event of non-repentance. Jonah was unreasonable to desire the destruction of the city when the people did repent. Even then Jonah hoped that something would happen, for he sat down outside the city to watch and see.

Then the great and powerful God, Who can also be kind and gentle, taught Jonah a lesson in a very practical manner, as can be seen by Jonah's account of the gourd that came up overnight and provided shade from the sun. The next day the gourd withered, and a strong east wind and scorching sun beat on poor Jonah's head, so that he wished to die. Moreover, he grieved that the gourd, so green and splendid, should in a few hours be withered and dead.

Pity for the Erring

The lesson pertains to more persons than Jonah. If Jonah could have pity on the gourd, why could not God have pity on the people of Nineveh, and spare their lives? There is nothing in the narrative to show that this repentance of the Ninevites pertained to eternal salvation. The only question raised was salvation from the threatened destruction of their city. There was no attempt to Judaize them, to bring them in line with the promises to Israel, for it was not God's time then to break down the middle wall of partition and offer salvation to the Gentiles. That did not come till several hundred years later, when the Son of God was manifested to give light to the Gentiles. (Luke 2: 32; Acts 15: 7-11; 28: 28.) However, when considering how God regards the idolatrous nations of the earth, we may well remember His comment on Jonah's anger (Jonah 4)—

10 Then said the Lord, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night:

11 And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?

But there is more in this than merely light on God's pity for a heathen nation, and His willingness to spare them on repentance to live a few more years on this earth. There is light on the state in which men will come up in the resurrection. The men of Nineveh who repented did not by that means become learned. They remained ignorant, and their moral

sense was not greatly improved if at all, for the Lord says they could not discern their right hand from their left. But they did have the perception and good sense to avert a threatened calamity by altering their manner of life and acknowledging the God of Israel who threatened them. For that reason it is safe to say that, when they come up in the resurrection under the judgment of the Lord Jesus Christ, they will be ready to acknowledge the greater than Jonah.

That seems to be our Lord's argument in Matt 12: 41. The "men of Nineveh" included the more than 120,000 undiscerning persons, many of whom doubtless fell in with the orders of the King in a purely mechanical fashion, not discerning the rights and wrongs of the case. The Lord says they will rise in the judgment, and their sole recommendation will be that they repented under the preaching of Jonah. And yet in the judgment they will be in a better standing than the more enlightened men of Judah, who refused to repent under the preaching of Jesus.

An Opportunity in the Judgment

The obvious teaching of our Lord is that the Ninevites will be raised from the dead; and, during the Day of Judgment, which will last a thousand years, will be given the opportunity—which was not granted them in their lifetime—to hear the greater than Jonah and to take advantage of the terms of everlasting salvation never previously offered to them.

But we are grieved to say that there are Christians who have no more pity for the ignorant masses of humanity than had Jonah for the people of Nineveh. They "explain away" our Lord's teaching concerning the raising from the dead of the Queen of Sheba and the Ninevites. We trust, however, that, when God's great mercy and love for the previously unenlightened nations are made known in the Day of Judgment, many who are now, like Jonah, angered at the thought of God's mercy, will then be sorry for their opposition, and will rejoice with them in the Lord's gracious provision for the enlightenment of all the resurrected dead.

Among the sixscore thousand Ninevites there would be thousands of children, including infants in arms, as loved by their mothers as were the children whom Herod slew. The infants of the Gentile mothers would, however, be no more ignorant than the infants of the Hebrew mothers, and neither would be responsible for their own deaths; for while the latter were deliberately murdered, the former in many cases would be unintentionally killed by bad feeding, exposure to infection, etc., even as is the case in our own day with millions of innocents. But—behind all this loss of life—stands the sentence of death passed on our race at the beginning. (Rom. 5: 12; 1 Cor. 15: 21, 22.) The life of an individual may be cut short in infancy by murder, disease, or neglect; but his death, in any case, would be only a matter of time.

Some of those who live to years of discretion hear the Gospel and are benefited thereby, both now and for eternity. But the vast majority of mankind who reach maturity do not hear the Gospel, even in our enlightened day. Hence they are, so far as know-

ledge of salvation is concerned, on a par with the infant who dies only a day old.

Paul in addressing the Athenians referred to this ignorance among the Gentile nations, saying that God "winked at" it. That is, God did not hold them responsible for not believing something they had never heard of. There must be first a hearing of the Word, before it can be believed. (Rom. 10: 14.) When the Gospel reached them, responsibility began; for, in the Gospel, God calls on all men to repent. (Acts 17: 30.) We may say the same thing concerning our own day. Those who have never heard are in the same position as the nations in Paul's day, and as the Ninevites in Jonah's day. They are practically infants, not knowing their right hand from their left hand. And shall not God have mercy on them?—Isaiah 42: 3, 4; Matthew 12: 17-21.

Let us be of good cheer concerning our loved little ones who have passed away, and also concerning those older ones who in knowledge were as babes.—John 1: 9; 1 Timothy 2: 3-7.

Those who are interested to pursue this subject further are invited to write us for free tracts on the following subjects. A postcard will do.

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The Jubile

(Continued from March Issue.)

Our Lord directed the attention of the Scribes and Pharisees, and other hypocrites, to the fact that *good* works were allowed on the sabbath day; that is, good works *for others*; as, healing the sick, watering and pasturing cattle, lifting an ox out of a pit, etc. (Matt. 12: 1-15; Luke 13: 11-17; 14: 1-14.) The sabbath, He said, was made for man, not man for the sabbath. The sabbath was intended for the Israelite's benefit, not his oppression; therefore it was lawful to do good on the sabbath day.

His statement, "Therefore the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day," has been greatly misconstrued. (Mark 2: 27, 28; Luke 6: 5.) In that he was merely claiming what any Jew had a right to claim, if he used the day properly, instead of letting the Pharisaical traditions bind his mind and conscience, and thus make him a slave of superstition and fear and of that very selfishness and laziness which the sabbath was intended to abolish. If the priests did not sin in preparing the shewbread on the sabbath, neither did other Jews when they did good works on that day.—Matt. 12: 1-8.

When was the Weekly Sabbath Instituted?

Some would say in Eden, because Gen 2: 2, 3 refers to God's blessing of the seventh day. But this passage should be understood as the comment of Moses, the historian. God gave the sabbath law to the Jews through Moses, therefore it was appropriate for him, or any other historian of creation, to explain that God gave the Jews for their rest-day the seventh day, rather than the second or fifth, because He Himself had divided the days of creation into six ages or periods, and rested on the following age or period. Notice, it was from *creative* work that God rested, not from all work; for God is still ruler of the Universe, and engaged in works of benevolence and mercy. In the creation God *worked for Himself* (Rev. 4: 11): "for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were

created." But during His long rest-day God works for man's deliverance from the pit into which he fell through sin—to heal his wounds, and to spread before him a feast of fat things.

The Israelites' first lesson in keeping a sabbath was given in the wilderness, on the occasion of the giving of the manna. It was the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure from Egypt that the general complaint of the scarcity of bread became a loud murmur against Moses and Aaron and an act of rebellion against God. There had been no rest days under the Egyptian slave-drivers, and none during the first month's march in the wilderness; therefore when they received a double portion of manna on the sixth day, and none on the seventh, it took them some time to realize that there was a purpose in it; they found it exceedingly hard to do as they were told.—Exod. 16: 1-35.

That the seventh-day sabbath was a new thing to the Israelites is shown by the action of "all the rulers of the congregation," in coming to Moses to report the double portion of manna on the sixth day, and to inquire the reason therefor. Moses then explains, and tells them what to do with the extra portion to preserve it for the following day. They were to bake or boil the entire quantity, eat what they required, and lay up the remainder for the morrow.—Exod. 16: 22, 23.

Had the sabbath observance been customary, the rulers or head men of the various tribes would have known without special inquiry that the extra manna was for the sabbath. As it was, Moses had to repeat the information over and over again, and even on the sabbath had to tell them again that "to-day is a sabbath unto the Lord: to-day ye shall not find it in the field." And then he adds that it will be so from that time out—"Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none." "... let no man go out of his place on the seventh day" (i.e., to look for manna).

The historian concludes his account of the incident by saying that the manna was supplied unto them until they came to Canaan.—Exod. 16: 25, 26, 29, 30, 35.

For a time even Moses was not clear in regard to the sabbath observance, for when the man was found gathering sticks he had to inquire of the Lord before he was certain how to deal with the man. As it was a hot country, there was no occasion to gather sticks unless he wanted to warm the manna, which was kept over from the previous day. Since in the same chapter rules are given for the offering of sacrifices by those who sinned ignorantly, and their forgiveness, the severity of the punishment inflicted in this case showed that the man was wilfully perverse. Evidently this was the first case of serious sabbath breaking after the people had been fully instructed, the earlier transgressors having been more leniently dealt with.—Compare Num. 16: 27-36; Exod. 16: 27, 20.

The Sabbath a Sign

In Exod. 31: 13-17 the weekly sabbath is described as a "sign" between Jehovah and the children of Israel. Its object is stated in verse 13, "that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." The sabbath is thus indicated as having been given to none others than the children of Israel; it was the sign of a covenant between God and the children of Israel, just as circumcision was given to Abraham and his seed as a sign of his faith which he had being uncircumcised; and the circumcision of his descendants was to preserve their interest in the promises given to Abraham, and to stimulate them to imitate his faith. (Rom. 4: 11; Gen. 17: 1-14, 23-27.) Note the similarity of the language in the command to circumcise and the command to keep sabbath (Genesis 17)—

10 This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee: Every man child among you shall be circumcised.

11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.

13 . . . and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.

Exod 31: 16 Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant.

17 It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: . . .

Here both ceremonies, circumcision and keeping the sabbath, are spoken of as signs of a covenant—two different covenants. Both differentiated their observers from other nations—the Jewish people being doubly differentiated in that they both circumcised and kept sabbath. The children of Ishmael (the Arabs) circumcise to this day, according to the covenant made with Abraham, but they never observed the sabbath of the Law Covenant. The penalty for transgressing either rite was death.—Gen. 17: 14; Exod. 31: 15.

Both covenants were said to be "forever," but in both instances subsequent events showed "forever" to be used in a limited rather than in an absolute sense; for since Christ came the Lord requires neither circumcision nor sabbath-keeping as a sign of a covenant between him and the believer. (Rom. 2: 25-29;

4: 10-16; Gal. 2: 16, 17, 21; Rom. 14: 5, 6; Gal. 4: 10, 11; 5: 1.) What the sign is in the case of the Christian will be shown later on when considering the New Covenant, under which the Christian sustains a very precious relation with God.

The other sabbaths prescribed in the law were also to be observed by abstinence from customary labor. The "sabbath of the land," or sabbath year, required the land to lie fallow, and that which grew of itself was to be allowed to remain, except that the family, servants, and strangers, and also the cattle, might use what was required for food. None was to be gathered to sell or to lay up in store. The jubile, or fiftieth year, was also a sabbath of relaxation from toil and gainful pursuits.—Lev. 25: 3-7, 11.

Special Sabbath Work

The priests were under the command to keep the sabbath holy, and as a day of rest; but the law also commanded them more work of some kinds on the sabbath than on other days. The shewbread was to be prepared and arranged on the table in the "holy" apartment. (Lev. 24: 8; 1 Chron. 9: 32.) Each weekly sabbath the morning and evening sacrifices were doubled, thus entailing double labor on the priests and Levites performing the duties of the tabernacle or temple. (Num. 28: 9, 10.) On the other sabbaths, such as the first day of the month, Passover day, the Day of Atonement, etc., additional sacrifices were offered, the details of which may be read in Numbers 28 and 29.

Holy Convocations

While the priests were busy with special offerings on the sabbath, the people were to turn their thoughts toward the tabernacle, and let their prayers arise to God as the smoke of the offerings ascended. When the temple was built, courts were provided, in which the people might stand while offering this worship. Jews absent from Jerusalem turned their faces thither, as the place from which God sent forth His blessing.—Psa. 141: 2; Ezek. 46: 3; Psa. 5: 7; Dan. 6: 10; 2 Chron. 23: 5; Psa. 100: 4.

In addition to such voluntary worship, holy convocations or gatherings were commanded, that the people might hear the law read by Levites and scribes, whose duty it was to take care of the rolls and make additional copies when required. When the law was read the people were expected to rejoice in the Lord's goodness in giving them a law, and to acquiesce in all its commandments. (Exod. 24: 7; Josh. 8: 32-35.) When Israel returned to Jerusalem after the captivity they all gathered on the first day of the seventh month (a sabbath), to hear Ezra and his assistants read the words of the Lord. (Ezra 7: 1-28; 8: 1-8.) After Ezra's day synagogues became numerous for this purpose; previous to that time the people met at the temple or in the open spaces of their towns and villages.—Luke 4: 16.

Feasting on the Sabbath

That the sabbaths were days of rejoicing can be seen from Nehemiah 8: 9-12. When the people wept at the reading of the law, they were admonished that that day, being a sabbath, and therefore holy unto the Lord, should be made an occasion for rejoicing

rather than weeping. Therefore "all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them."—Verse 12.

Those who were able prepared liberally on the sixth day, so that they might entertain their friends, as well as supply the needs of their own households; and they were to remember also the poor, that they too might rejoice on the sabbath day.—Luke 14: 13.

The custom of giving feasts on the sabbath prevailed during the time of our Lord's ministry, and he was frequently an invited guest. The Pharisees and rich publicans had so far forgotten the true import of the day that while they gratified their own appetites they neglected the poor. Hence—when our Lord blessed the poor and sick by healing them on the sabbath day—as the law justified Him in doing—they were angry.—Matt. 12: 14.

Sanctification

The sabbath was also a time for sanctification, or setting apart unto the Lord. Having had six days for servile work for self or earthly employers, which might have a tendency to draw the mind away from God and His service, the sabbath day should be used to draw the interest and affection from these and centre them upon God. They were to be holy, and to engage as far as possible in holy deeds—prayer, hearing the Scriptures, presenting of gifts on the altar, kindness to the poor and afflicted, etc. In every respect it was to be a holy day.

The Day of Atonement

The only sabbath which was commanded to be observed in a mournful manner was the Day of Atonement. In that day they were to fast, and to afflict their souls, confessing their sins before God. This contrast with the joyful observances of the other sabbaths would impress upon their minds the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the goodness of God in providing an atonement for their sins. After the atonement was made, the High Priest came out and blessed the waiting people. Thus were their joys renewed. (Lev. 23: 27-32; 16: 29-31; Num. 6: 22-26; Heb. 9: 26-28.) It was followed a few days later by the Feast of Tabernacles or Ingathering, of which it is written—"and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days."—Lev. 23: 40.

The Jubile and Family Inheritances

Every fiftieth year was a Jubile. It was a sabbath year of the land, similar to the seven sabbaths leading up to and including the 49th, in that no crops were to be sown or gathered, and that which grew of itself was to be allowed to stand for whoever needed it, whether man or beast. It was also, like the other sabbaths, a year of rest for the people. But the Jubile year had a special feature, described in Leviticus 25—

10 And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.

11 A jubile shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor

gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed.

12 For it is the jubile; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field.

13 In the year of this jubile ye shall return every man unto his possession.

That the Jubile was the culmination of the sabbath system is clear from its association in Lev. 25 with the other sabbaths, and that it was determined by a multiplication of seven sabbath years. There were to be seven sabbath years, and the year following the 49th year was to be the jubile. That the Jubile belonged to the sabbath system is also clear from the fact that it, like the other sabbath years, was a rest year for the land, and consequently for all the people also, who would be in other years more or less engaged in agriculture.

Just as the sabbath day, one day in every seven, was intended for the benefit of the people, that they might not forget God, but honor and serve Him, and that they might not become harsh slavedrivers like the Egyptians, under whom they had been in bondage, so the sabbath year was a benefit to the land as well as to the people. The regular rest renewed its fertility; while the abstention of the Jews from robbing the soil forced them to restrain their avarice, and also made them consider the poor. An additional rest year once in fifty years would still further serve these purposes.

But the main object of the Jubile seemed to be to readjust family inheritances, which the Jews in their bungling would disarrange. The Lord, having given certain portions of the land to certain tribes, purposed that they should retain those portions as their inheritance. This was also shown in the case of Zelophehad's daughters, who were given their father's land for their inheritance. It was seen that if they married outside their own tribe confusion would result, because they would thus become associated with two tribes, as would their children also. The matter was adjusted by the command to marry in their own tribe, which they did. (Num. 36: 1-12.) Similarly, if a man forfeited his land to a member of another tribe, confusion would result.

To safeguard the family possessions, the Lord arranged that no land was to be sold in perpetuity—only to the year of jubile. This plan fostered tribal and family honor, and discouraged going into debt. It also kept alive in the minds of the people that, though they lived in the land, it was in reality the Lord's, and they were only free tenants. (Lev. 25: 23.) Moreover, as shown in Lev. 25: 14, 17, 43, 53, the jubile arrangement was to discourage oppression, usury, and slavery. They were to remember that they had been oppressed and enslaved in Egypt, and they were not to oppress or enslave their brethren. They were, however, allowed to enslave Gentiles. A Jew sold to a Gentile should be redeemed.—Lev. 25: 47-50.

Property could be sold only until the year of jubile, when it would revert to its original owner or his heirs. In the meantime an effort should be made to redeem it, either by the debtor himself, or by his family or tribe.

Levites Benefited by the Jubile

While the Levite was not allowed to sell the

"suburbs" of any of the towns or villages allotted to him, he could sell a house in a city. The ordinary Israelite could sell any of his inheritance until the jubile, because he was sole inheritor of his possession; but the "suburbs" or pasture lands surrounding the Levitical cities were communal; that is, they belonged to all the Levites resident in that city. A house in a city, however, was considered a Levite's personal possession. That he was allowed to sell, but at the jubile it should return to him again. In the matter of redemption, the Levite was given an advantage over other Israelites. The latter had to redeem a house in a city within a year, or it became the absolute property of his creditor; whereas a Levite could redeem his house at any time; and, if not redeemed, at the jubile it returned to him again.

Arrangements were made whereby any Israelite might present a piece of land to the Lord; and if afterward he desired the field again he might redeem it at a valuation fixed by the priest, plus one-fifth. But if he failed to redeem it, or if after presenting it he sold it to another; then in the jubile the field would be considered as reverting to the Lord, instead of to the donor. But if a Levite wished to sell his patrimony, and live instead at the tabernacle or temple—a devoted servant of God—he might retain the money; besides being given a portion of the offerings for his food. And his property would return to him in the jubile.—Deut. 18: 6-8; Lev. 25: 32-34.

The Possessions of the Priests and Levites

As some Bible students are under the impression that the Priests and Levites had no possessions in land or houses which they could sell, as intimated above, it may be well here to explain their exact position.

When the twelve tribes came to Jordan, two-and-a-half tribes settled on the east side, as they said that district pleased them, and the promised land itself could be no better. The other nine-and-a-half tribes crossed the Jordan, and all except the Levites were given a portion to go in and possess.

In the wilderness the Lord had taken the whole tribe of Levi as instead of the firstborn, and had given them to Aaron. Aaron himself was of the tribe of Levi, and his family constituted the priesthood, the other families of the tribe being the servants or assistants; that is, the males from twenty-five to fifty; after fifty they were to have charge of holy things, but not to do manual work.—Num. 8: 5-26.

As the Priests and Levites were to serve in the tabernacle and temple in the interest of the other eleven tribes, they were granted the tithes and portions of many of the offerings; and the Israelites were exhorted to remember them with gifts.—Num. 18: 1-32; 2 Chron. 31: 5, 6, 10; Neh. 12: 47; 13: 10-12; Deut. 12: 12, 18, 19.

But when all the tribes were settled in their possessions (so far as they had faith and determination to occupy them), the heads of the Levites came to Eleazer and Joshua and reminded them that God had promised them cities to dwell in and land for their cattle. (Josh. 21: 1, 2.) Then by the command

of the Lord each tribe gave to the Levites certain cities with land attached, including the cities of refuge previously arranged for.—Josh. 20: 1-9.

The question then arises, How can this be harmonized with Josh. 18: 7—"But the Levites have no part among you; for the priesthood of the Lord is their inheritance;" (Josh. 18: 7.) "But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not any inheritance: the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance, as he said unto them."—Josh. 13: 33; Num. 18: 20, 23, 24; Josh. 13: 14.

The explanation seems to lie in the words, "they shall have no part among you"; they were not given a certain section of the land of promise to be their inheritance, as was given to the other tribes. But the Lord did not purpose that they should be homeless wanderers or dependent upon the charity of their brethren. Hence, the cities and pasture lands which were subsequently given them, though situated in the territory of the other tribes, were legally their property or inheritance, over which the other tribes had absolutely no control.

The Levites had their own flocks and herds for the support of those members of the tribe who were not in service at the tabernacle or temple, where the offerings were eaten. But the Levites did not have vast areas from the produce of which they could grow wealthy; and as many of those who were not engaged at the temple travelled about to read to the people and instruct them in the law, these were in a position to accept hospitality. The Levites also acted as judges, and were sometimes used by the spirit of God as prophets.—2 Chron. 19: 8-11; 20: 14-17.

Instead of the priests and Levites being excluded from the special jubile benefits, as some erroneously claim, it was the "strangers" or Gentiles who were debarred. They could not return to their "possessions" because no inheritance had been given them in the land. The aliens had indeed been thrust out or destroyed in order that Israel might inherit their land.—Exod. 34: 24.

The law said there should be one law for the strangers who dwelt in the land, as for the Hebrew, and the strangers who were servants or slaves should have the sabbath rest. This benefit they received because of close association with the Israelites, and because their labor would be a source of gain or distraction to their masters. (Exod. 20: 10.) As for slavery, the law distinctly allowed the retention "forever" of foreigners. They did not go out in the jubile. (Exod. 21: 2; Deut. 15: 3; Lev. 25: 14-16.) These distinctions were no doubt intended to impress upon all the advantages of being one of the covenant people, and to encourage the aliens to become proselytes.—Exodus 12: 45, 48; Numbers 15: 14-16.

The Silver Trumpets

Moses was told to make two silver trumpets "for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps." (Num. 10: 1-10.) The sons of Aaron, the priest, should blow the trumpets. They

were also to be used in case of war, in remembrance of God as the One in whom they trust for victory.

"Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, **ye shall blow with the trumpets OVER YOUR BURNT OFFERINGS, and OVER the sacrifices of your peace offerings;** that they may be for a memorial before your God: I am the Lord your God."—Verse 10.

From this it would appear that the opening of the Year of Jubile was by no means the only occasion on which the silver trumpets were sounded. They served to call the people together, to proclaim the offering of sacrifices, and to announce the sabbath and feast days. The use of the same trumpet in the year of jubile again shows the connection of the jubile with the sabbath system, and the connection of the sabbath system with the offering of sacrifices and the worship of God.

The word *yobel*, meaning the blast of a horn, occurs in Exod. 19: 13, and is translated "trumpet." It is this word which is translated "jubile" in Lev. 25: 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 28, 30, 31, 33, 40, 50, 52, 54; 27: 17, 18, 21, 23, 24; Num. 36: 4. The word stands for the trumpet, for the sound of the trumpet, and for the fiftieth-year festival which the sound of the trumpet introduced.

The word rendered "jubile" in Lev. 25: 9 is not *yobel*, but *teruah*, meaning an acclamation of joy.

The word *yobel* is rendered "rams' horns" in Joshua 6: 4, 6, 8, 13. No doubt, in the overthrow of Jericho and of Midian, the use of the trumpet was, as on other occasions, a memorial of the Lord, and a testimony of their faith in God's power to win the victories for them.

The Jubile Trumpet and the Atonement

Since some interpreters claim that the trumpet of jubile was sounded at the close of the day of atonement, it is important to notice, first, that the record does not so state; and, second, that the custom was to blow the trumpet *over* the sacrifice, while it was being consumed on the altar. The jubile trumpet must not therefore be dissociated from the atonement. The jubile trumpet is indeed first concerned in announcing the day of atonement, and calling the people together, that they may

be ready to fall down and worship when they see the smoke of the burnt offering arising and have that testimony that the High Priest is sprinkling the blood of the atonement on the mercy seat. On every day of atonement for fifty years the trumpet was blown, the sacrifice offered, and the sins of the people forgiven; but it was only in the fiftieth year that the jubile festival was celebrated: by the return of every man to his possessions.

The jubile trumpet proclaimed liberty for any Hebrew who had been sold for debt; but that was not the only time Hebrew slaves were liberated. No Hebrew was allowed to hold a brother Hebrew as a slave for more than six years—in the seventh he must go free, and he must not be sent away empty. (Exod. 21: 2; Deut. 15: 12-18.) But on no account could a Hebrew hold a brother as a slave through the Jubile, unless the ceremony mentioned in Deut. 15: 17 had been performed at the slave's request.

Nothing is said about remission of debts in the jubile year, but Deut. 15: 1-11 commanded the release of debtors (except foreigners) at the end of seven years. Instead of making a fellow Jew a debtor, they were preferably to open their hands wide to supply his needs.

The Good Things Foreshadowed

The simplicity of the Gospel, as contrasted with the complexity of the law, is illustrated in that a few words may outline the "good things" whose shadows require columns of description.

The one sacrifice of the Lord Jesus on the cross was the antitype of hundreds of thousands of sin-offerings and burnt offerings. In Himself he was the antitype of the daily, or continual, burnt offerings, which for over a thousand years ascended to God. Through Him alone our prayers may be heard; by Him alone we are acceptable as worshippers at the throne of God. His simple law of faith and love and obedience takes the place of a long and detailed code of commands and prohibitions, rites and ceremonies. In harmony with the simplicity and beauty of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus is the sabbath or rest of the Christian believer, and the liberty wherewith Christ makes free.

(To be continued in May issue.)



The Two Swords

(Luke 22: 35-38)

GREAT EVENTS were on the march. The last twenty-four hours of "the days of his flesh" had come to our Saviour, and much was to be done. (Hebrews 5: 7.) Many precious words of instruction were to be spoken to the disciples after the last Supper; their faith must be strengthened for the trial that was just upon them, their pride of position must be rebuked, and a lesson of humility must be taught. The Saviour Himself required preparation in agonizing prayer for the coming ordeal. And certain prophecies were to be fulfilled. With all this amount of history to be made in so short

a time, these few hours would be crowded with incidents sufficient—one might suppose—to engage all the faculties of even the dulllest; and yet the chosen three slept while the Master prayed.

That it might be Fulfilled

Many times is it stated in the Gospels that certain things were done that the Scripture might be fulfilled. A familiar illustration is Matthew 8: 16, 17—

16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils; and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick:

17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

Compare Isaiah 53: 4.

Those who deny the freedom of the will have sought to appropriate to their own province these fulfillments of Scripture, as though God had predicted these events and then had compelled individuals to fulfil them. The case of Judas, who betrayed the Saviour and thus fulfilled certain prophecies, is often alluded to by Universalists in particular as though it were an instance of this sort. By taking this view of Judas' act it is thought to relieve him from responsibility for his deed, and to show that no punishment is due for it because Judas was only doing what God compelled him to do in order that His Word might not be dishonored by going unfulfilled. It should be carefully noted, though, that Judas was not chosen to be a devil; he was chosen because he *was* a devil.—John 6: 70.

God's Word must be fulfilled, without doubt; and if it ever happened that persons did not of their own free will take appropriate parts in the fulfillments of prophecies as they became due, God would see to it. But such a contingency has never arisen, and since God's foreknowledge is perfect there is no need to suppose that such a contingency would ever arise.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to know that even such an event is provided for, though not in the direction of coercing an agent otherwise free. Neither is God so limited that He must insure the correctness of His predictions by entirely withholding freedom of the will from all created beings, which would thus be helpless to do aught except at His impulse. One of the most convincing proofs of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures is the fulfilment of its prophecies. (Isaiah 41: 21-23.) But there would be no glory in foretelling the inevitable; hence it is evident that divine provision for the fulfilment of God's prophecies is not made along this line.

The Stones would Cry Out

What God would do in case His intelligent creatures failed to take their appropriate part in the fulfilment of prophecies is indicated by our Saviour's words to the Pharisees on the occasion of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Luke 19: 37-40)—

37 And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen;

38 Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

39 And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.

40 And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

The prophecy of Zechariah 9: 9 was here being fulfilled, and the terms of the prophecy required a shout to acclaim and greet the King. The whole multitude of the disciples, moved thereto by the sight of many mighty works, rejoiced and shouted of their own free will, and so were privileged to act

in fulfilment of the prophecy. Had they not been ready to shout at the right time, the prophecy would still have been fulfilled. Divine power would not have coerced the multitude to shout, but, passing them by, would miraculously have given animation, voice, and speech to the silent stones, and *the stones would have immediately cried out*. God, who miraculously predicted the triumphal entry some centuries before it occurred, could, if necessary, and without coercing the free will of any one, perform other miracles at the appropriate time, to assist in the fulfilment.

A similar thought had been expressed by John the Baptist. When the Pharisees and Sadducees trusted in their lineage, he warned them to bring forth "fruits meet for repentance."

"And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."—Matthew 3: 9.

The prophecy of Genesis 22: 17 required that there should be a numerous seed of Abraham, but they must be of a certain disposition. (John 8: 39-44.) If the children of Abraham according to the flesh were not, and would not be, of the disposition of their father Abraham, God would not coerce them into becoming so; He would, if necessary to work a miracle, work it upon the very stones of the ground, which had not, at least, acted contrary to Him, and from them He would raise up children for Abraham.

Thus—by showing His mighty power in the inanimate creation—would God cause His prophecies to be fulfilled if the co-operation of beings with freedom of will were not forthcoming. But in neither of these cases was it necessary for divine power to resort to the stones. In the first case, the multitude of the disciples was ready to raise the shout; in the second case, although the Pharisees and Sadducees were rejected, God has raised up children for Abraham from among the Gentiles.—Galatians 3: 7, 29; Romans 4: 16.

God's people should be ready at all times to take part in fulfilling prophecies, and should consider themselves highly honored to be allowed to do so. For instance, those who realize that the events of our day show that a change is taking place in the rulership of the world should be ready to take some part—if only a small one—in sounding out the "great voices" throughout the "heaven" of Christendom, saying: "The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ; . . ." (Revelation 11: 15.) Such an opportunity and privilege must not be surrendered to the stones of the ground.

The Master's Readiness to fulfil Prophecy

The blessed Master on more than one occasion willingly and knowingly took part in the fulfilment of prophecy. Beyond all question, He had an understanding of His mission and its relation to many Old Testament predictions, which enabled Him to fulfil His part not blindly, but intelligently. He understood the duration of His ministry, so that He

could say that His time was not yet come (John 7: 6), and later could say that the things concerning Himself were coming to an end. (Luke 22: 37.) It is in view of this understanding that the Saviour had of the Old Testament prophecies and His part in their accomplishment that His instruction in connection with the Two Swords is best understood, for in this incident is clearly brought out our Lord's willingness—even eagerness—to fulfil all the prophecies concerning Himself.

In the first place, He reminds the disciples that He had sent them on a mission, and had strictly charged them to carry no money or other supplies. (Luke 22: 35.) Had they lacked any thing? No; every need had been supplied. "But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip:" (v. 36.) Why so? Was the Lord's providence in future to be less potent than in the past? Would He be less able than formerly to care for His messengers? Not so; the Lord would be just as able in the future as in the past, and had the errand been the same the instructions would have been similar, no doubt—as indeed they were when, after the Saviour's resurrection, the apostles went back to secular business, and the Lord told Peter rather to feed the sheep and the lambs of His flock.

But in the present instance the Lord was sending the disciples on a vastly different errand, and so keen was He in the matter, and so urgent that they have money, that He said—according to the Revised Version of the latter part of v. 36—"and he that hath none (i.e., no purse), let him sell his cloke and buy one." Why this urgency that they have money now? One may well stand astonished at the answer—He desired them to buy swords. What a paradox!—the disciples of the Prince of Peace armed with swords! Yet so it was.

"But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise a wallet: and he that hath none, let him sell his cloke, and buy a sword."—Luke 22: 36, R.V.

Why should they provide swords? For no other reason than to accomplish something that was written. The things concerning Him were now drawing to a close, but there was one item that must yet be accomplished in Him—

"For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end."—V. 37.

The swords were to bear some part in causing Him to be "reckoned among the transgressors." When they said they had two swords, He said that those would suffice.—V. 38.

The Part played by the Swords

When the multitude, under the command of the chief priests and elders and the guidance of Judas, came to the garden to arrest Jesus, the disciples said, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" (Luke 22: 49.) Without waiting for a command, one of them cut off the right ear of the high priest's servant. Here was a transgression indeed—violent resistance of arrest. For, although the Lord did not personally do this, it was done by one who acknowledged His authority, and whom He acknowledged as a disciple,

and so He would be responsible. Was the close of the busy years of healing to be marred by the maiming of a man? No; for the damage done by the impetuous disciple was immediately repaired; the servant was healed.—Luke 22: 51.

"Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"—John 18: 11.

Thus did the possession and use of the sword by a disciple cause our Lord to be numbered or reckoned among the transgressors; and had Jesus not immediately healed the smitten servant of the high priest, thus destroying the evidence, He would have been a transgressor from the human standpoint at least, and probably also from the divine standpoint as well, inasmuch as He had not been sent to destroy, but to save. (John 3: 17.) As it was, men could reckon Him a transgressor in only a technical and not at all in an actual sense. In reality, He was an overcomer, for He resisted the temptation to turn aside; He went forward to drink the cup poured for Him by the Father, and fulfilled the Scriptures, as He said further to Peter (Matthew 26: 53, 54)—

53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

An Unauthorized Allusion

There is but one other New Testament allusion to the prophecy of Isaiah 53: 12, whose fulfilment is above referred to. It reads (Mark 15: 27, 28)—

27 And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.

28 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.

It is perhaps sufficient to observe that Mark 15: 28 occurs only in late MSS.; it is omitted by every one of the ancient MSS., and by the Revised Version, though it is noted in the margin of the latter.

Strangely enough, the fact that our Saviour was crucified between two thieves is almost invariably thought of as though it were the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah 53: 12—largely because some later copyist mistakenly so thought, and without authority included his idea as part of the Gospel of Mark; while the matter of the Two Swords is practically overlooked, although this was undoubtedly the way in which the Master was numbered or reckoned among the transgressors or law breakers.

Mere *compulsory association* with the thieves, as in the crucifixion, could in no way furnish adequate ground for considering, numbering, reckoning, or inventorying (as the Greek word means) Him as a transgressor. A draper when stocktaking does not inventory a piece of silk as muslin because it happens to be found among the muslins. Neither would our Lord be inventoried as a transgressor or law breaker because in His crucifixion He was found between two thieves.

But the possession and use of the sword by His disciple to resist arrest constituted Him, the responsible Master of the disciple, a transgressor or law breaker in the sight of men, and would allow

them, for the moment, to inventory Him as a transgressor. But only for the moment, because the disciple's action was immediately rebuked and the consequences were made good, so that this episode could not be brought in as evidence against Him. It is well to know that Mark 15: 28 does not require to be considered, as it is an unauthorized portion probably added by the hand of some later copyist to express his own thought, which was incorrect.

Are not our Lord's faithfulness and His eagerness to be associated with the out-workings of the Father's purposes lessons to all of us, who profess to be following in His steps? Shall not we be keen to discern, and faithful to do, the Father's will, counting ourselves honored to be associated, even if in some insignificant capacity, with the fulfilment of His designs?

From Far and Near

Greetings in His Name. We received the two parcels of tracts quite safely, and we think the title—"The Blessing of All Nations"—very appropriate to the present time. We have put out most of the 500; and would be pleased if you would send another 500. There are not many in our Class to distribute them, so it generally falls to me to put them round. This I do when visiting the different districts. I could wish it were thousands instead of hundreds. But the Lord will understand and bless the work done in faith. Many Christians do not understand what this great trouble means at the present time; but it is undoubtedly the flaming fire that shall reveal the Lord's presence.

Praying the Lord's blessing upon your work of faith, labour of love, and patience in hope. Your brother in the One Hope. —, Queensland.

Enclosed herewith P.N. to value of 10 shillings for N.C.A. for another 12 months; the remainder to be devoted to the Advocate Sustaining Fund. —, Victoria.

Just a note trusting things are all well with you all, as this leaves me in fairly good health. I enjoy the reading of the N.C.A., and get great help from it. I enclose P.O. for 2/6; would you kindly send me "Bible Talks for Heart and Mind," paper covers, and oblige. Yours very sincerely in Christ. —, Queensland.

Please find enclosed a P.N. for 5/- covering my usual donation to the Advocate Sustaining Fund for the month of March, 1943. The Advocate still comes along regularly, and I am pleased to note that the article "What this Journal Stands For" is being reprinted from time to time. Whilst not a dogma, in that sense of the word, it enables casual readers, often people leading busy lives, to see in a few minutes the main outline of the "Faith once delivered to the saints," as expounded in the N.C.A., and may result in quickening their interest in a manner which a serial magazine otherwise would not do. Thus more wheat is separated from the tares—which is all to the good, and as our Lord wills.

Trusting you are maintaining good health, and with kindest regards, Yours sincerely, —, South Australia.

Christian greetings in the precious name of Jesus. And my prayer is that God's richest blessings may be your happy portion now and through all eternity.

The time for the Memorial is now getting close at hand, and we are looking forward with joy and peace to keeping and partaking of the solemn feast. May the dear Lord's guidance and blessing rest upon us all as we strive to follow in His footsteps.

I am enclosing note to pay my subscription for the N.C.A. And if there is any over please use balance to help on the glorious work.

If you have a little of the Bread emblem on hand, could you please send me say about half an ounce by post in time

for the Memorial? Your brother in the Master's service, —, New South Wales.

As this request reached us in time we were able to send a portion of the Memorial Bread. Other isolated ones have also been supplied when their desire was known in time.

May the Lord's blessing rest upon us all—whether singly or gathered together in a given place. And may we all continue to testify by our lives that, having been bought with a Price, we are faithfully serving Him who did so much for us, and is still at our side to help us to the glorious end.

THE CONQUERING KINGDOM

THE friends of the Truth in Melbourne are looking forward to the Conference to be held on the statutory holidays, Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

The topic chosen, "The Conquering Kingdom," has been divided into the following subtopics, of about 15 minutes each, which we believe will be of great interest to all who can arrange to attend. Friends from the Country and New Inquirers welcomed.

1. The Creation and Eden.
 2. Filling the Earth.
 3. A New Beginning.
 4. Israel at Sinai.
 5. The Land of Promise.
 6. A King Wanted.
 7. Conquering Self.
 8. The Conquering Lamb.
 9. The Precious Blood of Christ.
 10. Kings and Priests.
 11. Conquering the Gentiles.
 12. The Mystery of Iniquity.
 13. The Great Reformation.
 14. The Second Coming.
 15. The Kingdom of 1,000 Years.
- "More than Conquerors."

The yearly Memorial Supper will also be observed; on the Scripturally indicated date, April 20.

—SINCE OUR LAST ISSUE

ALL THE WORLD keeps on wondering. The last war was looked upon as a world war—the most extensive ever known. And there were queries as to whether it would be the last. Some observers thought mutual understanding and consideration for one another's rights would guarantee friendship and peace. And the League of Nations was the result. But—

UNDERNEATH other forces were working. The Peace

Potion put some of the nations to sleep. They saw the need of internal reforms in all nations, and the benefit that would follow mutual understanding and friendly co-operation for world betterment. Under such conditions fortifications and armed forces were needless. But the defeated nations worked quietly to regain their status as world powers, and the result is seen to-day.

BEFORE OUR EYES has developed the greatest war of all history. And many Christians are studying God's Word afresh to find whether this is indeed the greatest and the final conflict before the

FORCIBLE SETTING UP of the Kingdom of God.

Whether indeed it is God's instrument to fulfil the prophecy which says: "and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time:" (Dan. 12.) And the completion of

the work spoken of by our Lord (Matt. 24: 14)—“And then shall the end come.” “The Sign of the Son of Man in heaven” is to be looked for. (Matt. 24: 30.) And He “shall send his angels” (i.e. messengers) to “gather together his elect.”

GATHERED together to the truth—to the correct understanding of the prophecies concerning the work to be carried on in the Gospel age as a witness and to choose out those who shall be joint-heirs with Him in His Kingdom.

UNCOVERING the Nations. One result of the present world war has been an uncovering of the habits and customs of both professing Christian and so-called heathen nations. The public Press has accomplished much of this uncovering so far as the general public is concerned. And no doubt the Lord's hand was in the invention of the printing press, cheap paper, etc., etc. All of which should convince the believer in God and His Word that the time for completion of the church of joint-heirs, with the setting up of His Kingdom in power and great glory, is drawing ever nearer.

LET us then be diligent in fulfilling the commission the Lord gave to the disciples, and seek out those who worship Him in sincerity and whom He is calling to be among the joint-heirs. We read (Romans 8: 22)—“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.” And is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God who are to live and reign with Christ in His Kingdom.—Rom. 8: 19.

KNOWING these things, let us use every opportunity to speak the truth—not only by word of mouth, but also by the printed page. We have on hand thousands of printed tracts suitable for distribution at this time. They are free for the asking, and are sent postfree to friends who desire to engage in this blessed service. To use one of our Lord's parables as an incentive to activity, let us behold the fields ripe to harvest, and let us take our sickle and help to reap the ripened grain.

And may the Lord bless every sincere searcher of His Word! Even in war-time God can spread His truth. Witness the opening up of various countries long closed, and the introduction therein of evangelical scripture translations. The pity of it is, so much of this evangelism is tinged with the error of eternal torment—as though the poor world were not already in sufficient torment and suffering!

Now: Let the True Light shine!

AND let us also observe how the Lord in our day is revealing more and more of the wonders of His creation and of His sustaining power; an example recently brought to attention by scientists in their experiments and various analyzings of Plant Growth, as explained in March issue.

The New Covenant Advocate

and Kingdom Herald

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The New Covenant Advocate

— and —

Kingdom Herald

VOL. 35

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, MAY 1, 1943.

No 2.

The Conquering Kingdom

THE TOPIC chosen for our Easter Conference this year, "The Conquering Kingdom," was divided into fifteen Sub-topics, as listed in April issue. And we have pleasure now in presenting the good messages in print for the enjoyment of our many N.C.A. readers scattered abroad. Every study of the Lord's great Plan brings a blessing, with increased gratitude for His goodness in sending His beloved Son to give Himself for us, that we might be delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the Kingdom of His dear Son.—Col. 1: 12, 13.

The Creation and Eden

Were we not informed by reading the Word of God that He created all things, we might look out of our door, as savages do, and think that things just happened; or that one or more of their idol-gods was responsible for things as they are. But, having the Word of the True God, we know that "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."—Gen. 1: 1.

And the Psalmist, writing under inspiration, says (Psalm 33: 6): "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." So we need not be surprised that He expects reverence as well as love from His human creation, whom He made in His own image.—Col. 3: 10.

The Lord Jesus was in the image of God, but did not fall, as Adam did.

CARE of the garden of Eden God made the responsibility of Adam; giving him the privilege of giving names to the beasts, cattle, and fowls. But among these there was no suitable mate for the man. Then God created the woman to be a help meet for him. And thus God provided for the increase of the Adamic stock under Paradisiacal conditions. (Gen. chapters 1, 2.) But before the reproduction of the human family, God foresaw that Satan would interfere, and thus complications were avoided.

The serpent was not of itself able to talk and reason. According to the account, he was in the tree, and a conversation is reported. (Gen. 3.) But the serpent had not of itself powers of speech. It

was in the tree the fruit of which God had forbidden to Adam. Other Scriptures show that the real tempter was Satan, who was an angel of God's creation, but who saw in the garden and in the persons of the man and the woman an opportunity to gain, as he thought, for himself rulership over them. Whereas God their Creator had not given him any such position.

God retained to himself the right of rulership over the perfect pair, and to them He gave the duty and privilege of living in and caring for the garden, which would provide food necessary to the welfare of the human beings as well as food for the animal creation put under their care.

But on account of their sin, God drove them from the garden. Yet He did not abandon them. They were given land to work in, and general rulership; and the flaming sword (Gen. 3: 24) was a warning to them to obey God in future.

Chapter 4 tells of Cain and Abel, and how Cain slew his brother. But God still kept an oversight of the human race and provided for their welfare.

The Father of Lies

If it be asked who introduced sin into Eden, the New Testament supplies the answer. It was Satan—one of the angels, who was led astray by greed and ambition when he saw what he thought were the possibilities of control over mankind.

The New Testament leaves us in no doubt as to who was responsible for the entrance of sin. The Lord told the wicked scribes and Pharisees:

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

Here the Lord distinctly tells us that Satan was the first liar, and consequently also the first murderer. Satan had been in the truth, but did not abide in it. Hence God pronounced a curse upon him. (Gen. 3)—

14 And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this,

15 And I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Who then was the conqueror in the garden? Undoubtedly God himself, for He pronounced on Satan a severe penalty.

It is true that God drove Adam and Eve from the garden, but He did not abandon them. Sorrow would come upon them, and ultimately death. But God had foreseen those events, and had provided against them, as we read in Gen. 3. He clothed them, and gave them a promise of a Redeemer to come. (Read Gen. 3: 17-19.) And verse 24 tells how a place of worship was provided at the Gate kept by the cherubim.

God was the Conqueror, and able to place a sentence of death upon Satan. But Satan was allowed liberty to influence human beings for a time, and

some men have learned to choose God in preference to the evil one. Yet it is still true, as stated in 2 Cor. 4:

4 In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

The ultimate destruction of Satan is still God's design. During the Kingdom age just ahead, Satan will be bound the thousand years. After that, he will be loosed a little season, and allowed to make what effort he can to spoil the glorious millennial work of Christ. And finally he will be forever destroyed.

Let us pray for the coming of God's Kingdom to help as many as are willing to turn to God.—Matthew 6: 9-13.

Filling the Earth

It is always a happy position to be in to be on the victorious side. To conquer—or, to make it more striking, "more than conquerors," as Paul says—is undoubtedly worthy of our best efforts and strivings. No victory was ever won without the most careful and painstaking planning, hard fighting, and skilful strategy. All this is borne out by a careful study of Genesis, chapters 4 to 10.

Here is depicted the growth of Adam's sons: their trials, their filling the earth, making cities, their crafts, and their sins and failures.

These chapters have been a very keen battleground for higher critics, and others who try to discredit the simple and clear Bible account. Many and varied are the comments made and objections raised. These early people, they state, were simple, unlearned, unscientific and childish, who had to be taught by simple stories. They could not write, or know the use of letters. They were so primitive as not even to be familiar with fire and how to use it. They were just struggling up, the critics say, from the brute beast and learning to walk upright.

Some go farther, and assert that the early ages of our earth are littered with the abandoned failures and the wrecks of experiments tried by God in making and founding our planet. In fact, the Genesis narrative is all out of focus of modern scientific trends, and so carries no authority for the modern thinker.

Yet if the evidence is examined and a careful study is made of these chapters, it will be seen that the Christian has no cause for panic or dismay. No book has won more victories than the Bible, or has come off with such striking success. Even higher critics now admit that there was such a person as Abraham, and that the Genesis account of his life and times is accurate and reasonable. But this is only one of many Bible narratives which have withstood the keenest scrutiny and been proved true.

We must also remember that, in a vast plan covering thousands of years and embracing several ages of time, many details might be obscure and not easy to define. More so when, as in this case, the "world that then was" was destroyed by an overwhelming deluge.—2 Peter 3: 5, 6.

This is true of these early chapters of Genesis. A knowledge that God has a plan extending over a long period of time will help greatly in understanding pre-

flood times. For the Bible assures us that God did have a Plan carefully worked out to the last detail, and which provided for every contingency and difficulty that might arise.

In fact, our Lord Jesus Christ was, in God's purpose, the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. (Isaiah 53: 1-12; Rev. 13: 8.) Sin and death had been provided for and defeated.

So to say that the flood was merely a hasty judgment of a world out of hand is untrue. God knew men would sin. He also was a just God, who could not tolerate sin and evil ways.—Gen. 6: 5.

Sin can have only one end: death. That is the only wages sin pays. (Rom. 6: 23.) So—whether a whole evil system, or a nation, or a man—God could and did destroy. (2 Peter 2: 9.) This great truth is driven home many times in the Bible.

It is evident, therefore, that many critics do not read the chapters they so confidently condemn; or, if they do, they forget the facts related in them. They query the origin of Moses' sources of information. They assert that he copied and relied on outside sources and changed and moulded them to unite the Jewish nation. This question of the origins is highly important. Whence came this account? Moses lived 2,500 years after these things; whence, then, came his knowledge?

We believe, with Paul and Peter, that all Scripture was written or given under inspiration of the Holy Spirit. As the Spirit is from God who cannot lie, all narrations given by it must be true. In addition to this, Moses had a special high standing as a prophet. "And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." No other prophet in Israel had this privilege.—Deut. 34: 10-12; Exod. 33: 11.

Now, then, does a man speaking to a friend give him false data or deceive him? Of course not! Then we can easily see that God would inform Moses correctly as to the origin and development of our race. Moses was forty days and forty nights in the mount with God, that time would be ample to give full details of creation and pre-flood times as well as of the law and the tabernacle.

Could we for a moment suppose that God could create a wonderful world like our earth, and then not cause an intelligent account of its creation to be

written? Did not our Lord, who spoke of the days of Noah and who always spoke of Moses as a Prophet and Leader of God's people, speak truly as One who knew whereof the things He spoke were true?

Seeing, then, that the authority for Genesis—and indeed the whole Bible—is the highest: God our Creator, and Jesus Christ His Son our Redeemer, we can have the utmost confidence in our source of information. Let us then examine the narratives and see what they tell about these early sons of Adam.

We read that they built houses and cities. (Gen. 4: 17.) As we all realize, to build cities implies considerable knowledge and ability. Of the sons of Cain, Jubal was the father of such as have cattle and dwell in tents; his brother Jubal was the father of all who handle harp and organ; while Tubal-cain was a worker of every artifice in brass and iron. This upsets the "no fire" assertion, as every smith must have a good knowledge of fire and its uses in working brass and iron.—Gen. 4: 20-22.

Abel was a tiller of the ground, and had some success in his husbandry. If Adam's sons had these gifts and trades, must we not conclude that Adam himself also had ability? He was created perfect and put in charge of Eden to tend and look after it. (Gen. 1: 27; 2: 8.) Eve, we can be sure, also had her gifts and abilities to be used as needed.

These few verses show us that man was inventive, skilful, and expert in trades and husbandry, and even in the arts.

We can thus establish the fact, that the order before the flood was well planned, intelligent, and of a high degree of civilization. It has been found that an examination of water-borne clay beds on the Euphrates and Tigris rivers in the vicinity of Babylon witness to the truth of the Bible. The remains of various articles—as swords and domestic pottery—have been found to be of a very much higher standard than that after the flood. Indeed, there was a marked decline in quality of similar articles after the flood, and not till 800 years after did their general artistic utility and quality approach pre-flood workmanship. The pre-flood civilization was of a very high order indeed as far as arts and crafts were concerned.

Due no doubt to specially favorable climatic conditions, the span of life was long, and this would give ample time for individuals to develop their skill in various arts and crafts.

We can learn something about these people from our Lord's words in Matthew 24: 3-39. The people before the flood had complete social arrangements, they married among themselves, and evidently had feasts about it. They were fond of the pleasures of the table, and were alas! careless and indifferent to God and his word. These things so fully occupied their time that even Noah's building an Ark did not warn them because they carried on their usual manner of life without any thought of reformation or repentance.

This warning applies to our day, when signs of a great change in our system are evident. But is any attention given? No, very little; and when these evil systems are swept away the world will be taken by complete surprise. They "knew not." (Matt. 24:

39.) So there is at least this that the pre-flood people and those of our time have in common: careless, pleasure-loving, and prone to forget God. Their span of life was much longer, due it is thought to a more even climate, a more vigorous constitution, but sin and death were operating. Instead of being thankful for the conditions they enjoyed and serving God, they fell into sin, and their wickedness was great, and every imagination and thought was evil continually.—Genesis 6: 5.

Angels Ruling

What form of Government did these people have? The New Testament (1 Pet. 3: 19, 20, and 2 Pet. 3: 9) shows that they were ruled over by heavenly angels. As the earth filled with the children of Adam, some rule would become necessary. The early form would be rule by the heads of families—Adam, Cain, Seth, and others. They would be well endowed mentally and even after the fall could rule and guide their people.

But the "heaven," or higher ruling direction, came from angelic beings. These were allowed by God to try if they could guide men in right ways. They did not succeed, but fell from their appointed status.

Angels had the power to appear in human form (Gen. 6: 2), and Peter's statement shows the sad result of their disobedience. They saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took wives of all that they chose. (Gen. 6: 2-4.) They used the accepted social and legal tie of marriage of that time. But it was sinful, and out of order, for angels to do so. The result was disastrous.

These unions produced "men of renown" who oppressed the race and were mighty men of old. So angels failed to maintain their separateness and righteousness in God's eyes, and God was so displeased that He destroyed this unauthorized hybrid race, as Peter informs us.—1 Peter 3: 20; Gen. 6: 4.

Still God had a few faithful men who walked with him: Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah. Genesis 4: 26 states that Seth brought up his family to call on the name of the Lord. He evidently instructed them in the need for worshipping God and approaching Him with acceptable sacrifices, as Abel had done.

In Genesis 6: 8 we read that "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Thus was a worshipper of the true God honoured. Noah, his sons, and their wives—eight persons in all—were to be the only survivors of their day and generation. God instructed Noah to build an Ark, and prepare it for himself and family, and for certain beasts and fowl, and their food.—Gen. 6: 13-22.

This evil world of wicked people was to be destroyed by a huge flood of water.

They scoffed, and disbelieved Noah, but the flood came and took them all away.

Critics have raised objections, and have made the Ark and the flood the target for their unbelief. They say—(1) There is not enough water to cover the earth as related in Gen. 7: 17-20 when the mountains were covered. (2) The Ark was not large enough to hold every living creature. But Genesis states that of clean beasts seven, and of other creatures, including fowl, two of each kind went into the Ark.

As to objection No. 1, that there was not enough water to cover the earth and lift the Ark, God caused the rain to fall upon the earth for forty days and nights, as well as "the fountains of the great deep" to be "broken up." So there was no difficulty in raising the Ark above a world-wide flood. Science today finds in various parts of the world evidence of that great Flood.

On the earth today the area of the oceans exceeds that of dry land. As is known, the seas are 5-6 miles deep in places. There is also the water in the rivers and lakes, and also in the rain clouds. So even in our time there is an immense quantity of water on the earth.

The Genesis account states, first of all, that it rained forty days and forty nights. It poured. The fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. That looks like a deluge, does it not? The flood was not for forty days only; it continued a year.

The waters "prevailed exceedingly upon the earth" (vs. 19), and vs. 24 says they "prevailed one hundred and fifty days;" after which (Gen. 8: 1-14) the process was reversed. The windows of heaven were stopped, the rain was restrained, and a drying wind came.

Yet it took another 150 days for the waters to abate, and verses 13 and 14 explain that it was over a year before the earth dried.

Now as to the Ark. Genesis 6: 14-16 gives details as to size. It was about 400 feet long, 80 feet beam, and 40 feet deep—quite a large vessel even as ships go in our time. The Ark had three decks, and provision was made for ample storage space.

Some naturalists give 14,000 as an outsize number of species of animals and birds, snakes, etc. The average size of animals is that of our dog, and for birds smaller. So there is a neat problem for young scientist students. Work it out and see if there was not ample room. You can also work out the water on our earth to nearest ten million gallons. Curiously enough, Soviet scientists set out to make a model of the Ark, to show up Genesis history. As nothing more has been heard of it, it appears that the size was adequate.

The Flood is recorded all over the earth among numerous tribes and nations. Accounts differ, but all agree as to its extent.

There is also some agreement as to the number who survived; i.e. eight. Would it not be reasonable for us to suppose that these accounts had their origin in the descendants of Noah who in course of time spread all over the earth, and that our Bible account is the original?

The Flood is mentioned by our Lord; and by the Apostles and others in the Scriptures; so it is witnessed to by good and holy men, in addition to the Lord himself who was holy, harmless and undefiled, and separate from men.

We might mention here that not all scientists scoff at and disbelieve the Bible. Isaac Newton, Lord Lister, Pasteur, were I believe sincere believers in the Bible, and are undoubtedly leaders in their spheres of scientific knowledge. Newton's place is outstanding. It is said of him he uncovered two-thirds of the knowledge available up to his time, and was a man of great ability and extensive learning and experience.

God's Rule Supreme

The Flood was not the act of a disappointed God who had failed in his plan for the race, and was compelled to destroy his unsuccessful experiment. No: It was part of a well-planned purpose, many sided, covering ages and periods, and having as its goal the filling of our Earth with a happy, good-living, and righteous people. The Flood had been foreseen and provided for.

God foreknew the proneness of men to sin and evil ways, and provided a Redeemer. The Flood was the close of "the world that then was." (2 Peter 3: 6.) Men must learn that God is supreme in His universe, and He will not tolerate sin and evil doing.

Offerings to God

When the Flood subsided and the waters dried up, Noah and his family were able to leave the Ark, and again live upon the earth.—Gen. 8: 15-18.

God instructed them to offer up certain burnt offerings. This Noah did, and God accepted them and blessed them, and gave Noah a promise: Never again would there be a flood of water to destroy every living thing. (Gen. 8: 20-22; 9: 11-15.) Summer and winter, seedtime and harvest, would continue while the earth remained. A beautiful sign was also given—the rainbow in the clouds.

The Rainbow

Whenever we see this (as we often do after and during rain), we must remember that God has given men that lovely sign to remind them of His Promise to them. This Promise has been faithfully kept by God. And, although men have sinned and done evil and disregarded the goodness of God, that sign still shows. Can we not also regard the rainbow as a witness that there was a flood and a promise of hope?

So the first "age" ended. Noah's was the only human family left. He flourished, his seed have filled the earth. But the span of human life fell to 70 years. Men lived, toiled, and for the most part forgot God.

Still there were always a faithful few. To these God sent his messages, and in time His Son. Always there was a blessing to these. Let us, then, imitate them, and in God's due time have a part in His Conquering Kingdom.

—J. S.

Is Christ's Return to Earth to be Expected?

BRIEF tho it was, the ministry of our Savior as the Man Christ Jesus on earth brought to light many truths till then not revealed, and set in motion great forces previously inactive.—

Psalms 78: 2; Matthew 13: 35, 11, 16, 17; John 8: 47-51; 9: 39-41; 12: 44-50.

If then we inquire particularly as to the truths revealed, we find that the "great salvation" began

to be spoken by the Lord; that He "brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel"; that as many of His own people (the Jews) as believed on Him were given the liberty to become sons of God, whereas they had been members of a house of servants; that our Lord informed the Jews that He had other sheep not of this fold whom He must also bring in—that is, the Gentiles; that for the commands given through Moses He was substituting others more searching, for He was the One of whom Moses had spoken, saying that God would raise up unto them a Prophet whom they were to hear in all things that He should say unto them. All these truths and more not previously made known to the people of God were brought out by our Lord at His first advent.—Hebrews 2: 3; 2 Timothy 1: 10; John 1: 11, 12; Galatians 4: 1-7; Hebrews 3: 5, 6; John 10: 16; Luke 24: 25-27, 44; Matthew 5.

If we inquire minutely as to the forces set in motion, we find that the truth preached by our Lord to the Jewish people acted among them as a winnowing fan to separate the wheat from the chaff in that nation; that the scribes and Pharisees were exceedingly annoyed, and their wrath was stirred up to persecute Him, while the "Israelites indeed in whom was no guile" were made glad by the message He brought them from the Father. The gospel preached by our Savior was by Him sent into all the world to be made known to all nations as a witness and for the obedience of faith. This was the greatest divine force that had ever been introduced into the world to that time; and nothing more powerful than this has been experienced by humanity to this day: for the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation," to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. The Holy Spirit has been sent into the hearts of believers, bringing forth in their lives the gracious fruits of the divine likeness and testifying with their spirits that they are children of God, and if children then heirs; heirs of God and jointheirs with Jesus Christ, if so be that they suffer with Him, that they may be also glorified together. These are some of the principal forces set in motion as a result of Christ's earthly ministry.—Matthew 3: 12; Luke 16: 14; John 1: 47; Matthew 28: 19, 20; Luke 24: 46-48; Romans 1: 16; 8: 14-17.

What do we see in the world as the result of these truths made known and these forces released? Are Jews and Gentiles enraptured by the wonderful truths in regard to the great salvation, life and immortality, and the high calling? No, decidedly No! But few take the message to heart; some actively or underhandedly oppose it, a good many more are wholly apathetic, while the vast majority have never so much as heard these grand truths. The gospel truly is the great power of God unto regeneration, renovation, and salvation; but it is all this only to the believing soul, and the hard fact is that from the time of our Lord's ministry until now there has been only a small number who have believed with their hearts.—Romans 10: 11-14.

In view of all these facts, would it be fair to conclude that the gospel, the great power of God unto salvation, has been successfully opposed by some greater power? The Apostle Paul said that in the

latter days evil men and seducers would wax worse and worse; that men's ears would be turned from the truth unto fables; that the time would come when they would not endure or tolerate sound doctrine, but, having itching ears, they would heap to themselves teachers who, for a consideration, would willingly tickle their ears with entertaining inventions. Must we conclude, then, that God began to build but will be unable to finish?—1 Tim. 4: 1-3; 2 Tim. 3: 1-5; 4: 3, 4; 2 Peter 2: 1-3.

By no means! What has to be done is to ascertain, if possible, what God sent the gospel into the world to accomplish. If we can know this, we shall find that the gospel has done all it was sent to do. In Old Testament times God assured His people that His word should not return unto Him void, but should accomplish His good pleasure and should prosper in the thing whereto He sent it. The same must be true now, for God's arm is not shortened nor His power diminished.—Isaiah 55: 11; 46: 10; Acts 15: 15; Isaiah 59: 1; Ephesians 1: 9.

Our Lord said that the gospel was to be preached among all nations "for a witness." This witnessing has been proceeding ever since Peter delivered the testimony in the house of Cornelius. The purpose of God in causing the gospel to be preached for a witness to the nations, or Gentiles, was that He might take out from among them a people for His name. The New Testament states this in so many words, and the Old Testament had said long before that this would be done. Moreover, the Master's words give us to understand that this chosen out people would be numerically small; for He intimated that while many would be called only few would be chosen.—Acts 10: 15; 14: 17; Amos 9: 11, 12; Matthew 22: 14.

History Confirms

Does the known history of the gospel in the world confirm these inspired statements? It does, exactly! A testimony has been given more or less among all nations. A good many have been called by the hearing of the gospel, and it must be acknowledged, however regretfully, that the greater portion of these called ones have not persevered to the end, and therefore will not be numbered among the chosen and faithful. No doubt it is true that a people has been taken out from among the Gentiles—a "little flock" to whom it will be God's pleasure to give the Kingdom.—Luke 12: 32; Revelation 17: 14; Acts 13: 46-49; Colossians 1: 23, 26, 27.

From this it may be understood that in the past age it has not been God's pleasure to enlighten every individual of mankind with the gospel. Most certainly the Word which God sent forth has not prospered in any such project; therefore it cannot be that it has been sent to accomplish that work. What the Word has prosperously accomplished is what it was sent to do, and what God was pleased it should accomplish—no more and no less. The gathering out of the people for God's name is nearly finished, and this phase of the gospel work has been successfully brought to pass, notwithstanding the fierce opposition of Satan and his emissaries, who have vainly tried to thwart the divine purpose.—Revelation 2: 7, 10, 17, 26, 27; 3: 5, 12, 21.

If to the number of those saved from Pentecost till now be added the saved before Pentecost, right back to righteous Abel—some of them mentioned (and some not) in Hebrews, chapter 11—the fact emerges that in all the thousands of years from the dawn of human history to the present day only a relatively small number can be said to have been “saved.” The culmination of the antediluvian riot of ungodliness was destruction by the flood. After the flood, the descendants of righteous Noah when they increased in numbers decreased in faith, for they essayed to build a great tower that would reach to heaven. But God frustrated them by confusing their speech. In the days of Abraham there was a visitation of destruction upon Sodom and Gomorrah. During the Jewish age God recognized the children of Israel alone as His people. They demonstrated that they were hardhearted and stiffnecked, so that at our Lord’s advent He came to His own, and His own received Him not. As for the other nations, God entered into no covenant arrangement with them during the Jewish age, but left them largely to their own devices. Taking these facts with what we have already found about the Gospel age, the inevitable conclusion is that from the beginning until now the fruits of salvation have been exceedingly meagre.—Gen. 7: 23; 2 Pet. 3: 5, 6; Gen. 11: 1-9; 19: 25; Exod. 24: 3-8; Amos. 3: 1, 2; John 1: 11; Eph. 2: 11, 12; Rom. 1: 20, 21.

Yet the prophet was inspired to say of our Lord Jesus Christ—“He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.” The travail was great when He made His soul an offering for our sins; and, since He died for the sins of all, one can not refrain from asking whether the salvation of so few and the loss of so many would be considered satisfactory compensation for the great price that He paid.—Isa. 53: 10, 11.

Christ Comes Again!

One of the teachings enunciated by the Master during His earthly ministry was that He would go away and come again. On the last night of His earthly life He said to the disciples in the upper room, after they had eaten the Passover Supper together and He had ordained the new Supper to take the place of the Passover and to be observed in remembrance of Him (John 14)—

Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me.

2 In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I WILL COME AGAIN, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

The promise of our Lord’s return was mentioned frequently to the disciples. It is prominent in nearly all of His parables, and is often brought out in His other discourses. In their preaching after Pentecost the apostles and other brethren spoke much of their Master’s return, and in the light of what He and they said it is clearly to be seen that the subject was often spoken of by the holy prophets of Old Testament times. They spoke of the sufferings of Messiah and of His conquering power and glory. The Jewish mind fastened itself on the power and glory,

not appreciating that the suffering and the offering of His soul for our sins must come first. So they rejected the Messiah in the days of His flesh, when He came to fulfil the prophecies of suffering.—Luke 24: 25-27, 44-47.

In our day Christendom generally professes to believe in the Second Coming of Christ. They repeat this profession of faith from time to time as they recite the so-called “Apostles’ Creed,” which says—“From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.” Yet, while the phrase rolls fluently from the lips, the evidence is overwhelming that only a few of Christendom’s millions believe it “with their hearts;” and, if they do not believe it that way, is the drawing near with their lips while their hearts are far from Him any more commendable among Christians than it was among the Jews!—Matt. 15: 8.

Any one can easily satisfy himself that this estimate of Christendom’s attitude toward the Return of Christ is correct. Let him who desires firsthand evidence on this matter speak of the Lord’s Second Coming in conversation with professing Christians, and he will soon be convinced that to the very great majority the subject is exceedingly uncongenial, that the introduction of it is a most unwelcome intrusion, and that their one desire is to get away from it. Moreover, the one who introduces the subject of the Lord’s Second Coming, and shows that he believes it “with his heart,” will soon be marked “peculiar” or “cranky,” and his room will be more welcome than his company. All this because he really believes in his heart, and gladly cherishes as a priceless possession, the teaching that our Lord would return as He promised to do. How else shall the Christian feel?

“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly.” And the heart of the believer responds, “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” These are the concluding words (except the benediction) of the New Testament, the last message from the Lord to His people. The last thought He presents, the last impression He wishes to make upon their minds, is that of His intention to return. Yet nearly all Christendom, professed believers in and followers of Jesus Christ, is indifferent or opposed to this final message from Him, and declines to let its mind be impressed with this last thought.—2 Pet. 3: 3, 4; 1 Thes. 1: 9, 10; 2 Tim. 4: 8; Rev. 22: 20.

What Christ Returns For

The Scriptures testify respecting the manner as well as the purpose of our Lord’s Return, and it is highly important that His people inform themselves with the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit in regard to every phase of the subject. Nevertheless, it is sometimes necessary to give attention to limitations of time and space, as must be done now. Our thoughts for the present occasion are to be directed to consideration of the purpose or object of our Lord’s promised return.*—Matt. 28: 16-20

*For detailed consideration of the Manner of our Lord’s Return, and the pointing out of the Signs of the Times in regard to it that are fulfilling in our own day, please see the book “Christ’s Prophecy on Olivet,” mentioned in Book List.

To Receive His Disciples to Himself

Referring to the promise already cited from John 14: 1-3, it appears that part of the purpose of our Lord's return is to receive the faithful unto Himself; i.e., the people taken out for God's name during the Gospel age. These are to be the Lord's joint heirs in glory; they are to be made like Him and are to see Him as He is in the incorruptible inheritance to which He was raised from death by the power of the Father, and which is reserved in heaven for them who are being kept by the power of God through faith unto the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.—John 17: 24; 1 John 3: 2; 1 Pet. 1: 3-5.

Quite a good many Christians believe that the Lord has been receiving His faithful unto Himself from time to time throughout the age, as each one finished his course. But the teaching of the New Testament is contrary to this. Not only the passage in John 14: 3, which says that He would come again and receive them unto Himself, so that they might be with Him, but many other passages, such as 2 Tim. 4: 8; 1 Thess. 4: 14-17; Col. 3: 4 (to mention only a few), show that the Christian's hope of being with and like the Lord depends entirely upon His Second Coming to make it effective.

To Reign Over All the Earth

For thousands of years men have ordered their own affairs—individual, family, civic, national, and worldwide—as best they were able, and have never made a success of it; the events of the last nine years† being the most recent and greatest evidence of humanity's colossal incompetence to govern itself.

The course of human history as foretold in the prophecies dealing with events that were to occur from the time of the Babylonian captivity of the Jews onward to the great consummation, when human attempts at self-government would be ended and a perfect regime introduced, show that humanity has no hope in itself. It can never solve its social, political, and moral problems. The only chance humanity has for peace and quietness is in the Kingdom of God, the successor of the world governments, which is to take over the affairs of mankind as predicted in the divinely inspired prophecies.†

The Lord Jesus Christ is the divinely appointed ruler over the promised Kingdom, as it is written—

“Yet have I set my king

Upon my holy hill of Zion.

I will tell of the decree:

The Lord [Jehovah] said unto me, Thou art my son;

This day have I begotten thee.

Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance,

And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.”

—Psalm 2: 6-8, R.V.; see also Acts 13: 32, 33.

The Lord did ask, in that He humbled Himself unto death and paid a great price, even the giving of Himself as a ransom. Wherefore He has been made both Lord and Christ, a Prince and a Savior, the Lord of the dead and the living, holding in His

hands the keys of death and of hades [the grave], and possessing all authority in heaven and in earth, seated at the Father's right hand in the throne of the universe.—Phil. 2: 6-10; Matt. 20: 28; 1 Tim. 2: 6; Acts 2: 34-36; 5: 31; Rom. 14: 9; Rev. 1: 18; Matt. 28: 18; Heb. 1: 3; 10: 12, 13; 1 Pet. 3: 20; Eph. 1: 20-23.

Altho His authority is not limited, Our Lord has been using it during the Gospel age for the accomplishment of the definite and somewhat limited purpose already mentioned; viz., the gathering out of the people for God's name—a comparatively small number, who have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of God's dear Son. When these are all gathered out, and when He shall have received them to himself, they will sit with Him in the throne, and He will give them power and authority over the nations, even as He received of His Father. The overcomers shall sit with their Lord as kings and as priests, to reign with Him over the nations for a thousand years. Every part of the earth shall be ruled by Him; no part shall be excluded.—Acts 15: 14; Col. 1: 13; Matt. 19: 28; 1 Cor. 6: 2, 3; Rev. 2: 26, 27; 3: 21; 20: 4, 6; Dan. 2: 44; 7: 13, 14, 26, 27; Psalm 2: 8; Zech. 9: 10; Hab. 2: 14; Phil. 2: 10, 11.

To Enlighten the People

As one empire succeeded another in the course of human history, the greatest glory of the new empire was that it added to itself the territory, the wealth, and the subjects of its conquered predecessor. This is quite understandable; for it would have been no gain or glory to an empire to sacrifice some of its wealth, and many of those who produced or could produce it, if the war of conquest did not bring in more wealth and subjects than had been sacrificed. On the same principle, the object of the divine Kingdom in shattering the world kingdoms is the taking over of the territory and subjects of the world kingdoms.

Up to now, error and deception dominate the world. Truth has been preached to some extent, but it has been received and believed with the heart by those only who were hungering and thirsting after righteousness. And even the truth preached has been more or less adulterated by admixtures of error, so that Christendom is in an exceedingly confused condition. What the Apostle John said is still the fact, that the whole world lieth in the evil one; and Paul's statement, that we fight not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers, and wicked spirits in heavenly places is also still true. Satan's deceptions have been so potent over the minds of men, that he is the cause of their not believing the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ when preached to them.—Matt. 5: 6; 1 John 5: 19, R.V.; Eph. 6: 11, 12; 2 Cor. 4: 4; Eph. 2: 2.

But all this is to be changed. During the Thousand Years, when Christ and His joint heirs shall rule the world, Satan and every evil system of his devising—political, ecclesiastical, commercial, and social—shall be bound, and sealed up in the abyss of oblivion, so that they shall not deceive the nations during all that time. Then the Truth will have a clear field, and it will run and be glorified through-

†Referring to the World War beginning in 1914.

‡For detailed explanation of these prophecies please see the book, “Daniel the Prophet in the Latter Days,” mentioned in Book List.

out the whole world. Missionaries of the truth have little to encourage and much to discourage them under present circumstances; but during the Thousand Years it will be the other way about. Now it is difficult for people to believe the truth and easy for them to believe some of the thousand-and-one errors of Satan's invention. During the Thousand Years it will be easy for them to believe the truth, and wilfulness for them to believe an error, for no error will be allowed to deceive in that blessed time.—Rev. 20: 1-3; 21: 4-7; 22: 1, 2, 17.

Every Man That Cometh Into the World

Thus will the Lord Jesus Christ, ruling in His glorious Kingdom for a thousand years at His second advent, take over the territory and subjects of Satan, the prince of the present evil world, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience.—Rev. 11: 15; Eph. 2: 1-3.

As all should know, Satan has been losing his subjects during all the past thousands of years. He has lost a few by their having been translated out of his kingdom into allegiance to the Son of God. But he has lost all the others as well, because death has taken them. By one of those queer perversions of truth which we may well believe has been foisted upon a too credulous Christendom by Satan himself for his own glory, it has come to be generally believed that whereas an unbeliever alive has some chance of escape from Satan's power, an unbeliever dead is irrecoverably in the grip of the arch-fiend, and is doomed to be tormented to all eternity. Which is not so at all; for, according to the description of death and the state of the dead given in the Scriptures,* a dead person is of no use whatever to Satan. Moreover, no dead person, whether believer or unbeliever, is under Satan's power or authority, because Jesus Christ is the One who has "the keys [power over] of hell and of death." (Rev. 1: 18.) Satan is not the ruler over hell; Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Savior, has the keys of that dominion, and He will use them in due time to liberate the prisoners; for, said the Apostle, we have hope toward God that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, of both just and unjust. The prospect is hopeful for both classes. The Apostle did not say hopeful for one and hopeless for the other; he used the word "hope" only once in his statement, thus signifying that there is hope for both just and unjust in the resurrection.—John 5: 27-29; Phil. 2: 10; 2 Tim. 4: 1; Acts 24: 15; Jer. 31: 15-17; Matt. 2: 17, 18; Rev. 20: 11, 12.

What hope can there be for the unjust in the resurrection? The hope to be entertained on their behalf is that in that great and wonderful time certain things will be fulfilled which evidently have not been fulfilled to them in the past. Take, for example, these statements—

That was the true Light, which **LIGHTETH EVERY MAN THAT COMETH INTO THE WORLD.**—John 1: 9.

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior;

*For complete scriptural evidence on this subject, please see the books, "The Dead—Where are They?" and "Everlasting Punishment," mentioned in Book List.

Who will have all men to be saved [i.e., "preserved"], and to **COME UNTO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH.**—1 Tim. 2: 3, 4.

Vast numbers of people have passed out of the world unenlightened by the True Light, which is Jesus Christ. Few indeed have as yet come unto the knowledge (**epignosis**)—full knowledge of the truth to which it is God's will that all shall come. Most of the human race are safely locked up in the dominion of hell (**hades**—the grave) and death, and must there wait the pleasure of Jesus Christ their Lord (Rom. 14: 9) to use the keys and, with the voice of authority, call them forth to the judgment rule of the Kingdom age. Then they will be enlightened with the True Light; then they will be brought to the full or accurate knowledge of the truth in ignorance of which they died. Then, if obedient to the requirements of that Kingdom, they shall have the opportunity for salvation and everlasting life.

Their Former Estate

It should be clearly understood that the people who will be enlightened in the Kingdom age will not have the opportunity to enter the High Calling to joint heirship with Jesus Christ that has been offered to believers in the present age. Inasmuch as conditions in the age following our Lord's second advent will be much more favorable to faith and obedience than they have been in the Gospel age, so will the reward in the next age be less than that now held out.

Foretelling the dealings of the Lord in the Kingdom age, after the resurrection, with the Sodomites, who were destroyed in the days of Abraham, the prophet says they shall be brought back from the captivity of death "to their former estate." That is to say, the resurrection will place them on the earth again as human beings, such as they were before destruction engulfed them. When they are brought back the Samaritans and the children of Israel also shall be brought back to their former estate. And in that time Israel shall be a comfort to these erring "sisters" who shall then be given to Israel for "daughters" when the Lord shall be pacified toward Israel for all they have done. Thenceforth these and other saved ones of that time shall inhabit the earth for ever.—Ezek. 16: 44-63; Matt. 11: 20-24; Isa. 65: 17-25.

When Israel shall be brought back, then shall Egypt and Assyria also be there to receive the Lord's blessing in the midst of the land.—Isa. 19: 23-25.

In short, after the "little flock" of "joint heirs" (the firstfruits of salvation) shall have been gathered out from among the nations, and shall be seated with the Lord in His Throne, then shall be fulfilled that wonderful vision of the innumerable multitude, clad in white robes and with palms in their hands, ascribing glory and honor and praise for their salvation to God and the Lamb.—Rev. 7: 9-17; 14: 1-4; James 1: 18.

These are the wonderful things that are to take place in connection with our Lord's Second Coming; and after all the great work is completed the Lord will deliver up the Kingdom to God the Father, and will evermore be subject to Him, that God may be

all in all. The wilfully wicked will have been destroyed with Satan and his angels in the Second Death if remaining hardhearted after all the display of grace and love which will then be made before an astonished and delighted earth full of people, who will be amazed and will wonder at Him as they believe in that day.—2 Thes. 1: 10; 1 Cor. 15: 24-28.

At the present time, many, even of those who are deeply interested in the Lord's Second Coming, have not grasped the full significance of the Scripture teaching regarding the wonders of the Kingdom age. And we doubt not that a great deal of the apathy and even opposition that is in the minds of some respecting our Lord's Return arises from their misconceptions of the results that are to follow that Advent.

For example, that the earth is to be destroyed by fire or by intense cold or by being absorbed into the sun. To the contrary, when the Lord taught His disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." He gave them to understand that the earth would abide in order that God's will might be done on it. Besides which Eccl. 1: 4 and Isaiah 45: 18 both declare that

the earth will remain, and Gen. 8: 22 intimates that seedtime and harvest will go on forever. The earth must remain in order that Abraham may receive the land of Canaan. (Gen. 13: 14-18; Acts 7: 5.) When the misconceptions concerning the events to take place at the Second Advent are removed, the sincere inquirer can the more heartily join in the Apostle John's response, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."—Rev. 22: 20.

Looking to the time when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, when there shall be no more sighing, pain, or death, for all the former evil things—the curse—shall have passed away, the teaching concerning Christ's Second Coming is real good tidings. And when the true object of our Lord's Return—the blessing and enlightenment of all men, living and dead, is understood, we feel not like those who would put it a long way off, but like watchful servants eagerly awaiting their beloved Master's return. (Luke 12: 35-48.) They long for Him not only because of the satisfying reward they hope to obtain for themselves, but also because of the wonderful blessings then to flow to all mankind.—Isa. 6: 3; 25: 6-9; Rom. 8: 19-21.



The Times of the Gentiles

Question.—Is there such a thing as a Gentile "lease" of power? Or what did the Lord mean by: "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."—Luke 21: 24.

Answer.—The word "lease" is used *never once* in Scripture. The Greek word rendered "fulfilled," when applied to time, means "finished," according to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance. Jerusalem is to be "trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be finished." Can any person looking around over the world to-day truthfully say that the times of the Gentiles are finished? Assuredly not. Every government on the earth to-day is a Gentile government; for "Gentile" means every nation and every individual that is not a Jew. There is no Jewish government anywhere on earth. The Jew is the only known remnant of that nation of Israel which God delivered from Egypt by the hand of Moses, and to whom centuries later Christ came. In our Lord's day there were still some who could trace their lineage to the tribe of Asher (Luke 2: 36) and others of the Ten Tribe kingdom of Israel, but the majority who held to the law were of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi. And all the faithful males of the prescribed age, of whatever tribe, came up to Jerusalem three times per year when able to do so, in accordance with the command of the law.

It must also be recalled that, from the time of the secession of the Ten Tribes under Jeroboam, every member of those tribes who disagreed with that rebellion against God and His law made it his business to attach himself to Judah while that tribe maintained the true worship at Jerusalem, and that after the return of Judah from the Babylonian captivity and the restoration of the temple worship, a

similar opportunity was given to members of any of the tribes who desired to join in the true worship. And the name Israel, as well as the name Judah, was frequently used of the people living in the land of Judah.

On the day of Pentecost Peter included all the tribes in His address—"Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem" (Acts 2: 14), and later on in the same discourse—"Ye men of Israel, hear these words;" and it is in this latter part of his address that he speaks of signs done by Jesus "in the midst of you," and "Him . . . ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain;" (Acts 2: 22, 23.) Thus holding Israel as a whole responsible for our Lord's death.

Not only was the term Israel used of the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem, but members of all tribes of the "dispersion" came to be called Jews. In the New Testament we find Israelite and Jew used interchangeably. In the synagogue at Antioch Paul said that: of David's seed "hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus;" He called his hearers "children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God," and opened his address with: "Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience."—Acts 13: 16, 23, 26.

But when Luke, the writer of the book of the Acts, refers to those present he calls them Jews—"And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath." For there had been in the synagogue some "religious proselytes" as well. Those would be Gentiles who favoured the Jews' religion and were taking steps to be received

fully into Judaism.—Acts 13: 42, 43.

"And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God." Again the distinction between Jew and Gentile was made clear: all who were not Jews were Gentiles. "But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy," and Paul told them: "seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

And many of the listening Gentiles rejoiced, and thanked God that Christ was a light for them as well as for the Jews.—Acts 13: 44-48.

This practice of including all Israelites of whatever tribe under the name Jew was followed by the apostles in their epistles—"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly;" etc. "What advantage then hath the Jew?" "Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:"—Romans 2: 28, 29; 3: 1, 2, 29.

Thus the question of Gentile rule becomes a very simple one. If the Jews are not ruling in Palestine to-day, then the Gentiles are. As we said in regard to the Jewish population of Palestine, so we say in regard to this question of Gentile rule. What is needed on the part of writers and speakers on the subject is truthfulness. What good does it do anyone to pretend that the Gentiles are not in power all over the world to-day? What good purpose can be served by pretending that a few thousand Jews granted the privilege of living in the land are thereby constituted in some way or other a nation? To the contrary, they are no more a nation in Palestine than they are in England, or America, or Australia.

They have preserved their nationality to a large extent, just as Scotsmen and Welshmen do who live under English rule, but the fact remains that the Empire is ruled by the King and Parliaments and not independently by any of the peoples who make up the population of the empire, even though some of them, like Australia, are largely self-governing.

So the Jew may and does enjoy parliamentary representation; Jews have been high officials in England, a Jew was the first High Commissioner of Palestine under the British crown. But, after all, these men were servants of a Gentile power, as are any Jews who may happen to occupy official positions in Palestine to-day, and as was the distinguished Jew Daniel at the court of Nebuchadnezzar, the first of the great Gentile powers represented in the dream. (Daniel 2: 36-38, 48, 49.) Daniel was also given high office by Darius the Mede, who conquered Babylon, the Medo-Persian being the second great Gentile power represented in the image.—Daniel 5: 30, 31; 6: 1-3.

Daniel was preferred above the "presidents and princes" whom Darius set over the realm, and even above the other two supervising presidents, of whom there were three, "because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm." Then a conspiracy against Daniel caused him to be cast into the den of lions, where God protected him, and from which Darius freed him, and then honored him even more than before. "So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian."—Daniel 6: 1-3, 28.

If Daniel prospered, the other Jews could count on protection and assistance in various ways to ease the burden of bondage in a foreign land, where they often wept for the homeland, as voiced in Psalm 137. But all this goes to confirm what we have said about the Jews in Palestine to-day. For a Jew to hold high office under a foreign Government does not make the Government a Jewish one.

The case is even more clear when we look at the Jews after they returned from Babylon and were established again in their own land. Nehemiah (for a time the governor) and others were given great liberty in the use of funds for the benefit of the community, and after some local opposition they were granted facilities for rebuilding the temple and carrying on their accustomed mode of life. But the Jews were never allowed to forget that they were subject to the Persian government.—Ezra 3: 7; 6: 14; 7: 11-26; Nehemiah 2: 7, 8; 5: 14.

Again: In Esther's day, Mordecai the Jew, one of whose ancestors had been carried to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar, was influential at the court of Ahasuerus, the Medo-Persian king. Ahasuerus reigned "from India even unto Ethiopia," over 127 provinces, each being governed by a representative of the king. According to Esther 3: 8, Jews lived in all these provinces, and carried on their own customs.

Esther had great influence with the king, and was therefore able to secure a decree whereby the wicked device of Haman was frustrated; but neither Mordecai nor Esther nor any other Jew could have interfered with the original decree without the authority of the king. Similarly when the Jews proposed and made a covenant for themselves and their descendants, to keep a yearly memorial of their deliverance, to be called the days of Purim, their resolution was of no value without the endorsement of the king, or rather the issue of a decree after the manner of the Medes and Persians, authorizing such an annual observance.—Esther 8: 7-14, 17; 9: 20, 21, 29-32.

Shortly thereafter Alexander the Great defeated the Persians, and there was established the third of the empires of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The Jews at Jerusalem, who had had their own local arrangements, continued as a tributary province of the new Grecian empire; and when on Alexander's death his four generals succeeded to a divided dominion, Judea suffered much in the wars that followed. But when Rome—the fourth of the empires of Nebuchadnezzar's dream—succeeded to sovereignty over Palestine, the Jews entered into a comparatively peaceful time.

Herod rebuilt the temple, and they continued therein the prescribed sacrifices according to the law. The Jews disliked the publicans—Jews who gathered the taxes for the Roman government; but their position and the mention of them in the New Testament is of value to us to-day, for it is a demonstration that they were still under Gentile dominion.

Such changes as the Roman empire underwent subsequently—its division into East and West, and then the subjugation of portions of the empire to the Saracens and later the Turks—still kept Palestine and the Jews subject to the Gentiles. The Saracens allowed the Jews much latitude, for Mahomet was favorably disposed toward them, having included in

the Koran much from the Jewish law. Besides which the Jews believed in but one God, in contradistinction to the Trinitarian ideas of the then Christian church; and both Jews and Saracens were against the use of images. Later on, the Turks who came from the East showed less consideration to the Jews, and latterly persecuted them, and by edict for a time prevented Jews from the West entering Palestine at all.

Trodden Down of the Gentiles

Exactly what did our Lord mean when He said "trodden down"? Did He mean that when they were well treated by their Gentile rulers they were *not* trodden down, and that when they were cruelly or tyrannically treated they were *trodden* down?

If that be the way our Lord's words are to be understood, then Jerusalem has been trodden and non-trodden a number of times, for they have been variously treated. Some go so far as to say that Jerusalem is not now "trodden down" because the intolerant Turk was ejected by General Allenby's victorious forces, and because he by consent of the vanquished made a peaceable entry into the city. To read some of these claims one who was not posted on the Palestinian campaign might suppose that the conquest was something of a "walk over," and that there was no bombardment. But the non-bombardment of Jerusalem was due to the fact that the Turkish forces outside the city had been bombarded, and the fall of the city was certain in view of the demoralized state of the Turkish army in general. No commander would be so foolish as to waste ammunition bombarding a city that would capitulate of itself within a reasonable time.

Instead of riding into the city on horseback General Allenby and his staff and others *walked* in. When he walked in he acknowledged no Jewish sovereignty, but he received the city from its Turkish defenders. And he received it in the name of a Gentile power—Britain. One Gentile power handed the city over to another Gentile power. Yet some Christians are either so lacking in consistent thought or so ignorant of the facts or so dishonest in their handling of evidence that they declare Jerusalem has not been trodden down of the Gentiles since General Allenby's entry into the city. Yet General Allenby did tread down the city when he and his officers walked in. It was trodden under his feet as truly as though the city had first been bombarded; as truly as the Saracens trod it down and the Crusaders trod it down and all the other conquering armies trod it down.

What It Means

To tread down simply means subjugation of; it does not necessarily mean kicking and hounding. It means exercising the ruling authority over. This the Gentiles have done over Judah and Jerusalem ever since Nebuchadnezzar's capture of the city. And this treading down, our Lord said, would continue until the Times of the Gentiles be ended or finished.

But this is where the unscriptural theory of a "lease" came in. Some time before the year 1914 a certain writer predicted that the "Times of the Gentiles" would end in the autumn of 1914. Later he changed the date to one year later, the autumn of

1915. He said that all the Gentile nations would go down and the Kingdom of God be set up within the year.

When 1914—and then 1915—passed, and neither of these things happened, this certain writer clutched at the European war which began in August, 1914, and claimed that he had predicted it. Some of his followers to this day [i.e. 1928] contend that he predicted it. Here again was an opportunity for honesty and admission of the facts, but a frank acknowledgment of error was not made.

To predict that all the Gentile powers would go down and the kingdom of God be set up in 1914 or 1915 was not a foretelling of the war that occurred. The world-war (so-called) was a contest *among* the Gentile powers of exactly the same sort as had occurred hundreds of times in previous years. The principal difference was that more nations were involved, including some outside Europe. Yet Napoleon had engaged practically all the nations of Europe more than a hundred years before. The war of 1914-18 was a shuffling of the cards, but Gentile power still rules supreme, as we have already pointed out; the "League of [Gentile] nations" being a further emphasis, if any were needed, of the Gentile quality of the present "powers that be."

In face of these facts and his demonstrated failure as an interpreter of prophecy, the said writer gave a new, incorrect, and indefensible definition of the meaning of the word "lease."

In general business and legal usage a lease is a contract between two or more parties by which in consideration of a specified payment the lessor agrees to give the lessee the use of a property for a specified term. At the expiration of the term the lessee must vacate the premises unless in the interim he negotiates for an extension of his lease. That this is the proper use of the word may be known by everyone who sees huge posters or newspaper advertisements in which sales of goods are offered at reduced prices because the merchant's "lease will expire" at a certain date; and towards the close of the sale of stock it is announced that all the remaining stock, counters, fixtures, etc., etc., will be cleared regardless of cost, because on the expiry of the lease the lessee must surrender the place.

Now, among a large class of prophetic students of the last century, when discussions concerning the time and manner of the Lord's Second Coming were going on everywhere, it became common to speak of the term during which the Gentiles as "the powers that be" were in possession as a "lease." This word was used to indicate that at the time appointed the Gentile powers would have to close up, be put out, ejected; that the Lord's power would be manifested by their complete and rapid, if not almost instantaneous, overthrow. And He himself would take the reins of government and rule over the earth. For many years the said writer used the word in this sense; when their "lease" was up, when the time of control over earth had expired, they would be put out without delay or ceremony, he said.

What then was the subterfuge to "save his face" (to use a Chinese expression)? He boldly asserted—

in contradiction of all the evidence—that the Gentile “lease” had expired in 1914; and he gave the word a new false definition by adding—but they have not been put out yet. This utterly unwarranted alteration of the meaning of the word “lease,” excluding from it its proper sense of period of tenure, was adopted by many of his followers without due examination. Few if any seemed to recognise the false position in which they placed themselves, and now not only his immediate followers but persons who disagree with him in many of his views have fallen into the habit of saying that “the times of the Gentiles ended in 1914, but they have not been put out yet.”

At the beginning of 1928, 14 years after 1914, it is plain that the “times of the Gentiles” have *not* ended; because, as we said at the beginning of this article, the whole of the world is under Gentile government, the League of Nations itself being a Gentile organization.

Taking Refuge in a New Date

The year 1914 had been arrived at by a misuse of the expression “seven times” in Leviticus 26. Four times repeated is the threat to Israel, that if they are disobedient the Lord will punish them. The threatened punishments each time would *increase in severity*, culminating in the captivity to Babylon as the most severe of all. *Seven times here refers to severity of punishment*, and not to a period of time. To say that Leviticus teaches that the Times of the Gentiles is a period of 2,520 years is pure invention. There is no Scripture, and no scriptural method of calculation, giving the slightest ground for the claim that the period of Gentile sovereignty is 2,520 years. For more on this point please see N.C.A., September, 1921.

However, some of those who reckoned 2,520 years as expiring in 1914, having re-examined their figures and history, now assert that 2,520 years reach to May, 1928. Combining the two errors, (1) misuse of the “seven times” of Leviticus, and (2) wrong use of the word “lease,” some now say that “the lease or commission to govern given to the Gentiles ends in 1928,” and that “the greatest of all wars is to begin in 1928-29.” This is saying a great deal; and we wonder if those who say such things realize the mischief likely to result in the lives of those who really believe them. Or do these prognosticators not expect to be believed?

So far as we know, and we have searched the Scriptures diligently for whatever evidence they contain, there is not a prophecy or type or plain statement to differentiate 1928 from 1927 or 1929. The apostle said that—to those who are awake and watching—the day of the Lord will not come as a thief in the night. (1 Thessalonians 5: 1-4.) Now it is well known that the thief never announces the hour at which he may be expected. Those who are asleep will neither see nor hear him. But the awake will know. Watching Christians know *what* is going on in a general way. And we believe the Lord has shown wisdom in permitting the exact date to remain unknown as to when the Gentile powers will be put out of their position of governing the world.—Romans 13: 1-7.

At the date of this writing, March, 1928, there is ~~unrest~~ the world over, but in some respects less un-

rest than two or three years ago. But even suppose a general European war began in May, 1928, only two months from now, that would not prove what its advocates claim for the date. Because a general European war would only be a war among Gentile rulers who would by that very action prove that “the times of the Gentiles” are still with us; for the right and ability to challenge another nation and engage in war is one of the best indications of rulership and power. War implies authority or at least power of the government to draft men, money, and munitions, and the nation that obeys its government and goes to war acknowledges the power.

Difference between Military Operations and Conquest

Since the Scriptures do not use the word “lease” in connection with the Gentile powers, there being no evidence of a contract between God and “the powers that be” as to the date of termination of the time allotted the fourth universal empire portrayed in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, it might be as well for prophetic students to drop the word from their discussions on “the times of the Gentiles.” We have in Daniel 7 the 1,260 years of Papal domination over God’s true children, during which it was allowed to persecute and slay—toward the end of that period by the horrible methods of the Inquisition. We have also the testimony of Daniel 12: 1 that “Michael” (a prophetic name of our Lord Jesus) would “stand up” at the end of those days, these words signifying assumption of power, the particulars of which we have gone into in the book “Daniel the Prophet.”

Since that date the Lord has sent out of His mouth a “two edged sword,” representing truth on religious and secular subjects, which has caused a “time of trouble” among the nations. Knowledge has been increased, there is much running “to and fro.” There have been wars and revolutions innumerable, many of which have changed the character of the ruling powers from despotism to democracy. On the other hand, many of the peoples and nations have merely changed over from one form of despotism to another, or from subjection to one power to subjection to another. Take one example. In 1870 the Germans defeated France, and Alsace-Lorraine was ceded to the Germans. In 1914-18 France and its Allies defeated Germany and the Central Powers, and Alsace-Lorraine was ceded back to France. Both Germany and France are Gentile powers, though France became a republic in the Revolution of 1789-93, and Germany did not become a republic until the Revolution of 1918. Both are great nations still.

This glance over nearly 140 years of history should help us to see that a Gentile power may change its form of government and yet remain a Gentile power. Russia introduced a new form of government, but it is nevertheless, as before, a Gentile power. We have also the testimony of Daniel 2 that the change from the legs of iron to the feet and toes of iron mixed with miry clay was a progression downward in exactly the same manner as that which characterized the previous empires—gold to silver, then silver to brass, and then brass to iron, representing a gradual

diminishing of fineness and value in the four successive empires.

The Clay of Democracy

But the introduction of the clay of democracy into the iron of the Roman empire in its two divisions (feet) East and West and its ten divisions (toes) does not destroy the image. So long as the image of Gentile power stands, so long "the times of the Gentiles" continue. Indeed, some of the Gentile powers are pressing out some of the clay and returning to a larger admixture of iron. This is the case in Italy, where the iron hand of Mussolini is accomplishing what the previous milder government either could not or would not do. A Fascist governor in Sicily has ferreted out, arrested, and in some cases executed the Mafia bandits who have terrorized the country for 50 years, and whose members, emigrating to the United States and other foreign lands, have committed many murders and in various other ways terrorized their countrymen. The iron in the government of Italy recently procured the acceptance by labor unions of a general reduction in wages in order better to compete with other manufacturing countries in the markets of the world.

Since "Michael" stood up changes have occurred *within* the Gentile powers and *in the relations* of Gentile powers with one another which we may regard as having been induced by the increase of knowledge, invention, and liberty. Some reactionary forces have also been at work to hinder progress in knowledge, invention, and liberty. But the image is still standing. And as long as it stands "the times of the Gentiles" have not been "fulfilled," have not been finished, have not ended.

What will end the Times of the Gentiles will be the smashing blow on its feet and toes which will topple over the great image. Daniel 2: 44 says that the Kingdom of God shall "break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." Not one of these kingdoms has as yet been consumed by the Kingdom of God. That is what God's expectant children have still to look forward to. The Kingdom of God will manifest itself in power, and will take hold of the affairs of earth in a very practical manner by the establishment of an entirely new government.

So long therefore as the Gentile powers function it is correct and Scriptural to say that "the times of the Gentiles" continue. The functions of the Gentile powers are defined in Romans 13, and include protection of citizens, punishment of evil doers, collection of taxes or tribute, etc. All these duties the Gentile nations are carrying out this year [i.e. 1928] up to this writing, and apparently will continue to do for some time in the future.

Redeeming the Time

In the meantime we who have been enlightened with the knowledge of the truth have a duty to perform in the service of our Master. Much as we might like the Kingdom to come soon and put an end to this present evil world, we cannot hasten it by false interpretations of prophecy or false reading of the signs of the times. Ours is the privilege of living day by day and doing each day the Lord's will so far as we understand it. While in the world, we are not of it. We are messengers of glad tidings with a definite mission to perform, and that is to assist in the great work of taking out a people for His name; of seeking out the truth-hungry wherever they may be found and giving them nourishing spiritual food.

Notwithstanding all the unrest in the world, conditions are now favorable for the circulation of the truth. Most countries are recovering or have recovered from the effects of the last war and are intent on commercial enterprises which keep open the lines of travel as well as commerce. Mails go everywhere. There is no hindrance to the circulation of reading matter, and tons of books and pamphlets teaching error are being sent everywhere. Preachers are numerous who travel the world with unscriptural doctrines. To those who have the truth the apostle's admonition is timely: "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." (Ephesians 5: 16.) Buying back the time. Time keeps going on, the days pass never to return. We cannot keep the days from passing, but we can redeem or buy back some of the time by employing it contrary to the evil tendencies of our day and the wishes of the Evil One, who is the "god of this world," "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

And we can buy back or redeem some of the time which would be taken up by teachers of error. Let us not by idleness let them have all the time to use in their own way. Let us be busy, instant in season and out of season, and so be instruments in the Lord's hands for the accomplishment of His special work in the last years of the times of the Gentiles.—2 Timothy 4: 1, 2.

This work, of taking out a people for His name, is still going on in this year 1943. Who is doing this work? Let each one who has come to the knowledge of this glorious truth ask himself, Am I responding as I should? Am I doing all I can to make my calling and election sure, and am I joining in the great work of "taking out" others for His glorious Name, to be with and like Him, and reign with Him the Thousand Years, and enjoy to all eternity the wonders of the heavenly inheritance?



GRACIOUS, HEAVENLY LOVE

I love to tell the story
Of gracious, heavenly love;
How Jesus left His glory,
That wondrous love to prove.

I love to tell the story,
Because I know it's true;
It satisfies my longings
As nothing else would do.

I love to tell the story!
More wonderful it seems,
Than all the golden fancies
Of all our golden dreams.

I love to tell the story!
It did so much for me;
And that is just the reason
I tell it now to thee.

—Selected.

The Jubile

(Continued from April Issue.)

Jesus Christ was the Great Prophet whom Moses said God would raise up—"Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you." He is the great High Priest who blows the trumpet of Jubile, announcing that the atonement sacrifice was offered by Himself, that sins may now be forgiven those who will afflict their souls and confess their sins in His ears, and take His yoke upon them, to serve and obey Him. In Him therefore, and in the blessings He gives, we find the antitype of the jubile, just as the sabbath has its antitype in the rest of faith which He gives the penitent believer.—Heb. 4: 3, 8-11.

The Antitypical Jubile

Much of the prophetic language concerning our Lord Jesus is in the words of the jubile proclamation—

"To proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

"To proclaim the acceptable [propitious, delightful, or favorable] year of the Lord, . . ." (Isa. 61: 1, 2; Luke 4: 18, 19. See definitions of "acceptable" in Strong's Concordance. Young translates, "the year of the good pleasure of Jehovah"; Leeser renders it, "a year of favour of the Lord.") Observe that after Jesus had quoted these words, he added, *"This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."*

THE ANTITYPICAL JUBILE WAS PROCLAIMED THAT VERY DAY; we are told that the words which proceeded out of His mouth were *gracious*, so that all the people marvelled.—Luke 4: 22.

The following prophecies also declare the good things our Lord began to give when He came to introduce the Antitypical Jubile—

"Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time [or, in the time of favour] have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inhabit the desolate heritages; That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth," etc.—Isa. 49: 8, 9. Compare Leeser's translations, and 2 Cor. 6: 2.

"But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth."—Isa. 11: 4.

"Thou hast multiplied the nation, and increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest [that is, in the feast of the ingathering, following the day of atonement]. . . . Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end,"—Isa. 9: 3-7.

"nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."—Isa. 2: 4.

The New Testament speaks also of liberty as the present Jubile experience of believers in Jesus Christ. Paul says to the Jewish converts—

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."—Gal. 5: 1.

"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty;" . . . "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law."—Gal. 5: 13, 18.

"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but . . .

"Being then made free from sin, . . ."—Rom. 6: 17, 18.

" . . . that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they which

are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."—Heb. 9: 15.

The Jews were in a greater bondage than that of temporal servitude to one another, though they did not realize it fully—the bondage of the Law, the bondage of Sin, and the bondage of Death, and from these only the Greater than Moses and Aaron could deliver them, and give them an abiding inheritance.

Gentiles as well as Jews were in a terrible bondage, from which Christ came to deliver them and give the jubile blessings of inheritance—"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive the forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."—Acts 26: 18.

The New Covenant Trumpet and Seal

The Antitypical Trumpet of Jubile began to sound in Palestine eighteen hundred years ago; it is still sounding, and it will continue to sound as long as attention needs to be called to the atoning sacrifice offered, and as long as there are slaves of Sin and Death to release. The angels sang the song of jubile—"Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." (Luke 2: 10, 11; Heb. 5: 9.) But as under the Law Covenant the aliens were debarred from the worship of God on the sabbaths and from the special benefits of the jubiles, so no unbeliever can worship God acceptably under the New Covenant, or receive the deliverance of the Antitypical Jubile. As in the ancient day of atonement those who would not afflict their souls nor acknowledge their need of the sacrifice were to be put to death, so it is written of the wilful rejector of Christ—"And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." (Lev. 23: 29, 30; Acts 3: 23.) Instead of receiving the liberty and blessings of the Antitypical Jubile, he must be destroyed as unworthy of them.

The blessings to believers in Jesus are arranged for under the New Covenant (Heb. 8: 6; 9: 15), the sign or seal of which is the Holy Spirit given to believers. (Eph. 1: 13; 2 Tim. 2: 19; Rev. 7: 1-8.) The ancient Jews in their year of jubile were concerned for their houses and lands and possessions which God had given them. The believer in Jesus (either in the present High Calling age or in the Kingdom age—for the Antitypical Trumpet of Jubile or gladness sounds through both ages) is more concerned over questions of righteousness and truth, and deliverance from sin and death.

But the glad tidings and the blessings now received are not all the benefits of the jubile. We read also that God has prepared wonderful things in glory for the overcomers of the present age. They shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years. (1 Cor. 2: 9; Rev. 20: 4, 6.) And in the Kingdom age further jubile blessings will be given to all

mankind, the dead being raised to hear the joyful sound.—Psa. 89: 15.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. . . . He that overcometh shall inherit all these things.—Rev. 21: 4-7, margin.

From Far and Near

THE Memorial Observance of our dear Lord's death on our behalf was partaken of by the friends in many parts of the world on its yearly recurrence, Tuesday night, April 20. We in Melbourne received a blessing, and we know the Lord's promise to bless was fulfilled to all who met to remember Him. One isolated brother in New Zealand writes—

"Although alone, I knew that brothers and sisters of the Faith were also keeping the Memorial of His death. I had some unleavened bread that dear Brother Hennings sent me years ago."

Will you please send me 6 of last month's [March] N.C.A. The articles—"The Lord's Coming" and "Foretelling the Future" are so good I would like to send them to friends. I look forward to my N.C.A. every month, and enjoy reading them so much.

The world is in such a terrible state, and we can only hope and trust for the better time we know is coming. Yours in the one hope,—*Queensland*.

We, myself and husband, do enjoy the N.C.A. you so kindly send from time to time, and we receive such light and comfort from them. They give us cheer and courage for the dark days in which we are passing. Am enclosing subscription, and would you also kindly send me the Divine Healer, also Daniel the Prophet in the Latter Days.

Praying that God's richest blessings may attend and bless your work and labour of love for Christ, Yours sincerely, —, W. A.

The overcoming saints are still one by one passing on to their reward. In England a faithful brother aged over 80 has passed away, who was "very active for his years, and very zealous for the Lord and the Truth. I am so glad that he was spared from the terrors of these days. How wonderful it will be when the Nations learn that peace (real) can only come—not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

"I pray God's rich blessing on your work and labour of love for His sake, and commit you to His care.—(Heb. 13: 20, 21, 25.)"—, *England*.

Trials of all kinds are a test of character. And the Lord told His disciples to pray to the Father, "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Any enticement to sin can be resisted with His help. So also in regard to doctrinal error. The Lord has given us the inspired Word as our guide, and has also promised the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

A good-sized and earnest Class of believers in present truth was built up in London over forty years ago, and it is encouraging to hear that many of them still hold fast. One of the first to take the truth writes also of the war effects:—

"You would hardly recognise the neighbourhood with which you were associated; they have all been very badly blitzed. But considering all things the loss of life has not been great, and there have been many miraculous escapes—proving that in spite of 'man's inhumanity to man' there is a restraining influence working to prevent utter extermination. I do hope you dear folk in Australia will not have to face all we in the old country have been through.

"Still we have come through, and have found His grace sufficient in every time of need. And now when I hear the roar of the guns I hear nearer still the voice of the Lord, as He speaks in love and power through His word—"My grace is sufficient;" "I am with thee." Only believe and great things thou shalt see. The night is passing. 'Twill soon be day, when war, death and sorrow will pass away. Amen, I answer. "Thy Kingdom come," the "desire of all nations." . . . What a handclasp we will have when we meet in the Kingdom! —*England*.

We have been thinking of you all today at the Easter Conference; we had been wondering if there would be one this year. The topic is a good one.

Will you please renew my subscription (6 copies as usual) to the N.C.A. Also please send 6 copies Everlasting Punishment (paper covers) and 2 Parables (in cloth) and apply the rest to the N.C.A. Sustaining Fund.

We still get an inquiry occasionally and send out book or tract or both, but the people do not show any desire to seek further; however, we keep the work going, and this is all any of us can do. And we think the persistent attitude on keeping going in the face of all opposition and seeming failure must be acceptable to the Lord.

Each individual believer may not be greatly successful in the work, but as a body of believers we can realise that our work is successful, and that the Lord is watching the work and giving us encouragement all the time. So that it is our duty and privilege to keep on, faithful to the end.

The war still goes on, and the Lord's people are going through various trials; we can pray for peace, for even man-made peace though falling far short of the ultimate peace, which God will speak to the nations, is better than a state of war. It would be a grand thing if the war would end soon and present restrictions—such as travel—removed so that we might be able to visit Melbourne once again. However, all such matters are in the Lord's hands. Trust you are in good health, and with Christian love from us both, Yours in the One Hope, — *South Australia*.

—SINCE OUR LAST ISSUE

PROPHECY continues to be fulfilled. As indicated, two lines of work are being carried on. The Lord said, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." (Matt. 24: 14.) We are witnesses to-day of the fact that every nation, or nearly every nation, in the earth to-day has had or is having a witness concerning God's purpose to set up His Kingdom.

FALSE IDEAS as to how are prevalent, and we are warned that false Christs and false prophets shall

arise. (Matt. 24: 21-31.) And the first work is to gather his elect. This work is still being carried on to-day. The "little flock" who are to reign with Him is not yet complete. Therefore let us be diligent in seeking out the sincere truthseekers. Or, as a parable has it, be energetic in reaping the ripe grain, the result of sowing the good seed of the kingdom.

THE SUPERIORITY of the Christian religion over the pagan religions has long been supposedly demonstrated in what is called the civilized world. But in more recent years searchers of the Scriptures have found that the large organisations professing to be God's instruments have been teaching very misleading things about God. For example, that the majority of mankind are bound for a place of eternal torment.

SOME have tried to soften this fearful error by saying the torment would be distress of mind and not torment in literal flame. Hence the need to tell out the truth concerning the nature of death—as a sleep until the resurrection. And

CHRIST'S SECOND COMING as the time for raising the dead. Also more light is to be had now as to the purpose in raising the dead, and that the Thousand Years of the Kingdom age are just before us.

MODERN photography in a few minutes takes "snaps" from all sides of a large object, as a ship or a house. It shows us the outward aspect all round, and then takes us inside the ship or house by showing us "snaps" of the captain's cabin and other cabins, the cook's galley, the engine room, etc., etc. Or, in a house, snaps of drawing room, etc.

The Bible contains word pictures of events of the past, and also in its prophecies of the future. For example, the Lord's parables are a series of descriptive pictures to illustrate Gospel truth.

Our readers are advised to secure the book, "The Parables of our Lord," in which these wonderful story-pictures are explained. The special price to "Advocate" subscribers is only 1/6 in paper covers; in cloth covers, with gilt lettering, 2/3; postage extra.

A NEW WORLD. This expression is now in frequent use in the Press in regard to the possibilities of reconstruction after the present war is ended. After the last war the same possibilities of reconstruction were spoken of. At present 76 "United Nations" are on one side, in defence against certain European powers and one Asiatic power. The Christian is encouraged by the Lord's words that HE will shortly take control, and the faithful of the Gospel age will be given a place in the throne as the bride of the Lamb.

A NEW ORDER OF THINGS. That is the meaning of the new Kingdom Christ will set up. And then shall God's will be done on earth, as it is in heaven, as our Lord taught us to pray.

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The New Covenant Advocate

— and —

Kingdom Herald

VOL. 35.

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, JUNE 1, 1943.

No. 3.

A New Beginning

(Conference Addresses continued)

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.—Gen. 6: 5, 6.

BUT Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. "And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth"—not the physical earth, but the social order. And Noah manifested his faith not only by believing that God would destroy, but also by doing what God instructed him to do. As the apostle Paul wrote centuries later—

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear [i.e., pious forethought, or godly fear, reverence], prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."—Hebrews 11: 7.

It would seem that no rain had fallen up to this time, as Noah was warned "of things not seen as yet." Genesis 2: 6 says that in Eden a mist went up from the earth and watered the ground; there is no mention of rain.

So Noah made an ark of gopher wood for the safety of his family; an immense boat on dry land. By faith he built it amid ridicule and scorn, so convinced was he that God would destroy that evil generation. And he gathered his family and the beasts, fowls, and creeping things that were to be saved, into the ark.

Then the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, and the rain was upon the earth for forty days and forty nights.

Thus God by His conquering power destroyed the evil conditions and governmental arrangements that prevailed on the earth at that time. Every living creature was destroyed from the face of the earth; only righteous Noah and those with him in the ark were saved.

Here was a manifestation of God's mighty power. He remembered Noah and all those in the ark. And God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the water subsided; and the earth was made dry again. And God spoke to Noah saying (Gen. 8)—

16 Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee.

17 Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.

So Noah went forth out of the ark. And he built an altar unto the Lord, and offered thereon of every clean beast and fowl; and so showed thankfulness to God for their deliverance. (Genesis 8)—

21 And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake;

22 While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

So Noah and his wife and his sons and their wives were given a new beginning, and from them the earth would be filled. God blessed them and said unto them, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." (Gen. 9: 1.) And He gave them instructions for their guidance in Godly living, including instructions as to their food.

He would provide plenty of vegetable, also animal food; but nothing strangled was to be eaten, as the blood which was the life of the animal would be congealed within it, hence not good to eat.

Also God would regard murder as a crime to be punished by Himself, or by man according to laws given for man's guidance in punishment of evil doers.—Gen. 9: 9; Rom. 13: 1-8.

God's Covenant with Noah

Having preserved Noah and begun a new "world," or order of things, God now enters into a covenant with him, with his sons, and with every living creature in all generations (Gen. 9)—

13 I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.

14 And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud;

15 And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

Blessing and Cursing

Though there was a new beginning, there was still sin and death to be contended with. Evil was not long in making itself known again. Noah had righteousness imputed to him on account of his faith. But not so Ham, who soon showed he was evil, and his evil mocking brought a curse upon his son Canaan and descendants. As Noah said (Gen. 9: 25)—

... Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

26 And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem;

And Canaan shall be his servant.

27 God shall enlarge Japheth, And he shall dwell in the tents of Shem.

Noah could not of himself have made all the descendants of Canaan the servants of Shem and Japheth. So it would seem that Noah was inspired to prophesy the blessings and cursings upon his sons.

God, under this new order of things, for a time at least

purposed to visit blessings for right doing and cursings for evil doing.

The curse pronounced by Noah upon Canaan was a contrast to the blessing pronounced upon Shem and Japheth; in so much that Shem and Japheth had lordship over the earth—Canaan and his descendants for servants and material things included. While Canaan and his descendants were servants who had to suffer whatever was meted out to them, Noah's curse on Canaan was partially fulfilled when the Canaanites were destroyed and their land taken by the Israelites under Joshua, and by the Hivites; becoming their servants forever. But what a contrast to the ones that kept the knowledge of God in their lives.

Gen. 11: 10-32 gives the account of the children of Arphaxad (the son of Shem) who for a number of generations were faithful. When God separated unto Himself a family for special blessing, he chose a son of Terah of the tribe of Arphaxad, whose name was Abram, afterwards called Abraham, who was a sincere worshipper of God. God foreknew how Abram would conduct himself in trials and testings, as in Gen. 18: 19—

"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring that which he hath spoken of him."

God the Conqueror again—in having found Abram upright and suitable to be head of a great nation (Gen. 13: 1-3)—

Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

By faith Abraham went out, not knowing whither he went, and sojourned in the land of promise, a stranger and a wanderer, observing his part of the agreement. Abraham believed God, and his faith was counted unto him for righteousness. His faith was strong too in the promise of an heir. Romans 4: 20 says: "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;"

And there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down into Egypt. And when the princes of Pharaoh saw Abram's wife Sarai, and how fair she was, they took her to Pharaoh; Abram having said she was his sister, and Pharaoh treated Abram well for her sake.

But God plagued Pharaoh with great plagues because of Sarai. So Pharaoh sent Abram and Sarai and all that he had away.

God's Mercy toward Lot

When Abram, Lot, and all that were with them in Egypt came out, they journeyed from the south country to Bethel, where Abraham had previously called on the name of the Lord. And there Abram and Lot parted company—Lot taking the well-watered plain of the Jordan by choice. So while Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, Lot "dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom."—Gen. 13: 12.

But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly. 2 Peter 2: 8 says of Lot: "(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and

hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)"

One would think, of his own account, and for the sake of his family, Lot would leave such wickedness that vexed his soul; but no, the plain was well watered and tempting, and good for his flocks and herds. So Lot stayed there until God sent two angels to warn him to come out of that city, that they were sent to destroy it.

Even then Lot lingered, until "the men [angels] laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him; and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. (Gen. 19: 16.) Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire.

Gen. 18: 20 says that the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was very grievous. Even so, God was willing to save that city if fifty righteous people could be found in it, for Abraham's sake. Abraham asked—

"Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous; wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five?" And the Lord said, "If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it."

Finally Abraham requested, if ten righteous people could be found, and the Lord agreed. But ten righteous were not found in that city, so it was completely destroyed, and is a salt waste even to this day.

What wisdom and love were shown in dealing with those that were faithful and trustful of His care! And what conquering power was shown in dealing with those wicked ones that would not repent!

In due time Abraham's son Isaac was born, then Isaac's son Jacob—later called Israel. Their's was the true line through whom Jesus Christ the seed of promise came.—Gal. 3: 16.

God was not left without a witness in those early days. These faithful ones gave evidence of their faith both by words and deeds. During their lifetime on earth they testified that they sought a city whose builder and maker is God.—James 2: 21-26; Heb. 11: 10.

Jacob had twelve sons, and from them sprang the children of Israel, who were numerous as the stars in the sky. And to them God sent the prophets to instruct them in Godly living, and so that they might refrain from evil; also to give them encouragement by foretelling the coming of a Deliverer who would save them from their sins—"Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." To the Jews first the Lord gave the opportunity of the high calling.—Acts 3: 25, 26.

We in our day have the blessed privilege of sonship offered to us. The promised deliverer is the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for our sins as well as for the sins of the faithful ones of old time WHO DIED IN FAITH. Do we not see the mighty wisdom and power of God in His ability to translate His words of promise into fulfilment? He is surely a conquering God in truth; and His wonderful Son, whom he has set on His holy hill of Zion, inherits God's conquering unshakable kingdom.

Let us, every one, give Him our loyal service in hearts and minds—for ever and ever—to our everlasting benefit.

O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise!
—D. S.



Israel at Sinai

IN TIMES previous, God had been dealing with people of Faith as individuals. Those people—such as, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—were all God-fearing people, and as such received special favour from God. But the time has now come—at Sinai—when He is making a variation in his programme. Instead of dealing with individuals, He

has now taken the family of Jacob (or Israel, as he was then called), and has given them the special favour of becoming His own special nation, and is going to show them what a mighty Conqueror He can be. This family by certain events had been brought to Egypt, where they lived under the favour of the then reigning Pharaoh. And by being under the

favour of both God and Pharaoh they multiplied greatly in number; so much so, that when a later Pharaoh who did not know Joseph came to the throne, he was very worried because the children of Israel were getting more in number and mightier than the Egyptians. And he feared that the Israelites might join an invading army or even start a revolution.

Therefore, in order to check any such movement, he made them slaves to work for the Egyptians, and put them to making bricks and such like work in order to keep them down. But in spite of their hardships they still increased in number, so Pharaoh ordered that all the male children of the Israelites should be killed at birth. This was an additional burden on the already overburdened people.

It was at this time that Moses was born.

But Moses did not suffer the fate of the other boys, because God desired that he should be the one who would deliver His people. So his mother kept him hidden for three months; and when she could not keep him hidden any longer she placed him in a basket which she floated on the river. There he was found by Pharaoh's daughter, who took a fancy to him, and reared him as her own son: with his mother as nurse.

We can well imagine that this must have been a wonderful education for the child Moses; for, as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he would doubtless have the best education the Egyptians could give. And not only that, but he would learn all about God from his own mother, and how that God had chosen the Israelites as His own special people. This education would fit him for his future mission.

From this vantage point in Pharaoh's household, the young Moses could also witness the oppression of the Israelites. But God did not intend that he should always live in this life of luxury: He had work for him to do.

So it happened that, when he saw an Egyptian beating one of the Israelites, he killed the Egyptian and hid the body in the sand. But the next day, when he saw two Israelites striving together and he tried to separate them by peaceful means, his action was mistaken, and the Israelites looked upon him as a trouble maker, and made things so uncomfortable for him that he was forced to fly from Egypt and live in a strange land for a further 40 years. After which God called to Moses and gave him special instructions, how he was to go about delivering the Children of Israel.

But Moses doubted his ability to act on God's behalf, even though he knew that God would be with him. It seems as though he was affected by a sense of inferiority; he wanted someone to back him up; therefore God told him to go and meet his brother Aaron, and the two of them together would then appear before Pharaoh.

Moses was to be the mighty one, and Aaron was to be his prophet or spokesman.

So, as God commanded, they went to Pharaoh on nine separate occasions, to demand a release of the Children of Israel, backing up their claim by bringing a plague upon the land. But this and great subsequent plagues only served to harden Pharaoh's heart.

It was the final plague that proved too much for Pharaoh. Why? Because it affected him more personally than the others had done, seeing that his own son had died together with all the first-born of all the people and all the stock in the land, except the first-born of the Israelites who obeyed God's command to sprinkle the blood on the door posts.

At this juncture Pharaoh practically forced them out of the land. But even then he hardened his heart when he realized that all his Hebrew slaves had gone. So he sent his army after them.

And again God demonstrates himself as a Conqueror: placing a curtain of fire between the Egyptians and the Israelites, which gave the Israelites time to march dryshod through that great trough in the Red Sea.

Then, when the Hebrews were on the other side, and the Egyptians tried to follow, the pursuers were all caught in the returning waters. After this, Moses by the hand of God led the Children of Israel to Mount Sinai.

A Government Necessary

As is the case where there are gatherings of people—whether small or large—there must be some form of Government to preserve law and order. Therefore God spoke to Moses, and directed him to assemble the people before Mount Sinai, where He would give them the law.

We are told that there is a plain in the mountains of Sinai, before a mount known as Jebel Musa. This plain is of about 400 acres, and could accommodate two million people. And another thing about it is that sound travels remarkably well there. This would make it a wonderful amphitheatre for such an occasion.

On the morning of the third day there was a mighty commotion—thunders, lightning, and smoke on the Mount, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud. This was the proclamation, and continued while Moses brought all the people before the Mount. And, when all were assembled, Moses spoke, and God commanded him to come up into the Mount, where He charged him to sanctify the Mount.

Then, when Moses had returned to the people and done as God had commanded, God spoke to the Children of Israel with an audible voice and gave them the first ten commandments.

But this was too much for the people when they heard the voice of the Lord coming out of the thunders and lightnings and smoke of the Mount. Therefore they desired that Moses should go and get the word of the Law, for they feared the voice of the Lord. So Moses received from God the law and ordinances which all the Children of Israel promised to keep.

God also gave them a system of worship; with instructions how to build a tabernacle, where he could place His presence and receive the worship of His people.

And, to make the service complete, God chose the tribe of Levi as office-bearers or priests; Aaron being the High Priest, and the only one who could enter the Holy of Holies into the very presence of God, and that once a year, and not without blood.

The priests were to receive the offerings of the people and perform numerous other sacrifices on behalf of the people. Surely an elaborate form of worship; and yet every phase of it pointed to some aspect of the great sacrifice; even that of Jesus Christ.

This Law and System of Worship served the purpose of showing the people their responsibility to God; and, while they kept to the law, God proved himself as a mighty Conqueror on their behalf.

But God's willingness to deliver his people depended upon their obedience. After this dramatic receiving of the Law at Mount Sinai, Moses by the hand of God led the Children of Israel through the wilderness for 40 years, during which time the people were not always faithful.

Time and time again they became discontented and murmured against Moses. On one occasion they murmured because they lacked water, blaming Moses for bringing them out into the wilderness to die. On this occasion God told Moses to strike the rock, and it brought forth water.

On another occasion—when Korah and 250 princes rose up against Moses and Aaron and told them that they were taking too much on themselves in acting as leaders of the people—we read that Moses called to God to demonstrate to the people who were to be the proper ones in authority. This God did by causing the earth to open and swallow up Korah and the rebellious princes. And so the Israelites were led on toward the promised land; by the power of God conquering armies that barred their progress until they reached the promised land.

Smiting the Rock

Moses was not permitted to lead them into the land because of a sin on his part. This was on the second occasion when the people cried for water:

(Num. 20: 1-12.) God told Moses and Aaron to gather the people to a certain rock, and then Moses was to speak to the rock and it would bring forth water. But, instead of speaking, Moses struck the rock, and for this reason he did not enter the promised land.

There is a lesson here for us.

The Living Rock

That rock represents Christ, who was struck on our behalf, that we might receive of the life-giving stream.

If we sin again we are to ask for forgiveness; which can be compared to Moses speaking to the rock to produce the life-giving stream.

But woe betide us if we sin wilfully after having received the knowledge of the Truth! for that would be like crucifying the Lord afresh, and would be similar to Moses striking the rock instead of speaking to it.

We, like Moses, would not enter into the promised possession.

God chose Joshua to succeed Moses as leader of the people into the promised land. And when Joshua had led the people into the land and conquered its former inhabitants, then God commanded Joshua to divide the land so that each tribe had a portion—that is, all except the tribe of Levi, who were the priests and were to be supported by the other tribes. In all this we can see the leadership of the Almighty.

When ye hear the thunders in the heavens, remember the thunders of Sinai. That same God who spoke on that mountain is our God, and those thunders of Sinai still speak. His work is not yet finished. He is still leading on.

Let us follow faithfully.

— W. S.

A King Wanted

THE name Samuel means "asked of God," and was given him by his mother Hannah, because she had received him as a gift from God in answer to her prayers. And in return she dedicated him to the Lord's service, as we read in the first book of Samuel, Chapter 1.

Eli the priest took Samuel in charge, to assist in carrying out his mother's earnest desire, by instructing him in the law of God, given at Sinai, and in the prescribed services and sacrifices to be carried out in the tabernacle which Moses had been instructed to erect, and in which Moses' brother Aaron was the first high priest.

The Israelites' insistence on having a king like the idolatrous nations around them was displeasing to God. And Eli, the high priest, failed to restrain them in their waywardness. So we read (1 Sam. 3)—

19 And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.

20 And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord.

21 And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh; for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the Word of the Lord.

But the Israelites again turned to evil ways, and the Philistines were allowed to take the ark as a spoil of war; and it was in the Philistines' country seven months. (1 Sam. 5:

1-10; 6: 1.) Then the ark was returned to the Israelites. Samuel directed this reform, and directed also that prayers be made; and in answer the cities were restored to Israel. 1 Samuel 7 declares:

15 And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

16 And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places.

17 And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD.

These historical facts show that under Samuel's guidance the Israelites acknowledged God as their Sovereign Ruler. The term Judge in those days was not limited as it is now in some countries to a trial judge in a court of law, but was the title of the supreme ruler over Israel as God's representative. In the book of Judges the names of a number of such judges are given.

But the people fretted under the restraints imposed upon them, and looked with jealous eyes upon their neighbour—the Philistines—and copied their methods. In doing so they flouted God, and there was nothing for it under the Law but that God should punish them for their wrongdoing; 30,000 Israelites lost their lives, and the Philistines acquired the Ark, and control of the holy places.

Twenty years later, as a result of Samuel's efforts, and

the influence of loyal priests and Levites, the Israelites repented of their misdeeds, and Samuel assured them that if they were genuine in their expressed intention to return to the Lord, they would be delivered out of the hand of the Philistines.

The Lord answered Samuel's prayers on behalf of the Israelites by discomfiting the Philistines when they tried to repeat their former success. Not only were the Philistines then subdued, but (1 Samuel 7: 13-17)—

"... they came no more into the coast of Israel; and the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. "And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites. "And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. "And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places. "And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the Lord."

OTHER JUDGES

Eventually the time came when Samuel made his sons Judges in his stead.

But his sons were obviously not prepared to comply with the laws by which they judged the people. For instance, concerning the office of a judge, the law said (Deut. 16)—

18 Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes; and they shall judge the people with just judgment.

19 Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift; for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous.

That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Yet we find that Joel and Abiah, Samuel's two sons, repudiated the law by accepting bribes and giving perverted judgments.—1 Sam. 8: 3.

So the elders of Israel had a meeting at which they reached a decision; they approached Samuel at Ramah, and said to him: "Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations."—1 Sam. 8: 5.

We are told simply that Samuel was displeased. As a true servant of God, Samuel could not countenance such a copying of their heathen neighbours. And at the first opportunity he prayed to God for guidance.

There had been a series of Judges over Israel for about 450 years; and Samuel would be loth to change or recommend the change of a system that God himself had instituted.

But it was not only Samuel that they rejected. The Lord assured Samuel "they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them."—1 Sam. 8: 7.

The Lord God himself had been king over Israel. And for years He had been forsaken—years during which the Israelites had served heathen gods. Still the Lord so directed that the Israelites be granted their request. They should have a king.

But first Samuel was to dissuade them, if possible, by describing the characteristics of an earthly king. Willingly he told the Israelites what they might expect. (Read 1 Samuel 8: 11-18.)

But the people refused to heed this earnest appeal. They envied the supposed benefits obtained by other nations which had a king—instead of a judge—directing their affairs. "Nay," they said, "but we will have a king over us; That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles."—1 Sam. 8: 19, 20.

While the nation was obedient to the Lord's commandments, the land had rest and prosperity, and God in His providence protected and blessed them. They could have continued to earn God's approval if they would have accepted Him as their king, and acknowledged each succeeding Judge as His representative.

The nation, however, was no longer satisfied with this mode of government. The general discontent was focussed by a raid of the barbarian Nahash, chieftain of Ammon, whose alarming movements on the unprotected eastern

frontier of Israel urgently brought home the need of a warrior king to lead them out to battle. They wanted to have all the certainty which they associated with having a king always with them after the manner of the surrounding nations, so a movement began which favored the establishment of a monarchy. (1 Sam. 8: 4.) And the Lord said to Samuel: "Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king."—1 Sam. 8: 22.

SAUL THE KING

Saul—whose masterly handling of a difficult situation, by mobilising 330,000 men within a few days ensured victory over the Ammonites—was obviously the popular choice.—1 Sam. 9: 1, 2; 10: 24-26; 11: 15.

Of all the things they might have done to welcome Saul when he was first introduced to them, the Israelites, so we are told, greeted him by shouting, "God save the king!"

A tall man, about 7 feet, he certainly must have been an imposing figure, and he made such an impression on the people that they were prepared to put to death the children of Belial, who despised him.

What an opportunity Saul now had! The first king of Israel, he could have had his kingdom established for ever, if he had kept implicitly the commandments of the Lord.

But he did not; and Samuel was continually chiding him for his failure to do so. We read of one such instance in 1 Sam. 13: 11-14—

11 And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash;

12 Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the Lord: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.

13 And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly; thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.

14 But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee.

There was a warning of Saul's impending dethronement, and his final rejection is recorded in 1 Samuel 15.

And at the end of the chapter we see that—"the Lord repented that he had made Saul king over Israel."

Yes, Saul was certainly a disappointment as a ruler, but God was prepared: He had already chosen a successor to Saul, and He arranged that Samuel should seek him. Samuel was to seek out Jesse of Bethlehem; for one of his sons, whose identity was not disclosed, was to be anointed with oil in accordance with God's instructions.

So Samuel proceeded with the plan and met the sons of Jesse one at a time; but though seven sons were paraded before him, Samuel could only say, "The Lord hath not chosen these. . . . Are here all thy children?" No, there was one other, a shepherd, and at Samuel's request he was sent for. Then the Lord told Samuel: "Arise, anoint him; for this is he."

"Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. . . . —1 Samuel 16: 13.

DAVID THE CHOSEN

When we think of David, several highlights in his life come readily to mind.

We remember his battle with the 10-foot giant Goliath; how he—a youth so untrained in the art of war that he scorned the use of armor, helmet and sword—felled the disdainful Goliath with one well-directed stone.—1 Sam. 17.

We recall the story of Jonathan and David; their mutual love and the protection of Jonathan provided when his father—King Saul—plotted to kill David, whom he eyed with "a murderous intent."

We know, too, that when David was 30 years of age, he was anointed king of Judah, and that 7½ years later the elders of Israel came to him and said (2 Sam. 5: 1-3)—

Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel.

So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord: and they anointed David king over Israel.

It also strikes a familiar chord in our memories when we are reminded of David's desire to build a house for the Lord befitting His power and majesty, for there is a particularly thrilling climax to this incident; in declining David's offer, God made him a promise, the effect of which was more far-reaching than David then realized.—1 Chronicles 17: 1-14.

David was a man after God's own heart, we are told; so, after all—

GOD CONQUERED

David proved righteous and faithful, and God used him to give Israel an idea of what a king should be.

David was followed by Solomon, who was for a time loyal to God, and who wrote what is now known as the Book of Proverbs.

Israel's height of power and influence occurred in Solomon's reign. Later kings differed—some being loyal to God, while others ran after the heathen idolatries. Still

wanting a king after the heathen model rather than after God.

Finally, God brought Gentile powers against them—first the Babylonians, then the Medes and Persians, then the Grecians; and finally the Romans, who were still in possession when Christ came.

Christ was the true King of the Jews by birth in the house of David; through His mother Mary, as well as His being the Son of God.

But Christ has a much more important appointment than King of the Jews in the new order to be introduced in the Kingdom age; for he is to exercise authority over the entire universe; having power second only to God himself.

And it is to that wonderful day—the last day of the Gospel age—that we look forward so hopefully—knowing that Christ's Conquering Kingdom will then be manifest. May that day soon come!

A. J.



God's Holiness While Allowing Evil

AS FAR as we can understand the historical and traditional data of this world, the people generally have missed the understanding of the great purposes of God. There have been some more wise than the rest, but they have been so few, that the world of mankind has never recognised them. Hence the remark we often hear—If God has the power to stop it, why does He allow such evil to go on as He does? The ignorant have looked to the learned for instruction, and the learned, in the main, have more or less taught the ignorant ignorance. But, thank God, this time of ignorance is about to close, and the time of true learning for the world of mankind is indeed about to begin.

The word "beauty," in its essence, really means perfection; and perfection in its true sense means consummate excellence. From the standpoint of perfection, I would like to make my remarks for the present. No matter what we may say concerning God's justice, mercy, love, it is the outcome of the perfection of God, who has said—"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye. (Psa. 32: 8.) "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."—1 Tim. 2: 3, 4.

God's Holiness and Pharaoh's Hardness

Of God's justice we have an excellent example in the building up of the nation of Israel in Egypt. We all know how Joseph was taken to Egypt, as a forerunner to preserve his family; how he became great in the land; the esteem and gratitude shown to him and his father Israel. Likewise how a King came into power that knew not Joseph, and instead of still treating the people with gratitude, the grossest ingratitude was exercised toward them, even to the slaying of their children.

The tasks put upon them by the Egyptians were so great, that the people cried unto the God of their fathers for help—Who was pleased to send them

Moses as their leader, to lead them, under God's guidance, out of their bondage, to a land flowing with milk and honey. God listened to their cry, and He brought them away with a strong hand, thereby giving a very fine lesson of His justice, to be remembered to this day.

The justice of God was also administered to the children of Israel in the wilderness for their disobedience to the wishes and guidance of God, although they promised to do whatsoever He told them. And so keen was God's justice, that only two men, besides those that were under twenty years of age on coming out of Egypt, were allowed to enter into the promised land. All the rest died in the wilderness.

The Babylonian captivity of seventy years was another example of God's justice, because of Israel's unfaithfulness to His Law, and their worshipping of other gods.

There is another act of God's justice that might be mentioned, and that was in connection with Sodom and Gomorrah. They were very wicked, and God took them away as He saw good.—Ezek. 16: 50.

At the beginning of this present age God's justice was exhibited against Jerusalem, and in the dispersion of the Jews amongst the nations. Their land has been desolate ever since, their social standing among the peoples of this world has been *nil*, and great persecution has been their lot. And we are not quite sure that their time of suffering is finished, for there is yet to come more trouble, not only on the Jew, but on all the people of this world. When that is finished, then will come the time of brilliant display of God's mercy—not that the mercy of God has been lacking in the past, but in the near future no man except the most perverse will be able to dispute the fact of that mercy which will then be shown.

Wrath Tempered with Mercy

A few citations will show how God has been very merciful to mankind, even from the beginning. Even

while pronouncing the curse on the serpent, the perfect mercy was seen.—Gen. 3: 15.

The flood of waters was mercy for the race, as that pollution that had taken place was removed for ever.—Gen. 6, 7.

Great mercy was shown to Abraham in selecting him as God's friend; and Abraham showed his appreciation thereof by obedience to God's laws and statutes. The offering of Isaac on the altar was the occasion for a great manifestation of God's mercy, in that He swore that Abraham should be a father of many nations, and that through him the promised seed should come.

When the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord, and the Lord had recourse to His justice to punish them, He always sent them a deliverer to bring them back to the fold, who judged or ruled over them. Even when the people desired a king like the other nations, which was contrary to God's wish, as God had always been their King and Guide, they were allowed to choose a king who brought the nation into trouble that they had no rest. Then God in His mercy had David anointed, who in due time ruled Israel wisely. In mercy the prophets were sent to rebuke the people and to teach them the will of God, and to foretell to them the things that were to happen, that they might be prepared for the events when their time should come.

At last, in His mercy and love, He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3: 16.) Though its complete manifestation in Christ was long deferred, this love existed from the beginning. All through the ages of sin and wickedness, although there were times that looked very black for the race, and God's justice was frowning upon mankind, there was always a gleam of hope to establish His faithful believers in His mercy and love, shown repeatedly by His dealings and long-suffering toward His people the Jews, and to the world of mankind in general.

All have felt this justice; some have realized His mercy to a less or greater degree, and a few have positively known His love, especially His saints of this Gospel age. But we must not forget that the Lord had faithful servants in former ages also, as is well set before us in all His holy prophets.

So great mercy has God shown to mankind in general and to His saints in particular, and so merciful is His love to usward, that He is pleased at times to give us such trials and testings, that we can be convinced in ourselves that without His mercy and love we are altogether helpless, and are absolutely dependent upon His strength for our faithfulness to Him.

God Tempteth No Man

This brings us to that much-contested point, that God tempts men to see if they will be faithful, and if not, then He condemns them. Of course, you and I know well enough that God knows all things; that He knows us. It is not therefore necessary for Him to try us for the sake of proof to Himself. More often, I think, His object is to teach us lessons of ourselves, to show us our weaknesses, and to give

us an opportunity to correct our faults and to strengthen our characters where we are weak.

In Gen. 22: 1 we read—"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, . . ." The word "tempt" here is altogether out of place, because God had no desire to lead Abraham astray. Besides, He knew in advance how His faithful servant and friend would come through the experience. It was rather a "trial" or "test" given, to prove to Abraham (and also to those who read of it) that he was faithful to God's commands, and with a view to then confirming to His faithful friend His promises with an oath.

The reason I have for saying that the word "tempt" is made use of wrongly in this place, and in many other places, is, that the Apostle James tells us—"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." (James 1: 13.) This Scripture shows that the words to try, or to prove, would have been preferable in such a connection.

In Psa. 95: 9 we read—"When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works." James has just told us, "God cannot be tempted with evil." If in the Psalm the words "tried me" had been used instead of "tempt," it would have fitted the case better, because we know from Scripture that the children of Israel did try God, and they did prove Him, and they saw many marvellous works.

The Thousand Year Judgment

But, thank God, the time is now coming nearer when God will indeed prove to all mankind His mercy and love; when all will have the opportunity of coming to the correct knowledge of the truth. Then all will hear and understand that call in Acts 3: 19, which after Pentecost was sent out to all the world, and has reached some of us, but which yet must reach unto all men—"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, . . ." Here is something to be got rid of—our sins to be blotted out. This blotting out is accomplished when we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. The same will be true in the Kingdom age in the case of everyone who accepts Jesus Christ in the manner the Father has set forth. They will then obtain the everlasting life promised, and will enjoy those blessings mentioned in Rev. 7—

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Rev. 21: 4—And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

If then their sins are to be blotted out, and they shall sin no more, then there is to be no more death; then all they that are alive will continue to live everlastingly. Sin was the cause of all sorrow and pain; sin was the cause of death. It is reasonable to say that, if there is no more sin, there will be no more death.

—S. S. W. B.

Taking From or Adding To ✓

AMONG AUTHORS and newspaper writers of good repute it is a matter of honour to quote accurately the statements of other writers. They would scorn to invent a statement and palm it off as a quotation from another's book or article. If men are thus particular, it should not surprise us that God requires His Word to be handled honestly. Indeed, the apostles found occasion often to reprove those who mishandled the Word of God.

Another thing that should not surprise us is that, when He gave by His angel to the apostle John a series of prophetic visions, the Lord Jesus required accuracy of record. John was told, "What thou seest, write in a book." (Ch. 1: 11.) He was not told to write what he did not see, nor to omit any of the things he did see. And, since John wrote at the Lord's command, we believe the Lord by His Spirit guided him in the use of the words which would clearly and accurately describe what he saw and heard in the various visions. The blessing promised (chapter 1, verse 3) is to be derived from "the words of this prophecy," as the Lord gave them to the apostle John to write down for the benefit of the Church whose guide His words were to be.

Inspiration of Original Manuscript

Now, the inspiration is in the words of the original manuscript. But, that original not being available, the Lord's people have had to do their best with the copies that have been made since the apostles' time. In those days there were "scribes" who copied manuscripts, deeds, contracts, etc., as a mere matter of business, and who would have no interest in producing inaccurate copies. Of course, there were men in those days who for a consideration would produce a forgery, just as there are men to-day ready for such imposition. But we speak of the average scribe, who would take pride in accurate work. Sincere believers serving as copyists would desire to reproduce the exact words of the manuscript before them, with no alteration, omission, or addition of their own.

But all men are fallible, and copyists, like others, even with the best intentions, may omit or add a word or two; not at all likely a whole sentence, though that would be possible. Let anyone try to copy a few paragraphs of the Bible or some other book, and see how careful one must be not to make a mistake. Persons experienced in copying would make fewer mistakes than a beginner. Moreover, as long as the original epistles were in circulation, copies could be compared with them and any faults in the copies corrected. We have to remember, too, that brethren in good standing in the Church of believers, fully indoctrinated in the teachings (1 John 2: 20, 21), would have the aid of this knowledge in making accurate copies, being able also to ask the help of the Holy Spirit in the task.

Making all due allowance therefore for copyists' errors and allowing that only the original was directly inspired,* we have to gather from the Lord's

words concerning the adding to and taking from "the words of this prophecy" that He desires all readers to consider seriously whether any given statement in a copy is according to the original. Owing to the nature of the book one would have to consider well, and not conclude that any thing was an error except on good evidence. Some one might ask, What evidence could be brought forward? And the reply is, If there are several manuscript copies that can be compared, whose dates are known, those nearest in time to the original would in all probability be more reliable than those of several centuries later.

It follows that if on good evidence any word or even a sentence is discarded as something some one has added, then those who discard the added words are *not* "taking from" the words of the Lord, and cannot be said to come under the condemnation of Revelation 22: 19. It also follows that anyone who persists in retaining words which the Lord has not authorized and the apostle John never wrote—such person is placing himself alongside the one who added the words, and hence in a very unsafe position.—Revelation 22: 18, 19.

We have before us a clipping from an American Adventist paper, containing an extract from another American publication, which leads us to desire that all the brethren be well posted on this matter, and able to answer any such assertions as are here made. The clipping reads (the capitals are theirs):—

THE REST OF THE DEAD

Some dear people, anxious to prove that the thousand years of Rev. 20 are PAST, tell us that the words, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished," are spurious. And there are some who believe the thousand years are FUTURE who take this view. But what are the FACTS?

While Rev. 20: 5 is not in the Vatican MSS. No. 1209 (this MSS. is known as the *Codex Vaticanus*), let it be distinctly understood that the book of Revelation is not in this MSS. at all! This is the whole truth. The *Codex Alexandrinus* contains the book of Revelation and also the disputed verse.

The best Greek text extant (that of Westcott and Hort) contains the words, and neither the English nor American Revisers question it. The facts are the verse is there, and the objection of its being there is over-ruled by hard, cold facts. Paste this in your Bible.

It is difficult to understand how anyone writing in this positive way about the two manuscripts—the Vatican 1209 and the Alexandrine—utterly ignores the important and valuable Sinaitic manuscript. Giving no information about the dates of the two mentioned, one wonders if it is of ignorance or of purpose that the Alexandrine—a later manuscript—is mentioned, while the Sinaitic, considerably older, is not even named. The article is written with an air of having caught some one using Vatican 1209 as evidence when it contains none of the book

*The little book, "The Inspiration of the Bible" (see Book List), is most excellent on this subject, and well worth passing around among friends and others who may be misled by the frequent attacks made by some professed Christians on the Word.

of Revelation. This *we have never done*, so the article does not "hit" us.

In "Bible Talks for Heart and Mind," in book form (opp. p. 128), and in the "Thanksgiving" issue (p. 39), the searcher after the facts will find a list of known Greek manuscripts, with the names of the books of the Bible contained in each. The reader will notice that some of the manuscripts contain only the Gospels; some are of the 8th, 9th, 10th, and other comparatively late centuries, while only two date from the 4th century; namely, the Sinaitic and the Vatican 1209, whereas the Alexandrinus is later—of the 5th century.

From our List it will be seen that we are not of those who use the Vatican 1209 as evidence on the subject of Revelation 20: 5, for we know full well it contains none of the book of Revelation.

But the fact that the Vatican 1209, though of the 4th century, cannot be quoted on anything in the book of Revelation makes our position stronger; for now the choice lies between the Sinaitic MS. of the 4th century and the Alexandrine MS. of the 5th century. And surely we are justified in accepting the evidence of the Sinaitic MS., the oldest Greek Uncial MS. of the Scriptures now available. The meaning and value of the Uncial Greek MSS. are explained in "Bible Talks for Heart and Mind."

The intimation of the criticism quoted is that we do not want the words, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished," and that therefore we reject them. But that is not a fair statement. We as sincere students of the Word of God want the truth about Revelation 20: 5, as about every other passage of Scripture. And it is because these words—"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished"—are *not in the nearest to the original* that we are justified in rejecting them. In so doing we are casting out as uninspired what some unauthorized person has added.

Looked at in the most generous light, some one made a marginal note in some ancient manuscript expressing merely his own view, and this by mistake was copied into a subsequent manuscript as though it were part of the original.

Looked at as an effort to mislead, by making it appear that the saints would be raised at the beginning of the Thousand Years, and that the Thousand Years reign of Christ and the Church would be of absolutely no benefit to the myriads of the dead for whom He died, it is a most callous, heartless suggestion—contrary not only to other portions of the book of Revelation, but contrary to the entire Scriptures!

The author of the extract from the American paper, after making a partial statement concerning the ancient Greek manuscripts, says, "This is the whole truth." But observe: he does not tell the whole truth, because he makes no mention whatever of the Sinaitic manuscript belonging to the fourth century. The fact that neither Westcott and Hort nor the English or American Revisions follow the Sinaitic reading is no proof that the words belong. Neither can the presence of these words in the Alexandrine MS. justify rejection of the evidence of the

Sinaitic MS. The only conclusion possible is that the Revisers were either ignorant of the value of the Sinaitic manuscript or were unwilling to admit its claims.

History of Greek Text

Westcott and Hort's Greek Text is a presentation of the judgment of its compilers after an examination of the labours of their predecessors; for the compilation of the Greek text has engaged scholars for centuries. In "Smith's Bible Dictionary" will be found (art. New Testament) a brief history of their labours. Many manuscripts had to be collated, their dates determined, and the probable date of the more ancient manuscript of which they were copies. The dates were determined by the style of writing and by words and phrases used and known to be in vogue at certain periods. In a similar way we may decide on the probable date of a scrap of newspaper, supposing the date of issue is lost. If it contains the word "automobile" we may know the date is later than the invention of the motor car and the name automobile given to it in the U.S.A.

In the most ancient Greek manuscripts there was no space between words and no punctuation. Nearly 700 Greek manuscripts are now known, but the mass of them are of little or no value as compared with those of the fourth and fifth centuries. The "Emphatic Diaglott" translation is based on the text of Griesbach, of whom it says—

"Griesbach, in critical labors, excels by far any who preceded him. He used the materials others had gathered. His first edition commenced in 1775; his last completed in 1806. He combined the results of the collations of Birch, Matthæi and others, with those of Wetstein. In his Revision he often preferred the testimony of the *older* MSS. to the *mass* of modern copies."

Among textual critics and translators who have rendered valuable service to the whole Church by their labours may be mentioned—Mill (1707), Wetstein, Griesbach, Scholz, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Doddridge (1755), Macknight, Campbell, Horne, Murdock (Syriac Version), Turnbull (1854).

Westcott and Hort published their "New Testament in the Original Greek" in 1881. This of course means, as said before, their best judgment on what was the original Greek—after comparing available MSS. and the textual labours of their predecessors. It was a worthy purpose, and the Variorum Bible footnotes very frequently give Westcott and Hort's readings, as they do those of other textual critics. That Westcott and Hort were not unwilling to omit from their text long-accepted passages of the New Testament is shown by the fact that they omit four such interpolations. [To interpolate means—To insert in a writing: as for example, new or unauthorized matter.] These four important interpolations are—

Portion of Matthew 6: 13—For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

John 7: 53 and John 8: 1-11. Too long to insert here.

Portions of 1 John 5: 7 and 1 John 5: 8—in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth.

Mark 16: 9 to end of chapter.

Interpolation in the Lord's Prayer

If those who have the Variorum Bible will please look at page X, which explains the abbreviations used in the Footnotes throughout, they will find under "Critical Editions of the Text" the abbreviation W.H. for Westcott and Hort's "New Testament in the Original Greek." Just below will be seen *Edd.* This indicates that wherever this *Edd.* abbreviation appears in a Footnote, Westcott and Hort and the others mentioned are in agreement. Let no reader turn back from here thinking this is getting too complicated. On the contrary, read on and you will find it quite simple, even if you have no Variorum Bible to refer to. We shall presently state what we want to prove, and you can compare the Revised Version or any other modern version you may have.

The Variorum Footnote on the words interpolated in the Lord's prayer (vs. 13) reads thus—"Omit. Sinaitic, Vatican 1209, Codex Bezae [of the 6th century, Gospels and Acts only], Codex Palimpsestus [6th century, contains part of Matthew], *Edd.* [including Westcott and Hort] and R. [i.e. Revised Version]." In this quotation we have for clearness given the names of the Greek MSS. rather than the capital-letter abbreviations of the Footnote.

What we wish the reader to observe in this Footnote is that the Sinaitic and Vatican 1209 MSS. are in agreement, in that neither contains the words "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." In view of the evidence, Westcott and Hort omit these words as unauthorized, and the Revised Version also omits them.

Should this fact shake our confidence in the remainder of the Lord's Prayer, as found in the Authorized or King James Version? By no means. The two most ancient Greek MSS.—the Sinaitic and the Vatican 1209—contain the remainder of the Prayer; both agreeing also in the reading (vs. 12), "as we have forgiven."

In this connection it is worthy of note that the words interpolated are in contradiction of the request made in the prayer (vs. 10)—"Thy kingdom come." God's kingdom was not set up on earth early in the Gospel age, nor has it yet been established on the earth with the result of causing God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Compare Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its interpretation.) As believers in and followers of our Lord Jesus, we are still praying for the promised kingdom to come.

Now look at Revelation 12: 10, and see how the Lord forewarned His people by the vision to John of a great claim later made by the Papacy—"Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ." This is a warning to God's people not to be deceived by such claims made before the "due time." The Papacy claims to be the kingdom of God on earth, and the insertion of the above words into the Lord's prayer indicates how far the Papacy was willing to go in its efforts to secure world dominion.

Before proceeding to the next interpolation, let us remind ourselves that both the Sinaitic and the Vatican 1209 are in harmony in not containing the words referred to, and that Westcott and Hort acknowledge their authority by omitting the words indicated. The Revised Version omits the words, but appears to regret the necessity, for it adds a rather unsatisfactory marginal note, saying—"Many authorities, some ancient, but with variations, add '*For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*'" This marginal note is unsatisfactory because no dates are given for the MSS. referred to, and "some ancient" would appear to show that there is some excuse for their inclusion. Whereas the fact is, as above shown, that the words are not found in the two most ancient Greek MSS., and are properly omitted from the Prayer. The Lord never said the words, neither did He ever authorize any one to put them into His mouth. The kingdom could not "come" until the Lord himself would return from a "far country," gather together His elect, receive them to the heavenly glory, and overturn the kingdom of this world and all its evil institutions and false religions. (Matthew 25: 14. For full explanation of this and other parables, see the book, "The Parables of our Lord.") Till then His people do right to pray daily for the coming of His kingdom, as well as for the provision of their daily food, and the forgiveness of their sins.

Casting the First Stone

The next interpolation to be considered is comprised in the last verse of chapter 7 of the gospel of John and the first eleven verses of chapter 8. The Sinaitic and the Vatican 1209 do not contain this passage, nor do some later MSS., as mentioned in Variorum footnote. The Revised Version, still declining to cast its influence in favour of the most ancient Greek manuscripts, includes the passage in the body of the book, but encloses it in brackets and adds the following note—"Most of the ancient authorities omit John 7.53-8.11. Those which contain it vary much from each other." Westcott and Hort are cited by the Variorum as omitting this passage; and a note in p. X states that only their important rejections are given; "The important readings which the same editors enclose in double brackets are regarded by them as interpolations which, though added to the text at a very early date, did not originally form part of it."

A little reflection on the interpolated words is sufficient to convince the truth seeker that they formed no part of John's gospel. The words attributed to our Lord, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her," are sufficient to demonstrate the narrative as an invention. While, in the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord showed the New Covenant to be higher and finer than the law covenant, He never cast reflections upon the law such as are imputed in this supposititious answer. The law required witnesses to appear against evil doers, and to take part in the execution of criminals by stoning; and, since all were imperfect, necessarily the accusers were imperfect in some degree as well as

the persons accused. (Deuteronomy 17: 2-13; 10: 6-11.) Nowhere in the New Testament does the Lord teach that a person must be "without sin" before he may recognize and condemn sin in others. The statement that these designing scribes and Pharisees were convicted by their own consciences and went out one by one also has a fictitious ring. Their consciences were notoriously hard, and had they been touched at all in a proper manner they would have remained with Jesus and would have become His followers. The whole story savors of an attempt by immoral persons in the Christian church to save themselves from criticism. In the Middle Ages particularly the clergy were notoriously corrupt, and the Papacy granted indulgences to others as well, on payment of a price.

One may mention that in a so-called religious picture shown at the cinema houses (in 1929) this alleged incident was, according to advertisements, presented with great elaborateness. The fact that it never happened made no difference to the picture producers, who apparently catered to a perverted taste on the part of their patrons. By presenting a so-called religious picture the producers attempted to draw to the theatre Christians who up till then were averse from attending.

Part of our Lord's mission was to call the Jews to repentance, not to minimize their sins. In order that he may avoid committing sins, the child of God is instructed by the Scriptures that certain actions are wrong and should be avoided. In the New Testament many sins are warned against of which God expressed His disapproval in the Old Testament.—See Romans 13: 8-10.

In this case, therefore, and in the case of the Lord's prayer, the Sinaitic MS. and the Vatican 1209 are in agreement, and the insertion of this passage in late manuscripts is seen to have been an interpolation. No portion of God's Word is rejected when we cast out those interpolated words.

The Interpolation in 1 John 5

Again we have the Sinaitic and the Vatican 1209 in agreement that certain words are an interpolation; i.e., words added that do not belong. The Variorum Footnote states that "two very late MSS." contain the words in question, found in 1 John 5: 7, 8. These words are—"in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, . . ." Note this statement, that the MSS. containing the words are "very late."

What evidence is there against the words? The Variorum Footnote states that they are omitted by the "Sinaitic, Alexandrine, Vatican 1209, and all Greek MSS. written before the fifteenth century, *Edd., R.*; the passage is first found in African Fathers of the fifth century (but is possibly also quoted by Cyprian) and in later copies of the Vulgate."

Westcott and Hort, in their critical edition of the Greek Text, omit the interpolated words. Candor compels anyone to do so on learning that they are contained in neither the Sinaitic nor the Vatican

1209.

One of the first to collate and compare Greek manuscripts and from them prepare a Greek text of the New Testament was Erasmus (1466-1536), a Dutch scholar and theologian, who for a time taught at Cambridge University (England), and became acquainted with Wicliffe's English version. Of Erasmus' Greek text Smith's Bible Dictionary, after stating that he in some cases filled blanks in the manuscripts by translations from the Vulgate (Latin Version), says—

The received text contains two memorable instances of this bold interpolation. But he did not insert the testimony of the heavenly witnesses (1 John v. 7), an act of critical faithfulness which exposed him to the attacks of enemies.

In March 1519 a second edition of Erasmus' Greek Text appeared—considerably altered, but without inserting the words in 1 John 5: 7, 8 now under consideration. In a third edition, published in 1522, Erasmus inserted the words "for the first time on the authority of the 'Codex Britannicus' (i.e. Cod. Montfortianus), in a form which obviously betrays its origin as a clumsy translation from the Vulgate."—S.B.D. art. New Testament. For other particulars of Erasmus' career, and his acquaintance with Tyndale, please see "Daniel the Prophet in the Latter Days," pages 349-351.

These Three Agree in One

The interpolated words in 1 John 5: 7, 8 are the chief foundation of the prevailing erroneous teaching on the Trinity. The word "Trinity" appears nowhere in the Bible—neither in the Old nor the New Testament. The insertion of the words, "in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth," was an attempt by the ecclesiastical authorities to provide a seeming Scripture support for a doctrine of three gods in one god-head early adapted by the Christian church from Egyptian mythology. Evidence on this point is presented in "Daniel the Prophet in the Latter Days," pages 316-325. The words inserted involve an absurdity. No witness is required in heaven concerning the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, for God and Christ are personally present, and the Holy Spirit is well known in heaven to be the power or influence of God given through His Son to believers, as Peter plainly taught on Pentecost (Acts 2: 33)—"Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost [or, Holy Spirit], he [the risen Jesus] hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." The Spirit thus shed forth was not a person, but a power which entered into the disciples and enabled them to speak in foreign languages and do wonderful miracles, and was also given as a sign of sonship.

What the apostle John teaches may be seen by reading verses 5-8 connectedly (1 John 5)—

5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

6 This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ: not by water only, but by water and blood. And

it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

7 For there are three that bear record [omit interpolated words].

8 [omit interpolated words] the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

A witness or testimony was required on earth of our Lord's position as the Anointed Son of God, the Messiah promised to the Jews, and—

This necessary witness was given by the descent upon Him of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove when our Lord arose from the water on being baptized by John. The "water" bore record or witness in that it was the element employed in baptism by John, who had been previously informed to look for this sign in token of the Messiah, while carrying on his mission as baptizer in Jordan. And the "blood" gave witness in that our Lord's genealogy or blood descent through His Virgin mother had been carefully preserved, and His heirship to the throne of David was indisputable, while God publicly acknowledged Him as His Son. These three witnesses agreed in one testimony; namely, that Jesus was the Son of God (see 1 John 5: 5) in the flesh (though now the Son of God with power in the image of His Father in heaven), that He was anointed by God as King of Israel and Heir of the World; anointed also as High Priest after the order of Melchizedec, and that obedience to the Son ("hear ye him"—Matthew 3: 13-17; 17: 5; John 1: 29-34) was and is God's requirement of all men.

The "Emphatic Diaglott" contains a useful note in regard to these interpolated words, as follows—

This text concerning the heavenly witnesses is not contained in any Greek manuscript which was written earlier than the fifth century. It is not cited by any of the Greek ecclesiastical writers, nor by any of the early Latin fathers, even when the subjects upon which they treat would naturally have led them to appeal to its authority. It is therefore evidently spurious; and was first cited (though not as it now reads) by Virgilius Tapsensis, a Latin writer of no credit, in the latter end of the fifth century.

Responsibility

Every one who knows the truth about this interpolation should be frank and open in declaring it. Many believers in the trinitarian doctrine are ignorant concerning its source, and in the majority of cases their attention has never been called to the evidence of the manuscripts. There is some excuse for them in continuing to believe the error—or, we should say, *trying* to believe it, for no one has yet been able to conceive of three persons as being at the same time one person. Many are struck with the inconsistency of saying that God and His Son and the Holy Spirit are equal in power and authority, when so many scriptures plainly teach that the Father is supreme.

But the Editors of the Revised Version cannot urge the plea of ignorance in justification of their manner of dealing with this interpolation. Let the reader look in his Revised Version and observe that what we say is correct. Here is the way the Revised Version has arranged these verses—omitting the interpolation, but not indicating the fact either in the text or in the margin—

6 This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ: not with water only, but with the water and with the blood.

7 And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth.

8 For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one.

9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for the witness of God is this, that he hath borne witness concerning his Son.

(1) No marginal note is inserted to call attention to the facts revealed by the Sinaitic and Vatican 1209 manuscripts, that certain words in 1 John 5: 7, 8, are uninspired, added by a later unauthorized hand, though such marginal notes frequently appear in other parts of the Revised Version.

(2) While claiming to follow for the reader's convenience the verse arrangement of the Authorized Version, they have in this instance done otherwise, with not a syllable to explain why, and thus give the reader a hint of the importance of the omission of these certain words. They have divided verse 6 into two, and have made the last sentence of verse 6 appear as verse 7. Then they have taken the few genuine words of verse 7 ("For there are three who bear witness") and combined them with the genuine words of verse 8, and give this combination as verse 8.

Not a word of explanation to the reader as to the reason for doing this! Apparently the reader is expected to read through these verses without noticing the alteration in the contents of verses 6, 7, and 8.

What a contemptible way of dealing with a sacred theme, the very testimony of our Lord's life and work and God's witness to the genuineness of His claims to be the Son of God and heir of David. What were the Revisers afraid of? One can guess that they were afraid to pull down one of the pillars of great Babylon, that great system of error that has deceived the whole world. How noble it would have been had they come out boldly and declared in black and white that the words they omitted were an interpolation. Surely the Lord will hold them responsible for so misrepresenting and deceitfully handling His Word.—2 Corinthians 4: 2; 2 Peter 3: 16.

The reader who is interested to pursue this subject further is invited to write us for literature on the true teaching of Scripture on the relations existing between the Father and the Son and the Spirit of truth which the Lord promised to send His disciples after His departure from them. In the meantime, observe once more that the Sinaitic and the Vatican 1209, the two oldest Greek manuscripts containing John's epistles, are in agreement on this interpolation as on the interpolation in the Lord's prayer and in the first eleven verses of John 8.

The Interpolation in Mark 16

To show that the Revisers were capable of making a marginal reference to the "two oldest Greek manuscripts," let us look at Mark 16. Verses 9 to end are separated by a space from the first eight verses of the chapter, and a footnote reads—

The two oldest Greek manuscripts, and some other authorities, omit from ver. 9 to the end. Some other authorities have a different ending to the Gospel.

The two Greek manuscripts thus described as the "two oldest" are the Sinaitic and the Vatican 1209. On these two authorities verses 9 to end might well have been omitted altogether from the Revised Version, the only justifiable reason for leaving them in (properly indicated) being that they are useful as they stand to point out to the uninformed. But why did the Revisers not make a similar statement concerning the interpolated words in 1 John 5: 7, 8? For the very same "two oldest Greek manuscripts" omit the words, as we have seen.

Guilty, or Not Guilty

In rejecting the interpolations in 1 John 5: 7, 8 and in Mark 16 we are not guilty of taking from the Word of God; we are but recognizing and discarding the unauthorized and untrue statements that have been added to the Word by men—men who evidently had a theory they wished to uphold, and did not hesitate to corrupt the Word of God for the purpose. On the other hand, those who added the interpolation, and those who knowingly retain what they see is an interpolation, are guilty of adding to the word of God, and have incurred God's displeasure.

Before taking up the interpolation in Revelation 20: 5, a word more about the Greek manuscripts.

Codex Sinaiticus is indicated by the letter Aleph—the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It was obtained by Constantine Tischendorf from the Convent of St. Catherine, Mount Sinai, in 1859. It contains a large part of the Septuagint (O.T.), and the whole of the New Testament. Smith's Bible Dictionary describes it as "probably the oldest of the MSS. of the N.T. and of the 4th century." It was preserved at St. Petersburg (now Leningrad) until purchased by the British Government from the Russian Soviet, and is now deposited in the British Museum. The Variorum Bible (p. IX) says—"Written, in Tischendorf's judgment, about the middle of the 4th century A.D. and at Alexandria, others have thought at Caesarea in Palestine. Corrected [or altered. Ed. N.C.A.] in some places by later hands."

A—Codex Alexandrinus, in the British Museum, was presented to Charles I in 1628 by Cyril Lucar, Patriarch first of Alexandria, then of Constantinople. Contains the Septuagint almost complete and most of the New Testament, and is credited to the middle of the fifth century, possibly earlier. It contains the book of Revelation, and therefore must be considered in connection with the passage in Revelation 20: 5.

Distinction between Two Vatican MSS.

Just here an important thing to remember is often forgotten; namely, Vatican MS. No. 1209 dates from the fourth century, according to internal evidence already referred to, but it does not contain the whole of the New Testament. Describing it, the Variorum Bible states (p. IX)—

B—Codex Vaticanus, in the Vatican Library at Rome. Contains nearly all the Septuagint and all the New Testament except Hebrews IX. 14 to end, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus,

Philemon, Revelation; the missing parts of Hebrews and Revelation have been supplied by a late hand, probably of the 15th century.

Smith's Bible Dictionary gives a similar description—

B (Codex Vaticanus 1209) a MS. of the entire Greek Bible, which seems to have been in the Vatican Library almost from its commencement (c. A.D. 1450). It contains the N.T. entire to Hebrew IX. 14, . . . ; the rest of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Pastoral Epistles [i.e. 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon], and the Apocalypse, were added in the 15th century. The MS. is assigned to the 4th century.

Westcott and Hort give the following information—

Cod. Vat. B contains the whole N.T. except the later chapters of Hebrews, the Pastoral Epistles, Philemon, and the Apocalypse.

Cod. Sin. (Aleph) contains "all the books entire."

Cod. Alex. A contains "all, except about the first 24 chapters of Matthew, 2 leaves of John's Gospel, and 3 of 2 Corinthians."

Cod. Ephr. C contains nearly three-fifths of the whole (145 out of 238 leaves), disposed over almost every book.

In their Greek New Testament Westcott and Hort arrange the various books as follows—

Gospels	Galatians
Acts	Ephesians
Catholic Epistles	Philippians
James	Colossians
1 and 2 Peter	1 and 2 Thessalonians
1, 2, and 3 John	Hebrews
Jude	1 and 2 Timothy
Pauline Epistles	Titus
Romans	Philemon
1 and 2 Corinthians	Revelation

The word "Catholic" means "general," as distinguished from epistles written to certain churches or individuals.

From this arrangement of the books of the New Testament it will be seen that it is perfectly correct to say that the Vatican MS. 1209 ends with Hebrews 9: 14. Such a statement is not correct, however, in regard to the books as arranged in our Authorized Version and other versions in common use.

In "Bible Talks for Heart and Mind" (p. 128) will be found an extract from H. B. Swete's "Apocalypse of St. John" (London, 1906). Six Uncial MSS. are named and described, with the following comment—"Thus at present there are available only three complete and two imperfect uncials of the Apocalypse." The three complete are the Sinaitic, 4th century; the Alexandrinus, 5th century; and the Vaticanus Gr. 2066 olim Basiliensis 105, 8th century. The two incomplete omit considerable sections preceding and following as well as verse 5 of Revelation 20, hence cannot be called in evidence.

Students who possess the "Emphatic Diaglott" will observe throughout that its footnotes give the readings of the Vatican 1209 where of importance. In Hebrews from 9: 14 to end, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and in Revelation it gives the readings of the Alexandrine MS. where noteworthy. But students must have a care not to be confused by the Diaglott footnotes to the book of Revelation; they should carefully read the explanatory note at the beginning. The Vatican MS. there made use of is not No. 1209, but No. 1160, according to Dr. Birch's Collation, this MS. being attributed to the

eleventh century. Not only so, but in places it makes use of "B" which is the recognised letter for Vatican MS. 1209, whereas the manuscript referred to by "Diaglott" is of the seventh or eighth century, and will be found in the "Bible Talks" Manuscript List under the title Basiliano-Vaticanus, containing Revelation only. The Basilianus MS. is described by Smith's Bible Dictionary as a Secondary Uncial. In the Variorum List it is called—

B (Revelation). Also in the Vatican. Contains Revelation. About 800 A.D.

Referring again to the criticism in the American journal. We hold no brief for those (if any) who claim that the Vatican 1209 contains the book of Revelation. But we certainly sympathize with any who make the mistake of supposing it contains the Apocalypse when scholars who gave letters as identification tabs to the various manuscripts used the

(Continued in July issue.)



Giving Up the Ghost

Question.—What is meant by "ghost" in Genesis, Matthew, Acts, and other scriptures?

Answer.—Unnecessary mystery has been added to what occurs at death by the use of the word "ghost" in Genesis 35: 29—"And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people," and Genesis 49: 33—"And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people." The same was said of Abraham (Genesis 25: 8), and verse 7 lends particular interest—

7 And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years.

8 Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people.

Abraham lived 175 years, then "gave up the ghost;" so it could be said that he "died in a good old age, an old man." And to give up the ghost is thus seen to refer to the last breath—to breathe out for the last time; to expire.

Strong's *Exhaustive Concordance Dictionary* defines the Hebrew word here used as meaning, "to breathe out, i.e. (by impl.) expire." The same word is rendered in some other places in the Authorized Version, "die," "be dead," and "perish."

So far as the present life is concerned, both good and bad "breathe out" their last breath, and there is no mysterious "soul" to continue its existence elsewhere. For, as we have often seen in connection with the creation of Adam, the person is the soul; Adam "became a living soul."—Gen. 2: 7.

The hope, then, is for a future life. And the faithful of old looked forward to the fulfilment then of the promises which God had given them.

Our Lord Jesus Died on the Cross

The same thought is expressed in the New Testament—

Matthew 27: 50; Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

letter B for both the Primary Uncial MS. Vaticanus 1209 of the 4th century and the Secondary Uncial Vatican MS. of Revelation (only) of the 8th or 9th century, without distinguishing the latter by its subtitle Basilianus. In any of this there is nothing more complicated than the descriptive labels which the grocer gums or paints on his bins and jars to distinguish one commodity from another, so that when he has an order for a pound of rice he dips into the rice bin and not into the barley or salt. It is not nearly so important to "paste" the little printed criticism "in your Bible" as it is to "paste" the right "labels" on the manuscripts, and then, when you want to dig into Vatican 1209, just remember that it is a different "bin" from Vatican (Revelation) Basilianus. The distinction could have been made more clear in the Diaglott note, but there was evidently (to our mind) no desire to mislead.

Mark 15: 37: And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

Also verse 39: the centurion "saw" that he "gave up the ghost."

Luke 23: 46: And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

This is the evidence that Jesus actually died. He died for our sins. But when He said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," He meant more than the breath that was about to be breathed out. He referred to the power to live which God alone could receive and hold during the interval while His Son was dead. For while our Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself freely and fully as a sacrifice for our sins, the Father had promised Him a resurrection to a position far higher than the human; higher also than the position He had possessed at the Father's right hand before the world was. (John 17: 4, 5, 24.)

He was not to remain dead. On the third day God raised Him from the dead, as Paul wrote (1 Corinthians 15)—

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures:

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

Our Lord's death was real; a real sacrifice of Himself for us. And it was the Father who raised Him from death; giving Him life, and setting Him at His own right hand in the heavens—"Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, . . ."—Ephesians 1: 20-23; 1 Peter 3: 22; Philippians 2: 5-11; Hebrews 1: 2-9.

Ananias and Sapphira

The same expression, "gave up the ghost," was used of that last breath which marks the cessation of the present life in the case of persons having no hope in the promises. Ananias and Sapphira were punished for their duplicity by being deprived of life. Ananias hearing Peter's words of exposure

and condemnation "fell down, and gave up the ghost." This was a warning to all present that the apostles had special powers and could discern duplicity: "and great fear came on all them that heard these things." Sapphira was not present. Coming in later, she too tried to deceive the apostle, and was rebuked. "Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost."—Acts 5: 1-11.

The lesson is there for all who hear the account. It is useless to try to deceive the Lord. All who make the attempt are not so promptly dealt with, but God with a word can cause the present life to cease; so that to "breathe out" may come earlier than it would ordinarily do.

Herod the King

Herod the king foolishly accepted acclamation as a god. Other kings have done the same thing and not been summarily punished. But Herod knew better. Acts 12 tells how he vexed the church, and even took the life of James the brother of John. But when he allowed the men of Tyre and Sidon to hail him as a god, the Lord intervened.

23 And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

The dependence of human beings upon God, who "giveth to all life, and breath, and all things" (Acts 17: 24-28), should be borne in mind by all who learn

of it, but particularly by those who have come to a knowledge of the truth. Man whose breath is in his nostrils cannot successfully contend with the Almighty. If we desire His favor and blessing, we must not fail to do Him honour by acknowledging His beloved Son and seeking to be His loyal and faithful servants.—Matthew 23: 24-29.

The expression "gave up the ghost," or "give up the ghost," occurs also in the book of Job 3: 11; 10: 18; 13: 19; 14: 10. The last is frequently quoted—"but man dieth, and wasteth away: Yea, man giveth up the ghost [breathes out], and where is he?" The context is well worth reading and consideration. God's commendation of Job is voiced by the apostle James. Job set us a good example of patient endurance and loyalty to God.—James 5: 8-11.

The Holy Ghost

The English word Ghost has come to have in most minds the sense of an apparition. Its use in our English language as the name of the Holy Spirit of God has served to befuddle the Bible teaching concerning the Spirit. For explanation of the nature and work of the Holy Spirit, the reader is referred to our issue of July 1, 1935—article, "One God, One Lord, One Spirit." Copies of this issue are still available in this year, 1943. See Book List.



From Far and Near

With loving greetings, I am truly thankful for your kindness in sending the N.C.A. I find it a great help and comfort these uncertain times we are living in. I have been away, and neglected to send the money which I now enclose for the little book, also the N.C.A. Yours faithfully, ——— West Australia.

Our meetings are still going; we have three every week. Am enclosing renewals of seven N.C.A. subscriptions. We held the Memorial at our house, and had a very happy time; we all took part just like a family. Up till recently we have been sending out tracts by post—many thousands of them. But now envelopes are almost unobtainable, and we shall have to use some other means. At present on Sundays we are studying Daniel, chapter 10; have had some very nice studies. As in other countries, the same forces are at work, but we through the light of prophecy are not taken unawares. We can see the danger, and our only hope is in the setting up of Christ's kingdom. With best wishes. Yours sincerely, ——— New South Wales.

I was indeed very glad for the letter you wrote. Yes, it is so sweet to know if one of our loved ones has passed beyond the veil, that his life has been to the service of the Master. Glad to see you are keeping the work going. May you continue until the end is my prayer.

I also desire the earnest prayers of all God's dear children, as I have a hard battle to fight. To become a Christian is easy, but to remain one is the struggle. I still enjoy the monthly "Advocate" as it comes along every month.

A question: Is this war now on the struggle of Daniel 12, such a time as never was and never will be again? Will our Lord openly manifest His Ruling Power after this war? or what do we expect next, according to Rev. 20: 1-4. Will Satan be bound then?

Hoping this will find you well and fit for the Master's service, as I and my wife are also keeping well. At the

age of 73 I am still strong and hearty in the Master's service. Your sincerely, ——— South Africa.

Greetings in the Saviour's precious name. We hope you are receiving the promised grace and strength for this and every time of need. Enclosed for the renewal of our N.C.A. subscription. Great is the distress upon the nations, with perplexity. If all the righteous blood was required from the Jews at the end of the age; so now the Gentiles stand in the same position at the close of this Age [the Gospel age].

And since 1799 they are having blood to drink—for having shed the blood of God's saints and prophets. How serious to interfere with God's people. For precious in the sight of the Lord are the deaths of His saints. Afterwards the people will know what this great trouble is for.

Beyond will be the glorious reign of peace. And the Kingdom, which shall never be destroyed. Praise ye the Lord! Christian love to all. Your brother in the One hope. ——— Queensland.

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—SINCE OUR LAST ISSUE

THE World goes on much the same as a year ago, in that death takes its toll whether there be a war or no war. Death is in fact the penalty which God placed upon the human race on account of the first man's sin, as described in the book of Genesis and referred to frequently throughout God's Word—the Bible. Hope, however, also continues. Not only hope that wars will end and a period of peace and plenty follow, but that those who have lost their lives under either peaceful or war conditions have not gone to that worse suffering which most of the creeds of Christendom say is the fate of the majority. Thus they make the God of love and mercy into a fiend; and in making God a fiend they justify themselves in their own fiendish use of world power.

OPENING UP the World. The saying has been, Half the world does not know how the other half lives. But, as said before in these columns, since the invention of printing and the consequent daily newspapers and magazines of all kinds, world-wide information is available; facilitated also by the invention of the steam engine for rail and steamer travel; and, more recently, the aeroplane which soars over mountain and sea, cities and countryside, peering into the habits and customs of all peoples. Not forgetting telegraph, telephone, and cable communications; and still more recently "wireless," which gives out world news almost as soon as the events transpire.

GOD'S glory is manifest in these inventions, spite of their misuse. Who gave steam the power to run an engine? Who gave the atmosphere (which we cannot even see) its power to sustain the airplane and the giant bomber? and carry heavy loads of passengers above the clouds?

AT THE graveside Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." And he that was dead came forth. Thus readily will the dead come forth from the graves in the Kingdom age, when not only the patriarchs and other faithful will come forth, but also the myriads of "heathen" who never heard of Christ. For "all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth."—John 5: 28, 29.

RESURRECTION OF JUDGMENT is the proper reading in John 5: 28, 29—not resurrection of damnation as in A.V. (See Variorum footnote.) Now is the time to tell out this great truth so long covered over by the faulty rendering "damnation." The judgment is the thousand years of the Kingdom age, when Christ and the Church (the overcomers of the Gospel age) will sit in the throne of His glory to reign for the thousand years. And when the faithful Abraham and other faithful of the ages previous to this Gospel age will come forth to inherit the land promised to them.

"All in the graves" (John 5) includes the unenlightened, who will come forth to be enlightened.

Exceptions are persistent, wilful sinners, such as have been enlightened and then turned against the Lord. The apostle Paul mentions such. (Hebrews 12: 25-29.) And Rev. 20: 13-15 tells of the thoroughness of the 1,000 year day of judgment.

A NEW HEAVEN and a New Earth (Rev. 21) tells of the results of the Lord's reign over the earth. The wilfully wicked during the Thousand years reign will be destroyed. Then the earth will be firmly established as the everlasting home of those who appreciated the blessings of the thousand years and believed the promises. For everlasting life on earth is the promise of the saved of all nations for whom the Lord died and for whom the enlightenment will then be provided.—Rev. 22: 1-17; Matthew 25: 31-46; Rev. 21: 24-27.

A MESSAGE OF HOPE is the true Gospel. Let us who know these things be diligent in telling it out to all around. Freely use the leaflets and tracts which are available to convey the good message. Send for ten or for 500 of these, or send lists of names and we will have the wrappers written here, and post them direct.

"The Wideness of God's Mercy."

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"Is Satan Stronger than God?"

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Kingdom Herald

VOL. 35.

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, JULY, 1943

No. 4.

In Remembrance

THE RECORDS of Scripture contain many names held in remembrance by those associated with the individual in his lifetime, and by those of later times who treasure their memories by reason of God's approval of their fidelity to Him in difficult circumstances.

The records of secular history also contain names of great men and heroes not Christians, but courageous so far as they had light enabling them to distinguish between right and wrong as conceived by their leaders.

While other names are associated with both religious and political reform—as in the Great Reformation of the sixteenth century, when Protestantism was established in Great Britain and her Colonies (including what is now the U.S.A.), as well as in Switzerland, Germany, Scandinavia, and other countries in the course of the struggle to adhere to the Bible as God's guide in doctrine and practice.

To these reformers we owe the emphasis given to the doctrines of the Lord Jesus Christ as the one and only Sacrifice for sins, the one and only Mediator between God and men, the one and only Reconciler between God and those who believe in Jesus and come to God in His name.

Subsequently there were Christians here and there who saw the emphasis laid in Scripture on the Lord's Second Coming. And some of these made the mistake of supposing that Jesus had taken His human body to heaven, and would come again with that same human body to live on the earth, gather His Church, and give them new human bodies and a prominent place in the Government of the earth.

In John 1: 1 Jesus is called "the Word," the name given to a high dignitary serving a Sovereign. But the use of the title does not alter the fact of His personal existence. The whole race of mankind having been condemned because of the sin of the one man Adam, God arranged that Jesus, who was experienced in God's service, should become a man, and thus be able to give Himself a perfect ransom for the whole race of mankind. And, not only so, but be raised again to occupy an even higher position at God's right hand; namely, serving as the "one Mediator between God and men, . . ."—1 Timothy 2: 5, 6.

Of these facts, Paul says he (Paul) was "ordained a preacher, and an apostle," and he spent his life in telling out the glad tidings, and writing doctrinal and practical instruction in epistles to the various churches. Those writings we still have in the Bible for our instruction today.

And the Lord arranged also that a yearly remembrance be made of His death on our behalf by those who believe in Him. This we are privileged to observe yearly, when the appropriate date comes around. And in order that all of like precious faith may observe the same date, this Journal—the "New Covenant Advocate"—has made a practice of announcing it early in the year, so that all may be united in the time as well as in the spirit of the Observance.

In the "dark ages" there arose reformers, in Britain and on the Continent, who preached a return to primitive Christianity; and the result was the establishment of Protestantism, with churches where the believers could meet together to worship God through Jesus Christ, on the terms laid down in the New Testament—repentance from sin and turning to God; accepting Jesus as the One Mediator between God and men. And, following this acceptance of them by God as His children, the only reasonable course was a lifetime of devotion to His service.

Errors taught and believed for centuries were that the soul is immortal, and that the wicked will be tortured for ever and ever in a lake of fire and brimstone. So it became necessary for those who saw the truth on the state of the dead—unconscious as in sleep until the resurrection—to arrange a campaign against the eternal torment error. And it became necessary for those who held to the truth on those important subjects to separate themselves from the gatherings where false teachings concerning the work of Christ as Mediator were being introduced.

A Stand for Truth

was taken by loyal friends of the truth in various parts of the world, much to their blessing. To assist these to build up one another in our most holy faith, the friends of like faith and purpose formed a new meeting.

Concerning those days we quote from our issue of February 1, 1939, as follows:

PUT IN TRUST WITH THE GOSPEL

— Editorial —

LATE in the afternoon of February 3rd, 1939, another trusted servant of God through Jesus Christ our Lord finished his course.

Our beloved Editor, E. C. Henninges, having faithfully discharged his stewardship in the publication of the "New Covenant Advocate," laid down his pen and closed his eyes to rest, and his labours in the flesh were finished. The readers of this Journal will receive the news with sorrow for a loved Leader taken from them, yet they will rejoice in the victory of another of the Lord's saints over the trials and besetments of a lifetime, having reached the age of 68 years. "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; . . ."—Philippians 1: 29.

At the same time, our beloved Editor was of a most cheerful and hopeful, as well as patient, disposition. With a deep and sincere faith he accepted in his youth the call to the high calling, and received as a sacred trust the gospel which Paul and the other apostles preached. (1 Thessalonians 2: 4.) To devote his life to the service of the One who had done so much for him—even to death on the cross—seemed to him the only consistent course. And that the Lord accepted that life, and used it to His glory for the enlightenment and comfort of many, the readers of this Journal and of his numerous books and pamphlets can testify.

Among the many other blessings the Lord gave him has been the love and co-operation of the brethren of like precious faith in the various countries in which he has witnessed to the truth—America, Britain, Germany and Switzerland, and—for the last thirty-five years—Australia. The first number of the "New Covenant Advocate" appeared in April, 1909, and we are now about to begin our thirty-first year of publication.

Regular Sunday meetings to uphold the great truths concerning Jesus Christ the one Mediator, and concerning the blessings the Lord gives under the New Covenant, have been conducted with the assistance of fellow-believers, and many of these fellow-servants still remain to carry on the great work. They, too, realise themselves as "put in trust with the gospel"; and with the Lord's blessing they will continue the good work, confident also of the co-operation of the like-minded throughout the world who rejoice with us in the precious truth.

Our week-night Bible classes, in which a verse by verse study of the selected portion has been found very helpful, will also be continued (D.V.) as usual in suburban homes.

The New Covenant Fellowship is an Association registered under the laws of this State of Victoria, and of the Commonwealth of Australia, for the carrying on of the publishing work, at the address which appears in each issue. And a good stock of books (see Book List) is on hand for sale, as well as copies of this Journal and thousands of tracts and supplements for free distribution.

It is our purpose to carry on along the same lines as those followed by our late Brother: With the publication of the "New Covenant Advocate" monthly, and to keep always on hand a good supply of the Books listed.

Let us all then unite, with one mind and heart, to uphold and further proclaim the great truths with which the Lord has favoured us in these last days. The world is still the "field," and the "wheat" has not all been reaped as yet. (Matthew 13: 30, 36-43.) The duty is laid upon us all to "carry on." See the book "The Parables of our Lord" for the application of this parable to our own day, and the privilege still open to truth lovers to become "reapers," and "gather the wheat" into the "barn." And let us continue to pray for one another.

The Revelation Book

Inquiries are coming in about the projected book on the Revelation. We are thankful to say that our Brother Henninges' comments (begun in August, 1938, issue) are complete to the end of the 17th chapter in this—February, '39—issue. We are glad to say, also, that he left Manuscript Notes and selected Historical items which will make possible the presentation, as he had planned, of the remaining chapters. It is hoped to begin chapter 18 in March issue. In the accomplishment of this work we ask the prayers of all the household of faith, that the Holy Spirit may guide us as he was guided to the true understanding of the wonderful visions preserved through the centuries for our learning and guidance at this time; and not only so, but to clear and appropriate language for the accurate expression of the same.

The Beauty of Holiness

Among our late Editor's admirable qualities was his modesty. To all suggestions that his portrait appear in the N.C.A. he turned a deaf ear. His desire was to direct attention to the All Glorious One, our Saviour, and keep himself out of sight. The Message was the thing, not the man. Yet he could not prevent those within range from seeing his natural features. A letter, received a day or two ago from a country reader who had learned of his decease, expressed great regret that, though living in the same State and deeply interested in the truth, the writer had never seen him, nor even a photograph or snapshot. Doubtless others will feel the same.

Therefore we are glad to report what seems a divine leading; for unexpectedly someone found in a box of oddments a likeness obtained by Brother E. V. Catford, of Adelaide, about 30 years ago, shortly after the office in the Fink's Buildings had been taken and the publication of the N.C.A. begun. Under a magnifying glass the beauty of his features caught by the camera is so remarkable that we have decided to share this pleasure with our readers. A testimony indeed is it to the transforming power of a sanctified life.

Ober Half a Century of Service Ended Faithful unto Death



Photo. by Brother Catford

THE LATE ERNEST CHARLES HENNINGES
(Taken in 1909 at the time he founded *The New Covenant Advocate*.)

DIED FEBRUARY 3, 1939

The Land of Promise

(Continuation Conference Addresses, the Conquering Kingdom)

AS believers in Christ, we are naturally very interested in the history of the Israelites; especially in their law and their worship of God, because the law (and their manner of worshipping Him) was given them of God, and were "a shadow of good things to come." (Hebrews 10: 1.) Many of the rites and ceremonies pointed forward to God's Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

In studying the history of the Israelites—God's chosen people during the Jewish age—we find help in the New Testament. They were the people to whom God gave His Law and many promises, as the Apostle Paul tells us in Romans 9: 4—

"Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;"

And we will want to know something about their homeland—how and why they settled themselves in that particular land of Palestine, and their manner of worshipping and serving God there. If we look back at the Old Testament recordings of their very beginning as a people, we will see that they were a wandering race and strangers in the lands in which they wandered.—Exodus 6: 4; 22: 21.

But God had promised the land of Palestine, as an everlasting possession, to their forefathers—to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It was a very good and large land, very fertile and fruitful: spoken of as "flowing with milk and honey."—Exodus 3: 8, 17.

It was never occupied by Abraham, nor by his descendants till the time of Joshua, some four hundred odd years after Abraham's death, when Israel had developed into a great nation consisting of twelve tribes (or families) descended from the twelve sons of Jacob, who was later called Israel.—Genesis 32: 28; 35: 10.

Joshua led the people of Israel, after the death of their great leader Moses, across the river Jordan, and at last into the land of promise, dividing it amongst their different tribes under God's guidance and direction.—Joshua 1: 1-18.

Only the tribe of Levi received no inheritance in the land (Joshua 13: 33; 14: 3), as God set them aside specially. They served as underpriests for the rest of the nation in the worship of God. God took their tribe instead of all the firstborn of Israel; for this firstborn belonged to God because "on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I am the Lord."—Numbers 3: 13.

Each tribe had its own "head" (or "prince") for the oversight of local affairs (Joshua 14: 1; 22: 14), but over all was the one Law, the one high priest served for all, God Himself being the supreme Ruler and Director.

As we have already seen, the Levites received no portion of the land for their inheritance, "for the priesthood of the Lord is their inheritance." (Joshua 18: 7.) But they received "cities to dwell in, with their suburbs for their cattle and for their substance."—Joshua 14: 4.

Worship of God was carried on at the tabernacle, which was a tent light enough for them to carry during their wanderings in the wilderness. Upon entering the land the tabernacle was set up at Shiloh, as we read in Joshua 18: 1—"And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them." Joshua divided the land there—"before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation."—Joshua 19: 51.

The tabernacle consisted of two apartments, the first called the "holy place," and the second or inner apartment the "most holy place." The most holy place was separated from the holy place by a curtain or veil of very rich cloth.

Into the most holy place only the high priest could enter, which he did on the day of atonement with the

blood of the atonement sacrifice. None of the underpriests were allowed to enter with him. There was only one high priest at a time serving before God. When that high priest died, he was succeeded by another.

Aaron was the first of these, but there were many underpriests, increasing in number with the growth of the Levitical tribe. Of these subordinate priests, Aaron's sons were the first.—Exodus 28: 1, 40-43.

The underpriests served in the holy place, assisting the high priest, and looking after the furnishings of the tabernacle. Numbers 3: 5-8 reads:

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him. And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle. And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle.

All other tribes went to the tabernacle to hear the word of God, and to pray. There they made all kinds of offerings to God. There were peace offerings, trespass and sin offerings, thank-offerings, some for public occasions, some for private and personal offerings. All these various offerings were made through the hands of the priests. All tribes were directed to go to the tabernacle for the regular feasts, as is expressed in Deuteronomy 16—

16 Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the Lord empty:

17 Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee.

The first-mentioned of these regular feasts, that of the unleavened bread or passover feast, was the first the Lord commanded the children of Israel to keep as a memorial. The first observance was held in the night when the Lord slew the firstborn in every house in Egypt, but passed over the houses of the children of Israel because their lintels and doorposts had been sprinkled with the blood of the slain lambs; this marking—and their remaining indoors—sparing them from the visitation of death. This account of the first passover is given in the twelfth chapter of Exodus.

The children of Israel never again had exactly the same experiences as those on the first passover night; therefore the later yearly memorial ceremonies were somewhat altered to suit their different conditions. But the essentials remained unchanged. All those partaking of the feast would be reminded of the deliverance of their nation from Egypt and the first passover supper. Lambs without spot or blemish had to be obtained, and these were kept until the 14th day of Nisan (the first month of the Jewish year), when they were taken to the tabernacle and sacrificed "at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt."—Deuteronomy 16: 6, 7.

The lambs were roasted and eaten there, after which those who had taken part in the ceremony returned to their homes, to keep the passover feast of unleavened bread.

Jesus the Lamb of God

These various feasts and religious observances were kept up by the Israelites when they settled in the promised land, and were continued (with a few omissions) right down until our Lord's death.

The passover feast, although serving to remind the Israelites all this time of their deliverance from Egypt, also foreshadowed Jesus, the Lamb which God provided for the deliverance of the whole world from the bondage of sin and death if they will but accept Him. He has been sacrificed, and His blood shed for us. All believers accepting that sacrifice, which has been offered once for all, are under the protection of the shed blood, which is sprinkled on their hearts.

As the blood of the passover type was sprinkled on the "lintels" and "side posts" of the homes of the Israelites (Exodus 12: 23) on the first passover night, saving those within from the visitation of death, so the blood which was shed for us now by faith protects us, that we may go on to everlasting life, and to a place in God's kingdom.

There can be no doubt about Christ being the antitype of the passover lamb, as the Apostle Paul writes (1 Corinthians 5)—

7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven; neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Christ our Passover

Christ is our passover, and we keep that passover by accepting His sacrifice for us, and doing it with sincerity and truth, not with material unleavened bread, as did the Israelites.

As the Jewish sacrificial lambs had to be without spot or blemish, so Christ also "offered himself without spot to God." (Heb. 9: 14.) He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners."—Heb. 7: 26.

Christ never committed sin. Born under the law of the Israelites, which was a perfect law having been given them of God, Jesus kept all its rites and ceremonies as applied to Himself, and offended not in one point.

The Jews of His day could not convict Him of sin. His keeping the whole law blameless proved His perfection. In dying and giving His life to God for us as a perfect human sacrifice, He corresponded to our father Adam, who was created a perfect man.

Adam trespassed against God—breaking God's law given him in the garden of Eden, and bringing upon himself and his future posterity the penalty for breaking that law; namely, death—from which he could not free himself.

God had foreseen this, and had a pre-arranged plan in His Son Jesus; a plan in which God's divine justice could be satisfied. Jesus was ready and willing to fulfil that plan by dying and giving His life in place of Adam's. He died on account of our father Adam's sin, thus freeing Adam and his race from the penalty of death if they will but accept His sacrifice when made known to them—either in this life or in the resurrection period of a thousand years.

The Perfection of Jesus

The Lord Jesus, being the Son of God, miraculously born of the Virgin, was outside the condemnation passed on Adam; and, never having sinned Himself, was able to give Himself "a ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2: 6), as well as an atoning sacrifice to God for us.

Christ is not only the antitype of the Jewish passover lamb, but also the antitype of the atonement day sacrifices of bulls and goats, the writer to the Hebrews tells us (Heb. 9: 12)—

"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."

Christ did not need to be offered year by year for an atonement as were the Jewish sacrifices. He was offered only once. The blood of His atonement sacrifice is ever efficacious for all who accept it for all time. The blood of bulls and of goats could never take away sin, but served only to make "a remembrance again" of "sins every year."—Heb. 10: 3.

Christ's sacrifice was very much better than the typical offerings, and did away with the necessity to offer them. Israel did not understand these higher significances, but these Scriptures on the typical sacrifices helped to make clear the worship of Christ, and gave Christians good evidence that the law was done away in Christ.

—H. E. M.



The Precious Blood of Christ

WHEN we think of the blood of human beings, and of the blood of all the lower orders of animals, we realize that the blood signifies the life, as the life is in the blood. (Leviticus 17: 11.) When the blood flows out of the body, or ceases to circulate, there is no life left; therefore the body is in the state of death.

Under the Law Covenant there was no remission of sins without the shedding of blood. "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."—Heb. 9: 22.

Animals were slain, and the priest would sprinkle the blood upon the altar of the Lord. (Leviticus 17.) And, as we read in verse 11, the Lord says—

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."

Ceremonials in connection with sprinkling of the blood are described in Exodus 29.

We could readily understand these animal sacrifices as thank- and praise-offerings, but how could they accomplish anything by their slaying and offering up as sin offerings?

By the shedding of the blood of an animal as a sin offering, the descendants of our first parents were taught that sin was a serious offence, deserving death. But God was willing to accept contrition, and a prac-

tical demonstration of that contrition was the sacrifice of an animal—not a lame one, but the best of their flocks.—Deut. 15: 19-21.

But, though God agreed to forgive the trespasses and sins for which the offerings were made, the sins of the people were not entirely removed by these offerings.

Yet these things were "shadows" of a greater sin offering to be made later on, as recorded by Paul. (Heb. 10)—

1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

We notice Paul's reference here to the word "blood," showing that it was the blood of the animals offered that under the law was accepted by God as an atonement for sin and their sins were forgiven.

And God was pleased to accept the sprinkling of the blood upon the Mercy Seat, which in its typical significance pointed forward to Christ.

Jesus, therefore, was the antitype of the animals slain; and His blood—signifying life (for the life

is in the blood)—was the fulfilment of the type. For, as is stated in 1 John 1: 7, God had arranged that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." But there is a condition laid down for this cleansing of sin, and we find that condition stated in 1 John 1: 8, 9:

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

But, and here is the condition—

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

A great misbelief among some people is that because Christ died the sins of everyone are cleansed away. But that is not true; for John makes it very clear that belief in Jesus, and acceptance of His death as given for us, are necessary before anyone's sins are forgiven. Sin is a transgression against God, who is holy and cannot compromise with Sin.

Paul tells us (Eph. 1: 7), "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;"

Jesus, therefore, with the blood of His sacrifice entered into the very presence of God in heaven.—Heb. 9: 22-24.

It is correct to say that Christ entered into heaven both "with" and "by" His own blood. Just as the bullock and goat were slain to provide the blood which Aaron carried in to the typical Most Holy, so Christ was slain in order that, in the antitypical sense, His blood might be sprinkled on the antitypical Mercy Seat, as explained in Hebrews 9—

12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once [i.e., "once for all"] into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh,

14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

The Blood of the New Covenant

The Lord's blood was accepted also as the blood which sealed the New Covenant which God had promised; a covenant under which sin could be completely taken away, and remembered no more.—Heb.

8: 6-12; Romans 11: 26, 27.

We can well realize that the atonement offering was complete, as offered by the Lord Jesus Christ, for we read in Hebrews 10—

12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14 For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified [or, literally, "them that are being sanctified"].

This one sacrifice put an end to all those sacrifices which were offered year by year by the Jews, and which could not take away sin completely. For God had designed this great plan whereby Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient for all.

He Bought Us

Jesus is not only the cleanser from sin in God's sight, but He is also the Purchaser of the whole human race, because He gave Himself as a ransom-price for mankind.—1 Timothy 2: 6; Mark 10: 45.

In order that Jesus might give His life a ransom, it was necessary for Him to die. God was His Father; and before coming to earth He had been with the Father in Heaven. To give the ransom Jesus became a man—being born of the virgin—not a sinful man, but a perfect man such as Adam was when created by the power of God. And this perfect human body was offered up on the cross. The ransom price was paid by His death on the cross. In 1 Peter 1: 18-20, we read—

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.

So we can see how precious is His blood to us, because He offered Himself a perfect sacrifice for us, so that when we believe and accept Him as our Saviour, our sins are forgiven, and through Him we have access to the Father in heaven.

This is a wonderful benefit: transforming our whole lives, and giving us the opportunity, by faith, to become members of His Kingdom. And, even as Christ overcame, so may we also overcome, and find joy in becoming members of His Conquering Kingdom.

—G. H.



Kings and Priests

IN giving the Law Covenant to the Children of Israel through Moses, God made complete provision for the establishment of a priesthood. Some details of this have been given in a paper read earlier in this conference.

The priesthood was established when the covenant was given. It was limited to the tribe of Levi and was established in the family of Aaron. All the sons of Aaron were priests, Aaron himself being the first

high priest. The ceremony of their consecration is described in Exodus 29 and Leviticus 8.

The remaining members of the tribe of Levi were set apart to aid the priests in the ministrations of the temple. The duties of the priests included the offering of the sacrifices, the giving of public instruction, the purifying of the unclean, and the blessing of the people.—Leviticus 1: 6; Deuteronomy 33: 8-10; Lev. 15: 30, 31; Numbers 6: 23-27.

Later on, the craving of the people for a king was anticipated by the Lord. In such a case, Moses made provision for the establishment of a form of government with a human king as its head. The directions given are set out in Deuteronomy 17: 14-20.

Such an one was to be chosen by God, and was to be "a captain over God's inheritance," the Lord himself remaining the supreme ruler.—1 Samuel 10: 1.

We should notice particularly that these provisions for the possible establishment of a king to reign over the children of Israel were in addition to and separate from those setting out the requirements of the priesthood.

The priesthood commenced its operations at Sinai, and existed for about four hundred years before the Jews had their first king.

Again, the priesthood had to be of the tribe of Levi, whereas the first king—Saul—who was the choice of the people, was of the tribe of Benjamin.

At the death of Saul, God required that subsequent kings should be of the tribe of Judah, and chose David as the second person to occupy the royal office. Since under the Jewish regime a king and a priest had each to be of different tribes, no one who occupied the position of a priest could be a king, nor could a king be a priest.

The king was chiefly concerned with temporal, military, and foreign affairs, while the office of each was different—the priest had to consider the religious life and the health of the individual.

With the beginning of the captivity in Babylon, the lines of the succession of Jewish kings ceased.

But following the return from the Babylonian captivity the priesthood was re-established by Ezra.—Nehemiah 8: 13; Ezra 2: 70.

The priesthood over the children of Israel had been arranged by God for the particular purpose of keeping the people true to Him, and to the Law given at Sinai. All nations surrounding Israel had their heathen gods, which they worshipped and to whom they erected idols.—Deuteronomy 29: 16, 17.

But notwithstanding all that was done to guard them against it, the people of Israel fell into some of the most cruel and shocking practices of idolatry. (Jeremiah 7: 31; Judges 2: 11.) See also 1 Kings 11: 5, 7, 33; Psalms 106: 34-41.

Centuries later Stephen upbraids them for worshipping heavenly bodies and also the heathen deities Moloch and Remphan.—Acts 7: 41-43.

Baal was a great God, but a useless one, as all other idols were, and was shown up badly at the great trial by Elijah, when 450 of Baal's prophets were destroyed.—1 Kings 18: 17-40.

An idol is an image or anything used as an object of worship as a god.

In a figurative sense, idolatry means anything which draws the affections away from God.—Colossians 3: 5.

The law expressly forbade all sorts of idols, or figures, formed or set up with the intention of paying worship to them. God alone was the one to be worshipped.—Exodus 20: 3, 4.

Jesus Rebukes False Priesthood

It was the duty of the priests to remind the people of the requirements of the law and to admonish them when they departed from it. Not all the priests were faithful in the performance of their duty to instruct the people. And on these unfaithful priests the Lord Jesus placed much of the blame for their ignorance of God and the prevalence of empty traditions substituted for the word of God.

A Royal Priesthood

Teaching as a priestly service is mentioned by Peter. (1 Peter 2: 9)—

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

The priesthood to which Peter refers in this passage is a royal priesthood. This then is something different to the Jewish priesthood, where the royalty was separate and distinct from the priesthood. It brings us to a consideration of Melchisedec, who lived in the time of Abraham—years before the Law Covenant was given, and who united in the one person the dignities of the two separate offices of king and priest. Genesis 14: 18 states that Melchisedec was "king of Salem" and "the priest of the most high God."

Melchisedec stands out as a unique figure distinct from all other notable personages of Hebrew history. He has no recorded lineage that could link him with any other peoples or priesthood.

Writing to the Hebrews, the apostle uses the case of Melchisedec to illustrate the position of the Lord Jesus, and to show the superiority of His priesthood over the Aaronic priesthood. Melchisedec was greater than Aaron, we read in Heb. 7: 21—

(For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord aware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.)

The Scriptures show that when Christ died the Law Covenant came to an end, and the priesthood necessarily ended with it.

With the introduction of the New Covenant there was a new priesthood (Hebrews 7: 12); the High Priest of which was our Lord Jesus, who is a priest "after the order of Melchisedec." The Lord Jesus is a High Priest "after the power of an endless life."—Heb. 7: 16.

This is a definite and wonderful promise to the Church of the Gospel Age—to you and to me. The promise comprehends a change from fleshly beings to spirit beings—"to be like Him"—and at the right hand of the Father—to be royal priests acting under the High Priest (Jesus)—"after the power of an endless life."

For these under-priests a kingdom is prepared, as shown in Revelation 1: 6—"And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

A similar thought is expressed in Revelation 5: 10—"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."

To "reign on the earth" does not mean to live on the earth, but to have control over it. In that kingdom the Church will not be subjects, but rulers. The glorified Church members in their glorious heavenly inheritance will be serving with Christ to

help the people over whom they reign to see in Jesus the sacrifice for their sins. They will help earth's millions to serve the true God. God grant that we may all make our calling and election sure.

—J. W.



The Mystery of Iniquity

The Opposition (would be) Conqueror

WE have been hearing much of the majesty and might of the heavenly Father; His ability to plan and devise, and to bring the things planned into being.

We know that all of God's arrangements are for the benefit of His creatures. The whole of the Bible is an exhibition of God's good will towards men. One would hardly believe it possible that any living beings could ever think of organising wholesale rebellion against Him and His beneficent arrangements. Yet Biblical history abounds with such.

During the Lord's ministry, and for many years later, there were marvellous exhibitions of God's love and might, in the miracles of the Lord and His disciples—miracles of healing, raising the dead, feeding the multitudes. The leaders of the Jews, who should have been glad to receive such an one as their King, bitterly opposed Him, and finally accomplished His death.

Just retribution followed in the overturning of their place and nation, the very thing they feared. —Matt. 11: 2-6; John 11: 47, 48; 1: 11.

Later the Gentiles—as well as the Jews—excepting always the few who believed—found that the preaching of the Gospel interfered with their more or less idolatrous practices and customs generally, and with the ambitions of their rulers.

Differences began to be manifest even in the Church, in which were some not wholehearted followers, but who sought power and influence for themselves.—Acts 19: 21-29; 1 Cor. 1: 10-13; 4: 7, 8; Gal. 1: 6-9; 3: 1.

In this way there gradually developed a great system of opposition to the truth, which the Lord called (Matt. 24: 15) "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet," and which would "stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)"

The Greek word here translated "understand" means "to exercise the mind (observe), i.e. (fig.) to comprehend, heed."

Then follows in figurative language instruction on what action to take when this "abomination of desolation," or "mystery of iniquity," was seen, or "observed" by exercising of the mind. We cannot now dwell further on these words, but pass on to vss. 21-25—

21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those

days shall be shortened.

23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; inasmuch that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect.

25 Behold, I have told you before.

These words were part of the Lord's answer to the disciples' question: "what shall be the sign of thy coming [presence], and of the end of the world [properly, "age"]?"

The Lord warned of many who should "come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many."—Vss. 3, 5.

To-day we can look back and say that the Lord's words have been fulfilled in a most exact sense during the intervening centuries since they were spoken. The Mystery of Iniquity which had its beginning even in the apostles' day Paul calls also: "man of sin," "that wicked," "the son of perdition"—all referring to the same system which should come into being before "the day of the Lord" should come. In Paul's day there were political hindrances to its immediate full development. But as time passed these were overcome, and there appeared "the abomination of desolation" which Daniel had spoken of; also as a "king" doing his own will, and "shall exalt himself above every god [mighty one], and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods," and who should prosper during such time as the true God of heaven tolerated him.

We understand this period to be the 1260 years beginning in 539 A.D., and ending in 1799 A.D., at which time the Lord would begin the final action to consume and destroy, as the apostle Paul told the Thessalonian brethren.—2 Thess. 2: 1-9; Dan. 11: 36, 37, 40.

Identity of the Mystery of Iniquity

The Lord said that false Christs would deceive "many." The greatest of all antichrists is well known to all (perhaps not as an enemy of Christ); yet the fact remains. It claims that, instead of the church being subject to the Scriptures, the Scriptures are subject to the church, because members of the church wrote the scriptures, therefore they are not subject to them. In this way God's Word is brought down to the level of man's invention.

This has been done liberally: many doctrines are abroad which are not taught in the Bible; such as fasting from certain foods, and observing certain days as more holy than others; also additional sacrifices which it is claimed are absolutely essential

for the forgiveness of sin; and that the pastors of the church have power to forgive sin at their discretion. The offering at the sacrifice of the mass is claimed to become the veritable flesh and blood of the Lord; indeed, each particle partaken of by each communicant is said to contain the whole essence of the Lord Jesus Christ, sacrificed again and again; thus establishing itself as an "abomination" in God's sight. Whereas the Scriptures assure us that Jesus Christ himself was the one and only offering for sin as well as the one and only ransom for all.

That ransom sacrifice was made in full when the Lord Jesus died on the cross of Calvary. The belief in any additional or supplementary sacrifice of any kind is therefore abominable in God's sight. And all who place their faith in such abominable sacrifices are **making desolate to themselves** the true sacrifice of our Lord, whose death was all-sufficient, for all time; not only for past sins, but for day to day sins which are forgiven if confessed—confessed to God, who alone has power to do so, through His blessed Son, whom He exalted at His resurrection to a position next only to Himself in the heavens.

The continual efficacy of the blood of the Lord Jesus was pictured by the offering of two lambs day by day, thus a continual offering, and a type of the efficacy of the One Great Offering, then still future.

The same power is spoken of—in Daniel 7: 8—as a "little horn" which came up among them, and had "eyes like the eyes of man," and also "a mouth speaking great things"; and further on (vss. 21, 22)—

21 I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;

22 Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

This horn, which was more robust than his fellows, pictured the mystery of iniquity as being more powerful than those powers which sought to hinder its progress, and was able to overcome obstacles and become a great—or, we should say, the greatest—persecuting power of the Lord's people which has ever existed on the earth. It has deceived many, as the Lord said. And very many have been deceived by its image, the "false prophet." Political as well as religious systems were involved.—Dan. 7: 21.

So realistic were the troublous times portrayed for the instruction of the saints, that Daniel was greatly disturbed in mind; "As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me."—Dan. 7: 28.

The saints of many centuries have been bitterly persecuted and tortured unto death—tremendous numbers of them. Untiring efforts were made to completely obliterate the Word of God, at least in so far as the common people were concerned, who were considered to be not sufficiently learned to "rightly divide" it correctly. Thus have been fulfilled the inspired words of the Prophet Daniel, also

the Lord's words, that there would be "great tribulation"—such as never had been, nor ever would be again. The trouble here was for the saints.

The Lord's statement, "except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved," is saying in other words, that had the mystery of iniquity been permitted to go on long enough, that no flesh would have survived.—Matt. 24: 22.

But, the Lord said, "for the Elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

Thus evil conquered for a time. But God who can, and does, overrule all, though allowing evil to flourish for a time, set a limit to the "man of sin" operations—restricting them to 1260 "days" (prophetic years). The same period is elsewhere named as: "forty and two months," "a time, and times, and half a time."—Dan. 7: 25; 12: 7; Rev. 11: 2, 3; 12: 14. (See explanations in "Daniel the Prophet"—described in book list.)

The beloved Daniel did not understand, as we can now, the deep significance of the words, "But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end." (Dan. 7: 26, 9-11.) God's time was not then to show the details of just how and when, as was explained to Daniel—

"But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."—Dan. 12: 4.

It is our blessed privilege to live in that wonderful "time of the end"—in that comparatively short period in which it is God's good pleasure to bring about the fulfilment of the words "knowledge shall be increased"—knowledge of the truth, which had been trodden under foot during the dark centuries under the domination of the "little horn." Thanks be to God, we see the fulfilment, in our day, of the promise made that God will "consume" and "destroy" it.

To-day, we see miracles. Is that a right word to use? We see free compulsory education, by which every individual will ultimately be able to read and study for himself the Bible, even to the darkest corners of the earth. We see mechanical marvels of transport and travel, marvellous machines which can turn out an immense amount of work—work in hours, which human hands have taken weeks to perform, and do it better. In the realms of science, there are wonders of wireless, lighting, power, mechanical music, chemistry, and many others; all of these wonders are signs of the times, the nearness of "the end." We are in the "time of the end."—Dan. 12: 1-4.

Looking back into those dark days, we cannot fully appreciate the position of the saints in the dark centuries of the "wilderness" condition of social ostracism, persecution and suffering—both literal and spiritually. Yet, even so, the Lord was not forgetful of their condition, any more than of His people who were in bondage in Egypt under Pharaoh, and whom He delivered with a strong arm. On that occasion the Lord's message to the children of Israel through Moses was:

"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself."—Exodus 19: 4.

Divine providence was watchful and exceedingly active on behalf of Israel; to the discomfiture and eventual extermination of their oppressors in the Red Sea. The use of a somewhat similar illustration is found in Revelation 12: 14, describing God's care of His little ones in those hard times—

"And to the woman [church] were given two wings of a [properly, "the"] great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent,"

Here is expressed Divine activity on behalf of the true Church, as contrasted with the apostate church, the persecutor. The same mighty God who delivered His people from Pharaoh was watchful and able to provide food for these in their great distress. When the Lord Jesus, after His resurrection, told His disciples of His exaltation in heaven. He commissioned them as His ambassadors; sending them out to teach all nations to "observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you"—He said these wonderful words: "and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" [literally "age"].—Matt. 28: 18-20.

The same watcher as was mindful over the children of Israel's welfare was the One selected by the Father to die, and thus give Himself "a ransom for all." Later, being exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high, the risen Jesus was watchful every day over each one who held fast such precious truths as he had. The wings of the great eagle signifying the Father's ability through His Son to be always alert and watchful, powerful and swift to act where and whenever necessary for the benefit of His church—the true believers who had "seen" the abomination of desolation, recognising it as in opposition to God, and defiling His temple, and with the Lord's help came out from among them.—Dan. 10: 21; Isa. 63: 9; Jude 9; Heb. 1: 2; Acts 17: 30, 31.

The Apostle Paul, in writing to the brethren at Thessalonica, explained how the day of the Lord should not come "except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." (2 Thess. 1: 3.) The Apostle's words were fulfilled in the rising of the apostate church to political influence; which the Lord permitted them to carry on for 1260 years. But at the end of that period the Lord set forces in motion for its consumption and destruction.—Rev. 15: 19; and Rev. 18.

The Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven

The Lord foretold definite signs which the disciples would be able to recognize (Matt 24)—

29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:

33 SO LIKEWISE YE, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is NEAR, even at the doors.

34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

What is the "sign" in the heavens? Not anything seen with the physical eye; nor need we look up into the sky for the sign. The "heavens," here, is the place of **ruling position**, as the sun and the moon **rule** in the astronomical heavens, controlling the length of light and darkness, and the seasons, heat and cold, etc. In ruling places in the social order, those in **high positions** are in the **political heavens**, or ecclesiastical or **spiritual heavens** or place of rulership. Stars may be prominent teachers, etc.

For well over a century these places of rulership have been very badly shaken, and increasingly so as time goes along. Positions of rulership or authority on the whole earth have become very insecure and uncertain; one cannot foretell what will happen next among the nations.

This is what the Lord meant when He said, "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven." The presence of the Son of man is apparent—to be "seen" or recognised—by the things which are coming to pass on the earth. The disciples asked the Lord: "What shall be the sign of thy coming [literally, presence] and of the end of the world [literally, age]? Here is the answer—

The great spiritual luminaries in the ecclesiastical (religious) heavens (ruling positions) are darkened, or losing their influence fast. They are not bright guiding lights to guide the people into the way of truth any more, but have fallen among earthly things.

But let us realise the Lord's presence: by the things which are happening around us.

Coming "in the clouds of heaven," He is obscured from the worldly minded, who are too interested in the things of the world to take notice of what is going on around them. During our blessed Lord's ministry the great men of the day did not recognise His presence among them, though surely there was abundance of evidence, in the wonderful miracles He did, and which His disciples did after Him. They were filled with their own desires for place and position among the people.

So to-day: Few there be who realise what is taking place. The Master is here, the harvest is going on, all His co-labourers are busy, the time is short. Just how short, none can say, till the time when the present evil order shall completely collapse; for our Lord Jesus Christ will cast it like a millstone into the sea, never to rise again. And then shall He take full control, to reign for a thousand years.

—A. K.

The Great Reformation

FOLLOWING the passing away of the apostles, and those other great earnest ones like Timothy, who learned from them and faithfully proclaimed the truth, many trials came upon the Church. But the Lord used the apostles to record the truth (the Holy Spirit assisting), to a large extent by letters written to the Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, and others. These epistles were treasured, and by divine providence were preserved, so that we have them in our Bibles today. In the meantime there came

The Dark Ages

Previous speakers have brought us along in point of time to the days of Martin Luther and other great reformers of the sixteenth century. Of this period much had been written by the prophet Daniel, by John the apostle in the book of The Revelation, and also by the apostle Matthew, who recorded the words of our Lord.—Chapter 24.

Before we turn to the historic records referring to this period, we will briefly review these prophetic words of the Scriptures.

In Matthew 24 we are told of the state of things that would exist during what we now speak of as "the dark ages." In verses 11, 12 we read—"And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." The following verses advise those who see this condition existing in the church, and who realize the destruction that is coming on the professing church, to come out of it as quickly as ever they can—not even to remain in the system to gather up the few things they might want to save: because it is important to get out of such a system and come over to the truth—as we read in verse 15—

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)."

The Lord knew that this condition would come, and if allowed to continue would completely stamp out the truth. In verse 22 we read:

"And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

Thus we see the Conquering King taking control so that His own plan should not be frustrated. His plan for the time being is to take out of the nations a people for His name. (Acts 15: 14.) And, by bringing about what is now known as "the Great Reformation," His work was not only allowed to continue but was given a great impetus.

Michael Shall Stand Up

Now to come to Daniel's prophecy of this time. In chapter 12: 1 we read—

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: . . . and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

It should be mentioned here that the one spoken of as "Michael" in this verse we understand to be our Lord Jesus; the meaning of the word Michael

being: "Who as God." And it is to Him that God has given all power and authority, so that at the appointed time He would "stand up," or take control. And one of the things that He was to do was to consume and destroy this iniquitous system.

The Apostle Paul, also, associates the overthrow of the mystery of iniquity with the Lord's taking up the reins of government (2 Thess. 2: 8)—

And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming [literally, presence]:

Now we come to what the Revelator had been instructed to write on the matter. In Revelation 11 we are given a description of the period when the Papacy was in power: the 1,260 years during which time the two witnesses—The Word of God—prophesied "clothed in sackcloth." (vs. 3.) The witnesses were symbolically "dead" as far as their activity was concerned. And, reading on to verse 15, we see the Conqueror once again:

"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever."

Or, as a more accurate rendering of the original states it.

"The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever."

The Conquering Kingdom

In this again we have the Bible witness to the Conquering Kingdom. Let us turn now to History, and see how in the face of much opposition the work of the kingdom was carried on.

In the 4th and 5th centuries of the Christian era, the days were indeed dark. Truth was withheld from the people. There were no Bibles to be seen as we have them today; and, even if there had been very few people were well enough educated to be able to read them; and their instructors were indeed themselves blind to the truth.

The Conquering King

But about this time, we are told in the Revelation (chapter 3: 8) that the Conquering King, our Lord Jesus Christ, had set before them

"An Open Door"

That is to say, the truth was no longer to be locked up. And, however much the opposing forces might try to close the door, they would fail; for the verse continues—"and no man can shut it."

And this was indeed the case. John Wycliffe, one of the early translators of the Bible, said—

"The Sacred Scriptures are the property of the people, and one which no one should be allowed to wrest from them. . . . Christ and His apostles converted the world by making known the Scriptures to men in a form familiar to them, . . . and I pray with all my heart that through doing the things contained in this book we may all together come to the everlasting life."

And to this end, surrounded by much opposition, Wycliffe set about the great task of translating the Bible into his own modern language—which task he completed just before his death on the last Sunday

in 1384 A.D. As the result of his labours the Bible went forth—against much opposition—CONQUERING AND TO CONQUER.

The next one of whom we have a record of setting about this great task is Tyndale.

About 100 years after Wycliffe came Tyndale; and during his life printing was invented, which greatly assisted the spreading forth of the good news of the Gospel; in that, instead of having to write each copy of the Bible separately, the Bible could now be printed by the thousand.

Tyndale determined that England should have the Word of God spread among her people by means of the new invention of printing. Not having freedom to carry out his great task in England, Tyndale accepted a life of exile.

In 1524 he left his native land never to see it again. And at Hamburg—in poverty and distress, and amid constant danger—the brave-hearted exile worked at his translation so diligently that in the following year he went to Cologne with the material all ready for the printer.

But here he met opposition, and was forced to gather together his sheets and escape to Worms; where the enthusiasm of Luther the Reformer was at its height. There he accomplished his design, producing for the first time a complete printed New Testament in English; and with great difficulty succeeded in sending copies to England. In barrels, in bales of cloth, in sacks of flour—every secret way that could be devised—the books were sent, and in a few years were scattered far and wide through the country.

The next great reformer we should mention is—

Martin Luther

In the year 1524 A.D., Luther made a translation of the New Testament into the German language; and in 1534 he completed that of the whole Bible. Most of us are familiar with the amount of opposition that Luther met.

Luther was indeed a Messenger of the Conquering King, who was thus quietly sending forth his army—to Conquer.

—H. S.



Taking From or Adding To

(Continued from June Issue)

The Interpolation in Revelation 20: 5

The Codex Alexandrinus by its use of occasional large capital letters and by other indications shows itself to be considerably later than either the Sinaitic or the Vatican 1209; for those capital letters and other distinguishing details had not come into use in the fourth century. At earliest it is of the fifth century. This should be remembered when comparing the evidences of the manuscripts. Vatican 1209 not being available as evidence on the book of Revelation, we have to decide between the Sinaitic and the Alexandrine when these two do not agree.

Now we have seen that the Sinaitic MS. and the Vatican MS. 1209, the two oldest Greek MSS. of the New Testament, agree in not containing four passages contained in later MSS., these four passages being thus shown to be interpolations, added without authority, and consequently forming no part of the inspired Word of God.

Does not this fact constitute in a measure an endorsement of the Sinaitic MS. by the Vatican MS. 1209? or at least a recommendation of the Sinaitic MS. Since the testimony of the Sinaitic MS. on those four interpolations is accepted by scholars and made use of in the Revised Version, should not its testimony concerning Revelation 20: 5 be received with respect?

True, the testimony of the Sinaitic MS. on Revelation 20: 5 has not the backing of the Vatican 1209 as in the four illustrations of agreement regarding the interpolations in Matthew 6, Mark 16, John 8, and 1 John 5: 7, 8. But neither has the later MS.—the Alexandrine—containing the words the back-

ing of the Vatican 1209. As we have already seen, Vatican 1209 cannot be cited either for or against the disputed words in Revelation 20: 5, since that MS. contains none of the book of Revelation. It is a fair conclusion, then, that the testimony of the Sinaitic MS., being at least 100 years older than the Alexandrine MS. (which is the first to contain the words), and consequently 100 years nearer the original as written by John, should be accepted as the truth on Revelation 20: 5, as on the four other passages on which its testimony is accepted.

Interpolated Words a Contradiction

As we saw in regard to the Lord's prayer, that the interpolated words were a contradiction of the truth expressed earlier in the prayer, so it is with the interpolated words in Revelation 20: 5: they are out of harmony with the context. Observe—

4 . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

5 [But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.] This is the first resurrection.

6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

In the above quotation we have begun with the last clause of verse 4, and have placed the disputed words in brackets. Now read this passage, omitting the disputed words, and see how the last words of verse 5—"This is the first resurrection"—refer to those mentioned in verse 4, the overcomers, whose reward is to live and reign with Christ the thousand years. Their resurrection is the first in both time and importance. To receive them to Himself

would be one of the first works undertaken by the Lord on His return, as He told the disciples. (John 14: 3; 1 Thessalonians 4: 14.) The apostle Paul wrote (Colossians 3: 4)—“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” Revelation 20: 6 explains that those who have part in this first resurrection will be “blessed and holy,” unharmable by the second death, which is the punishment to fall on the reprobate. It then explains what the work of the Church of overcomers will be during the thousand years. Their reign will not be provided for solely as a reward of faithfulness, though that aspect of their *enthronement will be highly appreciated*. The glory and honour will be compensation—more than compensation—for the sufferings here. The apostle says, “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him”; “that we may be also glorified together”—“if so be that we suffer with him.” “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory”; “the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” (2 Timothy 2: 12; Romans 8: 17, 18; 2 Corinthians 4: 17.) Thank God for these precious promises!

Now, as we have said, that aspect of the thousand years' reign is greatly appreciated by the “overcomers.” But, having been delivered from sin and death, and from the ignorance and blindness in which mankind has been bound since the fall, the other part of the promise contains a peculiar sweetness of its own—“they shall be priests of God and of Christ.” What does that mean—to be a priest? The priests under the law had two principal functions—to offer sacrifice and to bless and instruct the people. Since our Lord offered on the cross the one and only efficacious sacrifice for sin, that function of the priesthood is finished. In His present glorious position He offers no sacrifice. Nor has there been occasion for the overcomers to offer sacrifice for sin at any time, our Lord's offering being the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. Our duty as priests exercising kingly authority in control of humanity will be to instruct them concerning the Saviour and all He has done for them. How can this be done when the vast majority of our race are in their graves? It can be done because God has made provision for calling them forth from their graves.

The Interpolator's Mistake

Just here is where the interpolator made a mistake—supposing him to have been a sincere believer in Jesus and the resurrection. He seemed to think something should be said about “the rest of the dead,” i.e. those not overcomers, and not to be seated in the throne. And—as usual when man tries to improve on God's method of presenting truth—he put in words that do not fit; that wipe out—in one fell sentence—the grand and glorious work our heavenly Father planned should be done by Christ and the Church *during* the thousand years; namely, the en-

lightenment and instruction of those who died without hearing of the “only name” and of the great sacrifice for their sins offered on the cross. Yes, the interpolator made a serious blunder when he asserted that the rest or remainder of the dead—which would mean all of the human family except the called, chosen, and faithful who sit on the thrones—would receive no benefit from that thousand years' reign.

Our Lord Jesus is King and High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, and as such will sit on the “great white throne” shown in a later vision recorded in this same chapter. (Verses 11-15.) The interpolator evidently did not understand that chapter 20 contains a series of visions—four distinct visions, each telling something in connection with the thousand-year reign—

1. Satan bound the thousand years.—Verses 1-3.
2. The overcomers described, and their resurrection and reward promised.—Vss. 4-6.
3. Satan let loose at the end of the thousand years, unchanged in opposition to God and Christ, and determined to work ill among those who have received the benefits of the Kingdom reign.—Vss. 8-10.
4. The great white throne set up at the beginning of the thousand years. Christ's reign of a thousand years shown to be for the purpose of dealing with “the dead, small and great.” The books to be opened represent the truth which to us has been given in the Scripture, and which to the people then may be given through the same, since it contains the history of our race and of God's provision for their redemption. Or God may reveal himself and His purposes more directly through the teachings of the Church and the service of the “ancient worthies” who will be the Lord's human representatives on the earth. But the Gospel of God's love and grace is unchanged. They will hear the same good news that has gladdened our ears. For, note: a book of life will be opened, in which will be written the names of those who believe and obey in that age. These believing and obedient ones are referred to again in Revelation 21: 2-7, another beautiful picture of God's purpose to remove the curse and enlighten all for whom Christ died, while verse 8 declares the well-deserved punishment to be sent on those who prove themselves wilfully disobedient and unbelieving during that marvellous reign of a thousand years.

It is conceivable that the interpolator made a marginal note in a manuscript, merely to record his own thought, and that later some scribe, through ignorance or carelessness, incorporated the words into the body of the text, and so the wrong thought began to circulate as truth.

But there is another way of accounting for the presence of those words in the manuscript in which they first occurred. From the unauthorized words inserted in the Lord's prayer, and from what we know of Papal claims to be God's representative on earth, with authority to reign over all the world, we can see that Revelation 20: 4-6 as it stands in the Sinaitic MS. would not suit the Papacy. Neither it nor verses 11-13 would suit the Papacy, since

Christ's kingdom is shown to be set up after the Church has been tried and prepared for the position of joint heirs and is united to Him. Moreover, the Papacy, while able to invent various theories concerning invisible saints and guardians, could not produce "the dead, small and great," specifically stated to stand before the throne.

But—a few strokes of the pen and the Lord's prayer was made to say "Thine is the kingdom," and the Papacy had a text to justify its claim to rule the world. Just as easily the inconvenient dead of Revelation 20: 11-13 were disposed of by the simple assertion in verse 5 that they would not live again until the thousand years were finished!

God Shall Add the Plagues

That a serious responsibility is incurred by any one who knowingly and wilfully adds to the book of Revelation is the testimony of Revelation 22: 18, which says—"If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." The development of God's purposes toward mankind has demonstrated His love and mercy, particularly in the sending of His beloved

(Continued in August issue)



From Far and Near

To the Editor: Being interested in your writings and explanations of Scripture, I would deem it a great favour if you would answer one or two questions as simply and plainly as any ordinary person may understand who is not very highly educated; as there seem to be some difference of understandings.

Question 1. When Christ Jesus takes over His Kingdom of the earth, will He appear in Person so as we can see Him as we are now formed? Will He have His throne in Zion? Or will He be Ruler in Spirit (which we cannot see in our present form) with His selected messengers ruling from Zion as earthly rulers under Christ's authority and teaching? Please to make this plain . . . —, *New Zealand*.

Answer. The truth on this as on other questions is clearly expressed in the Lord's sermon on the mount. (Matthew 24.) The Israelites had been in a sense the kingdom of God on earth. They worshipped the true God according to the rites and ceremonies given them by Moses, God's special messenger to them and Leader into the promised land.

The Land had been promised to Abraham and His seed for an everlasting possession. It was therefore difficult for them to realise that Jesus, while He fulfilled the Law and was demonstrated to be perfect and sinless, was to give Himself a Ransom—not for the Jews only, but for the whole race of Adam. Whoever believeth—whether Jew or Gentile—would be saved.

The majority of Jews failed, however, to realise this, and failed also to understand that Jesus had been a Spirit Being with the Father before man was

Son to be the "ransom" corresponding to Adam and Eve, and all their race; the pure and perfect offering for the sins of all, and the Mediator to reconcile to God all who are willing to leave their old ways and be reconciled to a just and holy God. With the weak and feeble who trust in Him He is longsuffering and patient, and transgressors are given time for repentance. But deliberate tampering with His Word is a heinous offence. In this respect great Babylon has been a persistent offender, and we read in chapter 18 that great plagues are due to come upon her.

By great Babylon the value of the cross of Christ has been diminished by the pretended additional offerings in the mass; heavy burdens in penances, and often imprisonments in convents and monasteries, have been laid on the people. And God's wonderful provision for guarding in death the whole race under the keys in the hand of the Son of man has been distorted by picturing the dead as in a place of torment—a place of red-hot furnaces, humanity writing in agony, and red demons to stoke the fires and otherwise add to their miseries.

created; was, in fact, God's instrument in creation, as stated in John 1: 1-5; Colossians 1: 15-19.

The Risen Christ

In Col. 3: 1-3 we read that the risen Christ "sitteth on the right hand of God." And the promise is given that His footstep followers shall be given glory with Him in heaven—"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."—Col. 3: 4; Rev. 20: 5, 6.

Because Jesus showed Himself to the disciples after His resurrection in a body of flesh which they could see with their natural eyes was not to demonstrate that He was in fact still a human being, but rather to present Himself to them in a form recognisable by human sight. We read that God is invisible to men. So, then, Jesus also is invisible, for He was raised in the image and likeness of God.

We understand that Christ and the overcomers of the Gospel age will reign over the earth for the thousand years, invisibly—as God now rules.

Earthly Representatives

But Christ and the Church will have *earthly representatives* in the persons of the Ancient Worthies who were promised everlasting life on the earth as their reward. They will administer affairs on the earth as visible representatives of the Lord Jesus—who will remain invisible in His glorious heavenly estate.

The promise to the Church is, that we shall be like Him, and see Him as He is, not as He was when He

took human form for the purpose of giving Himself a ransom. It is therefore our privilege to run faithfully the race that is set before us, and not imagine ourselves as living again as human beings on the earth. We should appreciate God's love and condescension in offering up the prize of the high calling, and do our best with His aid to fulfil His plan for

us as believers in the Gospel age, the time the Church is being chosen.

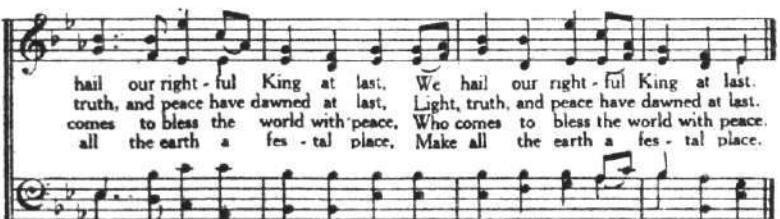
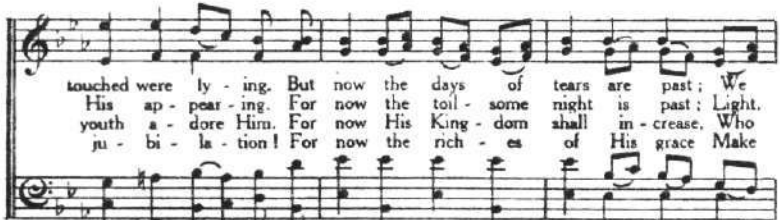
If the above answer and the book "Christ's Prophecy on Olivet" do not answer every query in the minds of any of our readers, we shall be glad to have further questions submitted, and do our best to answer them according to the Scriptures.

7

MRS. E. C. HENNINGES

Welcome to Our King

E. C. HENNINGES

With animation

NO OTHER NAME

One offer of salvation
To all the world make known;
The only sure foundation
Is Christ, the Corner Stone.
One door to life eternal
Stands open wide to-day;
It leads to bliss supernal;
'Tis Christ, the living way.
My only song and story
Is, Jesus died for me;
My only hope of glory,
The Cross of Calvary.



—SINCE OUR LAST ISSUE

PROPHECY continues to be fulfilled on every hand. Our Lord said (Matt. 10: 26) "... for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known." At the end of the Jewish age there was a great revelation. The failure of the Jews to recognize their Messiah became the occasion for revealing their true state in relation to God and His Law, and of calling out a few faithful ones to become His footstep followers.

A GLORIOUS hope was set before them, and that hope has been preached, and its reward offered, for now over 1800 years. These specially called-out ones are to be joint-heirs with Him in the Kingdom soon to be set up. Yet of the world in general the prophet Daniel foretold that the images of world power would be smitten in the feet, the whole image would be broken to pieces and carried away.

THEN THE STONE that smote the image would become a great mountain [i.e. kingdom], and fill the whole earth. Just when this final smiting would come has been of interest to God's people all the way down. Our Lord encouraged His disciples to note the fulfilment of prophecy in their day, but not to go to sleep, for there were other prophecies still to be fulfilled. The calling out of the Church during the Gospel age was an important reason for deferring the actual setting up of the Kingdom as a World Power until the prospective joint-heirs were chosen.—Dan. 12: 3, 4, 9-12.

REAPING THE HARVEST was set forth as an illustration of the final work of the Gospel age in connection with the gathering out of the true saints, the overcomers. Wheat and tares would grow together until the harvest, and then a separation would be due, and the saints be gathered out as ripe grain to the Master's glory. [For full explanation of these and other parables, please see the book, "The Parables of our Lord," mentioned in Book List.]

THE EVENTS of the last 140 years have shown great increase of knowledge and invention, the encouragement of the masses to learn to read, and the wide circulation of the Bible in modern languages. And to make this available to the masses the peoples must be taught to read. The fulfilment of this prophecy is evident in Europe and America and wherever Bible loving Europeans and Americans have settled—as, for example, in India, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, and other islands, in the last century or two.

AND NOW we have air travel. Immense airplanes conveying troops rapidly from place to place add to the impression that Divine power is at work; else why were they not invented centuries ago? At the time of the end—not before—many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

COMMERCIAL Interests are making full use of these modern inventions—not forgetting the valuable advertising made possible the world over. The publication of the books named on last page of this Journal testify to God's will that a better conception of His character be circulated. Thus countering the eternal torment fiction and other libels on God's character, whereby billions of our race are said to be even now in a place of unspeakable torment. On the other hand, the errors of Universalism need to be pointed out—the false theory that God could not be satisfied if even one person ceased to live after death. On the contrary, the Bible teaches that knowledge brings responsibility, and that every individual who has ever lived will be reckoned with in regard to his personal attitude toward the light when given him. Going down into death means "sleep" until the resurrection day. Then the Lord Himself will reign and see that each individual then called out of the Adamic death will have a fair and free opportunity to repent of sin and to turn to Him as the One through whom sins can be forgiven and reconciliation effected.

Any who desire to see the true Bible teaching concerning hell and death are recommended to read "Everlasting Punishment," "The Dead—Where are They?", and "Christ's Prophecy on Olivet."

THE CUBIT mentioned in the Old Testament is difficult to transfer into our measurements. It is variously given from 16 in., 18 in., 19 in., 20 in., 21 in. So exact length as used in pre-flood days is uncertain. Taking 18 in., the measurements should be 450 feet long, 75 feet beam, 45 feet deep.

SPECIES of Animals.—Dr. A. R. Wallace states that there are about 1,700 species of animals, 10,087 of birds, 987 reptiles. He gives average size as common house cat for animals. It must be noted that there are 50 species of cats, numerous members of dog tribe, and also different pigeons. All breed from a common pair. It will be found that the ark had ample room for all animals; with sufficient storage space for food. Steamers that carry livestock allow 20 sq. feet for each cow, and one deck in the ark would take 1,500 cows approximately. —J. V. S.

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Kingdom Herald

VOL. 35.

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, AUGUST, 1943.

No. 5.

Conquering Self

(Conference Topics continued)

FROM what we have heard thus far in our Conference, it has been shown that—despite many things said and written by others, to the contrary, God Himself has been and always will be, supreme in the affairs of His Universe. And He has not been defeated in His plan and purpose to have a kingdom on earth from among the members of the human race. This fundamental truth gives confidence in a time when earthly kingdoms are being shaken to their very foundations, and when there is growing uneasiness regarding the stability (or otherwise) of all forms of human government.

Although God allowed the entrance of sin into the experience of the human race, in the Garden of Eden, He was in no way responsible for it, nor for our First Parents' transgression. Nor was God responsible for the Adversary's temptation with the object of usurping the kingdom. Nevertheless, God allowed it. For had He not, such of course could not have taken place.

Besides the estrangement which followed the disobedience of our First Parents, many calamities have befallen the human race as a result of the entrance of sin into the experiences of mankind; but even in all this it can be seen that God still stands supreme. He had said that if man sinned he would die, and in removing Adam and Eve out of the garden He plainly told them what would follow—toil, pain, sorrow, sadness, and eventually death: not only for themselves, but for every member of the human race. What a sad state of affairs! But how true even after these thousands of years. Not one single individual member of our race has escaped. Death is still God's supreme penalty for disobedience. Never has death been the gateway to heaven, as some would have us believe.

Adam as created by God was perfect, with a mind capable of making contrasts and of choosing his own conduct. And when he chose to obey Satan in preference to his rightful Master, Adam learnt through sad experience that God was still the highest ruler. Although Adam flouted God's command, and

despite Satan's lies and even all the wrong actions and sins of the human race in believing and doing Satan's bidding, God's purpose is still certain of fulfilment. That fact stands out sure.

Truly the Psalmist said, and the Apostle repeated: Man was made "a little lower than the angels:" crowned with glory and honour, and set over the works of God's hand. All earthly orders of creation were subjected to him until he sinned, and then the process of declining power and loss of control and authority set in.—Psalm 8: 4-6; Heb. 2: 6-8.

On the other hand, the writer to the Hebrews says (Heb. 2: 9)—

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

Jesus, who was the first—and only direct—creation of God, before He came to earth was a glorious Spirit Being, in the image of God, and was God's instrument in creation. He had a perfect mind, with freedom of choice, and He chose the good and obedient way of living, in subjection to all of God's purposes. And so it was that—when Adam sinned and brought upon himself and his posterity the supreme penalty of death—the Lord Jesus was willing and prepared to sacrifice His life for the benefit of mankind.

The supreme work of Christ while He was on this earth was that He died, and gave His life a ransom for all. (1 Tim. 2: 6.)

The Lord's death was a manifestation of the love of God himself, as we read in John 3: 16—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God's loving interest in man was certainly vindicated in the fact that He sent His Son into the world for the express purpose of dying for us; as we read in 1 John 4—

9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he

loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

We might well say that far too little is known of what our Lord did on our behalf when He gave up His life for us, and that the love of God is belclouded and belittled when the vain imaginations of men are allowed free and unrestrained play. Let us therefore not fall into the error of despising the great work of redemption which the Lord Jesus performed for us human beings.

Let us look back over the history of our Lord Jesus and see how all His powers of mind and body were kept in true harmony with His Father's will and righteousness. Not only in His earthly life, during which time He gave us an example of a perfect character, but also in His pre-human estate the Son proved His subjection to the Father's will. Acting as God's agent in creation, only that which was very good was brought into being by Him. No experiments of His own were carried out, no experimental trials of this or that theory were tried; no vain imagination of His own in thinking that He might improve on God's plan. No, nothing of that sort; but, as we read in Genesis 1: 31—"And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."

Think for a moment just what these words imply. Picture, if possible, the vastness of this universe as we know it with our finite minds. Gaze at the myriads of stars and planets in the heavens, all in their ordered courses. Think of the marvels of nature as revealed in the fields and the gardens, in the oceans and in the air.

Ponder the wonders of creation in the animal kingdom, and then think of man himself; and even the unbeliever is filled with praise.

The believer knows that all things were made by the Lord Jesus, and that "without him was not any thing made that was made." (John 1: 3.) And we have these words of approval (Gen. 1: 25, 31), that everything was without blemish; "And God saw that it was good"—all was executed according to the Father's exacting plan.

But someone will say: "How does all this regarding our Lord Jesus apply to us in our endeavours to conquer ourselves?"

And we answer—

Constraining the Will

It shows us that to conquer self implies more than a mere reform from an evil life and the putting off of some evil trait; for our Lord had no such evil tendencies to contend with. To conquer self means that all our powers of good shall be devoted to God's service in the furtherance of His kingdom. And when we say all, it means all, without any exception.

Many people who live good moral lives, and pay all their just debts, boast of the fact that they keep the law of the land and do nobody any harm—all of which, they claim, is surely acceptable to God. But let it be remembered that when the rich young man came to Jesus to enquire the way in which he might obtain eternal life, he was told that in addition to keeping the law, which he claimed to have

done, it would be necessary for him still to do something which was not written in the law. (Mark 10: 17-27.) It was told that young man that he should use all the means he had for the benefit of others. And so it is necessary for us, if we would seek eternal life, to devote all our energies to God's service. Not only some of our energies must be so employed, not only that which we find convenient must be done, not only that which we please, and when, and how; but our whole undivided and continuous labours must unreservedly be used for our Master's kingdom.

Sometimes when a person hears the Gospel and is converted, and forgiveness of sins is obtained from God, the new-born Christian fails to realise any further obligation on his part, and sets about to live a more or less self-centred existence. Such conduct is not, however, in harmony with the example left us by the Lord and by the apostles, and would bring only failure in the greatest work a man can undertake. This mistake is made by many Christians when they fail to realise the true import of our Lord's words, "come . . . and follow me." (Mark 10: 21.) If we would follow Him, we will imitate the example He left us: complete devotion to the Father's will, and co-operation with Him in the carrying out of His great plan.

Not for one moment did the Lord Jesus allow Himself to resist the Father's will. Not that it was easy to give up His life. As one who had never sinned or had a wrong thought, the Father's will was His whatsoever it might be. And so, while as a perfect being who had never sinned, and hence was worthy of eternal life as a perfect member of the human race, Jesus did not in His prayer draw back, or wish to be relieved of the death. What the Lord most probably asked to be relieved of, if possible, as related by Luke (22: 37-44), was the cup of ignominy involved in arrest and death as an evil doer.

The prayer offered up—as related in John 17: 1-26—was a heartfelt expression of devotion to God and to the carrying out of the agreement to give Himself the perfect sacrifice for the redemption of sinners of the fallen race. And included special pleas on behalf of the disciples who had lovingly followed Him and were to continue the work which the Lord had instructed them to do.

In this prayer the Lord's mind went out to His disciples, and He commended them to God's care: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."—John 17: 16, 17.

Having been remembered and prayed for by our dear Lord Himself, can we do better than give ourselves to Him in appreciation of what He has done for us, and endeavour with Divine aid to conquer evil, and to use all our good powers unselfishly for Him?

So even now we have the privilege of consecrating ourselves to Him, and of using all our strength and energy in the service of truth and righteousness. May God grant us His grace so to do.

—P. C. G.

The Conquering Lamb

THE ASSOCIATION of ideas conveyed in our title is certainly unusual—"The Conquering Lamb." Ordinarily we do not think of a lamb as a conquering animal.

But the Lamb we are considering is no ordinary one. It had seven horns and seven eyes. It is very unusual for a lamb to have any horns at all; but this one had seven. Lambs generally have two eyes, but this one had seven eyes.

This Lamb had been slain, and had been brought to life again, so that it could stand once more.

In other words, this lamb is a symbolical one; and the symbol stands for our glorious risen Lord Jesus Christ. Christ was typified by the Passover lamb, and by the lambs of the daily sacrifices offered under the Law Covenant.

We understand from the various scriptures where reference is made to Christ as the Lamb, that the symbol is used as a designation for our Lord in His capacity as the great Sacrifice for sin—"the Lamb that was slain," "the blood of the Lamb," and similar expressions.—Revelation 5: 12; 13: 8; 1 Peter 1: 19; Isaiah 53: 7; John 1: 29.

But a lamb that is dead could not be active. It could not go forth conquering. So we observe that this Lamb was a resurrected Lamb. This can be seen in the passage of Scripture which we shall take as our immediate text.—Revelation, chapter 5.

Opening the Sealed Book

In the fourth chapter we have a wonderful vision of the divine glory and the divine throne. Following the description of this glorious throne scene, the Revelator refers to a sealed book in Revelation 5—

1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

In no uncertain terms the heavenly messenger asked a question concerning the sealed book, a query which perturbed the Revelator, because no man was able to fulfil the object of the question: to open the sealed book, or scroll—

4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

John's disappointment at this sad state of affairs was not to continue; for one of the elders assured him that there was someone who would be able, and worthy, to open the book. He was told that this One was, "the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David,"—Verses 5, 6.

We know from other scriptures that these descriptive titles refer to our Lord Jesus, and to Him alone.—Gen. 49: 8-10; Heb. 7: 14; Rom. 15: 12; Isaiah 11: 1; Revelation 22: 16.

But when John looked into this vision, he saw a "lamb as it had been slain," and was now standing, and therefore now evidently alive. And this lamb had "seven horns and seven eyes."

What, then, are we to learn from the use of this

figure as applied here to our Lord? Mathematically, seven is the highest digit which is a prime factor. In other words, it is the highest digit which is indivisible by a whole number other than itself and one. It is complete in itself.

On other occasions in the Scripture we have seen the use of the figure "seven" to stand as a symbol of completeness.

The creative days were seven in number. Complete cycles of seven were given to the Jews in calculating their weeks and ceremonial years. Seven lamps stood in the holy place of the tabernacle. In the Revelation it is used in connection with stars, candlesticks, lamps, vials, trumpets, seals, and churches, to indicate completeness in itself of each of the series.

This Lamb, therefore, had seven horns and seven eyes. Horns being used figuratively in the book of Daniel and other Scriptures to indicate power, the seven horns of the Lamb would teach that the Lord has complete power.—Daniel 7: 24; 8: 4.*

We read that "a Lamb as it had been slain" had seven horns. This is a symbol expressive of the power of Christ; of His dominion, His government, and kingly authority. It is a fitting symbol to indicate the Lord's possession of complete power and authority received since His resurrection. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."—Matthew 28: 18.

The Seven Eyes

The seven eyes of the Lamb are referred to as "the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." The seven eyes are therefore to be taken as representing God's Holy Spirit in all its comprehensiveness and completeness.

Proverbs 15: 3 (and other texts) shows the omniscience of God's Holy Spirit—"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, Beholding the evil and the good."

Do we realise the full importance of this Statement? It must not be thought of in a passive way, as though the Lord was merely looking at the evil and good which persons may do, say, and think. Rather it implies a preparedness for action, a readiness to punish and to reward.

The Worthy Lamb

Having the seven horns—possessing all authority in heaven and in earth—the Lord Jesus is able to send the seven eyes—the Holy Spirit—into all the earth with the object of taking definite notice and action accordingly. All authority in heaven and in earth! What could be greater than that? Surely, the Lamb who was worthy had conquered!

The Lamb whose worthiness was thus established took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. (Verse 7.)

The Lamb had Conquered

In this we have a striking example of the fact

*For further information regarding the Scriptural usage of this symbol, see "Daniel the Prophet in the Latter Days" (pages 107 and 140), mentioned in book list.

that God can over-ride the worst acts of men. The Jews thought that they had put a complete end to the man of Galilee who reproved their wickedness. Instead of that, their thoughts and actions which brought about His sufferings and death only made them still further slaves of Sin.

These thoughts and actions on their part brought them still more into the need of the blood of that very One whose death they brought about. Though they did not know it, that death was for them the giving of His life as the ransom sacrifice; that death brought them into His power with which He could deal with them at a future time.

Acclamation of the Lamb

The worthiness of the Lamb was acclaimed in the vision. The four beasts (R.V. "living creatures") representing the providences of God (Revelation 4: 6-9), and the four and twenty elders symbolising the Holy Scriptures (Revelation 4: 4), paid their homage.

8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

The harp was one of the chief instruments used in the temple worship, and was a fit emblem to represent the harmonious accord of the Divine Providences and the Divine Word in this grand acclamation to the triumph of the Lamb.

The Holy Writings had authorised the believers to pray and so can agree with the testimonies of the saints in their prayers. The prayers of the saints, the Revelator tells us, are pictured in the vision by the golden bowls of incense. And the song is part of this great ovation to the Lamb. This is stated in verses 9 and 10—

9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us [us omitted from ancient MSS.] to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

10 And hast made us [or, "them," as in Sinaitic, Vat. and Rev. V.] unto our God kings and priests: and we [or, they] shall reign on the earth.

The rendering of the Authorised Version gives the impression that the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders were singing about themselves. This is not the correct thought, as can be seen by referring to the earliest manuscripts and the Revised Version, which reads as indicated in the brackets—

9. "for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God

with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation,

10 and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth." (R.V.)

Observe the change in the pronouns in the better rendering. This makes it clear that the New Song was not at all about the living creatures and the elders, but about the Lamb Who was worthy, and also about the glorified members of the Gospel age Church who are to reign with Christ—as under-kings and under-priests.

A Universal Chorus

Not only do the Scriptures, and God's Providences, ascribe honour to the Lamb, but the myriads of the heavenly host join in the ovation.—Revelation 5—

11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

The word "blessing" as used here is a translation of the Greek word "eulogia," from which we get our word "eulogy," meaning—"a word or speech of commendation," or praise. The Lamb is worthy to be eulogized.

But there are others yet who will help to swell this great song of glory to the Lamb—the Conquering Lamb who was Worthy. The Revelator foretells that ultimately every creature will join with the heavenly host in the grand chorus of praise.

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

Every creature, including those under the earth! This can mean nothing less than that the dead will be raised to make this prophecy possible—for those "under the earth" are dead.

We thank God that we can realise this to be a true picture—after the destruction of the wilfully perverse—of the future whole-hearted acceptance of Christ by all mankind as the conquering Lamb—as their Redeemer and King. Shall not we now acclaim Him gladly with heart and voice as the One who has purchased us unto God and made us a kingdom and Priests?—1 Peter 2: 9.—H. S. W.



The Second Coming

DURING the 3½ years of our Lord's ministry on earth He instructed His disciples regarding His great mission. He assured them that He came down from heaven (John 6: 38), and that He was to return to where He came from. The apostle Paul wrote of the Lord's mission to earth—

"And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the

cross."—Philippians 2: 8.

He also informed them that (even under the Law Covenant) it was "not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." (Heb. 10: 4.) Jesus alone could offer the true sacrifice, as recorded by the apostle in Hebrews 10—

5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast

thou prepared me:

6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

This was done by Jesus sacrificing Himself on the cross and giving His life a ransom for the salvation of mankind; as it is written in John 3: 16—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:"—John 3: 14.

These Scriptures were hard for His disciples to understand at the time, because they could not realize this great mission of the Lord Jesus. Nevertheless, the Lord Jesus was not going to leave them in ignorance regarding His mission or to be sorrowful concerning His death, for He knew what was to take place. He informed them of a great promise which would be necessary for them to receive; and so He said (John 16)—

6 But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:"

Also in John 14: 26—

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

The disciples remembered this great promise, and the Lord reminded them again after His resurrection of the great importance of this promise (as recorded in Luke 24: 49)—"And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."

This promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2.) Therefore from then onwards the Lord's people have been enlightened to the understanding of God's Word regarding His great plan and purposes, and the CONQUERING KINGDOM for which He taught His disciples to pray—"Thy Kingdom come." Matthew 6: 9.

Seeing, then, that the promise to send the Holy Spirit was fulfilled, it is equally certain that those words in John 14: 3—"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"—will also be fulfilled.

This is a wonderful promise that the Lord has made to all who will follow Him. It contains much more than that which can be told in the time allotted to me. It gave great comfort and consolation to the disciples, and would fortify them for the happenings that were to surround them then and whatsoever suffering they might experience later. They were to be His witnesses. But, firstly, they must be fully qualified and equipped with instructions and have on the whole armour of God. They were to remember that they were sent into the world to proclaim the Gospel

of the Kingdom, as recorded in Matthew 24: 14—

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

Necessity of Gospel Preaching

This work evidently must be accomplished before the Lord comes to set up His Kingdom. Some have thought that the promise meant: that when a Christian dies and his soul is received by Christ then that is a "second coming." But this idea cannot be entertained for a moment, for it is not scriptural. Others say that after His resurrection His appearance to His disciples constituted the "second coming." But those appearances were brief, and were given to the disciples in proof of His resurrection: demonstrating that He was the same Jesus—their Lord and Master—risen again, and that He had not yet ascended to the Father.—John 20: 17.

The Lord Jesus had told them before He died that He was going to the Father. Therefore these manifestations enabled Him to give them explanations of the events that had taken place, and to remind them of the promises He had made; thus enabling Him to give them His instructions as to what they were to do in His absence. They were also evidences to convince them that He had indeed risen from the dead.—Luke 24: 13-49; Matthew 28: 18-20.

These manifestations having been accomplished, we are informed by Luke that Jesus led His disciples out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up his hands, and blessed them. "And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."—Luke 24: 51.

Evidently His disciples could not realize at first that these appearances of our Lord to them were not the fulfilment of His promise to come again. They were no doubt surprised with the Lord's words and actions. But the Lord knew that they would be convinced later on (as mentioned already). He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father. This promise was that they should receive the Holy Spirit not many days hence. When they received it, then they would fully realize the words spoken to them and recall the promises such as that recorded in John 14: 1-3—

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

This promise they would then realize was very much in the future from the appearances before His ascension. Great and wonderful events were predicted to take place before and when the Lord would come again. In His parting words He gave the disciples both information and comfort in that which concerned them most—namely, that "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

The disciples were deeply interested in the Lord's mission and the setting up of His kingdom—in which they expected to have prominent positions. But, still deeper than that, they had a great love for their

Master, and their desire was to continue with Him always. Our Lord expressed this longing on His own behalf in His prayer (John 17: 24)—

Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

The disciples looked forward to the time when they would be with their Lord and Master. The hope that they had was somewhat upset by the events of His last days in the flesh. Their hope revived when the Master was raised from the dead, as the Apostle Peter says (I Peter 1: 3, 4)—

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

"To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

The resurrection of Jesus to this grand inheritance in heaven was a wonderful event, and its effects have been (and still are) far reaching. The Apostle Paul emphasised this point in his first letter to the Corinthians; he said, "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." And he goes on to show that He was raised—for we read in I Corinthians 15: 20: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."

Because Christ was raised, we can have a resurrection through Him; and our resurrection if we are faithful will be to a wonderful inheritance (I Peter 1: 4-8)—

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.

5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. . .

7 That the trial of your faith, . . . might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

These are great words of comfort for us all who believe in the promise. The early disciples loved the Master dearly, and it would be only natural that they should desire Him to come soon. But as time passed they reflected on other promises, particularly the one in Matthew 28—

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, . . .

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world [Greek "aion," age; that is, the age or period of time during which this preaching ministry should be carried on].

By His Holy Spirit the Lord continued with the church, and through the apostles gave further enlightenment concerning the period of His absence. All this is much amplified in the New Testament and in the book of Daniel. During the age the disciples as they finished their course would fall asleep in death. And those who were still alive would continue to preach His coming.

The Apostle Paul instructs them that they are not to sorrow as those who have no hope regarding the resurrection, and comforts them with these words

(1 Thess. 4)—

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ [the sleeping saints] shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Having then, dear friends, endeavoured to show that the Lord loved the church of true believers, and has sustained it all through the age (even unto the consummation), we have these words: "and so shall we ever be with the Lord." We shall enter into the duties and privileges of joint-heirship—Kings and Priests, and other rewards mentioned in the Scriptures. (Romans 8: 17; 2 Timothy 2: 11, 12; Revelation 1: 6; 20: 6.) And in Matthew 25: 34 we read—

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

Seeing, then, these great and wonderful promises held out to the overcomers, let us give heed to the words of Peter (2 Peter 1: 10, 11)—

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall [R.V. "stumble"]:

For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Now, before concluding, let us read those comforting words in 1 Thessalonians 4: 15, 16—particularly in regard to the word "coming." Paul wrote—

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming [presence] of the Lord shall not prevent [Variation footnote and R.V. "precede"] them which are asleep.

On the meaning of "prevent" as here used the "Standard Dictionary" has an instructive comment, after giving two definitions: 1. To stop or hinder from happening by means of previous measures; ward off; preclude; thwart. 2. To bar the action of in advance; intercept; check; restrain: with force.

3. To be or act in advance of; be beforehand with; precede; anticipate.

Synonyms: Anticipate, forestall. The original sense of *prevent*, to come before, act in advance of, which is now practically obsolete, was still in good use when the authorised version of the Bible was made, as appears in such passages as "When Peter was come into the house, Jesus *prevented* him" (i.e., accosted him first), Matt. 17: 25: "Thou *preventest* him with the blessings of goodness" (i.e., by sending the blessings before the desire is formulated or expressed), Ps. 21: 3. *Anticipate* is now the only single word usable in this sense; to *forestall* is to take or act in advance in one's own behalf and to the prejudice or hindrance of another or others, as in the phrase "to *forestall* the market." But to *anticipate* is very frequently used in the favorable sense; as, his thoughtful kindness *anticipated* my wish (i.e., met the wish before it was expressed); or we say "I was about to accost him when he *anticipated* me (by speaking first); or one *anticipates* a

payment (by making it before the time). For the present use of *prevent*, see synonyms for *hinder*; *preclude*; *prohibit*.

That valuable aid to searchers for truth "Strong's Exhaustive Concordance" gives the Greek word for the word translated "coming" as "*parousia*," which is defined also as "presence," which means "being alongside of." The Revised Version also uses the same word "presence" in the margin—which is correct, and very necessary, in order that we may understand the right teaching of our Lord and His apostle, concerning this wonderful promise of His return.

For us to say all that might be said on this important subject time will not permit. But we would sincerely invite you all to take a little book that is on the table at the rear of the hall—entitled, "Christ's Promised Return." It is offered free, and explains all the texts containing the Greek word "*parousia*." So please take one before you leave.

Also the word "prevent" is to be noticed, which in this connection means "precede." The "voice," "shout," and "trump" are of great interest; and, added to this, we would like to say that the watching servants of the Lord receive a great blessing when they realise that the Lord's presence to which they look forward is not a moment (or a second) of time, but a considerable period; as indicated by the word "presence," and shown by the work which will be accomplished by Him during His presence.

Therefore, brethren, let us give heed to the word of truth on this wonderful promise to "come again." Let us not give any attention whatsoever to the cunningly devised fables and seducing spirits. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.—Ephesians 6: 12.

Also 1 John 4: 1-3—

1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

Says the Apostle Peter (2 Peter 2: 1, 2)—

"who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

"And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."

The swift destruction here referred to indicates the responsibility resting upon those who are favored with a knowledge of the truth in this life. For example, those who heard and accepted Peter's preaching and afterward turned against the gospel and became enemies of the cross; even to denying the value of the cross of Christ whereby Jesus gave Himself a ransom for all, and who now sends His disciples out to proclaim the truth and make disciples. Such perverters of the truth are held re-

sponsible, "and they shall not escape."

1 Thessalonians 5: 3 is another very positive statement of the responsibility of those who know the truth.

The Apostle Peter stirs up the pure-minded ones on this important matter by way of remembrance of the words which were spoken before by the Holy Prophets and of the commandments of the apostles and of our Saviour. Peter says (2 Peter 3)—

3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts [or, desires].

4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming [literally, "presence"]? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

Why do they say this? It is because they "willingly are ignorant" of the word of God. Peter explains. Now a scoffer is one that will try and make mockery, especially in religion. This manner of conduct was very prevalent in the attitude of the Jews towards our Lord Jesus and His apostles. The Sadducees tried to make the teaching of the resurrection look ridiculous; also the crucifixion, by putting a crown of thorns on the head of the Saviour. Many other things were done in a similar manner. However, the apostle's warning is to those who have been taught the precious promises. Believers are exhorted to avoid such scoffers and to "communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."—Galatians 6: 6, 7.

The Apostle Peter, also, tells us that they carry on after their own desire and "wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:"—1 Peter 4: 4.

Nevertheless, the Lord has promised to deal with them in due course. In the meantime, let us watch and pray, and remember the words of the Apostle written to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 5: 16)—

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh, yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more [i.e. after the flesh].

If we are watching, we will be able to put to silence those that say and teach that Jesus when He comes will be a fleshly being. For we know differently. The same Jesus has been raised to something greater and higher than a fleshly being, also higher than the angels. As it is written in Hebrews 1: 3, 4:

3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

These things, dear friends, reviewed in the time allotted to this paper, will we hope be the means of renewing us all to a further interest in the wonderful promise of the Lord that we should be with Him and see Him as He is. The promise is not that we should see Him as He was, but as *He now is*—a Spirit Being, the exact image of the Father's person.

—F. R. McK.

"More Than Conquerors"

LOOKING FORWARD, to us a thousand years seems a very long time. If we look back, we see that the children of Israel were a long time in the bondage of Egypt. And they owed much to the Lord's deliverance of them, and His leading of them forty years in the wilderness. Yet how they murmured against Moses in those forty years!

Six thousand years are thought to have elapsed between the creation of Adam and the present day. Generations have multiplied, but death has taken early toll of many. And, so long as the curse pronounced in Eden is allowed to operate, so long will the groaning go on.

Yet we who have the Word of God in our hands, in the convenient form of the Bible, have had our minds directed to Christ Jesus, who came into the world for the purpose of giving Himself a ransom for the groaning creation of mankind. He has therefore *bought us all*, and we *belong to Him*. As Paul says (1 Cor. 6: 19, 20)*—

"... and ye are not your own?

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, ..."

But how few of mankind are aware of these Bible truths, even in our comparatively enlightened day!

Well may we be grateful, then, when we read that Jesus Christ, who died for us, is now Lord of all; and that, as stated in Revelation 1: 18, He is alive forevermore, and has "the keys of hell [*hades*, the grave], and of death." The first to be raised from death would be the overcomers of the Gospel age, and to these He would give a place in His throne.—Rev. 3: 21—

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne."

This shows that the thrones are given to the overcomers—the overcoming church—not as an empty honour, but that they may reign with Him for the Thousand Years, and for a beneficial object; for the purpose of participating with Christ in the bestowal of light and blessing upon mankind generally, including the myriads of the dead.

A Thousand Years of Blessing

The general dead will be raised to hear the good news of the Saviour and His Kingdom. But first Satan, the enemy of God and of righteousness, who has deceived mankind, will be bound for the thousand years.

That will leave the way clear of Satan's interference, so that the dead when called forth will not be molested by the Evil One, and so will more readily see clearly that the reign of Christ and the Church is an accomplished fact, and that it remains with them to give their allegiance to Him.

And, in order that they may make their choice intelligently, those multitudes called forth from the

grave will be instructed—taught.

They will be shown the falsity of the idolatries of the nations and of the perverted so-called Christian teachings which have deceived the masses of humanity.

For example, the erroneous teaching concerning the state of the dead—that the wicked are alive forever and ever in a place of eternal torment from which there will be no release. Thus many have been driven into infidelity who rightly could not comprehend a God of love arranging eternal agony even for His enemies.

Conquerors in the Kingdom Age

Just how much of the Thousand Years will be occupied with the instruction of those dead who will be from time to time called forth before the final test (so there will be no confusion), is not stated.

But there will be conquerors; and there will be some who will fail to be conquerors even after full enlightenment.

Understanding of this subject has been obscured by the addition by unauthorised persons of the words (Rev. 20: 5): "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished."

Whoever added those words has done incalculable harm by giving the impression that the majority of mankind who have died in ignorance would receive no benefit from that glorious Reign of a Thousand Years.

Whereas the words, "This is the first resurrection" (vs. 5) follow verse 4, showing that the overcomers (vs. 4) who are to live and reign with Christ have part in the *first resurrection*, which will take place at the Lord's return: at the *beginning* of the Thousand years.

And that these overcomers raised to be with and like the Lord will engage in a wonderful work of benevolence is shown in verse 6, still continuing the explanation of the work the overcomers will engage in during the thousand years; namely,

"... on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

A reigning priesthood is here pictured. Jesus Christ, the High Priest, gave Himself as the sacrifice. The "overcomers," those who believe in Him during the Gospel age, are rewarded with the privilege of engaging with Him—not at all as part of the sacrifice and ransom, but engaging in that other part of a priest's duties; namely, *instructing the people*. (Leviticus, chapters 21, 22.)

And this instruction is not given by the saints of the Gospel age coming to live on the earth (as some erroneously think), but by the "ancient worthies"; that is, those who were faithful to God in the previous ages, and whose reward is to be a resurrection in human perfection: as Adam was originally created.

Those ancient worthies looked forward to the Deliverer on the basis of Old Testament promises, and they were

*The words—"and in your spirit, which are God's"—are not found in the most ancient Greek MSS., and are omitted from the Revised Version. Therefore should not be taken as an inspired statement.

Conquerors in Their Time

Hence will be qualified to serve as instructors of the generality of mankind during the Kingdom age.

And then a test will come upon those resurrected and instructed human beings. Will they become obedient and remain obedient? Will they love God and Christ (as they should), and desire to serve them for ever?

Tests of Loyalty

Revelation 20: 7 says that at the end of the thousand years every individual human being will be tested as to His loyalty to God.

Death and Hell (*Hades*) will be cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and the false prophet were cast. That is, there will be no further use for death and the grave.

The test of every one enjoying the advantages of the Kingdom age will be individual. After having been given full knowledge, the final test will be necessary in order that each individual may be tested as to his suitability to receive eternal life; for God designs to rid the universe of sin and sinners. Rev. 22: 3 says, "And there shall be no more curse."

The "Conquerors" in the Kingdom age will be those who line themselves up beside the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Conqueror of Sin and Death.

The earthly administration will be in the hands of the faithful who lived in the ages before Christ opened the High Calling. And the dead (not previously judged) called forth will be judged under these rulers of that glorious Kingdom—during which time Satan will be bound. Any so perverse as to go against God and Christ will prove themselves to be rebels, and with Satan shall be destroyed in the Second Death.

As it was God's purpose from the beginning to have man as ruler over the earth and in control of its animals, etc., etc., we can see that a genuine conqueror of self will fall in line with God's requirements, and will help others to do so. Each individual will have conquered self and will have resisted the evil one. As stated in Rev. 21: 24—

"And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: And the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it."

This will be glory and honour consistent with their positions as God's people, and manifested in righteous living, and in enterprises full of ingenuity and skill, doing no harm to anyone, yet glorifying God in that all the facilities for the enjoyment and skill of perfect humanity will be provided by God himself.

Now, in our time, new discoveries and new inventions are numerous—all giving honour to God in the eyes of reasonable beings. So God throughout all future ages will be glorified by the conquering of self and the devotion to Him of all the reasonable and obedient of mankind.

More than Conquerors

Often the success of various expeditions in captives and wealth was the pride of the conquerors of the past. They were often ruthless and cruel. But we who have taken upon us the name of Christ, and are seeking to do His will, are "more than conquerors through him that loved us." We have endeavoured to conquer by love—showing ourselves the children of the God of love, the disciples of Jesus who so loved us. Love is the mainspring of our actions.

The Kingdom age rule is to demonstrate the advantages of obedience to God, the richness of His love, and His triumph over all that men and Satan could devise to the contrary.

And we who love Him wish in our lives to show that superiority of faith and obedience even now—in the midst of a world of selfishness and sin.

"More than conquerors" means much. Conquerors of the world have been cruel and have oppressed the conquered. We are privileged to be "more than" such conquerors. To be patient and generous with the world as they are being taught in the Kingdom age. To help them also to be conquerors through Jesus Christ, who loved them even as He has loved us. As the apostle says—"more than conquerors through him."

More than conquerors? Yes, more than conquerors through Him that loved us; through Him that showed us the way of love and kindness, patience and helpfulness—through Him that loved us and gave Himself for us—to whom be glory and honour forevermore!

—R. B. H.



My Prayer

BEING perplexed, I say,
Lord, make it right!
Night is as day, to thee,
Darkness is light.
I am afraid to touch
Things that involve so much.
My trembling hand may shake,
My unskilled hand may break;
Thine can make no mistake.

Being in doubt, I say,
Lord, make it plain!
Which is the true, safe way,
Which would be vain?
I am not wise to know,
Nor sure of foot to go;
My poor eyes cannot see
What is so clear to thee—
Lord, make it clear to me.

—Author unknown

Bible Reading

Daniel 2: 44. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

Daniel 7: 14. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Luke 1: 33. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever: and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Luke 11: 20. But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

Luke 17: 20. And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:

Isaiah 49: 24. (Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?)

Luke 11: 21. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:

Luke 11: 22. But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

Luke 11: 23. He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

Matthew 20: 22. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him: We are able.

James 4: 3. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

Zechariah 2: 10. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced. And they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

Ephesians 6: 18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

1 Chronicles 28: 9. And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the (imaginations) of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.

Isaiah 7: 9. And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's (son). If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.

Proverbs 17: 3. The firing pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the Lord trieth the hearts.

Jeremiah 11: 20. But, O Lord of hosts, that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I revealed my cause.

Jeremiah 17: 10. I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

Jeremiah 20: 12. But, O Lord of hosts, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I opened my cause.

Acts 1: 24. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen.



Taking From or Adding To

(Continued from July Issue)

All this perversion of the Word and purpose of God has been allowed to go on for centuries. In the meantime the sincere who desire to worship God in spirit and in truth have been persecuted, and the difficulties of learning the truth have been increased by adding to and taking from His Word. We have therefore to thank God that in His kind providence He has preserved His truth from utter extinction, and has in these last days brought to light the testimony of the Sinaitic MS.—preserved through 15 centuries to be a witness that God's kingdom is surely coming, and that the myriads of the dead will be called from the grave by the Lord's all-powerful Voice, to experience the blessings of His millennial reign—the thousand years of the Kingdom age.

Unquenchable Fire

Since we have referred to the teaching of eternal torment as an error, it is but right to conclude with a word to those who have been taught to believe in it as a Bible teaching. God's Word is emphatic in declaring that death is the punishment for sin, and that "hell"—so long described as a place of torment—is the grave, the state of death. Two books mentioned in Book List—"Where are the Dead?" and "Everlasting Punishment" will be found helpful on this subject. And please note when reading

the ninth chapter of Mark that both the Sinaitic and the Vatican 1209 omit verses 44 and 46. But verse 48 is not omitted, and it is worth while for all God's children to inquire into the meaning of *Gehenna*, the symbol of everlasting destruction and not of torment. If we have hitherto "added" ideas we should not to the Word of God, let us henceforth be the more diligent to circulate that Word in the purest form possible in our day.

Westcott and Hort, the Revised Version, and many others give no heed to the testimony of the Sinaitic MS. on the interpolation in Revelation 20: 5, and persist in its retention in the Bible. But not all scholars are against admitting its evidence. We shall conclude by quoting one who expressed himself very positively in favor of accepting the Sinaitic MS. and all that is implied by the discovery that the words in Revelation 20: 5 were an interpolation. In his work entitled "The Apocalypse Translated and Expounded," published in 1872, the Rev. James Glasgow, D.D., said—

"This is the first resurrection." Before these words the common text has, "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." What weight should be attached to these words, is a grave question, as a preponderance of evidence seems to mark them as not of the text.

(a) The Codex Sinaiticus wants them; and as it is the

oldest and completest copy of the Greek New Testament known to exist, it would involve a very onerous responsibility to receive the words in opposition to it, unless there were opposite evidences to outweigh this. It is true that the Codex Alexandrinus has part of the words with a little emendation,* but the copies that have them vary very considerably. Thus A has *hoi loipoi*; B has *kai hoi loipoi*;† the common text, *hoi de loipoi*; A has *exeson*; the common text, *anexesan*; Andreas, *anestesan*; A has *achri*; the common text, *eos*, etc. This rather tends to open than to settle the question, since the difference in the words would lead to the supposition of a marginal entry afterwards brought into the text.

(b) The Syriac version omits the words—dated beginning of sixth century.

(c) The Codex B, of the eighth century has them; also the Latin.

Thus the supporters of these words may feel that at best they are very questionable. And he would be a hardy advocate of a theory who would rest so much of his cause on these words as was formerly done. But I go further, and think we cannot on the ground of sufficient evidence prove them textual, 1. because the most ancient codex wants them, as well as the Syriac version and twenty other copies; 2. because the copies that have them vary; 3. because they are at best a parenthesis breaking the sense, and having all the appearance of an interpolation, not like anything else in the New Testament [or the Old, we might add—Editor N.C.A.] They state that "the rest of the dead lived not," and yet they are followed immediately by "this is the first resurrection." That cannot be a resurrection of such as did not rise. The first resurrection is predicted of those who "lived and reigned with Christ the thousand years."

Here we have an orthodox Doctor of Divinity frankly and honestly admitting that the omission of these words must affect the belief of all true Christians who had previously based their conception of the Thousand Years upon the words. While there was no evidence against the interpolated words Christians had no authority for rejecting them. But now that the Sinaitic MS. has been found, and gives its evidence that the words are an interpolation, we may and should reject them. And in rejecting them

*The Alexandrine MS. omits the words "But" and "again" from the interpolated sentence, and the Revised Version omits them (though with not a single word of explanation that its authority for doing so is the Alexandrine MS.). Yet the omission of the entire sentence from the Sinaitic MS., a hundred years older than the Alexandrine, is completely ignored by the Revisers. They refer to "some ancient authorities" as having "the" instead of "a" before the "thousand years" in verse 6, but completely ignore the most ancient MS.—the Sinaitic—in connection with verse 5.—Editor N.C.A.

†The B here referred to is of the 8th century, not the B Vatican 1209 MS. of the 4th century.—Editor N.C.A.

let us have it clearly in our minds that we are *not* taking away from "the words of the prophecy of this book" as given to John; on the contrary we are rejecting the unauthorized words *added* to the text some time in the fifth century, these interpolated words being in contradiction of all Scripture statements on the resurrection. Those in the graves who are to hear the voice of the Son of man and come forth comprise some raised to life, and others raised to judgment. And the thousand years of Christ's reign is the judgment to which they will be brought forth; for in the Scriptures judge stands for a ruler, such as Moses, Joshua, Othniel, and others mentioned in the Book of Judges, who "judged" Israel by ruling over them, securing their safety, and encouraging them in obedience to the Law God had given them. When the thousand years reign of Christ and the Church is seen to be the period set apart in God's purpose for the blessing and enlightenment of the myriads of humanity now resting in their graves, we are caused to rejoice and joy exceedingly.

We cannot take the advice of the American journal to "paste this in your Bible," when "this" is an offhand way of ignoring the Sinaitic MS. which the Lord has very evidently preserved until our day to give its testimony against unauthorized words added to the Revelation. But we do want to have indelibly impressed upon our minds and hearts the good news that the Sinaitic MS., by not containing those words, has given us a New Testament in perfect harmony with itself concerning the resurrection and enlightenment of the families of the earth during the Thousand Years. For this the whole creation waits, as the apostle Paul so eloquently tells us in Romans 8: 19-22. Then indeed shall death be "swallowed up in victory." (Isaiah 25: 6-9; 1 Corinthians 15: 54.) Other passages of Scripture confirmatory will be found in "Bible Talks for Heart and Mind," also in our issues of October 1912 and September 1921.

The apostle tells us that every man should be able to give a reason for the hope within him with meekness and fear. We trust this review of the evidence of the manuscripts will assist the brethren to give a reason for the hope when confronted with objections. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."



Conscience and Sin

AS WE ARE told in Rom. 2: 12-15, every human being has a conscience. Conscience is defined by the "Standard Dictionary" as "1. The power or faculty which distinguishes between right and wrong; moral sense. 2. Conformity in conduct to one's conceptions of right and wrong. 3. Conscientiousness." A person is said to be "conscientious" when his conduct is "Governed or dictated by conscience."

The possession of a conscience, or moral sense, distinguishes a man from the brute creation. By it, combined with a mind capable of reason, he is able to classify certain things as right, and certain other things as wrong. A man is said to have "no conscience" when he does as he pleases without regard to who is injured or inconvenienced; yet even in such a case the man probably has a standard of some sort, as evidenced by the saying, "honour

among thieves." Though a thief, there are some things he will not do, such as betray a "pal." To him, stealing is right, but treachery is wrong.

Conscience, in itself, does not make certain acts right and certain other acts wrong. The right or wrong of an action is something outside conscience; conscience being only that faculty which "distinguishes between" the two. This accounts for the fact that two equally conscientious persons may adopt exactly opposite courses in regard to some important question. For example, the Apostle Paul, or Saul as he then was, persecuted the Christians, and consented to their death, while other Jews accepted Christ and regarded Saul's opposition as altogether wrong. The stoning to which Saul consented was practised in the name of the Law, which prescribed that form of punishment for blasphemy. (Lev. 24: 16.) When executed in accordance with the Law, stoning was right; when used against converts to Christianity, it was wrong. In later years Paul acknowledged that he did wrong, but he says truthfully that he did as he did "in all good conscience."—Acts 7: 57-60; 22: 4-7; 23: 1.

A Standard for the Conscience

Paul's conscience proved to be an insufficient guide; and every other man discovers the same thing about his own, if he gives the subject due thought. What each one needs is a standard of right, up to which his conscience and reason can be trained. And the God who made man with a moral sense, or ability to distinguish between right and wrong, gave also that perfect standard of right by which every thought and act could be measured. We see this in the garden of Eden. The standard of right there given was a very simple one. It consisted of one general command of obedience to the Creator. Though simple, this command was quite sufficient, because both Adam and Eve had been created perfect, and therefore all their bodily functions and mental powers worked harmoniously together. They had no abnormal development of acquisitiveness or combativeness or pride to lead them astray, and against which they were obliged to wage constant warfare, as is the case with many of their descendants. There was nothing in their characters or dispositions that required to be set before them as transgressing some code. As created, they could have lived righteously forever, in harmony with God, and in perfect happiness.

But the tree placed in the midst of the garden was a test of their obedience. The fruit of this tree was good for food, as they afterwards discovered; but, without having tasted it, they would not have known this, and its beauty would have been sufficient attraction in their eyes. We may say this because our modern gardens contain trees with fruit that all admire but never think of eating. We stress the point that this was a literal tree, and that there was no necessity for our first parents to taste it. Since God had forbidden them to do so, loyalty and appreciation of His goodness and the many privileges they enjoyed should have been strong enough sentiments to keep them from trans-

gression.

However, as after events proved, they were inexperienced. They did not fully understand their position, they were totally ignorant of what sin was, and had little if any conception of what the death threatened in case of disobedience would mean; though, since animals are not immortal, they may have seen death in the lower creation. When Satan came with his temptation they knew it was wrong to yield, for Eve repeats God's command not to eat of the tree in the midst of the garden, and considers that a sufficient reason for not doing so. Here was the Standard by which her conscience could and did measure or test the suggested act. Not only so, she repeated the statement of the penalty attached to infringement of God's command, and expressed, and probably had, no doubt that God would do as stated.

Sin Made Attractive

Satan's device to induce the sin was to make it attractive. First, there would be no evil consequences: "Ye shall not surely die." Second, there were three distinct advantages—(1) she would see things she never saw before: "your eyes shall be opened," (2) they would increase their powers to equal those of the angels, who talked with them in the garden: "ye shall be as gods;" (3) to know evil as well as good would be a decided advantage over their present status of knowing only good, and that knowledge was a prerogative of the "gods," Satan said. We must observe that in these statements, though made to Eve only, the plural form was used. Also that, in each of these statements, Satan lied.

But even yet Satan had not won her over. All these were appeals to the imagination—advantages to be gained by following the advice given; and doubtless Satan would represent himself as one who had experienced those advantages; but still, these were only pictures of possibilities for her to contemplate. The next move was a more practical appeal. Somehow Eve was given the idea that the fruit was also good for food—whether by seeing the serpent eat it, or by some other means. The whole suggested transgression was made to appear as something very good and desirable, and in this way the thought of it as a sin was minimized, if not temporarily obliterated.

The Apostle Paul intimates something of this kind when he says, "the woman being deceived." But, though deceived, her act was nevertheless a transgression. (1 Tim. 2: 14.) In fact, it may be said her transgression began even before actually partaking of the tree. It was wrong to listen when Satan suggested that God her Creator was jealous, and for that reason did not want her to eat the fruit. All her experience of God was that He was good. Yet she allowed the slur against Him to take root in her mind. Thus pride and perversity were aroused in her.

How often since then the tempter has used these subtleties, to lead astray Eve's descendants! Making evil appear good; suggesting that parents, or friends, or brethren in Christ who seek our highest

welfare are actuated by selfish or mean motives when they advise us to pursue, or avoid, a certain course.

Just what was said to Adam is not recorded. The bare fact is stated, that Eve "gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." Does this mean that he was "with her" when the serpent tempted her, and that he readily fell in with the proposition? Paul says that Adam was "not deceived"—obviously meaning that the serpent had not directly assailed him. He was probably equally convinced both as to God's jealousy and the advantages of eating of the forbidden fruit.

What about their consciences, their ability to "distinguish between right and wrong," between good and evil? We reply: They had been carried off their feet by eagerness to obtain something they were led to believe would "make them wise" (Gen. 3: 6), and conscience was in abeyance—asleep.

As God had made them perfect, their ability to distinguish was also perfect. What they lacked was knowledge and experience. After they had eaten, they realized certain facts that they had not particularly noticed previously, and that realization doubtless recalled their minds to what God had said. Thus conscience was again awakened, and began to exercise itself on the new set of circumstances, with the result that they now concluded the serpent was wrong and God was right. Hence their fear, and hiding themselves in the garden. Then, as one wrong usually leads to another, Adam blamed Eve for giving him the fruit, and sought to cast a reflection on the Almighty, because He gave him this woman—"the woman whom thou gavest to be with me" (not a chattel, but a companion), and Eve blamed the serpent for beguiling her. But this effort to shift the responsibility did not save them from punishment. They were driven out of the garden, and subsequently died, in accordance with the penalty attached to the command.—Gen. 3: 9-24.

Later events show that both were sorry for their wrongdoing, and that by the offering of animal sacrifices they maintained relations with God, even in the midst of the cursed earth. Their experience served to confirm their faith in and reliance upon God, and their consciences would more readily discern between good and evil under subsequent temptations.

As the Serpent Beguiled Eve

The method of Eve's temptation is an important study for the Christian, because the Apostle says there is danger—"lest as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." (2 Cor. 11: 3.) Thus the temptation of Eve is described as a corruption of the mind, and we are warned that Satan is ready to corrupt our minds by the same means used so successfully with Eve.

And have we not found it so—both in our own experience, and in what we see of the experience of others? Flattery, promises of increased "wisdom," slanders against the faithful brethren, as evil men in the Corinthian church were Satan's

agents in slandering the Apostle Paul, against which slanders he so vigorously defends himself in the remainder of 2 Cor. 11. He says "deceitful workers" were at work among them, "and no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." (Vs. 13, 14.) How cunningly temptations are set before us as "light"; false beliefs and wrong actions are glorified. Sin is made to appear attractive; and, unless we are very much on our guard, our consciences will be numbed, and we will be carried away from the Lord and the truth.

Training the Conscience

This brings us back again to our first proposition; namely, that it is necessary to have a Standard for the conscience. If a standard is not given by some Higher Power, men make a standard for themselves. Since men, however ignorant and degraded they may be, are so constituted that some things appear to them to be "right" while other things appear to them to be "wrong," it follows that each man will build up for himself a double column of things permissible and things forbidden, and will more or less live up to that standard. The savage chief usually takes it upon himself to set up a standard for his tribe; or, he may place that duty upon his "medicine man." When a number of men meet together to form a State, one of their first acts is to set up a code of laws by which the subjects of the state shall be guided; and in ecclesiastical States these laws include so-called religious duties, which are imposed on the consciences of the people as being even more important than the civil and criminal codes.

The Standard by which the Jews were to regulate their consciences was the Law given at Sinai and the subsequent teachings of the Prophets. In Rom. 2: 12 the Apostle divides mankind into two classes—those under the Jewish law, and those not under it; namely, Jews and Gentiles. When he says (verse 14), "the Gentiles, which have not the law," he means the Jewish law. The Gentiles who had not the Jewish law were not entirely without law, he says, because they "are a law unto themselves." They make their own laws, whether individual or State, and govern their actions by them. And, he adds, a comparison between the Jewish law and the law of the Gentile nations shows that in some particulars they are alike. For instance, the Jewish law said, "Thou shalt not kill." Practically all other nations also have a law making murder a crime. The Jewish law prescribed for the punishment of the murderer; so does practically every other code of laws adopted by the Gentile tribes and nations. And then he refers to the Gentile consciences—"their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." (Rom. 2: 15.) What he is driving at in this parenthesis (which begins properly at verse 7 and ends with verse 15) is to show that both Jews and Gentiles were handicapped by their laws. According to the Jewish law, only the doer of it was justified. As a consequence, every Jew died, being condemned by the law. (Compare Gal.

3: 10; Rom. 7: 10; Jas. 2: 10.) The Gentiles are no better off, for they all die. (Verse 12.) And their own consciences condemn them, for sometimes they excuse and sometimes they accuse; thus showing not only that their standards vary, but also that their consciences are often troubled, and they find it difficult to decide what is right.

Now if we read verse 6 and then verse 16, we will find that Paul is telling both Jew and Gentile that God has set up a new Standard for the guidance of men's consciences—one common Standard for both. All nations, of every race and clime, are now called upon to regulate their lives and their consciences by the Gospel—

"Who will render to every man according to his deeds: in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."—Rom. 2: 6, 16.

If the "secrets of men" (that is, their thoughts and consciences) are to be judged by Jesus Christ according to the Gospel, is that not a strong hint to every Jew and every Gentile to cease regulating his conscience and his thoughts and ideas by either the Sinaitic Law or the Gentile codes (whether national or individual), and to regulate them by the new Standard which Christ has set up? Is it not equivalent to a command to at once begin the training of the conscience according to the will of Christ the Lord?

Why listen to the subtleties of Satan, as they became largely attached to the Jewish Law by tradition, or as they are embodied in man-made laws and creeds, or as they are presented to our individual minds from one source and another, when we can daily, hourly, meditate upon the holy Word of God, and in it find direction for every circumstance of life?

Even now the Lord judges the secrets of our hearts—i.e., of those who know Him, and are therefore responsible to obey Him. (1 Pet. 4: 15-19; Heb. 4: 12; 1 Cor. 11: 27-32; Heb. 10: 26-31.) How important, then, that we train our consciences according to the Standard which He has set before us in the Gospel, and which in 2 Cor. 11: 3 is spoken of as "simplicity" compared with the "subtleties" of Satan, and his emissaries. James calls it "the law of liberty."—Jas. 2: 12.

Not for nought does the New Testament contain explicit directions for the guidance of God's people. It is that we may train our consciences according to a definite Standard, that we may not be tossed hither and thither as were the Jews and the well-meaning Gentiles, never knowing whether this or that is right; but that we may be rooted and grounded and built up in love and every other virtue and grace.—Eph. 4: 13-21.

Prejudice Hampers Conscience

We have seen that man was created with a conscience; that is, with the faculty of distinguishing between right and wrong. We have also seen that though man fell from the state of innocence and perfection in which he was created, the faculty of conscience still persisted; for even degraded and benighted savages distinguish between certain things

as right and other certain things as wrong; while the Jews, who lived centuries after the Fall, were continually exercising their consciences in regard to the things permitted in, or forbidden by, their Law. Furthermore, we have found that conscience is not in itself a sufficient guide; that conduct must be measured by some definite standard up to which conscience can be educated.

For conscience to act intelligently in the choice of the good, knowledge is necessary. But conscience can deal only with such information as is laid before it by the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell), and by the other faculties of the mind (reason, combativeness, veneration, etc.), aided by memory. Where any of the five senses are defective, or the faculties of the mind uncultivated, conscience is handicapped, and the person so limited must use special caution in coming to conclusions.

Prejudice and false information hamper the conscience. Had Saul of Tarsus realized that his knowledge of the Christians was defective, his conscience would not have permitted him to persecute the disciples. He said long afterward—"Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." (1 Tim. 1: 13.) Notice that his ignorance neither justified his act nor made it right; ignorance was only a ground on which he might plead for mercy from the Lord whom he persecuted in the persons of His followers. (Acts 9: 5.) Prejudice and unbelief had up to that time hindered him from securing the necessary knowledge by which to come to a right judgment. This necessary knowledge was to be found only in the Scriptures; and Saul of Tarsus, in common with many other Jews of the time, had failed to search the Scriptures along right lines, though they were well versed in the traditions of the elders and scribes. Apparently he also ignored John's mission.

A New Start with a Clear Conscience

We have said that the New Testament contains the standard by which the conscience should be measured and trained. But, before that training can begin, it is necessary for us to have all the old burdens on our conscience removed. And, before that removal can take place, we must be brought to a state of mind in which we will not only recognize that we have such burdens, but be anxious to go about getting rid of them in the way the Lord indicates. This first step is called repentance. The next step is to ask God's forgiveness, in the name of Jesus, for the numerous transgressions and faults, of omission and commission. This brings us to the place where we can accept Rom. 3: 24 and similar statements as applicable to ourselves. By faith we accept the statements here made that, on account of our faith in Christ and our acceptance of His finished work, all the sins of our past life are forgiven and removed. Thus our conscience is made clear. Its burden of sin is gone. The mind is no longer weighed down by a sense of guilt. The blood of Jesus has cleansed the conscience, and we are

at peace with God.—Heb. 9: 14; 1 John 1: 8-10; 2: 2; Eph. 4: 32; Rom. 5: 1.

Heb. 9: 14 has a special application to the Jew in this connection. His conscience was burdened by the "dead works" of the Law. That is, the Jew, while continually striving to keep the Law, found himself unable to do so, and thus his works or efforts were fitly called "dead works." They were, despite

his best endeavours, short of perfection, and therefore he came under condemnation, as explained in Rom. 7. In this chapter Paul paints himself as an example of a sincere Jew, not doing what he would, and doing what he would not, until he felt like a prisoner chained to a dead body. Thus heavily did these "dead works" lie on the conscience of a sincere Jew.

(Continued in September Issue)

From Far and Near

THE FACT that we are able to hear from "Far" as well as from "Near" is a testimony to the glory of God, inasmuch as the world is now in one of the worst times of trouble which mankind has known. But God knew it was coming, for the prophet Daniel had been inspired to foretell it; and our blessed Lord while on earth had warned His disciples to be on the watch, lest that day come upon them unawares.—Matthew, chapters 24 and 25.

It is encouraging to find that old friends still rejoice in the good tidings and in its service. And newly interested readers are also encouraging us with their co-operation and fellowship in the service. For examples, read the following and receive encouragement also.

You have been forwarding to me the N.C.A. for some time now, and I have received many a blessing from them, after which I have been handing them on to others.

As the Lord gives me opportunity I pass the Good News of Salvation and His Kingdom on to others, and at times I've often wished I had some reading matter to pass on for instruction to others who are interested.

I have a wonderful opportunity to help others now, so will you forward to me the following publications:—

- 1 copy "Bible Talks for Heart and Mind";
- 2 copies "The Parables of Our Lord";

And will you please send with the above some tracts for distribution also. I have one tract here called "The Blessing of All Nations," and if it is possible would like a few more of these. And renew N.C.A. subscription. . . .

Yours in the service of Christ, —, Western Australia.

Dear Friends,—

I have been thinking many times of writing you long before this, but now I am going to do it finally. So please pardon my delay, so far.

I have been receiving your most valuable little paper, the "New Covenant Advocate," quite regularly, considering the times we now live in. The last Feb. issue came through on the 29th of March, and I am most gratified that none of the issues so far has gone lost by ship sinkings out there in your troubled seas.

And I have been saving up a little fund regularly for to send to you, for your "N.C.A. Sustaining Fund," or to whichever you may need to apply it to most. So I have

nearly \$5.00 by now, but I have been a little wary of sending it as yet on account of the unsettled conditions out there in that ocean, thinking it might get sunk.

I also received the parcel of books sent me about two years ago, or more. They arrived in good condition, and had not been opened by anyone in transit, and came the way you had packed them. But it took about three months from the time I sent to you for them, till I received them by mail. So I guess it takes some time for the boats to make the trip, and especially now-a-days.

I want to buy still one more book from you, and also a few booklets too, as follows:—

- Comparisons and Contrasts, paper covers, 75 cents.
- Christ's Prophecy on Olivet, paper covers, 25 cents.
- Christ's Promised Return, paper covers, 28 cents.
- The Inspiration of the Bible, paper covers, 12 cents.
- The Divine Healer, paper covers, 12 cents.
- Do the Dead Communicate?, paper covers, 12 cents.

And also if you have a few extra tracts of these titles: "The Wideness of God's Mercy," "Planning a World"—and include them with the books. I will be glad to do my best to distribute them, and send about 25 of each. I have distributed the last lot you sent me.

I also wonder if you have many years back from 1938 of Volumes of the N.C.A. complete? If so, let me know, and I may consider buying some of them later; for I find that I need some of them to refer back to from time to time as I progress in my studies in the Scriptures.

And I wish to thank you so much for keeping sending me the N.C.A. I am reading every issue regularly, and also loaning them out at times to them that are interested enough to want to read. And I want you to keep on sending them, and I will do my best to compensate for your kind deeds; for each issue is much appreciated by me, and I have learned much about the Scriptures, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, from the help of your N.C.A. and your books and Bible.

I have been thinking for some time past, that there should have been some kind of a branch, for your books, magazine and literature, some place here in Canada also, same as in England and the U.S.A. And I would be glad to help if it could be possible to get such a branch started. For I sincerely believe you have as near the right teachings of the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as there is to be found in these latter days on earth.

With my best wishes, and may God bless you, and all of you down there in Australia, in your most wonderful work.

I am, most sincerely, —, Canada.

The New Covenant Advocate

and Kingdom Herald

A Monthly Paper for the Exposition of Bible Truths. R. B. HENNINGES, Editor.

Yearly Subscription Price (including postage)—
In Australia and New Zealand . . . 4/-
In other Countries . . . 5/-; \$1.25
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(Address all Mail only to P.O. Box 797)
MELBOURNE, C.I., AUSTRALIA.
Melbourne Telephone—Central 8041.
80 Shadwell Road, Bristol 7, England.
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—SINCE OUR LAST ISSUE

PROPHECY has been fulfilling. Some students of prophecy make mistakes in their interpretations: Applying a prophecy to the wrong time for fulfilment, and (or) giving a mistaken interpretation of the prophecy. Some interpreters make both mistakes. And their mistakes in time are often accompanied by wrong ideas as to what to expect.

THE ADVENTIST movement of early in last century made the mistake of supposing that Jesus Christ was a man in heaven and would come down as a man of flesh and blood to establish His kingdom on earth. Many Adventists to this day still look for Jesus to come in the flesh, and appoint them in the flesh as honorary rulers in that kingdom on earth.

THAT VIEW is based largely on a misunderstanding of our Lord's words to the disciples after His resurrection, as related in Luke 24: 36. At first they failed to understand that the object of appearing thus in flesh recognizable by them was to prove to them (and to all others to whom the apostles would relate the incident) that He was the same Jesus. While the appearing suddenly as from nowhere and then as suddenly disappearing from their sight, would prove that He was no longer a flesh being.

MANY Christians who fail to understand that Jesus was a Spirit Being with the Father in heaven, and was God's instrument in the creation (as related in John 1: 1-5), think of Him only as a flesh being. But a little thinking should show that only a very intelligent as well as powerful Being could create or bring into existence the animal creation of which mankind is the highest example. For man was made in the image and likeness of God, and fitted to have rulership over the earth.

BUT even before man sinned, and the death penalty was pronounced upon him, the Heavenly Father had foreseen the fall into sin, and had provided a remedy in that Jesus the First Born of all creation would become a man—crowned with the glory and honour of perfect manhood; "that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."—Heb. 2: 9; Heb. 2: 5, 6.

DEATH was the penalty—not a momentary cessation of life and a transference as a living soul to some other sphere; either of happiness or of misery, as many creeds state—but to die and remain in THE GRAVE; spoken of as Hebrew, "sheol;" Greek, "Hades." In other words, to

SLEEP until the resurrection morning. Then the Lord Jesus will call forth His joint heirs—chosen during the Gospel age—to be kings and priests and reign with Him the Thousand Years. To call forth the general dead will be a wonderful work, and their enlightenment will enable them to make definite choice as to whether they appreciate the privilege offered them of living forever on earth, and fulfilling this prayer—"Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven." And the "Ancient Worthies" will be the human rulers under the reign of Christ and the Church.

GROANING indeed is humanity to-day. The last war was spoken of as the worst man had known. But everyone can see that this one is very literally a "world war." How long it will continue, and who will be the victors we cannot prophesy. Nor can anyone say with certainty that there will not come a peace signature on the terms laid down by the victors—or by mutual concessions and willingness to try again to make a "better" world.

A "NEW HEAVEN," or ruling power, as well as a new Earth (or organisation of mankind under that new heavens) is what prophecy declares must come before the Lord's prayer given the disciples can be fulfilled—Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. And, to accomplish this, strong forces will be necessary.

Do we see these new authorities in occupation now? Not forgetting that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will have a ruling place on earth as a reward for their faith and obedience to God in their lifetime, with no promise of heaven, as was afterward given to the apostles and other faithful followers by the Lord Jesus. Let us who are living to-day be diligent in faith and service, that we may reign with Christ in glory.

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The New Covenant Advocate

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Kingdom Herald

VOL. 35.

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, SEPTEMBER, 1943.

No. 6.

How To Read The Bible

OUR ATTENTION is drawn to the subject of Bible reading, or how to read the Bible satisfactorily.

As we all know, there are many thousands who do not even know that there is a Bible: these are left out of our consideration for the present. Then there are a good number who do know about the Bible and perhaps hardly ever read it: in fact, in almost all cases they never read it; they think the Bible too dry. Then there are those who do read the Bible, and read it fairly often: some of them manage to read it through once a year, and allot certain passages or chapters to be read daily; so that from Jan. 1st to December 31st they have traversed the whole of the Old and New Testaments. This is not a bad plan at all. But some read the Bible as a mere duty, reading a few verses, or maybe a chapter, daily as a duty performed, but they get little or no satisfaction from doing so.

There are many who read the Bible in an argumentative spirit; that is, for the purpose of adopting a criticising attitude towards others, and for finding fault with others: and if they succeed in picking someone to pieces by comparing their conduct with rules laid down in the

Scriptures, they derive some satisfaction or pleasure from it. Many read the Bible now and then, merely to satisfy their curiosity, and expect to be able to understand God's Word by this method; and

if there were no higher motive than this—well, it had better be left alone—unless, indeed, curiosity should come across something to touch the mind and heart, and so the curious one be led to become a genuine truth-seeker.

There are some who say that the Bible is far too difficult to understand, and after making attempts to read it they give it up in despair. They say that the prophecies of Daniel and Ezekiel, and other prophecies, are far too difficult, and that the Book of Revelation is quite impossible to be understood, and that God never meant it to be understood. But to this we reply, If this were so, the book would not be true to its name, for the very word "Revelation" means something revealed.

The highly symbolic language of the book, and also of the prophecies, deters many from reading the Bible, so they give it up as unsatisfactory. But it should be remembered that symbolic language is not by any means confined to the Bible. It is used commonly

HELL

Not an explosive word this time, but one which occurs in the Bible, and requires explanation.

Together with certain related words and phrases, the words translated "hell" are found about 100 times in the Bible.

All are acquainted with the tradition according to which "hell" is supposed to be a very hot place.

But tradition is often wrong. In this case it fearfully dishonors our loving heavenly Father.

Are you aware that in the Old Testament Authorized Version sheol is translated "grave" exactly as often as "hell"—31 times each—and "pit" thrice?

Consider that the grave is cold, dark, and silent; not hot, lit up, and noisy.

Job, suffering the agony of many boils, prayed to be hidden in sheol. Would he have prayed thus had sheol ("hell," "the grave") been a worse state than the one he was in?—Read Job 14: 13.

In the Bible both good and evil people are said to go to sheol when they die, there to sleep with their fathers until the resurrection morning.—1 Kings 2: 10; 22: 40.

This helps us to see that sheol is the "grave."

In the New Testament the Greek word *hades* translates the Old Testament word *sheol* (Psalm 16: 10; Acts 2: 27, 31), showing that *hades* also means "grave," as it is given in 1 Cor. 15: 55.

What a blow to tradition it would have been to translate this verse—"O Hell, where is thy victory!"

What is more, "hell" in old English meant "grave," like *sheol* and *hades*.

The English farmer 400 years ago used to speak of "helling" his turnips. He did not mean that he would torment them; he would bury them in a pit to protect them from frost.—See Dictionary.

Finally, hell is not everlasting. It is to be destroyed. God has said it.—Rev. 20: 14.

"O Hell, I will be thy destruction."—Hosea 13: 14.

in our every day speech, and often conveys our meaning more forcibly than if plain speech were used. We propose therefore to try and find a way of reading the Bible which will be satisfactory to us, and make it worth while.

Some may say, "Oh, you can twist the Scriptures and make them mean anything!" And so we could, if the Bible were the work of men and its authorship were of various sources. But let us see if the Bible itself shows us a satisfactory method of reading. In 2 Peter 1: 20, 21 we read—"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

Divine Authorship

So here we see that the authorship of the Bible is divine. God was its author, and He it was who moved the holy men to write it, and thus preserve His Word for all mankind to read.

We are not to put any private interpretation on the Scriptures; rather we must seek to be guided by the Holy Spirit to the true meaning as intended by the Lord. But before trying to understand the doctrines of the Bible, we must be tolerably familiar with the text, and the only way to become so is to read it. Read it carefully and thoughtfully, not skimming over any parts. We could not expect to understand the book of Genesis, for example, by merely what we heard others say of it, or by hearing a few quotations occasionally. We must read it all through to see really what is said there.

There are nowadays many helps for studying the Bible—we have concordances, various translations, lexicons, etc., and these are very useful in the study of God's Word.

Willingness

But before all these there is something else very necessary. Before we can study the Bible in a manner satisfactory to ourselves, and in a way pleasing to the Almighty, we must have the spirit of devotion and of willingness to do His will. So our Lord said to the Jews when they marvelled at His wisdom (John 7: 16, 17)—"My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

But some will say, "How can we imperfect beings do God's will? Why, the thing is impossible." To this we answer that the Authorised Version does not adequately express the sense. The Revised Version is better—"If any man *willeth to do his will*." So if anyone is willing to do God's will, if he makes up his mind that he really desires to know God's gracious purposes, if he really submits his own mind to God, the promise is that he shall be given understanding.

Before hastily fixing on one Scripture to support a certain idea, we must see if the Bible says anything more concerning this idea. We must adopt the principle of comparing Scripture with Scripture, and thoroughly test every reference bearing on the subject.

Without our submission to God's will we cannot hope to understand His word. With all the translations, concordances, and lexicons we may fail to understand—if our mind is not devoted to God.

On the other hand, with the cheapest Bible obtainable—without references, and without any concordances or lexicons—we may yet come to an accurate understanding of Scripture.

Take for instance the disciples and other believers of those times. They had no New Testament Scripture, such as we have, to help them to understand the Gospel teaching, and yet they understood what they were taught. But even if they had had the New Testament, many of them could not have read it, for they were uneducated. But their wills were submitted to God, and their minds were eager to do His will, and they diligently searched the Old Testament which they did have, and that is why they were able to take in what the Lord and the Apostles taught.—Acts 17: 11.

How to Test the Truth

Let us take an example of how to test the truth or error of some seemingly good explanation of a Bible statement or prophecy.

In Daniel's prophecy we read of an evil thing called "the abomination of desolation." This evil thing, whatever it was, was to have a terribly evil influence upon the divine worship, and some Bible students say that it referred to a king named Antiochus Epiphanes—one of the successors of Alexander the Great—who showed his contempt for the Jews and their God by sacrificing a pig upon the altar in the temple. This was an outrage to the Jews, to whom swine were unclean animals, and this act defiled the Jewish temple. And so many Bible students apply to this act of Antiochus Epiphanes the prophecy concerning the abomination of desolation. And if this were the only reference in Scripture concerning this evil thing, we might well accept it as being correct, for there seems a certain amount of plausibility in such an interpretation. But, following the method of comparing scripture with scripture, we must look further.

Let us see if our Lord has anything to say concerning this great evil, which was to have a very serious effect on God's people. Yes, there is something. Let us turn to Matt. 24: 15, and we read—"When ye therefore shall see (note the tense 'shall see') the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place." This evil thing was to stand in the holy place. Note, particularly, that our Lord said, "When ye *shall* see" this thing—showing that it was still future from our Lord's time. This shows clearly that the abomination spoken of could not refer to Antiochus Epiphanes, for he lived two or three centuries before our Lord's first advent. So by the method of comparing scripture with scripture we see that this theory is wrong.

The apostle Paul has something to say concerning this same evil thing. In 2 Thes. 2: 3, 8 Paul calls it, "the son of perdition," and "that wicked one," which he says was already in existence in his day, but was hindered from showing itself openly; and

not only this, but it was to continue for many centuries right down to the second advent of our Lord, for he says that this great evil will be destroyed then by our Lord Himself.

Other Bible students say that this "abomination of desolation" was the Roman army, which occupied Jerusalem, and variously defiled the place where the Jews worshipped. But this reasoning is at fault, for the Roman army is a thing of the past, and still the abomination continues, and will continue till destroyed at our Lord's second advent.

Every other doctrine or teaching that comes to our notice claiming to be the teaching of the Bible may be tested in the same way. The New Testament

is given us as in a large part the interpretation of the Old, and therefore must be carefully compared before any explanation of the prophecies is accepted. New Testament teachings must be tested by comparing the utterances of our Lord and the writings of the Apostles. They are all in harmony, and if they seem to contradict each other it is our ideas that are at fault and not the Bible. In a few instances faulty translations obscure the meaning, but these can easily be studied and the correct translation be found. The Editor of "The New Covenant Advocate" will be glad to answer questions of interest to readers, and to point out other helpful scriptures to those who find a difficulty in reconciling some passage they are reading with the truth as presented in these columns.



Present Your Bodies a Living Sacrifice

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

"And be not conformed to this world [age]; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."—Romans 12: 1, 2.

MERCY is always a strong incentive to gratitude, which those who have received the mercy will not only desire to feel in their hearts and minds but will seek also to manifest by suitable actions—not by way of making an equivalent payment "for value received," but as an expression of appreciation. And it is on this basis that the apostle's exhortation to the "brethren" rests.

If it be asked, What are "the mercies of God" here referred to? an answer may well be, the general mercies—food, clothing, etc.—received from day to day, conveying as they do intimations of divine favour; and doubtless such mercies are not to be ignored in this consideration. But it seems likely that the mercies mentioned in the latter part of Romans 11 are here particularly meant. There the apostle explained God's line of conduct toward Jew and Gentile, showing that He had concluded them all in unbelief that He might have mercy upon all of them who would exercise faith in Jesus Christ. This divine mercy meant that such believers would be justified on account of their faith, would receive forgiveness of sins, would be at peace with God and reconciled to Him (whereas formerly they had been estranged), and would be on the way to be made partakers of the glory of God, as joint heirs with Jesus Christ.—Romans 5: 1, 2, 11; 8: 15-18.

Greater mercies than these, particularly the last named, could not be offered. Those who become joint heirs with Jesus Christ will have received a favor, an unmerited free gift, a mercy beyond which it is not possible even for God to go on giving; for Jesus Christ is next to the Father in the universe, and others could not possibly attain to a position higher than joint heirship.

This mercy, known as the High Calling, explained in Romans 11 under the figure of the branches in the olive tree, is doubtless the one principally in mind as the basis for the exhortation in our text; and since the High Calling is the greatest favor possible for God to bestow, it constitutes the most powerful incentive conceivable to gratitude, to be manifested in every way open to us.

What does the apostle exhort the brethren to do by way of demonstrating their grateful appreciation of the abounding mercies of God? Nothing less than to "present your bodies a living sacrifice." If this appears to be carrying gratitude to the extreme, it need only be remembered that in the High Calling God has shown mercy to His uttermost possible, therefore it is fitting that we should show gratitude to our uttermost possible; and when we have done so we shall be fully aware that our uttermost gratitude is no match for God's uttermost mercy. In fact, we cannot claim to be worthy of even the least of His mercies.

A Living Sacrifice

We are exhorted to present our bodies "a living sacrifice." When animals were brought as sacrifices to God's altar in the Jewish age, they were not presented so that they might live, but so that they might die. Lambs morning and evening; every day, bullocks and goats on the day of atonement and other occasions, besides rams, heifers, and doves as required, all were brought to the Lord, and forthwith they died—were slain as the Law Covenant required—and when their bodies were actually offered they were not living sacrifices, but dead ones. Not one of the animals thus presented was retained alive, to pass the remainder of its days at the centre of divine worship as then carried on.

This being so, it is evidently NOT intended that the Lord's people in the present age should consider that any of the animals sacrificed under the Mosaic law was a shadow or in any way a type or representation of the living sacrifices now being presented

according to the apostolic exhortation. Had any of the animals presented before the Lord in the Jewish age been kept alive, and employed for the remainder of its life in some useful service for the Lord at the tabernacle or temple, such animal would doubtless have been "a living sacrifice," and would perhaps have been a foreshadowing of the Christian believer's body presented as a living sacrifice. But the simple and well-known fact is, that under the Mosaic law animals were not thus dealt with.

The animals sacrificed under the law covenant typified in their various details the one sacrifice offered "once for all" by our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on Calvary, but they represented believers not at all.

Your Reasonable Service

The apostle says that it is only a reasonable service—in present-day English we might say "only a fair thing"—that we present our bodies a living sacrifice. And certainly, as we contemplate the number and greatness of the mercies received and the trifling value of the sacrifice we are able to offer, we can but admit that the advantage of the exchange is all on our side. We are not offering a valuable consideration on account of which we might justly make a claim on the Lord. In our "living sacrifice" we are but expressing gratitude to God.

But we shall not fully comprehend the right idea of the apostle's exhortation unless we consider the meaning of the word here rendered "service." The Greek word does not mean "service" in the sense of work or labor performed, as by a slave or a hired servant, nor "services rendered" as by a professional person; it means "religious service," as the worship of God. The exhortation thus defines the presentation of our bodies a living sacrifice as our reasonable manner of worshipping God.

What can be meant by this? Divine service or worship is practised under various forms—ritualistic, more or less elaborate, in the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Anglican communions; more simple in the Protestant denominations in and since the Reformation. Are these modes, or any of them, referred to in the apostle's exhortation? The answer is, No.

What the apostle means will be discerned by considering the case of—

The Whole Time Levite

The tribe of Levi, it will be recalled, was taken for the Lord's special service in Israel as instead of the firstborn in all the tribes. The tribe of Levi was called the "house" of Aaron, who was the first high priest under the Law covenant.

This tribe had no inheritance in the land. But after the children of Israel were established in Canaan, the Levites were given cities with surrounding pasture lands located in the various tribal territories. There they sojourned in the intervals between their turns of service at the tabernacle or

temple. Having no inheritance or cultivable land, and being engaged in divinely appointed religious service on behalf of the whole of the twelve tribes, the Levites were supported by the tithes (or, tenths) of the income of the other tribes, and the pasture lands surrounding their appointed cities were given them for the accommodation of that portion of the tithes that consisted of animals. Having no inheritance in the land, the Lord was the inheritance of the Levites and the other tribes were strictly enjoined not to forget them.—Deuteronomy 18: 1-5.

But among the Levites there would be some animated by special zeal for the Lord's service. Their devotion was recognized and provided for as follows (Deuteronomy 18)—

6 And if a Levite come from any of thy gates out of all Israel, where he sojourned, and come with all the desire of his mind unto the place which the Lord shall choose:

7 Then he shall minister in the name of the Lord his God, as all his brethren the Levites do, which stand there before the Lord.

8 They shall have like portions to eat, beside that which cometh of the sale of his patrimony.

This was a Levite who desired, as the Psalmist later expressed it, to "dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." (Psalm 23: 6.) His mind was wholly on the Lord's service or worship as carried on at the tabernacle or temple, and his desire was to be associated constantly with that service for the remainder of his days. His living accommodation and other circumstances there would perhaps not be as comfortable in all respects as they would be in the city where he would sojourn between his turns of service in the ordinary way; but he was willing to forego all those considerations for the privilege of being what we have termed a "whole time Levite." So he would come "with all the desire of his mind," and would be in deed and in truth "a living sacrifice."

The Lord indicated that such a sacrifice of himself by a Levite would be acceptable, and in the passage above quoted commanded that a Levite thus presenting himself should be received and provided for. The consecration of such a Levite was complete; he "burned his bridges behind him" by selling his patrimony in the city appointed for his sojourning, thus cutting himself off from all but the Lord's service or worship at the Lord's tabernacle or temple.

Our Lord Jesus is the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec under the New Covenant, and the Gospel age church is His "house, . . ." called also in the epistle to the Hebrews (12: 23), "the church of the firstborn." The devoted mind and consequent whole-hearted action of the whole time Levite is the beautiful picture that the apostle sets before these brethren—not some of the brethren, but all the brethren—for their imitation, exhorting them to present their bodies a living sacrifice, as the whole time Levite did. As this Levite cut himself off from everything by selling even his patrimony, so the Church in this age is exhorted to forget her Adamic father's house, and to leave all behind.

Not Conformed to this Age

Says the apostle to these brethren, "And be not conformed to this age." (Rom. 12: 2.) The present evil world is round about us, and the brethren are unavoidably in it. Yet they are not to be of it, and they are to resist the pressure by which the world would mould them into conformity to itself, its spirit, and its arrangements. It is much easier and often more congenial to float unresistingly with the prevailing current than to struggle against it. But the brethren are exhorted by the apostle to take on the ceaseless struggle of nonconformity as far as this world is concerned, and to maintain it all their days.

Some Christians consider it to be their duty to attempt to remake the world. Such only bring upon themselves unnecessary trouble. The apostle's language indicates that the present evil world, or age, will retain its characteristics to the end; and elsewhere we are informed that it will be destroyed, and that a promised new one will be instituted by divine power. The duty of the brethren is therefore not to attempt the hopeless task of reforming the present evil world, but to see that they do not conform to it. This latter will be quite enough to engage all their abilities.

Be Ye Transformed

What is the nature of the transformation? On becoming a believer in Jesus Christ there is no physical alteration in the person. In respect of physique the believer is the same a moment after believing as he had been in his last moment as an unbeliever. Righteousness is imputed to him on account of his faith, but that does not alter either his material substance or (immediately) his appearance. The transformation is within—

By the Renewing of Your Mind

There are some who in these last days will rashly claim that they were "always in harmony with God in their minds," so that they claim still further, and if possible even more rashly, that they never needed Jesus Christ to act as their Mediator to reconcile them to God. In saying this, they contradict the Lord.

Our Lord said to the Pharisees that only the sick need a physician, not those that are whole; and that He had not come to call the righteous to repentance, but only sinners. Similarly we may say that the apostle's exhortation to the brethren to be "transformed by the renewing of your mind" is not for those who have "never been out of harmony with God in their minds." They would find such a transformation no advantage, but detrimental and very injurious. Poor people! they do not realize how spiritually sick they are, and how great is their need of the Physician of Souls. Poor sheep! they do not realize how seriously astray they even now are in that very wilderness of conformity to this world in which they fondly delude themselves into

thinking they have never been—not even for one moment—out of harmony with God in their minds!

But the brethren who realize where they came from, that they were born in a state of enmity toward God, and that this their natural state was manifest in both their minds and their actions, as also the apostle says (Ephesians 2: 1-3; Colossians 1: 21, 22), and who not only realise that they needed Jesus Christ to act as their Mediator to reconcile them to God, but who also "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Romans 5: 11, margin and Revised Version), the brethren, I say, can and do appreciate not only the apostle's exhortation to renewal by transformation of the mind, but also that other exhortation that probes even deeper—"be renewed in the spirit of your mind." (Ephesians 4: 23.) Appreciating these exhortations and realizing their appropriateness, the brethren willingly seek to be obedient, and submit themselves to the sanctifying influence of divine truth and the power of the Holy Spirit in their hearts and minds—knowing that only so will they be able to prove "the will of God, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."—Romans 12: 2, R.V. margin.

These last words bring us back again to the original exhortation—"present your bodies a living sacrifice." In another place the apostle says—"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification. . . ." (1 Thessalonians 4: 3.) Those who undertake the reality, of which the whole-time Levite's devotion was the shadow, find themselves sanctified, or set apart from this world. They realise that in Jesus Christ they are holy, and therefore acceptable to God. They come more and more to understand that entire devotion and whole-hearted consecration is the only reasonable or rational form of service or worship of God. They also realise that God's expectation of, and the apostle's brotherly exhortation to, this the only reasonable form of divine worship and service is well based on the mercies of God—past, present, and prospective—and that in view of these mercies, that we have received and expect to receive, such wholeheartedness on our part is "only a fair thing."

Now the question comes—Shall we permit the Levite—who had only the "shadow"—to outdo us who enjoy the "substance?" Shall the whole-time Levite be more devoted to God on account of the mercies he had than we who have the immeasurably superior mercies, even those of the High Calling? Shall his longing to dwell at the tabernacle or temple in Jerusalem for the remainder of his days be greater than ours to spend and be spent all the remainder of our days in God's service under the New Covenant? Shall His fervent zeal and whole-hearted action—going the limit in selling up his patrimony—leave us stone-cold? No, indeed! Let not the faithfulness of the whole time Levite be a reproach to any of us. By the mercies of God present your bodies, a Living Sacrifice!

Peace With Tribulation

"A New World"

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.—John 16: 33.

Peace is mentioned many times in the Scriptures, and in many different connections and relationships. But the peace Jesus refers to is possible only "in me," the Saviour says; and that peace would be the happy possession of His disciples by reason of what He had spoken to them—"These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace."

This peace did not mean doing nothing and enduring nothing, as some inexperienced beginners have thought. It meant a state of mind consistent with activity; a joy in following His example as they had personally witnessed it while following Him about in Galilee.

1. Follow His example of *serving one another*. Each to regard himself as a servant of the others. If they did so, it would contribute greatly to their peace. He said,

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." As an example of service, He—their Lord and Master—washed their feet, although they were His servants.—John 13: 4-17.

2. Follow the example of His love for them all, which was so complete as to bring Him to His death. The Lord's peace was absolute: because out of pure love He did the will of Him who sent Him. Let this love also be in you all toward each other, and *you* shall have *my* peace (John 13)—

34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

3. Take into account that He was going to prepare a place for them in the heavens. Due regard to this promise would naturally result in the preservation of peace amongst them.—John 14: 1-3.

Another Comforter Promised

He knew it would not be easy for them to do these things; and, if left to their natural abilities alone, they would certainly fail. He therefore speaks further: saying that He would pray the Father, and He would give them another Comforter; thus providing the helpful influence so essential to their encouragement, and therefore to their peace.—John 14: 16, 17, 25-27.

Himself their Example

But, lest they should be downcast by the weight of opposition and persecution and from without, He urged them to remember that "The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you:" (John 15: 20.) They would not then be perturbed or lose their calmness (their peace) under persecution.

His word is, "These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended." (John 16: 1.)

Or "stumbled" (R.V.), and so drop the whole thing when the tribulation comes. For they would remember that He told them of it:—John 15: 20.

His Care over Them

Lastly, He reminds them that there would be no lack of care for them all; for, whatsoever they would ask the Father in Jesus' name, God would give it them.—Ch. 16: 23.

All these things "spoken" (John 14: 25, and these are not the whole) should make for a sense of confidence and trust, and a realisation that their peace depended upon their individual devotion to Him their Master and to His spoken words. This was the status between Himself and the Father, which secured His own peace—"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, I give unto you."—John 14: 27.

Peace in Me

That is, in your devotion to me you shall have the same peace which subsists between the Father and me. Therefore He says—after giving the wonderful parable of the vine and its branches—"Abide in me, and I in you." That is, let your association with me continue permanently and unbroken.—John 15: 1-11.

Tribulation

And where does the tribulation come in? Is the branch not secure in the vine? Yes, it is safe, but there is purging, pruning.

It is impossible to dissociate the peace of our text from the possession of the Holy Spirit, as the vine parable shows. Paul also puts this forcibly (Rom. 15: 13)—

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit."

To believers faith and spirit of holiness are a rebuke to, and draw out the opposition of, determined evil-doers. Paul met them in plenty.

Pruning the Vine

But trouble—tribulation—overtakes us from another cause. The Lord himself takes measures against the evil that is naturally in us, and provides (or allows) tests to prove our fidelity, and for character building, which involve us in more or less distress. His measures may be financial losses, social ostracism, and the like. Not pleasant things, but experiences intended to draw us nearer to Him and lead us to experience and develop the peace that is "in me"; the Lord's peace in us.

In the World

Here it is then, in the world, that ye shall have tribulation; for the Saviour assures us of its inevitability. It awaits our development as overcomers.

To the disciples still undeveloped, and as yet without the power of the Holy Spirit within, the prospect of the tribulation ahead may have been depressing. But the Lord immediately assures them that they were to

Be of Good Cheer, or good courage, good comfort through it all; for

I have overcome the world.

The Lord's life and ministry were untouched, unsullied by this evil order. He was wholly unresponsive to its allurements. He was the master of all its trials, and the lord of all its spiritual rulers. Nothing could divert Him from the course of purity and of utter detachment from its ways, notwithstanding the many attempts made to seduce Him. He was surrounded by enemies spiritual and human, and so would the disciples be, all of which would separately add to the sum total of their tribulation.

But let them remember that *their* enemies would be identical with *His*, and that already *He* had vanquished them, having overcome them. And so would they, again and again overcome, if they remained "in me." Therefore be of good comfort; only the one thing is needed remain "in me."

It is to be noted that these are among the last direct words to the disciples collectively, before the Lord's death; for (ch. 17) immediately after them He engaged in a long prayer, opening it with these words: "Father, the hour is come;"—the hour to face His trial and death. And from the Father He received strength for the weary way to the Roman tribunal and finally to the Cross.

And the record of the words by the apostle was by the power of God, who enabled John to hear and to remember the words of the whole scene. Not only the immediate disciples who heard the words, but all others down to our day (and will be even onward throughout the Kingdom Age), the Lord's prayer is

sacred and His agony entered into.

They were intended to assure all his followers at all times that in Him they had a Leader who was the conqueror of all evil and the Overcomer in whose footsteps we are to walk. All then who enlist in His service, and remain steadfast "in me," must likewise be conquerors, overcomers. If to this be added the prospect of a place with Him in His Kingdom for believers of this age, whatever of tribulation may, in the Divine providence, be permitted, could only be counted as a *light* thing beside the *weight* of glory to follow.—2 Cor. 4: 17.

And yet more appears from these last words. The fact that our Lord has overcome the world has added its quota toward making the New World possible. Already—by reason of His having overcome—His disciples of this age experience some of the blessings which help to fit them for a place in this world. Millions of others will taste its sweetness to the full in the age succeeding this, for they are spoken of as standing before the throne of judgment.

Therefore we would say, Let us follow the Conqueror closely; patiently endure the tribulations of our time whatever they may be; preserve good courage throughout, and learn to abide in Him, and we shall be overcomers.

And, lastly, well may we rejoice in the contemplation of that marvellous picture of the world itself lifted out of the great tribulation of sin, and standing before His throne, where also there will be overcomers, finding forever that peace which is Jesus, and in Him alone.

—F. S.



Conscience and Sin,

(Continued from August Issue)

And he could not rid himself of this burden. The only way was through faith in Jesus Christ. Thank God, through Christ there is victory, and the conscience is thoroughly cleansed! This is what the blood of Christ did, and still does, for the Jew.—Rom. 7: 24, 25; 8: 1.

Thus both Jew and Gentile, when they repent and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour, are cleansed, and their consciences are then like a clean slate, ready to be written on by the Holy Spirit of God. (2 Cor. 3: 3.) Here the hearts of the true believers are called "fleshy," or soft, in contradistinction to the "stony," "gross," "implacable" heart of the unbelievers.—Matt. 13: 15; Rom. 1: 31; 2: 10-18, 23; Ezek. 11: 11; Acts 19: 9; Mark 8: 17; Rom. 2: 5.

Just here many new Christians make a mistake, and older ones too, we fear. Instead of fully submitting their consciences to the Lord to be written upon, they still seek to measure themselves more or less by the old ideas and standards, and by the standards of the people around them. They look to see what others are doing, and say, "Oh, if So-

and-So can do that, then I can also." So it is well to have a care not to make others our standard, but always keep looking to Christ the Standard-Bearer, and to the Standard in the Holy Word. We will observe in 2 Cor. 3: 3 that the writing is done by "the Spirit of the living God," while John 17: 17 shows that the Spirit of God operates through the written Word of God. Thus we are not left to doubt and question the Spirit's work, as we should do if we had no written Word. But by recognizing as of the Spirit only that which accords with the Word, we can submit to the writing intelligently; in fact, co-operate in it by being studious and attentive. "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."—Rom. 12: 2.

A Few Practical Examples

We have already considered the Apostle Paul in regard to the conscience. Let us now review some of his instructions to the early disciples. Let us consider a newly converted Jew, his conscience

cleared of the condemnation of the Law, and now at peace with God through Jesus Christ. According to 2 Cor. 5: 17 he is a "new creature" in Christ, and his conscience is to be trained according to the new Standard. One of the first things to be written new on his heart will be his attitude to the Gentiles and Samaritans. Under the Law he was to have no intercourse with them. Now, his conscience must regard that attitude as of the past, and must be taught to look upon association with them as right. He may now even eat with them. The early Jewish Christians were blessed in being made missionaries to the Gentiles—so great was the change from the Law.

Similarly every teaching of the Law — as they were accustomed to fulfil it in their lives—was to be scrutinized, and their consciences trained to look at every question and circumstance from the new Christian standpoint. Had the early converted Jews been more keen on this sort of work, they would not, many of them, have become victims of false teachers who insisted that they must still keep the Law.—Gal. 1: 6; 3: 1-3.

Take a Gentile who had been an idol-worshipper, believing that the gods inhabited the idols, and taking part in feasts in honour of the various gods, to whom offerings were presented. As a Christian, of course, he could have no part in idol worship. With a cleansed conscience, he must now worship the true God, and train his conscience in His ways. Yet some were overpersuaded to continue taking part in the idol feasts, to whom Paul wrote plainly in reproof. (1 Cor. 10: 14-22.) Some even went so far as to quote the Corinthian proverb, "All things are lawful," showing they had not put away completely the old standard. But, Paul says, it is neither expedient nor to edification to continue such public association (verse 23), while in verses 16-21 he definitely says it is wrong.

Then Paul goes on to give directions, to help these Gentile converts to adjust their consciences to their new position and their new knowledge; taking up the question of the private consumption of meat (that had been offered to idols) as ordinary food. This question could not be settled altogether on the score of one's personal liberty or disposition. The effect of our actions on others must be considered. Most, if not all, meat sold in the markets or slaughtering places had been, according to custom, offered to idols, in whole or in part. When purchasing meat, Paul advises, it was not necessary to ask if a given piece had been thus offered. It could be taken home and eaten with a clear conscience, not knowing whether it had been offered or not, and not considering the meat any better if it had been offered or any worse if it had not been offered.

Similarly, if invited to a feast by an unbeliever, the Apostle says the Christian faith does not forbid going. And if one attends, his conscience will be perfectly clear in eating what is set before him without asking questions to see if it had been an idol offering. But suppose some one at the feast is surprised at seeing you eating this meat, and

says, "This is offered in sacrifice to idols." Then, though it may make no difference to you, do not eat it, because that person's conscience would be troubled over the rights and wrongs of the case, seeing that you profess to have left idolatry. The thing to do is to eat to the glory of God, and if I have given thanks for food set before me at such a gathering, I should be spared criticism. (1 Cor. 10: 28-31.) Then he sets the Standard plainly and distinctly—"Give none offence [or, "no occasion of stumbling"], neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God;" and, finally, he gives himself as an example of self-restraint in the interest of others—a good example for us all. How carefully a Gentile or Jewish believer had to walk, to avoid stumbling unbelieving Jews, pagan idolators, or Christian believers—all having different standards, prejudices, and customs!

To the Roman brethren, also, Paul wrote on these matters, commenting on the prejudice which led Jewish converts to keep on observing the Sabbath day, and that of others who ate no meat at all, only vegetables, in order to make certain that they partook of no meat offered to idols. And he points out that the worst feature of these differences was the critical spirit among the brethren, the one who ate meat feeling himself superior to the one who feared to eat, and so on. It is better to avoid eating such meat, even though Christ gives liberty in the matter, rather than cause (even though indirectly) another brother to do the same against his conscience. After all, the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking idol-offered wines and meats, or not eating and not drinking them, "but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." Our new Standard is to act according to love and consideration for a brother, not to display before him our vaunted superiority in regard to conscience.—Rom. 14: 1-21.

Then he brings in the question of sin, and his remarks have been greatly misunderstood. (Verses 22, 23.) Paul is supposed here to be saying that each one should do as he thinks best: that if he thinks he is doing right it is right, and if he thinks he is doing wrong it is wrong. Were that sort of principle accepted by Christians, there would be a relapse to the old Gentile and Jewish uncertainty, which the Christian religion does away with. In these two verses the apostle returns to the purely personal aspect of the case; namely, that no Christian should act contrary to what he sincerely believes to be right; for, if he does so, he acts contrary to the Standard of Faith which now governs his life, which Standard makes the glory of God the test. And if in eating meat offered to idols the Christian believer has doubts as to the correctness of his action; or, as the margin has it, if he still thinks there is some distinction between meats, and some advantage or disadvantage, he is condemned—not condemned to everlasting punishment, but condemned as walking contrary to the true doctrine of Christ. To eat "of faith" was to understand that an idol was nothing, and the meat neither better nor worse; while to eat "not of

faith," was to fall back into the old idolatrous way of looking at the idol meats. That would be sin in one who had once seen the truth and had renounced the idol worship.

For the sake of such—not assured and established in the faith—Paul advised the brethren not to exercise their liberty, but to do without the idol meat, and thus help the weak brethren to come out fully from the idol associations. "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."—Romans 15: 1.

In our day the question of meats offered to idols is a less burning one, except among converts in such countries as China. But it is our duty and privilege to consider the bearings, upon any set of circumstances in which we may find ourselves, of the principles enunciated by the Apostle. Self-denial for the sake of the brethren is indeed a high standard of character up to which to train our own consciences, while assisting their consciences also out of the bonds of worldliness or sin into the liberty wherewith Christ makes free.

Two Modern Examples

Let us now take an example of a modern convert, and see in what respects he requires training of mind and conscience. Say he is one who had an ungovernable temper; has been in the habit of saying what he thinks in forcible language, and backing speech with blows. Having heard the Gospel of good tidings, and come to know of the love of God through Christ (John 3: 16), his old manner of life palls him, and he desires to begin anew. He comes to God through Jesus as His mediator, is accepted and forgiven. His "sins of the past" are blotted out. According to the New Covenant, God "remembers them no more." His conscience is cleansed of all the burden of sin, and he is ready to have the new Standard of love, goodness, meekness, patience, and brotherly kindness engraven thereon. For a few days, or perhaps weeks, his temper is apparently dead, and all his friends recognize the change. They are glad he has become a Christian, if for no other reason than that home is now so much pleasanter. But one day he is not feeling very well, or someone says or does something particularly irritating, and out come some of the sarcastic words, or oaths, or other of the works of the "old man" reckoned dead. (Col. 3: 9, 3; Rom. 6: 11.) Much of the success or failure of his life as a Christian will depend on how he handles himself when he awakes to the fact that he has gone back to the old manner which he once repudiated, and which had been forgiven him.

If he quickly says to the victim of his outburst, "I am so sorry! I should not have said that. Forgive me!" and also asks the Lord's forgiveness, then he has done all in his power to make amends, he is forgiven by the Lord, and let us hope also by the person addressed. His conscience, defiled for the moment by the sin, is at once cleansed again. But that is not all. The prompt recognition of the outburst as a sin is a demonstration that he has really understood and accepted the new Standard

of love and forbearance, and the occasion becomes an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to engrave more deeply on his mind and heart the Christian law of love. And with this frank confession will come also a desire to make amends for the unkind words by saying or doing something kind. His conscience will be in process of education up to the Standard of Rom. 13: 10-14; 15: 6, 14; 1 Cor. 6: 20; 2 Cor. 7: 1; 10: 3-5; Phil. 4: 7-9; Col. 3: 10-17, and innumerable other texts setting forth our proper Standard. Each reading over of these apostolic exhortations and commands, and each endeavour to put them into practice, means that that much more of the Law of God—which for us is the law of love—is being written on our minds and consciences—or, as the apostle puts it, and as expressed in the New Covenant, on our "hearts."—2 Cor. 3: 3; Heb. 8: 10.

But suppose instead of quickly acknowledging the fault, seeking forgiveness, and endeavouring to make amends, the young Christian seeks to justify the outburst. Pride may say the other person got only what he deserved; like Adam and Eve, he will be tempted to pass the blame along. For hours he may nurse hard thoughts in his heart. Will this assist the conscience to grow up to the new Standard of love? Will it be an exercise in following in Christ's footsteps, as outlined in 1 Peter 2: 21-23? Will it assist the Holy Spirit to write on mind and heart the things of the Spirit?

One may do all these wrong things, and still come to one's senses sufficiently to recognize them as wrong, confess them, and be forgiven, for the Lord is very merciful and long suffering. But how much better to correct the fault at first, and not let a dozen other faults pile up on top!

So much for the young Christian, with whose temptations and struggles we all sympathise, and who must in every case go to Christ for help, if he would obtain the victory. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."—1 John 5: 4; Rom. 8: 37.

Now let us take one who has been a Christian for some time, perhaps only a nominal one, born of Christian parents, and fancying that somehow or other he is better than the average, never having been soundly converted. Let us say he looks at many of the commands against sin in the New Testament as not required by himself, since he never wants to do those horrible things anyway. This is not a fanciful picture: we have personally met such. They contend that they never do anything they think is wrong, and therefore all they say and do is right. Whenever they said or did what others would consider wrong, they justified themselves in some way or other. We have known such men and women with fiery and vindictive tempers, or sulky, vengeful moods, who called the manifestations of their evil disposition "righteous indignation." They do not seem to realize that a fiery or vindictive temper is wrong under any label. Of course, to justify their position, and preserve themselves from any necessity to confess or make

amends to those wronged, such persons must have a text of Scripture to stand on, and they find Eph. 4: 26 very convenient for the purpose—"Be ye angry, and sin not." "Here," they say, "is a positive command to be angry." And we have heard them say, "God is angry, and if we are angry we are only imitators of God." Was there ever a more subtly Satanic plea to glorify sin?

Anger a Divine Prerogative

To these specious excuses we reply:

Anger seeks the destruction of its object. Anger in any of us would seek redress and vengeance for real or fancied wrongs endured. And it is because we are still imperfect, and therefore incapable of reaching infallibly correct conclusions, that anger is forbidden us, while the Lord promises that the wrongs done to His people shall not go unnoticed, for vengeance is His, and He will repay. (Rom. 12: 19-21; 2 Thess. 1: 6; 2 Peter 2: 9.) This being so, it is not difficult to understand why the Lord defined anger with one's brother as murder. (Matt. 5: 21, 22.) The Lord, being perfect, can judge dispassionately, and can be justly angry with those who sin wilfully after enlightenment. He knows perfectly who has been fully enlightened, and who has not; He understands exactly which sins are wilful, and which are not; but we are not yet equipped with that perfection of discernment, and are therefore to judge nothing before the time. (1 Cor. 4: 5.) Our part is to learn patience, long suffering, mercy, and obedience, so that we may be equipped with these virtues when, as overcomers by His grace, we shall sit with Him in His throne, as judges of the world and of angels.—Rev. 3: 21; 1 Cor. 6: 2, 3.

Be ye Angry, and Sin Not

"Be ye angry, and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath."—Eph. 4: 26.

Are these words of the Apostle contrary to those of our Lord, his Master? The Master forbade anger. Does the Apostle not only permit anger, but even command us to be angry, only to be careful that we do not sin, and in any case not to be angry after dark? "Righteous indignation" is not a scriptural expression, and the Apostle is not even justifying—much less commanding—anger during daylight hours, nor is he saying that one can be angry without sinning. He does not contradict the Lord, Who defines anger as a grievous sin.

The Apostle's words are a partial quotation of Psalm 4: 4 according to the Septuagint. In order to appreciate the full force of the words, vs. 2-4 should be read—

2 O ye sons of men, how long will ye be slow of heart?

Wherefore will ye love vanity, and seek falsehood?

Pause.

3 But know ye that the Lord has done wondrous things for his holy one:

The Lord will hear me when I cry to him.

4 Be ye angry, and sin not:

Feel compunction upon your beds for what ye say in your hearts. Pause.—Psalm 4: 2-4, Septuagint.

The word "Selah" means pause, and was a notation for the musicians.

The Psalmist, addressing the unconsecrated, re-

proves them for their vanity and hardness of heart. He expresses his conviction that Jehovah takes a special interest in those who are devoted to Him, and his confidence that his call to Jehovah will be heard. Still addressing the hard-hearted ones, the Psalmist says (v. 4), "Be ye angry, and sin not." Does the Psalmist call upon the ungodly to be angry with the godly, only to be careful that they do not sin? By no means! The word "not," though only once expressed, is to be understood as being applicable to both members of the sentence, as though the Psalmist had said—Be ye angry not; sin not. This is his exhortation to the ungodly, and this is the sentiment that the Apostle transfers to his letter to the saints at Ephesus, as though he would say, If it is sin for the unconsecrated to be angry with the consecrated, how much more sinful would it be for the consecrated to be angry with each other? Be angry not; sin not. But if through some weakness of the flesh your angry passions should rise, get them quenched at once. Do not allow them to remain up, when even the great sun has to go down. While the Psalm says, Think it all over in the quiet of the night hours, and you will see the rightness and the advantage of being still (Authorized rendering), instead of being tossed about by tumultuous waves of anger, the Apostle goes further, and says, Do not let it go so long as till after you are in bed, but get it over with even before the sun goes down.

To harbour angry feelings is to show hospitality to the devil, he goes on to say. (Eph. 4: 27.) Therefore the Christian must resolutely refuse to become angry; and not only so, he must also avoid provoking others to anger. As he would not wish others to tempt him by teasing or nagging, so must he not tempt others by the same conduct.

Holiness

The Standard which is set for the Lord's people is that they shall be holy, as He is holy. The exhortations and commands to love and to be holy, to exercise all positive virtues, are a guide to the conscience. Whatever is in harmony with these is right; whatever is out of harmony with them is sin. But the statement of the virtues is not enough for the guidance of conscience. There are also the positive commands as to what to avoid—what to "put away" and to "put off;" and anger, wrath, and such are frequently mentioned; as for example—

"Fathers, provoke not your children to ANGER, lest they be discouraged." "Provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."—Col. 3: 21; Eph. 6: 4.

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and ANGER, and clamour, and evil speaking, be PUT AWAY from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children."—Eph. 4: 31 to 5: 1.

"But now ye also PUT OFF all these; ANGER, wrath, malice, . . . seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."—Col. 3: 8-10.

This last text contains a specially helpful thought,

that the "new man" must be renewed in knowledge after the Lord's image; conscience must be educated and trained according to the divine likeness.

"Butter and Honey Shall He Eat"

Question.—Please explain the spiritual significance of "milk and honey" and "butter and honey."—Ex. 3: 8; Isa. 7: 15, 22.

Answer.—The expression "milk and honey" is used as a symbol of great abundance of everything desirable in a material sense, and of the richest spiritual blessings as well. The "butter" mentioned in Isa. 7: 15, 22 was not butter as we are accustomed to it, but more like curdled milk or cheese. In any case it was a milk product, so that we understand "butter and honey" to have the same general significance as "milk and honey." The reference in Isa. 7: 15 is to our Lord Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry, and the reference in verse 22 seems to be to the Jews in Palestine during the same period. The abundance of spiritual favour was manifested both to our Saviour and to the Jewish people, "that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good." In our Lord's case that end was served. He did refuse the evil, and He did choose the good. In the case of the Jewish people as a whole the abundance of divine favour shown them did not produce this effect. They were not rightly exercised thereby, and so did not refuse the evil, and did not choose the good. They rejected Christ, and their bountiful table became "a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompense unto them." (John 1: 11; Rom. 11: 9.) They rejected the truth which our Lord declared unto them from the Father; therefore, instead of being "a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings"—that is, valuable and useful plants in the Lord's vineyards (Isa. 5: 1-7)—the Jews became briars and thorns, and the troubles predicted in Isa. 7: 23-25 came upon them, culminating in the destruction of their city and temple and of many of their people (A.D. 68-70), the dispersal of the remainder and the sufferings of these and their descendants during the past 1860 years.

Training the Conscience

We have seen that conscience is the moral sense; that faculty of the mind which judges of the right and wrong of words, deeds, and thoughts—one's own, or those of others. But conscience is not sufficient unto itself. It depends upon information laid before it by other faculties of the mind, and its judgment may be biased by lack of knowledge, as was the Apostle Paul's when he persecuted the Christians. It is necessary therefore that the conscience be trained according to some definite standard. And the Lord has given us in His Word the best standard, Jesus Christ being our Teacher and Lawgiver; the Law placed upon us being Love—Love to God, and love to our neighbour; love even to the extent of laying down life itself for the brethren.—1 Cor. 13: 1-13; Rom. 13: 8, 10; John 15: 12, 13; Rom. 15: 3, 4; 2 Tim. 3: 15-17.

We have considered how conscience operates in daily life, and how with the training of conscience

and the growth of knowledge of God and His Word which is another way of expressing love, for love is holy. And in 2 Cor. 3: 3, 17, 18 we see how the Lord by His Spirit writes this law on our minds and hearts. We see the perfect pattern, our Lord Jesus, as in a glass, and are changed into the same image, from glory to glory—a glory of character now, so that we shall at the completion of our course be ready to receive that glorious body which shall be given to the overcomers; we shall be like Him, and see Him as He is.—1 John 3: 2; 2 Cor. 5: 1-8; 2 Thes. 4: 7, 8; Revelation Chapters 2, 3.

An Evil Conscience

Let us now look further into the Scriptures on the subject of conscience. We find it qualified by several adjectives, as follows—

1. Good conscience.—Acts 23: 1; 1 Tim. 1: 5, 19; Heb. 13: 18; 1 Pet. 3: 16, 21.
2. Weak conscience.—1 Cor. 8: 12.
3. Pure conscience.—1 Tim. 3: 9; 2 Tim. 1: 3.
4. Seared conscience.—1 Tim. 4: 2.
5. Defiled conscience.—Tit. 1: 15.
6. Evil conscience.—Heb. 10: 22.

Taking the last first, we find on examining Heb. 10: 22 and context that the conscience there described as "evil" is the one possessed before acceptance of Christ. Other Scriptures show that the blood of Christ is that which is necessary to be "sprinkled" on the heart in order to cleanse that evil conscience, or cleanse the heart from it. This reference is not applicable to the consciences of those who after they become believers sin wilfully. Such cases come under No. 4.

A Good Conscience

After the heart has been "sprinkled" from the evil conscience, the believer begins his new life with a cleansed, or purged, conscience (Heb. 9: 14), and also undertakes its training according to the pattern set in the Word and in the person of the Saviour. The first reference to a good conscience is Paul's statement, "Men and brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day." (Acts 23: 1, R.V.) As he is speaking in defence of his life as a Christian, we understand him to omit reference to his previous persecutions of the Christians, and to mean that he had not since indulged in wilful acts of wrong-doing. Remembering that Paul at this time was a man of middle age, with much experience in the ministry, a thorough student of the Scriptures, and fully consecrated to the service of his Master, we see that a good conscience in his case would be an educated and trained—as well as a sincere—conscience.

In this matter one has to guard against the practice of the careless and indifferent—not to mention criminals—who indulge their faults, and say and do very wrong things, and yet afterwards complacently say, "I have nothing on my conscience;" "my conscience is perfectly clear," "it does not trouble me," etc. They seem to have the idea that as long as their conscience does not prick and worry them they have

a good conscience. We should rather call such a conscience a "dull," or "sleepy," or "evil" conscience.

The next reference declares that "the end of the commandment [that is, the object sought by the doctrine which he gave as a commandment from God (verse 3)] is charity [love] out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:" (1 Tim. 1: 5.) The good conscience, then, is an object to be sought after, just as love and faith are to be sought after. That is not to say that the conscience in the early stages of Christian development is not good, but rather that it is immature, just as faith and love are immature. The goodness of the conscience and the unfeignedness of the faith are relative; and if the Christian feels satisfied with a small development of these characteristics they lose their value. So that conscience must be continually renewed, trained, and taught, just as faith must be maintained and developed more and more.

Paul exhorts Timothy to "war a good warfare; holding faith, and a good conscience;" (1 Tim. 1: 18, 19.) Here again a good conscience is ascribed to one who had been many years a Christian and an earnest worker for the Lord. Yet Timothy still had the responsibility of "Holding" both faith and a good conscience; that is, to maintain it. Timothy was sincere, a faithful disciple, and zealous in good works.

The next is another reference of Paul to himself, and modestly put—"Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly." (Heb. 13: 18.) Here he associates conscience with a willingness to live honestly. No doubt his reference to honesty is on spiritual lines, and not only a matter of honesty in pecuniary matters. Honesty toward God means sincerity of mind, straight-forwardness, and is essential to the maintenance of a "good" conscience. It also involves self-sacrifice; for to be honest with God often involves financial and other losses. Paul had suffered the loss of all things for Christ's sake, and for consciences' sake.

The Answer of A Good Conscience

The Apostle Peter also exhorts to a good conscience (1 Pet. 3: 16), and associates it with the Christians living such godly and consistent lives that all the accusations against them are false. They suffer for well-doing instead of for evil-doing. This throws another sidelight on what constitutes a good conscience.

In verse 21 of the same chapter, Peter says that "the answer of a good conscience toward God" is complete consecration. Water baptism is the outward form and symbol of this consecration, but the "baptism" referred to in 1 Pet. 3: 21 is the act of the mind in submitting itself absolutely to the Lord, as explained in Rom. 6: 3—"baptized into Jesus Christ." A conscience, then, in order to be "good," must be one that recognizes this obligation to come into, and abide in, Christ Jesus our Lord.

A Pure versus a Defiled Conscience

Paul exhorts Timothy to hold "the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience." (1 Tim. 3: 9.) And speaks of himself as having served God with "a pure conscience." The Greek word here used has the sense of "clean," and is the opposite to a "defiled" conscience, the description given in Titus 1: 15 of the condition of certain Cretians. The Cretians in their unregenerate state are described in Tit. 1: 12. But Paul's criticism passes by these, and takes note of certain ones who had risen up among them who made a profession of Christianity—and yet were in reality "unruly and vain talkers." (Verse 10.) These false teachers taught "Jewish fables, and commandments of men," and those who accepted their teachings became defiled in conscience and in mind.

A Seared Conscience

But the worst of all is a "seared" conscience, as described in 1 Tim. 4: 2.

Having their conscience "seared with a hot iron" is a figurative way of stating that the conscience has received a permanent injury. This permanent injury comes from "giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;" and "Speaking lies in hypocrisy." This "giving heed" means more than that one through weakness or inexperience is deceived for a time by evil spirits and false teachers. The fact that the Lord and the apostles cast out demons from some who afterward became genuine disciples proves that one can be rescued out of Satan's clutches. The class here described is rather those who have known the truth, have experienced its benefits, and **then** have given heed to seducing spirits. That this is so is shown in verse 1, where he says that "some shall depart from the faith," showing that they had once been in it. One who has been in the faith and then falls so far as to "speak lies in hypocrisy" has indeed damaged his conscience.

Safety in Christ

As Noah and his family found refuge in the ark, and were saved by it from the flood of waters, so a place of safety has been prepared for us. Our "ark" is the Lord Jesus Christ. Being baptized into Him, and thus having become members of His family, we ride safely above the flood waters of trouble and destruction sent because of sin. (1 Peter 3: 20, 21.) We are as branches partaking of the strength and vitality of the Vine, and so enabled to bring forth fruit. If we do not bring forth fruit, we shall be cut off as useless encumbrances. But, if we do bring forth the fruit of the Spirit, we shall be pruned: that we may bring forth more fruit. And, be it noted, the fruit is governed by the nature of the Vine and of the sap supplied to the branch. As the right kind of sap can be found nowhere else, manifestly we must abide in the Vine.* (John 15: 1-9.) Dearly beloved, let us abide in Him.

*For further comments on the parable of the Vine and its Branches, please see the book, *The Parables of our Lord*.

One Body in Christ

ACCUSTOMED as we are to thinking of and caring for our fleshly bodies, our most frequent use of the word "body" is in regard to them; and in that connection we use the word in three ways: first, of our entire body or physical frame including the head; or (in the case of a beheading) of the bodily form separate from the head; or, again, of the trunk exclusive of the limbs. A man eats "to keep his body in health," meaning the whole body; "the body of a man found drowned" means the whole body. If the head had been separated in some way, the description is always the "headless body." On the other hand, a warrior may carry "a shield to protect his body," meaning chiefly if not altogether the trunk, the object being to protect the vital parts, or when a man wears a coat it is to protect his trunk as distinguished from his head, which is covered by a hat or cap.

But the English word "body," and the same is true of the Greek word *soma*, of which it is a translation, has a wide application, both literally and figuratively, physically and collectively. Besides the physical body (either human or animal), it is used of a collection of persons, such as "a body of soldiers," "a body of students." Assuming that in these cases a head is implied, we find that the head of a body of soldiers or of students may be one of the individuals composing the "body," or it may be an individual or an organization quite outside of the body of soldiers or of students in question. But in any case the group of individuals forms the "body" manœuvring on the parade ground or engaged in recreation on the school campus.

Another application of the word "body" is to a large amount or collection of some one thing; as, "a large body of water," which is called a lake; "a body of ore, or coal," often called a seam.

For this reason when we use or hear or read the word "body" we have always to consider what thought it is intended to convey; the thought of a human body (in whole or in part), or of some other kind of a body. In the New Testament we find the English word "body" and the Greek word *soma* used in all these ways, and we have therefore to endeavour to distinguish between them if we would come to a correct understanding of the subject under consideration.

Of special interest to the Christian is the *figurative* use of "body" as applied to believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. And an examination of each of the passages in which the word occurs will be of value to us, giving us a clearer idea of our relation to the Lord and to one another. On this subject, as on others, men are prone to weave fanciful theories and to present them with great insistence; and it behooves us to have an answer ready when such are presented to us. We shall look at a dozen or more occurrences of the word in the New Testament, and see what they teach us.

The Redemption of Our Body

Let us look at Romans 8: 23—

"And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."—Romans 8: 23.

Here the church as a collection or body of believers is contrasted with the groaning creation in general. Had the apostle referred to the individual physical bodies of believers, he would have used the word in its plural form—"the redemption of our bodies." But the redemption (here meaning deliverance) of the whole church from the groaning incidental to the Christian way, even though we have many compensating blessings, such as the seal of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1: 13), is what the apostle refers to as the desire and expectation of all who constitute this "body." In this instance no question regarding the head of this "body" arises, because it is a body *all* of whose members are in an unsatisfactory state, whatever their position in the body may be.

Present Your Bodies

When the apostle had in mind the physical bodies of believers, he used the plural form, as in Romans 12: 3—"that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice." Each believer can present as a living sacrifice only his own body; but, as the apostle addressed all—"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God," the plural form was required, all the brethren being urged to present all their bodies. On another page more is said concerning the presentation of our bodies as a living sacrifice.

One Body but Many Members

The most lengthy dissertation on the Church as the body and all that this implies is found in 1 Corinthians 12: 12-31, which should be carefully read. Some who have failed to do this suppose the apostle to teach that the Church is represented by a headless body, the body being on earth and the head in heaven, and they are led to this in part at least by the concluding sentence of verse 12, "so also is Christ." But the subject under discussion by the apostle is not our Lord Jesus Christ, as though He were divided—part on earth and part in heaven, but the church on earth considered as "one body." This one body—the church—is compared with a human body having all its members. Verse 12 reads—

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ."

Thus the human body, including all its parts (the head as well as the rest), is used as an illustration of the oneness and unity and interdependence of all the members of the Church, here called "the Anointed."

The Christ, the Anointed

The name Christ, or "the Christ," is one of the titles of our Lord Jesus. It is the Greek form of the Hebrew *Messias*. Andrew was one of the first

to recognise Jesus as the Messiah for whom the Jews had been told in the prophets to look. John 1: 41 says—"He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ." Both the Hebrew word *Messiah* and the Greek word *Christ* mean "anointed." Jesus Christ was anointed of God at His baptism, when the Holy Spirit was poured out without measure upon Him. (Matthew 3: 13-17; John 3: 34; Acts 10: 38.) There He was anointed as King and as High Priest of Israel, after the order of Melchisedec, in accordance with the ancient custom of anointing the kings and high priests of Israel with the holy anointing oil; and in anticipation of the time when, after His resurrection, He should enter fully into the combined office of King of kings and High Priest. Not only was He Israel's king and high priest by this anointing, but also designated King and High Priest for all who would come unto God by Him, after He had been offered as the sacrifice for their sins. This anointing was foretold by the prophet, and included the prophetic office of teaching and law-giving, as referred to by Moses, and quoted by Peter.—Acts 4: 25-27; Isaiah 61: 1-3; Luke 4: 16-19; Deuteronomy 18: 15-19; Acts 3: 22, 23.

The Anointing Ye Have Received

But in 1 Corinthians 12 the apostle is not alluding to this very special anointing of our Lord Jesus to His very high offices.

He is alluding to the anointing which was poured out on the Church at Pentecost and in the house of Cornelius, and which is given as a free gift to each believer as soon as he becomes a believer. (Ephesians 1: 13.) This anointing by the Holy Spirit constitutes the Church an exclusive body or aggregation of individuals. And it is of these that the apostle speaks when he says: "So also is Christ"; that is, so is the anointed; so is the anointed body of believers. (1 Cor. 12: 12.) There is one body anointed by the Spirit, but there are many members who participate in and enjoy that anointing.

Baptized into One Body

Verse 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

The first to receive the spirit were the Jews at Pentecost; but later on Cornelius and his family and then other Gentiles were received into the same body, because all were anointed by the same Spirit.

From our Lord's words concerning the Holy Spirit which He promised to send on the disciples conditional on His first going away, the object in sending it to them differs from the object for which it was sent upon Him. Its object was to sanctify or set them apart from the evil, to bring scriptures to their remembrance, to give power over sin and in the working of miracles, and to guide the whole church into all truth, besides convincing the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Of this anointing the apostle John wrote (1 John 2)—

20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye

know all things [or, ye all know it]. . . .

27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: . . .

That is to say, as may be seen by reading 1 John 2: 8-29, all the believers having received the same anointing should abide in it and should expect help from one another, but should not expect light from those who had gone out from them or from other outsiders ignorant of the truth and not having the Holy Spirit as their Guide. Also we have the statement of Romans 8: 9—" . . . Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

God Hath Set the Members

1 Corinthians 12: 15-21 makes it clear that the Church is likened to a whole body including head members. Verse 15 is an encouragement to each member to occupy his or her own place and perform his or her own duties, and not feel discouraged or put out because he or she does not occupy some other position. "If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not the body; is it therefore not of the body?" Now comes a comparison showing that the apostle meant us to understand head as well as hand and foot members as part of the one body, and the head positions occupied by members of the church (1 Cor. 12)—

16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?

Now it is obvious that the apostle was not here referring to the Lord Jesus as Head with contention going on within himself. Paul referred to members holding prominent and important positions in the Church who might waste their time and opportunities wishing they were someone else. The whole matter is settled (verse 18) by recognising that God has arranged these things, and therefore we should acquiesce in appointments and providential indications in the Church—"as it hath pleased him."

"I Have No Need of You"

19 And if they were all one member, where were the body?

20 But now are they many members, yet but one body.

21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

Often the apostles called upon the brethren to separate themselves from those who walked disorderly, and to avoid those who caused division amongst them. Also, as already quoted from John's first epistle, teachers of wrong doctrine were not to be accepted as able to teach them anything to their advantage. Verses 19 to 21 are not therefore an intimation that such excrecences should be considered as members of the body to whom we cannot say, "I have no need of you." But even among those who are true members of the one body there may arise a feeling of independence especially toward those whom they may consider their social inferiors or superiors. The fact is that the Lord forbids us to say, "I have no need of you," to any member of the body, whether the service they perform in the body be in our eyes either higher or lower than our own. The most obscure members of our physical bodies are necessary to the well-

being of the whole, and so it is among Christian believers.

Anyone still inclined to question that the apostle's figure of the human body includes the head as portion of the Church, can hardly fail to be convinced by verse 21, which says that the head cannot say to the feet, I have no need of you. For if the head in this case represented the Lord Jesus then a denial would be given to His lordship. It is not true that Jesus cannot say to the feet "I have no need of you." Any "feet" member who conceives the thought that Jesus cannot "get along" without him would need to repent of such presumption. As a matter of fact, the Lord Jesus can get along *very well* without the feet members of the Church. The feet members are useful as servants to carry along the body and advance its interests in various ways, but they are not absolutely essential to the Lord.

(Continued in October Issue)



From Far and Near

WITH regret for the loss of a valued and beloved co-worker, though with joy that another Overcomer has entered into his reward, we announce the passing away of our brother in Christ, R. A. Wallis, of Bristol, England. And we are sure all will join in this expression of sympathy for the bereaved family, though they will be unable to carry on the agency. Arrangements are pending for the appointment of another British representative, but as yet the difficulties of wartime interfere. British readers are requested for the present to send their subscriptions direct to Melbourne by registered letter.

A kind Christian friend posts me this paper [the N.C.A.] month by month, and I thoroughly appreciate reading it. It is a joy to me in these back blocks. Could you please send me a bundle for distribution. I write on an average twenty letters a week, and I will enclose a tract in each letter. I feel, although I am out of the way, I can do this little to further the work of our Lord and Master. Trusting you will oblige me, Sincerely yours,

—, New Zealand.

—SINCE OUR LAST ISSUE

THE GREATEST War of History still continues. And believers in the Scriptures continue to ask, When will God speak the word to still the commotion, and announce the finish of the old world-order and the establishment of His own Kingdom on earth? We answer—

THAT KINGDOM involves the doing of God's will on earth as it is done in heaven, and mankind in general are not desirous of having their plans and their accumulations of power and wealth interfered with. The so-called Christian nations were largely concerned in the World War of 1914-18; and the present war was begun by the then defeated seeking to recover lost possessions and if possible acquire the territories of their opponents.

ONLY A LITTLE general knowledge of history is necessary to show the trend—the outcome. Added to this is the testimony of God's Word that a time would come for which His children were taught to pray—**THY Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.** A sad feature is that some of the nations which took part in—

THE GREAT REFORMATION of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries of the Christian era, which was a strong protest against wrong teaching that had been introduced into nominal Christianity, are now on opposite sides of the controversy. All informed students of history are aware of the struggle for

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM which followed the labours of Wickliffe and Huss in the fourteenth century, and of Luther and Tyndale in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the development of general education as a result. To see these two Protestant nations now on opposite sides is a sad commentary on what should be a united Christian fellowship true to God and His Word. The fact that

AMERICA has come in, in defense of religious and political liberty, has given great cheer to Americans in foreign lands (including Australia). Although the Thirteen Colonies fought against Britain to maintain liberty of belief, that war was followed by a friendship which increased as the ideals of free education gave every individual a knowledge of and ability to read and to study God's Word. And each time this subject is mentioned we feel led to express our

GRATITUDE FOR the King James Version of Holy Writ. Also gratitude for Christians who have laboured to make its meaning clear, especially in the great truths concerning our Lord Jesus as the Son of God who came to earth to die for our sins, and who was raised again for our justification. And not only for the blessings that have come to us who are called to be the Bride of Christ, but also for the

GREAT KINGDOM TRUTHS. The Church as joint-heirs with Christ in that Kingdom, and the Thousand Years of the Kingdom age set apart for the general resurrection, and the enlightenment and opportunity to be offered those myriads who had died in ignorance—many of them in infancy and childhood. Thus the

WORLD WAR of to-day leads on to the thought, **How** Soon will the chosen Church be complete, and the time arrive for public pronouncement of the Kingdom set up in power and glory over all the earth? The signs of the times showed the Jews when the Lord's first coming had taken place. (Luke 12: 34-53.) Similarly, to-day, we see coming to pass things prophesied by the Lord himself, as well as by the disciples later on, and by Daniel long before. All the events of our time converge on that great manifestation of Christ taking up His great power to reign, and demonstrating that Satan is bound that he may deceive the nations no more until the Thousand Years are finished. Then he shall be released—for a little season—for the final test of mankind, and Satan's own definite and complete destruction. Nothing more nor less than Satan's deserts as an enemy of God, and a wilful sinner against light and knowledge; and to the last a leader astray of as many as possible of those whom Christ died to save:

THE LORD extends no sympathy to Satan, the wilful and deliberate transgressor against light and knowledge. With the earth rid of Satan's influence, and all

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similar wilful transgressors among men, the earth will be ready to fulfil its position as the everlasting home of a race of mankind tested and established in righteousness, and praising God always for His love and mercy toward them through Jesus Christ, our and their Deliverer and Lord.

OUR STAND to-day must be as firmly and as unequivocally shown as will be the stand of the saved in the Kingdom age, notwithstanding deceptions and oppositions on every hand in our time. The Lord gives grace and strength to us who believe and take a firm public stand for the truth, as He gave to the overcomers of the past. Let us do our part now in making known His true Plan as contrasted with the awful theories of eternal torment so long believed in. Death is a severe enough penalty. And the Lord Jesus is prepared to help as many as are willing to serve Him, and grant them eternal life. Let us help our friends still deceived on this question by sending them a copy of the two books mentioned in last column—"Everlasting Punishment" and "The Dead—Where are They?"

THE WRATH of God is manifest, we are told, in His dealings with "vessels of wrath" upon whom the curse from Eden onward has fallen; giving us as a race thousands of years of suffering and death. Not torment, but death—the loss of life, hence described by our Lord when He said that all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth. But

GOD'S LOVE was manifested in the sending of His beloved Son to pay the ransom price. Hence Jesus Christ, the Lord, may well be called the Owner—the One who has authority to deal with all whom He has bought. Since many millions have died without so much as hearing His name, or knowing why death overtook all, it is just and reasonable in God's sight that the dead be called forth to be enlightened and then to be made responsible for their words and actions in view of having right and wrong definitely explained to them.

Just such a test was placed upon the Jews who had been instructed in the Law as to what God considered righteous and what unrighteous. He was justified in pouring out His wrath on the vessels of wrath; that is, the wilful transgressors under the Law.—Romans 9: 17-22.

Contrasted with that is His dealing with "vessels of mercy;" those who when enlightened appreciated their need of the Saviour—whether previously Jew or Gentile.

So in the world to-day: the Gospel is still a call to repentance and acceptance of Christ as the One who purchased us by the sacrifice of Himself. These great truths made known to us require sorrow for sin, repentance, and acceptance of Christ and His work on our behalf. So says the apostle.—Romans 9: 20-33.

The responsibility of the Jews was great, but no less great is the responsibility of the Gentiles who hear the Gospel. If they are stubborn and self-willed and refuse the Gospel message when offered, God's punishment will fall upon them. And so we see, to-day: The whole world under the wrath of God. Nation against nation, civilized and uncivilized, Christians and barbarians, all professedly Christian denominations. All heathen nations also being tested; their customs and manner of life set forth in the daily Press that all may read and compare.

Nations as nations may be under criticism and surveillance, and will have experience in the great time of trouble, but still God is interested in the individual, "who-soever" of any tribe or nations, civilized or uncivilized.

This we write to encourage all who have a sense of their own shortcomings and unworthiness to come to Jesus, and in Him find forgiveness and rest, and also help to lay down the old sinful life and take up the new life of obedience to Him and a holy life so far as possible with the weaknesses of the flesh still a burden.

And His Grace is Sufficient.

New Covenant Book List

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The New Covenant Advocate

— and —

Kingdom Herald

VOL. 35.

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, OCTOBER, 1942

No. 7.

"Serve Ye The Lord"

"Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD."—Joshua 24: 14.

THIS EXHORTATION of the prophet to the people of Israel when given careful consideration will be of great benefit to young and old believers alike, as there are important lessons for all God's people contained in it. It is desirable to read the whole chapter, as it is necessary to understand the context in order to study this verse in its correct setting.

The scene is situated in Shechem, a place which had some importance in the history of the children of Israel. This was the place where Abram, years earlier, had first entered the land of the Canaanites and where God made His first promise to Abram. (Genesis 12: 6, 7.) Here Jacob purchased a parcel of land and erected an altar. (Genesis 33: 19.) At Shechem also Jacob put away the strange gods belonging to his household. (Genesis 35: 2-4.) Later, according to verse 32 of the chapter of our lesson, the bones of Joseph were buried in the piece of ground bought by Jacob, and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.

It was at Shechem, then, where Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel (Joshua 24)—

1 And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God.

This was the occasion of the last public speech—made shortly before his death—by Joshua, an inspired and faithful servant of Jehovah. That he was inspired is indicated by the opening words of his address—"Thus saith the LORD," or "Thus saith Jehovah, God of Israel." He then narrates briefly the history of the children of Israel, commencing with their father Abraham and going through it to their own day (verse 2)—

And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor; and they served other gods.

Abraham made an important and wise choice. He

was brought up in Chaldea in idolatrous surroundings. The Chaldeans served other gods—they were worshippers of the sun, the moon and the stars.

Abraham decided definitely to obey the Lord even though it meant leaving his own country and going into a strange land. (Genesis 12.) It is particularly appropriate that the prophet should start his record with the patriarch Abraham, for Abraham possessed unswerving loyalty to God and Joshua desired to impress upon his hearers the necessity for them to exhibit the same fidelity. The children of Israel held Abraham high in their estimation of him. The reference to the flood in verse 2 and subsequent verses does not necessarily mean the flood of Noah's day. The word means any very large body of water and it is translated "river" in the Revised Version. It is thought that it refers to the river Euphrates.

In the third verse Joshua narrates the travels of Abraham, the multiplication of his seed, and the giving of Isaac. Then follows (verse four) the account of Jacob and Esau. Jacob received and valued the blessings promised to Abraham which were later confirmed to Isaac. Esau sold his birthright, yet God gave him the land of Mount Seir to the South of Canaan as a possession. The descendants of Esau, the Edomites, multiplied and became a fierce and warlike nation. Jacob and his children, on the other hand, had very different experiences. These experiences are told briefly in verses 4-13.

The aged leader of Israel made his last speech to the people before they departed "every man unto his inheritance" (verse 28), and in rehearsing their history he reminded them that God was interested in all their doings. He talked of their patriarchs; of their deliverance from Egypt; of Moses and Aaron; of the destruction of the Egyptians; of the wilderness journey; of the conquest of the seven heathen nations and the taking of Jericho; of the error of Balaam and God's blessing of the people through him. He also reminded them that Jehovah had given them a land for which they did not labour, with cities ready built and vineyards and olive yards ready planted.

"Now Therefore"

Before giving them his exhortation Joshua re-

minded the people of God's goodness to them in the past—His many blessings, His mercy and long-suffering towards them, His beneficence, His chastisements. Any reflection upon the past lives of the people and the nation would be incomplete if it did not take Divine Providence into account.

After reminding the people of their deliverance by their Heavenly Father from oppression, of God's providential care and guidance, of His assistance in battle, and of His presentation to them of a pleasant country, Joshua then made a direct appeal:—"Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth." This was the earnest appeal of a true servant of God who loved God's people and who recognised that their welfare as individuals and as a nation depended upon them acting in the way that he urged them to do.

We, too, would do well to take time and reflect upon the past and upon God's goodness and loving-kindness to us in days gone by, to remember our own short-comings and thus to make fresh resolves to be diligent in His service and to make good use of the time we have left.

We can also make a similar appeal apply to us now—"Fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and truth." The Gospel-age believer has received even greater blessings than did those Israelites. He has received greater enlightenment—the knowledge of our Saviour's finished work on the cross. He has the benefits of the New Covenant—the better covenant, established upon better promises, and he has the promise of an heavenly inheritance. Surely we therefore should "fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and truth!"

In saying "Fear the LORD" the prophet must not be understood to mean to be afraid of the Lord as a slave might be terrified of a tyrant master. A reverential and godly fear is meant, having respect to God's majesty and the attributes of His character. But such reverence and respect alone are not sufficient, they must be evidenced by wholehearted and true service. Not a service born of hypocrisy and deceit, but of sincerity and truth. To live a life in conformity with true worship and service of God the individual must put away all things that are inconsistent with such worship and service.

It is sad to think that the children of Israel had to be exhorted to "put away" the heathen gods. Joshua, however, knew well the circumstances then existing—for God's people were surrounded by idolatrous nations and the children of Israel themselves possessed a strong tendency towards the practice of idolatry. We, too, should see that we have no lingering tendencies to idolatry. Self-will, indulgence, pride, power, wealth, the praise of men, pleasure, covetousness—these are the idols which are most likely to claim our attention. The true Christian is willing to give up all love for the world and sin, and give his entire devotion to God.

An Appeal to Reason

Joshua however does not merely issue a strong exhortation but he appeals to their reason (Joshua 24)—

15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose

you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

"If," he says—"if it seem evil"—if it is irksome, inconvenient, troublesome, unpleasant, to serve the Lord—then use your reason: consider whom you will serve: *make a choice!*

He challenged them to consider definitely the claims of the Lord Jehovah, and the claims of the other gods—those gods who were rejected by Abraham, or those who belonged to the former owners of the land in which they were now living. They had seen that the gods in whom the Amorites trusted were powerless to protect their worshippers from the Israelites who had Jehovah for their God. Such was Joshua's challenge!

It is wise for the Gospel-age believer to keep before his mind the definite blessings to be obtained from serving Jehovah in contrast with the temporary and doubtful advantages to be obtained from giving his time and attention to the world. If we make this contrast, surely we will conclude that the Lord is the only one who is entitled to our service! Do we not obtain from God a wonderful peace which the world cannot give? Has He not loved us with an everlasting love? The apostle said (1 John 2)—

15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

Joshua called upon the people to make up their minds definitely and to make a right choice. He appealed to them to come to a positive decision about this matter—"choose you this day whom ye will serve."

The importance of this demand is with us today. In our recreation and in our daily tasks, in our every opportunity of service these words should ring in our ears—"choose you!"

To be indecisive is unsatisfactory at any time, both in temporal and spiritual matters. The question is not a complicated one—the alternative to be decided by each individual is that he will either "serve the Lord," or "serve false gods."

One or the other—no one can be neutral, no one can compromise. There is no half-way position. God wants whole-hearted allegiance. The Lord Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me." He also said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."—Matthew 12:30; 6:24.

It is part of God's glory that he has made us free-will agents—able to choose, to accept Him or reject Him. In His dealings with men God does not violate His law. God wants the love and service of men and women to be the outcome of their free-will choice.

The fact that God has given us free-wills to choose to serve Him or not, however, must not be misconstrued as meaning that the individual is under no obligation to Him. Though free-will agents, we are to remember that He is our Creator and our Sus-

tainer, and therefore obedience and service is a definite obligation.

Apart from the fact that it is our *duty* to serve the Lord, other reasons why we should do so will readily come to our minds. God is all-powerful and His will is supreme. It is, therefore, the wisest course to adopt though it may not always appear to be the easiest. Furthermore, service to God is a manifestation of our gratitude to Him for His love and mercy.

An Immediate Decision

Joshua wanted an immediate decision—"Choose you **THIS DAY**."

The past had gone—to choose in the future would have lessened the length of the Israelite's possible period of service for Jehovah even if it did not mean that his future choice would be against God. *Now* is the time to choose. Joshua strengthened his exhortation to make a decision for God there and then with a personal statement—"as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24: 15). Not only was this a powerful individual testimony, but he was able to speak for his house (or household) as well.

The appeal, fortified by his great example, brought forth the people's response (Joshua 24)—

16 . . . God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods;

17 For the LORD our God, he it is that brought us up and our Fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed:

18 And the LORD drove out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also serve the LORD: for he is our God.

They were certainly enthusiastic in their reply, but Joshua knew well how soon their fathers who left Egypt had forgotten their resolutions to serve the Lord and had murmured and complained. He, therefore, replied to them, as recorded in the next verse—

19 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

He knew that they had strange gods among them (verse 23), and could not serve Jehovah and other gods as well. Joshua knew also that they could not serve God in their own strength but would require to obtain Divine grace, help and strength. The prophet reminded them of some of those attributes of God which are repugnant to the natural man: His holiness, His jealousy, and His utter hatred of sin. Since God is holy, jealous, and opposed to sin, He could not approve of the service of any who allied themselves with strange gods.

The result of Joshua's persistence in his remarks and the emphasis of his warnings only brought a more determined resolve on the part of the children of Israel who said (verse 21)—"Nay, but we will serve

the LORD." This is further emphasised in the following verses.

22 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses.

23 Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel.

24 And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.

25 So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.

Evidence of the genuineness and sincerity of the people's remarks is given later in the chapter—

31 And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel.

If we, too, are sincere in our determination to serve the Lord then that sincerity will be shown by our works. If we recognise Him as being holy—totally opposed to sin in any form—then we will seek to serve Him in a manner conformable to His character of holiness. When we sin we will seek His forgiveness through our Mediator Jesus Christ, who gave His life as a propitiatory sacrifice on our behalf.—1 John 2: 1, 2.

But how can we serve Him? God has given us our bodies—each a wonderfully wrought machine with all its members. These we can use in His service. The tongue—the powers of speech—can be used to glorify God and His anointed Jesus. We can tell others of the good news of the gospel. We can use our hands and our feet and other members as instruments of righteousness.

God has blessed us with temporal necessities—food, raiment, shelter, and certain worldly goods—these we can use in His service. But there are many other things which could be mentioned, including our health and bodily strength, our time, and our knowledge (little though it may be)—all of which should be used in His service.

Above all, let us not forget that we have the Word of God, His grace, and His Holy Spirit—all these He has given to us to use in His service. Prayer is a powerful tool which Christians must not neglect to use. Our service for God is of two kinds, which may be described as inward and outward. The inward work consists in that effort which all believers must make with the aid of God's Holy Spirit to develop within themselves the character and likeness of Christ. The outward work consists in the performance of our duty and high privilege of preaching the truth to others. We are living near the close of the Gospel Age when the wheat is ripe—the field is white to the harvest and the labourers few. Shall we engage more zealously in this work? Let us do as Joshua did: make it a personal matter and say—"As for me, I will serve the Lord."
—H. S. W.



Christ as Saviour and King

"... Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."—Luke 2: 10, 11.

POLITICIANS, various organizations and church leaders, are at present talking about "National Reconstruction" and a "New World Order" which, they hope, will be brought into operation after the present great world war has ended. There is ample evidence that mankind still believes it possible for man, by his own efforts, to right the wrongs of the present order.

Christ taught His followers to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6: 10.) Christ would not have asked us to pray for a vain thing. The very fact that He asked for prayer that God's Kingdom should come is sufficient evidence that, at some time, all people that on earth do dwell, shall commence to do God's will and continue to do it. The only uncertainty is the exact time at which this condition amongst all men is to begin.

When charged before Pilate, Christ said, (John 18)—

36 My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

While the seed of Christ's kingdom was sown by Him in the hearts and minds of His followers this reference shows that the actual setting up of His kingdom on earth was to occur at some later time. Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream, (Daniel 2: 31-43) as a prophecy concerning earth's future kingdoms from Nebuchadnezzar's time onwards. The prophet then said (Daniel 2)—

44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

The various substances of which the image in the dream was composed were symbols of the different man-made world empires which were to hold sway on the earth commencing with that of Nebuchadnezzar. These governmental systems have had their places upon the earth being in turn those of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome and its successors.*

The symbolism used for the coming kingdom—a stone cut out of the mountain without hands—shows that the setting-up of Christ's kingdom is to be brought about by God, and not by the work of man. The fact that the stone broke into pieces all the metals constituting the image shows that God will bring about the overthrow of these man-made systems of

government. The prophecy shows that He foresaw, centuries ago, the end of man's attempts to establish his (man's) continual rule on this earth.

It may reasonably be asked—"If God foresaw the failure of man's efforts, why did He not set up Christ's kingdom at the beginning of these kingdoms, instead of arranging for it to be at the end of them?" The answer is that God has planned it so.

The Experience of the Race

The human race has been permitted to govern itself and to learn with bitter experience that it cannot do so satisfactorily. It has to learn that men must be obedient to God and submit to His rule. The setting-up of God's kingdom at the right time will mean that men will then have the opportunity to be obedient to Him and to His Son, as an act of loving free-will. God endowed Adam and Eve with free wills, which they used contrary to His will.

Satan said to Eve (Genesis 3)—

5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

These words make it clear that the eating of the forbidden fruit prompted by Satan was an act of insurrection against God's authority and rulership. The serpent suggested that if they were to eat of this fruit they would be "as gods" (or mighty ones) who would require God's Providence no more.

Since that day mankind has surely known "good and evil," with a considerable amount of the latter. We often have to learn by contrast. Mankind in general will ultimately appreciate God's goodness having known the dire consequences of evil, and will gladly choose the service of God out of love and gratitude—as a freewill act. Throughout the intervening years since the time of Adam to the present day, God has allowed the generations of mankind to experience evil. From before the foundation of the world He purposed to make possible their ultimate salvation, and His plans have been unfolding to this end.

A Perfect Law

With mankind estranged from Him by Sin God, through Moses, made a Covenant with the children of Israel. This Covenant embodied a law of perfect equity. God said to them (Leviticus 18)—

4 Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the LORD your God.

5 Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD.

The promise of life for the keeping of the Law is made also in Deuteronomy 5—

33 Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.

A further confirmation of the promise of life through the keeping of the Law Covenant is found in Deuteronomy 16—

20 That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Not one of the children of Israel, excepting Jesus

*For detailed explanations of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its interpretation please see the book "Daniel the Prophet in the Latter Days," mentioned in the Book List.

Christ, was able to keep the Law in its entirety. They all died therefore without inheriting the land which God promised to them through Abraham as an everlasting inheritance. (Genesis 13: 15.) Though Abraham and his seed have yet to receive the land as an everlasting inheritance God's promise regarding it will be fulfilled. In the meantime (as stated by Christ concerning part of the promised land)—"Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21: 24.

The overthrow of Jerusalem occurred in A.D. 70 when the city was taken by the Roman army under Titus. Continuously since that time the Gentiles and not the Jews have ruled Jerusalem and the surrounding country. As long as this condition exists, "the times of the Gentiles" referred to by the Lord will exist.

Had the Israelites kept the Law perfectly (which they were unable to do) they would thus have obtained the promised life and the earthly inheritance, through their own righteous acts. Had they thus have obtained life there would have been no need for a Saviour for them. Instead of bringing them life, the Law, through their failure to keep it only brought additional condemnation to death.

The inclusion of the Law Covenant arrangements in the Divine Plan has shown clearly that man is helpless in his attempts to attain righteousness, and consequently continuous life, through his own acts. The man Christ Jesus kept the Law in its entirety and so He merited eternal life under the Law. In addition to this by His sacrifice He became the Saviour of all those who afterwards would believe in Him and obey Him. (Hebrews 5)—

8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

Thus by His obedience to God, Christ paid the price for the redemption of all mankind from death into which they have already gone or are on the way. (Philippians 2) —

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, . . .

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Christendom has nominally accepted the fact that Christ is its Saviour. It has not realized however, to a full and proper extent, that He is its KING.

When Samuel had grown old—"the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah. And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel. . . . And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them."—1 Samuel 8: 4-7.

The Failure of Human Self-Government

In the following verses Samuel, by inspiration of

God, told the people of the disadvantages which they would suffer by having an earthly king reigning over them. But the people persisted, and God led Samuel to anoint firstly—Saul, and later—David, as their king. Thus God permitted His people to have the experience of the rulership of earthly kings. He has also allowed the Gentiles before and since Samuel's time to have the experience of earthly kings reigning over them. Under the rule of good kings, nations have prospered for a time. But, with few present day exceptions, crowned kings have had to leave their thrones and in many cases their kingdoms have ceased to continue as independent States.

When the Lord's kingdom is set up on earth, it will consume all the then existing kingdoms. The prophet Daniel said of this Kingdom: "it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms." (Daniel 2: 44.) Earlier in the prophecy we read (Daniel 2)—

35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

Referring to the abolition of the present world arrangements Peter wrote (2 Peter 3)—

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

The sixth verse of this chapter refers to "the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." We know that it was the order of things which then existed amongst men and not the physical heavens and earth which perished.* This is in harmony with the statement of God Himself (Isaiah 45)—

18 For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: . . .

The literal meaning of the Hebrew word *tohu*, here rendered *in vain*, is given in the lexicons as "ruin, vacancy, vanity," so that this part of the reference really means, "He created it not to be ruined."

In view of this and other texts we see that Peter's reference to the heavens and earth which are to be destroyed by fervent heat must necessarily be symbolic. As the heavens and earth which were destroyed by the flood represented the order of things which existed prior to the deluge so the present heavens and earth symbolise the order of things as it exists today. The ruling arrangements in this order which men look up to constitute the "heavens." These include the man-made systems of government and ecclesiastical institutions. These ruling arrangements together with the organization of society among men

*For further information regarding the World Orders referred to in 2 Peter 3 please see "Bible Talks for Heart and Mind" mentioned in the Book List.

("earth") are "reserved" until the time of their complete removal.

New Heavens and a New Earth

Following the impending destruction of the present heavens and earth the Lord will institute a new order of things based on righteousness.

Fallen man cannot do this—it is impossible for imperfect man to evolve a righteous system which will be equitable to all men. To bring it into being, this righteous system will need the exercise of force and how can any man force all other men to obey his rule? We know that this is impossible. The Lord's kingdom however will not be "man-made."

John wrote by inspiration (Revelation 21)—

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

To the Jews, Jerusalem in Palestine was the seat of government and its laws were those of the Law Covenant. The old Jerusalem representing the Law Covenant is contrasted by the Apostle in Galatians 4 with the New Jerusalem or the New Covenant arrangements. The New Jerusalem is represented in the text quoted from Revelation as coming down from God. This means that God is going to manifest control of earth's affairs in a much more pronounced manner than He has done hitherto.

A city in symbolic language stands for a government and the New Jerusalem is described as a Holy City. It corresponds to the establishment of the per-

manent New World Order wherein dwelleth righteousness. The following verse in Revelation 21 shows that this Holy City which is to descend to the earth would result in God dwelling with men. He would have them for His people and He would be their God. Not one man, nor many, but only God could bring about such a righteous arrangement. In order to implement this new order God appointed His Son, Jesus Christ, to be the supreme executive as KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.—Revelation 19: 16.

When the Lord's kingdom is set up on the earth those who dwell upon the earth will be able to contrast its benign influence with their own past experiences, and with the known past experiences of mankind recorded in history; and they will say, as prophesied in Isaiah 25—

9 Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the LORD; we have waited for him, ...we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

The words "he will save us," in the quotation from Isaiah, being in the future tense, show that the work of salvation shall continue after the setting up of Christ's kingdom on earth. Let us continue to pray and pray more earnestly—"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom spread from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.
From north to south mankind will meet
To pay their homage at his feet;
While all the world shall own the Lord,
And savage tribes attend his word.

—R. T.



One Body in Christ

(Continued from September Issue)

If they were not there, He could and would raise up other instrumentalities. The Jews had come to think they were indispensable to God, but when John the Baptist saw them coming to Jordan to witness his work (or perhaps even with the thought of associating themselves with it in a patronizing way), he gave them to understand that rather than accept them God could raise up children unto Abraham from the very stones they trod on.

No, not one of us is essential to Jesus: it is not He who cannot say, I have no need of you. But it is the "head" members in the Church as a whole, or in any local congregation of members, who cannot say to any other member, I have no need of you.

Is it asked, "Who are the head members? and who the less prominent members?" The apostle gives the answer (verses 27-30)—

27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets [public expounders], thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, govern-

ments, diversities of tongues.

29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?

30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

Evidently the teaching is that the apostles were the head members: they were first. Theirs was the office of seeing first the truths the Holy Spirit revealed, they being the Lord's special mouthpieces. As they heard the voice of the Spirit they spoke out the message, and they wrote their epistles for our learning. The early church did not always appreciate the apostles as they should have done, and some came to think that speaking with tongues and healing were more important than prophesying and teaching. Hence this 12th chapter to show that, whatever the gifts possessed, all the members constituted one interdependent body. The apostles had no spirit of rivalry, no wish to discredit or demean the other members. But they did wish all to recognize that the teaching office was more important than the physical healing.

Yet there was one excellent way in which all might

participate and all might rejoice: the way of love. The gifts of the Spirit were not confined to the teaching, miracles, healing, etc., which gifts were distributed "to every man severally as he will." (Vs. 11.) There was, and still is, a "fruit" of the Spirit that is the unceasing privilege of all to exercise and to enjoy. That is love.

Love is the combination of all those sentiments and virtues which are shed abroad in their hearts by the Spirit, and which enables them to rejoice even in tribulation; that enables them to love and cherish every member of the body, great or small; that appreciates the difficulties and trials of all, and would smooth the way of each on the path of life. That wonderful love is again referred to in Ephesians fourth chapter, and the part it performs in the "body." But next we shall look at Ephesians 1: 22, 23—

Head Over All Things to the Church

"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

In the preceding verses the apostle showed how Christ had been raised from the dead by God's mighty power, and given a position over all principality, power, and might, none of which are described as His body, though all are subject to him as Head. To this Headship the Church is no exception; yet "which is his body" must still be understood in harmony with 1 Corinthians 12—a body or group or aggregation of believers belonging to Him as an army may belong to a king, and be subject to his orders.

Reconcile Both in One Body

Before Christ came Jews and Gentiles were on a different footing in God's sight. But since the Cross both may be reconciled to Him by the same means, namely, through faith in Jesus Christ. The Lord broke down "the middle wall of partition" between them (Eph. 2: 14), in order that all who believe might be on an equal footing before God. Hence we read (Ephesians 2)—

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

The "one body" in this instance is the Gospel age church into which have been gathered believing Jews and believing Gentiles. The means of reconciling these to each other and both of them to God is the perfect human body of our Lord Jesus Christ which hung on the cross as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world (Colossians 1: 20-22); more particularly on behalf of the children of Israel who had been bound under the law and required deliverance from it. This could be accomplished only by His bearing the curse of the Law which said, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."—Galatians 3: 10-13.

This curse our Lord bore, and so secured the authority to deliver from that curse any Jew who would come unto Him in faith; for He is now serving as Mediator between God and men. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby

we must be saved." (Acts 4: 12.) Our Lord Jesus' sacrifice became the basis of reconciliation with God, both for the Jew, and for the Gentile. "Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified [or, margin, "a testimony"] in due time."—1 Timothy 2: 6; 4: 12.

Our Lord's human body had been specially prepared. He left the heavenly estate and was born of a virgin, thus being free from Adamic sin, a perfect man corresponding to the one who had sinned, and corresponding also to the wife and descendants of Adam. Jesus said, "a body hast thou prepared me: . . . Lo, I come . . . to do thy will, O God." (Hebrews 10: 1-14.) "And you . . . hath he reconciled.

"In the body of his flesh through death."—Colossians 1: 21, 22.

There are some who misrepresent this fact, and claim that the Church is here meant as having been "prepared" for Him. But that cannot be, for when Jesus was nailed to the cross there was no church. The church did not come into existence until Pentecost, a considerable time after the cross. That offering of His perfect human body was the offering for the sins of the whole world, in which the church (which is composed of persons called out of the world) were included at the time of His death. The Lord said He came not to call the righteous, but sinners; and the apostle (Ephesians 2: 1-5) says that those who form the church were once "dead in trespasses and sins"; hence had no life they could offer as an atoning sacrifice, for only a perfect, unblemished offering was acceptable on God's altar. But our Lord Jesus was the perfect, holy, unspotted Lamb of God, and when He died the atonement price was fully paid by that offering of Himself.

Gentiles, Fellowheirs, One Fellowship

Through Christ both Jew and Gentile "have access by one Spirit unto the Father." (Ephesians 2: 18.) Thus a community of interest exists between Jews and Gentiles who have received the Spirit. And the apostle goes on in the third chapter of Ephesians to explain that the acceptance of Jews and Gentiles on the same terms had been a mystery or teaching unknown in previous ages, but now made known through His apostles and prophets—

Ephesians 3: 6—"That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:"

9—"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:"

So there is one body of believers, composed of Jews and Gentiles, who are thus brought into a very close fellowship, for they are fellowheirs of the same promises. The Gentiles are no longer "strangers and foreigners," but "fellowcitizens with the saints" or remnants called from the Jews, and members together of "the household of God;" builded on the one foundation, Jesus Christ himself.—Ephesians 2: 19-22.

One Body, One Spirit, One Faith

The importance of the theme leads the great

apostle to the Gentiles to continue his exhortation. (Chapter 4.) Jews and Gentiles had different traditions, different customs, different points of view on many subjects. Now they must seek oneness of mind, and this would not be easy. He beseeches them to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*" Then he again reminds them—

Ephesians 4: 4—There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling:

5—One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6—One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

There are not two bodies—Jews and Gentiles, separate and as it were rivals in God's favour, but "one body"; formed by both having been accepted in the one faith and sanctified by the same Spirit, having the same God, and the same Lord Jesus Christ.

In verses 11 and 12 he again points out that the head of this one body is composed of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, all of whom are part of the body which they are to edify by their service; the object being "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." So that while some of the head-members represented by the eye, ear, etc., have a more prominent part in the service, it is only that other members of the body may also be developed and take their due part in the service, "edifying" one another. The chief business of the members of the body of Christ is to edify one another (Ephesians 4:)—

13 Till we all come in [margin, into] the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

The Church is here represented as growing from childhood to maturity or perfect manhood. Not only was this true of the early church, that maturity of the body as a whole, and of the members severally, should be the aim of the several members of the body, but it has been true all the way down the age to the present time. The apostles had no successors in their office, because it was unique: they having been given powers which were not passed on to others, such as the ability to impart spiritual gifts by the laying on of their hands. But their writings have remained with the Church as an infallible guide, and their example of self-sacrifice and devotion has remained as a constant inspiration to their followers. Paul said—"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." (1 Cor. 11: 1.) And this we may well do, since he followed closely in the footsteps of the Lord.

But as the members of "the body" finished their courses the work still required to be carried on by those of less than apostolic rank; namely, those who had been sought out and trained by the apostles themselves, and these were to seek out other faithful ones. (2 Tim. 2: 2.) So that in each generation and in each locality where a body of believers was formed there would still be "eyes" and "ears,"

as well as "hands" and "feet" and other members, qualified to care for, nourish, and instruct the body as a whole; one of the objects being to secure, maintain, and pass on to succeeding generations "the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God." The "fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4: 13) is the fulness of the example set by Christ, to which the church must endeavour to measure up. Only by so building one another up could they hope to outgrow the state of "children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with" every false teaching that came along.—Eph. 4: 14.

Maketh Increase of the Body

Verses 15 and 16 have been taken by some Christians to support the theory that the church is a headless body on earth with Christ as the bodyless Head in heaven; but if carefully read it will be seen that they teach no such doctrine. The apostle is speaking of a self-contained, self-perpetuating, and self-instructing body of believers in Jesus, guided by the Holy Spirit which the Lord sent upon them to assist those very purposes. This is expressed in verse 16—

"... the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

This statement shows that, in using the human body with its many members as a figure of speech to describe the true church, the apostle had in mind a whole body and not a headless body. Why do these words prove this? Because when a human being grows from childhood to maturity the whole of the being—head as well as body—grows gradually and proportionately; otherwise, the child or youth would develop into a monstrosity.

Now Paul here says that *the whole body maketh increase of itself*; consequently, this cannot include the Lord Jesus Christ as an absent member because Christ is already perfect in heaven, and needs not "increase according to the effectual working in the measure of every part." But, taking the church as an entire body composed of head members as well as trunk and feet members, we see that the eye and ear members grow with the growth of the trunk, hands, feet, etc.—all grow together; all develop in knowledge and grace and unity as all submit to the guidance of the one Spirit through the divine Word.

Grow Up into Christ

We have, then, not a monstrosity—Christ the fully developed bodyless head in heaven, with the church and undeveloped but growing headless body on earth. To the contrary, we have our Lord Jesus Christ as a complete Individual having the oversight and direction of the church; while the church as a whole self-contained body or organization grows up and increases *in His likeness*. That likeness is perfection of love and obedience to God. All the Lord Jesus did and is doing and will yet do is done in love; and love is self-sacrifice in the interest of others. Paul expresses it: "Unto the edifying of itself in love." If each member does its own little part in the spirit of love for the brethren, growth

is bound to be more steady and more happyfying all round than if each does its part grudgingly and complainingly. As each individual member grows in love, so will the whole body or organisation grow in love.

What, then, is the significance of "From whom," the first two words of verse 16, which are supposed to represent a connection between the headless body and the bodyless head? We answer, the church draws its inspiration, its authority from the Lord Jesus Christ, and on account of the help rendered by Him is enabled to maintain itself as a complete body or *ecclesia*, to use the Greek word usually translated church, and which means a called-out company. The church, the apostle points out, should draw its authority, its doctrines, and its practices from Christ the Lord, and not from the false teachers referred to in verse 14—"by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

This instruction from the apostle is as much needed to-day as when first written to the brethren at Ephesus. If there were crafty men (and women, too) who subtly strove to draw away disciples or who caused dissension and distrust in a congregation to serve their own evil ends, there are many more such in and outside the church to-day. And as the apostle goes on to admonish the church to lay aside lying and deceit and theft, so must we admonish those who profess the name of Christ. The liar and the thief and the deceitful worker are not those alone who are caught and jailed. Sad to say, they flourish everywhere. If the church would be "fitly joined together and compacted" like the members of a human body, all of whose parts work harmoniously together, the apostle intimates, then—"putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour; for we are members one of another." Ephesians 4: 25, 28.

Another reason why the human body is a good illustration of the church, but not of Christ Jesus and the Church considered together, is that heart, lungs, and other organs absolutely essential to the life of the head of a body are resident in the trunk, and not in the head. The brain requires blood, and the only way to receive it is from the heart. We cannot for a moment think that our Lord Jesus is thus dependent on the church which is His body. But it is clear that the church itself, as a body of persons united in one faith, hope, etc., interdependent and self-perpetuating, exercising mutual care one over another, is well represented by the constitution and functions of a human being. "That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."—1 Corinthians 12: 25, 26.

The Saviour of the Body

The next reference to the Church as a "body" is found in Ephesians 5: 23-33. The words "and he is the saviour of the body" (vs. 23), and "For we

are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (vs. 30), are often taken as proof that the "body" referred to is a headless body. Particularly is this view favoured by those who draw from the passage the teaching that a wife is as helpless as a headless body, and must take all her thoughts from her husband, who, as the expression is, "does all the thinking for the family." But here again the words of the apostle are not studied carefully enough to discern his intended and true meaning.

Instead of using husband and wife to indicate that the body of Christ is headless, and that Christ in heaven is the bodyless head, the apostle's purpose is in harmony with his statements in 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4; namely, that the church is a whole body, just as a woman is a whole body, having head as well as arms and feet and other members; in other words, a self-contained organism.

It should be noted that the words "of his flesh, and of his bones" (vs. 30) do not occur in any of the three most ancient MSS, the Sinaitic, Vatican 1209, or Alexandrine. They were introduced at a later date, possibly by some one who thought these words would add to the clearness of the subject. As a matter of fact, they becloud it. In Eden when Adam said of Eve—"This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh," he meant that Eve was made of the same nature as himself; that is, human, and was not of the lower or animal creation, previously seen and named by him, but without finding a mate intended for or suitable to himself. But when we come to compare the nature of Jesus Christ in heaven with that of the church on earth, we find they are different. Our Lord is now the exact impress of the Father's substance, while the church on earth still retains their human nature.

Not only so, but the Church is elsewhere described as a chaste virgin, espoused to Christ, waiting and longing for His return, at which time He will take her to himself. (2 Corinthians 11: 2; John 14: 2, 3.) And Revelation 19: 7, 8 foretells that the marriage of the Lamb will take place at the end of the Gospel Age, when the called number of saints is complete.

The apostle had just been exhorting the brethren to soberness and humility, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." (Ephesians 5: 21.) But lest this admonition be misunderstood in a mixed assembly, particularly one largely composed of former idol worshippers in which promiscuity was part of the religion, the apostle qualifies the statement by admonishing the married women—"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, . . ." (Eph. 5: 22.) Because all the brethren are to submit to one another "in the fear of God" is no reason why the relation of husband and wife should be interfered with; for the family is a self-contained unit and has its own obligations and duties. The husband provides for the wife, and thus is the caretaker, preserver, or "saviour"; and the wife acknowledges the husband's responsibilities and co-operates by reducing household friction to a minimum. Yet the wife to do this must still have "a head on her shoulders," and be able to think and plan and work for the good of the family.

Verses 25, 28, 29 are a command to husbands to love their wives—an admonition much required in an immoral community, such as Ephesus; and not out of place to-day when marital delinquency is condoned on every hand.

Present It To Himself

But immediately after referring to Christ and the church under the figure of husband and wife, the apostle uses the figure of a betrothed couple to represent their relation (verses 25-27)—

25 . . . even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

In verse 28 "as their own bodies" is sometimes taken to support the idea that a wife is and should be as unthinking as a man's personal body minus its head would be. But the apostle means "men ought to love their wives as they love their own [whole] bodies." And verse 29—"For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it." What care a man takes of his own comfort and convenience is well known. The apostle uses this general characteristic of men to illustrate that Christ takes as much care of the Church as a man takes of himself. At the same time the husbands are exhorted to overcome this natural selfishness and to exercise toward their wives the true self-denying love which Christ has for the Church, inasmuch as He gave His life for it, and has it in His constant care.

To return to verses 25-27 quoted above. Betrothals among the Jews were very solemn and sacred, the two persons being definitely pledged to each other. After an interval spent in preparing for the event, the marriage took place; the bridegroom calling for the bride at her parents' house to take her to his own home. In the case of Christ and the Church this interval is spent in preparation of the bride, the bridegroom's preparation having been already completed when He was received by the Father into heaven, and sat down on the right hand of his divine Majesty.

What the Church requires is sanctifying and cleansing, "the washing of water by the word." (Vs. 26.) God's Word is the water for cleansing the Lord's people from daily defilements, and for developing in them a holy, pure, and lovable character. Those of us who submit to be taught and cleansed in this way will be among those who will constitute the permanent members of the church. This preparation is also referred to as a work of the church on its own behalf (Revelation 19: 7)—

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."

The church therefore is likened by the apostle in both Ephesians 5 and 2 Corinthians 11: 2 to a betrothed virgin, a separate and distinct personality. So when he concludes (verse 30)—"For we are members of his body," the thought is, we are members of the called-out company of believers, the

aggregation of individuals united in one Spirit, which is to submit to the cleansing process which shall prepare the church as a whole (including each member individually) for its future position, when He as the Bridegroom will come and take it to Himself. The church is rightly called *His* body because He purchased it, and is the ruler and controller of it. And what applies to the body as a whole applies to each individual member: "and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price:"—1 Cor. 6: 19, 20.

In All Things Pre-eminence

The next reference to the church as a body, and the Lord Jesus as the head of the body, is Colossians 1: 18. In this case also the "body" refers to the aggregation of believers called the church—a complete body, a self-sustained and self-perpetuating company of persons, among whom some serve as head members, but all of them recognizing Christ in heaven as the head, or guide and director of the body, even as the apostle points out that He is the head of all principality and power, in heaven and in earth.

Again, in verse 24, the apostle uses "body" in the sense of a company of persons. Paul suffered much on behalf of the church, but rejoiced in the privilege—

"Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church."

Our Lord left no afflictions behind, having borne them all during His brief life on earth. He drank to the depths the cup of suffering which the Father had given Him to drink. (John 18: 11.) But the apostle Paul had had a career of suffering and affliction marked out for him, when the Lord said of him—"for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." (Acts 9: 15, 16.) These afflictions began to fall upon Paul from the beginning of his apostleship, and numerous incidents recorded in the book of the Acts, as well as his own epistles, give evidence that they continued throughout his life. At the time of writing to the Colossians Paul had not completed his course; hence there were still left behind—or remaining—some of these afflictions which he had still to bear.

These afflictions he called "the afflictions of Christ," that is, the afflictions endured in the name of Christ and because he was a faithful servant of Christ, and they were endured "for his body's sake," as he travelled about preaching: "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, fully to preach the word of God." (Colossians 1: 25.) The apostle Paul exercised the functions of both an eye and an ear member of the "body," and one might also say a mouth member of the "body"; for he was given special revelations and received many spoken messages, besides being the mouthpiece of the Lord in declaring the truth. All this he did for the benefit of the other members of the "body."

In Colossians 2: 9 the pre-eminence of Christ Jesus is again referred to. He as the Head should receive worship, and be held in honour. But some among the brethren were inclined to disregard our Lord's authority. They sought to beguile the brethren into "a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels," or messengers. Every such one the apostle Paul described as "vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head," (Col. 2: 18, 19.) In other words, such sought to displace Christ as the head, and to become themselves the directors and guides of the church in accordance with their own ideas. Some, according to verse 23, evidently recommended fasting and self-punishments of various kinds, as history tells us became the practice of many hermits, monks, and others at a later day. But while these things had "a show of wisdom" in thus exalting the human will and denying the flesh, they were in reality a satisfying or gratification of the flesh; that is, gratification of the fleshly mind which would take pride in these so-called achievements.

But all this was contrary to the directions of Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. Verse 19 is made more understandable by the Revised Version rendering—"and not holding fast the Head, from whom all the body, being supplied and knit together through the joints and bands, increaseth with the increase of God." That is to say, the body or church was endowed with its own system of supplying nourishment to the body through the apostles and other scripturally instructed teachers, and any member or any outsider who interfered with that God-ordained system was a usurper of the position of Christ, who alone has authority superior to that of the apostles. The tendency of individual leaders to lord it over the Church, and later the formation of a special class called the clergy and the convening of councils and synods to decide what is truth, are all warned against in this inspired epistle as usurpations of our Lord's position as Director and Guide of the body. The Lord as Head seeks the well-being of the Church. These usurpers seek their own preferment to the injury of the Church of true believers which constitute "His body."

The word "body" is used three times in seven verses (Colossians 2: 17-23), well illustrating the various applications of the word. In verse 17 "body" refers to a mass or substance which is capable of throwing a shadow. Everyone knows that the shadow of a thing is not the thing itself; also that it is not the shadow that originates the body or object, but the object casts the shadow. So Christians who had been Jews brought up under the Mosaic law were told not to mistake the shadow for the substance. The law was the shadow, but the "body" or substance, the real thing, was of Christ.

In verse 19 "body" refers to the church as a whole, or body of persons, as already shown.

In verse 23 "body" refers to the individual bodies of those who practised fasting, self-whipping, and many other supposed aids to spirituality, but which the apostle condemned as altogether out of place and a mere fleshly indulgence in place of genuine

sacrifice of self for Christ's sake.

Your Whole Spirit, Soul, and Body

Another occurrence of the word "body" applied to the church as an organization or aggregation of persons is in 1 Thessalonians 5: 23—

"... I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Undoubtedly "spirit and soul and body" refer to possessions of the church as a whole. The Spirit is the "one Spirit" mentioned in Ephesians 4: 4, given to the Church at the beginning as Comforter and Guide, to lead the disciples into all truth. This Spirit is also a spirit or influence of holiness and devotion and love permeating the lives of its individual members.

The "soul" (singular) referred to is not the souls (plural) of the members, for they all die as they finish their course. Paul himself expected to sleep until the Lord would call him forth in the resurrection. (2 Timothy 4: 6-8; 1 Thessalonians 4: 14-17.) The word "soul" means being, and the apostle's prayer was for the preservation of the church as a living vital force. And this prayer has been answered. For never at any time through the age has the church—the true church—passed out of existence. The true Church is a living organism, however "dead" the church nominal has been.—Revelation 3: 1.

The prayer for the preservation of the body has also been answered. Not by keeping alive the human bodies (plural) of individual members of the church—for they have gone to dust as they fell asleep—but by preservation of the body (singular) of the church as a whole.

(Continued in November Issue)



Why Should I Fear?

Whene'er the storms come down on thee,
And days of peace all seem to flee;
This thought thy peace again shall bring,
Why should I fear?—the Lord is King.

E'en when the tempest rages high,
And darkest clouds are drawing nigh,
With hands of faith to this, O! cling,—
Why should I fear?—the Lord is King.

Amid the stormy waves of life,
Above the tumult and the strife,
The chimes of hope still sweetly ring,—
Be not afraid—the Lord is King.

Thy ship is toss'd by wind and wave,
But there is one whose power can save;
Across the sea he hastes to bring
Both rest and peace,—the Lord is King.

Yes, Jesus walks upon the sea,
And in the storm he comes to thee;
Then trust in him, rejoice and sing;
He calms the waves,—the Lord is King.

He stretches out his hand to thee,
And from thy fears he sets thee free;
Beneath the shadow of his wing
He keeps thee safe,—the Lord is King.

— L. S. Cuthbert.

Interesting Questions

When this Life Ends?

Question.—What shall be the state of man when this life ends?

Answer.—Questions of all sorts sink into insignificance beside one that inquires into the state of things the moment after death. What shall be when this life ends is a matter of the deepest interest to every one who can think, and the question is certain to have occurred to every individual who is able to contemplate possibilities farther ahead than the next moment or two. Philosophers have wrestled with the question, and have formulated theories concerning it. Charlatans of all descriptions have coined mints of money by giving "answers" to credulous seekers after information, many of these alleged "answers" purporting to come from persons known to have died recently or in more remote times, but asserted to be alive and able to "communicate" through human beings of appropriate sensitiveness. Ministers of the Christian religion have also sought to answer the question: but their answers in the main have been so colored by the philosophical speculations of heathendom, that the before-mentioned charlatans have, unfortunately, been assisted by them rather than exposed.

The Bible answer to this important question has been sadly neglected in the meantime by many of those whose professed occupation is to teach the people what the Bible says. This neglect is the more saddening, because the Bible answer is the only one that can correct the misapprehensions lodged in so many minds, satisfy the longings of every truth-hungry heart, and expose the colossal pretensions of the charlatans who prey upon the purses of those emotional beings who are convinced by their longing desires—the wish being father to the thought—in the absence of unquestionable demonstration.

In the Bible answer to the question, "What shall be when this life ends," there are simplicity and straightforwardness that command respect and inspire confidence in the answer given. There is also a steadfast adherence to those facts which may be known apart from the Bible, which should form a weighty recommendation of the Bible to those who have not hitherto thought much of it. Moreover, in dealing with the situation revealed in its answer to the question, the Bible shows an incontrovertible logic which must appeal to every admirer of consistency.

What may be Observed

Before seeking the Bible answer to our question, it will be useful to remind ourselves briefly of the leading facts observable by those in the presence of one just deceased. What is the difference between the condition of that one just prior to decease and his condition after decease? The senses of sight, touch, and hearing apprehend the evidence. What do they tell us? Sight tells us that there is no longer the activity associated with life, however feeble. There

is no longer the rise and fall which must always be manifest where respiration is in process. Circulation of the blood having ceased, a certain pallor is manifest and remains. Touch tells us that there is no pulse, and presently informs us of a coldness that has come over the dead body. Hearing assures us that there is absolutely no movement within the trunk of the deceased, as there would be if the internal organs were functioning. So these three senses agree that life has ceased, and that death has taken place.

As far as these senses can inform us, the deceased person is no longer in existence. If it be asserted that something has flown away, and persists in living after the person is apparently dead, the senses of sight, touch, and hearing cannot confirm such assertion; they can but say: we neither saw, heard, nor felt anything go.

Will the Scriptures confirm the testimony of sight, touch, and hearing? If so, to what extent? And will the Scriptures give us additional information of a sort not deducible from the examination by the three senses? To these questions we answer—Scripture confirms the testimony of the senses in regard to our question, and gives additional information such as the senses cannot supply.

Testimony from an Ancient Hymnal

The phrase, "hymnbook theology," is sometimes used in derision of sentiments expressed in hymns. It cannot be denied that some of these sentiments are far from bringing glory to God and edification to His saints. The reason for this is because the writers of hymns are not always careful to follow closely the teaching of Scripture. Expressing their own thoughts, the hymnists could not avoid going astray on some points, and this is said without disparagement of many beautiful and most comforting hymns, for which we acknowledge indebtedness to talented saints of all ages.

But there is a hymnal nearly three thousand years old, which speaks with the authority of divine inspiration: viz., the Book of Psalms. Whatever is found in the Psalms is true theology, and is to be accepted as such. If they say anything bearing on our question, their utterance will be the divine ultimatum that should satisfy every requirement of those who believe in God. Now it is a fact that some exceedingly plain and explicit statements occur in the Psalms, the perusal of which leaves no room for doubt; for example—

"In death there is no remembrance of thee;

In the grave who shall give thee thanks?"—Psa. 6: 5.

If the ability to remember be gone, there is but little left. The power of connected thought goes out with memory, and only a blank remains. Not only is God forgotten in death by those who in life called upon His Name, but there is no power by which the dead can praise Him. The Psalmist in a sore illness uses this as an argument with the Almighty—Save me! for if I die I shall not be able to remember

thee or give thee thanks. With a similar argument the Psalmist again calls upon God (Psalm 30)—

9 What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit?

Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth? And again (Psalm 88)—

10 Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead?

Shall the dead arise and praise thee?

Selah.

11 Shall thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave? Or thy faithfulness in destruction?

Shall thy wonders be known in the dark?

And thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

All this is, of course, very far from agreeing with the "theology" expressed in many of the modern hymnals, in which it is asserted that the dead can praise the Lord much better than they could while alive. The disagreement is so serious that it is quite clear we cannot believe both. We cannot believe that a dead person both can and cannot praise the Lord; that a dead person cannot remember and that he can remember. It is therefore incumbent upon us to make choice. Which shall we believe; the inspired Psalms, or the uninspired modern hymns? *Choose this day!*

Another assertion of the Psalms is—

"The dead praise not the Lord,

Neither any that go down into silence."—Psa. 115: 17.

And King Hezekiah, having recovered from his serious illness, and having received the promise that fifteen years should be added to his life, sang a song of praise to God, saying (Isaiah 38)—

18 For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.

19 The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day; the father to the children shall make known thy truth.

Testimony by "The Preacher"

Efforts are constantly made to discredit the book of Ecclesiastes on account of its plain teaching in regard to what shall be when this life ends. It is alleged that it was written not under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but in a pessimistic mood; Solomon, its writer, having "seen life," and tired of it. To this we reply, the Royal Preacher undoubtedly did some very foolish and exceedingly wrong things; but the tone of the book, and particularly of its closing exhortation, is—

"The end of the matter, even all that hath been heard, is, Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."—Eccl. 12: 13, 14, margin.

A book that enforces its entire teaching, "even all that hath been heard," with words like these and those other words, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth" (Eccl. 12: 1), cannot be catalogued as infidel literature, and this book is grossly libelled by those who so classify it.

The testimony of "The Preacher" concerning our question is clearly expressed (Eccl. 9)—

4 For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion.

5 For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.

6 Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever

in any thing that is done under the sun.

10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

This teaching agrees exactly with that of the Psalm before quoted. If, therefore, some seek to discredit Ecclesiastes on account of this teaching, they should also find equal fault with the Psalms. But the right thing would be for them to revise their own false teachings, and remodel them according to the inspired declarations of the sacred Word.

Another portion of Ecclesiastes that is in even greater disfavor than the above with those who seek to discredit the book is (chapter 3)—

19 For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity.

20 All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.

21 Who knoweth the spirit of man, whether it goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast whether it goeth downward to the earth?—V. 21 according to ancient MSS. and R.V.

This is, of course, very shocking to those who entertain certain ideas about the constitution of man. But if this passage has to be criticised, then Genesis must be criticised on precisely the same ground. Moses wrote that the beasts of the field, the cattle and the creeping things were made by God out of materials furnished by the earth. (Gen. 1: 24, 25.) He also wrote that "God formed man [Heb. literally, the man] of the dust of the ground" (Gen. 2: 7), and that the effect of death would be that man should "return unto the ground: for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."—Gen. 3: 19.

As for all having "one breath," this is a truism; every one knows that the same atmosphere is breathed by man and beast, and that when either man or beast stops breathing he stops living.

From the reading of Eccl. 3: 21 as above quoted from ancient manuscripts and the Revised Version, it would appear that the well known facts mentioned in vss. 19 and 20, in harmony with Genesis, were here cited by the "Preacher" in contradiction of heretical notions that were even then abroad as they are now to the effect that man when he dies goes upward and the beast when he dies goes downward. Whereas the fact is that in death, and as far as death is concerned, a man has no preeminence above a beast.

Both being alive, the man is superior to the beast: both being dead, the man has no advantage over the beast. Nevertheless, *the dead man has prospects* which the dead beast cannot have; for God has promised that man shall be raised from death, but has made no such provision on behalf of the beast.

It is because of this *prospect* that the "Preacher" says that "the spirit [or breath, representing the power to live] shall return unto God who gave it." (Eccl. 12: 7.) The Hebrew word rendered "spirit" in this passage is the same as that rendered "breath" in Gen. 6: 17; 7: 15; Eccl. 3: 19; and many other places.

The Old Testament evidence in regard to our question has not been nearly all exhausted in the fore-

going; there is much more to the same effect. What we have considered fully bears out the evidence of the senses—Sight, Hearing, and Touch—which evidence is the same beside the death bed and in the autopsy. But Scripture looks forward as the senses cannot do. Scripture mentions the remedy for the disaster. As the people have been taken away in death, and have returned to their dust, they will in a time to come be brought back to "their former estate." (Ezek. 16: 53-55.) The children, too, shall return from death—"the land of the enemy"—to their own border, where they lived before death took them. (Jer. 31: 15-17.) Scripture makes no claim that people are alive while they are in death; recognizing that the people are actually *dead*, the Word of God mentions the only logical remedy for the situation; viz., RESURRECTION.

Testimony by Jesus Christ

"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. . . . Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: . . . Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead." "I am the resurrection, and the life."—John 11: 11-14, 25.

Coming now to the New Testament, we find no discrepancy between it and the Old Testament. The same answer is given to the question, What shall be when this life ends. In the Old Testament it is said of both good and bad that they sleep in death, knowing nothing. (2 Chron. 12: 1, 16; 14: 1, 2; 16: 13; 17: 1-6; 21: 1; Eccl. 9: 5.) In the New Testament our Lord Jesus Christ gives the same teaching, as above cited. This is confirmed by the incident of Lazarus' being raised from death, or waked out of his sleep. Had Lazarus been four days in heaven, he must have had much to tell about the wonders he had seen, and he might have been excused had he reproached his Friend for calling him back to earth again. But there was no gathering of an immense multitude to hear a lecture from Lazarus on "What I saw in my Four Days' Visit to the Heavenly Courts"; for Lazarus had nothing to relate; nor did his sisters and friends expect that he would have. Lazarus had not been to heaven at all. (John 3: 13.) He was simply asleep in death, knowing nothing, doing nothing; and it was from death that his loving Friend Jesus brought him back.

In connection with this incident, we are told Who has the power to raise the dead. It is Jesus; He is the Resurrection and the Life. By his death and resurrection He became Lord of dead and living; having paid the price of His own precious blood to purchase the race to Himself. (Rom. 14: 9; 1 Cor. 6: 20.) He has the "keys" of death and of *hades*, and in due time He will use the keys and will release those who are bound in the prison. (Rev. 1: 18.) He will call forth "all that are in the graves." (John 5: 28.) And we "have hope toward God, . . . that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."—Acts 24: 15.

Testimony by Peter and Paul

"For David is not ascended into the heavens."—Acts 2: 34.

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, . . . For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which

sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."—1 Thess. 4: 13, 14.

If our Lord said, "And no man hath ascended up to heaven" (John 3: 13), the Apostle Peter was equally explicit concerning David. "For David is not ascended into the heavens." (Acts 2: 34.) Language could not be plainer than this. David was more than a thousand years dead when Peter said this about him. He was "both dead and buried," and for a thousand years had been sleeping with his fathers. Since the day of Pentecost nearly two thousand years more have passed, and David's death-sleep remains unbroken. But just as surely as great David's greater Son has the "keys," just so surely will He one day call forth His renowned ancestor. Then He Who was David's son shall be David's Lord; He Who was the Offspring shall be the Root of David, from Whom David will derive His resurrection life. —Matt. 22: 41-46; Rev. 22: 16.

Paul's testimony is quite as clear on this question as those before cited. The believers who died had not gone to heaven; they were *asleep* in Jesus, and would be waked out of their sleep in due time by Him Who has the power to call them forth. Paul himself did not expect to go to his heavenly reward immediately at his death. He recognised that the crown of righteousness would be laid up for him, and would be given him "at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." Our Lord's appearing is not to be as a man—He is now "far above angels"—but in a high official capacity to take over the earth and all the dead buried in the earth, for the purpose of blessing the myriads who died in ignorance of Him and of the way of salvation.—2 Tim. 4: 6-8; John 14: 1-3.

If there be No Resurrection?

"For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished."—1 Cor. 15: 16-18.

Those Christians whose theology is corrupted by mixture with heathen philosophy and world-wisdom, and who therefore vainly suppose (contrary to Scripture and the evidence of their senses) that the dead are not really dead, but away in the enjoyment of more genial environment, relieved from the incubus of "this mortal coil," see no reason why there should be a resurrection of the dead. To them the resurrection appears to be a positive and very great disadvantage, since the weight of the happily shuffled-off "mortal coil" will again become a burden upon the now liberated soul. In the circumstances, it is not surprising that they take this view, and that many of them openly reject the idea of a resurrection as not only useless but injurious.

Their premise is wrong. The soul or spirit does not—cannot—live independent of a body, and the dead souls are not living somewhere while the body moulders away. The truth is, that if there be no resurrection of the dead, there is no ray of hope to lighten the future even for the saints, let alone the sinners. The Scriptures give us the logical position in the event of there being no resurrection—"If the dead rise not, . . . then they also which are

fallen asleep [dead] in Christ ARE PERISHED." This is easy to understand. If we cannot look forward to resurrection, we cannot look forward to anything. There is only blackness of darkness; the infidel teaching is correct; "death ends all"; and we, having hope in Christ in this life only, "are of all men most miserable."

But, thanks be to God, though death is the end of life, as Scripture and our senses affirm, death has not the last word. The Son of God has died for our sins, has Himself been raised from death, has abolished death as the conqueror over mankind, and has brought life and incorruptibility to light. (2 Tim. 1: 10.) For He must reign until death is put under His feet and destroyed. (1 Cor. 15: 25, 26; Rev. 20: 14.) Then shall the ransomed of the Lord exult, saying, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" "Death is swallowed up in victory!" (1 Cor. 15: 54, 55.) Praise ye the Lord!

The Common Salvation

Question.—What is the "Common Salvation" mentioned by Jude? How can any salvation be "common"?—Jude 1: 3.

Answer.—The word "common" as used by Jude has not the significance of ordinary or coarse, as the word is often used to-day, but "common" in the sense of being participated in by a number of persons. An open field or paddock is called a "common," because anybody and everybody may walk in it. So the salvation which the Apostles preached was open to everybody. Jude probably had in mind the former restriction of salvation to the Jews (John 4: 22), and that now the middle wall of partition is taken away, so that both Jew and Gentile may participate in the salvation offered by the Gospel. The "common salvation," about which Jude had previously written them, was the faith which they should earnestly contend for, according to the latter portion of the verse. Paul uses the expression, "the common faith," evidently to the same intent. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one way of salvation, not several different ways. All the called are called in "one hope of your calling."—Titus 1: 4; Eph. 4: 4-6.

When was the Holy Spirit Given?

Question.—John 20: 21-23: are these genuine? They seem to contradict Acts, first and second chapters.

Answer.—There is no evidence against the authen-

ticity of John 20: 21-23. The action of our Lord in breathing upon the disciples was symbolic of the impartation of the Holy Spirit, and His words, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit," were not fulfilled immediately upon being said, but were an indication of what they were to expect and of what actually came to pass on the day of Pentecost.

The steps taken by the disciples to fill the place vacated by the treachery of Judas, as narrated in Acts 1 were unauthorized, and the Lord disallowed them. He Himself personally chose Saul of Tarsus to fill the vacant place in the Apostleship, as He had personally chosen all the others of that class. The disciples had not received the Holy Spirit when they elected Matthias, therefore were not acting by authority, as might have been supposed had the election taken place on or after Pentecost. The disciples limited God's possible choice by lot to two men of their own choosing, thus placing a restriction upon the Almighty which it was beyond their province to do.

The fact that the Holy Spirit was not actually given until the day of Pentecost, as related in Acts 2, goes to show that our Lord's action in breathing upon the disciples was not the giving of the Spirit, but was symbolic of that great Gift which was conferred a few days afterwards.

We read (Acts 2: 33) that it was not until after His resurrection that our Lord received from His Father the Holy Spirit to pour out upon the waiting disciples—thus drawing a distinction between the Holy Spirit as He possessed it personally (John 3: 34) and that Holy Spirit which has since Pentecost been given to the Church. In each case the Holy Spirit was the Spirit of God, an influence from God, but adapted to different purposes; the Holy Spirit given to the Saviour at His baptism being the anointing to Messiahship and Kingship, as well as a power to work miracles, while the Holy Spirit poured out on the disciples was, besides being a power to speak with tongues and perform other miracles, a token of forgiveness of sins and a pledge of the future inheritance. Needless to say, our Lord did not receive the Holy Spirit as a token of forgiveness, because He had no sin and consequently required no forgiveness.

Remitting Sins

Question.—What is meant by Christ's remark in John 20: 23—"Whosoever sins ye remit . . ."? Catholic and Anglican priests usually take this to mean that they have authority to forgive sins.

Answer.—The commission here given to the apostles can be best understood by observing their conduct after Pentecost, when they were endued with special powers. They received, among others, the gift of "discerning of spirits," which gave an ability to read the state of mind of persons they met. (1 Cor. 12: 10.) Peter exercised this gift when he exposed the deceit of Ananias and Sapphira, and "retained" the sin; and the power of God was exercised to destroy them both. (Acts 5: 1-11.) It was a warning to the Church not to attempt to deceive God. This is not to say that Ananias and Sapphira forfeited all opportunity for future salvation, but they did lose

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their position in the Church and their prospects for the High Calling.

In taking them to task Peter was not usurping the place of God, but merely acting as God's agent. The punishment inflicted was God's work independently of Peter.

On other occasions Peter was used to "remit" sin. This he did, not arbitrarily, but as God's mouthpiece, giving assurance (as in Acts 2: 38-40) that if the steps prescribed by the Lord were taken—namely, repentance and baptism—the Jews addressed would receive the forgiveness of their sins. Later on Peter assured Cornelius and his household that through the name of Jesus "whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."

That those present sincerely believed was evidenced by the pouring out upon them of the Holy Spirit. With this Peter had nothing to do, the demonstration being an object lesson to Peter himself, as well as to others, that God was willing to accept the Gentiles.—Acts 10.

Peter also spoke scathingly to Simon the Sorcerer, but exhorted him to repentance and held out hope of forgiveness.—Acts 8: 18-24.

Peter did not say that he (Peter) would forgive Simon, but that if Simon would go to God confessing his sin God would forgive him. Nor did Simon ask Peter to pray that God would forgive him. He asked his prayers that the threat that he perish with his money might not be executed upon him. There is nothing to show whether Simon acted on Peter's advice or not. But the incident is valuable to us as showing that the apostles were not given the power to remit or to retain sins on such terms as they might devise, but that the forgiveness or the retention of the sin was God's work, and dependent upon the attitude of the sinner. The commission of the apostles was, therefore, to *publish abroad the conditions upon which God was prepared to forgive sins*. To whoever complied with these conditions, they were authorized to declare that their sins were forgiven. To whoever refused to comply with the conditions, they were authorized to state that their sins were not forgiven—hence retained.

In Matt. 18: 15-18, the whole Church assembled for the purpose indicated is authorized to loose or to bind. "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." We take this to mean that when the Church carries out the Lord's instructions He honors their action by His own endorsement thereof.

The authority to remit or to retain sin in individual cases is the privilege of every believer. That is, knowing the conditions upon which God has arranged to forgive sins, every believer has authority to say to any repentant sinner, who accepts Christ as his personal Saviour, that God receives and forgives him; and to say to any unrepentant one that his sins are not forgiven, he is still under condemnation.—Acts 10: 34-43; 13: 38, 39; 26: 18, 20; 15: 7-9; 11: 18; see also John 3: 16-21, 35, 36.

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VOL. 35.

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, NOVEMBER, 1943.

No. 8.

A Reason For The Hope

"And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."—1 Pet. 3: 15.

A HOPE, to be worthy the name, must have a reason attached to it. To hope for something without definite and sufficient reasons upon which to base the hope is foolishness, and results only in keen disappointment. To hope in vain is like a farmer expecting a crop without first putting in the seed, or an orchardist dreaming of what he will do from the proceeds of an orchard which he fails to prune and otherwise tend. So the Apostle says the Christian, if he have a hope of salvation, should have definite reasons for entertaining such hope, and moreover should be able to explain them clearly for the enlightenment and encouragement of others.

The more definite and numerous the reasons, the more boldly does the Hope stand out as a sure prize or reward. A farmer has a right to hope for a crop when he has planted the seed. But there remain many possibilities of failure. His hope is further justified and strengthened as additional reasons for it are found in rains at the right seasons, and in the steady growth of the crop. As he sees the fields ripe to harvest his hope is all but realized, and he hastens to make it sure by prompt reaping and threshing and storage in his barns.

Now what is the Hope of the Christian? and what are his reasons for entertaining that Hope?

A System of Belief

The Christian's hope may be considered from three standpoints. First, the Hope as a system of belief, which he sees taught in the Scriptures, and which he believes because of his confidence in the Bible as God's Word. Second, the Hope as it concerns himself personally, as expressed in the inquiry of the keeper of the prison, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16: 30.) Third, the Hope as it concerns others—those near and dear to him, and also mankind in general.

Before the Christian can have a definite hope for himself or others, he must see that the Bible defines what God is willing to do and to give, and the con-

ditions upon which any or all may obtain His favors. We have here those Scriptures which declare God's purposes in general; how it is His purpose to bless all the families of the earth, how He sent His only begotten and dearly loved Son into the world to purchase the race by the sacrifice of His own life, how the Son thus became the Lord, Owner or Ruler over all men, the whole race of Adam passing into His possession and being placed fully under His authority; how a "little flock" is being blessed in advance of the others, that they may be joint-heirs with Christ in the Kingdom, and reign with Him the thousand years.

The Hope for Oneself

Having seen something of God's purposes, and learned that only through the Lord Jesus Christ can any approach God, the inquirer hastens to avail himself of the privilege. (John 14: 6.) He confesses his sins, acknowledging the atoning blood, which alone can cleanse from sin, and receives forgiveness. This forgiveness is realized, not by his feelings, but by belief in the definite statements of God's word that one so coming is accepted and forgiven. He acts on the Apostle's answer to the gaoler, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." (Acts 16: 31.) Having so done, he has the assurance that he is saved—saved from the condemnation of death and from the power of Sin, and with the hope of complete salvation at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: for as yet, the Apostle Paul says, "We are saved by hope," not having seen the fullness of the deliverance, but we are, as the Apostle Peter explains, "Kept by the power of God through faith unto the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."—Rom. 8: 24; 1 Thes. 5: 8; 1 Pet. 1: 5.

The Hope as an Anchor

Amid the changing scenes and circumstances of life, the Christian (if he be faithful) suffers much for fidelity to the Lord and the truth, in addition to those pains and sorrows and disappointments inseparable from the present evil world. His principles prevent him doing many things for worldly advancement which others think nothing of. His sense of

duty compels him to carry burdens which others would long ago have laid down. His sense of honor requires him to fulfil his covenant of complete submission to the will of God at any cost of personal discomfort or inconvenience. The Christian life is one which no one should take up who expects to be carried along on flowery beds of ease. But it is the best possible life for one who is grateful for what the Lord has done, and is willing to submit himself to divine guidance and correction.

Painful as are many experiences, the hope continually enters in as a comfort and as an incentive to patient endurance or strenuous exertion (as the case may be). Hope says, This is hard to bear, but I trust it is one of the all things which we are told work together for good to those who love the Lord and are called according to His purpose. (Rom. 8: 28.) Or, I realize the Lord's chastening hand upon me, for I see where I have made a great mistake, but I hope I am being rightly exercised thereby, and that it will work out in me the peaceable fruit of righteousness. (Heb. 12: 5-11.) Or, present persecutions and afflictions for Christ's sake are severe, but I am not cast down, for I know I am not forsaken, and I have a hope of a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory which will more than compensate for present loss.—2 Cor. 4: 8: 18.

Abraham's hope in the promise given him was made sure by the fact of God's oath. The promise alone was as good as the oath, for in neither could God lie, but the oath was a conformation to the ways of men, who consider an oath the end of all strife. Therefore to Abraham's mind the oath gave double assurance. (Heb. 6: 13-16.) This promise and oath to Abraham were not given for his sake alone, but as an object lesson to those who should receive a higher promise, that is, a heavenly, and who should have a greater hope, even joint-heirship with the Lord Jesus. We who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us (in distinction from that set before Abraham) have also an oath to give strong assurance that the promise will be fulfilled. This oath is the one given to our Lord Jesus, as explained in Heb. 5: 1-6, "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." And it is because Jesus our forerunner has entered into that which is within the veil, God having fulfilled to Him His oath, that our hope of being with Him is like an anchor, sure and steadfast. So we read, "Being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him, called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec."

Here then is the reason for our personal hope. A promise given to the Lord Jesus, confirmed by an oath, that He should be High Priest and the author of eternal salvation; a promise to us that if we obey Him we shall receive the eternal salvation; this promise being confirmed by the same oath, for a High Priest is in office to minister for those who need His services, as stated in Heb. 7: 24, 25—"But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood, wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Further reasons for our personal hope are found in such definite statements as "Called by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thes. 2: 14); "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3: 14; "... sit with me in my throne" (Rev. 3: 21); and many others.

Persevering in Hope

It is well to have good reasons for the hope. It is good to have in oneself full assurance of the hope. It is also necessary to persevere in the hope both as a system of belief and as a personal experience. It is an oft-quoted proverb, that "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." (Prov. 13: 12.) And so it does. But Hope has a staunch helper in Faith. If Faith continues notwithstanding the deferred Hope, the heart sickness is healed and Hope once more brings glad anticipation. This also is illustrated in the case of faithful Abraham. We read (Rom. 4: 18), "Who against hope believed in hope." The object hoped for seemed ever further away, and yet he persisted in believing in it, because God had promised it, and he judged Him faithful Who had promised. (Heb. 11: 11.) In this persistent faith and hope the Apostle includes Sarah, with Isaac and Jacob and the believing Israelites. They all died in faith not having received the thing promised, but hoped to the last that they should receive it. And, thank God, their hope was not in vain; for they shall receive their reward in the Kingdom age.

Abounding in Hope

The reasons for hoping are so many and so inspiring that the Apostle prays that the saints may "abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit." And here again he places Faith in close harness with Hope—"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace through believing, [in order] that ye may abound in hope." Could any but a God of hope fill our hearts with joy, peace and hope? And having such a God, able and willing to give us these blessings, shall we through indifference or unbelief deprive ourselves of their enjoyment? No, rather will we abound in hope; we will be so certain of God, so sure of His promises, so obedient to our blessed Lord and Master who has us under His authority, that our hearts will overflow, we shall be ever singing and praising Him, and ever ready to tell all who ask the reason of our hope and why we are so happy.

"But," we are told, "some people are naturally more hopeful in disposition than others; some always look on the dark side, always count the bridges before they have to cross them, and when they do come to them always fear they will break down under their weight." No doubt this is the case with many, and they render themselves and often those around them gloomy and unhappy. But this need not be. The promises of God are not made with a view to nursing our natural dispositions, but rather to stimulate our endeavours to overcome the natural tendencies and develop the mind of the spirit. It is hope as a grace of the spirit, and not as a natural quality, that we desire and should cultivate. Rom 5:

1-5 tells us how this hope is developed. In the first place the promise enables us to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God," and then the Lord sends experiences which develop hope in us as a constitutional trait—"And not only so but we glory in tribulation also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed." The hope believed means character development all round, and finally makes not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit which he has given us.

If then we believe, if we have hope, let us not look and speak and mourn as those who have no hope, but let us so live and speak and *think* as those who have a hope to be proud of and to be recommended.

Hope for Others

One of the finest things about the Christian's hope is that it is not looking forward to happiness for himself and misery for three-fourths of mankind. Such was once, and is to-day, the belief of many. But by God's grace we have been taught better things out of His Word. The Christian's hope looks forward to the time when there shall be no more sorrow, crying or pain; when the present evil condition of things will give way before a "new heavens and a new earth in which dwelleth righteousness;" a time when the Kingdom of God shall be established under the whole heavens. (Acts 24: 15; Rev. 21: 1-4; 2 Pet. 3: 13; Dan. 2: 44; 7: 18, 27.) Then "all dominions shall serve and obey Him."

There is a Reason

There is a reason—a good and sufficient reason—for every item of the Christian's hope, both for himself and for others. If he be not able to give a reason, it may be because that particular item is with-

out Scripture support and therefore without a sufficient reason for him to retain it as an article of faith. Or it may be that his hope and belief are right and Scriptural, but he has not studied the subject sufficiently to enable him to understand the reasons. In that case, attendance at a good Bible class would be helpful. Again, one may not be fluent in explaining the reasons. In that case more practice is required in the telling of them. Another may have a good hope for others, but have little for himself. Here, too, more study of the Word is required, that the simple, straightforward and precious promises of the Gospel may be accepted and believed.

With Meekness and Fear

These are two necessary accompaniments to the telling out of the glad tidings—meekness and reverence. The Lord God must be sanctified in our hearts. We must hold His Word sacred and handle it reverently. And we must be meek—not boasting of all we know, or of the wonderful things we do, but meekly acknowledge that our hope is of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and that only by the Holy Spirit's help can we know anything as we ought to know it.

Our reasons may not always be acceptable to the one who has asked, but having done our best in accordance with the Apostle's admonition, we may leave the results with the Lord. If we do not convince our hearer, he will at least be assured of our sincerity and convinced that if what we say is true it is very good news indeed. Then we may hope that the Scriptures given (not our words, but the Lord's) may lie in his mind as a seed to germinate at a later day.

"For our sakes, no doubt, this is written:
That he that ploweth should plow in hope,
And that he that thresheth in hope
Should be partaker of his hope."—1 Cor. 9: 10.



The Sin Against The Holy Spirit

"Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world [literally, "age"], neither in the world ["age"] to come."—Matt. 12: 31, 32.

THE HOLY SPIRIT has shown forth God's love in providing and sending a wonderful Comforter and Guide for His people. The Spirit has helped God's people to understand the Word; has guided them into all truth; has brought to their remembrance items of truth formerly learned; has interceded for them with unuttered groanings; has witnessed to them that their sins are forgiven; has been a demonstrator that God's people are regarded as His children, members by adoption of His family. (John 14: 16, 17, 26; 15: 26; 16: 13. Romans 8: 14-16, 26, 27.) All these gracious offices have been

fulfilled by the Holy Spirit to the people of God severally and collectively since the great day of Pentecost, and the same spirit is still showing divine grace to the obedient believers. It has been well for us to realize, in our experience as well as from the teaching of Scripture, the Holy Spirit as the promised Comforter, because such realization must appreciably assist us to understand another phase of the Spirit's relation to God's people.

The Spirit of God occupies a position of the greatest dignity which must needs be minutely observed by us, for offence against the Holy Spirit is fatal. If one were to speak blasphemously against the Son of man, the Saviour said, forgiveness of the offence is possible; but blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is not forgivable, neither in this age nor in the age to come. All manner of sin and blasphemy is forgivable, except that against the Holy Spirit. It becomes us then to consider well this matter, that we

may realize the circumspectness which must govern our daily walk, and the carefulness which must watch over our words, so that we may avoid the fatal mistake.

Origin and Effect of Sin

The original sinner, who "abode not in the truth" (and from this saying we must acknowledge that he was once in the truth), was the devil. (John 8: 44.) But as far as the human race is concerned, sin entered by means of its very first members. Sin is transgression against law, and our first parents took upon themselves the responsibility of disobedience to the command which God had given them concerning a certain tree. (Rom. 5: 12; 1 John 3: 4; Gen. 2: 17; 3: 2, 3, 6.) In itself, and as far as the value of the property taken was concerned, this offence might appear to be no greater than that of irresponsible boys in an orchard. But man is ever prone to judge by the outward appearance, and such judgment is seldom just. In Eden, the value of the fruit taken did not enter into consideration; God was no poorer because of it, nor would He have been wealthier had the fruit not been taken. The question was not of material but of moral values. Would Adam and Eve obey God or not? They disobeyed.

The first effect of this disobedience was to bring upon themselves the penalty of death which had been associated with the command. (Gen. 2: 17.) The inquiry was held, and the guilty pair acknowledged their sin, aggravating the offence by seeking to shift the responsibility for it onto others, Adam not fearing even to try to involve God Himself when he said—"The woman whom *thou* gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." (Gen. 3: 12.) The sentence of death was duly pronounced, and it was explained that its fulfilment would be in Adam's return "unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." (Gen. 3: 19.) This would mean nothing short of the complete destruction of the sinful ones. Before Adam was formed of the dust of the ground (Gen. 2: 7), he was nothing; returning to the ground he would become nothing, as he had been before creation. Adam was not told that he should live forever in a state of anguish, mental or physical; he was told that he must die, and special measures were taken to insure that he should die, and not live forever.*—Gen. 3: 22-24.

The effect of the sin in Eden was not restricted to the sinners; it was passed on to their posterity, and all the race is involved therein, as the Scriptures assure us. (Rom. 5: 12, 15-19; 1 Cor. 15: 21, 22.) This is the reason why all die, whether the infant

which could not have sinned or the aged person that has sinned repeatedly during a long life. The infant does not die on account of its own sin, for it has not sinned; but neither does the aged person die on account of his own sins,* though they be many; all die on account of the original sin, having been constituted sinners by that one disobedience of their ancestors.

For that Edenic sin and for all of our individual sins that arise out of it Christ has died, giving a ransom for all men, and dying for *our* sins, according to the testimony of many Scriptures. (1 Tim. 2: 4-7; 1 Cor. 15: 1-3.) By this it is seen that God has not dealt hardly with us in decreeing that we should have the penalty of our first parents passed on to us. It is a foregone conclusion that we would have done as they did and so would have brought the penalty directly upon ourselves, in which event each separate sinner would have required a separate redeemer if he were to be rescued from the consequences of his sin. By causing all to be constituted sinners on account of one transgression, God has been able to arrange justly and equitably that all should be redeemed by the one sacrifice—that of His son, and freely justified through faith in His blood.—Gal. 3: 22; Rom. 3: 23-26.

All this teaching of Scripture is considered old-fashioned and out of date by the "wise" men of today at whose feet sit those who are to stand as professedly Christian ministers in the pulpits of Christendom; and so it has come to pass that the Genesis account of the Creation of man and his Fall into sin is said to be "legendary" and "unhistorical." By the "wise" the Cross of Christ and the Sacrifice on Calvary have been "interpreted" out of all the meaning attached to them in the divine purpose, which was and is that Christ's blood was shed as a *propitiation* for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2: 2.) This foolishness of the "wise" need attract no more than passing notice by way of pointing out how foolish they are thus to oppose the central truth, which stands as the foundation of man's relation to God and of his prospect for eternal life. Nevertheless, we are bound to feel sorry that men will so deceive themselves and others in regard to these fundamentals. But we also feel glad and thankful for the promise of a time near at hand, when deceptions will not be allowed for a thousand years, and when men shall be brought to that accurate knowledge of fundamental truths which is part of the divine will for them.—Rev. 20: 3; 1 Tim. 2: 4-7.

Forgiveness of Sins

The death of Christ as the sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world does not in itself procure the forgiveness of sins for even one member of our race. It provides, however, a *basis* on which the forgiveness of sins is possible for those who *believe in Jesus*, so that when one becomes a believer in Jesus, God is righteously and justly able to forgive such an one's sins that are past. All this, including the necessity for faith, is clearly set forth by the Apostle.

*Some possible exceptions of mature persons will be noted in due course.

*Considerations of space forbid more than a mere mention here of the subject of the penalty for sin. It is certain that the Christians in apostolic times, when the teaching was pure, did not believe that unbelievers were on the way to everlasting torment. Had they thought such a thing, they would not have gone about preaching to Jews only. They could not thus have limited their efforts, but must have tried to save others from the awful fate. (Acts 11: 19.) The interested reader is invited to consult the book "Everlasting Punishment," 112 pages, in which the subject is quite fully discussed. Cloth bound, 1/0 (25 cents); in paper covers, 6d. (12 cents), postpaid.

"... Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe. ... That he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."—Rom. 3: 21-26.

But the believer in Jesus, beginning his Christian life with a clean sheet, is not able to keep the pages of his life's record perfectly clear. He sins at times. However unwitting or unwilling, his wrong action in thought, word or deed is nevertheless a sin, and something must be done to make things right again. As a "new creature," the believer is not God's workmanship for sin but for good works. (Eph 2: 10.) Every sin committed by a believer in Jesus is therefore a departure from the program divinely marked out for him as a "new creature" in Christ Jesus. (2 Cor. 5: 17.) But if the believer confess his sin, God can justly and will faithfully forgive, and the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse the confessing one from all sin. The Holy Spirit in the believer will intercede, the Son of God in the Father's presence will also intercede, and thus the relationship interfered with by the believer's sin will be re-established. —1 John 1: 7 to 2: 2; Rom. 8: 26, 27.

God is exceedingly gracious, longsuffering, and willing to forgive, and none need fear to approach Him in prayer through His dear Son to ask forgiveness. Under the New Covenant in Christ's blood, shed for the many for the remission of sins (Matt. 26: 18), God can be merciful to our unrighteousness and can forget our sins and iniquities. (Heb. 8: 12.) But before He can forgive us on account of His Son's shed blood, He requires to see in us a willingness to forgive any who may have trespassed against us, and He also requires confession on our part. (Matt. 6: 12, 14, 15; 1 John 1: 9.) If God's forgiveness means that He is merciful to our unrighteousness and that He remembers our sins and iniquities no more, He expects us to be similarly merciful toward those who have injured us and not to remember their sins and iniquities.

But confession to God is more than the parliamentary form of words—"I withdraw." Confession implies the recognition of the wrong thought, word or deed as a sin, the abhorrence of it as such, and the endeavor to avoid the repetition thereof, this last being proof of the sincerity of the confession. If the wrong thought, word or deed has been the means of injury to some other person, that person should also be approached and confession made, together with every effort to repair the damage done. (Matt. 5: 23, 24; James 5: 16.) It is nowhere commanded in God's Word that confession of sin should be made to a priest or other person not concerned, but confession to God is required, also to the injured person (if any); and before the New Covenant blessing of mercy to his unrighteousness can be realized and his sins and iniquities can be consigned to the land of forgetfulness, there must be (as already mentioned) in the confessing penitent the willingness to forgive any who may require it of him.—Matt. 18: 21-35.

Possibility of Death

Notwithstanding the willingness of God to forgive, and the fact that He has made every provision for and offers every inducement to the erring one, there

are limits, and it is possible for the Christian—the "new creature"—so to live as to bring upon himself the utmost condemnation, even death. Says the Apostle to the saints (observe he does not address the "world" of unbelievers, but saints, "brethren"), "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die."—Rom. 8: 13.

That this statement does not refer to decease in the ordinary sense of that word is clear from the fact that both saints and sinners die—the most saintly as well as the vilest. It is also evident that the Apostle is not here referring to the state of deadness in trespasses and sins sometimes mentioned in the Scriptures, as in Eph. 2: 1-5. Had he wished, in Rom. 8: 13, to refer to this, he would doubtless have written, "If ye live after the flesh, ye are dead." The Apostle in Rom. 8: 13 speaks of death as a punishment; and as he is certainly not referring to the decease of the fleshly body of the Christian, it is evident that he is teaching that under certain circumstances, possible to occur in the present life, the "new creature" will die; and the circumstances are—"If ye live after the flesh."

What does it mean to "live after the flesh?" It means to live *according to* the fleshly mind and desires, which are at enmity with God; which are not and cannot be subject to the law of God. (Rom. 8: 5-8.) For the "new creature" to conduct himself in this manner is simply to invite destruction; because nothing that is contrary to God—willingly and wilfully so—can be allowed to remain alive forever. "All the wicked will He destroy." (Psalm 145: 20.) To adopt and persist in the course of living "after the flesh," is manifestly to sin against the Holy Spirit which God has given to His people; it is a "grieving" or "quenching" (Eph. 4: 30; 1 Thess. 5: 19) of the Holy Spirit in the Christian so acting, and in such circumstances nothing can be expected but the extinction of the "new creature."

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit

In Rom. 8: 13 the Apostle has given a general definition of the course which if persisted in must result in death to the "new creature." In Matt. 12: 31, 32, the Master Himself has shown one of the ways in which such evil conduct may manifest itself. The Greek word *blasphemia*, in Matt. 12: 31, 32, means, according to Strong's Concordance, "vilification." Vilification of the Son of man is forgivable under certain circumstances; but the vilification of the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven, neither in this age nor in the age to come. According to this statement by the Lord, the age to come will be a time of forgiving some sins; of all sins, indeed, except that of vilification of the Holy Spirit. Those who believe that the future age contains no possibilities of mercy and forgiveness should consider well these gracious words of the Saviour, to see whether their thoughts on this matter have been taken captive to Christ.—2 Cor. 10: 5.

Vilification of Jesus might be done in more or less ignorance, or by reason of weakness of the flesh; and these would be mitigating circumstances if the sin were afterwards confessed and forgiveness sought.

We feel satisfied in our own minds that ignorance is what has caused and still causes many to vilify the Father and the Son by promulgating the awful teaching that some human beings will be tortured for ever and ever. But the Holy Spirit cannot be vilified except after consideration and reasoning somewhat more extensive than that usually displayed by the advocates of the doctrine of everlasting torment.

What was either an illustration of such vilification of the Holy Spirit or something dangerously near it is recorded in Matt. 12: 24, and it was this incident that led to the Saviour giving out the teaching of vss. 31 and 32. Jesus had just wrought a remarkable miracle in healing a man possessed with a devil, blind and dumb. The cure was immediate and perfect, so that the afflicted person was able to speak and to see. When the news reached the Pharisees, they said, "This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils." In this they spoke not only against Jesus but also against the Holy Spirit which worked through Him to perform the miracles. (Matt. 12: 28.) Instead of acknowledging that the power of God was doing these things, they attributed the works to the power of Beelzebub. In effect, therefore, they blasphemously said that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, was the spirit of Beelzebub, God's greatest enemy. Is it surprising, in view of this, that our Saviour said concerning the hypocritical Pharisees—"How can ye escape the judgment of Gehenna?"—Gehenna being a symbol of the second death. (Matt. 23: 33.) The Pharisees had had extraordinary opportunities to hear Jesus, to see his miracles, and to consider them. Yet they were so wicked as to say that the miracles were done by the power of Satan. It was a terrible and perilous position that their awful hardness of heart led them to adopt, a position from which they would find it most difficult to remove. Whether the Pharisees actually perpetrated the unforgivable vilification of the Holy Spirit mentioned in Matt. 12: 31, 32, the Lord, the Judge of all hearts, knows. For us it must suffice at present to know that the attitude and words of the Pharisees on this occasion drew from the Master's lips those wonderful words which at once proclaim the liberality and define the limits of divine forgiveness of sins.

Falling Away After Enlightenment

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world [literally, "age"] to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."—Heb. 6: 4-6.

Here the statement is made that those who fall away after enlightenment, and participation in certain New Covenant blessings, cannot be renewed to repentance, or reformation. This is an intimation that such persons have sinned so seriously as to bring upon themselves the extreme condemnation. Such a falling away would be equivalent to a Christian crucifying his acknowledged Lord and Master and publicly putting Him to shame. A more horrible crime than such ungrateful mutiny could not be imagined, and the one who would do this would not

be fit to live. But evidently it is to be understood that those who fall away after being enlightened and blessed in the manner described are of the disposition that would traitorously rise up in rebellion against their acknowledged Lord, and would seek to accomplish His death. How careful we should be, lest our hearts become hardened through the deceitfulness of sin!—Heb. 3: 12, 13.

Wilful Sin after Knowledge of the Truth

"If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."—Heb. 10: 26.

The Apostle does not specify any particular sin of thought, word or deed; so every kind of sin might be included, because every sin after enlightenment may be done wilfully. Done wilfully, the offence which in itself may be apparently of little consequence becomes very serious indeed. The sacrifice of Jesus was not offered for such a sin, and no sacrifice will be offered in the future on behalf of it. The Christian who sins in this manner has thus fastened upon himself a sin the consequence of which he must meet alone. Being a wilful sin, the transgressor cannot count on the intercession of the Holy Spirit, nor on that of our Lord in heaven, and so he is left not only without a sacrifice past or prospective, as before mentioned, but also without any Comforter or Advocate (*Parakletos*). Without a shield of any sort he must face the divine judgment, and the Apostle says that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." He also says that the Christian who thus violates the New Covenant provisions and does despite to the Spirit of grace is more culpable and shall be punished more sorely than those who despised Moses' law. By taking this course against the New Covenant, by the blood of which he was sanctified, such transgressor demonstrates himself to be an *adversary of God*, and therefore he must be devoured by the fiery indignation of the divine judgment.—Heb. 10: 27-31.

(Just here it is necessary to observe that some exhibitions of wilfulness in wrong doing are attributable to the transgressors' inherited imperfection and weakness. To the extent that this is so, the Lord can be merciful to our unrighteousness, as stated in the New Covenant provisions (Heb. 8: 12), and can forgive if the sin be confessed. These partially wilful sins against a measure of light seem to be spoken of in Luke 12: 47, 48. Partially wilful sins are punished with few or many "stripes," according to the circumstances of which the Lord alone is competent to judge righteously.)

If we have rightly apprehended the teaching of God's Word, it is that wilfulness is the very essence of an unforgivable sin and that the wilfulness is the reason why the sin is unforgivable. This seems to be the meaning of "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth." The sin may be of any sort; it is in this case only the means for the expression of the wilfulness; and any sin in thought, word or deed will serve the purpose. It should also be noted that a sin committed wholly through weakness can afterward become the means of wilful sin; for if there be an unwillingness to

confess the wrong, and be converted from his error against truth and righteousness, the transgressor thereby associates his will with the unconfessed sin, so making it a wilful one and an instrument of death. (James 5: 19, 20.) If a Christian's will be associated with a sin, either in the first instance to do it, or secondarily to avoid confession of it, that is a wilful sin. It is a sin against the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as the carnal or fleshly mind has to some extent obtained the ascendancy over the Holy Spirit or mind of Christ given the believer. If the sin be fully wilful, the old mind has completely gained the victory over the new mind, which means that the new mind or "new creature" is dead ("quenched") in that person. As the old or fleshly mind is not subject to the law of God, neither can be (Rom. 8: 7), and the new mind in the transgressor is dead, it is easy to understand why the Apostle said that such a person

cannot be renewed to repentance. It is also easy to understand why death is the only suitable punishment for a fully wilful sin, or sin of the will, committed by a Christian after enlightenment. Such a sin is not to be prayed for.—1 John 5: 16.

The position then is this: Sin against the Holy Spirit is most serious. It is not forgivable—neither in this age nor in the age to come; whether that sin take the form of vilification of the divine Spirit in miracle-working power, or the other form of wilfulness in sin after enlightenment. In view of these things let us walk circumspectly; let us show ourselves children of the light; children of the day and not of the night, beseeching the Lord that He would grant us wisdom to avoid the snares and strength to overcome the besetments of the adversary of souls and of our own fallen nature.



One Body In Christ

(Continued from October Issue)

THE BODY of Christians as a whole has been perpetuated by individuals and small gatherings of sincere worshippers even in the days of the severest persecution. Our Lord said He would build the Church, and He has faithfully supplied the various members necessary to the sustenance and care of the body of believers; with "feet" members to carry forward the message in compliance with His command, Go ye, and teach all nations.

All these—Spirit, soul, and body—have been preserved through the age, and will be preserved until the Church is finished and the last members enter into their reward.

Sympathy One for Another

Paul a prisoner at Rome, and suffering other adversities, though a mighty apostle and powerful teacher, was still human, and appreciated the sympathy and love of the brethren. And his own experience enabled him to write feelingly of other disciples in bonds. As members together of one body they should feel for and remember the fellow-members suffering for their fidelity to the faith—

"Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body."—Hebrews 13: 3.

Vile Body, Glorious Body

Philippians 3: 21 is sometimes taken to be a reference to the physical bodies of Christians, which it is said will be changed at some time into spiritual bodies. But in this case the word "body" is used in the meaning of "mass," or "bulk." The word "vile" is not the best word to express the original, which means "humiliation." There can be humiliation without vileness.

The experience of the church in the Gospel age has been humiliation; we are counted the offscouring of the earth. Our names are reviled and cast out as evil, and had the Lord not told us to expect such conditions we might well wonder why His people should be so maligned and persecuted, often by those who profess to be fellow members of the church. The humiliation has been so great that it is well called a body or mass requiring the Lord's mighty power to overcome. For it is He who will change "the body of our humiliation" into the likeness of "the body of His glory."

The body of our humiliation, the great mass and burden of it, oppresses God's children until by faith they rise above the things of the present and take Paul's view, calling it a "light affliction." "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."—2 Corinthians 4: 17.

The body or mass of the Lord's glory is immense. He dwells in light which no man can approach unto. Besides which, taking another term—honour, the honours of His position are boundless. He has pre-eminence over all things. The body or mass of

The New Covenant Advocate

and Kingdom Herald

A Monthly Paper for the
Exposition of Bible Truths. R. B. HENNINGES, Editor.
Yearly Subscription Price (including postage)—
In Australia and New Zealand 4/-
In other Countries 5/-; \$1.25
By the dozen of any issue to one address—3/- in Australasia; 3/6
(85 cents) elsewhere. Free to the interested who are not able to pay.

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our humiliation is for a short time only. But when this mass is exchanged for the glories which are promised to the church in the kingdom, "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." He prayed that His disciples might behold His glory; and in Romans 8: 19-21 we are told that the deliverance of the groaning creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God in that glory.

One Body in Christ

The body of Christ is the body in Christ, says the apostle (Romans 12: 5)—

"So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

In this as in other passages, the Lord Jesus Christ is represented as separate and distinct from the "body," while the "body" is viewed as a whole, with many members. Otherwise the apostle's words become an absurdity, as though a body of which Christ constitutes the head member could be in himself. But, taking the church as an entire body, we have again the harmony of the members emphasized as they all unitedly and individually acknowledge the Lord Jesus in whom their standing as God's children rests.

Individually and collectively, the Church of Christ is the church in Christ. "For ye are all the children [or, sons] of God by faith in Christ Jesus;" "that whosoever believeth in [or into] him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."—1 John 5: 11; John 3: 16; Rom. 3: 26.

In Romans 12: 6, 7, prophesying and teaching, which are distinctively offices of head members, are referred to. Just as, in 1 Corinthians 12, the eye and the ear and the head too are used to represent the apostles and brethren of special value to the church. God speaks of them as His gifts to the church for the benefit of the church (1 Corinthians 12: 28; Ephesians 4: 8, 11, 12), and they are so while they retain their humility and their fidelity to the Lord. Should they become unfaithful, heady, or high-minded, the Lord will cast them out from their position and raise up others in their stead. But it is well to remember that enemies aim their missiles at the publicly exposed head, thinking that by downing the leaders their triumph will be swift and sure. Hence it may not be out of place to conclude this survey of the subject by reminding the brethren that while they should be on guard against both open and insidious foes, and against leaders who would lead them astray, it is none the less their duty and privilege to stand by their leaders who have proven faithful.—Hebrews 13: 7, 9, 17.

All the members constitute the one body, and each member is privileged to support and cheer and encourage every other member. Dearly Beloved, let us therefore realise our high privilege of being members of the "one body in Christ." Let us seek to live up to the duties associated with the privilege, and may divine grace enable us!

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Kingdom Herald

VOL. 35.

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, DECEMBER, 1943.

No. 9.

Knit Together In Love

Spring Conference, 1943.

FOR MANY YEARS the Melbourne Congregation have arranged a Bible Conference on Cup Day—a Melbourne holiday set apart in the interests of the sporting public, but utilised by many Christians for Sunday School picnics and conferences of various kinds. This year, as last year, the holiday was abandoned by the authorities because of the international situation. As a consequence, our 1943 Spring Conference was held on Sunday, 14th November; the program being divided, as usual, into three sessions—morning, afternoon and evening. Like its predecessors, it proved to be a season of spiritual refreshment and sweet fellowship. The subject was apportioned among sixteen friends of the truth, each of whom prepared an address which was listened to with keen interest.

None could attempt to give all the Scriptural references bearing on the several sub-topics, but each speaker made a selection to substantiate the particular truths set forth. Other corroborative texts and even whole passages could be looked up and studied with benefit. Some of the addresses are included in this issue and the remainder will (D.V.) be published later. Our hope and prayer is that all

readers will receive as much pleasure and benefit as did the hearers.

The following are the titles of the sub-topics into which the main topic was divided—

- 1 GOD IS LOVE.
- 2 THE LOVE OF JESUS.
- 3 A FALSE DOCTRINE OF FEAR.
- 4 SAINTS AND FAITHFUL BRETHREN.
- 5 RECONCILIATION.
- 6 ONE BODY, MANY MEMBERS.
- 7 FELLOWSHIP.
- 8 PHILADELPHIA AND LAODICEA.
- 9 MY PEOPLE.
- 10 SUBTRACTION AND ADDITION.
- 11 TYCHICUS AND ONESIMUS.
- 12 THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.
- 13 ONE HOPE OF YOUR CALLING.
- 14 BY LOVE SERVE.
- 15 THE MAINSPRING OF GOD'S KINGDOM.
- 16 THE HIGHEST STANDARD.

God Is Love

THE WORDS—"knit together in love" are contained in the epistle the apostle Paul wrote to the Colossians, who at one time had been idolaters. According to the heathen view, their gods expected not only worship, but various acts of self-denial in order to bring lavish gifts to the gods. Of course, these gifts fell to the priests of the idol temples. To the idolaters their gods were known as terrible deities whose fierce anger needed to be averted by such offerings.

But the modern searcher for truth may ask—"Are the doctrines of Christianity less frightful than those of the heathen idolater?" And we answer that the true Bible teaching shows God to be a God of love.

The theories of the present day philosopher who does not believe in a personal and sympathetic Creator also fall far short of the truth. The philosopher's god cares nothing at all for the individual; he is but an impersonal law or force, without a mind and without affections. How different is the Bible

CONFERENCE TEXTS

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

—Psalm 133: 1.

"Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."

—Philippians 2: 2.

"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous."

—1 Peter 3: 8.

"That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ."

—Colossians 2: 2.

view of the one true God, which teaches that "God is Love!" 1 John 4: 8, 16.

"God is Love"—Just a simple sentence of three one-syllable words, but what a wealth of meaning it conveys to us! Yet are these words so familiar to us that we do not ponder their real implication? What does God mean to us? Do we know Him as we might know of the existence of a distant planet? or do we know Him as the Supreme Being who planned and created the Universe, and who takes an interest in the welfare of His creatures?

The more we study God's word and His handiwork, the more we are convinced that the Universe and its maintenance are the result of the outworking of Divine thought and feeling. The Psalmist wrote (Psalm 145)—

9 The Lord is good to all:

And his tender mercies are over all his works.

This is in harmony with God's promise to Noah that He would continue to supply the earth with its harvests (Genesis 8)—

22 While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

The Creator's benevolence was not restricted to those doing good and pleasing Him, but was extended to all men, even as the Lord Jesus said (Matthew 5)—

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

In many things we have the love of God exhibited to us: in the wonderful machinery of our bodies; in the beauty of the animals, birds and fishes; in the pleasures of the trees and fruits; and in the valuable deposits of mineral wealth.

The Apostle James expressed this in another way when he said (James 1)—

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

While we rejoice in the breadth and richness of God's love we can also rejoice in the fact that it is unchangeable and everlasting. As God endureth forever so will His love endure forever.

Love for Individuals

Apart from the general love for His creatures which He manifests in supplying them with the necessities of life, God has shown particular love to those individuals who have sought to serve Him. The Scriptures give abundant evidence, for example, of Abraham being counted the friend of God. God's Word abounds in the testimony of His love to Noah, Moses, Joshua, David, Daniel, and others. The Old Testament writers have said—"the Lord loveth the righteous:"—Psalm 146: 8; Proverbs 15: 9.

Specific mention is made in Deuteronomy 4: 37 of God's love for the nation of Israel; also in Deuteronomy 7:

7 The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:

8 But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers . . .

The Father's special love to selected individuals

was not confined to Old Testament times, but extends also to some in New Testament times as well. An instance of this is shown in the remark of the Lord Jesus to His disciples when He said to them (John 16: 27)—

"For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God."

"God is love!" His Word proclaims it,
Day by day the truth we prove;
Heaven and earth with joy are telling,
Ever telling, "God is Love!"

In view of the evidences of Creation and of God's Word, we are bound to affirm that "God is Love." The fact of God's love, however, does not come to us as a mere assertion. It is brought before our minds in such a manner as to leave us without the shadow of a doubt as to its existence and its extent. We are given the proof, and we are told of the extent and the intent of divine love in that well known verse of Scripture, John 3: 16—

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Think for a while what these words mean! Jesus was God's only begotten Son: the Only One who was His direct Creation; for everybody and everything else was made by God through Jesus—John 1: 3.

God's Well-beloved Son

To God, Jesus was the greatest and most valuable treasure in the whole universe. He was God's well-beloved Son. In any analysis of this text we should give some thought to that adverb "SO." Great as was the love of God for His Son yet the Father SO loved the world of mankind that He spared not His own Son!

The text gives us the breadth of that great love. It covers the whole world of mankind. "God so loved the world!" This gift was given to a race of human beings entirely undeserving of it; for man had rebelled against God's authority and had merited His wrath. God in His loving mind had decided upon this gracious Gift before the foundation of the world! So the uncreated man was in God's thoughts as, during His creative work, day by day. "God saw that it was good."—Genesis 1: 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31.

God loved us, then, even before we had the opportunity of loving. But let us look into John 3: 16 once again, and we see the purpose of divine love—"that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The heavenly Father gave His well-beloved Son that He might be a propitiation for our sins, with the intent that we might believe in Him and accept the benefits which would accrue from His sacrifice, and that we might thus LIVE through Him!

"Herein is love," said the apostle John in his first epistle (4: 10)—"not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." What have we done that we should deserve such love? "*Herein is love*"—love in its vastness, and a love we did not deserve. "But God commendeth his love toward us" said Paul to the

Romans, "in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5: 8.) He has offered us salvation from sin and an opportunity of life.

"God is Love!" Oh, tell it gladly,
How the Saviour from above
Came to seek and save the lost ones,
Showing thus the Father's love.

An Heavenly Inheritance

But, dear friends, to us there is more in the Father's love even than that. The heavenly Father is pleased now, during the Gospel Age, to regard the true believer as His Son, and has promised a wonderful future inheritance for such an one should he prove to be faithful unto death. (1 Peter 1: 3-5.) This inheritance means a change in estate from the human to a glorious state of being—the extent of which it is impossible for us fully to comprehend. The Apostle John refers to this love (1 John 3:—

1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Let us then, by God's grace, hold things in their right proportion. Let us give our fullest love to God and exhibit a joyful loyalty to His cause, even if need be at the expense of suffering. Let us remember that it is not our knowledge nor our fame that counts, but our love for God and for the Lord Jesus, and

for our brethren—yes, and even for our enemies—that wins God's approval.

"Beloved, if God so loved us we ought also to love one another." (1 John 4: 11.) The obligation which God's love naturally lays upon us is that we should have love towards one another. The word "if," as used here, does not indicate a doubt, but has more the meaning of the word "since." This use of the word can be seen by referring to John 13: 14.

Real love, then, originated with God. Its source is not a blind impulse, but an intelligent movement of God's free-will pitying a sinful race by sending His Son as the ransom sacrifice. In this act God's love reached its climax. To know that God is love teaches us that we too must love. A heart full of hate and of self cannot know God. Let us then by prayer, by watchfulness, and by God's grace follow out the apostle Jude's exhortations (Jude 21)—

"Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

God is Love! Oh, boundless mercy—
May we all its fulness prove!
Telling those who sit in darkness,
"God is Light, and God is Love!"

Hallelujah! tell the story,
Sung by angel-choirs above;
Sounding forth the mighty chorus—
"God is Light, and God is Love!"

—H. S. W.

The Love of Jesus

CHRIST, the beginning of all creation, was a wonderful Being. God's first creation became Himself a creator, inasmuch as all subsequent things that were made were made by Him. As God's faithful agent in this wonderful work, Jesus manifested love and obedience to His Father's will from the very foundation of the universe. (Colossians 1: 15-17.) He was completely in harmony with and subject to the Almighty during His heavenly existence; always submissive, and never usurping authority for Himself. An example of this may be found in Jude 9, which refers to when He disputed about the body of Moses, while contending with Satan.

Recognising Jesus as Michael the archangel or chief messenger, we see that even in this responsible position Jesus did not wrathfully accuse the devil, but said, "The Lord rebuke thee." Jesus' obedience to God was shown to a remarkable extent in the fact that He willingly laid aside His high place of glory with the Father, and condescended to become the flesh and blood of an earthly being; a perfect man. (Philippians 2: 7, 8.)

"... though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor." (2 Corinthians 8: 9.) It can be noted here that for our sakes He gave up the might and heavenly wealth, to become a man, who, while on earth, had no earthly possessions—indeed, not even a place to lay His head.—Matthew 8: 20.

This humbling of himself is beyond man's comprehension, because no one has seen the wonders of the heavenly estate, so therefore cannot possibly appreciate fully what the cost of our Lord's descension meant to Him.—John 3: 13.

Loyalty to His Father

But Jesus' love for and His perfect accord with His Father were sufficient to fulfil in Himself all things, no matter how hard and unpleasant they proved to be, in carrying out the work given Him to do in redeeming mankind.

A real test of His love and obedience to God came at the beginning of His ministry, when He had been fasting forty days and was suffering the pangs of hunger. The wicked one, Satan, used all his subtlety to tempt Jesus to succumb to His evil persuasions to make bread and eat and thus satisfy His personal desire for food. Jesus never wavered in His devotion to God at this juncture, nor did He at either of the other two temptations Satan set before Him.—Matthew 4: 1-11.

Soon after this Jesus began to preach the gospel of the Kingdom, and gather together His disciples to whom He later gave power to perform miracles and preach among the Jewish people. Jesus' love for mankind was exhibited abundantly during His ministry, inasmuch as He not only was willing to die for

them, but offered them heavenly rewards in His future Kingdom for their belief and repentance. His love was also manifested when He freely wrought amongst them countless acts of love and benevolence in relieving many of those who were afflicted with demons and all manner of diseases.

A physician not only of the mind, to bring relief and peace to those who felt their burden of sin heavy upon them, but One who was ever ready to eliminate the sufferings of His people.

The Lord showed tenderness to the vast numbers who had accumulated from cities and villages in following Him, in referring to them as being like sheep without a shepherd; and He taught them many things.—Matthew 9: 35, 36.

Affection for the Jews

Later on, His consideration was shown in the fact that, instead of dispersing the multitude that they go and buy food for themselves. He bade them sit down and miraculously fed them with the five loaves and two fishes, leaving each one satisfied and strengthened for their homeward journey.—Matthew 14: 15-21.

To quote another one of the loving miracles which He performed—the man who was born blind, and to whom was given sight. (John 9: 1-41.) This man upheld Jesus to the Pharisees as his benefactor. They had enquired of him the source of his healing, and had later denounced him and cast him out of the synagogue. Jesus sought him out, and assured him personally that He (Jesus) was the Son of God, so that the grateful man worshipped Him. By this action our Lord manifested His appreciation of the man's faith, and His love and kindness in comforting him.

The incident showed the stubbornness of the Jews in recognising Christ as God's Anointed, and brought forth their complaint that the miracle had been performed on a Sabbath day and their false claim that He (Jesus) therefore was not of God. This opposition of sinners against Himself constantly accompanied our Lord; and indeed at times became so active that His very life was threatened. Jesus eluded them on these occasions, however, because the time was not yet ready for Him to be delivered into their hands. (John 7: 6.) Nevertheless He continued in their midst to heal and teach them, because He was sent to the Jews precisely for that purpose, as recorded in Matthew 15—

24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

And as a good shepherd loves his sheep, and leads them to green pastures, so Jesus invited the Jews to follow Him. (John 10: 1-29.) He came to them that they might have life. Jesus said (John 10)—

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

Few in comparison were the sheep who accepted Him, for the Jews as a nation rejected Him time and again. There was no mistaking their attitude; for they falsely attributed His power over evil spirits to Beezebub, the prince of devils. But Jesus knew their evil thoughts. (Matthew 12: 24-28.) Did they not say to the man who was blind (John 9: 24)—

"Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner." Jesus set His example to the words He spoke (Matthew 5)—

44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

Never did Jesus lapse in His resolve to favor the Jews with the first opportunity of obtaining the High Calling. Their utter rejection of Him and His yearning for them are beautifully expressed in these words (Matthew 23)—

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

An Example to the Disciples

Jesus gave another example of love and service just before the end of His earthly ministry; when, rising from supper, He washed the disciples' feet and dried them with a towel which had been wrapped about Him. The lesson to them was that they should serve each other likewise. He loved them to the end, and wished them to carry on this love one to another during His absence. Jesus' betrayal was very near, and He realised how sad and sorrowful the disciples would be when He was no more with them. Unselfishly He comforted them, regarding not Himself or the perils of the impending death on the cross. His words were—"Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14: 27.) He promised them that they might share a place with Him later on in the heavens. Many beautiful things Jesus showed and said to the disciples during the last few hours He spent with them on earth. Giving them a commandment, He said (John 15)—

12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

As I have loved you—here was the supreme test, this being cut off, but not for Himself; this manifestation of perfect accord with the Father, and their Oneness of purpose, in a glorious plan of redemption of mankind. Our Redeemer's prayer to His Father was on behalf of those who had accepted Him as sent from God, and whom Jesus counted as His own.

Their immediate welfare was His chief concern, that they should be kept from evil, and sanctified by the word of truth He had given them. His love for them caused Him to think also of their future and He desired their faithfulness to be rewarded with a glory which He only had known. For He prayed (John 17)—

24 Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

These ones were His; these who forsook Him later, in the terrible trials He endured, and the loved one Peter denied Him when put to the test. It was while on the cross that Jesus saw His mother and the disciple John standing by. He united them as mother and son, leaving her future secure with one He loved and trusted.

Love for All Men

So Jesus died fulfilling every detail of the work the Father had given Him to do. He died on the

cross for His kinsmen according to the flesh; for every Jew including those who opposed Him, as well as His disciples. The Lord's affection extended to others outside of the children of Israel. In giving His life, His all, He manifested His supreme love for the whole world of mankind, which includes you and me.

Jesus bought the race of mankind by giving Himself a ransom, or corresponding price; by dying on our behalf. Thus He became also at His resurrection the Lord (Ruler, or Owner) of the race for which He had paid the price. He is now, as the Apostle says, the one mediator between God and men.—1 Timothy 2: 3-6.

The fact that Jesus died did not of itself give life to men. He gave Himself as the ransom or purchase-price. All, therefore, belong to Him, though all mankind have not as yet heard this great truth. And, since He is Lord of all, it is the duty of all for whom He died to acknowledge that great fact, and give themselves to Him in token of their gratitude. Those who have heard the good news should respond to it and give themselves—their hearts, their lives—unreservedly to Him.

When He was risen, Jesus established His identity to His relatives and disciples, that they might rejoice in the assurance of His resurrection. (1 John 1: 1-3.) Before His ascension to the Father's right hand, far above all powers, He left them a commandment that they should teach all nations.—Matthew 28: 18-20.

Care for the Church

The Lord's purpose in giving this command was,

not the conversion of the whole world, but the selection of some from the world to form His church. The Apostle Peter had declared this. As James explained (Acts 15)—

14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

This work of selecting some to constitute the church has been progressing throughout the Gospel Age, and those thus "taken out" have had the special care and oversight of the Lord Jesus. Paul, when reminding believers of the love which should exist between husband and wife, referred to the great love which Jesus had for the church (Ephesians 5)—

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it;

All the members of His church are included in the loving prayer of our Lord to the Father (John 17)—

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

The love of Jesus calls forth our deepest love in return: "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."—Titus 2: 11-14.

We thank God for the provision He has made for us in preserving the inspired testimony of the apostles, that we by the help of the Holy Spirit may know and appreciate the love of Jesus and rejoice in Him who is (Hebrews 13: 8) "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever."

—F. K. S.



A False Doctrine of Fear

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment [restraint]. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.—1 John 4: 18.

PUNISHMENT of sinners by God is a subject that has caused a vast amount of misunderstanding among all Christians. The fear of God taught by the precepts of men (to which we shall refer shortly) is quite a different thing from the fear of God, or reverence, carefulness and respect towards Him and His commands, as taught in His Word of Truth. This subject of fear has been brought prominently before the minds of many people in recent times. An expression of the popular sentiment is contained in the statement of the fourth "Freedom" mentioned in the Atlantic Charter—"Freedom from Fear." The desire to have their minds released from fear has been a characteristic of human beings, not only of this, but of past generations as well. Yet nearly two thousand years ago our Lord, by His death on the cross, made it possible for human beings to discard all disturbing fears for ever—the fear of death, of sin, of God's just judgments on all sin and evil-doers.

Yet, even with the gospel good-news as proclaimed by angels (Luke 2: 10), men have been slow of heart to believe and appreciate its true meaning. How very often do we see in death notices "may his [or her]

dear soul rest in peace," often only "R.I.P."? Thus, in their hour of loss and grief, fear shows itself in a most reasonable wish. We are glad to be able to say that the Bible states in clear and comforting words that the dead do rest in their graves in peace. (Job 3)—

17 There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.

18 There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.

19 The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master.

Job wished to hide in the grave [Hebrew—*sheol*] until God's wrath be past. (Job 14: 13.) Jacob, the founder of the Israelitish nation and approved by God, said (Genesis 37)—

35 . . . For I will go down into the grave [*sheol*] unto my son [Joseph] mourning. . . .

It is clear that neither of these patriarchs had any fear of hell [the grave] as a place of torment. In Ecclesiastes 9 we have a clear and detailed statement—

10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave [*sheol*], whither thou goest.

A place of torment would at least have devices and works, but in this inspired statement by the wise king the grave is truly described as being a state or condi-

tion in which there is the absence of all thought and activity. A study of other texts by the diligent enquirer will confirm this teaching. The English word "hell" is used to translate the Hebrew word *sheol* in the Old Testament and the Greek word *hades* in the New Testament. *Hades* is the equivalent of the Hebrew *sheol*.—Compare Psalm 16: 10 with Acts 2: 27, R.V. Both *sheol* and *hades* mean the covered, hidden, or concealed place or state. The English word "hell" originally had this meaning. It forms part of the word "helmet" which means a covering for the head. Hell then was a fitting word to describe the grave [*sheol, hades*] into which most of the human race have gone after death.

Under inspiration of the Holy Spirit the Apostle Peter quoted from Psalm 16 applying the prophecy to the resurrection of Christ. The portion mentioned reads—

10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [*sheol*]; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Applying the Psalm in Acts 2: 27-31 Peter witnesses that Jesus was not left in hell [*sheol, hades*] neither did His flesh see corruption. Our Lord had been raised from the dead and was exalted at the right hand of God.—Acts 2: 32, 33.

Death the Penalty for Sin

Since our Lord paid the penalty for sin as the Ransom or corresponding price for the Adamic race and since this passage shows that our Lord went into *sheol* or *hades* [hell, the grave] it can be seen death was the penalty for sin. All of Adam's race die and go to the grave [hell, *hades*]. Good and bad, wise and foolish, old and young, believer and unbeliever, all die as a result of Adam's sin, and all have been bought by the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ. (Romans 14)—

9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

Our Lord, by His death and resurrection, conquered death and thus bought the whole human race. As a consequence, He is now the Lord or owner of the race and will raise and bless and rule over them. He will give everlasting life unto all those who will believe in Him and be obedient to Him.—John 1: 9, 10; Acts 3: 22, 23.

The obligation is laid upon all who preach the Gospel to be certain that they preach only what our Lord and the inspired writers wrote and taught. A diligent and careful study of God's word from Genesis to Revelation will reveal that God's Word nowhere states that eternal torment is the punishment for sin. God would not tolerate sin and His punishment for sin has often been sudden and overwhelming as well as complete. The destruction of the first order of things in the flood, of Sodom and Gomorrah, and of Babylon may be quoted as instances. On many occasions the children of Israel have had to be punished for wrong-doing. While we rejoice in the knowledge that Christ has purchased the race, we must not forget that faith is a pre-requisite to salvation. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."—Acts 16: 31.

We must remember too that there is such a thing as sinning wilfully after enlightenment which action will render us liable to a fresh condemnation

(Hebrews 10: 26-31). From this condemnation no deliverance is provided but such will experience that God is able "to destroy both soul and body in hell [*gehenna*]." (Matthew 10: 28.) The use of the word "hell" in this reference in the Authorised Version is unfortunate because "hell" is used elsewhere as a rendering of *hades*. These two Greek words, *hades* and *gehenna* are widely different in meaning, as our Lord showed by His discriminating use of *gehenna* and not *hades* in this reference. (See footnote, Revised Version.) Here our Lord plainly warns men that God can and will completely destroy all unrepentant sinners in *gehenna*. There is no escape from God's justice. Our enemies may kill our bodies and thus hasten us to *hades* [the grave] but they cannot take away our souls or beings in the absolute sense because Christ has the authority to bring forth the dead from *hades*. All who sin wilfully, however, in the end are to be totally and everlastingly destroyed in *gehenna*. Scriptural passages such as this (Matthew 10: 28) show that the theory of an undying soul is contrary to the teaching of God's Word. The Truth as taught in the Scriptures is that man is mortal, and lives but a short span and then passes away. (Ezekiel 18: 4; 1 Peter 1: 24.) The theory of the existence of fires of torment, so zealously taught and upheld by many, is not only based upon the unscriptural teaching of the immortal soul but it is totally against the mercy and love of God who is just and not willing that any should perish. (2 Peter 3: 9.) Those who are blinded by the wrong belief that the doctrine of eternal torment is Scriptural have only a false doctrine of fear which prevents them from loving their Creator as they should love Him.

The sad state of the world today is striking testimony that fear is a demoralising and degrading influence. There are some people today who, disbelieving this awful doctrine, have discarded religion altogether and have no respect for God and His Truth. Of those who believe the Bible to teach that God has provided a place where He will eternally torment the wicked, most will refer to the Lord's account of the Rich Man and Lazarus to supplement their claim. It will be desirable to give attention now to this passage even though our consideration must necessarily be brief.

The Rich Man and Lazarus

In Luke 16: 19-31 it will be seen that this is the last of a series of five parables beginning at Luke 15: 3. The whole five are directed at the Scribes and Pharisees who protested because Jesus received sinners and ate with them. (Luke 15: 1, 2.) The rich man represents the position of the self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees who had the sumptuous fare of great privileges with which God had favoured them as successors of Moses. The beggar Lazarus stands for the position which the Scribes and Pharisees considered the publicans and sinners to occupy—despised outcasts. But a change was to come, the Scribes and Pharisees were to be cast out and lose all their high privileges. In A.D. 70 a strong Roman army came against the Jews, destroyed their cities and their temple; put many to death and carried away many as slaves. They were in hell [*hades*], having died to God's favours. The nation came under

a severe Gentile yoke: their house was left desolate. Even to our day the Jews are subject to Gentile powers and, as in Europe now, their lot is far from pleasant and often hard and tormenting.

The beggar also had a change. The despised publicans and sinners who believed in Jesus died to sin. They are represented in the parable as being carried by the angels or messengers into Abraham's bosom; into the inheritance of the promises made to Abraham; into God's favours. They were accepted as children of Abraham by faith and became sons of God. This parable then was a prophetic one for the Jews, showing them that God would cast off the unfaithful section of the people carrying only those who believed in Jesus and confessed their sins into the favour of God, represented by Abraham's bosom.

This is necessarily only a brief outline explanation of this parable. Additional study of it and other parables and figurative language will but emphasise the importance of clearly recognising figurative description when it is used*. To take symbolical language literally can only lead to error and confusion.

The Mercies of God

The Lord's warnings to the Scribes and Pharisees were not the first the Jews had received. The history of God's dealings with the Jews all through Old Testament times contains many of such. An example of this occurs in the writings of Jeremiah, warning the Jewish nation of God's intention to permit the king of Babylon to overrun Judah, cast down their cities and destroy the temple and Jerusalem. They had followed vain idols and departed from the living God. So Jeremiah was sent with a clearly detailed message (Jeremiah 32: 36-44)—they were to be taken captive to Babylon but they would also return again to their own land that they might fear or reverence God and receive benefits and blessings from His hand.

36 And now therefore thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city, whereof ye say, It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence;

37 Behold I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely:

38 And they shall be my people, and I will be their God:

39 And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of

their children after them:

This is a striking illustration showing that God's chastisements are often reformatory in intent and purpose as well as punishments for wrong-doing. God does not take pleasure in the afflictions of the children of men, but He often had to deal with them as in the case of the Israelites, to show them that His laws must be respected and obeyed.

The Punishment of the Incurable

But while God is merciful and long-suffering, and has many times shown His love to His people after executing retributive punishments, some may place themselves in danger of destruction. Such are those who after full enlightenment wilfully reject God's provisions for their eternal salvation.

It is desirable to draw attention to a few of a number of Scriptural statements that apply to the punishment of wilful sinners. 2 Thessalonians 1: 8, 9 refer to those "that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

The Apostle Peter, quoting the prophecy of Moses relating to the Lord Jesus said (Acts 3: 22, 23)—

23 And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

This destruction from among the people is called in other passages of the New Testament—"the second death." Revelation 2: 11; 20: 6; 21: 8.

There will be no place of eternal torment (either physical or mental) but a complete removal and blotting-out for ever in "the second death." That in itself is a severe punishment. God does not intend to pollute His perfect New Heaven and New Earth with the presence of sinners living in misery and pain. No! He will destroy all such completely and everlastingly in the second death. Misery and pain will not have a place in God's universe when the Kingdom is perfected. We are told in Revelation 21—

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

When all incurable sinners have been finally dealt with, there will remain only those who love, serve, and worship God and His Beloved Son. When one realises from a study of the Scriptures that the doctrine of Eternal Torment is untrue then he can cast out all fear. One cannot both love and be afraid of the actions of the same person. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love," said the Apostle John. "casteth out fear."—1 John 4: 18.

Many people live with a burden of dread as to what is going to happen—a burden imposed upon them by their beliefs in these false doctrines. They either do not know very much or nothing at all of the love of God and His loving plan to bless all who believe in Jesus. The Eternal Torment doctrine could never draw people to a full love for God and one another. It is slander on God's Holy character and is contrary to the gospel message of love and great joy which shall be to all people.—Luke 2: 10.

*For further explanation of this subject please see "Everlasting Punishment," also "The Parables of Our Lord," mentioned in the Book List.

The New Covenant Advocate

and Kingdom Herald

A Monthly Paper for the Exposition of Bible Truths. H. S. WINBUSH, Editor.

Yearly Subscription Price (including postage)—
In Australia and New Zealand .. 4/-
In other Countries .. 5/-; \$1.25
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Love, a Tie that Binds

Since false teachings of fear exist in the world it is for those who are of God to cleave closer together, bound by a holy love, which is of itself born of God who is love. Perfect love expels servile fear. A reverent fear, on the other hand, increases as our love increases. But servile fear, the fear which hath torment [restraint—*Emphatic Diaglott*], is incompatible with perfect love. Paul has expressed this thought (2 Timothy 1)—

7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of

power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

We can be thankful that God has not given us the spirit of fear, but rather that of love. We can be thankful too for the knowledge that a time is coming when sin will be eradicated. The removal of sin will mean the removal of all pains, sorrows, and fears that it brings. Only the establishment of the new heavens and new earth can bring about a world in which will exist perfect freedom from fear. May that order soon be set up!

—J. V. S.



Saints and Faithful Brethren

THE WORDS of our Conference Topic, "Knit Together in Love" are found in Colossians 2: 2.

To whom was this exhortation given—to be "knit together in love"? To the brethren at Colossae, undoubtedly. But it is not necessarily limited to them, for similar exhortations are given in other of Paul's epistles, and the Lord had directed him to many others beside the Colossians.

This epistle was written by the Apostle Paul who, some time previous to the writing of it, was specially called by the Lord Jesus "to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." Acts 9: 15.

In the opening verses of the first chapter of Colossians, the apostle states his authority as "an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God," and he acknowledges Timothy as "our brother." We can also see that he is writing to a special class of people—addressing them as "the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse:"—Colossians 1: 1, 2. Who were these saints and faithful brethren? The word "saint" means a "holy one"—not that it is essential for a "saint" to be absolutely sinless, but one that is set apart for a holy purpose—hence, a sanctified person.

By some people it is believed that when a Christian dies he or she becomes a saint; or, by others, that they become saints only when canonized by the church—perhaps centuries after their death. But this is not what the Scriptures teach. The Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 1: 2) defines the saints as "them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called [omitting the supplied italics 'to be'] saints . . ."

They were saints while still living—not referring to some future time, or at their death; but right now. This would include "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours," right down the age to our time. Even now, if we are sanctified, it is our privilege to be called "saints." For the Lord prayed to the Father on behalf of the disciples, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."—John 17: 17-20.

In the Scriptures several classes of saints are mentioned. The Jewish nation had been set apart to be a people of God, distinct and separate from all other

nations; and it would be appropriate to use the word "saint" concerning them. There are many texts to show that this was God's purpose towards them.—Exodus 19: 5, 6; Deuteronomy 9: 10; Amos 3: 1, 2.

When entering the land of Canaan, Moses spoke to them on their duty (Deuteronomy 7)—

6 For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

Also the Prophet Jeremiah says (2: 3)—"Israel was holiness unto the Lord, . . ."—that is, set apart to God to be His people.

The word "saint" in the Old Testament would also apply to a holy person who walked with God—many of whom are referred to in Hebrews 11. This company of Ancient Worthies extended from Abel onward until John the Baptist, who was the last of the Old Testament prophets.

In the New Testament the words "saint" and "saints" are frequently used of believers in the Lord Jesus. By His sacrifice the Lord Jesus was able and did purchase all the human race, but that in itself did not make them a race of saints. All through the Gospel age—whether in the apostle's time or since—all true believers who accepted Christ as their Redeemer and Mediator have been called the church of God (Acts 20: 28). It is this class of people to whom the Apostle Paul is writing and exhorting them that they should be "knit together in love."

How are we Sanctified?

True believers in Jesus are called "saints"—not because they are perfect, but because when they believe, and confess their sins, righteousness is imputed to them. (Romans 4: 24; 1 John 1: 8-10.) Our Lord Jesus was a saint. His holiness and purity were absolute. In Him was no sin, neither any tendency to sin.—1 Peter 2: 22, 23.

But in the case of the Lord's disciples, their holiness and purity are not absolute, because they are descendants of Adam and are born in sin. The Apostle Paul says (Romans 3)—

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

(Continued in January Issue)