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Jehovah's Footstool Made Glorious

"And I will make the place [footstool] of my feet glorious." "And his [footstool] feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives."—Isa. 60: 13; Zech. 14: 4; Matt. 23: 35; Acts 7: 40.

God's foot-stool has been anything but glorious for the past six thousand years. Sin, pain, crying, mental and physical suffering and death have made it one vast dismal house in which now, conservatively estimated, at least fifty thousand millions of humanity wait for the time to come when the curse of divine justice shall be lifted; and the light of divine favour, shining in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord, shall rise as the Sun of righteousness to chase away sin's dismal shadows, and light the gloom with healing ray.

Thus our God has made abundant provision for the ransom for Adam, and for all who suffered loss through him as his children, bought the whole world, and made for each member of our race an opportunity for a trial for everlasting life under favourable conditions; but it did more, it purchased back Adam's life, his dominion as earth's king, representative of God, his Creator and Father.

Hence we read, "And thou, O Tower of the flock [Christ], the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion." (Micah 4: 8). The Apostle Paul also speaks of the redemption of the purchased possession (Eph. 1: 14). Our Lord, in one of His parables, referred to this also, showing that He purchased not only mankind, the treasure, but also the field, the world, the earth from under the curse; and that all who join with Him, as members of the Kingdom class, share in that purchase of the field and the treasure.—Matt. 13: 44.

The entire work of the Millennium will consist in reordering and making glorious God's footstool. Paradise, when lost through sin, was but a "garden" in a corner of the earth; but inasmuch as the race of Adam has multiplied to fill the earth, in accordance with the divine intention (Gen. 1: 28), and inasmuch as they all have been redeemed, it will be necessary to provide a Paradise sufficiently large to accommodate all, and this will imply that the entire earth shall become as the Garden of Eden for fruitfulness and beauty and perfection. And all this is promised as the grand future consummation of the divine plan.—Acts 3: 20, 21; Rev. 2: 7; 2 Cor. 12: 4.

But the richest jewel of the Lord's glorified footstool in the close of the Millennium will be mankind, in whose perfection, liberty, and likeness to God, in moral and intellectual graces, will be reflected the very image of Divinity. And most gloriously will the perfect man reflect honour upon his Maker and His wondrous plan for His creation, redemption and restitution. And with that wonderful plan will always be intimately identified first the Lord Jesus, Jehovah's "Word," and second the Bride, the Lamb's wife and joint-heir in disbursing the blessing secured by the ransom.

This beautifying and glorifying of the Lord's "footstool" will not be completed until our Lord Jesus, as the Father's honored agent, "shall have put down all [conflicting] rule, and all authority and power. For He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet, before He delivers up the Kingdom at the close of the Millennium."—1 Cor. 15: 24-28.

The period of the reign of Sin and Death is represented as the time when God "remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger" (Lam. 2: 1); but following the beginning of the Millennium, the people are prophetically called upon to—"Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his footstool, for he is worthy." (Psa. 99: 5). And this thought, that the establishment of the New Jerusalem, the Church of God glorified, as the new government in the earth, will mean the beginning of the restoration of divine favour to Jehovah's footstool, is clearly set forth through the Prophet Zechariah (14: 4, 5).

Jehovah's Feet on the Mount of Olives.

This prophecy is generally misunderstood, and applied to the feet of our Lord Jesus, at His second advent; and indeed, those who thus err generally go further and assert that it will be the feet of flesh, pierced with the nails of Calvary;—not realising that our Lord gave His human nature, complete and forever, as our ransom; and that He was raised from the dead, by the Father's power, a glorious spirit-being—"the express image of the Father's person."

But a glance at the preceding verse (3) shows that the Prophet's reference is to the return of Jehovah's feet; for the statement (referring to the trouble by which the Kingdom will be established) is: "Then shall Jehovah go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle [in olden times for Israel]. And His feet will stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be divided in its centre, from east to west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove northward and half southward."

As soon as any recognise the fact that the feet mentioned are Jehovah's feet, they will not dispute that this language is symbolic, and refers to the Lord's re-establishment of His dominion in the earth, which has long been comparatively abandoned to the "god of this world" Satan;—except as the Lord was represented first by the typical Tabernacle, secondly by the Temple at Jerusalem, and lastly by the present tabernacle condition of the Church of Christ, during this Gospel age. Surely, no one will err and get the thought that Jehovah literally rests His feet upon this earth as a "footstool."

And if the placing and resting of Jehovah's "feet" is symbolic, and signifies the return of divine favour and dominion to earth, so, we may be sure, other features connected in the same prophecy are symbolic: the Mount of Olives, its peculiar division, its valley, the flight of the people, the waters of life from Jerusalem (compare verse 8 with Ezek. 47: 1-9), etc., are all symbolic statements,—pictures of grand spiritual truths.

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How lovely are thy dwelling places O Jehovah of Hosts! My soul desired, yea, it even fainted For the courts of Jehovah. My heart and my flesh shout with joy Unto the living God. Even as the sparrow hath found a house, And the swallow a nest for herself, Where she may lay her young; (so I have found) thine altars, O Lord of Hosts, My God, my King. Happy are they that dwell in thy house: They shall be continually praising Thee. Selah. Happy is the man whose strong confidence is in thee, Whose heart reflecteth (wholly) on the paths of (righteousness). Passing through the valley of mourning, They change it into a place of (joy) springs—[Valley of Blessings]. The Autumn rain brings them blessings [Joel 2: 28]: They go from strength to strength That each of them may be presented (perfect) Before God in Zion."

The olive is a symbol full of meaning: in olden times it was the source of artificial light, its oil being generally used for this purpose. (Exod. 27: 20). Indeed, in the Hebrew, the olive tree was called shemen or oil tree. Olive oil was also used as the basis of many of the precious ointments of olden time—such as that used in anointing the priests and kings, typifying the holy spirit upon the antitypical "royal priesthood." (Exod. 30: 24). And from time immemorial the olive branch has been used as a symbol of peace.—Gen. 8: 11; Neh. 8: 15.

If, then, the olive be the symbol of light, peace and divine blessing through the holy spirit, and if mountain be considered as elsewhere the symbol for a Kingdom, the significance here of the term Mount of Olives is easily seen to be—the Kingdom of Light, Peace and Divine Blessing. And the standing or establishment of Jehovah's "feet" upon it, signifies that the Divine favour and law will be re-established in the earth by and through the holy Kingdom.

The application of the term Mount of Olives, is in full accord with the Apostle's statement (Rom. 11: 17, 24) in which he compares fleshly Israel with the original cultivated olive tree, and Gentile converts to wild olive branches grafted in where the natural branches had been broken off. (Compare Jer. 11: 16, 17). And he explains that the root of the tree is in the promise of God,—the Abrahamic promise, that the seed of Abraham should eventually bless all the families of the earth, etc. Eventually the same root or promise will bear two kinds of branches—the ingrafted wild olive branches, and the reingrafted natural branches: when fleshly Israel shall have his blindness turned away, and shall look with the eye of faith upon the Saviour crucified and pierced eighteen centuries ago—a sacrifice for sin. We remember also that fleshly Israel was God's typical Kingdom or mountain for a long time, and that spiritual Israel of the Gospel age is called to be the real Kingdom of God, as our Lord declared, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

Moreover from these two Kingdoms (even before Jehovah's glory rests upon them, to make them His channels of blessings to the whole world of mankind) has proceeded all "the light of the world" during all the darkness of the past: for are not these the representatives of the Old and the New Testaments, the old and the new Covenants? Do not these correspond to the Lord's two witnesses and to the two olive trees of Zechariah (4: 3, 11, 12) distinctly mentioned also in Revelation (11: 4)?—in that these two parts of the mountain symbolise the outcome of those covenants, the results of the witnessing—the Kingdom in its heavenly and its earthly phases?

Here we see, then, that the two halves of the Mount of Olives signify the two parts of the Kingdom of God, distinctly separated according to a divine order or arrangement. The separation indicates no opposition between the two parts of the Kingdom. It is, on the contrary, for the purpose of producing the "Valley of Blessing" between—to which all who desire divine aid may flee and find succour under the blessed protection of both the heavenly and the earthly phases of the Kingdom.

The Prophet David (Psalm 84) seems to have been given a foreview of this great "Valley of Blessings," close to Jehovah's "feet," when he sings first of the saints of the Gospel age and then of those blessed in the next age, saying:—

How lovely are thy dwelling places O Jehovah of Hosts! My soul desired, yea, it even fainted For the courts of Jehovah. My heart and my flesh shout with joy Unto the living God. Even as the sparrow hath found a house, And the swallow a nest for herself, Where she may lay her young; (so I have found) thine altars, O Lord of Hosts, My God, my King. Happy are they that dwell in thy house: They shall be continually praising Thee. Selah. Happy is the man whose strong confidence is in thee, Whose heart reflecteth (wholly) on the paths of (righteousness). Passing through the valley of mourning, They change it into a place of (joy) springs—[Valley of Blessings]. The Autumn rain brings them blessings [Joel 2: 28]: They go from strength to strength That each of them may be presented (perfect) Before God in Zion."

The Eighty-fifth Psalm also pictures the return of divine clemency and blessing under the Millennial Kingdom—the Olive Mountain (Kingdom) of two parts.

The removal of one part of the mountain to the north and the other to the south is significant; the North is the direction of the group Pleiades, the celestial centre of the universe, the supposed seat of divine empire.* This would seem to indicate the "change" of the Gospel Church at this time, from human to spirit conditions as "partakers of the divine nature;" and the removal of the other half of the mountain would seem to signify the complete restitution, to perfect human conditions, of those ancient worthies accounted worthy to constitute the earthly representatives of God's Kingdom.

The valley thus produced would be one full of light—free from shadows: for the sun would stream through it from east to west. This speaks symbolically of the Sun of Righteousness and its full light of divine truth and blessing scattering the shadows of sin, ignorance, superstition and death, and healing and restoring the willing and obedient of humanity who will flee to this valley of blessings, the valley of mercy. The valley of mercy, between and under the care of the spiritual and human phases of the Kingdom of Light and Peace (the establishment of Jehovah's feet) will surely be a "Valley of Blessings" to all who enter it with broken and contrite hearts.

We must remember, further, that while it is to Israel only that it said, "Ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains," yet as a name Israel signified "The people blessed of the Lord," "The people of God," "The Lord's people." (2 Chron. 20: 14). And while, as we have seen, the first or spiritual blessing of the Kingdom shall come to spiritual Israel, and the second or earthly blessing shall begin with Israel according to the flesh, yet it will not stop there; for whosoever will may become an Israelite: by exercising the faith and obedience of Abraham, all mankind may become Israelites indeed.—"the people of God." And hence the Prophet Isaiah declares that when Israel is called back to divine favour, at the establishment of the Kingdom, it will include "Every one that is called by my [Jehovah's] name: for I have created him for my glory; I have formed him, yea, I have made him." (The name Israel will then apply to all who are God's people).—Isa. 43: 7; Rom. 9: 26, 33; 10: 13.

"And [thus] will Jehovah my God come in, and all the holy ones shall [thus] be [united] with Him." (Zech. 14: 5). When God's time shall have fully come, Continued on page 2.

PEOPLES PAPER.

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Peace with God and the Peace of God

Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ... Then will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.—Isaiah 26:3

When the lesser of powers to the creature shall have run out, when the scattering of the great Day of Attonement... the High Priest shall have finished making atonement, not only for his own people...

To have come into a condition of Peace with God means that one has become reconciled with God. This implies a former condition of alienation, of enmity through wicked works.

We are not at peace with the flesh, but always at warfare with it. Yet there is a peace in the Lord that is born of faith in Him and in His promises.

Through all the tumult and the strife I hear the music ringing! It finds an echo in my soul; How can I keep from singing?"

We are resting in the Lord's promises—we are resting in His strength and His ability to make good His promises; for we know that He who has called us is able to fulfil all His good Word.

It has been written for our instruction and comfort—"This is the victory that overcometh the world even your faith." This faith is built upon the testimony of God's word—a sure foundation.

PEACE FOUNDED UPON FAITH.

This peace of God is not dependent upon the smile of fortune, nor upon physical health, nor upon a host of friends. But it is a peace which abides even when health fails, or poverty comes in, or death steals from us the treasures of our hearts.

How poor would be our inheritance today if we were without our anchorage in Christ! BUT with it we can endure all things which the Father's loving providence shall permit.

In order to enjoy this perfect peace we must have an unswerving trust in our Father's love and abiding faithfulness. As we look into the starry heavens we see a manifestation of God's mighty power and majesty.

If we trusted to our own reasoning, we would be in a very unsatisfactory condition. All would be uncertain; we would have no sure basis for faith or assurance.

prove them for ourselves, thus learning their reality and realising their truth. We rejoice that this loving God has called us to redemption through His Son. We rejoice that He has offered us eternal life, and has called us even to a glorious inheritance with His Son—Romans 8:17

PEACE DEPENDENT UPON FULL OBEDIENCE

We rejoice, further, to know of the wondrous provision for the whole world in the future. All these things form a firm basis for peace and joy and confidence in the Lord. But our peace is proportionate to our constancy—our staying power.

THE PEACE OF GOD

"The peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Great peace have they which love Thy law, and nothing shall offend them.—Psalm 119:165

God's law represents God's will. All who are right-minded, rightly disposed, will rejoice in having God's will well done. Originally God's will was written in man's nature.

To love God's Law, then, would be to appreciate the fact that God has a great purpose; to take delight in nothing but what God's will is; and to have full confidence in His Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power.

In this text the Apostle differentiates between the mind and the heart. The heart represents the affections. The Apostle urges not only that we should have good feelings in the matter, but that our minds should be at rest.

The text does not refer to our own peace, but to the peace of God, the peace which comes to us through a realisation of God's power, of His goodness and willingness to hold us by His right hand as His children.

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No looking back on Sodom's plains; No listening still to Babel's strains; No tears for Egypt's woe and smile; No thirsting for its flowing Nile.

Carrying the picture further, the Prophet declares, reminding that day in which gradually the earth shall be made glorious as Jehovah's footstool.

And it shall come to pass in that day that the light shall not be bright nor the darkness thick, but the day shall be the one luminous to the Lord—another full day not night, but it shall come to pass that at its close [evening] it shall be [literal] light.—Isaiah 60:5

Some understand the "day" here described with the "day of Vengeance" which is "a day of clouds and thick darkness with no light in it" (Joel 2:2; Zeph. 1:15) and the translators have, accordingly, generally tried to harmonise the translations. But not so; the day here referred to by Zechariah as only partially bright is the Millennial day, although it is the Sun of Righteousness with error and shame, to matter earth's masses of sin and superstition and death it will nevertheless be only partially bright, because it will throughout be dealing with generation after generation of the fallen race as brought from the tomb, and in various stages of restitution to the original condition. The law reminding it is to be assured that in that day of the re-establishment of Jehovah's feet upon His footstool, there shall be no more "thick darkness"; and that at the close of that Millennial Day, instead of growing darker, the world will only have reached the high noon of its "light of the knowledge of Jehovah"; and that its sun shall never set.

The reference to the rivers of living waters flowing from Jerusalem, during this Millennial Day of the re-establishment of Jehovah's feet upon His footstool (Zech. 14:8, 9), reminds us of the corresponding testimony of Ezekiel (47:1-12) and of John's Revelation (22:1, 2) which under the same symbol of living waters emanating from the throne of the Millennial Kingdom, show us the restitution blessings under the symbols of "waters of life," to which whosoever will may come and drink freely, and fruitful trees of life overhanging whose leaves will heal the repentant peoples of earth of all imperfections.

At ves' "In that day the Lord shall be King over all the earth"; His Kingdom shall have come as His faithful have long prayed; and by the end of that day He will dwell on earth even as He does in heaven. God's footstool shall then be glorious indeed, as it is now.

"AS FREELY AS I LIVE, THE WHOLE EARTH SHALL BE FILLED WITH THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH" —Neh. 9:21; Isa. 60:9; Habak. 2:14

No show shall be in that new earth for all that mighty this universe; No will shall the world hath—There shall be no more wars; No human hatred, hate and feud; The day of promise dawn for you; For life who are ever the throne; Say, I will make all things new.

No more the dead, but they shall wake; The lost, but they shall be restored; Of all our human hearts might break; What that sacred word; Deserve, look up! and beams, rejoice; Singing God's law of promise through; At sound of that prophetic voice; I will make all things new.

But in our second text above, the Prophet is referring to a class who have gone further than the condition of peace with God. He is speaking of a class who have come into possession of "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," as the Apostle Paul declares. This peace can come only to those who have given themselves unreservedly to God—their time, their talents, their influence, their life, their all. These have a peace that none others can know.

What a precious legacy our dear Lord left with His disciples when He went away from them! He said: "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14:27). This was truly a legacy of priceless value, and it is the inheritance of the entire Church throughout the age, even unto its close. To the world it may seem that the course of the Christian is far from peaceful, for the Lord's saints often have a stormy voyage. But if our hearts continue to be stayed on Christ by faith, and we do not let go our anchor, we shall be kept through all the tempests of life, however severely we may be tossed, however fiercely the storms may rage.

Faith can exclaim with the prophet Isaiah, "For the Lord will help me, therefore, I shall not be confounded; therefore, have I set my face as a flint and I know that I shall not be ashamed." (Isaiah 50:7). On the assurance of the Lord we may rest, because our anchor holds fast to the Throne of God. The language of our Master's heart was, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee." He had been with the Father from the beginning, and He knew His love and goodness; He had seen the manifestations of His power; He had marked His loving kindness. So we who have come into similar relationship to God have come to thus know and trust His love and faithfulness.

REST IN THE LORD

The Lord does not bless His people with peace in an outward sense. The Master's special associates, the Apostles, were buffeted, and so all His followers have been. The Adversary does everything in his power to make their lives anything but peaceful and happy. This is true of all who walk in Jesus' footsteps. We have "battles" within and fightings without, rather than peace without and peace within. We have fightings with our flesh; and it is part of our victory that we "fight a good fight," a conquering fight. We are to put forth our best efforts in fighting against the world and the Adversary, against all the things that Satan would put into our minds and hearts, and we are to get the better of these things. The Lord blesses His people with strength to surmount these difficulties.

The First Resurrection. Send a postal request for this interesting subject to Bible Students Tract Society, 1246 Collins St., Melb.

should make request increasingly for wisdom and the fruits of the Spirit for opportunities for serving the Lord and the brethren, and for growing more and more into the likeness of our dear Son. Under these conditions the promised "peace which passeth all understanding" will guard our hearts and thoughts. Selfishness and ambition would find little room in hearts so filled with when in "deep waters." Divine peace can dwell in our hearts and keep them.

The Apostle's thought seems to be that when he addresses have come into harmony with God through acceptance of His terms. Turning from all opposition, they have become children of God through faith, obedience, self-sacrifice and communion with death. The Apostle urges that God's peace should be in these, and that they should be guarded against anything that would disturb this peace. The expression, "Through Jesus," suggests that, as we entered into this peace through our great Advocate, so we can continue in this peace by His continuing to be our Advocate, through imperfections of

the flesh, we would get out of harmony continually. "Let us therefore, come hither to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:16). Thus we come daily and say, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," we abide in peace, for we have this great Advocate. Therefore, this peace abides—a continuing supply of grace through the great Advocate.

"Peace, perfect peace? our future all unknown?"
Jesus we know, and He is on the Throne!
"Peace, perfect peace? death shadowing us and ours?"
Jesus has vanquished death and all its powers!
"Peace, perfect peace? 'mid suffering's keenest throes?"
The sympathy of Jesus brings repose.
"It is enough! Earth's struggles soon shall cease."
And Jesus calls to Heaven's perfect peace!"

for us" (each having enjoyed and received their share of the original sacrifice)—nothing but a fearful looking forward to of judgment (imminent) and fiery indignation, which will devour the adversaries of God—in the Second Death—(Heb. 10:26, 27).
The Sodomites, therefore, did not enjoy any chance of eternal life. They knew not "the only Name given under heaven or amongst men whereby we must be saved." Not only so, but the majority of mankind since Jesus' day have never heard the Gospel, in the same sense of the word—and they have never understood, never appreciated it fully, rightly.

More Tolerable for Sodomites.

It may astonish some to know that Jesus, speaking of the Judgment or trial of the world during the coming Age, during His Mediatorial Kingdom, declared that that trial would be less severe upon the Sodomites than upon some of those people to whom He preached, who would also have a share in the opportunities of that great epoch—an opportunity, with the Sodomites, of reconciliation to God and the attainment of eternal life. His words were, "Woe unto you, Chorazin and Bethsaida, for if the mighty works which have been done in you had been done in Sodom and Gomorrah, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Therefore I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment (the world's trial time, the Messianic Reign) than for you." (Matt. 11:22, 23). What more could we ask upon this subject? What higher authority could be invoked than the Great Judge Himself?

It will not do to say that Jesus did not refer to the same licentious Sodomites mentioned by St. Jude in our text; it will not do to say that Jesus meant some Sodomites living in His day, because there were none. The Master distinctly tells us that "the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained down fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all." (Luke 17:20.) When our Lord declares that "it shall be more tolerable for Sodom in the Day of Judgment than for Capernaum" and the other cities in which He preached, He implies that it will still be tolerable for those people who heard Him and who rejected His Message.

"Thus it is Written."

This Gospel Age, which began with our Lord's sufferings and trying experiences, and which has continued those experiences with His followers, has for its object the preparation, the qualification of those who will be the Judges of the world in the coming Age. They must all be developed in the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit—"meekness, patience, brotherly kindness, love," else they will not be fit to be the Judges of mankind by and by. It is required that all these become copies of the Redeemer, God's dear Son. St. Paul tells us this, saying, "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" and declares that God has foreordained that all of these judges must be copies of His Son.

Coming back to the Old Testament Scriptures, we note how the Divine Spirit dictated this matter of the future trial of the Sodomites to one of the Prophets, and caused it to be written for our instruction. Alas! as Jesus said, we have been slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken." (Luke 24:25.) Through Ezekiel the Lord explained that when the Restitution Times shall come, at the Second Advent of our Lord, in the glory of His Kingdom, then the Divine blessing will come upon Israel, now cast off. Nor will the blessing of Messiah's Kingdom come upon Israel only; it will extend to all the families of the earth.

Through the Prophet the Lord specially emphasised to Israel the restoration of her two sister nations, Sodom and Samaria. The Lord pointed out that in the day of their pride and prosperity they despised these sister nations as being far beneath them and unworthy of their notice. But in the Restitution Times (Acts 3:19-21) they will be glad to have a share of the Divine favor in conjunction with these nations formerly despised.

The Lord declares that it is not because of the worthiness of any of these that He proposes their restoration, but because of His glorious character; for His Name's sake. Let us quote to you this remarkably clear statement of the Divine purposes future, and notice that it is emphatically declared that the ones to be restored and blessed are the very ones who perished in the days of Lot. We read:—
"Sodom, thy sister hath not done . . . as thou hast done . . . Behold, this was

the iniquity of thy sister Sodom; pride, fulness of bread and abundance of idleness were in her: . . . neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and the needy. And they were haughty and committed abominations before Me; therefore I took their away as I saw good. God did not see good to take them to a hell of eternal torments; but He did see good to destroy them and to make them an example of the destruction of all ultimately displeasing to Him after obtaining a knowledge of His great and an opportunity for eternal life.

"Thou also which hast condemned thy sister nations, bear their own shame for thy sins. They are more righteous than thou (as Jesus declared). When I shall bring again their captivity, bring them from the prison-house of death. . . then will I bring again the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them, that thou mayest bear thine own shame and mayest be confounded in all that thou hast done, in that thou art a comfort unto them. When thy sisters Sodom and her daughters shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters return to their former estate, then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate. . . I will remember My Covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting Covenant (the New Law Covenant of which Messiah will be the Mediator, and which, under His Mediatorial Kingdom, shall bless Israel and all who will come into Israel under the glorious terms of that New Covenant)—Jeremiah 31:31.

"Then thou shalt remember the ways and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thine younger; and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy Covenant (not under your present Law Covenant, but under the New (Law) Covenant and its better Mediator) . . . that thou mayest remember and be confounded and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God."—Ezekiel 16:54-64.

Length and Breadth—Height and Depth.

How wonderful it at first seems to us to find that we really have a good, kind, loving God, and not an unmerciful and vengeful One!—So greatly, we are deceived respecting His character, by the traditions handed down from the past, that we gave Him the reverence of fear rather than that of love and devotion.

The words of the Lord through the Prophet come to our minds, "Fear not their fear, neither be afraid." "Their fear of Me is not of Me, but is taught by the precepts of man." "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My plans higher than your plans." Oh, thank God that it is so! Yea, and he is the same yesterday, to-day and forever; He changes not. The great, wise, just, loving Plan for the salvation of mankind, which He is now carrying out, was the very one "which He purposed in Himself before the world was created." The plan of selecting the Church through fiery trials, through the straight gate and narrow way for nineteen centuries, was what He purposed in advance; for the Apostle says that He foreknew the Church in Christ.

Likewise the Times of Restitution soon to come for the world of mankind He foreknew and predestinated, and made all the arrangements for, just as His plans are being carried out now. The end will be glorious. His name will shine resplendently when the mists have cleared away, and when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in its beams, scattering all the darkness and degradation of sin and superstition.

As for those who shall under Divine tests prove themselves sympathetic with iniquity, we are glad that the Divine sentence is that they shall have from the Eternal One a destruction total, complete, from which there will be no recovery, no redemption, no resurrection: "They shall be as though they had not been." But all the willing and obedient shall have the blessing of the Lord unto life eternal—either on the spirit plane, as members of the Church of the Firstborn, or on the human plane, as members of the saved Israel restored to human perfection.

"To her a little and we come
To our reward, our crown, our home!
Another year, or more, or less,
And we have crossed the wilderness;
Finished the toil, the rest begun,
The battle fought, the triumph won!"

THE VENGEANCE OF ETERNAL FIRE

"Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them . . . are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."—Jude 7.

Our text is one of the strongest of those which once we erroneously misunderstood to teach the eternal torment of the wicked. Coming to the text with our minds filled with wrong impressions respecting the character of the Almighty God and regarding His purposes toward humanity, it is easy for us to misunderstand the words of St. Jude. So many were the erroneous thoughts impressed upon our minds from childhood that, although they were, we considered them fundamental theology.

In the main we listened to our own notions and happy memories. Scarcely reading into them what they do not say, we thought we were doing so. As, for instance, the messages of Holy Writ to the effect that "the wages of sin is death," that "the soul that sinneth it shall die," that there is no eternal life out of Christ. All these and others we learned and twisted away from their beautiful and simple teaching, and made out of them "doctrines of devils" with which we alarmed ourselves and those committed to our instruction.

We thank God that gradually the eyes of our understanding are opening to discern the great Truth that the testing of the Church in the present Age, and the testing of the world at large in the coming Age, will be as to worthiness for eternal life or worthiness of eternal death—overlasting destruction—the Second Death—from which there will be no redemption, no resurrection, no recovery. As St. Peter declares, those who enter into it will be like the beasts, made to be taken and killed—annihilated—2 Pet. 2:12.

Sodom's Guilt and Punishment.

Sodom and surrounding cities were profane and licentious in the extreme and Divine Justice decreed that their course should be made an example of—a lesson to others of the Divine displeasure against all licentiousness. Accordingly we read that fire and brimstone were rained from heaven in the utter destruction of those cities, the place of which is now marked by the Dead Sea. The Sodomites were obliterated and only their name and history have come down to us. Their destruction by "eternal fire," or heavenly fire rained upon them, was a complete destruction. Their punishment pictures forth the utter reprobation of all whom God will finally reject as unworthy of eternal life. Not that fire and brimstone will be rained upon all, but that utter destruction will come upon all disapproved by the Almighty.

Who thinks that St. Jude meant that

the fire that destroyed the Sodomites was an eternal one? Whoever thinks that it is still burning as a literal blaze should take a look at the Dead Sea and note that there are no fires there. The thought is that the fire, which is a symbol of destruction, did its work thoroughly, completely, leaving not a vestige of those condemned to destruction.

The Sodomites all went to hell—to the Bible hell—to the state of death. But they did not go to the hell which was manufactured by our forefathers during the "dark ages"—a hell of eternal torture. We have Bible testimony on the subject, which we will produce. They are unconsciously now, like the rest of the dead, waiting for the resurrection. And the resurrection opportunity will come to them, as well as to all the remainder of Adam's race, because they, as well as all others, are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ—by the sacrifice which He finished at Calvary. This is not speculative; we have the words of the Master Himself on the subject. Let us take our information, and wisdom, from the proper quarter. Doubts and fears will speedily flee away.

Not a Second Chance.

We will produce the Bible testimony showing that the Sodomites will be released and come forth during the mediatorial reign of Messiah to enjoy a share of the blessings then to be poured out upon Israel and the world, and to have an opportunity of coming into harmony with God and gaining eternal life. But we know that straightway somebody will say, No, that would be a second chance, and God has nowhere promised a second chance to any. Furthermore, it would be tantamounting to the Divine Government to suppose that God, after giving one fair trial to a man and reaching a decision, would conclude to give him another trial, as though Divine Justice were unable to determine the worthiness or unworthiness of the individual for eternal life in one trial or testing.

We fully agree with this sentiment, but call attention to the fact that the Sodomites did not enjoy one trial for life. They and all mankind were "Born in sin, shapen in iniquity; in sin did their mothers conceive them." They were born under the sentence, "Dying, thou shalt die." Neither they nor any one else, therefore, could be placed upon trial for a future life everlasting or death everlasting, until released from the original sentence of death under which all were born. And no release from that death sentence was granted to anybody until the Redeemer came and died "like just for the unjust," that "as by a man came death, by a Man also might come the resurrection of the dead."

Only those, therefore, who have been born since Jesus' day could be released from the original penalty, or could be placed on trial for life or death eternal. Only the Church, therefore, comes under this proposition. To this agree the words of the Apostle, "If we sin wilfully after that we have come to a knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?
This interesting sermon was published in a previous issue. The interest aroused and demand exceeded all expectations. Send for free sample. To Bible Students Tract Society, Temple Court, Melbourne.

A FRENZY OF DELUSION.

QUESTION BOX.

"For this cause God will send them a strong delusion... a frenzy of delusion... that they believe a lie because they had not pleasure in the truth."—1 Thess 2: 11.

Evidently these words of the Apostle were a prophecy concerning the present harvest time. Doubtless they apply primarily to the Church, and will apply later also to Babylon and the unregenerate world.

It is not a fact, that a mind may become generally indifferent to principles of honesty in regard to thoughts and reasonings. And would not such a mind be very apt to entertain delusions? Would not this apply to all the affairs of life, — the unkind, uncharitable thoughts would be entertained without honest endeavour to set them and to give the accused the benefit of the doubt? Is not this generally the case among men and women today?

We believe that such injustice lies at the bottom of nearly all the trouble of the Church, and of the world. Few but the saints are just—not to say merciful and generous—in their interpretations of the words and deeds of others.

And now, according to this prophecy, we are come to the time when God will test all—or allow Satan to test the whole world with a "frenzy of delusion." What may we not expect in the way of hasty and emotional conduct inspired by these delusions? Some may be exercised in respect to the Truth—new and old, others may be influenced thus in respect to their personal, social and political affairs.

It is this frenzy that is precipitating trouble, religious, financial and social, and leading to the anarchy which shortly, according to the Bible, is to envelop and swallow our civilisation in the indescribable time of trouble which will precede the reign of righteousness.

The saints, the consecrated, will not escape from this testing. Who will be able to stand? Some seem to be under the strain already. Let us pity them and do all in our power to succour them. But our chief concern should be ourself—that we may each maintain and increase our "Spirit of a sound mind."

What, then, should be our course if we would stand the test successfully? We should not only square our every act and word with strictest justice, but beyond this we should scrutinise our every thought and "bring every thought into subjection to the will of God" as expressed in Christ. Love, do you say? Yes! in its proper order. "Love is the principal thing." But justice must come first to be in line with the Divine precepts. "Just before generous" is an old and a true adage. After learning to think justly of the words and acts of others, we are prepared with a mental foundation to think generously—lovingly.

The Scriptures say not in vain that "A false balance is an abomination unto the Lord" (Prov. 11: 1), and this balancing applies as truly to mental as to physical dealings with others. Whoever does not love righteousness, yea, whoever does not hate iniquity, is surely in danger of being frenzied by delusions in this evil day.

Surely Satan and the fallen angels under him are being granted extraordinary powers to tempt God's people, and later on the world, to cut loose from all moderation in frenzy of error on one subject or another, with one person or another. Let us be forewarned and "Watch and pray lest we enter into temptation."

The more we think of it and comes in contact with those deluded by this latest "snare of the Fowler," the more are we astonished that any who have had the privilege of partaking of the spiritual food in Pastor Russell's six volumes falling into the trap and being willing to "believe a lie," and accept the volume as Pastor Russell's work, which is quite untrue, for he had nothing whatever to do with the writing of it.

Some of the classes visited had stood firm unanimously, and the meetings in Adelaide, as well as in Perth and suburbs, were well attended, and all seemed to be encouraged by the occasion. Some were recovered from the delusion and rejoiced to be again in the clear beautiful atmosphere of the truth, and others testified to being strengthened in their faith and hope, and in the appreciation that the Lord is the refuge of His people, and not a Society, and His truth is the shield, a buckler and not a "channel."

The friends everywhere showed their love and zeal for the Lord in the willing offerings to His work, and besides covering the cost of the trip, there was a substantial amount left to go to the Tract Fund.

THE WRITER OF THE PSEUDO VOLUME. Some have suggested that our reference to Brother C. J. Woodworth, the writer of the volume falsely called Pastor Russell's work, indicated a wrong spirit on our part. It appears strange how ready those who endorse the work which so bitterly assails their fellow Christians, as in the book mentioned, are to strain at a gnat while they swallowed a camel. What was stated in our previous issue was simply from information previously published by the Brother himself. We may refer to the I.R.S.A. Convention Report, 1913, page 274.

What has been published is not with any desire of injuring the Brother, but simply in the cause of truth that the friends may be warned of the spiritualistic tendencies of the work in question.

In the Christian warfare what is one of the principal things to contend with?

One of the chief battles of those who walk the narrow way is against self-will; to bring their wills into the fullest subjection to the Heavenly Father's will and to keep them there; to rule their own hearts, crushing out the rising ambitions which are natural even to a perfect manhood; quenching these kindling fires, and presenting their bodies and all earthly interests living sacrifices in the service of the Lord and His cause. These were the trials in which our Captain gained his victory and its laurels, and these also are the trials of his "brethren." "Greater is he that ruleth his own spirit (bringing it into subjection to the will of God) than he that taketh a city"; greater also is such than he who, with a false conception of faith, would leap from the pinnacle of a temple, or do some other foolhardy thing. True faith in God consists not in blind credulity and extravagant assumptions respecting His providential care; it consists, on the contrary, of a quiet confidence in all the exceeding great and precious promises which God has made, a confidence which enables the faithful to resist the various efforts of the world, the flesh and the devil, to distract his attention, and which follows carefully the lines of faith and obedience marked out for us in the divine Word.

Q.—What is the meaning of the expression: "Upon this rock I will build my Church"? (Matt 16: 18).

A.—The Greek word for Peter is "petros," and means a stone, and the original word for rock is "petra." The meaning of this passage, therefore, is "Thou art Petros, a stone, and on this petra, rock, I will build my Church." Mark the construction of the language; "Thou" is in the second person, and "this" is in the third. "Petros" is masculine, and petra is feminine. Jesus asked for a confession; Peter gave it in these words—"Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God"; and this was the petra on which he declared that he would build his church, and against which the gates of hell (hadēs) should not prevail. The Apostle (1 Cor. 3: 11) explains that Jesus Christ (and not Peter) is the only Foundation upon which the true Church or spiritual Temple is to be erected. St. Peter was merely one of the "living stones" (John 1: 42; 1 Pet. 2: 2-5) of that great Temple, the Church of Christ, which will be made up of many "stones," of which our Lord Jesus is the foundation Rock (1 Cor. 10: 4).

Q.—St. Paul in 1 Thess. v. 23 prays God . . . "your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless," etc. Is the spirit the same as the soul, or the soul as the spirit? If not, kindly enlighten.

A.—In his prayer, St. Paul evidently distinguishes between spirit, soul, and body. We should bear in mind that his letter was addressed to the Church collectively, and not so much to individuals. We can be quite sure that the Apostle did not refer to individuals, for whatever interpretation we may put upon "soul and spirit," we are all agreed that the bodies of the members of the Church have gone into dust as have others. Again, the words "body, soul, and spirit" are in the singular not the plural number. St. Paul expresses his earnest desire that until the Lord's return the Church might be preserved entire, without schism, in the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace. In Acts 4: 32 we read that "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one SOUL"; and in Eph. 4: 4 the Apostle points out that there is one BODY and one SPIRIT. As in the creation of Adam, with the entrance of the breath of life, man became a living soul, an intelligent sentient being—so with the New Creation. Inspired with the spirit of the Lord—the Holy Spirit, the members of the Church, which is his body, should work in unity and harmony in doing the will of the Lord and witnessing to the truth of the Gospel.

Q.—Kindly explain Matt. 25: 20: "From him that hath NOT shall be taken away even that which he hath."

A.—This verse occurs in the Parable of the Talents, and if we supply the word increased after not, the thought is clear. During the Gospel age—that period between the going away and the coming again of Christ Jesus, His servants have been entrusted with the Gospel of the Kingdom. All professing Christians have obligations and responsibilities to tell out the "good tidings of great joy," according to their knowledge and opportunity. Those

who improve their talents, increase them, and become faithful to the light and privileges granted to them, will receive the "Well done" of their Master. All who neglect to use their talents for the blessing of others, will not have the Lord's approval. On the contrary, they will lose not only the light they once enjoyed, but also the reward of faithfulness. Let us then heed the exhortation of our Lord, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2: 10).

Q.—Would you kindly explain the statement "through faith in his blood" (Rom. 3: 25)?

A.—This phrase really expresses the basis of hope of future blessing for the whole human race, the Ransom sacrifice of Christ. The same thing is referred to when the Apostle speaks of "redemption through his blood," "peace through the blood," showing how the "Church"—the members of Christ—become the first recipients of the benefits which accrue from God's gracious provision in Christ "through his blood," "even the forgiveness of sins," and ultimately to bring the blessing to the remainder of mankind. Possibly the expression in your question may sound peculiar, but nevertheless it is a correct one, because in Scriptural usage under the Mosaic regime of sacrifices the blood shed always was indicative of life sacrificed. Our Lord Jesus thus was designated the Lamb of God (the Antitype) that taketh away the sin of the world. Of him we read that he poured out his soul unto death—in other words, his blood was shed; and this is the great fact in which our faith and hope centre, even "faith in his blood."

PILGRIM MINISTRY.

It has been arranged for Brother Main (one of the directors of the Society) to make a visit to the friends in N.S.W. and Queensland. Bro. Main will be prepared to explain the object of the work of the Society, while his purpose is chiefly to encourage all to stand fast in the faith and to grow in grace and in knowledge. We shall be glad to have word from all who would like to avail themselves of this service.

BIBLE STUDENTS' UNION CONVENTION.

The Melbourne Ecclesia will hold the usual convention in the Masonic Hall, Collins street, during Christmas week.

While the Convention proper will not commence until Saturday, December 28th, there will probably be some special arrangement on December 26th and 27th for the sake of visitors who may be in town by that time.

A very interesting programme is in prospect, the finale being for Wednesday, January 1st, 1919. Arrangements include opportunity of symbolising consecration by immersion in water. All desirous of taking advantage of this should notify the Secretary, c/o Bible Students' Tract Society, Temple Court, as early as possible.

Visiting friends also note that if they desire accommodation arranged for, they should send full particulars of requirements and enclose 2s. as a deposit for securing room.

BIBLE STUDENTS' UNION CLASSES.

- MELBOURNE, Masonic Hall, Collins-street.—Sundays, 3.15 and 6.45 p.m.
WILLIAMSTOWN (Vic.), Mechanics' Institute.—Sundays, 3.30 and 6.45 p.m.
SYDNEY, Rawson's Chambers, Room 95, Pitt-street (near Station).—Sundays, 3.15 and 6 p.m.
ROCKDALE (N.S.W.), McMillan's Hall, Station-street.—Sundays, 7 p.m.
ADELAIDE, Stott's Business College, Pirie-street.—Sundays, 3, and 6.30 p.m.
PERTH, Enquire Mr Broadbury, 17 Stanmore Street, Subiaco.

For classes in other places enquire of Bible Students' Tract Society, Temple Court, Melbourne.

Ribbon Book Marks, 4d each.

Post Cards, 10d per dozen.

Text Cards, Pamphlets etc.

Obtainable at Bible Students' Tract Society, Temple Court, Melbourne.

NEWS AND NOTES.

NEWS FROM AMERICA.

A letter from Brooklyn, N.Y., writes: I wish to assure you, dear Brother, that your message is very much appreciated, and our hearts are made glad to be assured of the Lord's providence and His assisting grace toward the dear friends in far-off Australia. It is especially gratifying to us to know that yourself, with others there, have already commenced a work, and that you are endeavouring to have your ministry and service along the line of that recommended by our pastor. The copies of your paper have been received, and we have looked over them with much interest and appreciation as well as approval, and doubt not that the rich blessing of the Lord will accompany your endeavours as you continue to labour and follow the Lord's leading from day to day as He may direct. You may be sure, dear Brother, that you will have our prayers to the end, that the faithful ones may be assisted to stand firm looking unto the Lord.

It is the purpose here to so organise that a work and ministry can be carried on exactly as intended by Brother Russell at the time of his death, and his teachings and writings will be strictly and most carefully adhered to. We hope to have copies of a paper ready in a few days, and a supply will be sent to you; it will explain the situation more fully than has been done in this letter. When the periodical is issued, we will endeavour to make such arrangements as you suggest in regard to supplying the friends in Australia.

THE WORK IN W.A. AND S.A.

Abundant evidence of divine guidance and blessing accompanied the recent pilgrim visits in the western States. It was a happy surprise to find that the majority of the friends in Perth stood firm in the trouble in which we have been so long rejoicing, and consequently rejected the

To Interested Readers.

Give copies of this Paper desired with important messages will be sent free on request, to

Where are the Dead, Weeping all Night, The First Resurrection, Battle of the Great Day.

Bible Students' Tract Society, Temple Court, Melbourne.