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Glad Tidings of Great Joy.

“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.” “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost. (Luke 2:10, 11; 19:10.)

Our confidence in Jesus Christ, that He was the sent of God the Redeemer, the Deliverer of His people, rests not merely, upon the testimony of the apostles in the New Testament records, wonderful and convincing as these testimonies are; they gain nine-tenths of their weight and importance from the fact that they evidence the fulfilment of promises, types and prophecies given by the Lord with more or less explicitness from time to time throughout the preceding 4000 years. He who does not discern something, at least, of the divine plan of the ages in connection with our Saviour, His birth, His three and one-half years’ ministry, His sacrificial death, His resurrection, His ascension, etc., fails to get the real strength of the divine revelation, designed by the Lord to be the firm foundation for His people’s confidence in Him, and in all the glorious things which He has promised He would yet accomplish through this great Saviour.

Note the original promise of the Saviour shortly after sin had wounded our first parents and brought them under divine sentence. (Gen. 3:15.) Note the promise made to Abraham respecting Messiah, that He should be of his posterity. (Gen. 22:18.) Notice the same to Jacob. (Gen. 28:14.) To David. (2 Sam. 7:12-16.) Through Isaiah the prophet, His coming and His greatness are foretold. (Isa. 9:6, 7; 11:1-9.) Daniel, the prophet, also refers to the importance of His work of making an end of sin, and bringing in everlasting righteousness, and thus sealing the visions and prophecies, which the Lord had just given respecting Him and the favour to come through Him. (Dan. 9:24.) We recall also how He was typified in Isaac, who was not only the heir of the promises made to Abraham, but who was also in a figure put to death and received again from the dead. We remember also the types and figures of the Mosaic arrangement, and how Moses himself was declared to be like unto the greater One to come after him.

Had the hopes of Israel been merely inventions to deceive the people, we may be sure that the deceiver would have been careful to have marked out some remarkable line of parentage for the coming Messiah—free from blemishes, scandals, etc., but this was not done; instead, the weaknesses of the flesh amongst our Lord’s progenitors are fearlessly noted. The New Testament writers are similarly candid, and make no hesitation in recording the genealogy. All of this is in full accord with the scriptural presentation of the matter; namely, that our Lord’s virtue, His sinlessness, His separateness from sinners, was not through the flesh, not through His mother, but through His Father, God.

According to the flesh, Jesus Christ took hold of the seed of Abraham, as the Apostle explains; but

through various circumstances He was indirectly related also to the outside world. All of this is interesting to us, but nothing to be compared to our still greater interest in the fact that our Lord Jesus, although born a Jew under the Law, and redeeming those who were under the Law, did more than this, in that his death as planned by the Father and accepted by Himself, was a propitiation “for the sins of the whole world.” He died as the ransom price for Adam and his sin, and thus purchased from condemnation, not only Adam, but his entire posterity involved through his transgression; hence, as the Apostle points out, “He is able to save (deliver) unto the uttermost all who come unto God through Him.” (Heb. 7:25.) Not only so, but our Lord’s circumstances of birth and early experiences in comparative poverty as a working man impress us with the thought that He is indeed able to sympathise with mankind in every station of life; having passed from the glory of the Father to the conditions of fallen humanity and back again, He is surely able to appreciate and to sympathise with all conditions and classes.

Our chief interest centres in the message which our heavenly Father sent us through the angels at the time they announced the birth of Jesus: “Fear not”—the angel understood well that through sin and degradation a fearful

apprehension comes over man when he finds himself in contact with spirit beings; he is apprehensive of certain further condemnation or punishment; his acquaintance with his fellow man in influence, authority and power, leads him to dread the still greater authority and power of the Almighty, lest it should be injurious to him. Only the true Christian, having the eyes of his understanding opened to appreciate the length and breadth and height and depth of the love of God, can have that perfect love toward the Heavenly Father which is built upon an intimate knowledge of His Word, and which casteth out all fear. We are reminded of the prophet’s words respecting the Lord’s people of to-day, “Their fear toward Me is taught by the precept of men.” (Isa. 29:13.) The Lord would have His people free from this fear, though not free from a proper reverence toward Him. •

What was the first angelic word
That the startled shepherds heard ?—

“Fear not !” Beloved, it conies to you
As a Christmas message most sweet and true,

As true for you as it was for them
In the lonely fields of Bethlehem ;

And as sweet to-day as it was that night,
When the glory dazzled their mortal sight.

The message continues, “I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.” How slow the Lord’s people have been to believe this message, and to accept the Saviour at His full worth! How prone they seem to be to suppose first of all that He was to be a Saviour merely for the Jews; or, secondly, a Saviour merely for a special elect class; or thirdly, a Saviour only for those who, under present darkness, ignorance, Prejudice, superstition and devilish influences, manifest a special love for righteousness! But how broad is the statement—great joy—for all people! Our faith is not broader than the positive declaration of the Scriptures, when we hold firmly that our God graciously has arranged that every member of our poor fallen race shall yet be blessed with a clear understanding, not only of his own weaknesses and imperfections through the fall, but also by a clear understanding of the great redemption price paid by the Saviour, and a share in the glorious opportunities thus secured, to return, if he will, back to full harmony with God, and to full ‘blessings and everlasting life. •

The angels did not declare that our Lord came to bring universal and everlasting salvation to all people;

but they did declare that the good message of joy, of privilege, love, hope, shall extend to all people. The explanation of this is that a Saviour had been born—a deliverer of the weak, the helpless, the dying, able to succor to the utmost all who would come to the Father through Him; able to open the blind eyes and to unstop the deaf ears that all may come to an appreciation of the goodness of God shining toward them in the face of the Lord Jesus.

The word Saviour, otherwise rendered Deliverer, signifies in the Syriac language, literally, Life-giver. What a wonderful thought is conveyed by that word! What is it that our poor, dying race needs? 'It needs deliverance from the sentence of death, and then it needs deliverance from death itself, into life, complete, abundant, and everlasting. Our Lord has already become our deliverer in the sense that He has settled our account with Justice. As a result of this work already done, and since the Church, which is the body of Christ, has followed in the footsteps of our Lord, and has about "filled up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ," (Col. 1:24), very shortly now, under the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet, the mystery of God will be finished—completed—and atonement for the sins of the world shall be proclaimed in a proclamation of full emancipation to all people. Good tidings of great joy it- will surely be! full of gracious opportunities for enlightenment, restitution and obedience, and for a full return to all that was lost by father Adam, including life in perfect degree—lasting life!

No wonder,- after this message had been delivered, the Lord -permitted an angel host to serenade the proclamation, and, incidentally, to prophesy also of the grand results yet to flow from the great work of redemption. which was then only beginning in the birth of the Redeemer ! Properly, the anthem begins with praise to Him that sitteth upon the throne, to Him who devised the great and wonderful plan of redemption, and who sent His Son, our willing Redeemer; glory to Him in the highest—in the highest strain of heart and voice, with fullest appreciation of Him as a Saviour ! Next came the consequences on earth; namely, peace—not such a peace as men might patch up between themselves and between nations and parties, and that under present conditions would very soon be scattered to the winds, but a peace with God, a peace which comes from a restoration to the race of the divine good will. It was because divine justice could not spare the guilty, that the sentence of death, the "curse," has borne down upon our race for now six thousand years. Under that divine sentence of death, the dying race has become impoverished, not only physically, but mentally and morally. Selfishness has become the rule, and, in its wake, have come all our selfish ambitions and pride and strife and vain-glory and money-love, which have caused so much of the trouble that mankind has experienced.

But now, glory to God in the highest! because peace has been established upon a firm foundation—the lifting of the curse through the payment of our penalty by the Lord's own arrangement ! As soon as the - body of Christ has suffered with the Head, the great antitypical day of atonement will be complete, and peace between God and man will be established, will be renewed, and as a consequence the Redeemer shall take to Himself His great power and reign for the purpose of blessing and uplifting those whom He purchased with His own precious blood. In their interest, it will be necessary that the great peace shall be introduced by the breaking in pieces of present institutions with the iron rod of the new Kingdom, as the vessel of a potter they shall be. crushed as henceforth useless; that in their stead may come the grander and perfect institutions of the Lord's Kingdom. He will wound to heal, to bless, to bring in peace on the basis of everlasting righteousness; for ultimately, He will destroy all those who, after being brought to a knowledge of the truth, will still love unrighteousness, and tend to the corruption of the earth. He will destroy them, not in anger, but in justice, in love, that an everlasting peace in full accord with that which is in heaven may prevail upon earth.

Wherever the story of God's redeeming love has gone, even though confused by various falsities, it has carried more or less of blessing with it—even to neglectful hearers, and not doers of the Word, it has brought blessing; and still more blessing to others who hear partly and obey partly; but its greatest blessing has been to the little flock, the royal priesthood, who, entering into the spirit of the divine

arrangement, have realised themselves justified through faith in the precious blood, and, in harmony with the invitation of the Lord, have gone forward, presenting themselves living sacrifices, that they might have fellowship with Christ in the sufferings of this present time, and also, by and by, in the Kingdom glories that shall follow. It is this class, chiefly, that is now rejoicing in a still fuller opening up of the divine Word. so long beclouded by the falsities coming down from the dark ages; it is this class that is chiefly now rejoicing in the discernment of the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the divine love and of the divine plan which has purchased the whole world and will, eventually, recover from present degradation all who, under the favourable conditions of the Millennial Kingdom, will develop the character which God demands of all who shall have eternal life—a love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity.

STAND FAST.

HOW many times do the scriptures admonish us to “stand fast”? “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong,” says Paul. (1 Cor. 16:13.) He also says to the Corinthian Church, “Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: For, by faith ye stand.” (2 Cor. 1:24.) Then again, “Only let your conversation (behaviour) be as it becometh the gospel of Christ; that whether I come and see you, or else be absent. I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel.” (Phil. 1:27.)

These admonitions, so necessary at that time, are much more necessary now. How easy it would be to drift with the tide and become weary and faint.

The Apostles were arrested for preaching Christ and healing a lame man at the temple. They were illiterate fishermen, unaccustomed to speaking before the learned, and we may be well amazed at their courage, and at the straightforward presentation of the Gospel given by St. Peter. It astonished the High Court too. They wished to arraign the Apostles, not for the good deed of healing the lame man, but rather for their preaching of Jesus. However, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, St. Peter wisely and properly drew attention to the fact that they were on trial really for the healing of the sick. Again he disowned any power on the part of himself and his companions; admitting that they were merely ordinary men, he credited the miracle entirely to Jesus.

What a lesson is here for all who would rev’ the Lord, as TI is ambassadors, as St. Paul said, preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ.” (2 Cor. 4:5.) How courageous were the Apostle’s words, “Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him cloth this man stand here before you whole.” St. Peter was not only preaching that Jesus was the Messiah, whom the Jews had long expected, but, additionally, he was declaring that the Sanhedrin had murdered the Messiah. It was the truth, and it was necessary to utter the truth. To have evaded the point would have shown fear.

Next, the Apostle quoted to them from the prophecy of David (Psa. 118:22), saying. “This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”

Perceiving the boldness of Peter and John, and noting that they were unlearned and ignorant, these leaders in Israel marvelled; and “took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” Of Jesus, it was also said, “How knoweth this man letters, having never learned.” (John 7:15.) They knew of His power with

the people through the spirit of the Lord, and of His straightforward presentation of the truth. They recognised these men as of the sane character, filled with Jesus' spirit.

To this day, this is true of the followers of Jesus. "God hath not given us the spirit of- fear, but of power, and of love, and a sound mind." The Lord's people should remember this point and should cultivate such a spirit, and be copies of the Lord Jesus, and of the faithful Apostles, so that all might take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus and have learned of Him.

As the Apostle indicates in his discourse, "There is none other name given among men whereby we must be saved." We must make a personal acceptance of Him as our Saviour. We must consecrate our all to follow in His steps faithfully, even unto death. On these conditions, we become His disciples; and having become His disciples, learners in the school of Christ, and having been begotten of the Holy Spirit, we are privileged to show forth more and more His praises, and to let our light shine before men, that they, seeing our good works and our likeness to the Master, may glorify God on our behalf.

The Sanhedrin were perplexed, as they perceived that the disciples had so strong a case, and had really turned the tables upon them, charging them before the people with being the murderers of the Son of God, the Messiah. As they looked at the man who had been healed, they perceived a great miracle, and they could say nothing. So they put forth the disciples from their midst, that they might discuss the case privately. They could not deny the miracle, and they were afraid of what it might lead to if talk of this kind about Jesus, and about their being His murderers, should spread amongst the people. They thought it best to let the disciples go, charging them not to preach any more in the name of Jesus. Then was shown the marvellous courage of the Apostles. They replied, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to harken unto you more than unto God, judge ye, for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." The Bible directs the followers of Jesus to be subject to the powers that be; but while seeking to be thus law-abiding in (very respect. Christians are to recognise that there is a still higher Ruler, and are to be subject to the worldly powers only in the absence of a contrary divine instruction. God had commanded the disciples through Jesus, that they should preach the Gospel. It was, therefore, the duty of the Apostles, as it is the duty of all the followers of Jesus, to make known the Gospel message wherever there are hearing ears, and not to fear what man may do.

The church.. young in faith, had been greatly distressed by the imprisonment of the disciples, and when they were released. a general meeting for rejoicing and praise to God was held, thanking the Lord for the courage given to the Apostles, for the promises of His Word, and for the miracle which led up to this. As a consequence, all were so encouraged that "they spake the Word of God with boldness"; and "with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all."

This text is properly an exhortation to all of God's people everywhere, to be faithful and loyal to God and His cause. Let us each apply it to ourselves. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong."

(To be continued.)

“DEAD UNTO SIN-ALIVE UNTO GOD.”

Romans 6:11.

I count myself, O Saviour, dead with Thee!
By faith I also in Thy death have died:
Shall sin still have dominion over me
The sin which on Thy Cross was crucified

Thy Cross and mine, since I, by faith, was
One With Thee in condemnation, in the day
When God the Father made His willing Son
A sacrifice to put my sin away ?

I count Thee, O my Lord, alive in me!
I know as surely as in Thee I died,
So surely Thou Thyself hast risen in me!
And ever more Thou wilt in me abide.

And all the wondrous graces which are Thine
The glorious gifts which God in Thee has stored—
Come in Thy coming and with Thee are mine,
Since I am One with Thee, my risen Lord!

E.H.D.

MRS. BESANT'S PROTEGE.

It is stated in “Das Evangelische Deutschland” that Dr. Annie Besant's protege, Krishnamurti, who was to be the new Christ or Star in the East, has taken up film work in America. and regards himself no longer as the spiritual leader of the Theosophical movement.

PEOPLES PAPER.

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PRINCIPAL A. E. Garvie, D.D., evidently realises that there is something wrong with the church. He says, "It is a constant regret and trial to the forward-looking men, who do, passionately, desire to win the world for Christ through the church, that there are not only so great obstacles in the world, but also, so great hindrances in the churches themselves." . . . "It is painful for any Christian believer to disturb the beliefs of another, and so cause him grief. But, just as a serious operation may be imperative to preserve an imperilled life, so is it necessary for the church to take the risks and pay the costs of making herself fit for her tasks." . . . "There must be much more thinking done, and thinking so free of the traditions and prejudices of the past, that the church's intelligence shall be equal to the necessities to be met and the opportunities which offer. And this thinking will lead to recognition of how much needs to be revised and adjusted to the new situation in preaching, worship and service, if the church again to exercise the influence and command the authority in the world, which was once her portion, and which the treasures of truth and grace entrusted to her justify her in expecting and qualify her for attaining."

More thinking is necessary, and yet there are great. ----- always thinking, but it is thinking "free from traditions and prejudices" that is necessary, and it must be thinking under the guidance of God's Holy spirit and reverence for His word. Such unbiassed, unselfish, disinterested thinking, should lead to the discarding of all unscriptural doctrines, forms and ceremonies, and human traditions, and the adoption of only the beautiful: yet profound teachings and simple methods of Christ and the Apostles. "Thy Word has still its ancient power." It needs no secular power, it needs no influences of court or strength of earthly arms. If the Word is preached in faithfulness, if the gospel message be proclaimed in its simplicity, "It shall not return unto Me void; it shall accomplish that whereto it was sent." (Isaiah 55:11.)

There is nothing wrong with the Gospel of Christ. The message of the Bible is all right, and sufficient. "It is the power of God unto Salvation." (Rom. 1:16) The trouble is that men did much thinking on wrong lines. They thought of how to gain power over the minds of men, and so all sorts of mysteries were concocted, and "doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Pet. 2:1). The church gradually gained the worldly power and influence, which the doctor thinks she was justified in expecting, but which the Apostle Paul, as also the writer of the Apocalypse, speak of as the great "falling away," or the unfaithful woman.

In our thinking upon this matter, it is not only necessary to return to the pureness of teachings and simplicity of the faith, but also to search out the purpose Divinely intended in sending the Gospel to the Gentiles during this age. Whatever that purpose is, depend upon it, it is being accomplished, whether it be in accord with the teachings of the churches, or our own particular ambitions or thoughts or not.

What a joy, what blessing, there would be for all who would meet apart from bias and prejudice, just to search out the truth as it is in Jesus concerning the Gospel message, what it is necessary to preach, and what should be expected as a result of such proclamation.

It is because of the wrong thought that it was the church's mission to convert the world during this Gospel age, that there is the seeming defeat of the Gospel. The New Testament clearly shows that the object during this time is only.

"To take out a people for God's name," to choose a "little flock to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom"; to select a Bride class, which shall reign with Christ in His Kingdom. When the church has been perfected and glorified with her Lord, then Christ's Kingdom will be set up. Grace and truth will have sanctified those accounted worthy to "be joint heirs with Christ," and qualified them to be "kings and priests unto God," and for the of all the families of the earth. (Romans 8:1; 1:6; 1 Pet. 2:9; Galatians 3:16 and 29.) It was the mistake of the early church that they wanted to "reign before the time." Only by walking the humble narrow way of the Cross, "despised and rejected of men," can "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," be won.

It will be no earthly organised church that will win the world for Christ. Christ has “all power in heaven and in earth,” and, in His own time, will command obedience, and “unto Him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess.” The Gospel, however, is fast accomplishing the mission on which it was sent. “Preach the Gospel in all the world for a witness.” Nothing in the New Testament suggests any thought of the church winning the world or gaining power to exercise influence and command authority in the world. The purpose is very plainly stated to be simply the selecting of a people for God’s name, and the Gospel came to the Gentiles to fill up the number of God’s elect, which might, had the Jewish nation accepted Christ, have been taken entirely from that nation. (Acts. 15:14-17; Rom. 11:25-27.)

Dr. Garvie truly said, “It is painful for any Christian believer to disturb the beliefs of another, and so cause him grief.” Such is Christian spirit, and well would it have been, had all who have criticised their brethren in the faith, had more of such spirit. How much has been done in the denunciatory spirit, as though glorying in fault-finding and in a feeling of superiority. “Knowledge puffeth up” has been more frequently demonstrated. The true Christian who comes to a clearer knowledge of Bible truths and the Divine purposes, rather than feeling “puffed up,” should realise the favour bestowed upon him, and endeavour to use his best powers of mind and heart, in humbly transmitting the rays of light to others, who may be hungering for the knowledge of the truth. Divine truth upon spiritual matters has not reached anyone because he or she was clever; it comes only by having yielded ourselves to God, and having received Holy ‘by which alone, His Word can be interpreted.

If this is ever borne in mind, how much more tenderly will these “operations” of breaking up the mists of error and confusion of creeds and dogmas be undertaken.

There are some who seem to take pleasure in seeing the discomfiture of those whom they attack. It is the natural mind that would do so. The spiritual mind has confidence in simply ‘presenting the scriptural view of matters, kindly and prayerfully seeking to gain—not to defeat—the hearer, and recognising that all glory in any success is to the Lord, whose we are, and whom we serve, and who has provided us with “the weapons of our warfare, which are not carnal, but are mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds.” (2 Cor. 10:4.)

The carnally minded way of bluntly denouncing and smiting with ridicule, may break down the error, and leave the person stranded in doubt and unbelief. ‘The true soldier of Jesus Christ will seek rather to gain the ear and build up in true faith and doctrine, and it is in such results that there is the real joy of service.

CLASS ADDRESS.

Word is to hand from our Sydney friends that their class meeting room is now number 523 (Burn’s Club Room), 5th floor, Rawson Chambers, Pitt Street. Studies are held on Sunday afternoons and evenings, at 3.30 and 6.30 p.m.

CHRISTMAS CONVENTION.

Having finally decided that the days of the Convention season will comprise Thursday (Christmas Day), Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, December 25 to 28 inclusive, the Melbourne Friends have now drawn up their Convention syllabus, including what should be very helpful and interesting Bible studies, addresses, etc., and in which some of the visiting Brethren will take part. The season proper will include Thursday, Friday and Sunday, with afternoon and evening sessions, while the Saturday afternoon will take the form of an outdoor gathering at Heidelberg, when each and all can look forward to a happy, enjoyable, and profitable outing. On Saturday morning (if necessary) a baptism service will be arranged for any of the brethren desiring to symbolise. Tea will be provided each day, and it is hoped that as many as possible of the Friends from other parts will avail themselves of this opportunity of fellowshipping at convention this year with those of like precious faith, so that all may be further encouraged, exhorted, strengthened, and made to rejoice together, especially in these latter days.

The meetings will be held at Molesworth Chambers, 450 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, and any desiring further particulars. or accommodation are asked to communicate with the Secretary, Berean Biblical Institute, National Bank Chambers, Hawthorn, E.2., Melbourne.

“All God’s angels come to us disguised,

Sorrow and sickness, poverty and death,
One after other left their frowning masks,
And we beheld the seraph’s face beneath,
All radiant with the glory and the calm
Of having looked upon the face of God.”

—Selected.

Correspondence

Dear Brethren,

Recently, a book, "God's Eonian Purpose," came my way. It introduces the Concordant Version. While we appreciate a desire to clarify the Scriptures, we cannot endorse the practice of reading into the Scriptures the purport of one's thoughts, or, as we remark with secular things, making the wish father of the thought.

Just now, we find all freak religions ready with a cure-all. If we have once really understood Jehovah's plan, we must be aware that the pivot on which it turns or its centre feature is the Ransom sacrifice.

If we apply this test to anything but Jehovah's plan, that is presented to us, we shall find that the Ransom sacrifice is either evaded or regulated to be a nonessential feature, instead of being the paramount feature.

And so with this presentation, we perceive that while we understand that the world has been redeemed by the sacrificial death of God's Son, they would have us understand that the world has been justified by His death, without any action on their individual part. Romans 3:28; 5:1; Galatians 2:16; 3:24, all show we must use our wills and signify our faith. Acts 13:39 tells us the same thing.

It seems quite easy to fail to remember that we are free-will agents. Jehovah gives us the opportunity, but we must exercise our own wills, and will either to live or die.

Some are not capable of exercising their wills, just so, and, at present, are not responsible, and we rejoice in Isaiah 35:8 for them.

If we would just strive to become clear on the fundamentals of the plan, these subterfuges would not detract us. We do well to remember that these earnest folk, not having comprehended the plan, are not responsible as we are, who claim to have understood it.

With the fundamental error as above, the book is replete with many others as a consequence, and, as the sects hopelessly confuse the texts referring to the church and the world, so does this presentation confuse the spiritual and earthly phases of God's plan.

We do not hope to convince these people of Jehovah's plan, as they apparently have never comprehended it, but we humbly trust that aspiring saints will remember, that as such we have a responsibility to be fully persuaded in our own minds, and that we cannot put on the whole armour of God, unless we experience 2 Tim. 1:12. Again, in 1 Cor. 9:26, .27, Paul reveals that he was well aware that it was possible to fall from grace. Hebrews 6 also warns us to this effect.

I gather from this book that they consider these punishments a banishment for a period of time, with an eventual reconciliation. This does not harmonise the operation of Jehovah's characteristics, Justice first, then Wisdom, Love and Power. When refuting this teaching, Brother Russel, among other things, quoted Acts 3:23. How much more comprehensive and satisfying does the philosophy of the Plan appeal to us.

The claim is that the Concordant version is a word for word rendering of the Greek in translation, considering a much paraphrased translation, and remember it is only one of others. Mr. Benjamin Wilson has given us the Diaglott, a word for word translation of the New Testament, and its conclusions are at variance with the Concordant version.

Romans 16:17 and Hebrews 13:9 need no comment. Christian love, Brother.—From yours, humbly,

Question Box.

Question Well day should we keep as the Sabbath?

Answer ..—"We who have believed do enter into rest," not a ceremonial Sabbath once a week. "Let us, therefore, fear lest a promise being left us of entering into rest any of us should seem to come short of it." Only as we cease from our own works, "as God did from his," shall we be able to "rest in the finished work of Christ." If we would try to justify ourselves by good works, or by keeping a literal seventh day, we shall fail to enter into the real rest of faith. When we, as followers of Christ, consecrate ourselves to God, we devote, not only part of our belongings, talents, time, etc., but, "all my days and all my hours."

The ceremonial seventh day Sabbath of Israel was then but a type or a shadow of good things to come, but the reality is of Christ—the real Sabbath of faith. (Col. 2:14-17.)

There is no command that the followers of Christ observe the seventh day, but our Lord arose from the tomb on the first day of the week and appeared to His disciples on that day, and it seemed generally the first day of the week that He appeared afterwards. Thus it became a practice for the Lord's people to meet for prayer and fellowship on the first day. It is thus called "The Lord's Day."

It seemed to be the Lord's intention thus to make it evident that an entirely new dispensation had commenced, that the Law Covenant for the selection of a house of servants under Moses (Gal. 4) had closed, passed away, and that a new age for the selection of a house of sons under truth and grace had begun.

While, therefore, there is no Scriptural command that the Christian observe any particular day, it is, nevertheless, a good providence that the laws of the land provide one day a week when secular work may cease, and thus leave an opportunity for all of like precious faith to assemble in Christian fellowship.

Question:—Should the Mosaic Laws respecting clean and unclean meats still be observed?

Answer—As has been stated above, the church is being dealt with, "not under Law, but under grace," not as "a house of servants under Moses, but as a house of sons under Christ." (Heb. 3:5, 6.) Paul can, therefore, say both respecting the Sabbath and regarding meats, "Let no man judge you," in these things. (Col. 2:16.)

Yet, while we are not under command in the matter, we may learn much wisdom and guidance from the divine arrangements for Israel under the Law Covenant. "The Lord will not withhold from the righteous any good thing," and we may be sure that, as well as containing typical lessons, there were good health reasons for the withholding from the Jews certain meats and certain fishes. Let every man be persuaded in his own mind, and act according to conscience. *Question:—Is there anything in God's Law forbidding the eating of meat on Friday, or is it only one of the Roman church's many errors?*

Answer. No, there is no divine command respecting the keeping of Friday as a fast day. While there were fastings at times commanded under the Mosaic Law, there is no command respecting such matters for the Christian church. With the development of Papacy, it seemed to be part of the scheme of subjugating the laity to formulate all kinds of forms and ceremonies, and to make religion mysterious.

What is needed to-day is a return to the simplicity of the faith, and the practice of Apostolic days. Forms and ceremonies and man-made mysteries are all a hindrance to true Christianity. The Law Covenant and its ceremonies passed away when "Christ made an end to the Law, nailing it to the cross." "The Law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ."

South Africa's Native Problem: The Clash of Colour.

THE most formidable of all the political problems which loom in the future," writes Sir Herbert Samuel in "The Spectator," "is the relation of the coloured races to the white. The leaders of the Asiatic and African peoples are no longer naively ignorant of the nature, of the strength and the weakness, of European civilisation. Within the last half century, easier communications and widespread education have worked a great change. It is as though a curtain had been drawn up. They see the world as it is."

"If," he says, "they were to have reason to think that the British Empire is not, as it has claimed, a friend seeking to help them, its Government a trustee acting in their best interests, its commerce striving, on equal terms with the rest of the world, to serve their needs; let them see the British nation as a distant ruler, gaining power and holding it in order to exploit their trade; let them have reason to contrast their own conditions with those of other territories under the mandatory system where commercial privileges are forbidden, then the moral foundations of the Empire, more important than the economic, will be undermined; the principles on which it has been built and by which it has flourished, so different from those of any Empire of the past, will have been renounced."—(Christian World.)

South Africa, like other parts of this selfish sin-cursed earth, needs the Kingdom, and the Kingdom only will solve its difficulties. The general attitude of the white intruders to dark Africa is unchristian. What is needed here, as elsewhere, to bring peace and happiness is the application of the Golden Rule. The sentiment, particularly in the Dutch, is that the native must be kept down. They know that as education and Bible truths are received by the natives that the result must be a perception of justice and liberty, which will lead to the natives claiming their human rights. This will mean that their labour will no more be exploited and taken ad-vantage of. The natives of South Africa, in their native condition (particularly the Zulus), are a noble race capable of all that a white man can do, if given proper opportunity of development. For generations untold, they have been left in ignorance of the "only name" and only power that will or can lift man out of degradation and bring an intelligence of the Creator's purpose, yet, notwithstanding that fact, the moral standard has been equal to and probably higher than European civilisation.

The Zulu is naturally a gentleman and trustworthy. Those, however, who have come in contact with the white man have imbibed his evil ways, and can be as little trusted. There are good and bad natives as there are good and bad white men, but probably a larger proportion of whites are bad than of the natives. There are those who blame the Missionaries, and not without some reason. It would seem to be a fact that, even those who have gone to these foreign lands, ostensibly to suffer hardship for the Gospel's sake, have lived in luxury, exploiting native labour for a few shillings a month, on plantations, by which they have made considerable money. The inconsistency of these professing to be followers of Him who died for all, "Jew or gentile, bond or free," and "had not where to lay His head," is what has done so much harm, not only in Africa and India, but in the home lands also. What is needed to-day is genuine faith, producing works in accordance therewith. That should be the attitude of true followers of Christ, walking as He walked, talking as He talked, seeking to spend and be spent in His cause, adorning the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Then, too, let all churchianity cease, all the doctrines of the dark ages pass, all the dogmas and creeds of man depart, and let the pure word of God in its simplicity, yet depth, be brought to these people, how beautiful would be the effect. The Dutch, who now rule South Africa, are a religious people, but it would seem very hypocritical. "They will quickly refer to the curse on Ham and interpret it to mean that the natives, descendants of Ham, are destined by God to be hewers of wood and drawers of water for the white man. They ignore the fact that it is only until the third or fourth generation that God has said He would inflict punishment of the fathers upon their children, and that Christ died for every man, and that, as "all nations are of one blood," so there is no respect of person with God.

As indicating the Dutch attitude, we quote the words of a young Dutch Judge, who said; “We do not believe in the right of the native to rise to our level; we are passing a few laws to ameliorate the native position, but that is only to keep Britain and the League of Nations quiet; we are fighting to keep the native in his place, but we know we are fighting a losing battle.”

Well would it be if the Europeans of South Africa were to take advice of our Lord, when He said to the Jews who were so soon to lose the divine favour, and fettered by the Gentile powers: “Make friends unto yourselves with the mammon of unrighteousness.” That would mean that while they still have the power, they should treat the natives justly, firmly, kindly, as fellow beings.

There are many who say, if you treat the native kindly, he will despise you and take advantage. White men will do the same, of which there are many experiences, but kindness can be dealt out with dignity, and we have personally tested natives along this line, going out of our way to show a kindness, and in no case did we have anything but pleasant results and received well-expressed appreciation.

While there have been Honaries and Mission Stations which have, no doubt, done more harm than good, yet, as in the past, there are still to-day those earnestly striving to do good and bring to the natives of Africa the glad message of life and truth and liberty. The British and Foreign Bible Society has surely done a great work in printing the Bible in the native languages. The American Mission Board is also doing good work in educating and teaching useful trades, and there are schools for teaching reading and writing. We visited several of these with native teachers, and it was a pleasure to see the work going on. The native seems to be a plodder, and often, though able to read very slowly, he will plod through. The “Christian World” quotes Miss Margaret Wrong respecting Africa’s need of Christian literature, as saying. “We are teaching a great number of people to read and creating in them a mental hunger. but we are failing to provide them with anything with which to satisfy that hunger. A good book is a very cheap form of a missionary. In these days of increasing literacy, few needs are more urgent.”

It is a pleasure to know that, through the sacrifice of some of our readers, a pamphlet has been published, which, anyway, may be a morsel to hem in the great need—a little to help along the way until the day breaks, bringing the pure gospel in its fulness and beauty to these and all earth’s groaning creation, when, “no one will any more need to say to his neighbour. know the Lord, for all shall know Him from the least unto the greatest.”

The following letter, just received from South Africa, written by a Zulu to one of the friends who had placed the pamphlet into his hands, shows good appreciation, and that a blessing has been received:

Dear Sir.

I thank you very much for the copies about Bible that we get presently.

The fact is this, the Bible wholly is very hard to understand, and thus explained it's much easier. And if I can keep in touch with these copies I would be very much pleased.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully, J. M.

In such a world as this, with such ugly possibilities hanging over us all, there is but one anchor which will hold, and that is utter trust in God.

WALL TEXTS, CARDS, ETC.

In addition to the usual wall cards, a supply of the motto text card, "My Morning Resolve," bearing the text Psa. 116:12-14, and vows, is expected shortly from the printers.

These are very nice for the home, as it is helpful to have the vows of consecration to the Lord continually before the mind; and are available in two colours, each with gold and blue lettering, 10 x 12 inches, at 7d. each, or 3.5. per half-dozen posted. (The packing and postage would be less if friends desiring these would please combine their orders wherever convenient.)

A nice line of cards (postcard size), with appropriate verses on truth teachings, is also now in stock for Christmas and other use; assorted in colours, at 9d. per half-dozen, or 1s. 4d. per dozen, posted.

Bookmarks of silk ribbon are in various colours with Scripture texts and verses at 6d. each, or 2s. 6d. per half-dozen posted.

BIBLE STUDY AIDS.

For those of the friends who may wish to use the truth literature for presents over the Christmas season, supplies are in hand of the six volumes of "Studies in the Scriptures"; "The Divine Plan of the Ages" (the first volume of the set), and "Foregleams of the Golden Age," nicely bound in blue cloth with gold lettering; the volumes on Revelation, Daniel, and "Desolations of the Sanctuary," and the booklets, "Some of the Parables," "Tabernacle Shadows," "God's Covenants," "Christ's Return," etc. The children are provided for with the helpful little Xmas book, "God's Best Gift," and the "Daily Heavenly Manna" has a nice binding and contains birthday recording pages.

Free tracts and back issues of the "People's Paper" are made available to all who can make good use of them, and desire to cooperate in the work of extending the truth message to others who have ears to hear.

Give us grace, O Lord, to work while it is day, fulfilling diligently and patiently whatever duty Thou appointest us; doing small things in the day of small things, and great labours if Thou summon us to any; rising and working, sitting still and suffering, according to Thy Word.

—C.R.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS.

“Thou hast received gifts for men.” (Psa. 68:18.)

Christmas gifts for thee, Fair and free!
Precious things from the heavenly store,
Filling thy casket more and more;
Golden love in divinest chain,
That never can be untwined again;
Silvery carols of joy that swell
Sweetest of all in the heart's love cell;
Pearls of peace that were sought for thee

In the terrible depths of a fiery sea;
Diamond promises sparkling bright
Flashing in farthest reaching light.
Christmas gifts for thee,
Grand and free!

Christmas gifts from the king of love,
Brought from His royal home above;
Brought to thee in the far off land,
Brought to thee by His own dear hand.
Promises held by Christ for thee,
Peace as a flowing river free,
Joy that in His own joy must live,
And love that Infinite love can give,
Surely thy heart of hearts uplifts
Carols of praise for such Christmas gifts.

F. R. H.