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God's Plan for the Salvation of Mankind.

THE careful and reverent student of the sacred Scriptures will find, in the light now clue to the household of faith, that the Word of God presents a complete and systematic plan for the salvation and development of the human race, which for ages has bent in operation, which, tip to the present time, has been a success in its gradual development, and which in due time will be gloriously completed. The past six thousand years of human history have been necessary to work out that plan to its present degree of development, and one thousand years more will witness its full consummation in the restitution of every willing member of the race to the original likeness of God, and their establishment in righteousness, with the eternal ages of glory and blessing before them.

CHRIST 'THE CENTRE OF THE PLAN.

Such is the scope of God's plan which He formed before the foundation of the world, to be wrought out in Christ, who is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, the First and the Last of Jehovah's direct creation—His only begotten Son—Rev. 1:8-10; John 1:1; Col. 1:13. "By Him were all things made, and without Him was not anything made that was made." "He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. By Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible; whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." (John 1:13; Col. 1:15-17.) In Him also "we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins."—Col. 1:14.

God, having thus honoured His Son by making Him His instrument or agent for the accomplishment of all His grand designs, declared to men: "This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." He "bath exalted Him to lie a Prince and a Saviour," and "would have all men honour the Son (as the Father's agent and representative) even as they honour the Father." (Matt. 17:5; Acts 5:31; John 5:23.) Nor does the Son claim higher honour than to be the Father's agent and messenger, "the messenger of the (Jehovah's) covenant" (Mal. 3:1); for He says: "I came not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me," and "My Father is greater than I." (John 6:38; 5:30; 1:30; 4:34; 14:28.) To us, as to the Apostle, "there is one God, the Father, of Whom are all things; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things; and we by him."—1. Cor. 8:6.

MAN IN GOD'S IMAGE.

After the creation of angels came the creation of man, a being adapted to live on the earth, and to be its lord and king. as well as the angels, was created in the divine image—that is, with faculties of reason, conscience, etc., capable of discerning right and wrong. Man, as king of earth, and perfect, as created, was only "a little lower than the angels" (Heb. 2:7. 9), and that little consisted in his being limited by his nature to the earth, while the angelic nature, being spiritual, has a wider range for observation and hence a broader plane for reasoning. To be an image of God implies freedom of choice or will with respect to one's own conduct. With such freedom man was originally endowed by his Creator, and the alternatives of good and evil were placed before him as a necessity to his trial for lasting life, though not without warning on God's part as to the blessed results of righteousness and the baneful results of evil. On account of man's inexperience, implicit obedience to God's will was required of him for his safety and protection, as well as for a test of his loyalty to his rightful Lord and Sovereign. Nevertheless, God, by divine intuition, foresaw the course that Adam would take and the fall of the whole race with him into death, and also the lessons which that experience with sin and death might be overruled to teach them when, in due time, through the merit of Christ's sacrifice. He would grant them remission of sins upon their repentance and turn to righteousness. He, therefore, determined to let man take his

chosen course, and to inflict on him its just penalty, and then, in due time, to deliver him from it with a great salvation.

GOD'S FOREKNOWLEDGE GUIDED.

God foresaw that, even with good intentions, man's limited knowledge and experience would continually offer temptations to doubt the wisdom of divine arrangements, if not to disobey them; He, therefore, embraced this opportunity to convey to all of His creatures, as well as to man, a fuller conception of Himself, in order that they might the more fully and heartily worship and obey Him. (1; a revelation and illustration of His attributes—Justice, Wisdom, Power, and Love—God placed His human Son in His own image—perfect though inexperienced, and but slightly informed respecting His Creator's attributes —on trial, in order that He might gain a valuable experience, yet foreknowing that although in every respect fairly tried, he would, in the use of his own free will, fall into sin. But God did not purpose to abandon His disobedient and death-deserving creature to eternal ruin, but provided a way of redemption whereby He might be just and yet the justifier of the truly penitent and believing (Rom. 3:26), so that the painful experience gained under the reign of sin and death might eventually, under this overruling influence of divine providence, serve the more firmly to establish them in righteousness and willing loyalty to God.

The trial in Eden was merely a test of obedience, or loyalty to God. The fruit of the forbidden tree was good (for all the trees of the garden were good) and was desirable to make one wise; and had they proved their -loyalty to God by obedience, probably the restriction would in due time have been removed. Knowledge is a blessing only to those who are subject to the divine will. This, God had arranged that man should acquire by experience, and angels by example. The penalty of man's disobedience was death—"In the day that thou eatest thereof, dying, thou shalt die." The penalty was fulfilled, to the letter; the dying began as soon as the penalty was pronounced, when they were cast out of Eden and restrained from eating its life-sustaining fruits; and it was completed within the thousand-year day, as predicted. (2 Pet. 3:8.) The penalty, death, being gradually and not suddenly inflicted, left the condemned pair free to propagate their species, yet subject to the weakness and all the penalty under which they themselves groaned.

THE FALL OF MAN.

Thus, by one man's disobedience, sin entered into the world, and death by (as a result of) sin; and thus death passed upon all men, because all are sinners and imperfect by heredity.—Rom. 5:12.

Sin, and death its penalty, by thus gaining control of Adam, controlled the world, and reigned from Adam to Moses—with but few divine promises, even, to illuminate the dark way. Then "the law came by Moses," offering lasting life to anyone who would observe it in every particular. But in their fallen condition none of the condemned race was able to obey it, and by it to gain the reward of life. As God had designed, however, the law did serve a purpose; it served to show the helplessness of man for his own justification; and it served to point out, as from another than the corrupt and condemned seed of Adam, the holy, harmless undefiled Lamb of God, whose sacrifice, as Adam's substitute or Redeemer, satisfied the claims of justice, bought the world from the slavery of sin and death, and made possible the gospel offer of forgiveness and lasting life, not through our righteousness in keeping God's law (which is impossible by reason of the weakness of the flesh), but by our acceptance of Christ as our Master, and of his ransom- sacrifice as the satisfaction for our sins before God.

DIVINE TIMES AND SEASONS.

It might be supposed that the work of blessing the world should have begun at once when the sacrifice for sin was accepted, by the Father, as signified by the giving of the spirit of adoption at Pentecost; but not so. Another feature of the divine plan had first to be accomplished, viz.: The selection and development of the Church to lie joint heirs with Christ in His glory and kingdom and work of blessing the world. This was from the beginning a part of the divine plan; and, therefore, the glorious reign and work of blessing the world could not begin at Christ's resurrection, nor at Pentecost, but had to be delayed until the selection of all its tried and faithful members could be accomplished. Or, to state it otherwise, the Father's appointed time for blessing the world is during the seventh thousand year, and had it not been for His purpose to select the Church, the "bride" or "body" of Christ, to share with Him in the work of blessing the race, there need not have been two advents of our Lord. One would have been sufficient; for He could have come now, in the end of the sixth thousand years, could have redeemed all and at once begun the great work of blessing and restoring mankind. He came to redeem the world previous to the appointed time of blessing, so as to leave time, before that day, for the selection of His bride from among the redeemed race.

As the occasion of man's fall became God's opportunity for exhibiting to all His creatures His wonderful character from every standpoint—His justice, His Wisdom, His Power and His Love—so it also became an opportunity for the testing in all parts of: His only begotten Son, preparatory to His yet higher exaltation (Phil. 2:8-10) to the Divine nature, with all which that implies of glory, honour and immortality. and of position next to the Father, that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. And the same occasion, as prearranged of God, also makes possible the calling,

selection and trial of the Gospel Church, now soon to be completed and made joint-inheritors, with our Lord and Saviour, of glory, honour and immortality, and like Him to be exalted far above men and angels, even to the Divine nature.— 2 Pet. 1:14.

REVEALING THE VINE CHARACTER.

Only the justice of God's character has yet been made manifest to the world, and much of its glory is sadly beclouded by human tradition, which falsely declares the wages of sin to be eternal torment instead of "everlasting destruction." God's love for His creatures, the wisdom of His plan of salvation, and His power to save, are as yet but partially revealed, and even distortedly seen by but few indeed. God's justice has been revealed to all for the past six thousand years in the reign of death, the penalty which He prescribed for sin. God's love began to be revealed at Christ's first advent, but, not seeing all of the plan, few rightly appreciated the love. Nevertheless, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only Begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him (I John:9.) The wisdom of the Lord's plan will not be appreciated until the Sun of Righteousness has arisen, revealing those features of His plan which will bring blessings to all the billions which His justice condemned, and which His love redeemed. But the power of God will not be seen in its fulness until well on in the Millennial Day. Although partially revealed in the work of creation, the grandest and fullest exhibition remains to be shown in the resurrection from death of those redeemed ones who, accepting of the precious provisions of His love, bow in glad submission to all His just requirements,

It is a mistake made by many to suppose that Jehovah's justice and His love are ever in conflict with each other.

Both are perfect—His love never desires or attempts what His justice does not endorse; His justice and His love must both approve every act for which His power is exercised. With men, because of lack of wisdom and power, love and justice often conflict. Man's love often has gracious designs which he has not the wisdom or power to accomplish except by violating justice. We must gauge our views by the infinite and stay close to the revelation He makes of His plans, not seeking to make plans of our own for God. God's plan, when early seen, fully vindicates His justice as well as His love. The plan of redemption devised by divine wisdom is the essence of unfathomable love based upon uncompromising justice, and will be fully accomplished by divine power. The first act of God's love was to provide a ransom for Adam, and thus for all his race, since it was by his transgression that all fell into sin and death. Until the ransom was given nothing was done in the way of saving the world; promises and types of coming salvation were made, but nothing more could be done. God had rendered a just sentence, and the penalty could not be set aside; it had to be met. Before Adam and his family could be released from the death sentence by a resurrection, the life of another man not under the sentence had to be paid as its corresponding price, that God might be just in justifying and accepting back to harmony and life all who believe in Jesus and turn unto God in His name. (Acts 4:12.) And having accepted Christ as the ransom of all such, the Apostle assures us that now "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—I. John:9.

RECONCILIATION FOR BELIEVERS.

Thus we see, from God's own declaration, that since Christ died for our sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, or rather, since He ascended up on high, and there appearing in the presence of God on our behalf presented the price of our redemption and became Lord of all, of both the living and the dead, there is no longer any legal hindrance in the way of the return of believers to fellowship with God, and to all the blessings and privileges lost under the penalty of the first transgression. The only difficulties remaining are on man's part. In his fallen condition his mind is sick as well as his body. He inclines to believe falsely, and is disinclined to believe in so great a salvation, such "good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people." Besides, he is weak through the fall, and does those things which he often does not at heart approve, and leaves undone much that at heart he really desires to do, and there is no help in himself. Divine assistance in overcoming sins and tendencies must reach him or else the cancellation of past sin and opportunity for reconciliation will be a valueless offer.

THE CHURCH IN GLORY.

This necessity, which we recognise, is fully met in those features of the Divine plan which are yet to be fulfilled.

He who redeemed all is appointed to be both King and Judge of all; for God "hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained," Jesus Christ. (Acts 17:31.) That is, He will righteously grant the world a new, individual trial for eternal life, having cancelled the sentence of the first trial by the propitiatory sacrifice of His Son. ^

And the redeemed, tried and glorified Church, the faithful bride of Christ, is to share with her Lord in this great work, as kings and priests and judges. (Rev. 5:10; I. Cor. 6:2, 3.) As kings they will rule the world in righteousness, enforcing

and establishing order and justice and truth; as priests they will teach the people, and through the merit of the one sacrifice for sins forgive the penitent, and cleanse and help them out of their weaknesses—mental, moral, and physical; as judges they will judge of the measure of the guilt of all in respect to their course in the future as well as in their past lives, judging not by the hearing of the ear, nor by the sight of the eye, but by an infallible judgment for which they will be abundantly qualified by their exaltation to the Divine nature.

While the promise of God to the Church is a change of nature from human to divine, to be effected at the second advent of her lord, as the completion of His resurrection—the first resurrection (2 Peter 1:4; I. Cor. 15:20-53; Phil. 3:10-11; Rev. 20:6)—the provision of God's plans for the world at large is quite different, viz., a "restitution" or restoration to all the grand qualities and powers of the human nature (an earthly likeness of the divine), now so sadly blurred and defaced by the six thousand years of slavery to sin and death.

THE WORLD'S BLESSING.

Rightly to appreciate human restitution, it must be remembered that every excellent quality exhibited among men is but an imperfect exhibition of what belongs to each perfect man, whether it be logical acuteness, mathematical precision, aesthetic taste, art, wit, eloquence, poetic imagination, music, or any other intellectual grace or moral refinement; and that these, to a higher degree than we have ever seen them exhibited by any fallen men, will, in the process of restitution, become, as at first designed by the Creator, the endowments of each obedient member of the human family. With the restitution of perfect mental and moral balance to man, the original king of earth, will come also a blessing through man to all his subjects—the beasts of the field, the fowl of heaven, and the fish of the sea (Psa. 8:6, 8); and the ordering of the earth itself is likewise promised.

The "times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:19-21) are, we believe the Scriptures to teach, just at the door. Soon the last members of the body of Christ will have finished their course, and then, with their glorious Head and all the other members of the body, they will shine forth as the sun for the blessing of the entire redeemed race.

JOHN WESLEY ON EATING AND DRINKING.

John Wesley's rules for health were written 170 years ago. Here are the rules of the founder of Methodism as regards eating and drinking:—

"The great rule of eating and drinking is to suit the quality and quantity of the food to the strength of our digestion; to take always such a sort and such a measure of food as sits light and easy on the stomach.

All pickled or smoked or salted food and all high-seasoned food is unwholesome.

Nothing conduces more to health than abstinence and plain food with due labour.

For studious persons about 8 oz. of animal food and 12 of vegetable in 24 hours is sufficient.

Water is the wholesomest of all drinks; quickens the appetite and strengthens the digestion most.

Strong, and more especially spirituous, liquors are a certain, though slow poison.

Experience shows there is seldom any danger in leaving them off all at once.

Strong liquors do not prevent the mischiefs of a surfeit nor carry it off so safely as water.

Malt liquors (except clear small beer or small ale of due age) are exceedingly hurtful to tender persons.

"Coffee and tea are extremely hurtful to persons who have weak nerves."

The "clear small beer or small ale of due age," referred to, is a brewed beverage, often homemade, such as is no longer to be had anywhere. It was almost a universal drink in Wesley's day.

THE LORD'S PROVISION.

Not from a stock of ours, but Thine,
Jesus. Thy flock we feed;
Thy unexhausted grace divine
Supplies their every need;

But if we trust Thy providence,
Thy power and will to save,
We have the treasure to dispense,
And shall for ever have.

Our scanty stock as soon as known,
Our insufficiency
For feeding famished souls we own,
And bring it, Lord, to Thee;

Our want received into Thy hand
Shall rich abundance prove,
Answer the multitude's demand,
And fill them with Thy love.

CHAS. WESLEY.

PEOPLES PAPER.

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While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord's Word, we cannot accept responsibly for every expression 'sod, either in tile correspondence or in the sermons reported,

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BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

It was interesting to note that, at the annual meeting of the above society, held in Melbourne in March, all the speakers paid a tribute to the work of the society, which has, since its foundation in 1804, issued 385,838,255 copies of the Scriptures, in 612 different languages.

The Apostles asked Jesus the question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" In His reply He mentioned many troubles would come upon the nations, and deceptions among those - Who striving to follow in His steps, but one particular point was, "And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come"—:Matt 24:14.

The report of the British and Foreign Bible Society surely shows that this witnessing has been accomplished. and as the word translated "coming" in the question should be "presence," we can readily understand as these prophecies are being fulfilled that the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ is very near.

LIBERTY.

According to the Scriptures, liberty is granted only to those who are doing the will of God. and, according to Isa. 35:8, During the millennium the highway of Holiness leading to the perfect law of liberty and love will not be trodden by anything unclean. The Scriptures show that those who will be judged during the millennium are called the unjust; therefore, being raised from the dead, a schooling process will be necessary, and Rev. 20:4; 27, shows that the Christ, head and body, reigning a thousand years will rule with a rod of iron. We see that during that time the law of obedience will be enforced and those who will not hear (obey) will be cut off. (Acts 3:23.)

The reason the new creation is under the law of liberty is that, having put away sin, they are dead with Christ from the elements of the world. (Col. 2:20), and, having the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5), they, through the spirit, mortify the deeds of the body (Rom. 8:13), and walk in newness of life Rom. 6:4 following the steps of their Redeemer (1 Pet. 2:21). Should they not keep in this condition they will cease to be sons of God, and cease to be under the law of liberty,

It is a very lofty thing to be a Christian, for a Christian is a man who is restoring God's likeness to his character.—Rev. F. W. Robertson.

Proximity of the Kingdom of God.

NOW learn a parable of the fig tree. When his branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh. So likewise ye. when Ye shall see all these things, know that God's Kingdom is near, even at your doors. Verily, I say unto you, this generation (people living contemporaneously and witness the signs mentioned) shall not pass away till all these things are fulfilled. Heaven and earth (the present ecclesiastical and social order) shall pass away; but My Word shall not pass away.

Unbelievers have 'seized upon this passage, claiming that it proves our Lord to have been a false Prophet, and contemptuously remark that many generations have passed away without seeing the fulfilment of "All these things." To meet the objection certain writers have claimed that the words "this generation" meant "this race"—the Jews —shall not pass away until these predictions have been fulfilled. Our Lord, however, could not have referred to the Jewish race, because such was not the subject of the apostles' enquiry nor of the Lord's prophecy in reply. It would seem just as correct to say that the human race was meant as to say the statement applied to the Jewish race. Nov.-. when it is recognised that the words of our text were a prophecy, covering the entire gospel age, we have no difficulty in understanding how "this generation" (which will witness the signs enumerated) shall not pass away until all these things be fulfilled. In other words,

THE SIGNS MENTION ED WILL OCCUR WITHIN A GENERATION-EPOCH

in the close of the Gospel Age. We might note in passing that the time of the end of the age is by no means the end of time, nor is it the end of the world. When the Jewish Age ended another age began. and such will be the case at the end of the present Gospel Age. The first few words of our text may have been a casual remark, but we are inclined to think that it was not so. Our Lord's curse upon a fig tree, which bore no fruit, and which withered away directly (Mat. 21:19) inclines us to believe that the "fig tree" in this prophecy may be significant of the newish nation. If so. it is being signally fulfilled. Inasmuch as the withering of the fig tree indicated how God's disfavour would come upon the Jews, so the sprouting of the fig tree would point to God's favour returning to that nation. Our Lord had been speaking of the punishment that was clue to the Jewish nation for having rejected Him as thin): Messiah, saying, "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. Thank God that is not the settlement of the whole matter, as though their doom were eternally sealed. The following verse reads (Mat. 23:39): For I say unto you, ye shall not see Me henceforth. till ye shall say, Blessed He that cometh in the name of the Lord. His disciples were anxious to know what would be the sign of His coming, when, in the future, He would take unto Himself His great power (at the end of the Gospel Age), and begin His thousand-year reign. Among other things, our Lord told them that the Gospel should be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, adding "then shall the end come." It was clearly shown by this statement that the end for which the disciples of Christ were looking was farther off than they had supposed. Let us note carefully our Lord's words—that the Gospel was not to be preached with the hope of converting the world, but simply as a witness to all nations. and to gather out from all nations "the elect." the Gospel Age having been set apart for the selection of the body members of Christ. Then, in turn, Jesus the I lead and the Church, as His joint-heirs in the coining Kingdom, will deliver the world from the power of Satan, sill and death.

But our lord wished His followers to understand that they must not immediately expect the honours and glories of the Kingdom. which He promised should be shared by His faithful ones. The glories of the future were to follow the sufferings of the present life. He, as their Leader, must be rejected of Israel and be crucified. then that nation would be given over to their enemies. and their holy city, with its costly temple, be utterly destroyed. Moreover. His servants must not expect to be above their plaster, exempt from the reproaches that fell upon Him.. But that it was through much tribulation that they would be rewarded when lie would come again and receive them unto Himself. Our lord reserved His plain teaching along this line until nearing the close of His ministry. At first some of His disciples were disposed to insist (as many do to-day) that the world must be conquered for Christ. as a result of their preaching. Peter dissented by saying. "Be it far from thee. Lord, this (death on the cross) H1;in not he unto Thee." Jesus rebuked him, and the disciples settled down to a realisation that the glories of the Kingdom were not due until they had partaken of the sufferings of Christ. How very beautifully St. Peter expresses his view of the matter in his 1 Epistle. Chapter -1. Verse 3 reads; Blessed be tile God and Father or our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to His abundant mercy. bath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to he revealed in tile last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoiced, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire. might be found unto praise, honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently. who prophesied of the favour that should come unto you. Searching what time, or what manner of time (whether literal or symbolic) the spirit of Christ which

was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Not much glory has come yet; on the contrary, the condition of the world's most inglorious, but this promise has not failed, for it was not, according to the Father's intention, that the power and the glory should follow directly Jesus, the great Head of the church, had suffered. It was after the disciples had tarried in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high, that they no longer expected our Lord's words in reference to the coming Kingdom to come to pass there and then. But we have every reason to believe that the words of our text are low applicable. Indeed, we know that the Kingdom of God is near, even at our doors. The entire outline of our Father's plan, and also His times and seasons, are now clearly discernible, and this is positive proof that we are living in the time of the end of the present dominion of evil, through the binding of Satan, and the reign of Christ. If prophecy were never designed to be understood, there could have been no object in giving it. God is not executing the various parts of His plan at random, but has a definite time for every feature of it.

St. Peter calls attention to this subject when he declared, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye witnesses of His majesty. (2 Pet.

1:16.) He had been permitted to see in a vision, on the mount of transfiguration, the glory of the Kingdom that was to come. Moses was there (in vision only) to represent the ancient worthies, who were promised that they should have the earth as an everlasting possession, being princes in all the earth, Elijah was seen in vision to represent those who are to be joint-heirs with Jesus in the Kingdom of Heaven. The scene foreshadowed the "glory to follow" after the completion of Christ's sufferings. According to 1 Cor. 12:12, the Church is to consist of many members, and it is clear from the Apostle's teachings as a whole that the Gospel Age has been set apart for the development of the 'Christ,

and that during the incoming age he shows that Jesus, the Head, and the church, glorified with Him, will deliver the world from the bondage of sin and death. St. Paul, in connection with our subject, as well as elsewhere, distinguishes between the church and the world. To the brethren he says, "Of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you for yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. When 'they' shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, but 'ye,' brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief." It follows, then, that if a child of God, living in the day of the Lord, remains in darkness or ignorance of the fact, he must be either surfeited with the things of this life, or overcharged with the cares of the world, having neglected to watch with his lamp trimmed and brightly burning.

Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."—Luke 21:36.

A loving act does more than a fiery exhortation. What mankind needs is not more good talkers, but more good Samaritans. - Anon.

Contenting himself with these two things, to do all things justly, and whatsoever God shall send to like it well - M.A.

Question Box.

Question. — Am I right in understanding that the Apostle refers to the First Resurrection when he says, “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 15:50), and will the General Resurrection be to human nature on the earth ?

.Answer.—Yes, you have the correct thought on the matter. All the promises contained in the Scriptures of a spiritual nature apply to the Church of Christ, and to the Church alone, Flesh and blood cannot enter into the spiritual conditions, therefore, the members of the Church of Christ must all be “changed.” Those of the world of mankind who will enter into the earthly phase of the Kingdom will be resurrected as human beings, and not as spirit beings. These shall lie restored to full human perfection, in the “times of restoration of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy Prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3:19-21.) They will come forth from the tomb in the flesh—not with the old bodies which they possessed in this present life. but “God giveth it a body as it hath pleased 1 Cor. 15:35-38.) The Apostle differentiates between these two kinds of resurrections, saying, “As is the earthly, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly” (spiritual) (verses 45-48).

Question—Do the words “everlasting” “eternal” and “for ever and ever” not mean the same in the case the wicked as in the case of the righteous?

Answer.—Let no one be deceived regarding the duration of the punishment of the wicked, as it is repeatedly put forth in the Scriptures that it is for eternity and not merely for a season. However, it is not a question as to the duration of the punishment, but it is a question as to the nature of the punishment. It is on this point that many Christians have been confused. When the Apostle says, concerning the ultimate fate of the wicked, “they shall suffer everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord,” they at once get the thought of the eternal feature of the punishment, but do not get the proper idea as to its nature; reasoning generally that “destruction” means preservation (in fire and brimstone). Death is the punishment for sin. It is the penalty for disobedience. “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23) , and when death is eternal it is eternal punishment. There should be no question on this point. The Scriptural proposition is very plain. “The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The wicked who, after full light and knowledge, refuse to accept the grace of God as manifested through Christ, will never receive the “gift” of eternal life. “He that hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.” (1 John 3:15.)

Question.—Will you kindly explain Joshua’s words: “Sun stand thou still upon Gibeon and thou moon in the Valley of Ajalon.” Joshua 10:11-14?

Answer.-- There have been those who claim that the day was dark and that the sun did not shine at all, and this would seem to coincide with the remarkable hailstorm mentioned in the narrative. Joshua’s enemies were sun worshippers and such a day of darkness would be taken as foreboding ill for them, and this would in itself take away their courage and weaken their morale. The obscurity of the sun and moon was a great phenomenon, and Joshua took advantage of it and desired that the sun and moon should stay hidden. Another explanation is that the sun may have been visible during the day, and that heavy clouds refracted the sun’s rays unusually late in the evening, until the moon rose, so that there was no time without light. Either of these explanations seems feasible so that there is no reason that any should stumble over the matter. This question was more fully dealt with in our issue of September, 1925.

Question.—Please explain Luke 17:22. “The days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the son of man, and ye shall not see it.”

Answer.—The subject was the coming Kingdom, and Jesus had just said that it would not lie with outward observation (outward show). He then said to the disciples that they, too, would one day desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man. No doubt He had in mind that He would be taken from them, and they would personally recall the happy days of His visible presence. But it seemed also that He was speaking of His second Coming and how there would be an expectation of Him, coming again in a form visible to the human eye, and he gives the warning so that they should not be deceived by those who would say, “Lo here or lo there,” etc.

Correspondence

The following message was received from our Bro. Burpee:-

Greetings in the Lord to the Adelaide Ecclesia, —Though unable to attend the praise and testimony meeting at this time, through bodily affliction, I rejoice at the thought that we may meet around one common mercy-seat, and commune with each other, having the promise that if we walk in the light as He is in the light we have fellowship one with the other, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.

In reviewing my life, I can truly say, with God's servant of old, "Thou hast been the guide of my youth." "The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; I have had a goodly heritage." This applies both temporarily and spiritually; the latter more especially, since feasting on the rich supplies since our Lord fulfilled His promise, "I will gird myself and come forth to serve." We realise indeed that the light is now shining in a very dark place until the day dawn. We speak feelingly of the dawn because of the presence of Christ which brought the dawn. The truth came as a light from heaven, bringing us into such fellowship as we have previously not known. Fellowship means companionship and that Jesus is with us. Health and strength are no longer mine, "but Jesus is mine." I find myself clinging not to life, as it pertains to this body, but cleaving to Christ. "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine, Oh what a foretaste of glory Divine. Heirs of salvation, purchase of God, begotten of His spirit when washed in His blood." It is so good to feel that God's interest in His children is so real as set forth by our Lord when He said, "even the very hairs (of) your head are numbered." All the trials that come are understandable from the viewpoint that "all things are working together for good to those who love God."

What a flood of light we have upon the following words. "called according to His purpose" so far as the world's future is concerned. May the Lord draw us closer together that we may feel persuaded that His service is the only thing worth living for, so that our minds may be stayed on Him with hearts uplifted, knowing that our deliverance draweth nigh.

FAITH THE BASIS OF PEACE.

If we would know the foundation and security of this abiding peace which is able to survive the heaviest storms of life, we have only to look to the teaching and example of the Lord and the Apostles. What was it that held them so firmly and gave them such rest of mind while they suffered? It was their faith—their faith in the Love, Power and Wisdom of God. They believe. in that what God had promised, He was able also to perform, and that His righteousness and benevolent plan could know no failure. Isa. 46:9-11; 14:27.) On the assurance of God they rested. In Him their faith was anchored; and it mattered not how fiercely the storms raged or how they were tossed by the tempests of life while their anchor still held fast to the Throne of God.

In the midst of the Christian warfare let our hearts be cheered and our minds be stayed, not only with such assurances that all the Divine purposes shall be accomplished, but also with such promises of personal favour as these

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him, for He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust."

"Can a woman forget; her sucking child? Yea, they may, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have engraven thee upon the palms of My hands."

'Idle Father Himself loveth you.'

"It is the Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

"Such as are upright in their way are His delight."

"Delight thyself also in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desire of thine heart"—the peace of God, even in the midst of storm and tempest.

HISTORICAL EXCERPT

(Milner.)

THE GERMAN CHURCH—SEVENTH CENTURY.

Barbatus, born in Italy in the beginning of this century, was a great ornament to Christianity. Meditation on the Scriptures was his chief delight. He was looked upon to excell in preaching. He acted as curate of Morcona, near Benevento, and gave great offence by his faithfulness. By the malice of the people, he was obliged to retire to Benevento. This town was possessed by the Lombards, many of whom were idolaters, though some were of the general church, with their duke, Arichis, a friend of Gregory I. Barbatus found they worshipped a golden viper and a tree on which the skin of a wild beast was hung. He preached and prayed a long time; at length, the Emperor Constans besieging Benevento, the wicked inhabitants were intimidated so far as to repent of their idolatry. Barbatus was allowed to cut down the tree and to melt the golden viper, of which he made a sacramental chalice. He was appointed Bishop of Benevento in 663, and destroyed every vestige of idolatry in the whole state. He lived afterwards to Lear a testimony by his presence in the Council of Constantinople, and died in 682.

Toward the conclusion of the century, Willibrod, an English missionary, and eleven of his countrymen, crossed over into Holland, to labour among the Friezelanders. But being ill-treated by the king of Friesland, who put one of their company to death, they retired into Denmark. Returning, however, into Friesland, in the year 693, they propagated divine truth with success. Willibrod was ordained bishop of Wilteburg (now Utrecht), and laboured in his diocese to his death, while his associates spread the Gospel through Westphalia and the neighbouring countries.

It was in this century that Bavaria received the Gospel from the ministry of Rupert, or Robert, bishop of Worms. He was invited by Theodo, duke of Bavaria. His ministry prospered, and he was appointed bishop of Salzburg.

The increasing harvest required more missionaries. He therefore returned to his own country, and brought twelve assistants; from that time Christianity was established in Bavaria.

Some time after Emmeram, an Aquitanian Frenchman, leaving his own country and his large possessions, travelled to Ratisbon to spread the Gospel. He was well received by another Theodo, duke of Bavaria. He observed that some of the old inhabitants were guilty of idolatrous rites, which they mixed with Christianity. He laboured among them three years, preaching in all the towns and villages, and reserved for himself only the bare necessaries of life. His success was great; he declared that he only wished to preach Christ crucified. He was murdered by Lambert, a son of the duke, with savage barbarity.

Marinas and Anian, two Egyptians, continued the work in Bavaria; hut Marinus was murdered by robbers.

Eloi, bishop of Noyon, was very successful among the Antwerpens, Flemings, and the Frisons. At first he found them fierce and exceedingly obstinate; but God was with Him both in life and in doctrine.

This meagre account is all that can be related with certainty of the propagation of the Gospel in the seventh century in Germany and the neighbouring countries.

WORKERS AND WINNERS.

Keep striving; the winners are those who have striven
And fought for the prize that no idler has won;
To the hands of the steadfast alone it is given,
And before it is gained there is work to be done.

Keep climbing; the earnest and faithful have scaled
The height where the pathway was rough to the feet;
But the faint-hearted faltered, and faltering, failed,
And sank down by the wayside in helpless defeat.

Keep hoping; the clouds hide the sun for a time,
But sooner or later they scatter and flee,
And the path glows like gold to the toilers who climb
To the heights where men look over landscape and sea.

Keep onward; right on, till the prize is attained;
Front the future with courage, and obstacles fall.
By those, and those only, the victory's gained
Who look not to themselves but to God above all.

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

'Tis but a little and we come
To our reward, our crown, our home!
Another year, or more, or less,
And we have tossed the wilderness;

Finished the toil, the rest begun,
The battle fought, the triumph won!”

SELECTED.

THE TRIAL OF YOUR FAITH.—(1 Peter 1:5-8.)

Though we know there must be trials, and there will be tears below,
Yet we know His glorious purpose, and His promises we know!
Only ask—“What faith the Master?” and believe His word alone,
That “from glory unto glory” He shall lead, shall change His own.
Ever more and more bestowing,
Love and joy in riper glowing,

Faith increasing, graces growing Such His promises to you!
He is faithful, He is true!
Each Amen becomes an anthem, for we know He will fulfil,
All the purpose of His goodness, all the splendour of His will,
Only trust the living Saviour, only trust Him all the way,

And your springtime path shall brighten to the perfect summer day. —F. R. Havergal.