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## Need of Controlling Self.

### CONVENTION ADDRESS.

THIS subject of controlling self is a principle essential to all true Christians seeking to walk as nearly as possible in the Master's footsteps. Our first aim must be to learn to know what is to be controlled, and then to endeavour to do our best. As all mature Christians will know, faith may be said to have in it two elements, intellectual perception and heart reliance. Both the intellect and the affections are necessary to gain the character without which it is impossible to please God.

The trial to which our Lord and the Apostles refer is a trial not only of the intellectual knowledge of Divine truth, but also of the heart's trust and reliance upon God. In both respects the true child of God will find himself severely tested.

It is apparent in our times that a large number of the brethren have attached undue importance to the mental or intellectual phase of their faith, a head knowledge, to the neglect of the heart appreciation of the truth. They have failed to devote proper attention to the qualities of holiness, righteousness, Christian forbearance, and love, such qualities as enter so largely into the composition of the character likeness of Christ that alone will win a place in the kingdom of God.

It is evident that one may receive a large intellectual knowledge of the Truth, he may be able to discern many of the fine lines and points with regard to some of the doctrines, so far as the letter or theory of the Truth is concerned, and at the same time may have little or none of the real power of the Truth in his heart or life, and be greatly lacking in those essential elements that go to make up a truly religious life analysed by St. Paul in 1 Cor. 13 chapter. May we not in this way account for the lack of true piety, or love and brotherly kindness amongst the brethren to-day? Is it not because of too much theory, and too small a measure of religion in the heart that there is so much of the spirit of self-seeking and contention abroad amongst professing brethren, resulting in many bitter controversies and divisions? It would seem so!

In learning how to control self we certainly need to be engaged in the intellectual study and searching of the Word, but let us remember that the primary object is to reach the heart and effect the change there if we would be acceptable to God and make any progress in the development of character. Does not St. Paul tell us that "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love, I am become as sounding and a tinkling cymbal," and does he not add, "Though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have - all (that is, intellectual) faith so that I could remove mountains - and have not love, I am nothing?" The object, then, of all the revelation, of all the knowledge received through the intellect is to acquaint the child of God with the divine will, that he become informed as to what are his duties, -and the part he must perform if he would permanently secure the favour of God and the crown of life which He has promised to them that love Him.

In controlling ourselves we would need to be careful of one important trait of character of which those who may have an inclination to be heady and esteem themselves should beware, that is conceit, or pride. This arises from too low an estimate of other men. Estimates of ourselves as well as of other men are relative. All self measurements involve measurement of others. The only way by which the conceit can be taken out of a man effectually is by bringing him into a clear comparison and sharp competition with others. The more widely and truly we know men, the more we

shall see we are frequently equalled and surpassed. Candid estimates • Of ourselves by comparison with others will make us think soberly and judge ourselves modestly. Conceit has no more fruitful root than a narrow knowledge and prejudiced estimate of the labours and worth of others. Conceit involves a faulty self knowledge.

It is noticeable that a man who thinks' most highly Of himself is one of whom others of a right mind think little.

The conceited man has only one ardent admirer and that is himself. A true self-knowledge reveals our faults to us; and -gives us a true view of ourselves. It lets- the light - in upon our narrow prejudices, and makes us ashamed of them. It discloses the insufficient grounds of many of our judgments, and unearths the subtle process of Our self deception. It lays bare the operation of motives, and shows how often conscience itself is made a mere convenience.

Self-knowledge humbles a man. Those who think themselves complete 'beyond other men commonly stand alone in that opinion. They are apt to think themselves complete only because, while they keenly perceive others' faults, they are blind to their own. In this view lies almost the only excuse which can be given for the man of inordinate self-conceit. It implies intellectual weakness, and incapacity for keen discernment. - God dulls the discernment of such, as it reads in Matt. 11 25, v, here Jesus answered, "I thank Thee, Father, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." And the Apostle gives us a reason in 1 Cor. 1:27-29, "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. And base things of the world and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in His presence." Does it not also say in Isa. 5:21, "Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes."

Conceit causes an inability to study successfully one's self and others. It may be a mental, quite as much as a moral fault, though it is usually both. In both phases it is-a quality the development of which is to be dreaded and checked with the utmost promptness and sternness. No trait of character conveys a more unfavourable impression, none so quickly excites disgust, none provokes such constant and universal ridicule. A proverb of the wise man expresses the verdict on this point: "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit; there is more hope of a fool than of him." It is a mark of smallness of soul, a phase of selfishness.

The men who have been servants of humanity, the great reformers and philanthropists, have been free from conceit. They were great in humility; for humility rightly understood is an essential greatness. Humility is the quality which leads men to serve others; conceit the quality which leads them to serve themselves. Shakespeare said, "Conceit in weakest bodies, strongest works." Traced to its deepest root, therefore, it is a fruit of fundamentally defective character. It implies a lack of appreciation of God's greatness, before which every thoughtful mind should stand with reverence and humility. And, as the Apostle says, "When I am weak then am I strong."

The wise man informs us of the greatness of ruling our own spirit, and how can we do better than by giving strict 'attention to the influence of thought in the development of character? If we can control that part, how great an achievement would be accomplished; for our thoughts are the invisible influences which give completion to our lives, then, we would control ourselves and live good and worthy lives .we must not suffer our to become guilty thoughts. nor even allow them to be vacant thoughts. We must fill them with things of the spirit. How can we do this?. Best by forgetting ourselves,- best by obliterating our: own selfish will. best by thinking wholly of others and of God; the true life there are three factors—God, the soul, ai.: our fellow men. Our duty to our own soul is best summed up in our duty to God and our duty to our fellow men.

When the wise man admonishes; "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life," he is telling us to guard carefully our hearts; to watch "our meditations, to carefully consider what motives and purposes control and guide us in the course we are pursuing: in life. Thoughts about God and contemplations of His; character, and the great qualities thereof cannot 'but have an elevating effect upon every soul that is really consecrated to Him. One writer says, "Very few of us, I-fear, very few even of the best of us, think enough of-God. I low many a life has been kept humble, and pure, and sweet, by the living realisation of that One truth, "Thou, God, seest me."

We realise how all of us are affected and made better in our hearts by the .mere presence of someone to w' we can look up as good and true.

Now we realise that all mankind .are born with more less of determination. Some have this in a very marked degree, others in a lesser degree, but we find that whether our wills are strong or weak they need direction,. We need to be careful not to pervert sound judgment. It would be disastrous to us to yield ourselves to passion, to allow it to sweep over us and master us. whether we are weak-minded or strong-minded.

All should recognise that the inclinations: the impulses, and the preferences of the fallen nature of man are often contrary to that which is right, noble, and truly desirable. All should be regulated by some standard. The Law of God is the very highest standard of law. It is one which the world recognises as good, and surely the Lord's. people should measure all their conduct, their words and their thoughts by it. it is thus they will be able to rule their own spirit.

We are to rule our own mind, our natural impulses. This means that if a thought presents itself to the mind, or if we feel a certain impulse, we should be quick to perceive the nature of the thought or impulse, and if it is not in harmony with the principles of righteousness or with our covenant as children of God we should at once resist it. If we are unable to do this successfully of ourselves, as is often the case, the heart should 'be promptly lifted to the Lord for His promised grace to help in time of need. If we feel an impulse toward a certain action or course, we should carefully weigh the matter, and decide as to its righteousness or propriety in the circumstances, looking to our unfailing source of help for guidance. The world would think that this is too exacting, they would have more pleasure in doing their own will. But we know that in doing their own will they frequently get into trouble.

A Christian has covenanted not to follow his own will. The more advanced the Christian, the more should we expect that he would be able to rule his spirit, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the will of God in Christ. If we rule our mind. our thoughts. we shall rule our tongue. If the thoughts were not in the mind the tongue would not utter them. There is great danger of saying or doing things under a momentary impulse which our heart—our con., 'rated judgment—would not approve; hence the necessity of bringing our thoughts and impulses into subjection. We should consider what would be the effect of our words or our actions upon another. Would they cause any harm or ill-feeling?

By thus scrutinising ourselves, by thus controlling ourselves, we are showing our earnest desire of heart to be pleasing to the Lord and true to our covenant. And those who learn to rule their own spirit according to the will of the Father are the ones whom He will be pleased to make joint-heirs with His Son in His Kingdom.

In what way can a Christian cultivate the disposition to control himself? At first the individual has not the power to rule himself in everything; but as he learns to exercise control in the little things, more and more in thought and word and deed, doing what he can in this direction, he will gain in strength of character. If we daily practise, controlling ourselves we shall gradually attain a strong character along this line, which will be of inestimable advantage to us in our Christian warfare. There is no place in our daily walk where the proof of our ability to rule our spirit can be shown to greater advantage than in our own home. With husband and wife, with parent and child, with brother and sister. this is an important matter. The battle with ourselves is the greatest battle we have to fight. Moral strength infinitely nobler than the greatest degree of physical strength or the most scientific strategy. It is after we have become masters of our own flesh, after we have conquered ourselves, and after we have cast out the beam from our own eyes, 'when we have subdued anger, malice, hatred and strife in our own hearts, that we are enabled by means of these severe battles with our own weaknesses to assist the brethren. 'to assist our neighbours, to aid them by our example. in 'overcoming their besetments and infirmities.

To control ourselves implies a great conflict; for no matter where we begin, we find entrenched within us many armed and opposing powers. They have possession are there as the 'result of heredity. If we have the days of youth they are the more strongly emphasised, and it requires the greater skill and generalship to rout them out. But whether early or late, such as would succeed in life's battle of self-control must fight the good fight of faith. They must war a good warfare to the very end. If the children of God would be victors in this battle they must storm the fortresses of the inherited evils which seem to be a part of their natures.

We all realise that to control one's self is by no means an easy task; it cannot be done 'single-handed. Therefore, those who are wise will seek what assistance they have at their command; for as the Apostle says. "We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places." As we well know, the world, the flesh, and the devil are powers that are closely allied, and all individuals who have taken it upon themselves to go into combat with these allied forces must seek an alliance with another and stronger power. or else they will soon be "hors de combat." -

This power is tendered to all who earnestly undertake this great work. It is none other than the almighty arm of our God; "Greater is He that is with you than all they that be against you." There is an old saying, "Where there's a will there's a way." for good or for evil. God will assist through various agencies for good, Satan through various agencies toward evil. If the will says it must be done, it calls in the needed help that is available; and forthwith it will set the other faculties of the mind at work, first to subjugate, and then to regulate the entire being.

Conscience must be alert and keep a vigilant watch over all the mental operations. Then, -under the influence of conscience, judgment must decide as to the righteousness of any matter. If the will be 'weak it will be irregular in its rulings; and the governing of such is apt to be unstable and perhaps ultimately wholly at the mercy of the fallen appetites, passions and ambitions. It is all important, therefore, that the will be entirely consecrated to God and righteousness, and -that it strengthen itself in the Lord: and -in His name and strength strive to rule with a firm hand, always humbly looking for His guidance in all of life's affairs.

One thing we must particularly strive to control, and that is the tongue; for how much evil has been 'engineered by an uncontrollable tongue. It is written in Matt. 12:36, "That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." From our Lord's comments at various times on the subject of the 'tongue. we realise that in His day there must have been some seriously wrong condition prevailing amongst those with- whom He came in contact. The Scribes and Pharisees attributed- evil power to Him, and declared that He was the tool of Satan. that Satan was speaking through Him. In the beginning our Lord told them in a general way that they deceived themselves. Later He reproved them severely, and showed the fallacy of their arguments.

More and more we realise the wisdom of the Apostle James' statement that, although the tongue is a little member, yet it is the most dangerous of all, because it has the -widest influence, "If a man sin not with his tongue, he is a perfect man." We cannot possibly estimate the results of our words. This influence may reach even to the ends of the earth. 'Therefore; - -we have here a disposition of -character which needs controlling; and are to consider carefully what we may say in order to determine whether our words will glorify God or whether they will dishonour Him, whether they will stir up good thoughts and- impulses in the minds of others, or whether they will stir up that .which is evil.

God in His wisdom has seen .fit so to create us that our conduct of to-day has much to do with- our character of to-morrow, Thus- we are making or marring character continually. It is well that we. should all realise this fact. All Christians should understand this principle; for they are now on trial for glory, honour, and immortality. Therefore, by neglecting to weigh carefully their words, they may lose the great prize for which they are striving. There is a spirit which shoots out bitter words, and from the standpoint of our Lord this is murder. Thus at the end of the Jewish Age the Scribes and Pharisees criticised and slandered our Lord. Although from their knowledge of the law they knew that they would be accountable for their actions, yet they did not appreciate the fact that they would be judged by their words.

Under stress of sudden temptation, the Lord's people who are now on judgment may impulsively say that which is not pleasing. to the Master. But we must learn not to speak thoughtlessly; we must learn to weigh our utterances. Since we are servants of God, we should ever take heed to our ways, in order to render the most possible service. We are not merely to have a good will to- do that Nivlich is right, we are to seek to bridle our tongues. atever resolutions or restraints we may seek. to put upon our tongues may be considered as bridles. by which we are determined to bring ourselves into full subjection to the will of God. So. long as Satan and his emissaries are at large, the Lord's people will do well to take heed to their ways that they sin not with their tongue.. Satan and his angels are seeking to subvert those who have given themselves to the Lord and to catch them. in their words. The Psalmist says, "I will keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked is before me."

Amongst the Lord's people, it is very important that they should learn to be very just. While it is right to be. loving, kind; 'generous, yet justice is the very foundation of character. All love and kindness not based upon justice are neither satisfactory nor pleasing to the Lord. In dealing with others, a Christian will think, what are the rights of others, and what would the heavenly Father have me to. do? It is very natural for one to recognise his own rights in any matter,' but the fallen nature does not .so quickly perceive the rights of others. Therefore, one of the most important lessons to be learned is to do unto others as we would have others do to us—simple justice.

One must be just in his thoughts before he can properly be just in his dealings. Whoever thinks unjustly will. act unjustly in spite of endeavours to the contrary. Many of the Lord's people find that while their hearts are good there is in their flesh a tendency for certain things that are not good. There is a continual struggle between the flesh and the spirit as to what kind of treasure will be stored up. In laying up good treasures in our hearts and minds we are building character.

Whoever goes into a man's house and sees what he has gathered in the way of treasures can easily perceive the direction in which that man's mind is bent. His preferences .demonstrate his character. Thus it is with all of us, the things which we cultivate are an index to our character. When we come to render up our account as new creatures, character will decide whether we shall be esteemed worthy. Only those who have laid up the treasure of a character like that of our Lord Jesus Christ will be fit for an inheritance in the Kingdom. Our eternal destiny therefore will be

decided by the way in which we now use our minds, and the thoughts which we now accumulate.

Our first concern, then, must be for the heart, that its affections and dispositions may be wholly under the control of grace divine; that every principle of truth and righteousness may be enthroned there ;:that justice, mercy. -ievolution, meekness, self-control, faith, brotherly kinds love, supreme reverence for God, and for Christ, and a fervent love for all the beauties of holiness may be firmly fixed as the governing principles of life. If these principles are established in the heart, we shall have no difficulty in controlling our tongue and ourselves generally; for out of the good treasure. of our heart the mouth will speak forth words of truth, soberness and grace.

## ABIDE IN ME.

That mystic word of Thine,  
O sovereign Lord!  
Is all too pure, too high, too deep for me;  
Weary with striving, and with longing faint,  
I breathe it back again in prayer to Thee.

Abide in me—o’ershadow by Thy love  
Each half-formed purpose and dark thought of sin;  
Quench, ere it rise, each selfish, low desire,  
And keep my soul as Thine—calm and divine.

As some rare perfume in a vase of clay  
Pervades it with a fragrance not its own—  
So, when Thou dwellest in a mortal soul,  
All heaven’s own sweetness seems around it thrown.  
The soul alone, like a neglected harp,  
Grows out of tune, and needs that Hand divine;

Dwell Thou within it, tune and touch the chords,  
Till every note and string shall answer Thine.  
Abide in me; there have been moments pure,  
When I have seen Thy face and felt Thy power;  
Then evil lost its grasp, and, passion hushed,  
Owned the divine enchantment of the hour.

These were but seasons beautiful and rare;  
Abide in me, and they shall ever be;  
I pray Thee now fulfill my earnest prayer—  
Come and abide in me, and I in Thee.

Selected.

My heart is inditing a good matter; ‘I speak of the things... touching the King. Psalm 45:1.

If you want to live your life to the glory of God it must be made good to your own soul. If I enjoy the Word of God in my own soul I find it very easy and simple to make that Word sweet to the first soul I meet. If you read your Bible and get no blessing to your own soul, then God is not ready to use you while in that state; but if you get even a slight modicum of truth made good to your own soul, then the anointing oil must betray itself by its odour. The sweet fragrance of Christ must betray itself wherever we go.

J. Denham Smith.

There is no one clear way where all must go, Where none can wander, and where all may know; Then heed not thou where other mortals tread, But let thy gaze be toward the mountain’s head.

Anon.

## 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 responsibility for every expression used, either in the correspondence or in the sermons reported.

A. Cross (x) on the wrapper indicates that the Subscription to "Peoples Paper" is overdue.

## CONVENTION NEWS.

THIS Christmas Convention, held in Melbourne this year, again proved a means of great spiritual blessing, the general opinion being that, for earnestness of spirit and confidence, borne of a strong faith, together with that loving bond of true Christian unity, and oneness of thought, desire, and aim, this assembly of the Lord's people surpassed all previous gatherings of a like nature.

It was manifested throughout that all were rejoicing in the spiritual food provided by Him Who promised to gird Himself and serve us with the meat in due season, and the true Bread from Heaven, wherever His people assemble in sincerity and in truth.

While we had very many helpful and encouraging thoughts to stimulate and assist, more especially were we reminded of the fact, that if we are to be found faithful overcomers, it will only be inasmuch as our faith is firmly grounded, and our lives conformed to, and in harmony with the true teachings, and actuated by that Heavenly wisdom from above, which is first pure, right, just and honourable, and then peaceable, easy to be entreated; full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality (or respect of persons, but as members one of another) and without hypocrisy. We saw that unless the faith and life were based on that which is according to the fundamental and essential principles laid down in the Word, and exercised by the spirit of that Word, our every thought, word, and action would prove unprofitable, although some may be deceived as to what they consider are true Christian characteristics, and fruits or graces of the spirit.

All present greatly appreciated the many helpful points brought out in the Bible studies and addresses throughout the Convention season, particularly noting the necessity of exercising that true spirit of humility and meekness, if we are to make proper progress in our efforts to control self, against imperfection and fallen tendencies, which ever seek to war against the new mind in us.

On Christmas Day and Boxing Day, Bible studies were held on Matt. 5:1-12, and James 3:17, and with the addresses on "Strength and Courage," "Need of Controlling Self," and I Pet. 5:5, were much appreciated.

On Saturday, December 28th, the friends journeyed to, Upwey and partook of the good things provided, both spiritual and temporal, amidst pleasant surroundings of nature's own providing and setting.

Sunday, the final day of the Convention, was again made profitable by the Bible study on Psalm. 15; and, the addresses on "Pressing into the Kingdom" and "Our Lord's Return."

The latter address was much enjoyed, helping all to see the great importance of rightly understanding the Word of God as to the manner and purpose of our Master's Return. It was pointed out that it would not be as the man Christ Jesus, that He would come again, not again in the flesh as at His first Advent, but as a glorious Spirit Being, having given His "flesh for the life of the world." It was seen that as such our Lord is now present (though unseen by human eye) with His chosen people during this harvest time, and reckoning with His servants, until one by one the faithful stewards fulfil their covenant of sacrifice successfully, and finish their course in death, becoming joined to their Lord and Head in the Spiritual Kingdom. Not until the last of this chosen faithful class had finished their course and become associated with the Bridegroom, could the blessings flow out to the world of mankind, who are waiting for the manifestation of these sons of God.—(Rom. 8:19).

The presence of those friends who travelled long distances from other States and country districts added much to the encouragement of the Melbourne friends, and we trust brought a blessing to themselves.

Each and all present earnestly desired that the coming year would find the Brethren rejoicing with a stronger faith and an even brighter hope, as each would seek to press courageously, humbly, and meekly along the pathway of sacrifice, and at last receive an abundant entrance into the Kingdom of our Lord and Ahead.

## PASSOVER MEMORIAL, 1930.

Some of our readers prefer to follow the Jewish date in the matter of observing the memorial of Christ our Passover Lamb. We therefore take this opportunity of announcing that the date corresponding to the 14th of Nisan commences this year after sundown on April 11th, and therefore Friday evening, April 11th, will be for these the appropriate time to memorialise our Lord's death.

Others, however, prefer to observe the matter on the Thursday evening before Good Friday, feeling that it was on a Thursday night our Lord kept the Passover with the disciples, after which He left them this little observance to keep in future instead of the annual observance of the Jewish typical Passover Lamb. They realise more opportunity of getting away from worldly and business associations, being freer to think during the holiday of the Friday and weekend, of our Lord's sufferings, death, His lying in the tomb during Saturday, and His resurrection on the Sunday, the first day of the week. There is no command in the New Testament respecting which calendar we are to follow, so that each ecclesia is left to decide for itself which may seem to be the better from a spiritual viewpoint. It is not a matter that could be considered one of conscience, so that a minority in a class should realise it a privilege to fall in line with whichever date be agreed upon.

## Spiritual Welfare Most Important.

"Therefore take no thought for to-morrow saying what shall we eat or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek). For your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."— Matt. 6:31-33.

"For bodily exercise profiteth a little, but godliness is profitable unto all things."—I Tim. 4:8.

WE do not understand that there is any suggestion here of carelessness in respect of the necessary things of life or any conflict with the teaching of the Apostle when he admonishes that we must "provide things honest in the sight of all men," and that "he that provideth not for his own is worse than an infidel." - The thought seems to be that though we should learn to economically and properly use the good things provided, and take the necessary steps to gather the daily manna, or in other words to gain an honest livelihood, yet we are to remember that our Heavenly Father knows all our needs. He careth for us and will supply what is essential for our best interests. There is therefore no need for anxious care, but instead every reason for the child of God rest trustfully dependent upon the Great Provider. "Therefore I say unto you. Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not. neither do they reap nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"— Matt. 6:23,

There seemed a similar lesson from our Lord's words to Martha. She was troubled over much serving and providing and having things "just so," to an extreme: Mary had chosen the better part. With her, the gracious presence and words of the Lord made everything else secondary: She sought "First the Kingdom," and the Lord approved, saying, "Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken from her."

While many have engaged in work which was supposed to be Christian work, and have neglected homes and responsibilities in order to do so, others have gone to the other extreme, and make home, dress, food and earthly hopes their chief aim, and have neglected great privileges of service and sacrifice in the service of Him Who loved us and gave Himself for us. Both these classes fail to be pleasing in God's sight. Those who neglect home and family responsibilities to run after what they may call work for the Lord are making a great mistake, for such work cannot be acceptable. Duties must first be met before voluntary service can be pleasing to God.

What is needed in these matters is "the spirit of a sound mind," and that is attained by a willing submission to God's holy will partaking of His spirit and thus being guided in the reading and application of His word.

Having devoted ourselves and our all to the Lord, the proper thought would be that all our concerns and belongings, our homes, our businesses as well as our lives and our bodies are henceforth the Lord's property, of which we are stewards, to make the best use of to His in His service: So, then, if we neglect our homes or our bodies we shall be failing, to that extent, in our stewardship. We can serve God best by doing these things which are by natural ties, our duties, whether in home or business concerns, whether in eating or drinking, or whatever we do, "do all to the glory of God, and in everything give thanks. Some seem to find the daily round and common task irksome,

and feel constrained to neglect them in seeking some outside service which is thought to be more “Christian work,” and in which they receive perhaps more approbation from others.

On the other hand; it is not right that we should spend more time and strength and money in respect of home or what we shall eat or wherewithal we must be clothed, than is right. \ must ever keep the main object of our lives before us. “Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.”

With the general increase of knowledge in this our day. there has been much along the lines of hygiene and foods, their primer combinations, their food- values and chemical contents, and their proper preparation. All that is good in this direction is surely worthy of attention and personal application, but many are apt to go to extremes, and are led to waste time and money in attending lectures and seeking advice of men, who, having some knowledge of such things, assume a great deal more and take advantage of susceptible people to their own financial gain. These food specialists, as they are called, are like doctors who differ; some advise one thing. some another, and it is evident that much that they claim is uncertain. The point for our consideration. however, is that as consecrated Christians we are not seeking chiefly earthly good. “He who seeks to save his life shall lose it.” Our chief aim is to grow strong as new creatures, and to gain spiritual health and immortality.

There are all sorts of ways by which the adversary seeks to draw aside from the Christian narrow way. Some of these ways are not evil in themselves, but. nevertheless, they lead to the neglect of our spiritual needs.

There are simple rules of hygiene and instructions respecting foods which do not take much time or expense- to acquire, and even then natures are so different that what would be found to suit one would •not suit. another. The Lord’s people. need to use the spirit of a sound mind, in these as in all matters, and “Let your, moderation be known unto all men.” Some are so apt to run after anything supposed to be new or, claiming to be of great benefit. How much we need the instruction first the Kingdom of God and His righteous make everything else subservient to our spiritual needs. Everything else will have its proper consideration, duties will be properly attended to, as unto the Lord, and our lives will be recognised as moderate yet decidedly Christian. Our consecration is unto death, but if we ‘become so enthused over the natural benefits, and many .supposed benefits, how easy it would be to neglect the more important spiritual’ life. and what the Lord said might have its application, “He who seeks to save his life shall lose it.”

## Correspondence

January 6th, 1930. Dear Brother,—

just a line as we find ourselves back home again and starting into the New Year. To-day’s Manna text is in line with the piece in January “P.P.” “So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” The piece in the “P.P.” is very helpful; surely it is an appropriate time to examine our hearts, to inspect our lives and see just what associations are helpful and what are not helpful; to see just what has been profitable to us in the past and what has been a hindrance. Remembering that “this is the Lord’s will, even our sanctification,” we should be diligent in co-operating with the Lord’s-providential leadings to bring about the accomplishment of His will for us. The piece on “Seeking the Heavenly Kingdom”^ is also very helpful. What a good thought to have before our minds for the year before us, “I am seeking chiefly the heavenly kingdom.” “For me to live is Christ.” was Paul’s motto, and so it should be ours. When we think what a great favour God has bestowed, upon us in giving us ears to hear and hearts to ap, to His wonderful Plan, and especially in calling us to this acceptable Day to be •footstep followers of Jesus how our hearts should go out in gratitude and praise, the Psalmist says, “What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?”--Psa. 116.

We trust that this year will see us each one making good progress along the Christian pathway, that our faith may grow stronger, and brighter and love more warm and true and tender. •e may have our trials and testings. but we will also have unfailing strength from God to help us to overcome, for His promise is sure—“I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.”

Am glad to have been able to attend the Convention again this Xmas, and we appreciate all the kindness of the fr’-; and their efforts to make the meetings helpful. All these Convention gatherings are a means of blessing to us as we look for His blessing in connection with the same.-

Please give Our .Christian love to all the friends, .

Yours in fellowship and service of Christ,

• M.J.R. •

January, 1930. Berean Biblical Institute.

Melbourne.

Dear Brother,

As our subscriptions to the "Herald" and "Peoples Paper" expire at the end of the year, I am sending along postal note — to cover -same. Any little balance over you may use in the work,

We are both keeping well. We. often think of you all, and trust this finds you all well, .and that you had a happy and helpful time together at the Convention.

We are still clinging to the Lord and the truths we have learned and been assured of. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the. days of our life."

The question in last "P.P." re evidences of Lord's presence was good and helpful. We have been thinking along this line. A little paper to hand is evidence- that some are abandoning the view that Christ is now present and are returning to the view that Christ's coming will be visible to the world, and that He was raised in His human body. Surely we need the wisdom from above to guide us and keep us.

Christian love to you all,  
Yours in Christ,  
S.R.L.

## Question Box.

Question.—An important point has arisen respecting the understanding of our Lord's prophecy in Matt. 24. Does the word "parousia," which is translated "coming," indicate the "drawing near," the act of "arrival," or the actual "presence" of Christ?

Answer.—To our understanding, and eminent scholars agree, the English word "presence" is the equivalent of the Greek word "parousia." When we may look forward to having an absent friend with us for a season, We know that there must be a moment of arrival, also a time when he will be journeying and thus "drawing near," but it is his presence that we look forward to. Though in speaking of the matter, we may say we shall do this or that when he comes, we do not mean, when he is drawing near or at the moment of arrival, but while he is present with us and we are enjoying the -renewed fellowship.

The word "parousia" occurs 24 times in the Greek "Testament, and there would seem to be no other English word than "presence" that can so well be used to translate it in every instance.

In the Epistles we have:—

(1) 1 Cor. 15:23. Speaking of the resurrection of Christ (head -and body), as the first fruits, afterwards, they that are Christ's during His "presence." James also speaks of the church—the body of Christians being a first fruits unto God. Christ died, rose and revived, that He might be Lord of the dead and the living, thus all belong to Him by right of purchase. All are Christ's just and unjust—and are to be raised during His 1000 years' reign. "As all in Adam. die, so all in Christ shall be made alive." 1 Cor. 15:21, 24. Rom. 14:9. Acts 24:15. John 5:25, 29.

(2) 1 Cor. 16:17. Here Paul is expressing his gladness at the presence of three brethren, "For they have refreshed my spirit." That was not by their journeying or "drawing near," nor by the act of "arrival," but by their "presence" and fellowship..

(3). 2 Cor. 7:6; (4). 2 Cor, 7:7. Here the Apostle speaks of the comfort he had by Titus having come to him. It was not:that Titus was coming, but that he was comforted by his presence and fellowship, and the good news he .had brought.

(5). 2 Con 10:10. Here the word "parousia" is correctly translated presence, and it should be clear to all that that is

what is meant. One could not reasonably say that His bodily “drawing near” was weak, or that His bodily “arrival” was weak.

Phill. 1:26. Certainly Paul did not mean that the act of his arrival would do the Phillipians good; it was his presence and fellowship, his instructions and counsel that would increase their joy.

Phill. 2:1.2. The word is again correctly translated “presence,” and is placed as the alternative to absense. No other word could so well convey the meaning of the passage.

1 Thes. 2:19. Again the meaning is not the “arrival,” or “drawing near,” but the “presence” of the Lord, for the Apostle speaks of the church as being in the presence of the Lord at that time.

1 Thes. 3:13. The word rendered “coming” should be “presence” here also. The Apostle is referring to the same event as in the previous passage, namely, the church being present with the Lord at His second presence with all His saints.

1 Thes. 4:15. Here again the word “parousia” rendered coming, should be “presence.” If the Lord was to come like a flash of lightning, as some so misunderstand, Matt 24:27, then no one could await it with joy, nor could there be any time when “The dead in Christ, having risen first,” some could be left over or remain. With the true rendering of “parousia,” i.e., presence, all is harmonious and reasonable. When the Lord should be present. He would first raise those who had fallen asleep in Christ, and then those who were still alive in the flesh, would be caught away just as they finished their course to be together with the Lord, with those who had preceded them. These do not sleep as others who died before the presence of Christ, but at the moment of death are “Changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,” and so they together with all the body of Christ shall be “forever with the Lord.”

1 Thes. 5:23. Again read -presence instead of coming. It is not the act of His “arrival” we look forward to, but to His presence.

-2 Thes. 2:1; (13). 2 Thes. 2:8; (14). 2 Thes.. 2:9. The word should undoubtedly be rendered presence in each of these texts.

(15). James 5:7; (16). James 5:8. It should be evident to all that the “presence” is the thing which James referred to and not the act of “arrival,” or “drawing near.”

(17). 2 Pet. 1:16. That Peter had in mind the “presence” of Christ in Kingdom glory, is evident from the fact that he refers to the “Transfiguration” which was a picture of the Kingdom.

( 18 ) . 2 Pet. 3:4. Should read “Where is the promise of His presence?” This verse is having fulfilment in this, our day--

(19). 2 Pet. 3:12. This has reference to the time called, “The clay of God,” “The clay of the Lord’s wrath,” It will not be a flash of lightning in length of time, but a period, “A time of trouble,” even greater than that in Noah’s day, or at the destruction of Jerusalem.

.(20). 1 John 2:28. If the coming of the Lord was like a flash of lightning, there would be no time for anyone to feel ashamed “before” Him, but John had no such thought. he, along with all. those who love His appearing, look forward to being like the Lord’ with Him, and to “see Him as He is.” Such has confidence that they shall not. be ashamed before’ Him at His presence.

Thus we have gone over all the instances of the word “parousia” in the Epistles, and see that no other word than “presence” can so well convey in English the meaning of the inspired writers. Now we turn to Matt. 24, where the remaining four occurrences of the word occur, and find that the same word “presence” is clearly the Lord’s meaning in

each case.

Matt. 24:3. Here is the inspired question which was asked of our Lord, in order that the inspired answer could be provided for our edification, and it is only when we allow the proper meaning of the Greek word “parousia” four times used in this connection that we can comprehend the “meat in due season.” V. 45.

“When shall these things be and what shall be the sign of thy presence (parousia) and of the end of the world?” So that

the answer given is not indicating signs that the Lord was soon to be near, or to arrive, but rather that He would be present when the signs should be seen.

Had the Lord intended returning in a way visible to all human eyes, there could lie no value in providing any sign of His presence, but as He had said that it would not be with observation, the signs are given, and the signs are all now to be seen. -

Matt. 24:27. It would indeed be a sorry thing if the Lord was to come and go just like the lightning flash, but when we see that the Greek word rendered "lightning" is elsewhere used for the shining of a candle, we readily perceive that it is the glorious sunshine, rising in the east and shining all day, setting at evening in the west, that is here used to show the glorious reign of the "Sun of righteousness, which shall arise with healing in His wings." Also, that it is not just the "arrival," "coming," or "drawing near" that is referred to, but the "presence" of the Son of man, which will continue for a 1000 year day. The word rendered "lightning" simply means "brightness," or "shining," and could be used for sunshine, or shining of a candle, or brightness of lightning, and is dependent upon connections respecting translation.

Matt. 24:37; (24). Matt. 24:39. "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the presence of the Son of man be."

The word in the authorised Bible is mistakenly rendered "coming." As Noah was present in the "Days of Noah," so of course our Lord must be present in the days of the Son of man. See corresponding passage in Luke 17:24, 26..