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YOUR REDEMPTION DRAWETH NIGH.

“Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain”-Isa.26:.20,

THERE is an affectionate tenderness about these words of our Heavenly Father which helps us to realise His great love for I His people, and His special care over them. But, while appreciating very gratefully this special love and care in the comfort, encouragement and protection afforded us by our Heavenly Father in the world’s great tribulation, we would come far short of having His Spirit if we should regard the matter with self-complacency, forgetful of His great love for the world also. This love, veiled behind the clouds of His righteous indignation against their sins, in wisdom strikes the heavy blow which will shatter all their idols and humble their pride in the dust, so that the sore wounds of His wrath may prepare them for their everlasting healing.

If God so loved the world as to give His -Only Begotten Son, “that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish (eternally), hut have everlasting life,” He loves them still, and it is His love that wields the rod for their correction. He also would have His people so regard His judgments; and while they rejoice in the sunshine of His favor, -because by faith they have come into an attitude which can receive it, He would have them share His spirit toward the world; and while the blows of -His righteous indignation fall heavily upon the world, He would have us point them to the cause of their calamities and to the only remedy—”In returning (to God) and rest (in Him alone) shall ye he saved; in quietness and in confidence shall he your strength.” Be still,” saith the Lord, “and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”—Isa. 30:15; Psa. 46:10.

But who are those whom the Lord is pleased to designate by the endearing name, “My people?” Does this class include every one upon whom His name is named? -No , for that would include a great number of false professors. as the Psalmist expresses it, it includes all those who have made a covenant with God by sacrifice (Psa. 50:5)—all the consecrated and faithful children of God, however young or weak they may he, whose hearts are fixed firmly and resolutely to be truly loyal and obedient children by His assisting grace.

To be numbered among the children of God is a great privilege; but it means much more than many seem to understand--much more both on their part and on God’s part. On their part, it signifies, not merely a

name to live in some great organisation which bears the Christian name, but that they have become sons and heirs of God through Christ; that they have fully consecrated themselves to God to follow in the footsteps of His dear Son; that they have renounced the vain pomp and glory of the world and have solemnly covenanted to live apart from its spirit, ambitions, hopes and aims; and not only so, but that in pursuance of that covenant, they are striving daily to be faithful, and meekly to take up their cross and follow their Leader and Head, Christ Jesus.

On God's part it signifies the fulfilment of all His gracious promises to such through Christ, both for the life that now is and for that which is to come. It signifies that in the present life we have His Fatherly love, care, discipline, counsel, teaching, protection and encouragement to the end; and that afterwards we shall be received into His glorious presence, and into everlasting rest, joy and peace. Oh, how blessed to be the people of God! even in the present life the reward of His favor is -beyond computation.

THE "SECRET PLACE" OF HIS SAINTS.

The place of hiding is "The secret place of the Most High," "under the shadow of the Almighty" (Psa. 91:1-9). This secret place of the Most High is the place of intimate communion and fellowship with God, through the blessed privilege of prayer and through faith in His precious Word and His promised providential care.

"When all around our souls give way,
He then is all our hope and stay."

Oh, how precious is this hiding place! What rest and refreshment we find in the midst of the commotion that is even now bestirring the whole world—rest from the pride and folly of men in their abortive efforts to readjust the present unsatisfactory social order; and rest from the strife of tongues in their equally vain attempt to evolve the clear principles of truth and righteousness from the present confusion of human traditions (Psa. 31:20). Here we find rest, peace, light and joy, which the world cannot give nor take away.

Few indeed are those who can understand our motives in thus withdrawing from the world and from the various organisations of the nominal Christian Church, to walk alone with God; and many are the reproaches which such must endure for His name's sake. But fear not; "shut thy doors (of faith) about thee," and heed not the reproaches; turn a deaf ear to them, and "Sanctify the Lord of Hosts Himself, and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread" (Isa.

8:13); and, "Above all, take (for the conflict before you) the shield of faith. wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph. 6:16). "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."-1 John 5:4.

It is to inspire such a faith as this that the Lord has offered us, in addition to all His precious promises. so many encouragements to simple, childlike trust in Him, and that He has bidden us to turn a deaf ear to the reproaches of man, saying, "Hearken unto . ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart My Law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be afraid of their revilings. . . even I, am He that comforted] you; who art thou, that thou shouldst ,he afraid of a man that shall die and of the son of man that shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that has stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? . . . I have put My Words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of Mine hand, that I may plant the Heavens [establish the new Heavens], and lay the foundations of the earth [the new earth], and say unto Zion [the people tried and proved by these afflictions to be the worthy heirs of the new Kingdom—the new Heavens and earth], Thou art My People."—Isa. 51:7, 12, 13, 16.

“While the storm of trouble which is to engulf the whole world will affect all men, both individually and collectively, the Lord’s people, who seek only to draw yet closer to Him, entering more fully into the secret place of communion and fellowship and rest in Him, and shutting the doors of faith about them, will be safely hidden from the alarm and fear and trembling that will take hold upon all other classes. And while they patiently endure its effects upon their temporal interests, they will rejoice not only in the knowledge of God’s overruling providence, in the whirlwind and in the storm as well as in the calms of life, but also in His blessed assurance that His wrath will be thus revealed only “for a little moment.” and then will His righteous Kingdom be manifested in power and great glory, and they “shall shine forth as the sun.”—Matt. 13:43.

RETRIBUTION FOR WILFUL SIN.

Verse 21 seems to refer to the operation of the principle of justice in God’s judgments upon the world. The Heavenly father stands for justice, and He has appointed that all of His mercy shall be exercised through the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord will be specially identified with the trouble upon the nations, but it will not be so much His work as the Father’s. The time of trouble is called the Day of Jehovah. We read that “In that day His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives,” and that there shall be a great earthquake.— Zech. 14:4.

While God has done nothing for mankind during the past six thousand years, but has rested so far as any work of restitution is concerned, yet in some instances He has interfered to prevent the spread of evil, as in the case of the Amalekites and of the Sodomites. The Scriptures seem to indicate that in the end of this Age, He will intervene in the affairs of mankind. and execute justice in the time of trouble.

In the Scriptures, justice is represented as calling for retribution. The blood of the murderers’ victims is said to cry for vengeance. Whether the sin has been literal murder, or has been some injustice which has led to crime or suicide, justice will require of humanity this much of retribution on this score. Justice demands that the children of Adam shall suffer. The Church of Christ is a separate class, taken out from the world and having their sins forgiven: They are upholders of truth and righteousness.

But this time of trouble coming upon the world will be the time when justice will get its dues, so to speak. Justice will take its “pound of flesh.” It will requite for the more or less wilful sins of humanity. The class that has reaped the benefit of the spoliation of the poor in the past, will have to pay some of the toll to justice in squaring the accounts.

The Apostle James says, “Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon you.” We are not to think, however, that in this present time God is dealing with the rich. None are on trial now except the Church of Christ. ‘The others are merely the world of mankind, one part of which God will permit to wreak a measure of vengeance on the other part. But man’s extremity will be God’s opportunity. His appointed time for the establishment of His Kingdom will have come, and He will cause this wrath of man to work out good for humanity.

Those who are causing this trouble to come on are not aware of what they are doing. But when satisfaction shall have been made to justice, Messiah’s Kingdom will interpose. We read that “except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved.” This exacting of a penalty for such sins as we have enumerated is not at all in conflict with the Bible teaching that Christ died for sin. Jesus pays the sin-debt of the world.

The sin-debt of the world was a death penalty. Unless the Lord Jesus had met that penalty, the world would never be released. That death penalty would have remained upon the world, without any injustice

in any way. The selfishness which has led to murder is, however, over and above the sin of Adam, the penalty of which was met by our Lord. Whoever has, through injustice, been responsible for murderous conditions is held responsible for those conditions.

We read that in the end of the Jewish Age our Lord said that God would require from that generation a reckoning for all the righteous blood shed from the time of Abel down (Mat. 23:35). And the trouble which came upon the Jewish nation in the end of their Age fully settled that account. They had light and knowledge, and thus were held responsible. They were obliged to suffer because of the injuries that were not only perpetrated by some, but endorsed or winked at by others.

LIGHT AND RESPONSIBILITY.

In the close of this Age, it would seem, the judgment of the Lord will be upon Christendom, which has had much light, although at times only a refracted light. But a measure of responsibility has come with it, and apparently the Lord's edict is that they shall not escape the penalty. From this generation He will require all the righteous blood shed during this Age, upon it, even as He did from the Jews in- the end of their Age. This will cause the great time of trouble here. as it did there. So far as the world is concerned, they may not perceive the relationship between this time and the past. We know only from the Scriptures. God gives us this understanding, that we may have the greater poise and comfort of mind.

In thinking of the nature of the tribulation at the end of this Age, we are first of all to remember that it is a tribulation coining upon the world and the hypocrites. The Lord tells us that if we are faithful, we shall not come into the condemnation coining upon the world. The intimation is that those who are not faithful enough to be members of the Little Flock will come into this condemnation with the world. So the Lord tells us of some who will be appointed their portion with the hypocrites—Matt. 24:51.

Only the wheat class constitute the Church of Christ. Only they will -be gathered into the 'barn (Matt. 13:30). The tare class will undergo this time of trouble coining upon the world. The hypocrite class will include the rich of this world. These are addressed by St. James, 5:1-6. In these verses the Apostle is turning aside from his line of thought. Then he addresses the Church again. The trouble will be especially hard on the rich, who are represented as weeping and howling for misery.

The Great Company class is typically represented by the scapegoat of Israel's Atonement lay ceremonies. The -bullock typifies our Lord Jesus, and the Lord's goat His faithful followers (Heb. 13:11-13). After the faithful ones have finished their course, then something will be done with the scapegoat—the Great Company. The account in

Leviticus is very definite that the high priest will then lay upon the head of the scapegoat all the iniquities of all Israel (Lev. 16:21). All the sins of all the people were laid upon the head of the scapegoat, that it might bear them away— make full satisfaction. As has been declared, God has made provision for the cancellation of original sin through Christ, and has made arrangements for the satisfaction of justice, so far as all the other sins of the world are concerned, through the Great Company class.

There is a correspondency -between the end of the Jewish Age and the end of this Gospel Age in this way. As expiation for the taking of the life of Jesus was required of the Jewish nation, so at the end of the Gospel Age the sacrificed life of the Church will, in a measure, be required of nominal Spiritual Israel.

The Lord seems to give this suggestion, when He says that "The -blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily, I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation." (Luke 11:50, 51). These words of our Lord were actually fulfilled at the close

of the Jewish Age. So in the end of this Age there are certain things charged up against Christendom for their evil deeds. This will include all the persecutions of this Gospel Age, including also, presumably, all the persecutions against the Jews. Therefore, the Scriptures indicate that a great time of trouble similar to that which came upon the Jewish nation in the year 70 will now come upon all Christendom in the closing days of this Age.

Speaking of this trouble at the end of the Gospel Age, our Lord said, "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). Again (verse 28) He said, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." "My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors."

How much trouble there will be in our passing into the secret "chambers," in passing unto the Lord, we do not know. Whatever the experiences may be, all of the Lord's faithful people will 'be joyful in that they will have the thought of being so soon forever with the Lord. We can rejoice even as did St. Stephen.

"FEAR NOT."

Isa. 43:5.

Fearest thou the way before thee? Seemeth it to thee That the journey all untrodden Dark and rough must be?

Shrink not from the dread to-morrow; Take thy rest to-night- God may show a brighter pathway In the morning light.

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CONVENTION NEWS FROM SOUTH AUSTRALIA

THE Easter Convention at Adelaide was again a season of spiritual refreshment and blessing. we believe, to all present. True to His promise the Lord's blessing was surely with us as we met around His Word with earliest desire to do His will and partake of His blessings.

On the Thursday evening we met to keep the memorial of our Saviour's death, and once again we were reminded of the great love of God which provided the Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world. We were also reminded again of the love of Christ, who willingly gave Himself to be man's Redeemer, and who for the joy set before Him endureth the cross, despising the shame. How full of deep and solemn meaning is this simple remembrance which our dear Lord has enjoined upon us to observe each year at the appropriate season. It reminds us again of our consecration vow to lead to self and to live unto God, for only if we suffer with Him can we hope to share in the glory of His Kingdom; only if we are dead with Him can we hope to live with Him. Then in the type the seven days' feast of unleavened

bread shows how the consecrated Christian is to continually feed upon the pure unleavened bread of truth, as says the Apostle—"Christ our passover (Lamb) is slain for us, therefore let us keep the feast."

The Convention meetings commenced on the Good Friday with a Bible Study on Eph. 6:10-18. In these verses the Apostle reminds us that God has provided a protection for His people. and we need to put on the whole armour of God so that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. The line pieces of defensive armour are presented to us—the girdle of truth representing that we have pledged ourselves in our consecration to be servants of the truth, the girdle being an emblem of "servitude" or "diligence." The breastplate of righteousness represents our justification through the merit of the precious blood of Christ. Having the feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace suggests the necessity for careful preparation that our service for the truth may be rendered in a right spirit of love, meekness, gentleness and patience, and so minister a blessing to others. The shield of faith must not be forgo; our confidence must be in God and in His promises, and in His mighty power to help us. The helmet of salvation would represent that a clear understanding of the teachings of the Word is a necessary part of the Christian armour. We must understand the Word of God in order to have a proper hope. The sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God, being mentioned last, suggests that we need some experience in the Christian pathway, before we are prepared to use the sword aright. In conjunction with the armour, the Apostle urges the necessity for earnest persevering prayer.

On the Saturday and Sunday the study of Phil. 2:1-16 engaged our attention. Here the Apostle exhorts us to love and unity, and lowliness of mind, keeping before us the example of Christ who humbled Himself in order to become our Redeemer, and was obedient even unto the death of the cross. Because of such obedience God has highly exalted our Lord and given Him a name above every name, and so we should strive to work out our salvation with great carefulness, and to live the true Christian life as good examples in the midst of the twisted, perverse conditions of this present evil world.

The Bible Study on the Easter Monday was from Phil. 3:8-14. These verses give us a glimpse of the earnestness of Paul in his effort to follow in the steps of Jesus. He would count earthly gain but loss for Christ's sake. His one ambition was to win Christ to know Christ to experience the power of His resurrection, to share in His sufferings, to be dead with Him as a member of His body in sacrificial death, that he might also share in the likeness of His resurrection. Paul's singleness of purpose is worthy of imitation: he would forget the things of the world and earnestly press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling. This mark for the prize would be the mark of character-likeness, to Christ we are to be conformed to the image of Him. and to this end we, like Paul, should count all things else as loss and

dross, and so run that we might, by the Lord's grace, reach the mark and gain the prize— the immortal crown,

Addresses given by various brethren assisted toward the general helpfulness of the meetings. "Vigilance," and "Perilous Times," were the topics chosen by two brothers, who exhorted us to earnest watchfulness in view of the many snares and allurements of the Christian way. A discussion on "Christian Warfare." What? Where? When? also proved to be helpful, showing that the Christian warfare is a fight of the spiritual mind against the natural mind. and we must exercise perseverance and determination and a good strong faith if we would gain the victory. It is not by might nor by power, but be the Lord's spirit that we are enabled to overcome. When we are weak in our own strength then we may be strong in the Lord and in the power of this might. A symposium on the "Love, of God." the "Love of Christ." and "Love of the brethren" and an exhortation "Fear not Little Flock," as well as addresses from Ezek. 14:2)-3. and Heb. 13:9: "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines," gave added interest to the meetings. In the closing address, our brother dwelt upon the Apostle's words. "It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace." We should not be carried about with new and fanciful teachings. but rather seek to be established in that which we know and have proved to be the truth. We should "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

The Adelaide and Gawler Classes appreciated having with us some six or seven brothers and sisters from Victoria and New South Wales, as well as some from the nearby country districts; and our hearts were filled with gratitude to God for His goodness to us in granting so helpful and happy a season of Christian fellowship.

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

"THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME."

It was with an air of deep appreciation, sincerity and reverence that the Melbourne brethren gladly met on the evening of Tuesday, March 31, to memorialise the death of our dear Lord.

We were reminded again of the rich symbolic meaning that must ever be attached to the tokens of bread and wine, as these would fitly represent the true "Bread from heaven" broken for us and the life poured out in sacrifice on our account.

The brethren were encouraged to more deeply view their own standing as Body members in true participation of a life willing to suffer with their Head, and to more and more deny themselves and to take up their cross and follow Christ along the same narrow way of love and sacrifice.

We viewed, too, the blessed realisation, that, in the partaking of the tokens, it pictured not only the glorious truth of salvation or "sparing alive" of the first-born antitypical Priestly class, but also our faith in the expected deliverance so soon we believe to be accomplished, and when we shall partake in the truest and richest sense of the cup of joy and blessing in the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour.

We rejoiced also in the knowledge that when the Church's cup has been drunk to the full and the last member gathered out, then it will be that the "earnest expectation of the creature" will be realised, and the blessings and deliverance of the poor groaning creation come into operation, and all on account of the precious blood of Christ so freely shed that all might have life through Him. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me,

Bless and praise His Holy Name.”

From our dear brethren in other parts comes reports of their grateful appreciation of the privilege of once again observing the Memorial of our loving Lord’s death, and the blessings received as they assembled for this purpose in little companies, ill twos and threes, and in many cases alone with the Lord Himself.

In Sydney the Class members were thankful that others of like precious faith from distant parts were able to be present with them on the evening of March 31st “to keep the feast.” They were solemnly reminded again of the significance of the occasion, and of the emblems partaken, representing our Lord’s ‘body broken for us, and life poured out on our account. All realised that the Lords spirit was with them according to His promise. and that we are indeed a favoured people to be reckoned as sons of our Heavenly Father, on account of the merit of our dear Redeemer, and our consecration vow to follow in His steps faithfully unto death. Amongst other accounts of this special season is one from our little company of faithful brethren at Digby, Victoria, who, with all fellow-members in Christ, realise that He alone is their hope, their salvation, their all. With all God’s people their thoughts were centred upon the gracious, willing sacrifice of Christ, our Passover Lamb, all that He suffered for our sakes, and with renewed desire to faithfully endure to the end of earth’s pilgrimage well pleasing in His sight.

We pray that this Memorial season may have been realised by all God’s consecrated people as a further manifestation of the Lord’s grace and strength, and that the days ahead will find all waiting patiently on God, as we seek to fulfil our covenant of sacrifice with the gracious prospect of so soon drinking anew in the Kingdom.

“Grant us Thy peace, as we
The heavenly pathway run Thy face to see.
Cause us to know and choose the way
In which Thou bid’st us—Watch and Pray,
Until Thy will be clone.”

THE JEWISH DATE OF PASSOVER.

The question has been raised as to the reason why over two days elapsed this year between the observance of the Memorial of our Lord's death on the evening of March 31st (Nisan 14th) and the time of full moon in the early morning of Friday, April 3rd (Nisan 16th), seeing that each Jewish month begins with the new moon.

While we are not in any way in bondage to certain days and new moons, etc., this matter is of interest, for it is understood that the moon was about full at the time of Christ's crucifixion in the closing hours of Nisan 14th, and, taken to symbolise the Law Covenant, its waning after the Cross, well illustrates the passing away of the Law- arrangements, after their fulfilment by the Lord.

That the Jewish people have been particular in commencing their months at the first sight of the new moon is shown by statements that in olden times in some places they had watchers posted on elevated positions to inform the Sanhedrin. Proclamation was then made, "The feast of the new moon," and the beginning of the month was proclaimed by sound of trumpet. However, in the temple it is understood there was always a fixed calendar, or at least a 'fixed decision for festival days determined by the House of Judgment.

The Jewish Calendar of the present day seems to be as exact as in past times, for the new moon of Nisan this year came in about forty minutes before sundown on March 19th, and the 1st of Nisan was reckoned as commencing 011 the 18th at sundown. This seems to account for the moon not having reached its usual fulness this year on Wednesday afternoon, April 1st, the time corresponding to our Lord's crucifixion and death in the closing hours of Nisan 14th on that memorable day so many years ago, the previous evening of which He had instituted the Memorial observance to be kept each year at its anniversary in remembrance of Him.

CAST OUT THE BEAM.

Matt. 7:5.

THESE words are contained in Matthew's record of the Sermon on the Mount, in which the Lord seemed to give instructions concerning the principles which must operate in those who would be His disciples, and this matter of fault-finding and judging others is much emphasised. How well our Lord understood frail humanity and its weaknesses. He had been interested in man even prior to man's creation. He had superintended the work of the preparation of the earth and the production of such things as would supply every human necessity, and give scope for the pleasurable exercise of every faculty along righteous lines. "His delight was with the sons of men." He had seen the fall through disobedience, the entry of sin and its consequence—death. He had seen how soon the image of God had been impaired, how selfishness instead of love became the ruling passion, and how quickly envy, jealousy, pride and ambition had developed and lust, theft, murder, and all the abominable deeds of the fallen flesh resulted. It was such a "world of sinners lost and ruined by the fall" that the Saviour undertook to come and rescue. It was from such a world that the Church was to be taken. He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

The Apostle has put it, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." It would be well if every one who professes consecration to "walk in His steps"—to be "dead with Christ," would as truly realise as did the Apostle how utterly unworthy we are of being favoured by the call of God to enter this race for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus. There seem to be many somewhat like the Pharisees. From a standpoint of respectable birth and good training they have been favoured more than

others. They are outwardly the best living people, good, honest, moral, religious and perhaps liberal givers to the poor, interested in good works. They are well represented by the man that went to the temple to pray, "I thank Thee that I am not as other men are. . . I fast twice in the week,

I pay tithes of all I possess," etc. He was not like the poor sinner who was standing afar off behind him, saying,

"God be merciful to me a sinner." All! is it not just there that this miserable "holier than thou" spirit gets possession of one; instead of looking unto Jesus the Captain of our salvation, the perfect One, the One we must copy—whose character likeness is the "Mark for the prize," the critical eye rests on one whose faults are more open to view, and self satisfaction grows by comparing outward appearances. Without just uttering the words, the attitude is assumed, I do not drink, I do not smoke, I do not attend theatres, I abstain from worldly pleasures, I give my time to religious work,

I give to the church and to the poor, I read my Bible and am regular in prayer and in attendance at worship and study classes, and lead an honourable life, and so the Lord has called me to be a joint-heir with Christ. And there enters a spirit of judging, and, thinking of others, as, for example, that this one may possibly be of the "little flock" or that one of the great multitude, and another is not a consecrated Christian at all. There seems to be more pleasure for such people, in looking for faults in others, than in observing the brave fights that may be in course in their hearts and wills, battling against their inherited weaknesses and striving to reach the "mark."

The self-complacency and pride reminds one of the Laodicean Church condition. Sad, miserable condition, to think themselves so rich, in need of nothing when, in reality, they lack everything that matters most; and though the Laodicean Church of the present-day have seemed to think that they were the very gate of heaven they have been cast off by the Lord, who looks not on the outward appearance but on the heart. "Thou knowest not that thou art miserable and blind and naked."

It was the Pharisees, the best living—the holiness people, the self righteous, who despised the Lord because He went and did eat with publicans and sinners, who were so denounced by Christ that He said that the publicans and sinners would go into the Kingdom before them. It was these Pharisees who were the fault finders. They made long prayers to be seen and heard of men, but they made the word of God void by their own traditions and bye-laws.

There appears to be a similar class to-day who are well satisfied with their own attainment. They glory in their respectability; their outward appearances command the respect of others, and they seem to think that they can shine the brighter by holding up to view the deficiencies of others. Some glory in their sense of good order, and surely all should endeavour to have all done decently in order." All should try and so observe order, do the right thing at the right time in glad obedience to the arrangements of either the church, home, office or workshop. 'Those, however, who are the better balanced along this line should not expect others to find it so easy to comply. They must exercise patience and make allowances for such, and rejoice if they can observe any attempt to overcome the natural weakness; while at the same time trying to assist all towards a proper conduct. If, on the other hand, they should become impatient and by word or gesture they should wound or offend one of the Lord's little ones theirs would surely be the greater sill. They would be those represented as saying, "Let me take the mote out of your eye," while they had a beam (or splinter, as the word might be better translated) in their own. The Lord, who looks less upon the outer man than on the heart, may see the greater effort towards perfection in the one from a natural sense, the less perfect.

The fault-finding, judging spirit, is a mean, abominable thing. It is conceived in pride, selfishness, ambition, jealousy, envy and strife, and when the little "unruly member," the tongue, is once set going in

the service of such a spirit, who can tell where it will end? It leads to destruction; as James says, "It is set on fire of Gehenna." How often is envy at the root of the matter, and the works of the flesh so quickly press the tongue into their service.

Some one aspires to a position for which he or she has little or no qualification, while another is seen to possess the required talent. Envy quickly seeks to defame by exposing some weakness, or seeming wrong transactions or connections; or anything to discredit the person who stands in envy's way. How small, how foolish, how wicked must such a course appear in the sight of Him who seeth not as man seeth, for the Lord looketh not On the outward appearance of a man but upon the heart:" "Take out the beam," take away these abominable defects—the works of the flesh—jealousy, envy, malice, bitterness, etc.; cleanse the heart from secret faults, make the inside of the platter clean, and out of the good treasure of the pure heart will proceed, not jealousies, envies, thefts, murders, fault-findings, slanders, imputations, evil surmisings and evil speaking, but words of grace, of sympathy, encouragement and helpfulness to all fellow travellers in the straight and narrow way, beset by so many foes. The obstacles are so great, the standard of the mark for the prize is' so high, that the most nearly perfect of all in the race would utterly fail if they depended only on their own ability. All need the office of our great Advocate, for all are so weak and sinful by nature, so that none can glory in his strength above others. Some who appear so strong and are looked up to as so respectable and good and zealous are, maybe, very weak on points not discernible to human eye, but manifest to Him with whom we have to do.

The Lord Jesus knew what was in man, and, therefore. how much there is, in His words, warning us against this evil of wanting to take out the mote from a brother's eye—"Take out the beam." That is, attend to Your own faults, look to your own conduct, purify your own vision.

Do we find ourselves apt to think evilly of others do we find that we seem to look more for their faults than for their

virtues—are we paying more attention to the outward man than to the heart's intentions—the new creature in Christ? Then let us pray with the Psalmist, "Create in me a clean heart, oh God, and renew a right spirit within me."

We should be happy to put the best possible construction on the conduct of others. We should be anxious to find excuse and to defend each fellow member in Christ, or indeed any one even of the world. We should be glad that we are not required to judge others. The Lord is the Judge and He is a kinder Judge than man, so that David was wise when he: said, "Let me fall into the hands of the Lord, but not into the hands of man.

How solemn are the repeated words of Christ, "With what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged." With whatsoever measure we mete, it shall be measured to you again."

What sympathy and tenderness was expressed by the Master in all His contact with fallen humanity, even in their sins and weaknesses. The one thing more than another that called forth His indignation was hypocrisy and hard heartedness. "If ye from the heart forgive not those who grieve or hurt you, yes even your enemies, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you." Such instruction seems to run throughout His is teaching in parable and example, as well as in plain language. How miserable does the prodigal's brother appear in his complaint regarding the welcome given his returned penitent brother, beside the father's pitying heart which took idol along the way to meet the erring son.

What indignation is pictured in tile parable of the two debtors. The one who had been forgiven the great debt sought out a man who owed him a small sum. He pressed him and had him put in jail until he should receive his value So if we will remember how much we owed, the debt of sin, the penalty, death, and how

God willingly forgave us all, on account of Christ's sacrifice, can we be hard on any even in the world who may have injured us, and could we withhold a free glad forgiveness from any who showed sorrow or regret for wrongs done? How often, says Peter, shall I forgive an offender in a day, "seven times?" Nay, saith the Master, I say not seven times, but if one shall offend seventy times seven and seventy times seven shall repent, thou shalt forgive.

How far is all this from the fault finding, busybodying, defaming disposition. The very fact of trying to belittle another by slander, evil speaking, evil imputations, or of holding up to view another's weakness for correction, generally indicates that the fault-finder has a similar fault himself, just as in the parable it was not the man with the small mote in his eye who wanted to take out the splinter from the other. It was the one with the greater defect who wanted to put the other right.

It would seem, then, that when we see faults in others. it would be the wisest thing to examine our own hearts and minds, words and actions, and see whether or not we are in a position to "cast the first stone." In most cases such a personal examination will reveal the fact that we have enough to do to mind our own concerns, to make straight paths for our feet, and cleanse our own hearts and minds, that we may be vessels prepared and sanctified and made meet for the Master's use.

We may depend upon it that the Master will not require a service of us other than to encourage every fellow member in the Body, and to carry the glad tidings of peace and salvation, bringing comfort to the sorrowing. binding up the broken hearted, bringing strength to the weak and weary, for "A broken and a contrite heart, oh God, Thou wilt not despise." Let us see that we have no beam in our own eye, before we begin to complain respecting another's fault or weakness.

The great Head of the Body will seek to assist each and all towards perfection, and we all need His advocacy, for if any man say he is without sin he deceiveth himself, but if any one sin we have an Advocate with the Father who does not hold up our weaknesses before the great white throne, but, on the other hand, He pleads with His own blood in the presence of God for us.. Surely, then, every member in Christ, immersed into His spirit, will also seek not to criticise and judge one another, but to have an overflowing love that will cover a multitude of sins. It is the great enemy of the Church. the "accuser," who would find fault and accuse and discourage. but "How happy are we who in Jesus agree." and rejoice in the glorious hope of being one day able to encourage the whole race of mankind to walk up the highway of holiness step by step. overcoming all inherited weakness. What patience will he needed, then, and it is needed now. Let patience have her perfect work that ye may be perfect and entire and wanting in nothing. The first essential is our personal progress towards the: nook for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. This is the will of God concerning you, even your sanctification—Cast out first the Beam.

"How shall we gauge the whole, who can only guess a part?
How can we read the life when we cannot spell the heart?
How can measure another, we who can never know
From the jutting:, above the surface the depth of the vein below?"

"Even our present way is known to ourselves alone—
Height and abyss and torrent, flower and thorn and stone;
But we gaze on another's path as a far off mountain scene,
Scanning the outlined hills, but never the vales between.

“How shall we judge their present, we who have never seen
That which is past for ever, that which might have been?
Measuring by ourselves, unwise indeed are we;
Measuring what we know, by what we can hardly see.”

THE SECRET.

I went to Hampton Court the other day, and saw the great vine which is such an attraction to visitors, and is certainly one of the largest and most fruitful in the world. bearing hundreds of bunches of splendid fruit. They say the roots of this vine go clown to the Thames nearly a quarter of a mile away.

A few years ago the gardeners cut the great vine back to its withered-looking trunk. Had you seen it then you would have said: “The vine is dead. That is the end of it.” The gardeners did not think this. They knew that the true vine is the root, that the branches are hut its manifestation, the bearers of its foliage and fruit. These are sustained ‘by the root, and without the root they would not even be there.

So Jesus, using this as an illustration of the hidden, secret source of life in the souls of men and women, the spiritual life which is “life indeed.” said: “A branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine.” No, unless it draw its sustenance, its being, from the Root, it not only fails to bear fruit but it actually withers and dies. The gardener cuts it off and throws it away. It has ceased to be “in the vine.” It is a dead branch. The vitality of the Root, the secret source of its life, has ceased to flow through it.

One could imagine the great Root saying to the branches: “Be of good cheer, the pruning knife will cut you, the cold of winter will try you, many blights and devouring pests will attack you—but be of good cheer, in Me you have all you need, and without Me you have nothing, least of all life.”

So, when you are discouraged, look up and say: “I will be of good cheer, for my life is hid with Christ in God.” It is the secret not only of life, but of everlasting life.”—”Home Chat.”

EXCERPT.

THE necessity for highly figurative language is shown in such expressions as the ‘sun rises,’ and the ‘sun sets,’ for how otherwise could we make our meaning clear to the young and ignorant who are not acquainted with the occult fact that it is our earth that moves and not the sun.

“And just in this way God has found it absolutely necessary in revealing His Divine infinite nature to our feeble finite minds, to use those anthropomorphic (that is, manlike) representations of His personality and power, which we find throughout His word, and to which the atheist has raised such foolish objection. When we read of ‘the eyes,’ ‘the ears,’ ‘the nostrils,’ ‘the arms,’ ‘the hands,’ ‘the loins,’ ‘the feet,’ not to speak of ‘the shadow,’ ‘the wings,’ ‘the feathers,’ and ‘the roar’ of the Most High, we perceive on reflection that God, the Almighty, could not speak to man in any other way than by representing His actions in such figurative terms. This also applies with equal force to such descriptions of God where He is said ‘to rest,’ ‘to sit,’ ‘to laugh,’ ‘to shout,’ ‘to wake,’ ‘to smell,’ etc., as well as to the terms ‘anger,’ ‘jealousy,’ ‘repentance,’ ‘hatred,’ ‘fury,’ ‘revenge,’ and ‘grief,’ when applied to the emotions of the Divine Mind. All that is meant by these and such expressions is that, in the Divine mind and conduct, there is something analogous to and resembling the sensible objects and human affections on which these metaphorical expressions are founded.”—J. NEIL, M.A., in “Strange Figures.”

It doesn’t take much of a man to be a Christian, but it takes all there is of him.—E.S.J.