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STRENGTH AND COURAGE.

“Be thou strong and very courageous.” Joshua 1:7.

CONVENTION ADDRESS.

THE older a Christian becomes in his pilgrimage along the “narrow way,” the more he realises the necessity of being strong, stouthearted, and courageous, if he would seek to “win through,” and successfully combat the various .. trials and besetments that surround him ill the world in general, respecting this matter of what constitutes strength and boldness of purpose, both morally and physically. In the one case it is—“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit”—as saith the inspired Word, and in the other case, self-confidence, and outward show, and the “survival of the fittest,” is the code of mankind generally. As we look around us, there is much to be admired in the world in the many evidences of nobility, strength of character, fortitude, etc., which must be commended and rightly appreciated, and, were it not so, there is no doubt that the world would suffer much in consequence. But even from the natural view-point, do we not perceive that these commendable characteristics are few and far between, that mankind generally is very deficient in strength and nobility, both morally and physically, and that only one here and there, in proportion to the world’s vast population, can claim these excellent qualities in both aspects of their nature?

Again, taking it for granted that the few possess these splendid qualities, it is only for a brief span of years in which the strength is maintained, and often the nobility of character undermine of the imperfection and degraded status of mankind in general, of whom he forms a part. While the wise man says The glory of the young man is his strength,”—the Psalmist pictures the true position when he said:—“The days of our years are three score years awl ten, and if by reason of strength they be four score years, yet is their strength, labour and sorrow, for it is soon cut off, and we fly away”—and again:—“As for man, his days are as grass, as the flower of the field, so he flourisheth, for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more.”

Surely the world at large is a poor groaning creation, and well would it be if more serious thought and wisdom were exercised, during this brief span of life, with its fast fleeting ‘ears, in numbering their days, and applying the heart unto wisdom. We look forward to the time when mankind will appreciate, and be able to exercise the true wisdom, and when they shall say with the Psalmist of old:—“The Lord is the strength of my life, in whom shall I be afraid.” We rejoice that the time is very close at hand when all shall realise that it is not by might nor by power, but God’s Holy Spirit, “that worketh all in all,” and as the Scriptures say:—“Better is he that ruleth his spirit, than lie that taketh a city.”

Now, let us see what viewpoint we each must take in order to become strong, courageous Christians. First of all, we have fully to realise that we have no strength of our own, and, the sooner we appreciate this fact, the stronger Christians we will become. Only as we go in the strength of the Lord can we hope to accomplish anything, and successfully fight the good fight of faith, realising at all times the Apostle’s words: “When I am weak then am I strong.”

We cannot do better than examine a few worthy examples of strong. Christian character. What a wonderful demonstration of strength of character was exhibited by our Lord, as He rejoiced to walk the pathway of sacrifice and obedience, only in the strength of Jehovah, and energised by the power of the Holy Spirit’s influence. Surely, in viewing our Lord’s life, was it not fitting that He should be termed, “The Lion of the tribe of Judah”? In that faithful, obedient, sacrificial life, poured out with such fortitude, and in the face of continued opposition, was it not in verification of the Scripture which “In quietness and confidence shall be your strength I low can we explain, or

harmonise this strength of character of our Lord, with His meek, submissive, and inoffensive disposition, so apparently contrary, and a stumbling to many? Amongst mankind in general, any indication of a quiet, inoffensive, meek, humble spirit savours of weakness, and is considered that such an one lacks confidence, independence and moral courage. Does this not forcibly prove that “the world by wisdom knows not God,” but relies upon its own vain self-esteem, wisdom and imagination? They have yet to learn that the wisdom of the worldly wise shall perish, as it is written: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to naught the understanding of the prudent.” In our Master, we have a beautiful example of a well-balanced mind, strong for the right, and fearless of the consequences, and yet gentle, meek, and loving towards all with whom He came in contact. How we marvel at His strength of character, manifested in this twofold aspect, as represented in the “Lion” of the tribe of Judah, and as the “Lamb” of God. How easy it might be for us to stand up, strong and courageously for the cause of Truth and its defence, and yet lack the kindly spirit- of love, meekness humility, the lamb-like qualities so necessary and trial to every footstep follower of Christ.

Another noble example of great strength of character, and true Christian development, surely is the loved Apostle Paul. What a wonderful-, all-round, well-balanced disciple he proved himself to be. Do we not more and more perceive that it is only as we allow the operation of God’s Holy Spirit of love and of a sound mind to quicken and guide us, can any follower of Christ possibly hope to, become strengthened with might by His spirit in the inner man.

Let us look for a while at the position of some of the Old Testament worthies, and their strength of character, founded or based upon their faith in God alone. What an excellent example of strength and courage twofold aspect have we in David and Goliath, owed from both the Christian’s and the world’s standpoint. the one hand, a great giant of superhuman pitted against a diminutive shepherd lad, and • know the result of the combat. The Philistine came with sword, shield, and spear, to make short work of the shepherd boy, as the giant would view with disdain and contempt the young lad, while David came in the might and power of the Lord God of Hosts. A beautiful picture of the David class, triumphing the giant of evil, in its many forms, through the strength given to those who fight in the name of their God, and with the power of His spirit working mightily in them. Like David, we must know in what we believe, and be found only using the “pebble” from the brook, and the “sling” of Truth, the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God.

Then, again, we note the three Hebrew children in their experiences and strength of character, demonstrating great faith and fortitude, in refusing to worship any other than the only true God, and in consequence, being cast into the fiery furnace. How these also were protected on account of their noble stand against the command of King Nebuchadnezzar, which was contrary to their well-established, God-fearing heart and mind.

Again we are reminded, in this connection, of the boldness and strength of character of Joshua and Caleb, the two alone among the spies sent out to spy out the land of Canaan, who showed faith and courage, and were permitted to enter the promised land, while the others, who became fearful, and brought an evil report concern the land. shed in the wilderness. Have we), as did I men, to seek the promised Canaan and have not many of the chosen ones of this Gospel become fearful like the majority of the spies, and nothing to commend, giving: only an evil report? Have not the giants in the land, and the difficulties of tuned many to become fainthearted and weak. How we need to press forward courageously along our wilderness journey, toward the promised Canaan rest, and like Joshua and Caleb, realise the Lord’s hand and oversight with us. In His strength we shall be brought safely to our desired haven, against every foe and difficulty which must surely be confronted and overcome.

Another notable example of God-given strength and courage in the face of fearful odds was the occasion of . Gideon’s small band of 300 against the hosts of Midianites and the Amalakites. We recollect how Gideon’s army of 32,000 were tested as to their courage, faith, and strength of character, and how, at the first testing, 22,000 were allowed to return home on account of their becoming fearful of the enemy, leaving still 10,000, which, the Lord declared, were vet too many, and a further sifting was necessary in order that the required number be, obtained according to Divine direction.

Perhaps of all Old Testament pictures respecting God ‘It! overruling providence and care for His people, none serves better than this one, to stimulate and .encourage the child of God in his battle against the hosts of sin, which, pressing hard, seek ever to draw him from the prize. Just as this small band of Gideonites came upon the foe with strategy with a great blowing of trumpets, and lamps in their pitchers which they brake, thus defeating the enemy taken unawares, so, too, we, although only a “little flock,” can just as assuredly overcome every obstacle, by fighting in the strength which God supplies, we see the wisdom, to let our light shine from our earthen vessels and at the same time sound forth the silver trumpets of Truth.

(To be continued.)

When we are judged,

we are chastened of the Lord. 1 Cor. 11:32.

When on entering a house I see a child in disgrace for disobedience, although I tenderly consider the erring child, I especially feel with the grieved, sorrowing parent. When we sin, and are chastened of God, we should rather consider how the heart of our heavenly Father has by us been grieved, than be taken up with the smart of our stripes by His rod of correction.

R. C. Chapman.

Any influence is religious which fills the mind with gratitude and peace, which makes a man humble and patient and wise, which teaches him that the only happiness possible is to attune and harmonise his mind with the gracious purpose of God. A. C. B.

Correspondence

The Secretary, N.S.W., 3/2/'30. Berean Biblical Institute.

Dear Brother,—

I am enclosing postal notes for . I wish to pay for two subscriptions to the "People's Paper" for this year. When I have read them I send them to other people and I would like to have more.

Please send me two "Hopes Beyond the Tomb" and one Foregleams .of the Golden Age." What change is may add to the tract fund or whatever is best

Christian love, and I pray God's blessing on you and your work for Christ,

Yours in the one hope,

Dear Brethren,— Queensland, Feb. 3, 1930. Greetings in His dear name.

Just a line to enclose my subscription for the "Herald," also the "People's Paper." What is over is for the good cause. I am sorry I have been so long in sending, but with the "Herald" and the "P.P." and the dear old I have not been able to get about much for some time; Book 1 have not felt my confinement hard.

With Christian love to all,

Your sister in Christ,

PEOPLES PAPER.

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CONFUSION.

WHAT confusion reigns in religious circles at this time. Yet Christendom has claimed to be the gate of Heaven, the only means whereby mankind might escape from sin and death and hell. The old and terrible thought of a hell of torture has very generally given way to saner views of God's wisdom, justice and love. Only a small number of Protestant Christians would to-day teach or endorse it. With most people, however, the doctrine has been thrown over, not because they have come to understand God's great plan of salvation and in what way He will deal with mankind generally, after the Church has been selected, and what punishment is to be inflicted upon the incorrigibly wicked, but simply that they could see the foolishness of such a proposition, as preserving sinners alive in order to have them suffer eternally. They appear to have judged the whole teachings of Christianity as being equally false. On making a proper study of the Bible, they wrongly concluded that such teaching was contained in it. They have scented to think that Christ and the Apostles were responsible for the "damnable heresies" which Peter foretold would be introduced and for which the great Papal System must bear the responsibility. The consequence is the great indifference to religion in all so-called Christian lands to-day.

Another factor leading to the infidelity of the times has been the "Higher Criticism" or historicism in the pulpits.

This movement has, however, received many hard humps of late in the many valuable discoveries in Egypt, Palestine, Mesopotamia and elsewhere, corroborating the Bible narratives which these critics had endeavoured to explain away, cast doubt on or deny.

But even among the most sincere of Christian ministers there seems little definite knowledge respecting the Divine purpose, or true Bible teachings. We often read statements from one or another that the old creeds are worn out and that the Church requires a new theology. They seem to recognise that much that is contained in the Church creeds is not necessary, and is not founded on Scripture. We quote the following from the "Spectator":—"We have now learnt that when our Lord founded the Christian Church, He did not give it a creed and a code of rules and a constitution, but He gave it principles. He did not establish either Presbyterianism or Episcopacy, but He built up His Church on the principles of ministry and discipleship. He did not give us a code of conduct, but He taught us the great principles of righteousness and love and sacrifice. He did not give us a creed but a gospel, and He founded the Church on Himself, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone."

We quote this as indicating public opinion, and no doubt many eminent ministers will endorse the wide statements. Yet while they know there is something wrong with the doctrines and creeds, they do not get down to a thorough and honest search for the truth as revealed in the Bible. In their desire to appear "broad," they will admit to their pulpits and discussions Evolutionists, Spiritists, and others of all shades of thought and theories; but any who do not believe the unscriptural doctrines of the Trinity or inherent immortality of the soul are seemingly outside the pale of recognition. If Divine truth is earnestly sought after, then, realising how matters were confused in the Dark Ages, there should be an open inquiry as to what the Scriptures teach, regardless of sect or creed. These two pagan and Papal doctrines stand in the way of a clearer knowledge of the Bible. They are antagonistic to the whole tenor of the Bible; the word Trinity is nowhere found in it, and not in any instance is man or the soul termed immortal. On the contrary, we read, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord," Deut. 6:4. "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." "To us there is one God, the Father of whom are all things and one Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all things," 1 Cor. 8:6. "The head of woman is the man and the head of Christ is God," 1 Cor. 11:3. Also respecting immortality, far from being a quality possessed by nature, it has to be striven for and is given only to the overcomers. "To them who by patient endurance in well doing seek for glory, honour and immortality, eternal life," Rom. 2:7. The soul that sinneth it shall die, Ezekiel 18:4, 20.

While the Lord did not place His Church under any set code of laws, He certainly gave implicit instructions regarding the conduct of His followers. In fact, how could He leave us the "great principles of righteousness and love and sacrifice" without indicating the lines of conduct. Then does not the Sermon on the Mount, commencing with Matthew, fifth chapter, indicate not only the manner of life but the spirit which must animate the true Christian. Nor did the Lord leave us without a creed; He that cometh unto God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of "them that diligently seek Him." The sayings of our Lord and writings of the Apostles clearly and simply state what it is necessary one should believe in order to be saved. Doctrine is necessary, the truth has been given, and the Church is to be "the pillar and ground of the truth." The Christian is to fight the good fight of faith, "holding fast the form of sound words," 2 Tim. 1:13; 1 John 4:1-3; 2 John 7-9, etc. One can nevertheless, while differing from the sweeping statements, appreciate the spirit of the "Spectator's" remarks. Christianity is a practical religion. Christ's teachings provide the true principles for establishing a world in righteousness as well as for the selecting of the Church.

All theories and doctrines and professions and orations are simply tinkling cymbals and sounding brass, unless accompanied by earnest endeavour to apply the Christian principles and live the Christian life, and to attain the same character as the great Head of the Church.

ADELAIDE -CONVENTION.

Word has been received from the Adelaide class, that the Easter Convention will be held there again this year, commencing on Easter Saturday, April 19th, and continuing on the Sunday and Monday.

The Adelaide friends look forward to a helpful season of fellowship at that time, and will be pleased to see any from other parts who are able to attend.

The meetings will be held in Liverpool Buildings (second floor), Flinders Street, Adelaide. Further particulars may be obtained from the secretary, Mrs. Randall, "Lauriston," 45 Welland Avenue, Welland, South Australia.

They Had Been With Jesus.

"I here is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved."—Acts 4:12.

As the apostles were preaching Christ, taking for their text the manifestation of His power through Peter in the healing of the impotent man at the temple gate, "Beautiful," and while the devout worshippers heard them gladly and repentantly the theologians were disturbed. It seemed monstrous to them that any but themselves should undertake to teach the people, and that the people were giving more interested attention to these "laymen" than they gave to them—the chief priests, religious rulers and doctors of the law. In this they but manifested the usual worldly spirit, which in every religious system except the true one manifests special opposition to any light on teaching which does not emanate from those recognised as "ordained" teachers. True, these apostles were ordained by the very highest authority in the universe—the spirit and power of God, communicated by Christ; but such ordination, such authority to teach, was not recognised by those doctors of divinity who, like their successors to this day, failed to recognise the ordinations of God and merely recognise human authorisation to preach.

Not only were they envious that others than themselves should have the ear of the people for religious instruction, but they had listened sufficiently to the discourse themselves to ascertain that the apostles were really imparting to the people some knowledge of spiritual things. The people were actually being taught, and that upon subjects concerning which they, the recognised doctors of divinity and theology, knew nothing, and could teach nothing. If, therefore, such teachings were permitted, the worshippers would very soon know more than their religious rulers, which would never do. They were unable to teach the people themselves, and were not humble enough of heart to receive instruction, and hence were quite ready to be overcome by the spirit of envy, hatred and malice, against those whom the Lord had appointed, and was using, while passing them by. They had power to stop the preaching and to imprison the Apostles, and they did so.

This same spirit was equally manifested, and even more unrighteously, by the religious leaders during the dark ages: they not only imprisoned but tortured and put to death those who ventured to instruct the people in spiritual things without their permission, ordination, etc. This same spirit was manifested to a considerable extent by the reformers also, we are sorry to say—Calvin, Luther, and members in authority in the Episcopal Church from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. were similarly grieved with efforts to instruct the people outside their own channels; and the same spirit to a great extent followed some who fled from persecution in the Mayflower, to American soil. We need not accuse any of these of intentional wrong: they lived in a time when religion and politics were blended, and they verily thought they did God service. In opposing as they did that which they considered to be "heresy." Had they opposed the heresy with force of logic and Scripture merely, and sought thus to vanquish what they believed to be errors, with what they believed to be truth, they would not only have been worthy of approval, but also of admiration, and they might have been led into the truth; but their zeal misled them into the use of unjust means, and they more or less fought against God. But be it noted, all these improper efforts were unavailing to suppress the truth, and merely served to purify and refine the saints, as "gold tried in the furnace."

Arrogantly accustomed to overawing the common people with their titles, learning and authority, the High Priest and all the priestly family, and the religious rulers, and elders, and learned scribes, met as a court to hear, to overawe, to brow-beat, and to condemn Peter and John for their temerity in attempting to teach the people.

They were surprised when the two men whom they had judged from their general manner, dress, etc., to be "unlearned," not theologians. but of the "common people," addressed them meekly. simply, yet with holy boldness,

concerning Jesus of and His power to heal—as much since His crucifixion and resurrection as before. Peter, if speaking of himself, might have been inclined to avoid mentioning the guilt of his hearers in connection with the crucifixion of our Lord; but as a chosen vessel for this very purpose he was specially under the control of the holy Spirit; and, although in no bitter or acrimonious language, he told his hearers the plain truth concerning their guilt as the crucifiers of Jesus, and showed them from the prophets that they had set at naught the chief stone of the spiritual temple of God, but that, nevertheless, God had highly exalted Him to be the Head over the Church, which is His body—the spiritual temple into which we as living stones are being built up.

There is no ambiguity in preaching done thus, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: it is direct, to the point. Peter did not say that Jesus of Nazareth was one of the great teachers of the world, and as worthy to be heard as Moses or Confucius or others; neither did he say, “It makes no difference whether you ever hear of the historic Christ or not, as some false teachers now declare. Peter’s spirit-inspired teachings were evidently riot at all in harmony with what is known as the “new theology.” nor with what is known as the “higher criticism,” nor with what is known as the “broad theology,” advocated by many of our day. Peter gave the message direct and with force: “There is none other name given under heaven or among men, whereby we must be saved.” In these words he told his learned hearers that there was no hope of salvation in Moses and in the Law, any more than in the heathen systems of theology—that knowledge of, and faith in, and obedience to Christ was the only God-appointed way of salvation.

What could they say! What could they do under such circumstances? They had utterly failed to overawe these humble fishermen, and instead had received a discourse from them, which was wholly unexpected under such conditions. They were not in the humble attitude of heart to be affected as were the three thousand who, on the Day of Pentecost, were pricked to the heart and converted, nor were they of the humble, worshipful, teachable spirit of the five thousand worshippers who had been converted by hearing the apostles in the temple the day before. They could do nothing hut marvel. But they took knowledge of the fact that the same meek and quiet spirit of Jesus was in these. His disciples, and the same powerful logic, directness of discourse and humility of manlier.

So let it be with each of us, the followers of Jesus! If we have opportunity for testifying to His grace and gospel, let us not fear to declare the whole counsel of God, but let us not do it rudely nor unkindly, but with the gentleness and force which are of the spirit of the truth.

Just a little farther on—and all who “honour Me,” with joy shall prove My promise true; they too shall honoured be. Full well I know thy heart’s desire, the heights to which thou dost aspire; thy love which burns with holy fire—and all to “honour Me.”

Of too many it must be said, they are not convinced by Scripture. They do not possess an insight into the scope of the Bible. They know little of Moses and still less of the prophets. They do not understand the drift of an epistle. And therefore they may easily be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. A good flow of language, solemnity of manner, and plausible philosophy carry them away. Our armour is the Word. Read the Scripture, and prayerfully and diligently study “the whole counsel of God.”—Adolph Saphir.

Question Box.

Question.—Will ally Christians escape death? Does the fact of our Lord's presence (parousia) in any way lessen our "blessed hope of His appearing" and kingdom?

Answer.—Quite to the contrary, we find that the many evidences of Christ's presence in preparation for the setting up of His kingdom is part of the "blessedness" experienced by those watching and waiting at the- end of the 1335 days of Daniel 12. Far from lessening the hope, the Lord gave the signs which would mark His presence in Matt. 24 and Luke 21, and said, "When ye see these things come to pass, then look up, lift up your heads, for your deliverance draweth nigh." Luke 21:28. This expression clearly shows that the Lord would be present for some time prior to the deliverance of the saints still in the flesh. The deliverance and joys of being with Christ in the kingdom is still our "blessed hope." It is surely nearer than when we first believed; "this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." Matt. 24:34. "When ye see these things come to pass know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand," Luke 21:31. If the "rapture" theory were correct, i.e., that all the saints should be caught away at the moment of our Lord's arrival, these Scriptures could have no meaning. On the other hand, Christ was to come as a thief unknown, secretly, and therefore there is the necessity for these "signs" of His presence, that those "who are alive and remain" might know of His presence and "lift up their heads". in refreshed hope of being one by one or more changed and caught away in the moment of death to be forever with the Lord.

The suggestion that ally members in Christ may pass into the glorified condition without passing through the veil of death is contrary to the words of the Lord and the Apostles. Only if we suffer with Him shall we reign with Him; only "if we be (lead with Him shall we share His resurrection"—we must be "planted in the likeness of His death." "He that seeks to save his life shall lose it."

Ever since the adversary said to our first parents, "Ye shall not surely die," he has made appeal to the human heart along the same lines; for instance, there is the doctrine of "immortality of the soul," by which he has deceived the whole race—heathendom and Christendom, It was the same method behind a message which some, on their own authority, proclaimed a few years ago, that "millions now living would never die," and he would deceive, if it were possible, some of the elect by this suggestion also, of escaping death by being carried away into the air to be with the Lord without dying.

AIDS TO BIBLE STUDY.

"Hopes Beyond the Tomb," (id. "Tabernacle Shadows" 5d.

"Christ's Return: His Revealing and Manifestation." 4d. "I will Come Again" 3d.

"Mythology Explained" 3d.

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CHRIST'S RETURN:

HIS REVEALING AND MANIFESTATION.

“And He shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you, whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began.”—Act 3:20-2.1.

THE little band of believers who had followed the Lord in His service of love and sacrifice during the three and a half years of His earthly ministry, were about to be sorely tried. How great had been their expectations! The mighty power of God had been wonderfully demonstrated in the works of mercy accomplished by the Master, as also by His words of wisdom and grace. There could be no question but that He was The Messiah and Phillip confidently informed Nathaniel, “V\ .gave found Him of whom Moses in the Law and the prophets did write.” “Come and see.” Peter also boldly declared, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” How plaintive was the statement of Cleo-pas as he and another disciple were joined on the way to Emmaus by the Master disguised as a stranger. After having mentioned the terrible tragedy that had been enacted by the rulers of the people in slaying their Lord, he adds, “but we trusted that it had been he who -should have redeemed Israel.”

We then remember how their hearts burned within them as He, Who spake as never man spake, in words of grace explained to them from Moses and all the prophets, how just what had happened was only fulfilling that “which was written.” That it was necessary before Christ should enter His glory and Kingdom and commence the great work of delivering Israel and all the world from the oppression, not only of Rome, but of Satan and sin and its consequences, that He should first suffer. The first step in regard to the liberation of Israel and the world was to pay the price of sin. The penalty of death was against humanity as a whole. justice had condemned the race to death on account of one man's transgression. Adam represented the earthly family. It was in mercy that all were included in the transgression, so that in justice all could be included in the redemption wrought by the one man Christ Jesus. This is clearly stated in Romans 5:11-19, and again in that beautiful chapter on the Resurrection-1! Cor. 15:21-22, “For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead, for as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

Unless there could be a resurrection from the dead, then all the glorious promises of Messiah's Kingdom could avail nothing for the great majority of the human family. Millions of heathen and millions of children have died and never heard anything of God's great plan for blessing mankind, never heard of the only name whereby they could come to God and have salvation. I had not Christ undertaken to pay the price of sin, the death sentence could never have been lifted, and there could never have been any hope of a life to come, there could never have been any Resurrection at all. How necessary, then, was the great sacrificial work of our Redeemer at His first advent. The whole matter of His second presence in Kingdom glory, to “bless all the families of the earth” in accordance with the great Abrahamic promise, depended upon it.

Not only on the Way to Emmaus did the Lord point the disciples forward to the fulfilment of all the glorious prophecies of the Old Testament, but we read Acts 1:3, “To whom also He showed Himself after His passion by many infallible proofs being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.” They had also enquired of Him, “Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”

It had been a matter very much hidden in the scriptures of the Law and the prophets; that Messiah must first suffer, and thus make satisfaction for sin. Peter in his first epistle, chapter 1, tells us that the prophets did not understand their own utterances concerning the sufferings of Christ, but realised that the message was not unto themselves but was intended for those coming later—the church, the spiritual seed of Abraham” It was, then, not surprising that the disciples of our Lord should have such happy expectations regarding His presence. Not understanding the veiled utterances respecting the suffering they were more attracted by the beautiful expressions about the “King that should reign in righteousness.” “Of the increase of His Government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon His Kingdom to order and establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.” “But with righteousness shall He judge the poor and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth.” “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea,” and “in that day shall there be a root out of Jesse which shall stand for an ensign of the people: to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall he glorious.” “In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines -on the lees. well refined. And He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it.” “And the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established

in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths. and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares .and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”. “And they shall sit every man under his own vine and fig tree, and none shall make them afraid.” (Isaiah 32:1; 9:7; 11:4-10; 25:6-9; and Micah 4:1-5.)

“I WILL COME AGAIN”

John 14:3—“If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also.”

Nothing, then, can be more plainly stated than that our Lord Jesus is to come again and accomplish a great work for which the first advent was but the necessary preparation. The hope of Christ’s return and kingdom has ever been the great stimulus to the Church in all her trials and sufferings.

The Gospel Age is the Age of faith, not that faith is a characteristic of mankind during this time, but that God is only dealing with such as have faith, and that faith in Christ’s death is the means of justification and acceptance with God, in contrast with the Law Dispensation when perfect works were required, and also contrasting with the next Age, when under the New Covenant every man will be judged according to his works, (Rev. 20:12-13). During this Age of Faith, God is selecting a certain class which will, when the Christ character has been formed in each, become the Bride of Christ, and will “sit down in His throne even as He overcame and is set with the Father in His throne.” (Rev. 3:21).

In one sense the Lord has ever been with His people according to His promise, “Lo I am with you always, unto the end of the Age.” In the same way He is represented in Revelations as “walking amidst the candlesticks.” This was evidently in the way indicated by His words, “I will not leave you comfortless, I will pray the Father and He will send you another comforter even the spirit of the truth.” (John 14:16-18).

He would be with the Church in all her suffering. No member would he without His sympathy and gracious advocacy with the Father, and comfort of the Holy Spirit. Yet He is represented as being retained in the heavens “until the times of restitution of all things.”

At His first advent He came to His own, the Jewish people, who represented God’s Kingdom in the earth; He offered Himself as their King, and was rejected. “His own received him not.” They then failed to secure the privilege of becoming solely the Church, class; the Kingdom of Heaven class. “The Law and the prophets were until John, since then the Kingdom of Heaven is preached.” (Luke 16:16). They rejected the “chief corner stone.” They were the wicked husbandmen who slew the Son and Heir. Therefore, Jesus said “the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” (Matt. 21:33-43).

Peter refers to the rejection of the chief corner stone, and speaks of the Church, which is being selected from all nations, as being the nation of God. “Which before were not a people but are now the people of God.” (1 Peter 2:6-10).

Not until this Church class is complete will the Jews as a nation see that they crucified the Lord of Glory. Not until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in—the number of God’s elect completed— will blindness be removed from Israel, and they shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. (Matt. 23:39; Rom. 11:25, 27).

James so concisely summarises the matter in Acts 15:14-17, “God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out a people for His name, and to this agree the words of the prophets as it is written, “After this I will return and build again the Tabernacle of David, which is fallen down, and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up, that the residue of men might seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom My name is called saith the Lord, who death all these things.”

This, too, is in accord with the Apostle’s statement in Rom. 8:19-22. “The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. In other words, waiting until the Church is complete and shines forth “as the sun in the Kingdom,” for the blessing of all the willing and obedient of mankind, “All the families of the earth.”

The first and second advents are then closely related in that the plan if the second coming could not be undertaken until the justice of God’s throne had been met by the payment of the penalty for sin to redeem mankind. It will be

readily seen how necessary it was that our Saviour should become a man— not a sinful man, though born of a woman yet not of Adamic stock, but separate from sin, spotless, undefiled—in order that He might offer Himself as a perfect man, in the place of Adam, and thus allow the sinner to go free. “He gave Himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time,” so that “as all in Adam die, so all in Christ might be made alive again.”

Thus it was that Christ came in the body of humiliation for the suffering of death, but the object at the second advent is so very different that He will not again appear in the flesh, of which He said, “My flesh I give for the life of the world,” but we look for Him the second time “in power and great glory,” in the express image of the Father’s person.” He was “put to death flesh, but raised spirit,” and comes to take control of earth, to bind Satan, the present “prince of this world,” and to reign in his stead. To stamp out evil and ultimately all evil doers, to bring in righteousness and peace and make this earth a paradise, filled with the glory of the knowledge of the Lord.

(To be continued.)

Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. 1 Tim. 4, 13.

The Book of God is a store of manna for God’s pilgrim children; and we ought to see to it that the soul get not sick and loathe the manna. The great cause of our neglecting the Scriptures is not want of time, but want of heart, some idol taking the place of Christ. Satan has been marvelously wise to entice away God’s people from the Lord.