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The Peace of God.

“And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” — Phil. 4:7.

PEACE is defined to be a state of quiet, or tranquillity, freedom from disturbance or agitation—calmness, repose. Such a state of mind our text affirms of God. His is a mind tranquil, calm, undisturbed, never agitated, nor even wearied, nor perplexed by any - of the cares of His vast dominion. Yet this perfect peace of God, the Scriptures show, is due neither to the fact that there are no disorders in His vast domain, not yet to any stoical indifference to pain or pleasure, but rather to that perfect poise of His glorious attributes which makes Him Master of His situation as Sovereign of the whole universe.

Have we admired the coolness and calm self-possession of a great general, such as Grant or Napoleon, in the midst of confusion and smoke of battle? Or of a great statesman, such as Gladstone or Bismarck, in the midst of national perplexities and perils? Or of skilled physicians or others in critical times and places? These are only faint illustrations of the peace of self-possession and self-confidence which rules in the mind of God. He is never confused, bewildered, perplexed, anxious or care-worn, nor in the least fearful that His plans will miscarry or His purposes fail, because all power and wisdom inhere in Him.

The scope of His mighty intellect reaches to the utmost bounds of possibility, comprehends all causes and discerns with precision all effects; consequently, He knows the end from the beginning, and that, not only from philosophical principles, but also by intuition. •As the Creator of all things, and the originator of all law, He is thoroughly acquainted with all the intricate subtleties of physical, moral and intellectual law, so that no problem could arise, the results of which are not manifest to His mind. “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.”—I John I:5.

God, the Creator of all things, is also the competent Sustainer of all things. In silent grandeur, from age to age, the whole physical universe fulfils His will, without a suspicion of disorder or mishap; and the same power is pledged for its sustenance throughout the eternal future.

Thus from His own vast, inherent resources of power and wisdom, springs the peace of God. But not from this source alone is the divine peace; for peace is the certain concomitant of inherent goodness. God is the impersonation of every virtue and every grace; and consequently He has the blessed satisfaction and peace of conscious moral perfection as well as inherent wisdom and power.

GOD'S EMOTIONAL NATURE.

Yet we find this peace of God coexisting with much of disorder and trouble. As a Father He shows us that He bears a Father's love to all His intelligent creatures—“the whole family [of God] in heaven and in earth”—and that for His “pleasure they are and were created.” (Eph. 3:15; Rev. 4:1 1.) He created them in His own likeness—with the same mental and moral attributes, so that He might have communion and fellowship with them as sons, and they with Him as a Father, that thus, in mutual fellowship and communion, the Creator and the creature might find pleasure, happiness and delight.

This likeness of God includes in all not only the same mental faculties, but also the free exercise of the same in the formation of character. A creature incapable of thus forming character would not be in God's likeness. And for the purpose of developing character, the alternative of good and evil must be placed before him. The right and the wrong principles of action must be discerned, and the individual -left free to his own choice in the matter, that the pleasure of

God may be realised in the virtuous character resultant from the free choice of righteousness.

Since the love- of God for His -newly created- and innocent creatures is akin to, but much stronger than, the love of an earthly parent • for an innocent infant, and since that loving interest and solicitude does not grow cold as the creature advances in years, • but earnestly watches for the development of the principles and fruits of righteousness, it is manifest that, like an earthly parent, God experiences the sense of either pleasure or pain, . according as His free, intelligent creatures choose the right -course. or the wrong. Of this we are fully assured, not only by thus reasoning from the fact of Ills Fatherhood, but also by all of those Scriptures which speak of some things as abomin-able, displeasing, hateful, and despicable to Him and as giving Him no pleasure; which say that His anger burns against them, and that His indignation and wrath wax hot, even to their destruction. Other Scriptures speak of His pleasure, love, joy, and delight, in pleasing things—in the principles of righteousness and those who obey them—the appreciation of pleasurable emotions of an opposite character, for pain and pleasure may properly be considered the ebb and flow of the same emotion.

These exhibitions of the mind of God indicate clearly an emotional nature in the Divine Being, of which fact we might also judge from the realisation of our own emotional nature, since man was created in God's image. No, God is not a God of stoical indifference, insensible to the emotions of pleasure and of pain; but the perfect poise of His attributes preserves the equilibrium of peace under all circumstances, whether of pain or pleasure.

GOD'S PEACE UNBROKEN BY ETERNAL DISCORD.

With this thought, then, let us consider the circumstances under which the marvellous peace of God has been perpetually maintained. The deep-laid plan of God in all His creative-works required long aims [ages] for its accomplishment. Across the vista of ages He saw in His purpose the glory of an intelligent creation in His own likeness, established in righteousness and worthy of His gift of eternal life. He therein saw the mutual pleasure of the Creator and the creature, and with a peaceful patience He resolved to wait for the glorious consummation.

As the plan developed and time rolled on, the free Moral agency of His creatures, misused by some, was enabling them to develop evil characters. By this means discord was introduced into His family—"the family [of God] in heaven and in earth"—all His creatures, angels and men; and the family was divided, some holding to righteousness and some choosing to do evil. But such a contingency was one of the foreseen necessities of the far-reaching plan, the glorious outcome of which was, in the divine judgment, worth the. cost of all the trouble and loss which He foresaw.

What a dreadful thing is family discord. How a prodigal son or a wayward daughter often brings. the grey hairs of the human parent down with sorrow to the grave! Ah! the heavenly .Father knows something of such sorrow.; for He saw Satan, one of his sons (Isa. 14. 12), an angel of light, fall as lightning from heaven. (Luke 10:18.) For six thousand years, at least, that son has been in open, defiant rebellion against God, and most _actively and viciously engaged in inciting further rebellion and wickedness. He saw many of the angels leave their first estate (Jude 6) and become the allies of Satan, and then He. also saw the whole human race fall into sin. Did ever any human parent find such a. conspiracy—so virulent and hateful—spring up in his family? Surely not!

Then God found it necessary to perform the unpleasant duties of discipline. In His justice He must disown the disloyal sons and deal with them as enemies. Though all the while His Fatherly love was preparing to bless the deceived and fallen ones when the purposes of redemption should restore the repentant to His favour, love must be veiled, while only stern. relentless justice could be manifested. This has been no pleasant duty, nor has the attitude of the sinner been pleasing to Him.

Consider the love against which these recreants sinned.. Though from God cometh every good and perfect gift, His favours have been despised, His love spurned. His righteous authority conspired against and defied, His character maligned, misrepresented, made to appear odious, hateful, unrighteous, and even despicable. Yet, through it all the, peace of God continues, and for six thousand years He has endured this contradiction of sinners against Himself.

And still, O, wondrous grace,,! His love abounds; and it is written that He so loved the world, even while they were yet sinners, that He gave His only-begotten Son to die for them; and that through Him judgment (trial) is also to be extended to those angels that fell. with the exception of Satan, the leader and instigator of the whole conspiracy—the father of lies.—john 3:16; 1 Cor. 6:3; Jude 6; Heb. 2:14; Rev. 20:10, 14.

GOD'S PEACE COMPATIBLE WITH SORROW.

This gift of divine love was another indication of the cost to our heavenly Father of His great and marvellous plan. Not only did He behold the fall into sin of a large proportion of His family, but their recovery cost the; sacrifice of the

dearest treasure of His heart, and the subjection of this beloved One to the most abject humiliation, ignominy, suffering and death. Again the illustration of a parent's love assists us in comprehending the cost of this manifestation of Jehovah's love.. With what tender and yearning emotions of love must He have made this sacrifice. of His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased? In addition to all the graces of character manifested since the very dawn of the being of the Logos, was now added the further grace of full submission to the divine will, even. when the pathway pointed out was one of humiliation and pain.

Ah did the Father let Him go on that errand of mercy without the slightest sensation of sorrowful emotion? Had IN no appreciation of the pangs of a Father's love when the arrows of death pierced the heart of-His beloved Son? When our dear Lord said. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," and again, "Father. if it be possible, let this cup pass from me:; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." did it touch no sympathetic chord in the heart of the Eternal? Yes, verily the unfeigned love of the Father sympathetically shared the Lord's sorrow.—Matt. 26:38, 39.

The principle taught in the divine Word, that true love weeps 'with those that weep and rejoices with those who rejoice. is one which is also exemplified in the divine character. The immortal Jehovah 'could not Himself die for us, his divine nature being proof against death. And even if He could have died, there would have been no higher power to raise Him out of death. Thus all creation would have been left forever without a Governor, and only disaster and ruin could have ensued. But God could and did sacrifice at great cost to His loving, Fatherly nature, the dearest treasure of His heart; and thus He manifested (I John 4-9) the great love wherewith He loved His deceived and fallen creatures. if this sacrifice cost Him nothing. if it were impossible for His mind to realise any painful emotion, even under such a circumstance. then the gift of His Son would be no manifestation of His love; for that which costs nothing, manifests nothing.

Our Lord Jesus also manifested His great sympathy for the Father in the misrepresentation of His character, which He has so patiently endured for ages. It was the one effort of His life to glorify the Father and to rectify among men the false impressions of His glorious character—to show to men His goodness. benevolence. love and grace. and to lead them to love the merciful God who so loved them, even while they were vet sinners. as to seek them out and to plan for their eternal salvation.

GOD'S PEACE SELF-CENTRED.

Yes. there has been great commotion in the disrupted family of God—commotion in which the Lord declares He has. had no pleasure (Psa. • 5:4); but, nevertheless. the peace of God has never been disturbed. In the full consciousness of His own moral perfection, His unerring wisdom, His mighty power, and with the fullest appreciation of justice and the keenest and most ardent love of the beauty of holiness, patiently and peacefully. He has endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself for six thousand years.

But during the seventh millennium, according to the divine purpose. it will be the joyful privilege of our Lord Jesus fully to manifest to all creatures in heaven and in earth the Father's glorious character. Then will the Father rejoice in the grandeur of His finished work and in the everlasting peace and happiness of His family in heaven and on earth. "reunited under one head."—Eph. I:10. (Diaglott).

This blessed consummation will not be realised. however, until the incorrigible fallen sons of God. disowned and disinherited because they loved unrighteousness, and would not be reclaimed, shall have been cutoff. This will be the last unpleasant duty of the Creator and Father of all, who positively declares that it is a sad duty, yet nevertheless. one which He will have .the fortitude to perform in the interests of universal righteousness and peace. Hear Him: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the- wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?"--Ezek. 33:11.

Thus we see that the peace of God is: compatible with great commotion and with sorrow and pain of any kind; for it is not dependent upon outward circumstances, but upon the proper balancing of the mind and the conditions of a perfect heart. Such peace—the peace of God—was enjoyed also by • our Lord Jesus in the midst of all the turmoil and confusion of His eventful earthly life. And this brings us to the consideration of our Lord's legacy to His disciples, when He was about to leave the world, as expressed in His own words:

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as' the world giveth tin stinted measure or in perishable quality I, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."—John 14. 27.

This article, in connection with these words of our Lord, will be continued in our next issue.

The Good Fight of Faith.

I came and saw, and hoped to conquer,
As the great Roman once had done;
His was the one hour's torrent shock of battle,
My field was harder to be won.

I came and saw, but did not conquer,
The foes were fierce, their weapons strong;
I came and saw, but yet I did not conquer,
For me the fight was sore and long.

They said the war was brief and easy,
A word, a look, would crush the throng;
To some it may have been a moment's conflict,
To me it has been sore and long.

They said the threats were coward bluster,
To brave men they could work no wrong;
So some may boast of swift and easy battle,
To me it has been sore and long.

And yet I know that I shall conquer,
Though sore and hard the fight may be;
I know, I know I shall be more than victor
Through Him who won the fight for me.

I fight, not fearful of the issue,
My victory is sure and near;
Yet not the less with hand and eye all watchful,
Grasp I my buckler and my spear..

For I must fight, if I would conquer,
'Tis not by flight that fields are won;
And I must conquer, if I would inherit
The victor's joy and crown and throne.

—Horatius Bonar.

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

Bahatism

THERE appears to be a movement abroad called Bahatism. The thought appears to be to abridge all religions in order to bring about a working faith, into which all may be gathered in a common brother-hood of man under the Fatherhood of God. Referring to the movement, I. W. E. Dudley, of Brooklyn, N.Y., has made the following remarks

“It is certain that the clay will arrive when the human race will come into the unity of the faith; ‘that that may all be one’ is a prayer destined for fulfilment, even though the mountains crumble. But this unity of faith will not be realised by throwing off institutional restraint. It will be hastened by an organised programme of clear thinking, a programme born at the altar, where consecrated souls see their Lord high and lifted up. You see, to believe something about everything and nothing in particular, leads to no end of difficulty. If a man, for the sake of breadth of vision, believes equally in Christ and Buddha, the inevitable result is a neutrality that inhibits religious zest. This means that universality of belief may easily be made the excuse for carelessness in personal worship.

“There are individuals whose beliefs are so numerous that conviction is an absolute impossibility. This is why too much breadth leads to confusion. It is a delightful experience to be regarded as a person of unlimited tolerance and vision, but after all the thing that matters is the goal for which we are striving. To dip a ladle in every pot, and to be applauded for it, is positively thrilling, ‘but the danger is the complete loss of logic through loose thinking.’”

There is on the one hand danger of bigotry and a disposition ready to declare that every one not thinking and believing just along certain lines are outside Christianity altogether, and then, as is usual, the great Adversary swings others to the other extreme as inti-mated in the above excerpt, i.e., that it does not matter what we believe—just have a kind spirit and spend happy times together—gather all and sundry and make them think they are all bound for the same place, even if journeying along roads leading in opposite directions.

The Christian must know what he believes, and there are certain fundamental teachings which he must up-hold, and any who do not accept such doctrines are not Christians at all. All the same, there is no occasion to denounce those who cannot see what we believe to be essentials, not all are called to the “high calling of God in ‘Christ Jesus.’” We rejoice to know that the Lord has a provision for such in own time and way. There are other matters which are not so vital, and on these we should seek to exercise. consideration towards those who differ from us. All should be able to express their thoughts in quietness and turn to the Scriptures which they would think support their views; maintaining the unity of the spirit in the bonds of love, joy and peace.

Probably all other religions in the world might form a basis for unity, but the Christian faith can make no compromise—Christianity is exclusive—”what fellowship bath Christ with Belial.”

ADELAIDE CONVENTION

It is with pleasure that announcement is made to the effect that the brethren of the Adelaide Ecclesia have decided to hold their usual Easter Convention in that city. again this year (D.V.),

The Convention is to take in Good Friday to Easter Monday, April 14th to 17th, inclusive, and the evening just preceding these Convention days—Thursday, April 13th—has been chosen for the Memorial Service in commemoration of our Lord’s great sacrifice.

A very pleasing feature this year is the inclusion of a Baptismal Service in the programme, at which those so desiring may symbolise their consecration already having taken place, in the waters of baptism.

Any further information shall be supplied in our next month’s issue, and in the meantime the class secretary in Adelaide will be pleased to hear from all friends who may contemplate being in attendance, and to whom a hearty invitation is extended.

We pray God’s blessing upon the arrangements that the season may be one of mutual help and encouragement for each and all. Kindly address: - ,S. H. E. Copping, 70 Fairford Street, Unley, Adelaide, South Australia.

THE PASSOVER MEMORIAL, 1933.

Opportunity is taken of making this early reference to the Passover season for this year. All truly consecrated followers of Christ delight to assemble together, wherever possible, and keep the Memorial in remembrance of His death, in sincerity and truth. And, further, as is fully appreciated by the brethren, this solemn occasion of partaking of the emblems is a confirmation of our consecration vow and heart desire 'to be broken' with our Lord, as the life is "poured out" in faithful service unto death. (Rom. 8:17).

Our Lord, in fulfilment of the type (Exod. 12:1-6) became "our Passover (Lamb) slain for us" on the 14th of Nisan, according to the Jewish Calendar, and this date falls on Monday, 10th April, this year. It was, however, on the previous evening, still Nisan 14th (the Jewish day commencing and closing at sundown) that Christ instituted the Memorial with His disciples, after the customary Passover Supper. The evening of Sunday, April 9th, will, therefore, be the appropriate time to celebrate the Memorial this year for all the brethren desiring to hold it on its anniversary.

The Melbourne Class have decided on the anniversary (late, Sunday, 9th April, for the Memorial Service and all consecrated members in Christ will be welcome at the usual meeting rooms, Molesworth Chambers, 450 Little Collins Street, Melbourne.

Distinction Between Keeping and Fulfilling The Law.

THE question, Did the keeping of the Law Covenant require the death of Christ? is a peculiar and very deep one.

On one side it might be argued that the death of Christ was sacrificial, that no law would be just which would require the death of an innocent person; that since God's Law is just, it did not require the death of an innocent man, and that therefore it was not necessary for Jesus to die in order to fulfil the Law. But this is only one side of the question.

The other side of the argument is that our Lord Jesus, who loved His God with all His heart, soul, mind and strength, and who had consecrated His life to do the Father's will. must do that will and avoid everything contrary to it, in order to live in harmony with His consecration. As soon, therefore, as He learned that it was God's will that a redemption price of a perfect human life should be paid for Adam and the world of mankind, He would present Himself in consecration and faithfully carry out all that is implied in that consecration, because He loved God with all His heart, soul, mind and strength.

It would be reasonable, also, to expect that if our Lord knew that the hundreds of millions to whom He had become "neighbor" by becoming human were in great difficulty and could be delivered only by a sacrifice on His part. He would, if He loved His neighbour as Himself, want to do something for their relief. This desire would lead Him to make the sacrifice.

If to this we add the thought that God would not permit our Lord ,to perish, but would restore Him to life and glory, and that Jesus had in mind the promise that He would not be suffered to remain in death, we at once perceive that He would be willing to die for His Unjust neighbor, because He loved His neighbor as Himself.

These two views, so directly opposite, nevertheless coincide in that it was left open for our Lord to will what He would do. The Father gave Him an opportunity and set before Him a great reward; the Father did not entrap our Lord into an engagement from which He could not draw back. When we come to view the subject from this standpoint, we see the reasonableness of the whole arrangement.

In His consecration at baptism our Lord had said, "Lo. I come . . . to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. 10:7); I will keep nothing back that You require. Such obedience would have been as much as the Law could require of any one. On the other hand, Justice would not require a sacrifice, for Justice could not demand it. Willingness to do anything that justice would demand constituted His keeping of the Law. This point is so fine that 'it is almost impossible to explain it in language. We can know, however, that the Father set before Jesus the great reward, and that for the joy set before Him He endured the cross and despised the, shame.—Heb. 12:1, 2.

GOD'S WILL EXPRESSED

There is a distinction between fulfilling the Law and keeping the Law. The Jews did neither. They partially kept the Law and endeavoured to do still further than they were able to do. But they could not fulfil the Law; for it is so great that it is beyond the 'power of man to fulfil all of its requirements. . . . The Law consists of two different

parts. The one is a regulation of the morals the duty of all toward -God and toward fellow-men. In this sense of the word, the Law stands for justice—for what is right. The Jews endeavoured to do right and thus to keep the Law, but were unable to do so on account of hereditary weaknesses.

Our Lord Jesus, however, kept the Law in this sense. By so doing He earned the right to everlasting life on the human plane. This the world will do in the next. Age. They will be enabled to keep the Law and will get everlasting life, the reward of obedience to the Law. But Jesus did more than keep the Law of Justice. He also fulfilled that part of the Law which is applicable to Him, and He is still fulfilling the

The other part of the Law consists of ceremonial; features, which constitute the types and shadows mentioned by St. Paul. (Heb. 10:1). These prophetic features of the Law represent the Divine will in respect of the means by which mankind will 'be restored from the plane of degradation, sin and death to Divine favour. This' prophetic fulfilling of the Law consisted in the carrying out in antitype of one important feature—the Passover institution. The 'killing of the lamb, the sprinkling of the blood and the eating of the flesh, were prophetic—typical.

Jesus fulfilled His part of the type when He was put to death. It was only by virtue of His sacrifice of His will entirely to the Divine will that He was able to fulfil the prophecies, for these were not commands to mankind in general. In these was a suggestion of things which were not commanded, but which God desired to have accomplished at some time through some one, and through which the Redemption of the human race and the Restitution of all things lost by Adam would be effected.

In the performance of the Atonement Day sacrifices the blood was taken into the Most Holy and typically made satisfaction for sin. Jesus accomplished a part of this work. Since then He has ascended on High and made satisfaction for us, the Church class, by means of which we may walk in His footsteps by consecration. (Heb. 9:24). All down through the Gospel Age He has been accepting this class, and eventually will accomplish their sacrifice. This was typified by the killing of the Lord's goat.

Jesus, we see, has been fulfilling the Law during these eighteen hundred years, as well as during His ministry. This work will not 'be finished until the end of the Age. Jesus said that He came not to destroy, but to fulfil the things of the Law (Matt. 5:17); and He will continue the fulfilment of the types of -the Law during the thousand years. until all is fulfilled at the close of the Millennium Age. Some of these things are future: such as the sprinkling of the blood of the antitypical Lord's goat, the sending away of the antitypical scapegoat, and the appearance of the antitypical High Priest to bless the people. It will take the entire thousand Years of:Christ's reign to get back all that was lost through Adam's •disobedience and that is to be restored to mankind through the merit of Christ.

THAT FEATURE OF THE LAW FULFILLED BY CHRIST'S DEATH

The moral Law--the Ten Commandments—and the Covenant, of which it is a part, promised life to those who would keep its requirements. Jesus could have had that everlasting life by doing everything that the Law required, for the Law demands no more than justice. He could have obeyed every command of the Law without sacrificing any of His rights. But the prophetic features of the Law could not have been fulfilled unless some one had sacrificed his life. and the one who would do this must be equivalent of the one who had sinned.

Since the one who had sinned was perfect, in the image of God, the one who would be a corresponding price to fulfil the Law and to bring out all those blessings to the world that tilt" Law prophecies. must be one who could fully keep the Law. •Only such a person would be competent to make the sacrifice and thus to fulfil the prophetic features of the Law.

This requirement was fully met by Jesus, who was "holy, harmless. undefiled and separate from sinners"— everything, that Justice could expect. He gladly kept the Law, and did even more. He proposed to do everything written in the Book; for He had said. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God" (Psa. 40:8)—everything that had been written. His consecration went beyond the moral Law and embraced everything that God had written prophetically.

All this He fulfilled. As a result He is the Saviour, able to save to the uttermost" all that come to the Father through Him.—Heb. 7:25.

We cannot think that God would be offended with any one who came up to the requirements of the Law, but who did not go beyond. Since God had said, "If any one, keep all this Law, I will do My part and give him everlasting life," Justice could ask no more. If such a one should not go forward to sacrifice, Justice could not be offended, for it could not demand that he do so.

In fact, the Father does not require the righteous of this Age to sacrifice, nor will He expect the world to do in coming to the plane of human perfection. But if God should set before any of the human family an opportunity to offer their lives in doing the Divine will, they should esteem this a privilege. The Father would not consign one to death, however, who should fail to do this. But every one who loves the Lord should think, "Here is my opportunity to show my trust, my loyalty to God." In this respect the example of Jesus will stand out for all eternity to angels and to men, so that if ever God gave even a hint of what His will would be, they would hasten to do that will and not hesitate for any consideration.

There is a lesson also of love in the matter. We are not to content ourselves with saying, "I did not lie; I did not steal; I did unto my neighbour as I would wish done unto myself." We are not to stop with this as a sufficiency; no one will get life on any plane if he does no more than this. Our privilege is to anticipate God's will through watching the types of the Law and the words of our Lord and Head. We are to count all things as loss and -dross in comparison with this opportunity which we have. Nothing else should be counted so great a privilege as that of following in the footsteps of Jesus.

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

(Address at Baptismal Service.)

TO the well-informed Christian . believer. the Scriptural term, "Baptism," must ever present itself in deep and solemn significance. so rich in meaning. so singularly rare and grandly unique on account of the comparatively few invitations held out as a wondrous privilege for those so invited to enter into a covenant with God, having been drawn of the Father to Christ in true devotion and sacrifice and a fervent desire to wholly consecrate their lives in the Master's service. Realising that God's Word portrays, "One Lord, one faith, one hope, one baptism." and discerning the many so-called beliefs ill Christendom to-day, the truly enlightened child Of God views with sacred trust and solemn reverence these great fundamentals and foundation for his faith and hope.

We rejoice to-day because of this happy privilege of assembling and witnessing our dear sister's desire to symbolise with that sincere and earliest spirit of devotion and consecration which precedes her immersion in the waters of baptism, and which is merely an outward sign and symbol of a life hidden in Christ.

On all occasion such as this, it is well that we each and all remind ourselves of that deeper baptism, which is enjoined upon all called of God to journey along the same narrow way of self-denial and trial, and to examine our hearts and lives to see if our covenant is being fulfilled to the utmost. How easy it is, brethren, to become. in any degree, indifferent to our vow of consecration and to quench to that extent the true and proper spirit of obedience and sacrifice. Having begun in the spirit, are we made perfect in the flesh? Or are we continuing to crucify the fleshly tendencies in order that we may walk in newness of life, becoming more and more steadfast, immovable, and rejoicing in the wondrous privilege of living not for self, but unto Him who vouchsafes to present us faultless before the Throne with exceeding joy, providing we continue in the faith, grounded and settled,- and be not moved away from the "

Hope of the Gospel"? Let us say, then, with all earnestness of heart and purpose, "For me to live is Christ"—and be determined that nothing shall separate us from the love of God as exemplified in Christ Jesus, our Head.

How, then, do we understand the symbol about to be performed?. What does it signify? First of all, t') be immersed in the waters of 'baptism without intelligently comprehending why we participate in that ceremony would certainly profit the candidate nothing. Many •to-day so perform the symbol, believing it to be imperative that such must be, in order to make secure their salvation, and thus demonstrating the fact that a goodly percentage of professing Christians are blinded to the true import, and in their ignorance are found grasping at the shadow, and thereby losing the substance.

The beloved Apostle Paul expresses the matter of real baptism very vividly and decidedly in his 6th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, verses 3-11. In the light of these verses we learn that the true baptism is not water immersion, 'but something far more definite, and deeply significant—a "death 'baptism"—of which -this outward sign is an evidence, a picture. "Know ye not that as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have been baptised into His death !" Yes, a real death 'baptism of which the water baptism is but a symbol. The same Apostle says that the true baptism is not an outward observance, not the washing away of the filthiness of the flesh, but rather an answer of a good conscience toward God, a mind and heart co-operating intelligently in the lives of those N' ho have desired to put on Christ, and have entered into a covenant with Jehovah, with the spirit and understanding as to what the hidden, inner and deeper meaning signifies. Our dear Lord, the Head of the Church, clearly defined the spirit's leading, and what must be the attitude of each of His followers when, coming to John the Baptist, He desired to be immersed in Jordan's waters, and how John could not comprehend why the Messiah, of whom he was the forerunner, could possibly request of him an immersion, seeing that our Lord was holy, pure, undefiled and separate from a sinful world. John replied that he felt a much greater need to be baptised, seeing that the baptism he was administering was on behalf of fallen Jews who had violated their covenant under the Law, on account of fallen tendencies and imperfections, and thus had come short of Jehovah's requirements for them. Our Lord's reply, "Suffer, or permit it to be so now, for so it becometh Me to fulfil .all righteousness"—was deeply significant and not understood by John, but was designed to teach a very important principle in fulfilment of God's will for our Lord in picture and prophecy, subsequently preached and elaborated upon by the inspired Apostles as Jehovah's mouthpieces and representatives.

Our Saviour's baptism in the waters of Jordan, then, was an observance and Manifestation of in Ward desire and purpose of a consecrated heart and mind. working intelligently and in unison respecting His heavenly Father's will, and-so .He hastened at. the appropriate time to witness to that inner and deeper spirit of consecration that had preceded the symbolic immersion. John the Baptist was permitted and privileged as God's representative, to see the evidence of this inmost soul's expression as He says,—"I saw the spirit of God alighting upon Him. and I heard. a voice from heaven, saying,— •"'Phis is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.' "

While our Saviour's deep spirit of consecration was in advance of His Jordan experience, vet it was not until God's Holy Spirit -rested upon Him that we read of the heavenly, the spiritual, the higher things being opened unto Him in

richer and deeper purport and significance, and with a clearer illumination of mind than formerly respecting His Father's will for Him, and all that His covenant of sacrifice entailed and implied. In regard to the Lord's brethren we have noted firstly how the chosen Apostles left all to follow their Master, and during our Saviour's earthly ministry, aided by His spirit demonstrated that love, faith, and obedience as they hearkened to our Lord's instructions concerning them. They, too, thus previously gave that evidence of possessing the Master's true spirit of consecration, even before they were anointed with the Holy Spirit of God in that upper room at Jerusalem. At that time the evidence of the Spirit's begetting was manifested in the appearance of flaming tongues of fire resting upon them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit of power, which thus constituted them God's chosen mouthpieces and witnesses. Just so, as we one by one enter into that same covenant of sacrifice with our Leader and Head, just so it is, that the same anointing received by Him and the Apostles, is shed upon us, and we henceforth have our minds enlightened and illuminated and our lives quickened as we come to see the will of the Father for us more clearly, and the wondrous grace and heavenly hope extended to us as we receive the seal of sonship and earnest of the spirit in a truly consecrated heart—"Be ye filled with the Spirit"—is the Divine injunction laid down for God's earnest and obedient children, that they may lie more and more sanctified or set apart and quickened in the Master's service.

Just so we rejoice, as we realise in this our clear sister's witness, a deeper and more fervent desire to fulfil her covenant vow with an even more earnest spirit of love, obedience and sacrifice, as a richer sense of God's quickening spirit of power and love would so energise. This, then, is our prayer, that God may work in each of us to will and to do according to His good pleasure, as we heartily co-operate toward the consummation of that life placed upon the sacrificial altar.

We know, then, what the symbol represents; we well know what the real baptism in Christ signifies, and so the loved Apostle Paul urges us further, that being buried with Him by baptism into death, we ought to walk also now in newness of life. Yes, the old order of things passed away, earthly, unlawful desires sacrifice so that we may lay hold upon the heavenly. Natural hopes, aims and affections are surrendered that we might live for the Master and at last obtain far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Our hearts are transformed by the renewing power of Christ, by His Spirit, so that we may manifest to the world that we have been with Jesus and learned of Him. our minds increasingly centred upon the rich inheritance held out of joint-heirship with our Lord in the Kingdom, and this only to the "little flock" of truly consecrated ones baptised into His death, in order that eventually we may awake in His likeness in the first resurrection—"If ye be risen with Christ seek those things above"—and again—"That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His sufferings, thus being made conformable unto His death"—and so ultimately attain the high station promised. Yes, in the performance of the symbol, the going down into the water and being raised again, well pictures this change of disposition and transformation which takes place in the heart and life of the individual as old aims and former desires are put away in the mortifying of the deeds of the flesh, and all things become changed as the heavenly aspects appear in full view and the Daystar arises in the heart.

Having tasted of the Word of God as the living "Bread" from heaven, and the "power of the Age to come," is it not a matter of great rejoicing as we witness our sister's confession, in the presence of God's people, of a life surrendered to the service of Christ in joyful recognition of that rich favour bestowed in calling and drawing her in the one great hope and invitation of the Gospel during this only acceptable dispensation and day of sacrifice. Can we not say with our clear sister also: "Since my eyes were fixed on Jesus, I've lost sight of all beside, so enchained. my spirit's vision looking at the crucified."—"All for Jesus."

The Apostle goes on to say that. "if we have been planted in the likeness of our Lord's death certainly we shall awake in the similitude of His resurrection; for if we be dead with Him from the rudiments of this world, we will finally live and reign with Him." This is our privilege, our standing, our responsibility. Let us then cast off the works of darkness, and count not our lives dear unto us, realising at all times that we are not our own, but purchased with so great a sacrifice and price, that our lives are hidden now in the Anointed One.

To seek the earthly riches and again become entangled with the carnal, transitory things of this world, with all its emptiness, pride and vain showing, would not only manifest a deplorable lack of appreciation of God's grace to us, but would demonstrate also that we have not been diligent and faithful in the performance and carrying out of that covenant of sacrifice formerly entered into with such solemnity, zeal and earnestness of heart and purpose. Brethren, let nothing deter us from fulfilling our course with joy and determination, for hereunto were we called that we should inherit a blessing, knowing that all things are working together for our good because we are called according to our heavenly Father's gracious purpose and goodwill.

Let us each seek to encourage and stimulate the fellow in the Body to be alive and-awake to the wondrous station to which we have been invited to attain meanwhile to develop faith and patience, hope and love operating in our lives as evidencing the fact that these characteristics are essential, while the attendant hard experiences of our trial road are but for a moment anyway, so to speak, during this brief span of our earthly existence and pilgrimage.

Now is the acceptable time, now is the “Day of Salvation” for God’s consecrated people, and as the day is now far spent, let us readjust our armour that we may war a good warfare as sincere, earliest, courageous, and devoted soldiers of the Cross of Christ, ever marching onward and upward with that deliberation and fortitude, so needful in order to overcome the besetments of the flesh with its natural tendencies, the world with its yam allurements, and the great arch-deceiver with his subtle deceptions. “If God ‘be for us, who then can be against us?” Let us rally round the banner of Jehovah, for the victory is ours if we faint not. “Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus -Christ our Lord.”

“What shall I render unto God for all His benefits toward me, I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord, I will pay my vow unto the Lord in the presence of all His people.”

“Precious indeed in the sight of Jehovah is the death of His saints.”

“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”
“Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be My disciples.”

“According to Thy gracious will
This water symbol here fulfil,
Like unto my dear Head.
In token of my earnest vow,
I sink beneath right here and now,
And rise as from the dead.”

“Lord, grant me all sufficient grace
To walk as to behold Thy face,
In newness of that life,
All earthly aims and hopes subdue
As I my sacrifice renew
In this, my daily strife.”

“Accept my weak, imperfect all,
As ever at Thy feet I fall,
In consecration sweet.
Blest Master, all I have is thine,
O cause my life for Thee to shine,
Until Thy glory it complete.”

“Peace be unto you; as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.”—John 20:21.

It was, it is, a solemn thing to be sent of God. Moses shrank from it before the unbelief of his people and the scorn of his enemies. Jeremiah, from his conscious weakness, would excuse himself: “Oh, Lord God! behold I cannot speak, for I am a child.” Isaiah shrank from ‘testimony by reason of his sense of sinfulness: “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a ‘man of unclean lips.’ “ But the Lord God, when He sends a messenger, goes with him.—Anna Shipton.

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