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Hold Fast that which thou hast.

Rev. 3: 11. (Convention Address).

IT would seem that the words of this text have a very special meaning to the Lord's people of to-day. In the Christian world at the present time there is the tendency to lower the standard of truth. The Laodicean spirit is a compromising, luke-warm condition. It is this spirit—neither hot nor cold—which says, "Do not let us trouble very much about what we believe, only let us join together in one great confederacy." This spirit has wrought havoc in the churches, so that they have become altogether worldly and indifferent to the true spirit of the truth and consecration, as set before us by the Lord and His Apostles.

Writing to Timothy, the Apostle Paul said (2 Tim. 4: 3), "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears." "And they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables." While recognising that there has indeed been a great falling away from the pure teachings of God's Word, we will do well to remember that the Adversary, who has already succeeded in blinding so many, will also seek by one means or another to "quench the spirit" among those who have become awake to "present truth." By "present truth" we mean those things which have been revealed by the opening up of the Scriptures "as meat in due season," or truths specially applicable to our day. No doubt it is those matters pertaining to our Lord's Second Presence, the Harvest work, the closing down of the present age, and the preparation of ourselves for the work of the coming Kingdom, that we are exhorted to "hold fast that no man take thy crown."

The questions arise as to what does a true Christian really need to believe? What are the essentials of our faith? What is it that we must "hold fast"? Does it mean only that we preserve a clear knowledge of truth, or does it not imply "walking in the steps of Christ—walking in the light"?

What, then, constitutes a 'Christian'? The Scriptures show how in due time "God will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth," and how under the New Covenant and its great Mediator all the willing and obedient will be assisted to work out their justification to life by works of obedience and righteousness. 'the New Testament also clearly shows that the Divine purpose for this Gospel Age is to select a spiritual class to be joint-heirs with Christ, to reign with Him in the coming Kingdom Age, when the wider opportunity will come to all mankind. That will be when the Church or Bride of Christ will be complete, and "the Spirit and the Bride will say come, and whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely."

This class of "Priests and Kings"—the Church—is dealt with quite differently in its selection, from that of the rest of mankind in the next age. The Millennial Age will be an age of works, justification by works. The Gospel Age. is an age of faith, justification by faith, and that faith the Apostle tells us in Eph. 2: 8, is "the gift of God." 'Our Lord declared, "No man cometh unto Me except it be 'given him of My Father;'" "No man cometh unto the Son except the Father draw him."

These Scriptures show that the first essential is that we be invited. How are we invited or drawn? It is through the Word, as the Lord intimated in His prayer, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on 'Me through their word.'" (John 17:20). So it is God who invites those who may be joint-heirs with His Son, by bringing His Word to their attention, and by His holy Spirit He grants the faculty of faith. There is the conviction of sin, and the longing to be at peace with God and to be righteous. Then, in true penitence, faith in 'Calvary's atoning sacrifice lifts the load of sin and we find peace and rest. What a great favour this is, first to be called of God, and then, instead of being slowly justified by works under the New Covenant of the next age, to be at once "justified by faith and at peace with God." This particular arrangement of grace is in order that we may be able, through the merit of our Redeemer, "to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God." This is the second step after being justified by faith through our Lord Jesus Christ ; "By whom also we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and now rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." Rom. 5; 1, 2..

Following this step of consecration, we receive the begetting of the holy spirit—the spirit of adoption—and God calls us His sons. This holy spirit begets in us a new mind, a new heart, a new creature, so that though the human being is laid upon the altar of sacrifice to be done to death, for, "as many as have been baptised into Christ have been baptised into His death" (Rom. 6: 3) ; yet a new life is begun, a spiritual life, and as new creatures we have become Christians in the full sense.

As Christians, then, we have first the favour of having been called of God. Then we have the gift of faith; after that, justification through the exercise of that faith; then the holy Spirit of adoption through the further step of faith— i.e., consecration. Following our consecration we receive the wonderful hope of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Having received these favours, are there no other essentials for the Christian? We reply that the new creature, like the old creature, needs nourishing. If we fail to feed upon the Lord's Word, if we fail to drink of that water of life which is provided for us, we shall fail to develop, and would probably soon lose our faith and hope. We must go on from these first principles and learn to appreciate the deep things of the Word. We remember how the Apostle Paul felt that it was useless to try and explain the deeper things to the Hebrews because they had not exercised their minds along the lines of truth: They, had stunted their growth and so were still babes, feeding on milk, when they ought to have been able to teach others.

How essential it is that we hold fast the present truth as it is revealed from God's Word. The Word of God is the instrument, not only for calling the saints, but also for supplying grace and strength and enabling them to meet the difficulties of the way. It unfolds its precious truths as "meat in due season" to supply the needs of the Christian in his own day. It is, then, very essential that we understand, the present truth as it opens up, in order that our "shield" may be bright and strong, our "helmet" of hope firmly fixed, the "breastplate" of righteousness properly adjusted, that our feet be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, our loins be girt about with truth and that we may be able to wield the sword of the spirit, and be overcomers in the "good fight of faith."

How important is the correct knowledge and application of the truth. The truth alone can sanctify and give us strength to run our course. Just as truth helps, so error hinders.

The question arises as to how far Christians may differ from one another in respect of the truth without

interfering with our fellowship? The fact that we do at times differ on what may be called non-essentials, provides opportunities for the exercise of brotherly kindness in respecting the opinions of others though not endorsing them.

It would seem to be a different matter when we come to deal with the clear lines of faith and hope, or truths which are divinely revealed for the purpose of accomplishing some particular feature of work in connection with God's great plan. It would be presumptuous to say that such truths are of so little importance that it does not matter whether or not we believe them. We would also find it impossible to enjoy the same helpful fellowship with those who denied or belittled these things, as we could with those who appreciated them, and who were seeking to faithfully sound forth the message and Mi-form their lives to it.

It is quite understandable that those who do not know present truth, who do not recognise that we are living in "the clays of the Son of Man," and the harvest-time of the age. etc., should think such things are non-essentials. They cannot see the present truth to be essential if they do not recognise that the harvest work is in progress and that the separating of the "wheat" from the "tares" is taking place. They cannot value the truths now revealed as we do, who realise the presence of the Lord as "Reaper," and that He is now reckoning with His people respecting the use of their talents and their structure building of character—we who. realise that the present truth is indeed the feast which He promised to the faithful watchers in Luke 12: 37,, and Rev. 3: 20. What may seem non-essential to some, may be very essential to others, for it is the "present truth" which is doing the harvest work. On the one hand it sanctifies and prepares the Bride class for the great consummation of her hopes, and on the other it separates those who from some cause or other seem unable to understand it.

The "present truth," or "meat in due season," or the unfoldings of truths respecting the Divine Plan, the second presence of Christ, the harvest, the gathering of the saints and the consummation of the Age, etc., appear to be essential to those to whom they have been revealed if they would make their calling and election sure. Those who lightly esteem such things will surely fail in the use of their talents.

Similar conditions existed at the time of our Lord's first advent. The truth then due was sent forth; many were inclined to say such matters were all right and might be true, but. they should. not be carried too far; they were not essential, they could still hold on to the Law ceremonies and synagogue gatherings. The "present truth" at that time was, however, essential to such as the Lord was calling, and it did its work of separating the "wheat" from, the "chaff."

Dear friends, let us not undervalue the things which God has revealed to us. Let us fully appreciate our privileges. God has opened our eyes to see the wideness of His purposes and shown us that we are at the end of the Age and living in "the days of the Son of Man," and that, "as in the days of Noah" preceding the deluge; so now a. great calamity is pending, which will end this dispensation, after which: the new Age will commence when Christ shall be King over all the earth..

These things we are exhorted to "hold fast" in the message to the. Philadelphian Church (Rev. 3: 10, 11), "Because thou past kept the word of My patience, also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold I come quickly, hold fast that which thou bast that no man take thy crown."

We are living in a day of such a variety of confused teachings. We are forewarned of the many deceptions that were to come, so that even if it were possible the very elect would be deceived. The Apostle Peter says that there would be false teachers and that many would follow their pernicious ways, by reason of which the way of truth would! be evil spoken of. Paul admonishes, "Be not carried about by strange doctrines for it is good that the heart be established with grace." The Church is called "the pillar and

ground of the truth.” It is her responsibility to preserve the truth in its purity, to guard it and to let it shine. Our Lord declared, “To this end came I into the world that I should bear witness to the truth,” and it is for those who will follow Him, to do His work, and to be among those who are “beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God,”

Many are the injunctions of the Apostles respecting this matter of “holding fast the form of sound words,” and the truths, which God has revealed in His Word. See 2 Tim. 1: 13; 3: 13, 14; 4: 3, 4; Tit. 1: 9; 2 John 7-11; 1 Tim. 1: 3-6; 4: 16; 6:20, 21.

While seeing the necessity for holding fast to sound doctrine, we realise that that is- not all we must “hold fast.” There is the possibility of holding fast the form of sound words, of having a correct understanding of the main features of the truth, even of being “virgins,” and of understanding “present truth,” to the extent of expecting the Lord soon to take His people home, and yet to fail to be prepared and so fail to enter the marriage chamber.

A clear head is a good thing to have, but if the knowledge does not go down to the understanding heart, it fails in its intended purpose of sanctification, and we shall prove to be but sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. The trials of our day will not only try the doctrines, but will test our faith, our hope, our love and our loyalty to God, and to one another as members in Christ.

‘Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid in Christ Jesus. There is no standing before God apart from His Son, our Saviour, but having this foundation we must build thereon. What must we build?’

We must build our doctrine and see that all our teachings are in line with the foundation ; we must also build character. We must hold fast our foundation; we must hold fast our faith in the great Ransom for all. We must hold fast our consecration, our love to God in operation; we must bind the sacrifice with cords to the altar. We must “hold fast the confidence of our hope firm to the end.” We must keep on the whole armour of God and continue the good fight of faith. We must preserve our zeal for the Lord’s cause.

There is much in these days that might discourage us. Some have trials and testings in one way, some in another. Sometimes the failure of brethren whom we had highly esteemed in the Lord is apt to discourage us. Sometimes in contact with the world we meet plausible arguments against the truth by unbelievers or scientists, and if we trusted to our own wisdom and strength to save us, we might fail, but let us hold fast the Word of God. There may be some things that we do not fully understand, but we do understand enough Of God’s wisdom, justice, love and power which we have exemplified in His dealings with Israel and explained in His Word and experienced in our own lives, so that we can reasonably trust where we cannot quite understand. Even our Lord Jesus was tested in this way. He could not understand why the light of the Father’s countenance should be withdrawn just at the moment when, more than any other, He needed the assurance of His favor and presence. We must nerve ourselves and seek to grow in grace that we too May reach that condition of heart that can say, “Yea, though He slay me yet will I trust Him.”

‘Conditions in our home circles are sometimes such as would crush our religious life and quench the spirit. It puts us on our metal to so conduct ourselves as to bring honor to the cause we love, and preserve our faith, hope and spiritual life. We have, no doubt, been in many very trying circumstances, and have failed under the trial, at least to some extent, yet we may depend upon it that there are no circumstances into which we may come, but that we may by God’s grace conduct ourselves to His glory, and come out the better for the experience. “No trial shall overtake you, but such as ye are able to bear,” ‘and God, who permits the trial, is faithful to provide, a way of escape from anything too hard.

Probably all can look back upon trials and temptations and trace the kind hand that has overruled for our protection, guidance and provision, and thus tracing the way God has led us, shall we not hold fast the

confidence of our faith firm to the end?

Sometimes there arise conditions in our circles of Christian fellowship which try us. We may be much misunderstood, or perhaps we misunderstand others, and so difficulties arise, and sometimes anything but the spirit of love and of a sound mind seems to prevail. Then things are said and done, which cause so much pain and heartaches, and the bond of Christian love is greatly strained. Nearly all these things come through misunderstandings, lack of patience, lack of waiting upon the Lord for grace to act, and speak aright, and to enquire of His Word for instruction. What a lot of sorrow has thus been caused, and sometimes a root of bitterness has been permitted to grow, and many have been defiled. Have we injured one of the Lord's children by a harsh or hasty word or act? Has it not been because we failed to hold fast our faith 'in God, in His Word, and our love to Him and His.

Let us hold fast our love to the Lord. If we love God we will also love those begotten of Him, and it will be painful indeed to us to even think evil of a fellow member. We would shun listening to reproaches against brethren, we would be loyal to God and defend His children, and all members in the Body of Christ would be loyal to one another.

That loyalty, however, will be secondary to our loyalty to God, and His Word and the doctrine we have proved to be true. It may be necessary for us to withdraw even from those we love in Christ, if they teach things which we believe to be contrary to the truths with which we have been entrusted by God's grace to preserve and proclaim.

While we may find that separations are sometimes unavoidable, there is never any occasion to be unkind. We may have to speak plainly against wrong teachings or practices, but we are not to condemn nor cease to love those who think differently. As long as they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of mankind, by His own blood, and profess consecration to God, we may still think of them as brethren, though they may be erring brethren.

Let us hold fast our faith, our hope, our love, our doctrine, which includes "present truth." "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of knowing of whom thou hast learned them." How important it is that we hold fast that which we have proved to be an unfolding of God's Word,— "Meat in due season." If we begin to let slip this or that truth, other truths will likely soon be lost, and "if the light that is in thee become darkness how great is that darkness." "Hold fast that which thou hast that no man take thy crown."

A Christian.

OUR every day, every hour silent conduct is more effective than our conduct when we are among the Lord's people. There has always been a tendency in two opposite extremes when describing what the Christian ought to be.

One is to look for absolute perfection; the other is to lower the standard, by excusing the defects and sins of the followers of Christ. Let us avoid both. We cannot place before our vision a standard too high.

While we cannot be perfect and faultless, it is required of us that we be "blameless and harmless the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life." And the Apostle tells those who are so doing that it will be a cause for rejoicing in the day of Christ, that they did not "run in vain, neither laboured in vain."—Phil. 2: 15, 16.

A Christian is one whose eye is single to God's glory. "If your eye is single your whole body will be full of light," and the influences that proceed from you cannot but have a sanctifying effect upon those you meet and associate with daily. How responsible a matter is daily life, particularly the daily life of the Christian !

Selected.

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

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Convention News.

The Easter Convention, arranged by the Adelaide and Gawler classes, proved once more to be a season of helpful and happy fellowship. The Lord's blessing was surely upon the gatherings of His people, met together in His name and seeking to do His will. We trust the many good lessons and exhortations will long remain with us and serve to strengthen our faith and hope and give us renewed courage to press on in the narrow way that leads to life. The Christian pathway is the same to-day as ever, it is still the way of self-denial and sacrifice of the human hopes and ambitions; but those who have tasted of the Lord's goodness rejoice to suffer for His sake, knowing that "if we suffer with Him we shall reign with Him; if we be dead with Him we shall also live with Him."

In harmony with our Lord's request "this do in remembrance of Me," the Memorial of His death was kept on the Thursday evening, and the Convention commenced on , Good Friday, continuing on the Saturday and Sunday; Easter Monday being spent at Gawler, 25 miles distant from Adelaide.

Many good thoughts were expressed in connection with the Bible studies, which occupied the afternoon of each of the four days. The portions selected for study being as follows :—Matt. 10: 32-42; 2 Con 5: 14-21 ; Eph. 1: 3-12 ; John 15: 13-21. The addresses were helpful and encouraging to us,—Psalm 23, "For the Elect's sake ;" "All things are Thy servants ;" "The Lord proved) you ;" "Love one another ;" "Christ in you--the hope. of glory ;" "Let us walk in the light of the Lord ;" "Our Warfare ;" "Hold fast that which thou halt;" being the topics chosen.

A fellowship meeting having as its topic, "What good things have I received?" (Psa. 84: 11), reminded us of the many blessings which are ours in Christ. Also discussions on, "How do we determine the Lord's Will?" "How can we make our meetings and Bible studies most helpful?" "How can I best serve the - cause of truth?" gave us opportunity to examine ourselves and to profit by what we heard.

We feel grateful to those brethren and sisters who journeyed from -Victoria and N.S.W. to attend the Convention.

The spirit of loving service and the desire to just help along in the meetings is much appreciated. The same spirit of service was also manifested among the members of the local classes, and we doubt not that those who took pleasure in entertaining the visiting brethren, also received blessing upon their own hearts and heads. The provision of tea by the sisters of the Adelaide and Gawler classes was much appreciated.

The usual Love feast and singing of "God be with You till we meet again " terminated a very helpful season of fellowship and spiritual refreshment; and our hearts go out in thanksgiving to God for all His benefits. May the days that lie before us find us each one pressing on toward the mark for the prize, laying aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us; running with patience the race set before us; looking unto Jesus. keeping little in our own sight, and content to let His strength be manifested through our weakness.

Notes from Adelaide Convention.

THE following thoughts were expressed in the introductions on portions of the Bible Studies; also the additional selections at the fellowship and discussion meetings. .

Matthew 10: 32, 33.

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus “. (Rom.. 10: 9, 10.) The habit of confessing the Lord Jesus before men seems to be one of the Christian’s most difficult tasks, for it requires both tact and courage, but it has correspondingly a rich reward. There is a book of remembrance written for them that fear the Lord and try to obey His laws. This confession can also be seen by men, by the way we serve the Lord, by our conduct, by our speech, and by our daily habits. Everything we do must conform to the Divine Law as much as possible, and by this high standard men can discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not.

In 2 Pet. 2: 1, and many other Scriptures, we find a class of false teachers, who deny even the Lord who bought them., but this is not the only way in which one may deny Christ. There are those who profess that they know God, but in their works they deny Him. A work (an only have one motive,—it must either be done to the glory of God, or else the honor is given to the Adversary. We can deny Christ if our thoughts are not pure, true and honorable; we can deny our Lord by our conduct and actions toward the brethren. If we neglect to obey the Royal Law, “I command thee that ye love one another,” we most assuredly deny our Saviour.

2 Corinthians 5: 17, 20.

The class which God is selecting from mankind to reign with our Lord at His second presence is represented in the Scriptures as a new creation, its members being specifically mentioned as new creatures in Christ Jesus in this verse 17. See also Eph. 2: 10.

Read Rom. 12: 1, 2. We cast all we have and all we ever hoped for down before the Lord, because, as the Scriptures point out, in order to be counted a “new creature in Christ,” it is necessary that the old things or earthly things,—ambitions, hopes, vanities and follies,—shall have passed from the will, even though to some extent they may harass us, because in a measure attractive to our flesh. But we are to make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. See Gal. 5: 16, 17, 24, 25; Rom. 8: 5.

Our whole aim in life is for the progress and development of the new mind, because it is the new mind which the Lord recognises as the “new creature.”—Epli. 4: 22-24. In Col. 3: 3, we read, that “our life is hid with Christ in God.” These new creatures are actuated by a hope which entereth within the veil,—”Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus”—Heb. 6: 19, 20. See also. Psa. 45: 10, 11, 13.

Verse 20.

Following on Horn the Apostle’s statement that we have committed to us the word of reconciliation, he leads us to see what a great responsibility and privilege the possession of this message is.

There are, as we all know, earthly ambassadors whose position is recognised as being one of responsibility and dignity. How much more then is this so, in the case of the ambassadors for Christ.

In this connection. see John 1:45 Phillip findeth Nathanael; “We have found Him.” in effect this is how the

ambassadorship is carried out ; only those can represent Christ who have themselves already found Him. Read Rom. 5: 10, 11; Phil. 1: 20, 21,—”For me to live is Christ.”

This invitation extended through the faithful ones as members of Christ’s Body will, we know, be appreciated only by the few at the present time, and so the statement speaking prophetically of our Lord would apply also to us,—”The reproaches of them that reproached Thee have fallen upon me” (Psa. 69:9.) Nevertheless, the work of witnessing must continue, for it is only by proving ourselves worthy as ambassadors at the present time, that we shall attain to the privilege of being associated with the Lord in the full work of reconciliation in the next age, when “in the dispensation of the fulness of times He will gather together in one all things in Christ,”—Eph. 1: 10.

Ephesians 1:9.10

God has, indeed, most generously made known to us the mystery of His will. Not a mystery in the sense of .being unintelligible, or incomprehensible, but a mystery in the sense of it being kept secret for an appointed time, as in Col. 1: 26,—”The mystery which had been hid from ages and generations, but now is made known to His saints.”

In God’s plan, the Gospel Age was. the time for revealing this secret unto “us,” which He had previously purposed in Himself, or that which had originated in His own mind. At an appointed time (the Millennial Age) all would see the end or consummation of this plan, Which God had purposed even “before the foundation of the world,” and since then has gradually been unfolding and progressing toward its glorious completion, when all things, both things in heaven (spiritual) and things in earth (natural) shall be brought into complete harmony with the Head,—the anointed One, the embodiment of God’s righteous law of love.

This pictures the unity which is to exist in the whole universe when all things, both animate and inanimate, shall resound to the beauty of perfection, making one harmonious whole.

John 15:20, 21.

Jesus was reminding His disciples that they must expect reproaches, as he had received for preaching the Toni of God. In an unfriendly world we can only expect to receive the reproaches that fell on our Master, for the servant is not greater than his Lord. Christ bore the taunts and persecutions of the world patiently, while His great loving heart was full of pity and loving concern for others, and if we are His followers we should bear the persecutions as He bore them,—with pity and prayer for those who persecute us. We should endure persecutions as good soldiers for the truth’s sake and in our efforts to do the Lord’s will. All those who live godly lives during the present evil day will suffer Persecution, because they are not of the world, therefore, the world cannot endure the clear, searching light of the true Gospel.

“Those who endure joyfully for the Lord’s sake the greatest trials and persecutions in this present life, and have experiences most like our Lord, will, in proportion to their faithfulness, have a. future high reward. As the Apostle declared, he counted the sufferings of the present time not worthy to be compared with the glory hereafter. See John 13: 16; Matt. 5: 10-12, 44.; 1 Thes. 2: 15; 2 Tim. 3: 12.

Determining the Will of the Lord.

The following is the rule which George Mueller followed when seeking to determine the Lord's will:—

“I seek in the beginning to get my heart in such a state that it has no will of its own in regard to a given matter. Nine-tenths of the difficulties are overcome when our hearts are ready to do the Lord's will, whatever it may be. Having done this, I do not leave the result to feeling or simple impression. If I do so, I make myself liable to a great delusion. I seek the will or spirit of God through, or in connection with, the Word of God. The Spirit and the Word must be combined. If I look to the Spirit alone, without the Word, I lay myself open to great delusions also. If the Holy

Spirit guides us at it will do it according to the Scriptures, and never contrary to them. Next, I take into account providential circumstances. These often plainly indicate God's will, in connection with His Word and His Spirit. I ask God in prayer to reveal His will to me aright. Thus, by prayer to God, the study of the Word, and reflection, I come to deliberate judgment according to the best of my knowledge and opportunity, and, if my mind is thus at peace, I proceed, accordingly.”

The Canary and the Sparrow.

“A story is told of a gentleman who had a beautiful singing canary. A friend wanted to try if he could teach his sparrows to sing by keeping the canary with them. He borrowed it, and placed it in the cage with his sparrows. Instead, however, of teaching them to sing, the poor bird got so timid among the strange birds that it stopped singing altogether, and did nothing but chirp like the sparrows. The owner then took it back, but still it would not sing. It then occurred to him to put it beside another canary, which sang well. This had the desired effect, and, regaining the old note, it sang as beautifully as ever. Many Christians go, like the canary, into the strange company and atmosphere of the worldlings, and consequently they not only do not teach the world to sing their happy, glorious note of praise, but they cannot sing the old songs of praise in a strange land themselves, and soon they learn the sorrowful note of the world. The best thing for such is to go back again into the more genial society of happy, rejoicing Christian saints, among whom they will soon learn to sing the glorious notes of praise again, making melody in their hearts.”

Memorial Service.

On Wednesday evening, March 28th, the brethren in Melbourne assembled together on the occasion of another Memorial season, in remembrance of Christ,—”our Passover. Lamb.” “In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”

The few visiting members in attendance on this solemn occasion ere ‘gladly welcomed, and in the singing of appropriate hymns, the prayers of various brethren, and the remarks directing they thoughts of all to the deep significance of partaking of the emblems,— representing as they do our Lord’s body broken for us, and life (blood) poured out on our account—a very helpful and spiritual time was experienced.

As each Memorial comes round we feel more and more grateful to our loving Heavenly Father for the gift of His dear Son, and additionally, for revealing to our hearts and minds the wondrous privilege of following in the footsteps of. our Lord during our short earthly sojourn, being broken with Him, and drinking of His cup, so that we may eventually live and reign with Him and co-operate in the further joy of blessing the families of the earth, in due time.

We assure the dear brethren everywhere, including the ones and twos in the isolated places, of our prayers on their account, and sincerely trust that the passing of the Memorial season once again may stimulate and encourage each and all to faithfully fulfil their covenant of sacrifice in the days that lie ahead, by the grace and strength from above. “For Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore, let us keep the feast, with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

The following is gladly received from our brethren in Sydney :—”We of the Rawson Chambers Class, Sydney, held our Memorial on Sunday, the 1st inst. Previously, we have held the Memorial on the due date, but some of the friends expressed the wish to be present with us, but could not make it convenient or possible to be present on the correct date, so we thought it wise to put the matter off for a few days to meet the wish of the brethren. The Lord knows all things and looked) at the heart’s intentions, does He not?

Our numbers were somewhat smaller than usual, several of the friends having moved too far away, to whom we forwarded the Emblems. The small class held at Sutherland celebrated by themselves, being more convenient, and several others met with the St. Peter’s class, nevertheless, we had twenty present. The spirit of the Lord was manifest throughout, hence the meeting was very profitable spiritually to all. We know not how many more we shall celebrate this side the vail, my prayer is that we may keep our hearts and minds La the same attitude towards our Master continually.

Another Brother in N.S.W. writes in the same connection :—”I hope you had a good and profitable time at Melbourne and Adelaide, and experienced His presence at the Memorial and the Convention. It is another milestone in the Christian journey and each one brings us nearer home, and nearer to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

We did not celebrate the Memorial on the 29th, hut on the following Sunday. There were six of us, and we considered the institution of Passover in Egypt, where the sprinkled blood protected the first-borns, who sheltered under it, and reminded ourselves of its typical significance in our case, and how we too need trust in His shed blood, which is our protection. How we rejoice as we think of the time of which Jesus spoke, when He would drink of the fruit of the vine anew in the Kingdom, and further to think that He prayed for us in that memorable prayer, “Nor do I entreat for these only, but also for those believing into Me through their word: so that all may be one, etc.” (John 17: 20-22.) Well could the writer of the song, “Oh, that will be glory for me” say—”that will he glory for me.”

Question Box.

Question :—Is it possible to incur the second death without being begotten of the Holy Spirit?

Answer :—The second death does not mean that one must have personally died previously. It rather refers to the fact that all mankind were included in the first sentence and “all die in Adam:” then all are redeemed or purchased from that death sentence ‘by ‘Christ, so that as all in Adam die, so all in Christ shall be made alive again. That is, all will have an opportunity of choosing good and life, or evil and death, i.e., the second death, from which there is no recovery, for “Christ dieth no more.” All were in mercy included in one man’s sin, so that all could be included in the one man’s righteousness (Rom. 5: 12-21) and have the opportunity of going up the highway of holiness unto perfect human life. The prophet, Isaiah, 65: 17-25, speaking of that time, states that any one who refuses to make progress towards righteousness will die “as a sinner, being 100 years old, being accursed.” Such an one would never have been “begotten” of the Holy Spirit, although he shall have received “the knowledge of the truth, which will be the result of the Holy Spirit being “poured upon all flesh,” for God will have all men to be saved (from the Adamic condemnation) and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2: 3, 4.) To wilfully resist the influences of truth and righteousness would be sinning against the Holy Spirit. This would be corroborated by our Lord’s words to the Pharisees, who had never been begotten of the Holy Spirit for “the Spirit was not then given,”—”How can ye escape the damnation (or condemnation) of gehenna” (Matt. 23: 33.) Gehenna always signifies death, from which there is no ransom--the second death.

In Matt. 12: 31, 32, it is stated that sin against the Spirit shall not be forgiven, neither in this Age nor in the Age to come, that is in the Kingdom Age, when all mankind are to have the opportunity of life. This privilege of being “begotten” of the Holy Spirit belongs only to the Gospel Age. Those who become members in Christ are begotten of the Spirit, because they are to be no longer human, but spiritual beings in the resurrection.

In Heb. 6:4-6, the Apostle says that those who have been enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift and made partakers of the Holy Spirit and tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, if they should fall away it would be impossible to renew them unto repentance. He does not say that it would be impossible to sin the sin unto death unless all these conditions had been attained.

In John 9:41. Jesus said unto them, “If ye were blind ye should have no sin, but now ye say we see, therefore, your sin remained].” So these Pharisees were sinning against light and knowledge, and thus their sin was towards the second death, although they had not been begotten of the Holy Spirit.

The “sin unto death” would then appear to be wilful sin against light and knowledge of righteousness or the Divine will, whether by the Christian in this Age, or by mankind in the next Age.

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Enquiries for the booklet, “Voice from Switzerland” continue to be received, and we would remind those friends who now have the copies on loan that they can help greatly by making use of them, and then passing on, or returning to this office, as may have been requested, as promptly as possible,

Correspondence.

New Zealand,

13th April, 1934. Dear Brother.

A few (lays ago, I received a letter from a Bro. in the Lord which contained some thoughts on “The alabaster box of ointment,” as recorded in Matt. 26; Mark 14; and John 12.

These thoughts appealed to me, so I herewith copy the portion and so pass it on, maybe helping thereby to fulfil Matt. 26: 13.

“When we were studying John, a long time ago, we noticed that our Lord mentioned that what the woman with the alabaster box of ointment did to Him was to be told for a memorial of her wherever the gospel would be proclaimed in the whole world. Matt. 26: 13.

“I have never been satisfied with the thoughts we got then, but now I seem to see a parallel between this and what He was actually doing Himself. In Matt. 26, the one follows the other.

“Briefly—The Woman’ represents Love’;—The love of God that provided the sacrifice. ‘The Box’—The body of Christ;—This is My body broken for you.’ The Ointment’;—The result of this breaking—The outpouring of the spirit. In no other way could this ever be possible. The box had to be broken.. Mark 14 (possibly made so that its contents could not be released till then) and so with our Lord. He, the Head, was anointed at Jordan, and only after He gave His body a living sacrifice, and so it is with the whole Body down to the feet. Now note the result of this: ‘What waste, etc.’ Even then, many thought that Jesus would have been far better to remain with them and continue to heal the sick and feed the poor, etc. If, as Jesus said, it was a ‘good work’ that this woman had done, how much more His wonderful work of love. Yet there are many to-day who do not see that it was the only way, costly as it seemed to be. He did not condemn helping the poor, and little did they think that He was giving His all, in order that this problem might be solved.

“In the words, ‘She hath done this for my burial’ or embalming’ as the Diaglott says, we get the thought of an effort to preserve from or counteract the effect of death. This seems to me to be the key to this parallel. Was not this just what He was doing, ‘Giving His life, that we might live, etc.’ “

I have not seen the above expressed elsewhere, particularly regarding the problem of the poor, and the “embalming.” With Christian love,

Your’ Brother by His Grace, N.G.

Dear Brother.

I am very pleased to be able to write to you again. Every day since my return I think of that wonderful long journey I had to Adelaide and Gawler, and the happy days I had with the friends there during the four (lays' Convention.

It seemed to be the Lord's will that I should go so far away to assemble with those of like precious faith. It was really good to be with the friends there and dwelling together in spirit and in truth, and to have the eyes of one's understanding enlightened all the more. Truly, it makes one's heart feel glad to meet with the Lord's people wherever we go, for we can all see the beautiful spirit of the Master, and all speaking and studying the same things which He taught, "The Scriptures," which is a boon most sacred from the Lord. Here my thoughts remind me of a few beautiful lines which some friend wrote:

"What majesty and grace
Through all the Gospel shines,
'Tis God that speaks and we confess
That doctrine most Divine"

How good it was to meet with friends of like precious faith at Melbourne, to celebrate the Memorial Supper which our Lord desires us to keep in remembrance of Him,—All who have accepted His invitation to drink of His cup, and be broken together with Him as the one "Loaf." How sweet His name sounds to them that believe and know the truth

"No voice can sing, no heart can frame,
Nor can the memory find
A sweeter sound than Jesus' name,

The Saviour of mankind."

I also think of the little study we hail in Melbourne; this study—Acts 8: 26-40, is much deeper than one would think at first glance. I intend to study it again. Well, brother, I was sorry to have to leave all the kind friends at Adelaide, Gawler and Melbourne. I felt it very much, and was too full for words as I was leaving them all. I felt a big tear or two well up in my eyes as the train drew out from Melbourne, for realised I was leaving behind very great friends all along the way. How thankful I am to you all, for your kindness to me, and I pray the Lord will bless you all and that His spirit will always dwell within you.

I had a wonderful experience in the train after we crossed the Victorian border; it happened that as I took my seat at Albury, I sat next to a man who was one of the Plymouth Brethren. I offered him a tract, "Why Sorrow, Sin, Death and Evil are Permitted." He said, "I saw one of these you gave out on the Victorian side." "Some things in it are beautiful," he said, "but I don't hold with it all." I asked, "What part do you disagree with?" But he could not give a satisfactory answer; he spoke of salvation, then I handed him another Tract, "Two Distinct Salvations." Then he handed me his tract, "Found Written," and which I find according to Scripture is a thousand years ahead of its time. He said how the world will see Jesus again; I said, "Not with their natural, sight, for our Lord tells His people—that the world will see Him no more, for He gave His' flesh for the life of the world." After a while the man went to sleep, and in the same seat was a lady of the I.B.S.A. I gave her a tract and she promised to read it later. She seemed nice and friendly to me, and the man was, also.

On arrival at Goulburn I broke my journey for two days—Saturday and Sunday. I put out tracts from house to house on Saturday, and only three people refused to accept them. On the Sunday I took the 'bus to the General Cemetery, where I gave out quite a number of tracts—"Why Sorrow, Sin, Death and Evil

are Permitted”—and most people seemed pleased to accept them, and I found it quite a pleasure to give them out.

On the Monday, at 7 a.m., I caught the train for Sydney to see the doctor about my eyes, etc. I have had a very bad cold since my return, and it is not right yet. I will close now, dear Brother, with warm Christian love to yourself and all the friends.

I remain,

Your Brother by His Grace, B.J.

Lord Jesus, make Thyself to me
A living, bright reality;
More present to faith's vision keen
Than any outward object seen;

More dear, more intimately nigh,
Than e'en the closest earthly tie.

Ruby Leaflet.

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