



Volume XIV. No. 11 Melbourne, 1st NOVEMBER, 1931 Price —Twopence Halfpenny

## HIS WAY IS PERFECT.

“As for God, His way is perfect: the Word of the Lord is tried; He is a buckler to all those that For who is God, save the Lord ? or who is a Rock, save our God ?”--Psa. 18:30. 31.

GOD’S way is His plan or purpose, that which He purposes to accomplish and which He is steadily working out according to the counsel of His own will. Men also have various plans and purposes of their own which they try to work out as nearly as possible. Some men purpose to amass a fortune; some to acquire a liberal education and vastly to increase their mental capacity and power; others to gain fame and popular applause, or social or political preferment, etc., etc. But to most men the way they choose proves unsatisfactory after a brief trial, and they turn restlessly from one way to another; and even when they pursue one way to the end they realise that it has been an unprofitable way—that the end was not worthy of the strife necessary to gain it.

Then again, men have their various ways or theories as to how God will or ought to accomplish the world’s salvation.

Some claim that it will be accomplished by a process of evolution, and that it is due - to the race by right. Some of these blasphemously claim that the present degradation of the world is directly chargeable to God, who, they say, is the real author of all the sin and wickedness we see in the world—that He made men so, and is therefore bound in justice to bring them up to a better condition. There are others who claim that God has predestinated the vast majority of mankind to eternal torment without any will or choice of their own, their doom having been unalterably sealed before they were born, while a small minority were likewise unalterably elected to eternal salvation and happiness.

But these and various other incongruous theories are only the ways of men, and have no foundation in the Word of God, except as men pervert that Word. It is a serious matter for any of God’s children to accept or entertain such views of His character and plan when they are so clearly stated in His inspired Word; and any one who can hear our Heavenly Father’s character thus traduced without feeling or expressing indignation is disloyal to God and unworthy to bear the name of Christ. If we have so much regard for the friendship of those who advocate such views of God’s character that we cannot reprove their course, we also rank ourselves with the enemies of the Lord, and He will surely so regard us. Such indifference to God and His truth shows clearly that there is something wrong at heart; and sooner or later such will drift

into the outer darkness unless they promptly repent and resolutely determine to make no compromise with error, and to cultivate no friendships

But, “as for God, His way is perfect,” and His Word clearly sets forth His way to all the simple-minded ones who take Him at His word and who have no fine-spun theories of their own to establish. In coming to God’s Word it is always important to remember that our attitude should be that of the disciple and not of the teacher. Such an attitude is itself a long step in the direction of a knowledge of the truth; for it is written that God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.. ( James 4:6.) If we come to His Word as reverent students, expecting to find therein the delineation of the pure and righteous character and plan of our God, that plan and character will be revealed to us; but if we come to it in a captious spirit and with impure and unholy thoughts and ambitions, we have just the kind of poor, imperfect brains that can warp and twist the Scriptures to suit our own ideas. If we put on the coloured glasses of prejudice, we can read God’s Word as seen through them only.

And this is what the Psalmist implied when he said, “With the merciful Thou wilt show Thyself merciful; with an upright man Thou wilt show Thyself upright; with the pure Thou will show Thyself pure; and with the froward Thou wilt show Thyself froward. For Thou wilt save the humble people, but wilt bring down high looks.” (Psa. 18:25, 27.) And again we read, “A scorner seeketh wisdom and findeth it not, but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth ;” and “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” (Prov. 14:6, 12.)

Oh, how we need to beware of “high looks” and of the pride that goeth before destruction and of the haughty spirit that precedeth a fall! (Prov. 16:18.) For if in pride we go about to establish our own ways, and do not fully submit ourselves to the right ways of the Lord, we will surely deceive ourselves and be led away by “the error of the wicked, so that God’s way or plan, as viewed through the coloured glasses of our ambitions and prejudices, will seem to our obscured vision as the Psalmist describes—unmerciful, impure and perverse, instead of what it really is—merciful and holy and righteous altogether. There is nothing more dangerous than pride, whether it be manifested in a love of display or in ambitions to be great or to be thought well of by others. If we are ambitious to be more generous than God, and go about to establish the idea of the absolute certainty of the everlasting salvation of every individual, when God plainly speaks to the contrary; or if we ignore God’s appointed means of salvation, which is by faith in the precious blood of Christ shed for the remission of sins, and endeavour to climb up to life by some other way, and to teach others to make the same effort; or if we repudiate the doctrine of the original perfection of man, who was created in the image of God, and also that of his own free will he fell into sin and thereby incurred its just penalty—death, and not eternal torment; or if we seek out any other human invention contrary to the Word of God, and go about to establish it, it is pride that is asserting itself; and if it be not promptly humbled it will surely and shortly end in complete alienation from God.

Let us fear lest a promise being left us of entering into God’s rest—into the rest of abiding faith in His way, His glorious plan—any of us should come short of it. and instead of calmly and confidently resting in God’s way and in the blessed hope of its glorious outcome, we be left in confusion and doubt upon the whole subject.

But if you have thus far stood firmly in the faith of God’s way we are persuaded ‘better things of you; and if, with the Psalmist, you can say. “My heart is fixed. O God, my heart is fixed” (Psa. 57:7); if your heart is established in love and reverence and faith in the sure Word of God, then you may also say, “For Thou wilt light my candle; the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness.” (Psa. 18:28.) Yea, has it not been even so? Surely hitherto the Lord hath led us. The language of the prophet applies to all those humble and faithful ones whom the Lord has been leading. “For by thee T have run through a troop (of opposing enemies). and by my God have T leaped over a wall” (of bondage, into the glorious liberty of a son of God).—Psa. 18:29.

Beloved, have we been thus overcoming? Have we been following the Lord's leading? Have we found, and are we still abiding in the sweet rest of faith in His plan, in His way, and not our own? "As for God, His way is perfect." It is just and merciful and benevolent and wise and practicable and sure of a glorious termination. "The Word of the Lord is tried": when fully understood it will stand the test of every argument that could be formed against it as to its justice, its wisdom, or benevolence.

Of this we are fully assured by our Lord, who prophetically declared that the testimony of those who come to a full knowledge of God's plan will be—"Great; and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints."—Rev. 15:3.

"The Lord is a buckler (a defence) to all those that trust in Him, for who is God (is mighty) save the Lord? or who is a rock (a safe anchorage to our souls) save our God." There is no other one to whom we may anchor our faith and hope; but securely anchored to Him we may trust and not be afraid, and may sweetly rest under the shadow of His wings. "The Lord liveth; and blessed be our Rock; and let the Lord of our salvation be exalted."—Psa. 18:46.

## THOU KNOWEST.

Master, I am so glad Thou knowest all  
Outspoken joys, and sorrow's hidden pain.  
I am so glad my path is known to Thee,  
And that Thou wilt my wayward steps restrain.

I place my hand in Thine. Oh, hold it fast!  
Nor heed my cry whene'er I ask amiss.  
Thou knowest what is best, my loving Lord,  
From out my heart all wilfulness dismiss,

Lord, when the thorns of earth pierce sharp and deep,  
And I instead would choose the scented rose,  
Let me recall Thy tender, watchful love,  
And that mine inmost need Thy wisdom knows.

Ah, who can tell how far our feet might stray? -  
We are so prone to wander from Thy side,  
If not hedged in by Thine eternal arms,  
And made within Thy sheepfold to abide.

I am so glad Thou knowest all, dear Lord!  
My life but poorly proves what lips confess,  
And well I know none but a Father could  
So frail an offering with such mercy bless.

Thou knowest all! This is my cradle, Lord,  
Thou shadow of Thy wings, 'neath which I sleep,  
Not for my goodness, but Thine own great love,  
Thou wilt in peace Thy child securely keep.

—G.W.S.

## A NEW REJECTION.

“The years that have intervened since the Great War, which brought ruin and confusion to the Western world, have,” writes Mr. C. F. Andrews in “The Federal Council Bulletin,” “revealed how superficial the acceptance of Christ’s teaching has been in the West “

“Just as the Jews rejected His message two thousand years ago,” Mr. Andrews continues, “so to-day it would seem as if a new rejection had taken place in the countries which are called ‘Christian.’ Such has been more and more the conclusion to which my own thoughts have driven me. I have often found Christ more truly in Africa and Asia than in Europe. . . . To put it in another way, the East has shown me almost every day, while I have lived there, the essential meaning of Christ’s teaching, while the West, which professes His name, seems to have lost touch with that essential meaning and to have evolved a new philosophy of life of its own in which the greater number of the Beatitudes have little place. It has blandly ignored Christ and denied Him. It becomes, therefore, absurd to make these old crude distinctions and to divide mankind into compartments, which are only misleading.”—’British Weekly.”

## Extracts from “Strange Figures

by J. Neil. M.A.

Scripture abounds in metaphors.. Take an instance from Isaiah, “All flesh is grass.” The prophet does not mean that “all flesh,” that is, “all inch,” are actually members of the vegetable kingdom. He only means to say they are “like grass” in some particulars. Yet he says -”all flesh is grass,” and thus he uses a metaphor.

When Jesus says “I am the door,” He implies that He bears the same relation to the kingdom of heaven that a door does to a house, namely, that He is the one way by which men enter into it. No matter how utterly different- in their natures are the things thus compared, so that they bear resembling relations in some one single point to certain other objects When Christ says to His disciples, “You are the salt of the earth” ( Matt. 5:13) we know at once that He does not mean that they are literal salt, but that they are like salt, in that they preserve and influence the world in which they are placed. When He says, “I am the vine, ye are the branches,” we equally know that lie is only using a figure to show the saints intimate union by faith with Himself and that He is the secret source of their life and fruitfulness.

In the same way “flesh and blood” stand for the whole human nature. Thus the Apostle says of Christ that He has consecrated for us a new and living way through the veil, that is say, His flesh (Heb. 10:20.) So, too, in the case of the Saviour speaking of giving “His ‘flesh’ as meat, where He means His human nature in and by which He has made the atonement as the man Christ Jesus. ( John 6:53-56.) And again, when the Lord says to Peter, “Flesh and blood has not revealed it unto thee” (Matt. 16:17), and when Paul says, “I conferred not with flesh and blood” (Gal. .1:16), we know that “flesh and blood” stands in each of these instances for “men,” the whole.

## THE NATURE OF COMMUNION.

“Take, eat, this is My body” is shown conclusively to be the powerful figure of metaphor and to mean “this resembles My body.” To take the words “this is My body” literally to mean “this is changed into My body” would be absurd, contrary to the evidence our senses, contrary to reason, and would, more, clearly contradict a number of the plainest statements of Scripture....But if we take the words as a metaphor to mean “This resembles or represents My body then all difficulties disappear and all becomes consistent

with our Saviour's highly spiritual teaching. It is then seen to tell, under a beautiful figure, that our souls are, as it were, fed and strengthened by a believing reception of the Lord Jesus Christ, in His Word and spirit, just as our bodies are fed and strengthened by bread and wine.

## COMMUNION WITH THE LORD.

(Continued from October issue— No. 2.)

WHATEVER might be our natural inclinations with reference to definiteness and persistency in prayer, we must take our instructions from the Scriptures; and, overcoming our natural predilections, we must as "little children" and as "dear children" conform our views and conduct to the instruction which is from above. Let us all, therefore, remember the words, "Ask (in My name) and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full"—(John 16:24). The heavenly Father has multiplied mercies, blessings and providences in store for His obedient and faithful children who will ask for them.

True, some of these proper and authorised and much-desired requests are long delayed; for instance, the Church for more than eighteen centuries has prayed, "Thy, Kingdom come ! Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in Heaven" God has heard, but has not answered. Nevertheless all who have thus prayed for and desired the Millennial Kingdom have been blessed by their faith in that Kingdom not seen as yet—but evidently now very near. However, other requests—for daily food and for succour in temptation and deliverance from the Evil One—have been promptly answered.

In this connection notice specially that the privilege of prayer, or any other favour of God, is not granted for selfish purposes. A thing which might be properly desired and asked for in one case, might be improper if asked for from some other motive. To desire and ask for something good in itself, in order that we might be glorified before our fellows, is a wrong request, because of a wrong motive.

The desire for a good thing, simply for ease and convenience, is an improper, selfish motive. The Apostle refers to such cases, saying, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, to consume it upon your desires" —i.e., for inglorious purposes or other selfish reasons. (Jas. 4:3.) To ask for some good thing simply to make a test of it, thereby to establish our faith, is seemingly an improper request, for none but the faithful are promised anything.

Besides, God's plan is that we should walk by faith, and not by sight. Hence, we not only should not ask anything unauthorised, but as we grow in spirituality our petitions will be chiefly for spiritual favours; and even in asking for these we should be particular not to specify how they are to come. And we should look for the answers to our prayers in natural rather than supernatural channels, since God's usual method is to use supernatural means only where the natural means are inadequate.

The graces of the Holy Spirit are specially stated to lie open to our requests and corresponding efforts. Your Heavenly Father is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask it, than earthly parents are to give good (earthly) gifts to their children.—Luke 11:11-13.

**"YE HAVE NOT, BECAUSE YE ASK NOT"**

The trouble with many is that they do not avail themselves of the great stock of divine grace set apart for the benefit of those who, abiding in Christ, and His Word abiding in them, do ask, do seek and do find. Let no one suppose that all prayer must be selfish. Quite to the contrary, we have a wide field of prayer-liberty in full accord with the Lord's Word and will.

Every trial of faith and patience is an occasion for prayer for the promised succour. Every failure to gain victory is an occasion for a prayer for forgiveness, and as well for divine 'blessing, that the lesson of our own weakness may be deeply impressed, so that in the next similar trial we may promptly apply for and lay hold upon the "grace to help" promised. Every victory over self is an occasion for prayer that we be not high-minded and puffed up, but kept humble and watchful for the next attack from the Great Adversary. Every service for the truth becomes an occasion for a prayer of thanks for the privilege of serving the great King and maybe to have suffered something for cause; and a cause for supplication for further opportunities of service and grace to use them wisely.

If you have trials and temptations which you are able to overcome, and which are working out in your character patience, experience, brotherly-kindness, sympathy and love, rejoice and offer the prayer of thanksgiving and acknowledgment of divine mercy and help. If your trials seem heavier than you can bear, and likely to crush you, take the matter to the great Burden-bearer and ask His help in bearing whatever would do you good and release from all that would not do you good, but which would injure 'you. If your heart is full of a desire to obey the Lord's injunction and "forget not the assembling," and you are unreasonably hindered in a way that you have tried to overcome but cannot, take the matter to the Lord in prayer, and watch and wait and strive according to your prayers, and you will soon see a manifestation of divine power on your behalf, if you see a true brother, a true "soldier" faltering and in danger, let 'your heart be so full of love for all of the Lord's "brethren" that you will not only run to his relief, but also supplicate the throne of the heavenly grace unceasingly, until you have regained him, or until in his wilfulness he has renounced the "narrow way" entirely. And should the fault be your own, your prayers and efforts will surely be blessed and over-ruled to your own profit. If you have no burning zeal to preach the good tidings of great joy, pray earnestly and faithfully and persistently for it, and strive for it, and you will soon have it. If you have a zeal and love for the gospel, and lack ability to present it, pray for the ability while you make full use of what you have. If you have the zeal and the ability and lack an opportunity, take it to the Lord in prayer as soon as you can, telling Him that you are faithfully using all the opportunities you have. Then watch for more opportunities without slacking your hand to use the very humblest and smallest within your reach.

Have you a quarrelsome disposition, or other bad habits, which you realise are a 'burden to your home and family, and to your brethren in the Lord's household? Take it to the Lord in prayer, asking grace and help to overcome, and meantime using your best diligence and effort in harmony with your prayer.

Do you lack wisdom, so that your efforts to serve the Lord and the truth are usually failures? Take it to the Lord in prayer, remembering the promise, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not."—James 1:5.

Have you business complications brought about by your lack of judgment, or the dishonesty of others, or your generosity to the poor, etc.? And do these perplex you and hinder your progress in spiritual matters, and thus threaten your welfare as a "new creature"? This surely is a proper matter to lay before the Lord at the throne of heavenly grace; and although it would not be right for-you to attempt to dictate how your relief shall come, and you should not expect the Lord to work a miracle to prosper your imprudent venture, yet you can ask His wisdom to guide and over-rule in the results, better than your wisdom could do it.

Here is a wide range of subjects (and it might be widely expanded) upon which we may go to the throne boldly in the name of Jesus and ask and receive, seek and find, God's grace sufficient.

Distrust thyself, but trust His grace;  
It is enough for thee!  
In every trial thou shalt trace Its all-sufficiency.  
Distrust thyself, but trust His strength;

In Him thou shalt be strong:  
His weakest ones may learn at length  
A daily triumph song.  
Distrust thyself, but trust His love;

Rest in its changeless glow:  
And life or death shall only prove Its everlasting flow.  
Distrust thyself, but trust alone In Him, for all—for ever!  
And joyously thy heart shall own that Jesus faileth never. —F.R.H.

(To be continued.)

#### PEOPLES PAPER.

Published by the Berean Biblical Institute, at National Bank Chambers, 226 Glenferrie Rd.,

Hawthorn, Melbourne E 2.

(Monthly) 2/6 per annum, post paid.

## “The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.”

—1 Cor. 3:19.

SIR OLIVER LODGE, the noted scientist who some years ago undertook to inquire into the phenomenon of spiritism and who became a spiritualist, has said that he hopes to communicate with this world after his death. He intends to establish his identity by detailing a “preposterous and absurdly childish peculiarity,” which would be described in a sealed envelope placed in a fireproof safe by the Society of Psychical Research. He says he hopes to remember after his death the details of that document of which no living soul had any idea. He claims to have personally received a great deal of guidance from his wife and son, Raymond, both of whom, according to Sir Oliver Lodge, are “on the other side”—we would say both of whom are dead.

Well had it been if Sir Oliver Lodge and many others had. placed more confidence in God’s Word instead of trusting to their own understanding.

Spiritualists generally admit that there are evil spirits as well as good spirits, and this is a fact according to the Scriptures, but good spirits will not work contrary to the Divine will as it is revealed in the Bible, and therefore they are all evil spirits who communicate with mankind, though they may, like Satan, appear as angels of light. The Scriptures forbidding any such communication are quite positive and plain—Lev. 19:31; bent. 18:10-12; Isa. 8:19.

The following newspaper report from London on the subject of spiritism appeared recently under the heading, “Spurious Mediums”:

“Disclosures made in a book entitled ‘And After,’ to be published shortly by Herbert Bradley, will in all probability shake the faith of spiritualists all over the world.

“Mr. Bradley openly accuses some of the chief spiritualistic mediums of fraud. After a seance held in his house with a noted American medium, whom he names, “spirit impressions” of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Lord Dewar and Sir Henry Segrave were discovered to have been produced by the medium himself. An alleged thumb, print of Conan Doyle corresponded exactly with the print of one of the medium’s toes. The same trickery was used in ‘spirit impressions’ of other famous persons now dead.“Scotland Yard has verified the author’s records. Mr. Bradley expresses the opinion that the majority of professional mediums are at times guilty of the grossest frauds.”

While. as the above states, there has been and is a great deal of fake in connection with spiritism, yet there is no need to doubt that very strange things are done at seances, such as messages received by rappings, writings, etc., and that sometimes materialisation takes place anal a body appears assuming the form and speaking with a voice similar to some deceased person, and things supposed to be known only to the deceased person are revealed. Yet all this can be done and undoubtedly is done by evil spirits personating the departed and cruelly deceiving the remaining relatives.

The Bible clearly shows that these wicked spirits have been mischievously operating in wizards, witches and the false religions and oracles of Pagan priests, and in spiritualism, etc., of our day and ever since the time before the great deluge.

Evidently prior to the fall into sin the angelic host was permitted to assist in the preparation of this world for the habitation of mankind, and even after man’s fall into sin they were doubtless permitted to materialise and communicate certain necessary knowledge to our ancestors. On account of many of these spirits leaving their own estate and preferring to assume human form and marrying the daughters of men.

God brought that world or age to an end, saving only Noah and his family, who 4 alone seem to have been left uncontaminated and therefore purely of Adamic stock. We read "Noah was perfect in his generation."

Since the flood the angelic hosts have not been permitted to freely materialise and appear to men, and those who had been so wicked were "restrained in chains of darkness." Ever since that time their operations have had to be through mediums or witches and in darkness. (Compare Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4, 5; Gen. 6:1, 2, 5, 9.)

The only hope held out in the Scriptures for any future life is in the sure hope of the resurrection and this hope is based on the fact that "Christ died for our sills according to the Scriptures." "By one man's sin death passed upon all men." so that all might be included in the ransom procured by the death of Christ. "The wages of sin is death." so Christ "tasted death for every man." "He gave Himself a ransom for all." Rom. 5; Heb. 2:9; 1 Tim. 2:3-6; 1 Cor.

1.5:16-22.

The Bible states that until the resurrection "the dead know not anything," "there is no remembrance of thee in the grave." The death condition is spoken of as a sleep, because the morning will come when the dead in Christ shall rise first "Them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."

Sir Oliver Lodge says that no living soul knows the contents of the sealed envelope by which he hopes to prove his identity, but these evil spirits, able even to read thoughts, no doubt are well informed and will undoubtedly soon personate him to his friends when he is dead and tell them the details contained in the envelope, yet nothing will be proved. To those who are guided by the Word of God, there are so many infallible proofs that spiritualism is simply demonism.

#### CHRISTMAS CONVENTION.

The Melbourne friends have pleasure in announcing this preliminary notice respecting their Annual Convention, and contemplate holding the meetings at Moles-worth Chambers, 450 Little Collins Street, Melbourne. on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 25th, 26th and 27th December.

Further information will be published in our next issue, meanwhile the secretary would be delighted to hear from brethren from other parts desirous of attending the meetings, and who may require arrangements to be made regarding accommodation, etc. Address, c/o Berean Biblical Institute, Hawthorn, E2

## Has the Bible a Message for To-day ?

That Bible prophecy of two thousand and more years ago is being fulfilled in this our day no reasonable thinker can deny. It may suffice to quote Daniel 12:4, also verse 1, and our Lord's words of Matt. 24:21, Luke 21:26-33: "Men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." The Apostle in Heb. 12:26, 27, quotes the prophet Haggai 2:6, 7, "For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, yet once it is a little while and I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea and the dry land, and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come"; and adds in verse 27, "that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."

Notwithstanding the increase of knowledge of our day and that it is recognised that the writings and expressions of the people of Palestine and Syria are full of picturesque and figurative language, and that the sayings and writings of our Saviour, the apostles and the prophets were no exceptions to this rule, there are still many who teach that in the day of trouble foretold as the climax of this dispensation, the literal earth is to be burned up and the actual heavens to be destroyed. By this means the Bible message for our time has been beclouded and distorted and the silver lining of good promises has been altogether obscured.

The word "earth" is used in the Scriptures as signifying the social and national arrangements of the people—the earthly institutions. The word "heavens" indicates the spiritual controlling powers—the religious institutions. The Apostle Peter (2 Peter 3:1-14) speaks of the "world which then was" in Noah's day having perished in the deluge. Noah and his family, however, were carried over and began a new "earth" with a new "heavens," and the Apostle says that this present "heavens and earth" are reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. It is no more the literal earth or heavens which are to be destroyed by fire at the end of this age than it was the literal earth and heavens which were destroyed by the flood. That is very clear, for God has promised that He will "never again destroy every living thing," as He had done in the flood—Gen. 8:21. Then, also, our Lord speaking of this day says that unless the days of trouble were shortened no flesh would see through them, but that for the elect's sake the days are to be shortened. Thus it is clear that all will not perish from the earth "( Matt. 24:22). As mentioned above. Paul intimates that "those things which cannot be shaken will remain." That will be such institutions as are founded on justice, truth and righteousness, and the Lord has said, "Seek meekness that ye may be hid in the day of the Lord's wrath."—Zeph. 2:3. In the following chapter. Zeph. 3:8, 9, it will be seen that the fire is figurative.. "for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy, for then will I turn to the people with a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord to serve Him with one consent." Haggai also states that when all nations are shaken "the desire of all nations shall come."

Thus it is that while the Bible shows that there is to be a day of thick darkness, clouds of distress and trouble, yet there is a silver lining. There will be the overturning of the Prince of Darkness of this present evil world and then a new world will be ushered in a new dispensation with "new heavens," when Christ shall reign instead of Satan and make a "new earth" with justice and righteousness its foundation. Then peace and goodwill among men will abound in every land.

The earth is surely being shaken to-day to the very foundations; nothing is secure, no one knows what is to happen next. One kingdom after another has been overthrown; governments have led the way in extravagance and the people have given themselves over to self-gratification, selfish pleasure and greed, fulfilling the words of the Lord and the Apostle, that "as in the days of Noah which were before the flood, so also shall be the days of the Son of Man," preceding the overthrow of the existing order of things—Luke 17:26, 27; Matt. 24:37-39; 2 Tim. 3:1-5. They have sown to the wind and are already

reaping something of the whirlwind. The consequence is, the money holders have lost confidence in the controlling powers, 'financial conditions are strained and unemployment increases have reached unprecedented conditions. There is abundance of supply, yet the people are in need, and "men's hearts are failing them for fear of what is coming on the earth."

'There is hardly need that we longer emphasise the Bible warning of coming storm; most people are now alarmed. Our message is a message of comfort to all who love righteousness and who will seek meekness.

The Bible reveals a Divine purpose in respect of this earth and mankind. That purpose cannot be frustrated (Isa.

45:18-23; 46:10; 14:24-27), having been progressing from age to age, each dispensation having accomplished a particular feature in the Divine arrangement. All God's acts are consistent with His attributes of wisdom, justice, love and power. It is because men do not understand God and His plan that they sometimes very unwisely charge God as being responsible for the evil in the world, and the many terrible calamities and sorrows. They forget that because mankind represented in the first parent chose to disobey God, that man was sent out of Eden and the Divine providence and protection was removed. Since that time God has "suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, winking at their ignorance" (Acts 14:16), interfering only when such iniquity abounded that it was kinder to destroy, such as Sodom and Gomorrah and the Canaanites, than to permit them to live on under such horrible conditions. God made choice of Abraham to reveal His good purpose, first of selecting a special class called the "seed of Abraham," through which all the nations of the world are to be blessed. It was not God's purpose to convert the world in Abraham's day, nor in the Jewish Age, during which He dealt only with Abraham's natural seed and gave them the Law and sent the prophets. all for our instruction. ( I Pet. 1:10-12.)

Up to the time of our Lord's first advent there had no opportunity for any man to run the Christian race for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. ( Phil. 3:14.) All reward up to that time had been A\* an earthly kind, no hopes of a heavenly borne had teen held out. Abraham and others are promised to return to earth in the resurrection. (Acts 7:2-7; Psalm 15:16.)

When the Jewish Age ended, the Gospel Age began. Our Lord said, "The Law and the prophets were until John, since then the kingdom. of heaven is preached" and again, "Of all that have been born of women there has not arisen a greater than John, yet he that is least He kingdom is greater than he." "The Law came by Moses but grace and truth by Jesus Christ." It has not been the Divine intention to convert the world during the Gospel Age, but just to select a little flock to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom." "Such as the Lord our God should call."

The Church of Christ, or the Bride of Christ. are being chosen to be joint-heirs with Christ in the Kingdom: which is to follow this dispensation. The hope of a heavenly home in the resurrection is only to this class and that is why the Apostle in Heb., 11:39, 40, altar having mentioned so many worthies of the previous age. These all died in faith not having received the promise. God having provided some better thing for us (the Church). When the number of God's elect is complete. and there are strong evidences that this will very shortly be accomplished. then the great time of trouble will sweep over the world, to humble men's hearts and prepare them to receive the blessings of Christ's Kingdom which will then he established.

The Scriptures indicate that the blessing of Divine protection and providence will conic to the Jew first, and they are evidently being gathered once more to their own land in preparation for that time.

Paul tells us that when the full number has been taken from the Gentiles to complete the Church, then all Israel:hall be saved, for this is the Divine covenant with them, . Rom. 11:25-27.) He. refers to the new

covenant mentioned in Jeremiah 31, containing the promise to regather them in Palestine and bless them as of old. Amos 9:14, 15 declares that “never again will they be driven out of their land.”

It would seem from the Scriptures that while the world generally becomes more and more involved in trouble and distress through the breaking down of the present systems, that Israel, after the Church is completed and taken to be with Christ—to reign with Him—(2 Tim. 2:11, 12; Rom. 8:17; Rev. 3:21; Luke 12:32), will be found rejoicing in restored Divine favour. It is surely time to “speak comfortably to Jerusalem and say unto her that her warfare is ended.” (Isa. 40:1, 2.) Other nations will begin to recognise that while they are in such turmoil and distress that matters are quite different with Israel in their own land, that somehow they have learned how to govern and arrange matters properly so that justice and righteousness prevails, -and therefore peace and joy and goodwill and life and health abounds. How beautifully is this foretold by Isaiah 2:1-4, also Micah 4:1-7. How that God’s Kingdom will be represented by Israel\_ and the other nations having utterly failed to govern themselves, every attempt, every form of government having only resulted in failure. will appeal to Israel to send someone to put their affairs in order.

The happy result will be no more war or strife, but every man shall dwell under his own vine and fig tree and none shall make them afraid. There seems to-day a general movement among the Hindus, Muhammadans and others in appreciating the teachings of Christ, though not appreciating what they have seen of what is called Christianity in practise. This seems also a preparation for the glad day when Christ shall set up His Kingdom and when the promise to Abraham will be fulfilled—(Gal. 3:8, 9)—and the message of the angels also, that “Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people.” Peace and goodwill towards:1 and man. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as in heaven.

Much more could be said did space permit, but it is hoped that the earliest reader will enquire for further literature on these subjects, which will I be supplied free while funds permit.

## Question Box.

Question.—What spirit led our Lord into the wilderness? (Matt. 4:1.)

Answer.—Without doubt it was the same holy spirit that came upon our Lord at His baptism, that led Him to go apart into the wilderness. From the rendering in Matthew 4:1, it might be assumed that the purpose of going into the wilderness was to be tempted of the devil, but it is not necessary to take such a meaning from the passage. The rendering of Mark 1:12, 13, and Luke 4:1-13, seem to put the matter more plainly. Our thought is that almost immediately after His baptism, which signified His consecration to death, when the holy spirit came upon Him, Jesus was led by this holy spirit to feel the great responsibility of the ministry upon which He was entering and the necessity of quiet thought and meditation alone with God. He evidently desired to get away from all the ordinary environments of life and to consider quietly the matter of His consecration and how to proceed in respect of His service and the laying down of His life in accordance with the Divine will.

We may be sure that no wrong or evil spirit led our Lord into the wilderness to seek for grace and strength in meditation and communion with God. We are assured in this, for it is stated that the angels ministered to Him. Many of the Lord's people have somewhat similar experience following their consecration to walk in the steps of Jesus; to be baptised into His death. As with Christ, so with His followers, the great Adversary is prompt to attempt to lead astray right at the beginning of the new life and destroy the very purpose of our consecration. Severe trials of one kind or another quite often, if not generally, follow the act of consecration. The same source of succour and grace which sustained our Lord and brought Him off more than conqueror is available to uphold all who faithfully trust in God, rely upon His Word, and seek to conform to His will. These are exhorted to "think it not strange, concerning the fiery trials that shall try you," "But the God of all grace who hath called us unto His eternal glory after that ye have suffered awhile make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." (1 Pet. 5:10.) So our Lord came forth strengthened and fortified by His experience and prepared for His great ministry.

Question.—Why did God make such a distinction between the offerings of Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:3-5) ?

Answer.—It would appear that both Cain and Abel had a reverence towards God and it was a proper act of worship that led them to bring their offerings. The Lord, in having respect to Abel's offering and not to Cain's, would teach a lesson, namely, that the only way back to harmony with God was by the shedding of blood. "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins," or, as the little hymn has it, nothing in my hands I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling."

Cain's offering had nothing in it to indicate that he, a sinner needed redemption, while Abel's was in line with what had been shown after Adam's transgression, when God showed them how to make coats of the skins of the animals; thus, to provide them with a covering, the blood of animals was shed. The same lesson runs right through the Bible—in the offering of Isaac, in the ram as his substitute, in the Passover lamb in Egypt and in the blood of bulls and goats, which, as the Apostle says, could never take away sin; but they were types and shadows pointing to the precious blood of Christ, which was offered once for all. "Neither by the blood of goats and calves but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."—Heb. 9:11-28.

Many people would have thought Cain's offering the more beautiful, being the beautiful fruits of the earth, but it contained no recognition of the fact that he as a sinner needed the redeeming blood, while Abel's slain lamb pointed to the only hope for mankind, "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."—John:29.

# The Ministry of John the Baptist.

Luke 3:15, 22.

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”—John 1:29.

SEVERAL points in this familiar narrative are worthy of special notice—

(1) The deep and wide influence of John’s preaching. The prepared instruments of the Lord are powerful in His hand. The whole nation was aroused, the multitudes were baptised with the baptism of repentance (Mark 1:4, 5) and the expectation of the immediate advent of the Messiah was everywhere manifest.

(2) The humility and sincerity of John, which was not changed in the least by the popular favour, is seen in his denial of the suggestion that he might be the Messiah. Had he made the claim, how readily would the people have accepted it ! But this prepared vessel of the Lord was so established in righteousness as to be superior to any such temptation.

(3) In disclaiming this honour for himself, John compared his own work and the work of the coming Messiah, and showed them the difference. Referring to himself, he claimed great inferiority. And his own work he described as only a preparatory work: “I indeed baptise you with water, but . . . He shall baptise you with the holy spirit and with fire.” It is very manifest that all of the multitudes who were baptised with water were not baptised with the Holy Spirit. The ‘baptism of the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost after the Lord was glorified, but only upon a small minority of the Jewish nation. The baptism of fire came later—in the end of the Jewish harvest (A.D. 70), when Jerusalem was destroyed and their national existence terminated in the midst of a great time of trouble. Verse 17 is in reference to the great separating work of the Jewish harvest, and the gathering of the worthy remnant into the garner of the Gospel Age. and the fiery judgments upon the unworthy chaff.

(4) In the baptism of Jesus we see that the ordinance received a new significance. His baptism was not unto repentance; for he had no sins to repent of. “He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate, from sinners” (Heb. 7:26). With the accustomed view of baptism, John declined to baptise Jesus in Whom there was no sin, nevertheless, though he could not understand why He should desire it. John complied with His request—“Suffer it to be so now for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.”—Matt. 3:15.

The righteousness of God’s law which could by no means clear the guilty (Exod. 34:7) without a satisfaction of the claims of justice by the sacrifice of a life for a life (Exod. 21:23; Lev. 24:17-21; Dent. 19:21). He was about to fulfil by the sacrifice of Himself. He was about to give His flesh for the life of the world—giving His life for the life of Adam, in whom we were all condemned, that as all his posterity were included in the condemnation, so they might likewise have a share in the redemption. And all who desire to follow in the footsteps of Christ must likewise present their bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable through Christ. Thus it becometh us (the Christ, Head and Body) to fulfil all righteousness.

With the baptism of Christ, then, the ordinance received the new signification of entire consecration to God as living sacrifices, even unto death. And in this new view of the matter some of the Jewish converts were baptised again. See the baptism of John and the baptism of Christ and His Body, the Church, contrasted in Acts 19:3, 5.

Published by Berean Biblical institute. National Bank Chambers, Hawthorn  
Printed by & Powell, Brunswick, Victoria