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SOME THOUGHTS ON THE COVENANTS.

A CLEAR understanding of this subject is important to every Christian. The Covenants determine our relationship to God as well as the nature and extent of the blessing which our Heavenly Father intends to bestow upon His children.

There are three great Covenants brought to our attention in the Scriptures—the Abrahamic, the Law and the New, the fulfilment or completion of which will witness the recovery from sin and death of all the willing and obedient of the human family, as well as the exaltation of the faithful few of the present age to joint-heirship with Christ in His kingdom.

In Scriptural language (Isa. 54:6), God is represented as being the “Husband” of these Covenants, and He is said to ‘be the “Father,” while each Covenant is said to be the “Mother” of the particular class that is developed under it (Gal. 4:26-28).

The first, or Abrahamic, Covenant was made with Abraham. It was a promise that his “seed should bless all the families of the earth” (Gen 12:3) There were no conditions attached to this Covenant; it was sealed or ratified by God Himself with an oath (Heb. 6:13-18). There being no conditions and only one party concerned, there was therefore no necessity for a mediator (Gal. 3:20).

The second, or Law, Covenant was made by God with the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai. It was a Covenant of life or death, blessings or cursings, conditional upon their keeping intact all the precepts of the law of God (Deut. 28:115). The mediator of the Law Covenant was Moses, who sealed or ratified it with the blood of ilmls and goats (Heb. 9:19-21).

The third, or New-, Covenant will also be made with the nation of Israel (Jer. 31:31; 32:40). who will first participate in its ‘blessings, and gradually the whole world of mankind will be included in it (Heb. 8:8-12). Christ is the Mediator of this Covenant, having sealed it with His own blood (Heb. 9:14. 15).

The Apostle Paul throws much light upon this subject in his letter to the Galatians. Evidently those to whom he was writing had become more or less confused regarding the relative importance of, as well as their own relationship to, these Covenants.

In chapter 4:22-26, he points out that the first two Covenants, the Abrahamic and Law, were typified by the first two wives of Abraham—Sarah and Hagar—that Abraham himself represented God. Although in this connection he had no occasion to refer to the third Covenant, we may safely assume that the apostle saw in it the third wife of Abraham, viz., Keturah, as a type of the New ‘Covenant.

The apostle in this same chapter points out that Sarah’s son, Isaac, was typical of the Church of the present age, and Hagar’s son, Ishmael, typical of the nation of Israel.

He says, “Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman; -which things are allegorical, the women are the two Covenants. Hagar represents Sinai—that is the Law, and her son Ishmael answereth to the Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But (the new) Jerusalem above is (of) the freewoman, for she is our mother, so we brethren, as Isaac as, are the children of promise (Abrahamic Covenant), we are not children of the bondswoman (Law ‘Covenant), but of the free. Thus in type the Law Covenant is represented as being the mother of

Israel, and the Ahrahamic Covenant, or promise, the mother of the Church.

The Abrahamic Covenant or promise is termed by the apostle the “Gospel” (Gal. 3:8), and he points out that those who were seeking to leave the freedom of the Gospel to seek salvation by the -works of the Law were identifying themselves with Ishmael in preference to Isaac.

In other words, in their blindness they were sacrificing their relationship as heirs of God to become bondservants, for as Sarah (the freewoman) is superior to Hagar (the slave), so also is the Ahrahamic Covenant superior to the Law Covenant. In Hebrews 3:2-6, the apostle speaks of Israel as a “house of servants” under Moses, and the Church as a “house of sons” under Christ.

Although the Ahrahamic Covenant was confirmed in Abraham’s day, yet it did not become operative or bear seed till the beginning of the Gospel Age (Gal. 3:16). “That seed (promised in the Covenant) was Christ.” The barrenness, for a time, of this Covenant was also shown in type of Sarah, who, though promised a seed, yet remained childless till after Hagar’s son was born.

The apostle tells us that Christ was the seed of promise; He was the one that God had in view when He said, “In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Gal. 3:8).

The whole world lay under condemnation to death, and ‘before any permanent blessing could come to the race, the death sentence must first be removed, and God’s justice satisfied by a ransom. Adam, the one who sinned, forfeited a perfect life, and therefore the one who would redeem and bless the race must also have a perfect life, to give in exchange in order to satisfy the claims of justice against the first man.

None such was found, but the -Lord -Himself (Rev. 5:5). “In Him was life,” but forfeited by sin, He gave Himself a ransom for all, and thereby proved Himself to be the true seed of promise and heir of the Ahrahamic Covenant.

But we are assured (Gal. 3:29) that this seed is composed of many members. In other words, Christ, the seed, embraces not only our Lord Jesus but the various members of His body.’

Our Lord only became the seed at His consecration, when He offered Himself in sacrifice to God on behalf of the race. We must follow in His steps, but, unlike our Lord, we, as part of the condemned race, have no life to offer: and before we can have any standing in God’s sight or offering that will be acceptable to Him, we must first be justified. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1).

But justification alone does not bring us into Christ, or make us members of the seed: it merely gives us a standing before God, free from condemnation. It brings us to the same standing as our Lord before His consecration, only that ours is a reckoned perfection, whereas our Lord’s was actual. Then by following in His steps, and presenting ourselves a living sacrifice, as He did, we are begotten of the Holy Spirit, and reckoned no longer as human, but as spiritual. We are now new creatures in Christ Jesus, members of the promised seed (Gal. 3:29). As the blessing to the race cannot come till the last member of this seed is added, we see that God’s purpose in this age is not the conversion or uplifting of the world, but to prepare a class—the great “seed”—through which the blessings will come in the next age (Eph. 1:10; Rev. 22:17).

THE LAW SEED SHOULD COME.

Throughout the Jewish Age, God’s promise to Abraham was more or less lost sight of, and it seemed as though Israel after the flesh was the true seed and heir of Abraham. But when Christ, the true seed, came, Israel was set aside, and the Law Covenant ended. The law was given till the seed should come, of whom the promise was made (Gal. 3:19; 2 Cor. 3:11; Col. 2:14).

The prophet Isaiah, speaking prophetically of the ending of the law, says; “Where is the bill of your mother’s divorcement, whom I have put away?—Or—which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away” (Isa. 50:1).

Typically, this would represent Abraham addressing Ishmael, and saying, “Why did I send your mother away?”

Had I any occasion to divorce her? Or, did I require to sell her to, one of my creditors?” These queries imply negative answers. Then comes the explanation, “For your iniquities is your mother put away.” Abraham found no fault with Hagar, but because of her son’s iniquity, ill persecuting Isaac (Gal. 4:29), both mother and son were cast out (Gal. 4:30).

• In the antitype, God found no fault with the law; it was perfect; nevertheless, because of the iniquities of the nation of Israel, in rejecting and persecuting the anti-typical Isaac, the Lord Jesus Christ. God cast off the nation. and made all end of their covenant.

THE NEW COVENANT IN TYPE AND ANTITYPE.

Following the argument of the apostle in Gal. 4. showing Sarah and Hagar as representatives of the two Covenants, we may take the third wife of Abraham, Keturah, by whom he had many sons, as typically representing the New Covenant, under which all nations are to receive a blessing. It is interesting to note that in the type, Isaac inherited all of Abraham's possessions, conforming to the apostle's statement that the antitypical Isaac class are the heirs of God.

Abraham, however, gave gifts to all the sons of his other wives, representing in type the blessing of Israel and the world of mankind during the Millennium (Gen. 25:1-6). While Moses was mediator of the Law Covenant, we read that Christ is the Mediator of a better Covenant—the New Covenant (Heb 8:6. 7) , and with Him will be associated the Church as members of His body.

A mediator is one who acts as a “go-between.” a middleman (medius — the middle) , whose duty it is to bring both parties together, and to see that the terms of an agreement are faithfully carried out.

The work of the mediator under the New Covenant is represented in a threefold aspect—Prophet, Priest, and King. As prophet, he will enlighten the whole world. opening the blind eyes (Isa. 35:3-10); as priest, he will apply the merits of the sacrifice accomplished at Calvary on their behalf; and as king, he will rule in righteousness, compelling all to submit to the laws and regulations of His Kingdom, or suffer the penalty-death (Acts 3:23).

The Church of the present time requires no mediator to bring them into harmony with God; having accepted Jesus Christ as their Redeemer, they are justified by faith, but we still require the advocacy of the merits of the blood in order to cleanse us of our daily shortcomings. “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous” (1 John 2:1).

The Church does not participate in the benefit of the New Covenant, because the New Covenant will not be fully sealed nor come into operation till the last member of the Church is glorified. The apostle says: “We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise.” Had we been under the New Covenant, he could not have said this.

Are we justified by any Covenant? . No; We are justified by our faith in Christ. If Abraham and others of his day were justified by their faith apart from the New Covenant, so can we be; on the other hand, if we cannot be justified apart from the New Covenant, it follows that no one else could, which conclusion would be contrary to the records of Scripture. Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness; now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us also to whom it shall be imputed; (if we come under the New Covenant? No!) if ye believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead (Rom. 4:3, 23, 24).

Was not Christ acting as our mediator when he died on our behalf? No. A mediator must be a mediator of some Covenant. Now, we are children of the promise which the apostle assures us had no mediator, because it was an unconditional agreement (Gal. 3:20).

By Christ's death and resurrection He established His right and fitness to be the Mediator. Our Lord could not act as mediator till He had first satisfied the claims of justice against the race. This price was only accepted when our Lord ascended after His resurrection, and its acceptance was shown by the descent of the Holy Spirit. He has now the right to mediate by virtue of His sacrifice, but will not begin that work till after the sealing is completed, and the merits of the blood applied on behalf of the world. This is in harmony with I Tim. 2:6. There is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time; also Hebrews 9:14, 15.

Ransom and mediation are two different things. The ransom was the price paid to justice to redeem the race from death. Mediation is the work of restitution by which the world will be gradually brought to perfection and harmony with God during the Millennium.

It has been thought that 2 Cor. 3:6 teaches that we are under the New Covenant; but it does not say we are blessed by the New Covenant. that God has made us able ministers of the New Covenant. The minister of a covenant is not the one who participates in its blessings, but the one who dispenses them. Moses was the minister of the Law Covenant by sealing and dispensing its blessings to the nation of Israel. The Church—Head and Body—are the ministers of the New Covenant, sealing it with their own blood now, and dispensing its blessings of life and protection to the world in the coming age.

The chief point of 2 Cor. 3:6-16 is the contrast between the glory revealed through Moses in the type, in the inauguration of the Law Covenant, and the more excellent glory that belongs to the Church as ministers of the New 'Covenant. In short, it is a contrast between the passing glory attached to the mediator of the Law Covenant, and the permanent and far-exceeding glory associated with the mediator of the New Covenant. As in the type the face of Moses shone (his glory was revealed) when he came down from the mount of God a second time. so it is at the second presence of the Lord, when he comes down from the mount of God the second time, that the members of the Church will shine forth as the sun, in a "glory that excelleth" that of Moses in the type. But as yet this glory is ours only by faith, so the apostle adds, "seeing then that we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech . . . and faint not" (verse 12).

TAKING AWAY THE FIRST, ESTABLISHING THE SECOND.

In Heft 10:9 does the apostle teach that when the Law Covenant ended, the New Covenant took its place? The apostle is not discussing the Covenants in this connection. He is dealing with the typical and antitypical sacrifices.

This is very evident from the rest of the chapter. His main point is to prove to the Jewish people that their institution of sacrifices was not a permanent arrangement, but that, according to their own prophets, it would pass away and give place to the better sacrifices. Having first shown that the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin (verse 4), he quotes the 40th Psalm (a prophecy, pointing to our Lord's sacrifice of Himself), and says this is why, "When He cometh into the world, He saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body has thou prepared me." "Then said He, lo, I come to do Thy will, O God (by sacrificing Himself). He taketh away the first (or typical sacrifices) that He might establish the second (and permanent sacrifice) . . . for by one offering bath He perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (v. 14).

Heft 10:16, which is a quotation from Jeremiah 31:3, 34, refers to the days of Israel's disfavour, during which time Israel as a nation was trodden down, and the dominion of the world given over to the Gentile kingdom. After those days of disfavour, God will make a New Covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah, and eventually with the whole world, under which His Spirit will be poured out upon all flesh, and all shall know I-I ha, from the least of them unto the greatest of them.

The apostle's argument is to show how convincing Jeremiah's prophecy is. It says, "their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." The deduction is this, if their sins are at any time to be remembered no more, it could not be under the typical sacrifices, for there was a remembrance of sins made every year, therefore the prophecy argues the introduction, at some time, of a new and permanent basis of satisfaction for sins, which the apostle shows was the sacrifice of Christ.

Some have thought from Luke 22:20 that the New Covenant was sealed and became operative when our Lord died. Had not the Church been arranged for in God's plan, the New Covenant would have, undoubtedly, been ratified when Christ died, and immediately have been put into operation on behalf of the dying world; but, according to God's purpose, as revealed in the Scriptures, He has arranged that the Church, the members of Christ's body, should also participate in His death, as well as share in His resurrection. -Our Lord indicated this when He said "Are we able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with?" (Matt. 20:22). The apostle says the Church are joint heirs with Jesus Christ; if so 'be that they suffer with Him that they be also glorified together; and he goes on to state further in the same epistle (Romans) that each individual member of the body must be a living sacrifice. When the sacrifice is presented, the High Priest lays his hands on it, and thus it is written of the Church, "We are killed all the clay long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

The Levitical sacrifice; mentioned in Heb. 9 were ordained by God for the purification of earthly things, but the spiritual things (all things pertaining to the kingdom) are to be purified with better sacrifices than these (v. 23). We have already seen that the seed of Abraham is 'Christ and the Church (Gal. 3:16, 29); therefore, it will not be till the seed is complete (the sacrificing over) that the blessings will come to all the families of the earth under the New Covenant.

The Influence of this Hope.

1 John 3:3.

The world cannot be influenced by these things which God hath in reservation because the world knows not of them. The world understood not and believed not the apostles testimony, nor does it believe ours. The Scriptures explain this, assuring us that at the present time the world is blind and deaf to the features of God's plan, and that the Lord's consecrated people only can know them because we only have the eyes of understanding open, that we may more and more appreciate the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the Divine character and plan. As for the world, their blind eyes will be, opened 'by and by; but now, as the Scriptures declare, "None of the wicked shall understand." Thus it was also at the Lord's first advent hearing they hear and do not understand, seeing, they see and do not perceive, do not believe what they see. This is the case with the great majority, even those professing to be the Lord's followers.

But what is the effect of these things upon our eyes, that do see somewhat of the grace of God? The influence is beneficial, uplifting, cheering, comforting, hallowing, sanctifying, let the grace and truth of the Divine plan more and more fill our hearts, and it will crowd out more and more of the spirit of the world and of selfishness; and sin, of the world, and make us more and more sanctified and for the Master's use made meet.

Jehovah is Himself thy keeper true,
Thy changeless shade;
Jehovah thy defence on thy right hand
Himself hath made.
And thee no sun by day shall ever smite,
No moon shall harm thee in the silent night.
From every evil shall He keep thy soul From every sin;
Jehovah shall preserve thy going out,
Thy coming in.
Above thee watching, He whom we adore,
Shall keep thee henceforth, yea, for evermore.

—Metrical version, Ps. 121:5-8.

PEOPLES PAPER.

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THE OLDEST BOOK. AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF THE BIBLE.

(W. G. Thompson.)

I am the oldest book in existence, having outlived the storms of thirty centuries. Men have endeavoured to banish me from the face of the earth; they have hidden, torn and burnt me, and have done to death tens of thousands of my faithful witnesses. No other book has been more bitterly hated; no other book has been more dearly cherished; no other book has been so misrepresented and misunderstood; but to-day, while so many of my foes slumber in death, I still live on.

It is not for me to speak of the conflicting creeds laid to my charge, but on behalf of the one true purpose of my revered Author I appeal to reason. Look at the stately trees of the forest; the living green of the meadows bespangled by a thousand lovely flowers; the singing birds that delight themselves amid the beauties of nature; the blue dome of heaven, illuminated by the sun, moon, and stars that space out a universe too immense for man to fathom; and know that the Creator of these things has a wise and loving purpose equally great and beautiful on behalf of man.—Isa. 55:6, 13.

There is revealed within my covers a plan so broad and a design so deep as to be beyond the power of human origin. My story centres around the Redeemer, who by the grace of God tasted death for every man. Based upon this atoning sacrifice all the dead will be raised, and the whole earth made glorious with life and happiness everywhere, without a trace of sorrow, pain or death.—Isa. 1 1:9; .60:30; Rev. 21:1,7.

My message has blessed every follower of Jesus. It has inspired them with hope, encouraged them to zeal, comforted them in sorrow, and strengthened them in faith, till they have laid down their all in death, awaiting their grand reward. Like the crystal springs from the mountainside which flow on and on to refresh the luxuriant verdure on the plains below, so in the glad day now dawning. The waters of truth Neill impart their life-giving blessings to the willing and obedient of mankind, who will forever, With one sweet accord, praise, love and adore my beloved Author.—Rev. 5:8. 13.

The Scriptures teach us the best way of living, the noblest way of suffering, and the most comfortable way of dying.—Flavel.

Rewards for Obedience.

Proverbs 8:1 - 17

“In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.”—Prov. 3:6.

IN this chapter wisdom personified stands as an instructor, and offers good counsel to such as have an ear to hear and a desire to obey her.

Verse 1: “Wisdom is justified of her children.” They show their parentage, and reflect their mother’s likeness. But to this end wisdom’s laws and commandments must be carefully heeded. Wisdom’s laws are Divine laws, expressed not only in the Scriptures, but also in the laws of nature. “The children of the light” should walk in the light in reference to physical as well as spiritual matters—health, food, cleanliness, clothing, etc.

Verse 2: No one of ordinary perception can fail to note that a wise and moderate course in life in obedience to the Divine laws is beneficial with respect to the life which now is, and also that which is to come. True, many in the prime of life and health do not give heed to wisdom’s voice; true, many who do give heed are such as are already greatly impaired, having either inherited weaknesses and frailties from the un-wisdom of their parents (beginning with Adam and Eve) , or having neglected the voice of wisdom until retribution overtook them. But even for the impaired the counsel of wisdom is profitable, as many have proved, and brings with it more of peace than can be found in any other way.

Verse 3. How greed the counsel of this verse! How wise, and how necessary to a large development of heart are the graces here mentioned—mercy and truth’ No one is truly great who is mean, spiteful, vindictive. Mercy towards others, implying consideration for their failings and sufferings, is an ennobling grace, a part of the image of God, too largely lost by many. ‘Truth here stands for sincerity, pureness, and uprightness of dealing in all our affairs. Who could be a true nobleman without this quality? Much more is it necessary to every true Christian.

“Bind them about thy neck” signifies that these are to be esteemed as jewels and ornaments of character carefully guarded from loss and always in sight—delightful things. And not only should they be manifest to all as outward graces, but they should be written or engraven on our hearts. Nobility of character, God-likeness, was a part of man’s original endowment, and was written in his very heart, nature, constitution: but Adamic sin and its resultant separation from God, and six thousand years of degradation, have well nigh obliterated this original Divine law from the heart of humanity. So to fallen man in general the evil and selfish and resentful suggestions present themselves. instead of mercy and sincerity. But the child of God, the child of wisdom, is to retrace and engrave again upon the tablets of the heart (that is, in his very character) these graces so generally obliterated. This work is at the present time being followed only by those -who are in the school of Christ—the “little flock.”

But by and by the school of Christ will be enlarged, and those who are now pupils will be associated with the great Master as teachers and instructors of the Word. And then the whole world will be called upon to rewrite in their hearts the original law of righteousness. And all who appreciate the opportunity will be assisted in so doing by the Lord and His servants, as it is written (Jer. 31:33, 34).

Verse 4. Such characters are sure to be pleasing in the sight of God, and are acknowledged even by such persons as are children of darkness and hate the light, and would say all manner of evil falsely against the children of the light.

Verse 5. Every matured child of God must learn well and appreciate the sentiment of this verse. Experience has taught him the imperfection of his own judgment in many things, and the fallibility of all human counsel; and he has learned and is still learning to trust the Lord implicitly. In order thus to trust the Lord a knowledge of His Word and the plan of salvation which it reveals are very important; they inspire trust and confidence, not only in the ability and wisdom of God, but also in His justice and love.

Verse 6. It is not only proper that God’s children should trust Him in their hearts, but also that they should confess and acknowledge Him as their Lord and Master in all of their affairs. Such as are careful thus to acknowledge the Lord have the assurance that He will direct their paths. Their paths will not be directed in ways most congenial to the fallen natures, nor do they wish for this; for, as already seen, they are desiring and seeking mercy and truth, as outward charms, and also as deeply graven inward principles.

Verse 7. Nothing is more dangerous to the child of God than self-conceit; it blocks the way to true progress and reformation of heart, and hinders true usefulness to others. and especially usefulness in God’s service; for His Word declares. “God resisteth the proud, but showeth His favour unto the humble.”

Instead of self-confidence, wisdom dictates a distrustfulness of self, remembering its weaknesses and imperfections, and correspondingly the greater reverence for God and reliance upon Him, which more than anything else will strengthen and enable us to depart from the evil of our fallen estate.

Verse 8. "Health (or vigour) to thy muscles and marrow to thy bones," as a figurative expression, would seem to signify general vitality, vigor of mind and body, which certainly are among the blessed results of that proper reverence for the Lord which leads us to depart from sin in thought, word and deed,

Verse 9. Whatever we possess should be made to contribute its part in God's service. Whether our substance consists of a rich endowment of talent, or education, or influence, its first fruits, its results should go to the service of our gracious Heavenly Father, as our Lord said, "Seek ye first (chiefly to serve) the kingdom of heaven."

Verse W. Whatever our substance, if faithful in its use and in consecrating its best to the cause of God, a blessing will result to us. During the Jewish age, God's Covenant with that people was to the effect that faithfulness to Him and His laws would bring them temporal prosperity; and the same rule will be in force during the Millennial age; as it is written, "In His days (the Millennial age) shall the righteous flourish," but "evil doers shall be cut off" (Ps. 72:7; 37:9). This rule does not apply during this Gospel age, however; the meek do not now inherit the earth. Now the proud are prosperous, "Yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered" (Mal. 3:15)

. Not only our Lord Jesus and the apostles, who honoured God with the first fruits of their being, but also many of the household of faith since, have not had overflowing barns and wine presses, Chiefly they have been "the poor of this world, rich in faith." Nevertheless, they have had the finest of the wheat, the purest of the oil, and the best of the wine, as represented in their spiritual nourishment and enrichment.

Verses 11, 12. The trials and difficulties of this present life are not to be esteemed as marks of Divine disfavour, if we have 'become children of God, children of wisdom. We are to remember the promise of our Father, that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to the called ones according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). Reproofs, trials, disciplines should be reminders to us that we are not perfect, that we still have need of the mercy of God in Christ, even with our best efforts, and should lead us to greater diligence in "perfecting holiness in the fear (reverence) of the Lord" (2 Cor. 7:1.).

Verses 13-17: Wisdom and understanding are not exactly synonymous terms. Wisdom describes more particularly the perception of right and wrong principles, and their results; and the propriety of following these. Knowledge or understanding relates more particularly to the information and building up of judgment and character—obedience to the voice of wisdom.

It is a great blessing and privilege indeed to find wisdom, for few there be that find her in this present time. Wisdom is the light which cometh from above. She is the truth. Her grand exemplification among men was "the man Christ Jesus" our Lord. "the true Light." Light from above, "wisdom," is still in the world, as represented in the Divine Word; but to the majority it is unseen, unknown; as it is written, "The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not." Thank God for the assurance that in due time all the blind eyes shall be opened, and that then the true light, the true wisdom from above, shall lighten every man. Then all will see the truth, and all will hear the voice of wisdom, the voice of God, the voice of Christ, the voice of the Church, and be privileged to drink at the fountain of wisdom and knowledge, and, if they will be obedient, to obtain the full measure of Divine favour and blessing as represented in the offer of everlasting life (see Rev. 22:17).

But, alas although but few find wisdom now, still fewer heed her voice, and purchase the knowledge and its precious blessings as she directs. nothing else that can be bought is so valuable. Under wisdom's direction now not only the silver of truth may be obtained, but the Divine nature, as symbolised by gold, and graces of character, as symbolised in precious stones. All these may now be secured by obedience to her voice—and more. for "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man the things that God has in reservation for them that love Him," including everlasting life. heavenly riches, honour, joy, and peace.

Question Box,

Question—Some friends believe and have urged us to believe that Matt. 18:15-17 was only given to the Jews. Do you think this is correct?

Answer.—Quoting from the late Pastor Russell—“The instruction in Matt. 18:15-17 is given, of course, only to the brethren, the Church, and is not, therefore, to be applied outside.” But we can easily prove this from the Gospel. In Luke 16:16, Jesus said, “The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the Kingdom of God is preached.” (John 1:11, 12), “He came unto His own (people), and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He privilege to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on His name.” In Matt. 13:10-17, “the disciples asked why Jesus spake in parables. He answered, “Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given.” So we see that to the disciples and to those who believed on His name were given by Jesus the foundation teachings of the church. In His prayer for His apostles, Jesus says, “Holy Father, keep through Thine Owl; name those whom Thou has given Me. . . . I have given them “Thy word, and the world bath hated them, because they are not of the world. even as I am not of the world.” Here is Jesus’ recognition (although the Holy Spirit had not been given) of the nucleus of- the church — the apostles, to whom He had been giving instructions during His three and a-half years’ ministry. On these foundation teachings of Jesus Christ we find the apostles in their writings have enlarged.

Question —Can you harmonise the following Scriptures: Matt. 7:1 speaks of the way of salvation, as a very narrow, straight and difficult way, while Isa. 35:8 says that the way is a “highway.” and so plain that wayfaring men, though fools (simple), shall not err therein?

Answer.--The Bible clearly teaches that there are two salvations. of these is the salvation of the Church of Christ, called in the Scriptures “the elect, the Bride, the Lamb’s wife.” “a chosen generation, a royal Priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.” This special class is being gathered out from the nations of the earth throughout this Christian era, from the time of our Saviour’s first advent down to the time of His second coming. ‘That is the Divine purpose for the present age. Not many are chosen. “Many are called, but few are chosen.” The Christian’s pathway is a way of sacrifice and service, and constant fighting with evil within and without. This is the “Narrow Way.” When the Church is completed and glorified with the Lord, then will begin the second salvation, the world’s salvation. The “highway of holiness” will be opened up, and all the world shall he invited to go up over it and receive everlasting life. They shall return with songs and everlasting joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.”

Question. — Kindly explain Psalm 90:3: “Thou turnest man to destruction, and savest return ye children of man.”

Answer.—In the margin of the Revised Version the Hebrew word rendered “destruction” is shown as meaning “crushing,” and “dust” is suggested as an alternative translation.

Just as surely as it is true that men return to the dust at death (dust thou art) it is also ordained that all who are in their graves (returned to dust) shall hear the voice of the Son of Man (in the morning of His Messianic reign) and come forth (John 5:28). In harmony with this thought verse 14 reads: “O satisfy us in the morning (see Revised Version) with Thy mercy.”

“As in Adam all die (by heredity, through original sin), even so in Christ shall all be made alive again”— by virtue of the Ransom sacrifice of Calvary (I. Cor. 15:22).

Oh’s/loth—Must one keep the ten commandments to be a Christian? If not, then why were they given?

Answer .— All will admit that no man can keep the Law as given by Moses. for the Law requires a perfect man’s ability. As none of the race since the fall of Adam, with the exception of our Lord Jesus, is perfect, none can keep the ten commandments. The Apostle James states that he who offends in one point is guilty of all; again, the same apostle states that by the deeds of the Law shall no man he justified. Our Heavenly Father foresaw that the Jewish people could not keep the Law. Paul states in Galatians 2:24 the object of the Law, that it was not intended to justify any, but was to be a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, so that they might be justified by the faith which was then to be revealed. Our Lord kept the Law perfectly and fulfilled it, as is stated in Romans 8:4. We should also note that the Law was not given to the Gentiles, but to the Jews; consequently, the Gentiles would not be expected to fulfil a covenant which they never came under. It is quite true that, M. our churches, in the responses, we say, “Lord incline our hearts to keep this Law,” but this is owing to the fact that our spiritual advisers have failed to distinguish the teachings of God’s Word, that those who are following the Lord in this Gospel Age are not under the Covenant of Sinai, nor hound by laws which relate to the flesh, hut live unto God in the spirit.

Report from Cape Town, South Africa

I am wondering just how to put briefly anything that may be of interest to the friends in Australia; coming away from Durban seemed to be the end of another small chapter. It is to be hoped that my visit has been of some benefit to the cause of present truth in that beautiful city, so given over, like the other cities of the earth, to pleasure and self. Yet Durban would not seem so far advanced as Sydney and Melbourne, in the demonstration that we are living in similar conditions "as in the days which were before the flood." Yet the coloured races are so mixed, so deceptive, and immoral that it overbalances any possible better conditions among the white people.

The friends there seemed in a somewhat disheartened condition and of the mind that there remained little to be done in the work of the promulgation of present truth. That there is still work to be done is evident, and I hope that two or three will have been stirred by the message of the "Foregleams of the Golden Age" and more may be added to the little class, so that those who have been holding bravely to the Truth for many years will be encouraged to "hold fast that no man take their crowns."

I had some happy experiences in Durban, and will not forget the many kindnesses received, nor the "Primus Hospital" of Bro Du Camp, on whom I called at every opportunity, never failing of a cheery welcome, and so often to enjoy his French dishes. He lives all alone and we were sort of chums.

While the class in Durban had left the Lord's Memorial for the Jewish date, they realised that it could be more beneficially observed in the quietness of the Sunday evening rather than in the middle of the week; as the Lord left no command for one day or another, but simply the yearly observance they decided on this. There were fifteen present and I believe the Lord's blessing was added. This was the last meeting, except one at Sister R's home, on the Thursday before I came away.

Sailing from Durban on Saturday, 4 pm, we had a beautiful day on Sunday, but Monday was a little rough though so far I have had no inconvenience from the sea. On Sunday I was asked to take the morning service, but my conscience could not undertake such formalities (as well as some errors) in the Prayer Book service. However, I gave the address in the evening to about forty or fifty, who listened well, but I did not see any indication of interest in the deeper things.

We reached Capetown Tuesday, noon, and I have been visiting the few cases of interest here, and have been received most kindly.

This morning I called upon a lady who joined the "Sophocles" at Capetown for England, when I came this way seven years ago. She attended all the Sunday evening addresses on board, and gave me her Capetown address at that time. She is an earnest Christian, and seems to have gripped something of the wideness of God's great plan.

I have promised to call once more before leaving, and have several more appointments, so hope some good will be done before I go.

I have visited two homes of those who have taken their stand for the truth. The one case has been standing alone all these years since the severe trials were permitted, and this sister is happy now that she may have some fellowship in the present truth.

The other had been associated with the IBSA, trying to think what they did and said must be right but she has now come to see the error and confusion into which that organisation has fallen.

I am hoping to meet others who are also awakened to the errors; some have been discouraged, and are apt to make shipwreck of faith.

I hope that they may be revived, and will take fresh courage and "press with vigour on."

How easy it is amidst the present conditions to let slip the things we have heard and glide into indifference, and almost into infidelity, yet the truth is still the same, and the living stream may still be partaken of, if we will but climb a little higher up and get above the point at which the false shepherds have trampled in the water, and stirred up the mud, and mire, and so spoiled the pure stream "the waters whereof make glad the city of God."

What is needed is simple earnest faith in God, and in His word, gladly willing to accept assistance from any quarter so long as it comes in the spirit of the truth, and accords with what is written for our guidance and admonition.

-The husbandman that laboreth must first be partaker of the fruits

We would not consider placing anyone in position in the Church as one of the servants or labourers unless he had partaken of the truth, otherwise how could he tell of the beauty, the sweetness, the flavour of the fruit if he had not partaken

O Lord Give Thy blessing, we pray Thee, to this our daily work, that we may do it in faith, and heartily, as to the Lord and not unto men, Strengthen the faculties of our minds, and dispose us to exert them, but let us always remember to exert them for Thy glory, and for the furtherance of Thy kingdom,—Dr Arnold,

HISTORICAL EXCERPT

(Milner)

THE GERMAN CHURCH-SEVENTH CENTURY

THE northern part of Europe had still remained in the darkness of idolatry In this century they were visited -by evangelists from the British Isles, a further evidence of the spirit of godliness which prevailed there The French had also a share in the cause, although very imperfect accounts of these important transactions have been preserved Though the first instance more properly relates to France than to Germany, it may with no great impropriety be mentioned here Omer, bishop of Tarvanne, the old metropolis of the Morini, in Artois, laboured with success in the cultivation of a wilderness Vice and idolatry were very predominant in his diocese; but by the assistance of Bertin, his kinsman, he was enabled to eradicate inveterate evils and to civilise a race of barbarians The erection of many convents in Germany for the Scotch and Irish, some of which are still extant, is to be accounted for from the ecclesiastical connections of their ancestors Many persons travelled from Great Britain and Ireland with the laudable purpose of preaching Christ in Batavia, Belgium and Germany And however superstition might tarnish their labours, there must have been a nobler principle to have induced men to undergo so much danger with hardly any possible prospect of lucre or fame The love of God in Christ alone can support the spirit of men in such enterprises

Little is recorded of Columhan, an Irish monk, who laboured amongst various German nations till his death in 615; or of Gal, one of his companions, who laboured about the lakes of Zurich and Constance The account of Kilian, another Irish missionary, is somewhat more satisfactory He received a commission from the bishop of Rome, toward the end of the century, to preach to the infidels, and with some of his disciples he came to Wirtzburg, upon the Mayne, where a pagan duke called Gosbert was governor The duke received the gospel, was baptised, and many followed his example But he had married his brother's wife; the missionary deferred his admonitions on this head till the duke was settled in the faith Kilian at length ventured to act the part of John the Baptist, and the event was in a measure similar Gosbert promised to obey when he returned from an expedition In his absence, Geilana, for that was the name of the German Herodias, procured the murder of Kilian and his companions They were engaged in devotional exercises, and died with the patience of martyrs in the year 688 Gosbert was prevailed on by Geilana to suffer the murderers to escape with impunity But all the actors in this unhappy tragedy, Gosbert among the rest, came to an unhappy end Numbers of the eastern Franks had embraced Christianity, and sealed the ministry of Kilian

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