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The Divine Nature

(Convention Address)

2 Peter 1: 1-4; Romans 12: 2.

VERY few sermons are entirely original. Others labor and we enter into their labors. That which comes to us bringing a blessing, we communicate or share with others. Peter tells us that as Christians, we should desire to partake of the divine nature. What does that mean?

If, as a point of theology we were questioned —What is the divine nature? a quick answer would come from most—immortality. That answer has never been completely satisfying, though it was not until recently that it was clearly realised just how incomplete is such an answer. Other Bible students have helped in understanding more beautifully than it had ever been seen before. The “Bible Study Monthly” has been the main prompter of these thoughts, though the writings and scholarship of some others have also aided.

If, as has often been done, we take Peter’s exhortation, to seek after the divine nature, to mean seeking after immortality, then we would find ourselves seeking something that our Lord Himself never seemed to seek. Most certainly we believe our Lord to be immortal now, death proof, but He received it **not because he sought it**, but as a consequence of His seeking to maintain something else which was more important—even the divine nature or character likeness of God Himself.

Jesus did not meditate a usurpation to be equal with God (Phil: 2: 6); but Lucifer did, — “I will be like the Most High”, (Isa. 14: 13, 14). When Jesus had fulfilled His first advent mission, had poured out His soul unto death, if anyone had a right to feel he deserved exalted rank as a reward, surely it must have been He. But what was His request—“Father, glorify me with the glory had with thee before the world was” (John 17:5). With our Lord, even immortality was not a thing to be grasped after. He was not immortal before He came to earth, and He did not request it when about to return to the heavenly courts.

What He did appreciate and desired ever to retain, was the divine nature—God’s character. “I and my Father are one.” “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, he has declared Him”, (made God and His character known). God is Love, and what magnitude of love. No tongue can describe it; but those who have tasted any depth of it, long for a greater portion of this wonderful divine nature. “O”, says the apostle Paul —“to be filled with **all the fulness of God.**”

The word “partakers” in 2 Pet. 1: 4 is the same as when Christians are referred to in 1 Pet. 4: 13 as being “partakers of Christ’s sufferings”, and the word occurs again in 1 Pet. 5: 1, which states that Christians are also partakers of the glory to be revealed, after the sufferings are over. Stupendous as it may seem, therefore, Peter is telling us that it is **possible** for us to become partakers or sharers of God’s divine character and nature.

How is this done? We would never accomplish it of ourselves. It must be accomplished through Jesus Christ who strengtheneth us. We must **desire** a thing before we seek to obtain it; that is true in every field. What then has caused us to desire the divine nature, the excellent goodness of the character of our Creator and God? **God called us**, and taught us of His graciousness and His attributes of love, justice, wisdom and power. Not only did He call us, but He provided everything whereby we might attain His nature. As the apostle says in 2 Pet. 1: 3, 4, His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness . . . and great and precious promises. He provided for us wonderful things in order that we might partake of His nature, become God-like in all our

dispositions, and escape the corruption that is rampant in this present evil world.

Coneberre and Howson's rendering puts it—"by a **glorious divine efficiency**, God has done so much for us." He has dealt with us as a loving Heavenly Father, disciplining us, chastening us for our highest profit. In the passage Heb. 12: 5-10 which speaks about the chastenings of the Lord, which every son receives, it tells us in verse 10 that the **object** of it all is "that we might be partakers of his (God's) holiness", in other words His nature, His divine nature.

Dr. Paterson Smythe once said — "character tends to permanence." The sooner all men realise this truth the better. Everyone will be sorry some day for persisting in known evil ways.

Now this is where a correction of a very poor translation is highly important. 2 Peter 1: 5 should commence "For this very reason", and not "and besides this." Because God has provided so much for us, "for this very reason" we should give all diligence to the discipline outlined in the following verses. If we do, the apostle tells us, we will never fail, but shall enter into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord. This is the same reward or culmination which in 2 Pet. 1: 3 is referred to as (God's) glory and virtue. In this verse two translations agree that what the apostle says is—"God has appealed to us **by his** glorious perfections." The Amplified Version also appeals. It reads, "For his divine power has bestowed upon us all things that are requisite and suited to life and godliness, through the full, personal knowledge of him who **called us by** and **to his own** glory and excellence (virtue)."

Young's Concordance is also helpful. It points out that the meaning of "virtue" here, is "Power of mind and body." God has called us to share His own power of mind and body—to attain to His perfections. Only in measure can it be realised upon earth, but when we are with Christ in His throne we will share it fully. It is wonderful grace wherein we stand, able to rejoice in hope of the glory of God—the hope of sharing His perfection. (Rom. 5: 2). As yet our hopes have a sombre hue, for as Hebrews tells us—(Heb. 2: 10) in bringing many sons unto this glory, he made the captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings."

It depends upon how we view these experiences as to how much "glory" we find in them in the present time. If we can consistently regard them as "light afflictions which are but for a moment" happy indeed are we. They are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us later. He has made good progress toward the divine nature who can so regard present hard experiences. But who does not, from time to time, flinch under them? Let us not be discouraged. Peter says (1 Pet. 5: 10) "The God of all grace, who has called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." God brings all His sons (including the Captain) to His glory, through sufferings—all kinds of suffering, sufferings for righteousness sake, and disciplinary sufferings. But through them all He will "perfect" us.

Gold is not left in the crucible for ever, it is left there only until all the dross is refined away. It then becomes an ingot of pure gold, ready for all kinds of uses for ever. Let God perfect, stablish, strengthen and settle us then, till we have attained His nature, coming forth as pure gold and thus be fitted for His service through the ages of eternity.

When we look carefully at Isa. 60: 1 in the light of the last verse of the previous chapter, as well as the verses following, it would seem that we could say when we believe into the Lord, "the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." It will not be until the Kingdom that the **full** glory of the Lord shines out from His people, both from the Church and the restored nation of Israel (Isa. 40: 5), but right now **some** of the glory is discernible.

Remember Jesus performing His first miracle, changing the water into wine? "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee and manifested forth his glory. . . ." (John 2: 11). Not all His glory was revealed then. His glory was to be shown forth progressively from that moment to all who were worthy of discernment, and it will culminate when at last Gentiles and kings everywhere will rally to its beauty (Isa. 60: 3).

Quoting the words of another—"The glory of the Lord is the beauty of His character. It is risen upon you when **you realise it**, even though on earth you can do so only in part." So the glory of the Lord arises upon us when, with our intellect or understanding (through the spirit) we discern God's true character and His purposes through His son. The glory of the Lord arises more and more upon us as we become "doers of His word", and others begin to discern the Christ character developing in us—they take note that we have been with Jesus. The glory of the Lord will rise upon us in its fulness, "when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3: 4).

Read Rom. 12: 2. The good and acceptable and perfect will of God is that we all become God-like, become partakers of His divine nature. The transforming work is not accomplished quickly. We are indebted to another Bible student here for some helpful thoughts. The Greek word rendered "transformed" is closely related to a word

which in English signifies “transformation, as the chrysalis into a winged insect” (Nuttall’s Dictionary).

In the case of a butterfly we have, first the egg, then the caterpillar, then the chrysalis (cocoon, perhaps, we may know it) and finally the butterfly. We note some radical changes in the process—a caterpillar eats leaves, its mouth and organs adapted for this type of food. The butterfly has a mouth suctorial, adapted to suck nectar from flowers, by which its life is sustained. The caterpillar is **earth bound**, the butterfly is an entirely different creature. But the change is **not instantaneous**—the chrysalis is a seeming deathlike condition, while the caterpillar is being put to death and the butterfly is developing. The illustration is obvious. We are being transformed as “new creatures”, while the old creature is being put to death. The “inward” man develops spiritually while the “outward” man perishes (2 Cor. 4: 16). We are to “put off” the old man and “put on” the new (Eph. 4: 22-24). In the antitypical “holy” we are experiencing transformation, proving what is good and acceptable and the perfect will of God—the old creature is put to death, a “living sacrifice” while the new creature begotten of the holy spirit is being developed. Just as the chrysalis is a mystery to human understanding, so is our transforming as new creatures. The butterfly must “struggle” to free itself from the chrysalis state, so we too in transformation must “work out” our salvation.

If we are faithful unto death, we will receive the crown of life. That may well be summed up in the ultimate as immortality; but we gain immortality not because we sought it for itself, but because we sought above everything else God-likeness, the divine nature. As one Brother reminded us at the 1970 Melbourne Convention — there should be less thought of reward in our Christian striving and service, we should want to serve God simply because He is **good** and all that He does is good.

The life and spirit of our Master, Jesus, should be often considered. The marginal rendering of Col. 1: 19 reads—“for in Him (i.e. Jesus) all the fulness (of God) was pleased to dwell.” Verily He displayed the “divine nature.” Read Rom. 12: 3. It is very important that we be not high minded, and think ourselves something when we are nothing. What hath any one of us, but what we have received from the Lord. The more we are privileged of the Lord to render service for Him to the cause of His truth, the greater the temptation to become heady. *We* know this from our own personal experience, and we know it, too, through observation of other brethren’s experiences.

Brother Russell and some with him in his day knew it. Quoting from “Reprints” page 5001— “as one Pilgrim Brother remarked some time ago, I sometimes think that when we get beyond the veil, we shall be astonished to find how few of those who have exercised positions of prominence in the Church will be amongst the elect. It behoves us all who are associated in the Lord’s work to watch ourselves closely, that if we find the slightest tendency in this direction of pride, we may stamp it out as we would some contagious disease, knowing what the effects are upon others.”

Phillips renders early portion of 2 Cor. 10: 12—“Of course we shouldn’t dare include ourselves in the same class as those **who write their own testimonials.**” Another commentator who rendered this portion somewhat similarly, commented further—“How many there are, I fear, among professing Christians, who have no other standard of excellence than themselves. Their views are the standard of orthodoxy; their modes of worship, are the standard of the proper manner of devotion . . . their own characters are the models of excellence and they see little excellence in any who differ from them.”

How foreign to the divine nature, God’s character, did Jesus show the thought of pre-eminence to be. The disciples reasoned who should be the greatest amongst them and Jesus taking a little child taught them the lesson that “he that is least among you all, the same shall be greatest.” (Luke 9: 46-48).

We are told that as star differeth from star in heavenly glory and brightness, so shall it be among the Lord’s Church in the first resurrection; but it would seem from the general tenor of Bible teaching that those who will shine the brightest will be those who on earth had the poorest opinion of themselves. Those who will shine the brightest will not be those who **sought it**, but those who served the Lord without thought of preeminence or **special** reward.

It has been suggested that the Apostle Paul will be one “star” who will shine very brightly when the “new heavens” is eventually placed, and he could well be. During his earthly ministry he never showed any desire to seek pre-eminence, but described himself as “less than the least of all saints”, and when confidently at the journey’s end, declared that “henceforth there was laid up for him the crown of righteousness” the Lord would give him, showed he had no thought of pre-eminence by adding—“and not to me only, but to **all** those who have loved his appearing”, (had served God acceptably), 2 Tim. 4: 6-8.

May God help each one of us to a keener discernment of His “divine nature”, and to desire it so much that we make full use of all that He has provided for us in order that we may become partakers of it. It will surely be a

blessed experience to be finally confessed before God by His beloved Son, as one “who has made himself ready” to enter into the eternal joys of the Kingdom.

Correction

A mistake appeared in the last issue of “Peoples Paper” on page 2, first column, second paragraph, sixth line, where the word “imperfect” should read “perfect.” The sentence should read—“How little have we understood how great our need, and also how perfect our claim to all His fulness!”

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PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST’S KINGDOM *Australia, 3101.*

Whose Heart the Lord Opened

(Acts 16: 14)

THIS verse in Acts 16 refers to a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of Thyatira, who worshipped God and whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul. This is a very lovely record of this one being worthy of being blessed in the manner stated. In recent years we have become accustomed to hear of various operations of opening peoples’ hearts, and inserting valves to correct and restore normal heart action, so people may regain health and strength. This is a very helpful work of skilled surgeons because of the greatly increased knowledge of our day.

Back in the time of the early Church such operations would have been out of the question, but the operation concerning Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened, was of greater importance than all the heart operations or heart transplants of our day. We are well acquainted with the use of the word “heart” as referring to the centre of the affections. It is well used in the Bible to indicate the innermost thoughts and feelings. When we read, “My son, give me thine heart,” we know at once it means giving our whole life, our whole being, to the Lord.

We have a further use of the word “opened” as in our text, in Luke 24: 28-32, after the Lord had walked to Emmaus with His two disciples. On reaching their destination, the Lord had no intention of intruding into the home where the disciples were going. “But they constrained him,” and when He sat at meat with them and asked a blessing, as was His custom with them in past time, “their eyes were **opened** and they knew him.” The “opening” here is exactly the same word as in our text respecting Lydia. Anyone whose heart the Lord has opened will have their heart burn within them. It really means something when the Lord opens hearts. The two disciples on the way to Emmaus said their hearts “burned,” while He talked with them by the way, and while He opened the Scriptures to them. It was such a thrill to hear the Lord’s explanations; they had never heard anything like it before. The Lord explained that the events that had taken place had to be fulfilled before He entered into His glory. When they knew the Lord had really risen from the dead, that was an added joy as they brought to mind what He had explained to them as they rejoiced in His message; and it is even so today.

Our English word “burn” is a very good translation of the Greek word in the text, “Did not our heart burn within us as he opened unto us the Scriptures.” It means “to set on fire, to kindle, or (by implication) consume.” We have no doubt that those two followers of our Lord became His disciples indeed; their hearts were opened in no unmistakable way.

Further, in Luke 24:45, we have the same Greek word used,—”Then **opened** he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.” The Lord continued—”Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning in Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things” (verses 46-48). These disciples had been with the Lord for 31 years, and had witnessed all that He had done and told them, and no doubt felt the – influence of His spirit in their hearts. In other words, the work of opening their hearts to the privileges

and opportunities of the heavenly calling, begun in their lives, was to be extended from that time onward to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

What a glorious example we have in the opening of the heart of the Apostle Paul, in Acts 9: 3-6. Here we have the record of the Lord apprehending the zealous, persecuting Saul, in such an outstanding manner, that he was thoroughly subdued and humiliated, and from that time forward rejoiced to serve and suffer for the Lord's sake, even unto death. The Lord's words to Ananias respecting Saul were—"Go thy way; for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." (Acts 9: 15, 16). All Paul's life, henceforth, he was shown the things necessary to enable him to develop that quality of character which revealed him to be the wonderful "chosen vessel" in the service of the Lord.

The witness the Apostle Paul gave to King Agrippa in Acts 26: 13-19, has no doubt been a stimulating example to many followers of the Master. Just how beautifully the Apostle fulfilled his commission in being "obedient to the heavenly vision" is fully revealed throughout his epistles, once his heart had been truly opened by the spirit of the Lord. See also Acts 21: 10-13, in this connection; and Phil. 3: 7-11.

Then we have the Apostle Paul's appeal and exhortation to the Corinthians in his masterly presentation in 2 Col. 6: 4-13—"In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God. . . O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged." The word "enlarged" means "to widen"—his heart was going out to them in sincere and earnest appeal. The Lord had opened Paul's heart for complete and devoted service, and now his heart was "enlarged"—"widened" in fatherly appeal. From the Amplified Version, verses 11 and 13 read—"Our mouth is open to you, Corinthians—we are hiding nothing, keeping nothing back; and our heart is expanded wide (for you)! By way of return then, do this for me: speak as to children—open wide your hearts also (to us)." No doubt Paul meant, "open wide your hearts to us, for Christ's sake."

For ourselves, the Lord has graciously opened our hearts to appreciate His great love and the truths of His Word, which mean everything to us. Our hearts are to be kept open, enlarged, during the whole of our pilgrim way, towards the Lord and in the service of His cause, to His praise. The Apostle Jude joins with Paul in exhorting us also to "enlarge our hearts" in devoted, sacrificing service, in verses 20 and 21 of his epistle—"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the holy spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

Things That Come Not Back

(Convention Address)

THERE is an old adage which says: Four things come not back. (1) A spoken word. (2) A sped arrow. (3) Time past. (4) A neglected opportunity. Three of these have impressed very much—a spoken word, time past and a neglected opportunity.

Firstly, let us concentrate on the "spoken word". A spoken word is one which **never** returns, whether true or otherwise. The spoken word of truth is the one which we do not wish to return but to accomplish its desired purpose, but on the other hand, an evilly spoken word would also never return but would accomplish the purpose on which it was sent.

Also a word spoken hastily in anger would never return, however sorrowfully regretted. In Isa. 55: 10, 11, we read—"As the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it." The Word of God reveals the Divine Plan for the reconciliation of the sin-cursed and dying race. In this text we are given the blessed assurance that this divine purpose will not fail, that God will cause the things spoken in His Word to be accomplished. We must also have the Word in **our** hearts, but it should not be hidden there. If it is to be truly effective in our lives it must also be upon our lips. It was so with Jesus, who is represented prophetically as saying, in Psa. 40: 9, 10—"I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving kindness and thy truth from the great congregation."

It is a humbling thought to realise that the Word of God, which He declares shall not return unto Him void, can be communicated through **us, and will be**, if we are faithful to the commission which has been given to us by the

anointing of the spirit. How reassuring it is to know that even though our efforts are feeble, and we speak with lisping, stammering tongues, the “Word” will accomplish the good pleasure of the Lord.

We read in Isaiah—“I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.” “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of God shall stand for ever.” (Isa. 45: 23; 40: 8.) These Scriptures prove that the word of truth accomplishes its purpose and does not return.

We also have other Scriptures to prove that an evilly spoken word also accomplishes its purpose and does not return. James emphatically points out the necessity for the control of the tongue. James 3: 5, 6,—“Even so the tongue is a little member and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity among our members. It defileth the whole body and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of Gehenna.”

Here we have a series of word pictures. The tongue is a world of iniquity in the sense that every iniquity in the world can be introduced descriptively by the tongue. Of course, the organ itself is never meant, but speech, which the tongue represents. By the tongue, by our speech, oral or written, every form of evil may find its highest power. The tongue can paint pictures more quickly and more vividly than any painter’s brush. Since the world about us is full of iniquity expressed in a thousand forms, it is within the range of the powers of the tongue to picture these and by the printing press, to distribute them to thousands of millions, and they come not back.

It is indeed a whole world of iniquity, if improperly used. Alas! that even amongst Christians this is frequently the case. Careless words, insinuations, hints, are dropped into the minds of neighbours or friends and, because these are already predisposed to evil thinking, evil surmising, etc., these words are like lighted matches dropped in a hayloft—apt to start a conflagration which may do incalculable injury to the neighbour and from him the sparks may fly far and near, working moral and spiritual havoc. The tongue is the match. Possibly James had specially in mind the course of the new creature and its dangers. What if it should be set on fire and the entire spiritual prospect blighted, destroyed! That this is his thought seems to be implied by the words, “and it is set on fire of Gehenna.”

The world in general has evil tongues, reprobate minds, but being unregenerate, the world’s children, are not in danger of Gehenna, the second death. But the Church, having received the grace of God in Christ, having been “begotten again,” has staked its all upon the attainment of the spiritual blessings which the Lord has promised to the faithful. In the Church, therefore, the power of the tongue is much more potent than elsewhere. It may set on fire the course of the new nature for some—a fire which may burn into the second death, and a fire which may not be confined to the one in whose heart it is ignited, but which may spread to others with similar effect, blighting the sweetness, the happiness, the Christ-likeness in the present life and destroying all future prospects. The tongue which praises God, curses men.

If we could but get a proper conception of the mighty potentialities of the tongue, it would make us almost afraid to speak a word lest we should speak amiss. Such a fear would be very helpful to us, as gradually then, a desire to speak the words of justice, love and soberness, the good tidings, should burst the restraint and find utterance, while the dread of the evil would still guard every expression. The result would be greater Godlikeness. Psa. 141: 3,—“Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.” Remember, brethren, these words come not back.

Secondly, let us consider the phrase “Time past.” The Apostle draws our attention to Eph. 5; 16,—“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” Col. 4: 5,—“Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.” The Lord’s people are to watch in every direction. Our time is consecrated to the Lord, and it is our duty to watch that we render it to Him. If we consecrate our time to Him, and then waste it in reading novels and other worldly literature or in playing games, we are not using our time properly. If we are too much engaged in work or in pleasure to have time to study, to watch properly, we find ourselves in difficulty.

It is necessary for us to engage in some kind of occupation in order to prove our faithfulness. Further, as other people are engaged in these same occupations, laboring for the comforts of life, we are compelled to compete with these to some extent. But as we see that we have a nobler business, we shall see to it that all these secular things in life are cut off, as far as possible, in order that we may have the more time for the Lord’s service. The old ambition to gain earthly things would lead us to lay up treasures on earth. But the hope set before us in the Gospel leads us rather to lay up treasures in heaven.

So, this class does with as few luxuries in life as possible, in order that they may lay down their time in His service. And the more they do this, the more they become copies of God’s dear Son. Thus, if anyone is engaged in

the carpentry business—the same in which our Lord engaged when He was a youth—he will say, How can I minimize the affairs of life so that I can give more of my time to the Lord and less to earthly matters? And so it will be his endeavour to cut off the desire for earthly luxuries.

In proportion, therefore, as we imbibe the truth, in that same proportion we shall be striving to sacrifice, to cut off, to devote to the Lord this time and talent and energy. We do not think that the Lord would wish us to be too particular regarding earthly things and waste valuable time. For instance, we might say, I will keep this house as unto the Lord. And we might give too much of our time and attention to different matters about the house. Whoever would give too much time to the housework or to other earthly affairs would show that he did not appreciate the privileges of the Lord's service. The time spent on earthly affairs comes not back.

Finally, let us analyze the third phrase: "A neglected opportunity" which also "comes not back." Hence the Scriptures. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." "How shall **we** escape, if **we** neglect so great salvation." (Gal. 6: 10; Heb. 2:3.) It must not be thought that the Lord penalizes all blindness, some of which seems unavoidable. No one with decency would reprove his fellow-man, generally, for being blind, whether the blindness be of the physical or mental kind. However, it is upon those who have the capacity to hear and yet will not understand, and upon those whose eyes can see, yet will not perceive, that the penalty of blindness is pronounced; that, in having scorned the marvellous opportunity of understanding and perceiving the mind of God, they will thereafter be too late and the opportunity passed on to others. If we use the opportunity we possess, to the best advantage according to our best judgment, with an eye single to the Master's glory, it is acceptable unto Him, as the faithfulness and greater results of those possessing greater opportunities. And every faithful one will be able to increase his opportunities and service and shall thus increase his joy.

Nevertheless, be sober in the sense of earnest appreciation of present opportunities and privileges in connection with the Lord's service—not thoughtlessly negligent, letting opportunities and privileges slip through our hands to be afterwards regretted. In whatever department of the Lord's service He is pleased to open the door of opportunity to us, we should enter it promptly and with energy—with zeal for Him and for the cause to which He has called us. This is one condition of our acceptableness to Him. If we are slothful, inattentive to opportunities, undoubtedly they will be removed from us, and given to others, for the Lord is abundantly able to raise up one or another to serve His cause without interfering with, or overruling our free moral agency—one opportunity missed may be the marring of our whole life.

One day a harsh word rashly said,
Upon an evil journey sped,
And, like a sharp and cruel dart,
It pierced a fond and loving heart,
It turned a friend into a foe,
And everywhere brought pain and woe.

A kind word followed it one day,
Flew swiftly on its blessed way,
It healed the wound, it soothed the pain,
And friends of old were friends again;
It made the hate and anger cease,
And everywhere brought joy and peace.

And yet the harsh word left a trace
The kind word could not quite efface;
And though the heart its love regained,
It bore a scar that long remained.
Friends could forgive, but not forget,
Or lose the sense of keen regret.

Oh! if we could but learn to know
How swift and sure our words can go,
How would we weigh with utmost care
Each thought before it sought the air,
And only speak the words that move
Like white-winged messengers of love!

In Due Time

TIME is one of the most important factors in God's plan. The days of creation were long periods of time; the time of man's experience with evil has been six days of a thousand years each; the days of redemption and of the development of the Church has been nearly two thousand years. Time has been necessary for the accomplishment of God's great work; and it has also been necessary in proving to man the righteousness of God's character. Only time could prove to men His invincible justice. Six thousand years ago His sentence of death passed upon mankind, and during all that time He has permitted generation after generation to go down into the grave in the midst of agony, blood and tears. And though He loved men so, even while they were yet sinners, that He spared not His own Son, but freely gave Him up for us all, yet He has never for a moment relented so as to interpose His power for the relief or release of the groaning creation; nor will He do so until His "due time"—the time which His wisdom appointed, which will be the very best time for the securing of the largest possible results to the race, both of knowledge and of advantageous experience, as well as for the development of several of the most important features of His plan. But, as time can only develop God's plan, so time only can manifest His love as well as His wisdom, His power and His justice.

Time will fully manifest the Divine wisdom in what seems to short-sighted humanity like pitiless delay. Already those who are privileged to view by faith the Divine plan see the necessity of time for its full accomplishment. It is in view of such necessity that the children of God are frequently exhorted to patience. God has kindly brought us to His standpoint of view, and bidden us look into the glorious future—to the outcome of His plan; and in proportion, as we are able to comprehend and believe it, we may rest and rejoice in it. But in the meantime, being thus graciously refreshed by the cheering prospect, we must patiently wait for the end, however painful the waiting season may be.

Patience is a virtue which our heavenly Father desires to cultivate in us; and He manifests in Himself the grandest example of it. Through all the centuries past He has patiently endured the reproaches of those who, failing to understand the course of His wisdom in executing justice and in working out the deep designs of His abounding grace, attributed evil, and only evil, to His glorious and holy character. He knows that "in due time" His character will be fully vindicated, and so He patiently waits and works and endures. So also our Lord Jesus waits and endures. He endured great humiliation in coming to our low estate. Then, as a man, He patiently endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself and ungrateful persecution, even unto death, from those He came to serve. And, like His heavenly Father, through it all He was cheered in consideration of that "due time," though then in the far distant future, when His character, and also the Father's character, would be fully vindicated and manifested to every creature in heaven and in earth. And still our blessed Lord Jesus and our adorable heavenly Father await with patience the grand consummation. So, in similar attitude of mind, we must wait, for the servant is not above his Lord, and our rejoicing in view of the future will, if we have the mind of Christ, be not only because of our own prospective vindication and glory, but also in prospect of the vindication and glory of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the prospective everlasting triumph of truth and righteousness.

The waiting time is by no means a time of rejoicing, except in hope. This is a time when they that live godly must suffer persecution, when our eyes must look upon scenes of sorrow and mourning, when our ears must hear the wails of distress, and when our feeble flesh must experience the pangs of death. But oh, there is a glorious release to come "in due time." Wait for it patiently. "Let patience have her perfect work!" Submit to the humbling process. The Church's pathway of present humiliation leads to the future glory.

"Humble yourselves," says the Apostle, "under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." Do not make the great mistake of seeking present exaltation at the expense of that which is to come in due time to those who patiently endure to the end. It is only in proportion as any turn their eyes away from the glory to follow in due time, and thus lose faith in it, that they begin to prize the trifling recompenses which the world offers for the sacrifice of their birthright. Let us, therefore, dearly beloved, keep the eye of faith fixed upon the hope set before us in the Gospel; and, forgetting those things that are behind—all worldly ambitions, etc.—let us press toward the mark for the prize of our High Calling, which shall indeed be realized by the faithful—"in due time"; for, "Faithful is he that hath called you, who also will do it." His purposes cannot fail, nor His Word return unto Him void.

We Shall Not All Sleep

THE manner in which the members in Christ are changed from the earthly to the heavenly condition is of much importance to those who desire to be fully informed respecting all that the Lord has been pleased to reveal to His

children by His Word and spirit.

While many seem to see clearly that the Lord's people all down the Gospel Age, on finishing the earthly way in death, have fallen asleep, to await the time when "the dead in Christ shall rise first," some have difficulty in understanding how the last members—those "who are alive and remain unto the presence of the Lord"—are dealt with in fulfilment of the Apostle's words, "we shall not all sleep."

At the present time when the truth concerning the presence of Christ is being discredited by many, it is not surprising that the change of the last members of the Church should also be misunderstood and interpreted to support the incorrect view of the manner of our Lord's return.

It should be clearly noted that the Apostle in 1 Cor. 15: 51, 52, does not imply that any of the "we" class—the Lord's people—shall not die. He had previously stated in this same chapter, verses 6 and 18, that some of the saints had already "fallen asleep" in death. But now, in regard to those of the same class who would be living on the earth "at the last trump," he would show them "a mystery." The procedure of their change to "the image of the heavenly," at the consummation of the human sacrifice, would be different in that they would not need to sleep in the unclothed condition, because at this time-- the presence of Christ—the dead in Christ would have been raised already, so there would be no necessity for these last members to sleep, on their proving faithful unto death.

In thinking of the new creature, the new life, being transferred from the earthen vessel to the spiritual house (God giving to every seed its own body), that we may be like Christ, "for we shall see Him as He is," it may appear to some that the conscious existence would be unbroken, when the Apostle says it will come about "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." This, however, is not the Apostle's thought. The new creature could have no conscious existence apart from a body, and as the death of the earthly body is real and true in the case of all the saints right down the Gospel Age, so the unconsciousness before the union with the spirit body is just as real and true in every case, but the mystery is, that now in "the days of the Son of Man"—the presence of Christ—the union of the new creature, the new life, with the spirit body will come so quickly following the release from the earthen vessel that there will be no sleeping period, no remaining in the unconscious state, the transition period being so short. Hence, he uses the words, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: (during the time of Christ's presence, the harvest time). Yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." (Rev. 14: 13.)

Pilgrim Way Ended

Word was received of the passing of our Sister Jackson of Geelong on the 10th June, after a prolonged period of ill health in a nursing home in Geelong. Known mainly to the friends in Geelong and Melbourne, also to the Adelaide brethren, having attended the Easter Conventions there, our dear Sister truly loved the Lord and His truth very dearly.

Having responded to the radio message in 1944, and attending the meetings in Geelong for some years, Sister Jackson was stricken with a physical weakness some years ago, but was ever cheerful and mentally alert to appreciate the message of the truth, even when unable to speak or move without assistance. When visited by a member of the Geelong Class and having her glasses adjusted, she would delight in the message of the truth, just as others who have all their faculties. This surely was a good witness of our Sister's devotion to the Lord, and having her mind established on things above, looking forward to a place in the Lord's Kingdom with thankfulness and patient endurance.

"Peoples Paper" Delayed.

This issue of "Peoples Paper" has been unavoidably delayed at the linotypers.

Little Foxes and Little Lambs, a humorous, yet thought-provoking, illustrated book of clever poetry. The first poems call attention to the "little foxes" in people's lives—common faults and failures such as lying, evil-speaking, pride, laziness, anger. Next, attention is given to the "little lambs", such as truth, humility, patience, courtesy. Children will enjoy coloring the pictures that go with the poems. Paperback, 63 pages, price 70c post paid.

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