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Jesus Christ the Same Yesterday, Today and Forever— Did He Speak in Tongues?

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever.” (Hebrews 13:8.)

REVIEWING these words in our text from the Apostle Paul, they surely contain a lovely message with a sense of stability, security and enduring faithfulness with reference to our dear Redeemer. When the Apostle wrote these words, our Lord was, of course, exalted to the Father’s right hand, having gained “all power in heaven and in earth”, as Jesus Himself declared as He ascended to heaven after His victorious sacrifice on behalf of humanity and resurrection on the third day.

A connecting verse to our text, found also in Hebrews, links very helpfully, and is found in chapter 3:1— ‘Wherefore holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.’ We do well now to earnestly consider this great Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, in the three aspects,—yesterday, today and forever.

What, then, shall we consider about Christ Jesus concerning the first aspect of His life—yesterday? Yesterday, to the mind of the Apostle who wrote it, would likely refer to our Lord’s first advent. Paul wrote these words some years after our Lord’s sacrifice, and how much we have to consider about Him in regard to His condescension, to come to this earth to a poor, sinful human family, so beautifully expressed in 2 Cor. 8:9. The Apostle says,— “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” This is a lovely aspect we have of Him in regard to yesterday. Looking back upon the great sacrifice of Christ, we know the favor of our Lord Jesus; though He was rich with the Father before the world was, He became poor, that we poor ones may be rich through His great sacrifice.

Our Lord knew just what the Father’s will was for Him, and it was His delight to do God’s will at all times. He did this so fully and perfectly, as He declared,—“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” (John 10:10, 11.) This is the aspect we have of our Lord in respect of yesterday, looking back upon His sacrifice and His great exaltation to the Father’s right hand. Jesus Christ the same yesterday.

Connected with the laying down of His life in the yesterday aspect of Christ’s life at His first advent was His preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, and His miracles of various kinds, of healing and even

raising of the dead to life, as recorded in Matt. 9:35,—”And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.” Our Lord had compassion upon the people. He knew they were as sheep without a shepherd, and He came to comfort, to bless, to heal them, and to give them the message of the Kingdom. The teaching and preaching of the glad tidings of the kingdom was our Lord’s main work, and healing every sickness and disease among the people would be as a witness that He was the true Messiah. Especially was this so when our Lord raised the dead! Not that Jesus healed all the sick and all the diseased, but we understand from this verse that Jesus healed every kind of sickness and every kind of disease. This is important to remember,—that no sickness or disease could withstand the power of our Lord, because He had the mighty power of God at His disposal, to show how completely He will heal and restore all the afflicted, and raise all that are in the death condition, in His wonderful kingdom to come.

Considering the “today” aspect of the Apostle’s words respecting our Lord, this could refer to the whole of the Gospel Age, including the time when Paul wrote these words, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever.” Our Lord’s promise to His disciples as He was about to ascend to the Heavenly Father, is appropriate in this connection. He had paid the sacrifice, He had been raised from the dead and was about to leave them for His heavenly inheritance, when He said,—”Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age.” (Matt. 28:20.) This is the thought Jesus wished to leave with His disciples, that He was never leaving them really; His spirit would be with them even though He would go away personally to be with the Father. This is the aspect we like to think of respecting our Lord being the same “today” as He was “yesterday”, when He paid His sacrifice. He has gone to the Father’s home above, but He says, “I am with you always” in spirit. Thinking of His Church, those who walk with Him and talk with Him, He says,—”Lo, I am with you all.” The Lord meant the whole Church, down to our day; those to whom Jesus spoke would represent His true followers right throughout the period of about two thousand years of the Gospel Age. Our Lord’s promise to be with those who follow Him has surely been fulfilled, and truly gives assurance that He is always the same, He changes never. We have a Scripture relating to the Heavenly Father being “without variableness or shadow of turning”, and this is what Paul also means in respect of our Lord Jesus. He does not alter; He is the same compassionate, sympathetic High Priest. As yesterday, at His first advent, so He is today.

The Apostle Paul wrote of our Lord in Heb. 4:14-16,— “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” He was tempted in all points as we are as new creatures. Not like fallen humanity, but in all points like the new creatures who walk in His steps. “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” This is a lovely message from Paul to assure us that the Lord is the same loving, sympathetic High Priest who was here for 31 years laying down His life. He has not altered at all; He has the same consideration and thoughtfulness and helpfulness to all His people.

There is a claim, and it is rather prevalent today, amongst certain people by the name of Revivalists to the effect that the words of our text, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever”, are to be understood as implying that as our Lord healed all manner of sicknesses when He was here on earth, so He continues to do this through certain people on earth today. Another claim that is being stressed equally today by the same Revivalists (well-meaning people, of course), is that it is a mark of true discipleship to be able to speak in other tongues, other languages than their own.

If speaking in tongues is really a mark of Christian development, it is of great importance to know if Jesus spoke in tongues, and if not, why He did not.

Examining the Bible thoroughly, there is not one record that our Lord ever spoke in tongues during the

whole of His ministry of 31 years. It is evident that all who heard Jesus could understand the language He spoke. So speaking in other tongues would have been merely outward show. Right throughout the Bible we find that God is against outward show for show's sake. We remember how our Lord was tempted in the wilderness by the Adversary to make a great show before the people. "If thou be the Son of God", turn the stones into bread; cast yourself down from the pinnacle of the temple. This will make such an impression on the people that they will believe on you, and even God has promised that if you dash your foot against a stone He will protect you. Jesus knew that this was a subtle temptation from Satan himself, and would have nothing to do with it, but answered by Scripture,—"Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." So our Lord by His spirit and teachings did not condone outward show at any time; He was the lowly Jesus right throughout His 31 years of ministry, and also in His exalted state His spirit prompts to lowly, quiet, meek service. Nothing of outward show constitutes service for the Lord. However, those people today who feel these manifestations are coming from the Lord do feel themselves favoured, that they are being blessed above other people. It is most deceptive and a snare when people feel they are being especially favoured of God in these particular manifestations that are taking place today.

On the other hand, against the thought of speaking in tongues, the healing of the people by Jesus did give temporary relief from pain and suffering, though but comparatively few were healed by the Lord. Healings by Jesus were of a temporary nature only; they were not intended to be lasting, but rather illustrations of what He will do for the lasting blessing of mankind in the great Times of Restitution, for those who then obey the laws of Christ's Kingdom shall live forever.

When mankind are raised from death in the Kingdom age, the miracles of restitution will be lasting. We remember the lovely incident in the case of Lazarus, as recorded in John 11. When Jesus received the message from the sisters, "him whom thou lovest is sick", He did not hurry back that He might be there before Lazarus passed away. Jesus said in verse 4,—"This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified (or honored) thereby." Our Lord knew Lazarus was going to pass away in death, but was not to remain in death, for the outcome would be to the glory of God. When He came back to the sorrowing sisters we read that He spoke to Martha,—"Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him. I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." (Verses 23, 24.) Martha knew the truth about the departed. She did not say, Well Lord, he is really in heaven and you need not interfere with him. Martha knew Lazarus was dead, and he would rise again in the resurrection at the last day. If she thought Lazarus was in heaven, she would not have wanted the Lord to bring him back to the sorrows and troubles of earth again. But she knew Lazarus was sleeping in death, as Jesus had previously stated. "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead (though he die), yet shall he live." Our Lord did not say in verse 25, "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" in the sense of immediately living on, but though he die, yet shall he live in the resurrection, and he that liveth and believeth in me then shall never die. (Verse 26.)

This raising of Lazarus was a wonderful example of the power of God in the hands of Christ, who will ultimately raise all the dead, and for the glory of God, even as this miracle was for the glory of God, to show that in due time death will be no hindrance at all to the power of God. People who have passed on thousands of years ago will also be at no disadvantage, for all shall come again from the land of the enemy, death.

Seeing, then, that there is no indication in the Bible that Jesus ever spoke in tongues in proclaiming His truth, why did God give the outward sign of speaking in tongues on the Day of Pentecost and for a limited time afterwards? In Acts 2 the Day of Pentecost is recorded, showing the outpouring of the holy spirit, with the gospel message being put forth in various languages. From verse 5 we read—"And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. . . . And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" Verses 9-11 show the nationalities that were there

present. Undoubtedly the speaking in tongues was for the benefit of these foreigners there present in Jerusalem, that hearing the good message of the gospel they might return to their own countries and spread the truth in their own languages. Wasn't that so reasonable? There was nothing showy and superfluous about this; this was real commonsense understanding and preaching of the gospel in the languages of the other people there present. How strange it is when everybody has the same language that there should be different tongues and confused voices, and hardly anyone knowing what is happening! The Lord does not work that way; He never has, and is not doing so today.

It is evident that the same sign was given in the case of Cornelius and his house when the time came for the Gentiles to be received into the hope of the heavenly kingdom. This is recorded in Acts 10:44-48. This 10th chapter tells about the time when Cornelius also received the message of the gospel, and it was confirmed by the gifts of the spirit. This is quite understandable too. Undoubtedly that was a sign to the Jews also; they had to have some very clear indication that the Gentiles were being favored of God, even as the Jews. They were inclined to think they were always to be exclusive in receiving God's wonderful favor of invitation for the heavenly kingdom, and this outward sign convinced them otherwise.

These outward signs are called the gifts of the spirit. The Apostle Paul explains these gifts in some detail in 1 Cor.

12. From the Emphatic Diaglott, verses 29-31 read,—”All are not apostles; all are not prophets; all are not teachers; all are not powers; all have not gifts of cures; all do not speak in different languages; all do not interpret. But you earnestly desire the more eminent gifts; and yet a much more excellent way I point out to you.” We see from this translation of verse 31 that the Apostle is not exhorting the Corinthians to covet the best gifts, as seems to be indicated in the King James translation. Rather he reminds them that that was their object, when all the time the more excellent way should have been apparent to them. They were seeking for the highest outward show possible, but there was a more excellent attainment than any of the gifts. The more excellent way is the fruits of the spirit, revealed in the 13th chapter which follows. The Apostle therein shows that without the development and growth of the fruits of the spirit, all the gifts would be useless. The gifts were the outward sign, and a means of helping the early Church when they had no New Testament available.

Turning to verse 8 in 1 Cor. 13, we read—”Charity (or love) never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail.” What kind of prophecies is the Apostle referring to here? Undoubtedly the gift of prophecy, the ability to foretell coming events by the miraculous gift. “Whether there be tongues, they shall cease.” What kind of “tongues” is he speaking of? Without doubt the gift of tongues, the miraculous means of speaking in another language apart from the one known by the speaker. They will cease, he says.

As mentioned previously, not one record is found in the Bible that Jesus spoke in tongues. If speaking in tongues would be a sign of God's favour, it is only reasonable that Jesus would have spoken thus. However, our Lord did not want to make an outward show for show's sake, and none of His followers do that either.

Continuing verse 8, “Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.” What kind of knowledge is implied here? Surely not the knowledge of God and His truths. No, but the gift of knowledge, the miraculous understanding of knowledge, given only to the early church.

How do we know these gifts of the spirit were intended for the early church only, to establish the church in its infancy? Some verses in Acts 8 are helpful in this connection, explaining the occasion when Philip went to the city of Samaria and conducted a ministry with the use of certain gifts of the spirit. Philip was a very devoted servant of the Lord and the miracles connected with his ministry made a great impression on

the people, as revealed in verses 5-8. From verse 14 we read, —"Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John; who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the holy spirit. . . . Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the holy spirit." We see from this passage in Acts that while Philip was able to perform miracles himself by the power of the Lord, he was not able to confer these gifts upon others in Samaria. That was reserved for the Apostles only, so Peter and John were sent from Jerusalem for that purpose. This was God's method of causing the gifts of the spirit to cease, for when the Apostles finished their earthly course no further gifts were imparted, and in time they automatically ceased.

Further, in 1 Cor. 13:11, the Apostle contrasts the fruits of the spirit with the gifts of the spirit when he says,— "When I was a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." It is clearly shown here that the Apostle is speaking in the past tense—he had progressed from the childish gifts of the spirit when he became a man in Christ. So, he is exhorting the Corinthians to refrain from seeking even the most eminent gifts, which were childish in comparison with the development of the fruits of the spirit. Paul became a man in Christ, so he put away the former infantile gifts which were useful when the Church was in its infancy.

Some may ask, How do we account for the claims made in some circles now that tongues are used in certain gatherings today? In answer to this question, have we wondered why the Apostle Paul was the only Apostle to mention the gifts of the spirit in the New Testament, and his reference was only to the church at Corinth? In his epistles to the

Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians and to Timothy, Titus and Hebrews, there is not one reference to the gifts of the spirit. But much is said in all these Epistles about the fruits of the spirit. Surely Paul would have failed in his ministry by so much omission if the gifts of the spirit were to continue throughout the Gospel Age, to our day. Then we have the Epistles of Peter, James and John, and the wonderful Revelation, and we find no reference to the gifts of the spirit in these, but much in the way of exhortations to seek the fruits of the spirit. This should be a very helpful guide for Christians inclined to be influenced in seeking the gifts of the spirit.

Why, then, did Paul choose the Corinthian Church to refer to the gifts of the spirit, and encourage them to seek the more excellent way of gaining the fruits of the spirit? We have the answer in 1 Cor. 3, where the Apostle declared,— "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" This was a very infantile church, and Paul would seek to wean them away from the gifts of the spirit in favor of developing the fruits of the spirit. That is why we find the Apostle's reference to the gifts when writing to this church; those churches more spiritually developed did not need weaning away from the outward show of the gifts of the spirit.

In 2 Cor. 11, we have the answer to the deception of our days similar to that experienced in Paul's day, in verses 13-15,— "There are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." Satan, who caused all the sickness and death in the world, would even act as an angel of light. He brought down mankind to the state they are in, and now would take the opposite course, seeking to deceive and act as though he were an angel of light. What we see happening today is a counterfeit of the gifts given to the early church to promote the spread of the gospel. It is Satan's counterfeit for the last days particularly.

In Matt. 24:24 our Lord spoke in respect of the end of the age when these things would happen. He

said,—’There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; inasmuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” This is a very strong warning. Some people who have been to meetings where the “tongues” are encouraged are able to see through the deception; they can detect that it is not of the Lord. Others who do not understand the Bible think it is something wonderful to hear this gibberish going on, but it is one of Satan’s greatest deceptions, and is penetrating all denominations in the world today.

Again we have Paul’s warning respecting those who are not worthy of being enlightened and kept in the faith, as recorded in 2 Thes. 2:8-12. Here we have a message undoubtedly applicable to the end of this age. The Apostle refers in this chapter to the great “mystery of iniquity” that was already working in his day, and for the end of the age he says, “Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his presence; whose coming is with the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be condemned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” That is a very strong statement, that God would send people who would have these gifts, these tongues, a strong delusion so they will believe a lie. They are so sure of their own ideas, that God will allow them to be deceived in this matter, because they do not seek the truth in the love of it. They have pleasure in unrighteousness. They have pleasure in making a great show before people. They have pleasure in these outward, fleshly manifestations instead of seeking the lowly, quiet development of the fruits of the spirit in their hearts. God allows people to follow their own course, and they lose His spiritual blessing, though they will have the opportunity of being helped in the kingdom age, when Satan is bound.

While it is felt that the most important part of our text has to do with the development of the church class during the Gospel Age, we rejoice that our Lord Jesus will also be the same forever. This is also the lovely thought contained in our text from Hebrews. As He has a deep concern and oversight for His people at the present time, so He has the welfare of all mankind in mind, inasmuch as He tasted death for every man. In Isa. 53:11, we read respecting Christ,—’He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.” This means that He will be satisfied when all mankind have been raised up out of the death condition, and have all heard and known that He has paid the sacrifice for them, that they may then accept eternal life by obedience to the laws of His Kingdom. Multitudes of mankind will then realise how they were deceived during their present lifetime by the great adversary, who will then be bound and not able to deceive them in speaking in tongues or other deceptive practices. Then it will be easy for all mankind to believe the Lord truly and understand the wonderful truths of the kingdom, and thus return to the perfection lost in Adam and redeemed by Christ.

Understanding the Covenants

“FOR this cause he is the mediator of the new testament (covenant), that by means of death, for the redemption (deliverance) of the transgressions that were under the first testament (covenant), they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.”—Heb. 9:15.

Question: To whom does the deliverance here mentioned come, and when? Furthermore, is the deliverance effected through the Mediator of the New Covenant, or is it not?

Answer: To answer these questions satisfactorily it is necessary to keep in mind the fact that the Apostle, in this verse and its context, is contrasting the Old Law Covenant with the New Law Covenant, and is not discussing the Abrahamic Covenant (or Promise) to the “seed”—the Christ, Head and Body. —Gal. 3.

A further point which should not be overlooked in any consideration given to this subject is that both Old and New Covenants are made between the same parties, the New displacing the Old. The Old was between God and the nation of Israel. (Deut. 5:1-5.) The New also is between God and the nation of Israel. (Jer. 31:31-34.) Gentiles had no part in the Old Covenant except as they became Jewish proselytes. The same holds true with regard to the New.

With the foregoing in mind, and with the Gentiles out of the discussion except as they embrace Israel’s faith and worship, we are better prepared to seek an answer to the question, “To whom does the deliverance here mentioned come, and when?”

The first and obvious answer (but not the whole answer) is that the deliverance comes to Israel, and that it comes when the New Covenant goes into effect. And when is that? According to Jeremiah 31:33, which may be regarded as the text on which the Covenant discussion of the Epistle to the Hebrews is based, it is to be “after those days.” (Heb. 8:10.) After what days? After the days of Israel’s rejection, after the days when the Lord “regarded them not.” (Heb. 8:9.) Now, the days of Israel’s disfavor extend over the long period of Gentile Times, 2520 years. (Luke 21:24.)

If, therefore, the New Covenant is to go into effect “after those days”, it is to go into effect after the Gospel Age has ended, that is to say, with the commencement of the Millennial Age.

As already indicated, while this is the first and obvious answer, it should not be regarded as the whole answer. No, there is another feature, a secret feature, having to do with but a “little flock.” The original Covenant, namely, that to Abraham—which the Old Law Covenant, superimposed as it was years later, could not disannul, Gal. 3:17, and which the New Law Covenant cannot disannul either)—that Abrahamic Covenant was not made with Israel, as were the other two mentioned, but was made with Abraham and his “seed”, namely, Christ. (Gal. 3:16). Moreover, if we be Christ’s then are we Abraham’s seed (Gal. 3:29) and heirs (not according to the Old or New Covenants but) according to that (Abrahamic) Covenant or Promise. In order to the development of this “seed” class, all the blessings of the New Covenant are reckoned to them now, in advance of the Millennial Age. These, though not now actually righteous, are counted righteous, that they may be counted in with their Head as His Body members, to be “dead with Him”, to “suffer with Him”, that they may also be “glorified together” with Him. (2 Tim. 2:11; Rom. 8:17.) Now, since some of this “little flock” are Jews according to the flesh, one of the blessings these Jewish members of the Gospel Age Church receive now, in advance of the Millennial Age, is deliverance from the transgressions which they committed under their Old Law Covenant. Christ being the end of the Law to them that believe (Rom. 10:4), it follows that Hebrews 9:15 has reference to the deliverance already experienced by the believing Jew, although it should not be understood as having

exclusive reference to Jewish members of the Gospel Age Church for, as we have seen, its first and obvious reference is to Israel as a nation in the Millennium.

We come now to the second part of the question: "Is the deliverance effected through the Mediator of the New Covenant?" Undoubtedly Israel's deliverance under the New Covenant in the Millennial Age will be effected through the Mediator of the New Covenant, but not so with regard to that Jew who is of the "seed" class developed, as we have seen, in connection with the Abrahamic Covenant.

Let us not be misunderstood here. Of course there is no question but that the Gospel Age deliverance, the deliverance already experienced by the believing Jew, is through the death of Jesus, and of course it is likewise true that Jesus is the Mediator of the New Covenant, but the deliverance of the Jewish members of the Gospel Age Church is not effected by Jesus acting in His capacity or office of mediator. To illustrate this point: Let us suppose that in a corporation Mr. Smith holds office as Vice-President. He is also General Manager. The Vice-Presidential duties are nominal, and are without compensation; but for the duties of General Manager he receives a salary of 10,000 dollars a year. Now perhaps it would not be an untruth to say that Mr. Smith, Vice-President of the XYZ corporation, was in receipt of a salary of 10,000 dollars, but it would be a misleading statement, for it would convey the impression that such compensation was for the performance of Vice-Presidential duties, when such was not, in fact, the case. Similarly, to speak of the deliverance of any member of the Church as having been effected through Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, while true, would be a misleading statement, for it is not as Mediator of the New Covenant but as the Advocate they have with the Father, that He effects this deliverance for the Church.

Again, it is not improper to speak of Jesus as the Mediator of the New Covenant now, even though the New Covenant has not yet gone into operation. However, such a statement may be misunderstood. A simple illustration may clarify the thought here. An American surgeon, let us say, on the death of the Ambassador to Britain, is appointed to take his place. Several weeks might pass before he crossed the ocean and took up his Ambassadorial duties in London, but it would be quite proper through all these weeks to speak of him as the Ambassador to Britain. Moreover, if, just prior to sailing from New York, he saved some one's life by a skilful operation, his action might be referred to as the act of the Ambassador to Britain. It would be more exact though, to speak of it as the act of a surgeon.

One further point in connection with Hebrews 9:15. In seeking to interpret this Scripture, we must seek an interpretation which will harmonize with other Scriptures. With this thought in mind, let us glance at a related passage, namely Heb. 8:7. Here the Apostle, having in view the same contrast between the Old and the New Covenants, which he deals with in the 9th chapter, declares: "For if that first one were faultless, a place would not be sought for a second." In examining this verse it will no doubt be agreed, that there was no fault in the Old Covenant itself, but that the fault was in the lack of mediatorial provisions sufficient to lift the people out of their imperfection, so that they might be enabled to keep their part of the agreement. The Covenant itself was not weak, although it is properly stated by the Apostle to be "weak through the flesh."

Doubtless, too, it would also be agreed that the Apostle's words in Heb. 8:7 may be fairly understood to mean that if the Old had not been faultless it would have accomplished the very things that are to be accomplished by the New, and in that case the New would have been unnecessary. What then, it may be asked, would that first covenant have accomplished had it been faultless? We answer: It would have accomplished earthly blessings, not spiritual blessings; it would have brought in human perfection. It would have abolished sickness, pain and death. In basket and in store, man would have been blessed—his home turned into a paradise like to that of Eden. But if that First Covenant had been faultless it would not have made any one living thereunder a joint-heir with Jesus; it would have begotten none to the Divine nature, it would have made none a sharer of immortality. It would have taken no one to heaven. On the

contrary, it would have brought in Restitution which, great and wondrous blessing though it will be, is not the hope to which we, the Gospel Age Church, have been called.

It is certain that Restitution has not yet been accomplished for any one; it follows, therefore, that the operation of the Covenant which is to bring in Restitution is yet future. Again, the Church's hopes are spiritual, while the blessings under the New Covenant are to be earthly. Therefore, whatever blessings the Church may receive, now or hereafter, proceed from another source, namely, the Abrahamic Covenant, in which we, the Church, have strong consolation.— Heb. 6:19, 20. (Reprinted from "Herald of Christ's Kingdom.")

Christ's Kingdom—the Desire of All Nations

WHEN Christ's Kingdom has come, it will be just what all men need. At first it will rule with a rod of iron, dashing the now tottering kingdoms of this world in pieces like a potter's vessel (Psa. 2:9); breaking up civil, social and religious systems of tyranny and oppression; putting down all opposing authority and power; humbling the proud and high minded; and finally teaching all the world to be still and to know that the Lord's Anointed has taken the dominion (Psa. 46:10). Then the blessing of its peaceful reign will begin to be experienced. Truth and equity will be established on a sure and permanent footing; justice will be laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet (Isa. 28:17); and the great restitution work will progress grandly to its glorious consummation. There will be sweeping moral reforms; great educational and philanthropic enterprises; and wonderful cures for every disease and deformity, mental and physical. There will be awakenings also from death, and a grand reorganization of society under the new order of the Kingdom of God. All the world's bitter experiences during the six thousand years past will then prove valuable lessons on the exceeding sinfulness of sin; helping them to appreciate the new rule of righteousness, to live in everlasting conformity to the perfect will of God, and thus to accept God's gift of everlasting life, designed for all who will receive it on His conditions of love and loyal obedience to His commands. Then, it will be true: "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).

Such being the grand object of our Lord's return and the establishment of His Kingdom, we believe with the prophet, that it will be "the desire of all nations", and with the apostle that the earnest expectation of the creature longs, though ignorantly, for the coming revelation of the sons of God—the overcoming Church, who, exalted with her Lord, shall accomplish this great work.

The educational reforms and instructions of the future will begin with the hearts of men; they will start with the lesson, "the fear (reverence) of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 9:10). One of the great difficulties of present-day education, which tends to pride, arrogance, and discontent, is its lack of this elementary wisdom. Every work of grace under the regulation of the Kingdom will be properly begun and thoroughly accomplished.

No creature of the redeemed race will be too low for Divine grace to reach, through the all-powerful and blessed agency of the Kingdom. No degradation of sin will be too deep for the hand of mercy to fathom, to rescue the blood-bought soul; no darkness of ignorance or superstition will be so dense in any heart but that the light of Divine truth and love will penetrate its gloom and bring to it a knowledge of the joy and gladness of the new day, and an opportunity to share the same by obedience. No disease that can attack and pollute the physical system will be beyond the prompt control of the great Physician. And no deformity, monstrosity, redundancy, or mental imbecility will be able to resist His healing touch.

The grand work of restitution, thus begun on the living nations, will presently extend to all the sleeping families of the earth; for the hour is coming, yea, is not far distant, when all that are in their graves shall

hear the voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth; when death and hell (hades, the grave) shall give up the dead which are in them; and the sea shall give up its dead (John 5:28, 29; Rev. 20:13).

What a glorious prospect the new dispensation will present when fully inaugurated! The changes from one dispensation to another in the past have been marked and prominent, but this change will be the most eventful of all. Close your eyes for a moment to the scenes of misery and woe, degradation and sorrow that yet prevail on account of sin, and picture before your mental vision the glory of the perfect earth. Not a stain of sin mars the harmony and peace of a perfect society; not a bitter thought, not an unkind look or word; love, welling up from every heart, meets a kindred response in every other heart, and benevolence marks every act. There sickness shall be no more; not an ache nor a pain, nor any evidence of decay—not even the fear of such things. Think of all the pictures of comparative health and beauty of human form and feature that you have ever seen, and know that perfect humanity will be of still surpassing loveliness. The inward purity and mental and moral perfection will stamp and glorify every radiant countenance. Such will earth's society be; and weeping bereaved ones will have their tears all wiped away, when thus they realise the resurrection work complete.—Rev. 21:4.

No wonder that the thought of such a spectacle—of a whole race returning to God with songs of praise and everlasting joy upon their heads—should seem almost too good to believe; but He who has promised is able also to perform all His good pleasure. Though sorrow and sighing seem almost inseparable from our being, yet “sorrow and sighing shall flee away”; though weeping in sackcloth and ashes has endured throughout the long night of the dominion of sin and death, yet joy awaits the morning; all tears shall be wiped from all faces; beauty shall be given for ashes; the oil of joy shall replace the spirit of heaviness, and the whole earth shall be at rest.—Isa. 14:7.

Pilgrim Ways Ended

TWO of our elderly Sisters have recently finished the earthly way in Adelaide, and the following reports are to hand respecting these dear friends.

On September 3rd our elderly Sister Kaesehagen of Adelaide, South Australia, reached the end of the earthly way, after a long life of faithful and devoted service of the Lord and His cause.

During the past sixty years our Sister has been associated with the Bible Class in Adelaide, and we have many happy memories of a lifetime of loving, humble service. The graces of the Christ-like character had been very beautifully developed, by the Lord's grace, in the heart and mind of our Sister; and her gentleness, combined with patience and sympathetic understanding, enabled her to be a rich blessing to the members of her family, and also to her associates in Christ, and to those of her acquaintance generally.

Our dear Sister lived to be 96 years of age. She was one of those who had learned to trust God completely, and to live a day at a time; she certainly grew old gracefully. Even through trials and troubles there was always something for which thanks to God could be sincerely offered. Her favourite hymn, number 257 in “Bible Students Hymnal”, conveys a lovely message,—“New every morning is the love.” This hymn was also a favourite of Brother Kaesehagen's who was taken Home some eleven years ago at the age of 84.

Now that we understand we are living in the time of our Lord's second presence, the Scriptures assure us the sleeping saints have been raised, and those fully consecrated ones who now finish their earthly course in death, are taken to be with the Lord and the risen saints without the need of sleeping in death. (1 Thes. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51, 52; Rev. 14:13.) “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.”

Our elderly Sister Megaw of Adelaide passed to her reward on September 18th. Our Sister, who was in her 91st year, had been a believing Christian for many years, but had received the knowledge of God's wonderful Plan of Salvation for the church, and for all mankind, about 25 years ago.

Our dear Sister had a good, strong faith and trust in the Lord; and looked forward to the day when she would be taken to be with her Lord and Redeemer, in His heavenly kingdom. She longed for the fulfilment of our Lord's prayer—"Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, as in heaven."

We believe our dear Sister was "faithful unto death", and has now entered into the reward of the faithful overcomers to whom our Lord said,—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life", Rev. 2:10. Much sympathy is felt for the members of Sister Megaw's family who have sustained the loss of a good mother.

EXTRA COPIES OF THIS ISSUE

An extra supply of this issue of "Peoples Paper" is being printed, and friends who can use these to advantage are invited to apply for extra copies.

TWO NEW BOOKLETS

Two booklets have been produced recently in our office, being printed by duplicator, and entitled—"Is Baptism Essential to Salvation?", and "Does Partaking the Lord's Supper Contribute to Salvation?" To cover cost of production and postage, these copies are supplied at 10c each.

Melbourne Christmas Convention

The brethren of the Melbourne Class extend a cordial invitation to all friends able to attend their Annual Convention to be held this year (D.V.) on December 25th, 26th, 27th and 28th in the Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond. Further information from the Class secretary—Mr. J. B. Hiam, 16 Kennedy Street, South Oakleigh, Victoria, 3167.

BIBLE STUDENTS MANUAL

Copies of these Manuals, otherwise known as Berean Comments, have been published recently by brethren in Chicago, and are now in stock for the benefit of our friends. With nice appearance, bound in strong cloth, with gold lettering, the price is \$4.00, plus postage.

GOD'S BEST GIFT

A booklet for children—"God's Best Gift"—compiled on the Divine Plan of the Ages years ago in U.S.A., has been produced in our office again recently. Written in childish language it is a splendid little book to convey the main outlines of God's Plan for both young and old. To cover cost of materials it is supplied at 10c per copy, 15c posted.