



Volume XLVIII No. 1 MELBOURNE, FEBRUARY—MARCH 1965 Price--Six pence

## Need of Controlling Self

(Proverbs 16:32)

(Convention Address)

THIS subject of controlling self is a principle essential to all true Christians seeking to walk as nearly as possible in the Master's footsteps. Our firm aim must be to learn to know what is to be controlled, and then to endeavour to do our best, looking to our Lord to help us. As all mature Christians well know, faith may be said to have in it two elements, intellectual perception and heart reliance. Both the intellect and the affections are necessary, and both must be rightly directed and controlled if we are to gain that kind of character without which it is impossible to please God.

The trial to which our Lord and the Apostles refer is a trial not only of the intellectual knowledge of Divine truth, but also of the heart's trust and reliance upon God. In both respects the true child of God will find himself severely tested.

It is apparent in our times that a large number of the brethren have attached undue importance to the mental or intellectual phase of their faith, a head knowledge, to the neglect of the heart appreciation of the truth. They have failed to devote proper attention to the qualities of holiness, righteousness, Christian forbearance, and love, such qualities as enter so largely into the composition of the character-likeness of Christ that alone will win a place in the kingdom of God.

It is evident that one may receive a large intellectual knowledge of the Truth, he may be able to discern many of the fine lines and points with regard to some of the doctrines, so far as the letter or theory of the Truth is concerned, and at the same time may have little or none of the real power of the Truth in his heart or life, and be greatly lacking in those essential elements that go to make up a truly religious life such as is analysed by St. Paul in 1 Cor. 13th chapter. May we not in this way account for the lack of true piety, or love and brotherly kindness amongst the brethren today? Is it not because of too much theory, and too small a measure of religion in the heart that there is so much of the spirit of self-seeking and contention abroad amongst professing brethren, resulting in many bitter controversies and divisions? It would seem so!

In learning to control self we certainly need to be engaged in the intellectual study and searching of the Word, but let us remember that the primary object is to reach the heart and effect the change there if we would be acceptable to God and make any progress in the development of character. Does not St. Paul tell us that "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal," and does he not add, "Though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all (that is, intellectual) faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing?" The object, then, of all the revelation, of all the knowledge received through the intellect is to acquaint the child of God with the divine will, that he may become informed as to what are his duties, and the part he must perform if he would permanently secure the favor of God and the crown of life which He has promised to them that love Him.

In controlling ourselves we would need to be careful of one important trait of character of which those who may have an inclination to be heady and esteem themselves should beware; that is conceit, or pride. This arises from too low an estimate of other men. Estimates of ourselves as well as of other men are relative. All self measurements involve measurements of others. The only way by which the conceit can be taken out of a man effectually is by bringing him into a clear comparison and sharp competition with others. The more widely and truly we know men, the more we shall

see we are frequently equalled and surpassed. Candid estimates of ourselves by comparison with others will make us think soberly and judge ourselves modestly. Conceit has no more fruitful root than a narrow knowledge and prejudiced estimate of the labours and worth of others. Conceit involves a faulty self-knowledge.

It is noticeable that a person who thinks most highly of himself or herself is one of whom others of a right mind think little. The conceited man has only one ardent admirer, and that is himself. A true self-knowledge reveals our faults to us, and gives us a true view of ourselves. It lets the light in upon our narrow prejudices, and makes us ashamed of them. It discloses the insufficient grounds of many of our judgments, and unearths the subtle process of our self-deception. It lays bare the operation of motive, and shows how often conscience itself is made a mere convenience.

Self-knowledge humbles a man. The Word of the Lord speaks truly when it says—"The heart (the natural fallen heart of man) is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ; who can know it ?" (Jer. 17:9.) Those who think themselves complete beyond other men commonly stand alone in that opinion. They are apt to think themselves complete only because, while they keenly perceive other's faults, they are blind to their own. In this view lies almost the only excuse which can be given for the man of inordinate self-conceit. It implies intellectual weakness, and incapacity for keen discernment. God dulls the discernment of such, as it reads in Matt. 11:25 where Jesus answered—"I thank thee, Father, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and has revealed them unto babes." And the Apostle gives us a reason in 1 Cor. 1:27-29—"God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty. And base things of the world \_and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence." Does it not also say in Isa. 5:21, "Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes."

The wise man informs us of the greatness of ruling our own spirit, and how can we do better than by giving strict attention to the influence of thought in the development of character? If we can control that part, how great an achievement would be accomplished; for our thoughts are the invisible influences which give completion to our lives. If, then, we would control ourselves and live good and worthy lives we must not suffer our thoughts to become guilty thoughts, nor even allow them to be vacant thoughts. We must fill them with things of the spirit. How can we best do this? Best by forgetting ourselves, best by obliterating our own selfish will, best by thinking wholly of others and of God ; for in the true life there are three factors—God, the soul, and our fellow men. Our duty to our own soul is best summed up in our duty to God and our duty to our fellow men.

When the wise man admonishes, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life," he is telling us to guard carefully our hearts; to watch our meditations, to carefully consider what motives and purposes control and guide us in the course we are pursuing in life. Thoughts about God and contemplations of His character, and the great qualities thereof cannot but have an elevating effect upon every soul that is really consecrated to Him. One writer says, "Very few of us, I fear, very few even of the best of us, think enough of God. How many a life has been kept humble, and pure, and sweet, by the living realisation of that one truth—Thou, God, seest me."

We realise how all of us are affected and made better in our hearts by the mere presence of someone to whom we can look up as good and true. All mankind are born with more or less of determination. Some have this in a very marked degree, others in a lesser degree, but we find that whether our wills are strong or weak, they need direction.

We need to be careful not to pervert sound judgment. It would be disastrous to us to yield ourselves to passion, to allow it to sweep over us and master us, whether we are weak-minded or strong-minded.

We are to rule our own mind, our natural impulses. This means that if a thought presents itself to the mind, or if we feel a certain impulse, we should be quick to perceive the nature of the thought or impulse, and if it is not in harmony with the principles of righteousness or with our covenant as children of God we should at once resist it. (See Gal. 5:16.) If we are unable to do this successfully of ourselves, as is often the case, the heart should be promptly lifted to the

Lord for His promised grace to help in time of need. If we feel an impulse toward a certain action or course, we should carefully weigh the matter and decide as to its righteousness or propriety in the circumstances, looking to our unfailling source of help for guidance. The world would think that this is too exacting, they would have more pleasure in doing their own will. But we know that in doing their own will they frequently get into trouble.

A Christian has covenanted not to follow his own will. The more advanced the Christian, the more should we expect that he would be able to rule his spirit, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the will of God in Christ. If we rule our mind, our thoughts, we shall rule our tongue. If the thoughts were not in the mind the tongue would not utter them. There is great danger of saying or doing things under a momentary impulse which our heart—our consecrated judgment—would not

approve ; hence the necessity of bringing our thoughts and impulses into subjection. We should consider what would be the effect of our words or our actions upon another. Would they cause any harm or ill-feeling? The Apostle urges us to "Consider one another to provoke unto love and good works."

By thus scrutinising ourselves, by thus controlling ourselves, we are showing our earnest desire of heart to be pleasing to the Lord and true to our covenant. And those who learn to rule their own spirit according to the will of the Father are the ones whom He will be pleased to make joint-heirs with His Son in His Kingdom.

In what way can a Christian cultivate the disposition to control himself? At first the individual has not the power to rule himself in everything, but as he learns to exercise control in the little things, more and more in thought and word and deed, doing what he can in this direction, he will gain in strength of character. If we daily practise controlling ourselves we shall gradually attain a strong character along this line, which will be of inestimable advantage to us in our Christian warfare. There is no place in our daily walk where the proof of our ability to rule our spirit can be shown to greater advantage than in our own home. With husband and wife, with parent and child, with brother and sister, this is an important matter. The battle with ourselves is the greatest battle we have to fight. Moral strength is infinitely nobler than the greatest degree of physical strength or the most scientific strategy. It is only after we have become masters of our own flesh, after we have conquered ourselves, and after we have cast the beam from our own eyes, when we have subdued anger, malice, hatred and strife in our own hearts, that we are enabled by means of these severe battles with our own weaknesses to assist the brethren, to assist our neighbours, to aid them by our example, in overcoming their besetments and infirmities.

To control ourselves implies a great conflict; for no matter where we begin, we find entrenched within us many armed and opposing powers. They have possession, they are there as the result of heredity. If we have passed the days of youth they are the more strongly entrenched, and it requires the greater skill and generalship to rout them out. But whether early or late, such as would succeed in life's battle of self-control must fight the good fight of faith. They must war a good warfare to the very end. If the children of God would be victors in this battle they must storm the fortresses of the inherited evils which seem to be part of their natures.

We all realise that to control one's self is by no means an easy task ; it cannot be done single-handed. Therefore, those who are wise will seek what assistance they have at their command; for as the Apostle says, "We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places." As we well know, the world, the flesh, and the devil are powers that are closely allied, and all individuals who have taken it upon themselves to go into combat with these allied forces must seek an alliance with another and stronger power, or else they will soon be overcome in the battle.

This power is tendered to all who earnestly undertake this great work. It is none other than the almighty arm of our God: "Greater is he that is with you than all they that be against you." There is an old saying, "Where there's a will there's a way," for good or for evil. God will assist through various agencies for good, Satan through various agencies toward evil. If the will says it must be done, it calls in the needed help that is available; and forthwith it will set the other faculties of the mind at work, first to subjugate, and then to regulate the entire being.

Conscience must be alert and keep a vigilant watch over all the mental operations. Then, under the influence of conscience, judgment must decide as to the righteousness of any matter. If the will be weak it will be irregular in its rulings; and the governing of such is apt to be unstable and perhaps ultimately wholly at the mercy of the fallen appetites, passions and ambitions. It is all important, therefore, that the will be entirely consecrated to God and righteousness, and that it strengthen itself in the Lord; and in His Name and strength strive to rule with a firm hand, always humbly looking for His guidance in all of life's affairs.

One member of our body we must particularly strive to control is the tongue; for how much evil has been engineered by an uncontrollable tongue. It is written in Matt. 12:36, "That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." From our Lord's comments at various times on the subject of the tongue, we realise that in His day there must have been some seriously wrong condition prevailing amongst those with whom He came in contact. The scribes and Pharisees attributed evil power to Him, and declared that He was the tool of Satan, that Satan was speaking through Him. In the beginning our Lord told them in a general way that they deceived themselves. Later He reproved them severely, and showed the fallacy of their arguments. (See Matt. 23rd chapter.)

More and more we realise the wisdom of the Apostle James' statement that, although the tongue is a little member, yet it is the most dangerous of all, because it has the widest influence. "If a man sin not with his tongue, he is a perfect man." We cannot possibly estimate the results of our words. This influence may reach even to the ends of the earth. Therefore, we have here a disposition of character which needs controlling; and are to consider carefully what we may say in order to determine whether our words will glorify God or whether they will dishonour Him, whether they will

stir up good thoughts and impulses in the minds of others, or whether they will stir up that which is evil.

God in His wisdom has seen fit so to create us that our conduct of today has much to do with our character of tomorrow. Thus we are making or marring character continually. It is well that we should all realise this fact. All Christians should understand this principle ; for they are now on trial for glory, honour and immortality. Therefore, by neglecting to weigh carefully their words, they may lose the great prize for which they are striving. There is a spirit which shoots out bitter words, and from the standpoint of our Lord this is murder. Thus at the end of the Jewish Age the scribes and Pharisees criticised and slandered our Lord. Although from their knowledge of the Law they knew that they would be accountable for their actions, yet they did not appreciate the fact that they would be judged by their words.

Under stress of sudden temptation, the Lord's people who are now on judgment may impulsively say that which is not pleasing to the Master. But we must learn not to speak thoughtlessly ; we must learn to weigh our utterances. Since we are servants of God, we should ever take heed to our ways, in order to render the best possible service. We are not merely to have a good will to do that which is right, we are to seek to bridle our tongues. Whatever resolutions or restraints we may seek to put upon our tongues may be considered as bridles, by which we are determined to bring ourselves into full subjection to the will of God. So long as Satan and his emissaries are at large, the Lord's people will do well to take heed to their ways that they sin not with their tongue. Satan and his angels are seeking to subvert those who have given themselves to the Lord and to catch them in their words. The Psalmist says, "I will keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked is before me." (See Psa. 39:1; Eph. 4:29-32.)

Amongst the Lord's people it is very important that they should learn to be very just. While it is right to be loving, kind, generous, yet justice is the very foundation of character. All love and kindness not based upon justice are neither satisfactory nor pleasing to the Lord. In dealing with others, a Christian will think, what are the rights of others, and what would the heavenly Father have me to do? It is very natural for one to recognise his own rights in any matter, but the fallen nature does not so quickly perceive the rights of others. Therefore, one of the most important lessons to be learned is to do unto others as we would have others do to us—simple justice.

One must be just in his thoughts before he can properly be just in his dealings. Whoever thinks unjustly will act unjustly in spite of endeavours to the contrary. Many of the Lord's people find that while their hearts are well intentioned there is in their flesh a tendency for certain things that are not good. There is a continual struggle between the flesh and the spirit as to what kind of treasure will be stored up. In laying up good treasures in our hearts and minds we are building character.

Whoever goes into a man's house and sees what he has gathered in the way of treasures can easily perceive the direction in which that man's mind is bent. His preferences demonstrate his character. Thus it is with all of us; the things which we cultivate are an index to our character. When we come to render up our account as new creatures, character will decide whether we shall be esteemed worthy to be associated with our Lord as members of His Bride. Only those who have laid up the treasure of a character like that of our Lord Jesus Christ will be fit for an inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ. Our eternal destiny therefore will be decided by the way we now use our minds, and the thoughts which we now accumulate.

Our first concern, then, must be for the heart, that its affections and dispositions may be wholly under the control of grace divine ; that every principle of truth and righteousness may be enthroned there; that justice, mercy, benevolence, meekness, self-control, faith, brotherly kindness, love, supreme reverence for God, and for Christ, and a fervent love for all the beauties of holiness may be firmly fixed as the governing principle of life. If these principles are established in the heart, we shall have no difficulty in controlling our tongue and ourselves generally; for out of the good treasure of our heart the mouth will speak forth words of truth, soberness, wisdom and grace.

To the Potter's house I went down one day,  
And watched him while moulding the vessels of clay,  
And many a wonderful lesson I drew,  
As I noted the process the clay went through.

Trampled and broken, down-trodden and rolled,  
To render more plastic and fit for the mould.  
How like the clay that is human, I thought,  
When in Heavenly hands to perfection brought!

For Self must be cast as the dust at His feet,  
Before it is ready, for service made meet.  
And Pride must be broken, and self-will lost—  
All laid on the altar, whatever the cost.  
But lo! by and by, a delicate vase

Of wonderful beauty and exquisite grace.  
Was it once the vile clay? Ah! yes; yet how strange,  
The Potter hath wrought such a marvellous change!  
Not a trace of the earth, nor mark of the clay—  
The fires of the furnace have burned them away.

Wondrous skill of the Potter!—the praise is His due,  
In whose hands to perfection and beauty it grew.  
Thus will souls lying still, content in God's hand,  
That do not His power of working withstand—  
They are moulded and fitted, a treasure to hold,  
Vile clay now transformed into purest of gold.

PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM. (Bi-Monthly) 6/- (60 cents) per annum, post paid.

Published by the Berean Bible Institute, Ermington Place, Kew, E.4, Melbourne, Victoria Australia

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

A cross (x) on the wrapper indicates that the subscription to "Peoples Paper" is overdue.

# Convention News

WE are very thankful to the Lord for the very helpful season of refreshing experienced throughout the four-day Annual Convention arranged by the Melbourne Class and held over the recent Christmas period. A nice number of visiting friends were gladly welcomed from Adelaide, Sydney, Canberra, Tasmania and Victoria, and the assistance by these brethren on the programme, as well as a number of local friends, combined to make the sessions very profitable, with the Lord's blessing over all.

Throughout the gatherings three Bible Studies were conducted, eighteen addresses were given by the brethren and three Fellowship Meetings made up a full programme of spiritual food for the benefit of the good assembly present at all sessions. The Biblical passages chosen for the studies were John 12:20-26; 2 Tim. 2:1-10; and Rev. 14:13-16.

From the study in John 12:20-26 it was evident that the time of the "feast" mentioned would be near the close of Jesus' earthly lifetime, and the certain Greeks could have come to SEE Christ with an invitation for Him to visit their land. Probably His fame had spread far and wide, and what an impression such a man could make in any land with His miracles of healings and even raising the dead. However sincere these Greeks may have been in their approach to Jesus, through Philip, there is no indication that He granted them an interview. No doubt Jesus would detect at once that any invitation to leave Jerusalem at that time could be in the nature of a temptation for Him to avoid the sacrifice for which He came into the world as the Redeemer. His response in verse 23 shows that our Lord had one object only in mind at that time—to complete His sacrifice on behalf of fallen humanity, in keeping with the Father's will—"The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified."

The illustration in verse 24 was seen to be most fitting—"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone ; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Had Jesus avoided the sacrifice of Himself, He would have abided alone—a perfect man amongst the dying human family. By the sacrifice of His life, a ransom for all, He would bring forth much fruit—the church, the first-fruits unto God, and later the after-fruits, even all mankind in the general resurrection.

In verses 25 and 26 it was seen that the fulfilment of our Lord's covenant of sacrifice was the great example for all who would "follow Him". Our Lord came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. So, "If any man serve me, let him follow me"—first of all in sacrifice—and then, "where I am (to be) there shall also my servant be," for "if any man serve me (faithfully), him will my Father honour."

The study in Rev. 14:13-16 was of special interest, inasmuch as it applies to the harvest period at the close of the Gospel Age, the time in which we are now living. It was seen that verse 13 has a message of deep importance to all the Lord's people who "are alive and remain unto the presence of the Lord." (1 Thes. 4:15.) These "dead ones" (dead with Christ, Col. 3:4), "who die in the Lord"—who go down into actual death of the body during this special time of Christ's "parousia"—are especially blessed, not only in being taken away from the trials and tribulations of this earthly state, but also and especially are they blessed in being taken immediately to be with their Lord and His resurrected saints. (1 Thes. 4:17,18.) The moment of death of the human nature and body is also the moment of awakening in the likeness and presence of our glorious Lord. (1 Cor. 15:51-54.) 2 Cor. 5:1, 4 was helpful in this connection, expressing Paul's desire had it been possible at the time of finishing his earthly course—"Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." This desire is a reality now, for all the faithful followers of Christ—"from henceforth," during the time of the harvest of the Gospel Age.

"They rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" so well describes the attaining of perfect spiritual life of the highest order—even immortality. Entering into the reign with Christ will not constitute "labours" but rather joys of service, and their "works" of character will be perfectly used for the benefit of "all the families of the earth".

The addresses by the brethren covered a wide range of subjects, as follows :—"Peace on Earth ; Goodwill Toward Men" ; "Unity of the Brethren" ; "Assured Hope" ; "Resurrection—Life for All" ; "Jesus Christ—Saviour" ; "The Sacrifice of Obedience" ; "We have an Advocate with the Father" ; "The Sons of God" ; "Sincerity of Heart" ; "All Things are Yours" ; "The Necessity for Self-Control" ; "The Faith of Abraham" ; "Waiting on God" ; "Christ Lifted Up" ; "The True Vine" ; "The Quality of Love" ; and "God and Mammon." Each message contained help and instruction from the Scriptures, and two appear in full in this issue of the "Paper". The Convention Notes contain a brief outline of all addresses and other sessions and these Notes are now available to all who desire copies.

At the Fellowship Meetings messages were received from Classes and individual brethren situated in various parts of Australia and abroad, and were warmly appreciated. The message from the Convention to all our brethren is found in the words of Jesus in John 12:24-26. Praise and Testimony also gave opportunity for expressing God's blessing and

guidance experienced by the brethren generally. The Hymn Session was also enjoyed to the full ; the offering of praise to the Lord is an important part of the Christian's life.

During the usual Love Feast each one present shook hands with all others in farewell while singing "Blest be the tie that binds." Then the closing hymn "God be with you till we meet again" with a prayer of thanksgiving and desire for the Lord's protection and guidance for all His children in the days ahead concluded this season of refreshing at the 1964 Melbourne Convention.

Notes covering the Melbourne Christmas Convention have been prepared by one of our brethren, and are available free upon application to this office.

Adelaide Easter Convention.

The brethren of the Adelaide Class extend a cordial invitation to all friends able to attend their Easter Convention in Adelaide to be held (D.V.) April 16th to 19th in the Manchester Unity Building, (2nd Floor), 16 Franklin Street, Adelaide. Further information from the secretary—Mr. J. Jordan, Box 47 P.O., Lower Mitcham, South Australia.

Our Lord's Memorial

The anniversary of the Memorial of Christ's death falls this year on the evening of Thursday, 15th April. It is the privilege of all appreciating our Lord's request—"This do in remembrance of me"—to keep the observance at the appropriate season of the year.

Memorial Services

Melbourne—Sunday, 11th April, at 6.30 p.m., at Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond (near Church Street).  
Adelaide—Sunday, 11th April, at 6.15 p.m., at Manchester Unity Building, (2nd Floor), 16 Franklin Street, Adelaide.  
Perth—Thursday, 15th April, at 7 p.m., at 7 Harvest Terrace (opposite Parliament House).

Sydney—Thursday, 15th April, at 7 p.m., at 53 Bennett Street, West Ryde..

# Unity of the Brethren.

(Convention Address)

WE cannot find a great deal said in the Bible about the private lives of our Lord's first disciples. When Jesus called them, they just left their professions and joined Him. We may safely assume that, particularly after our Lord's departure, they were very much united because of their common knowledge and faith. When travelling around with Jesus, continually absorbing the lessons He taught them, they were gradually prepared for the work they were to do later on. Before their selection they were probably more or less strangers to each other, just like most of us were before entering the truth. How that was to change. Not only the miracles performed by our Lord, not only His teachings, but His character itself—radiating as it were—must have been very impressive for anyone so closely associated with Him.

When we ponder about this relationship we would feel inclined to wish to have that same opportunity, not later, but now. Imagine, to be able to walk and talk with Him in the same way as the disciples did in those wonderful days. If we visualise that little party going through the countryside, the towns and villages the picture is alive and at the same time remote. It almost seems unreal, perhaps because it is so long ago. Still, we know it is true, our Lord *was* there and so were His disciples, united together to follow Him wherever He would go.

Now, let us examine ourselves. We certainly live in a different time ; we live in different circumstances. Many of us have families. Could we “drop everything” and go with Jesus as the Apostles did? Whatever the answer, no doubt we would very much like to. But, even if we cannot walk with Him in the flesh, we can still bear out His teachings in many ways as the disciples did later on.

Once we believe in Him, really believe that is, convinced within ourselves, then we can trust Him, and once we trust Him we have hope and love. “But now, these three remain,” says Paul in 1 Cor. 13:13—“faith, hope and love; of these the greatest is love.” Love for God who first made us and who now has given us this great opportunity of life eternal; can we do anything but love Him? And love for Jesus, who, although perfect, was still a human being at the time He laid down His life for us. Apart from this enormous sacrifice, His character alone, as revealed to us by the many descriptions of His deeds and sayings, would be enough to create a desire in us to know Him more closely and to love Him. Without being under any obligation toward us, He loved us, which is emphasized by the Apostle John in his 15th chapter: “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you,” and “This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you.” (John 15:9, 12.) “This is my commandment, my teaching, love one another,” as no doubt the disciples did.

When first asked to give this little talk, I felt rather reluctant, never having spoken in public, but then I considered the word “public”. It indicates to a certain extent the listeners are strangers, and so you *were*, but not any more though. Don't we all like to think of ourselves as being part of one family, belonging to Christ—members of one family, as closely knit as were the disciples, with the same strong and joyful purpose in life of following Jesus. Not merely meeting together, but meeting in an enthusiastic manner, in an atmosphere of love, understanding and consideration for each other, grateful to God for being able to do so. “Behold,” says David in Psa. 133, “how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.”

When we come together, we naturally ask each other, “How are you, brother?” or “How are you keeping, sister?” These expressions, although well meant, are so often used in a general way that they tend to become stale, and can sometimes even sound indifferent. Particularly so when the following conversation deals with the weather, etc. Of course, there is nothing wrong with that, really the weather *does* play an important role in our lives. But something *is* wrong if that conversation never extends beyond that point. If we really are enjoying each other's company ; if we really love each other as Jesus taught us to, we should be ever so glad to be able to talk in the same manner as the disciples talked with each other when *they* met. Inspired by God after having had first-hand teaching straight from the lips of their Master, they certainly were in a favored position. We are told in the Scriptures that they knew later on about the things which were going to happen in the days in which we are now living—very important days, too.

At times they were probably excitedly and expectantly talking about the last days, knowing these would end in a climax—the reunion with Jesus.

Although *we* are living in these last days, we often don't seem to realise their importance fully. Is that because we have grown accustomed to hearing and reading about this subject? While we have the opportunity should we not gather closer around our Lord, as the disciples did? Here comes into mind the words of the inspired Apostle Paul when he says in Heb. 10:24, 25—“And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting—advising, encouraging—one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.” By doing what Paul said, we would find that we also would feel

ourselves drawn closer to each other, as close as the disciples were.

We need to realise, being foot-members of His body, that it may be quite possible that some of us may have to go through a fair amount of tribulation, even persecution, as foretold in Matt. 24. This simply means that difficult times lie ahead, perhaps in the very near future—times in which we may not be able to gather in the easy way we do now, times in which we shall need all our strength, all our faith, when we shall need to comfort and encourage each other. Therefore, friends, we need to be united in the same spirit as the disciples were in the days *they* suffered persecution. Therefore, also, we need to know each other better. You might say, but we *do* know each other. But do we ? Do we know each other well enough to agree with the Apostle John when he says in 1 John 3:16—“We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren”? We are not asked to forsake other obligations we may have, but we may be certain that fellowship among brethren is of *Al* importance.

We all have hopes for the future—to be with the Lord in due time. And so, the ultimate purpose for which we live is the same, to be united with Him. While we are still on this earth we fight daily the good fight of faith to eventually obtain that crown; a daily fight against evil, against the worldly influences in general, against the adversary. Normally, *a* fight or battle is won more easily when one has support. And although we can always count on (hell) from above, the moral support of the brethren would also be tremendously helpful. Which is another reason for us to unite, to be one *now*. From time to time, during lectures, talks or studies, we may find little points which do not always seem to fit exactly in place. Naturally, we all seek earnestly and sincerely for the real truth. Already we have been given much light in understanding God’s Word, but we realise that everything, in detail, has not been revealed to us as yet. The point is, that if there be any difference of opinion, let us not give a chance to Satan to drive a wedge between us; this could result in a split in our community which would weaken our unity. And the laughs would be on the devil, wouldn’t they?—Another reason to be strong and united. Strong and united, yes. May we remember some of these words when at the last night of this Convention, God willing, we shall unite in singing, “Blest be the tie that binds.” ***“Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”-1 Tim. 4:13.***

The Book of God is a store of manna for God’s pilgrim children; and we ought to see to it that the soul get not sick and loathe the manna. The great cause of our neglecting the Scriptures is not want of time, but want of heart, some idol taking the place of Christ. Satan has been marvellously wise to entice away God’s people from the Scriptures. A child of God who neglects the Scriptures cannot make it his business to please the Lord of glory.—Robt. C. Chapman.

A very good Oxford Bible, with References, India paper, thumb index, Brevier clear type, Persian Morocco binding, is now available at 70/-. Same Bible with Concordance and Subject Index at 80/-.

Revised Standard Version Bible.-1952. Copies of these Revised Bibles are available in strong paperback binding for 15/6 post paid. These Bibles are very useful for comparison in Bible study.

Melbourne, Vic., Australia.

# Pilgrim Way Ended.

ON the 13th of September last, an elderly Brother, James Bowles of Jerry's Plains, N.S. Wales, finished the pilgrim way after many years of loving devotion to the Lord and appreciation of His wonderful message of salvation.

Having come in contact with the truth message about 1918, he had procured the volumes of Scripture Studies and carried them with him for some years until about 1931, when, apparently, it was the Lord's due time for him to grasp and appreciate the truth in all its beauty. From that time forward he manifested a most earnest zeal for the Lord and the truth—it was his daily delight, as was so evident by personal contact and also by his letters which were our pleasure to receive in fellowship with him.

Known mainly to the brethren in N.S. Wales, our dear Brother Bowles visited the Sydney Class from time to time years ago, also had joined in fellowship at Canberra, as well as once in Melbourne on the way to attending a Convention in Adelaide. By these contacts he will be remembered by a number of the brethren as a humble, lovable Christian, devoted to the Lord and the truth above all else in this world.

Never having strong eye sight, in more recent times he was able to read only with difficulty, but manifested a patient and rejoicing hope at all times, and having the truth and its spirit in his heart so fully, gave thanks and praise to the Lord continually. By the Lord's grace, it is felt that our dear Brother Bowles would be one who has gained an entrance into the heavenly "joys of the Lord", to which he looked forward with rejoicing and expectancy.

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Bible Student's Hymnal (Music)—These music hymnal, containing 462 hymns with appropriate tunes and well bound, are priced at 25/- post paid.

Hymns of Dawn Music Book.—Containing the original 333 hymns, 27 additional in an Appendix, well bound in strong cloth, and priced at 11/- post paid.

FRANK & ERNEST TALKS

Geelong, 3GL, 222 M. Sundays 10 a.m.