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Are You Fearful of World Conditions Today?

Have You Heard of the Gospel of Hope?

THIS subject, we feel, is both timely and important. All people who are fully aware of the true condition of world affairs today cannot be otherwise than concerned with the trend of events. Indeed, those people who are best qualified to assess world conditions, the great scientists of our day, are the most concerned, because they know the possibilities of the weapons already manufactured. We repeat —They know the possibility of the destruction which could be caused by the atom and hydrogen bombs already in possession of the two main world powers today. Therefore, if we were looking to these main world powers today and depending upon them to give some reasonable assurance that they will liquidate their stocks of these terrible bombs, we truly would have every reason to be fearful, for time and again conferences on the highest level have failed to give any hope of agreement. Therefore, persons who ignore world conditions today, and use the oft-repeated expression—"All that we see today is just history repeating itself, and the world will right itself within a reasonable time"—are surely like the ostrich, which hides its head in the sand and thinks that all danger will pass when it cannot see the danger approaching.

Our Lord referred to conditions existing today in His words in Luke 21:25, 26, — "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars ; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity ; the sea and the waves roaring." We know that the reference to the sun, moon and stars is actually symbolic, and yet, some years ago there was a literal fulfilment in the darkening of the sun and moon and falling of stars from the heavens. It seemed as though the Lord was giving a guide to awaken men to the approaching Second Advent. People at that time were so impressed that many were down on their knees praying, because they thought the end of the world was coming. But there is also a symbolic fulfilment, and the portion of the verse to which we particularly refer is that there shall be great distress,— "On the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring."

It is interesting to note that the Greek word from which our English word "perplexity" is translated, means "to have no way out," "a quandary." Isn't that condition revealed throughout the world today amongst the greatest thinkers of our time? There is no way out for human minds today; all men's plans to provide a solution to earth's problems have failed. Mankind is truly in a quandary. And the Lord designs that as there is no way out by their own means, this shall bring about the greatest humbling of the human family ever experienced in the 6,000 years of human history since the creation of our first parents.

We see the effect of this great perplexity, this no way out, in verse 26 of Luke 21. "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth ; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." We notice that our Lord's words apply to men generally, — "Men's hearts failing them for fear." That is, men of the world. Having only worldly minds and hence worldly knowledge, there is certainly no discernible way out, and the Lord intends that there will be absolutely no way out for man himself to engineer. Only by such a lesson will mankind as a whole seek for the Lord's remedy for a world gone mad with selfishness through disobedience to our loving Creator. God expects and desires the world to look for. His remedy when the opportunity is given to all, in His own due time.

A connecting passage of Scripture to the one just mentioned in Luke 21, is found in Matt. 24:21, 22, from our

Lord's wonderful prophecy. "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." How pleased we are that the Lord added those few words—"No, nor ever shall be"! They remind us of the statement of the prophet Nahum 1:9—"What do ye imagine against the Lord? he will make an utter end; affliction shall not rise up the second time." That is why the Lord said there would never again be such a time of trouble, because this is to be a lasting lesson to humanity. All who will not learn obedience out of this experience and the Kingdom to follow, will be unworthy of life and will be cut off in the Second Death, from which there will be no resurrection. So "affliction shall not rise up the second time." How thankful we are that the Lord did say, "No, nor ever shall be" regarding such a time of trouble. This surely is of great consolation to those who are able to accept and appreciate it.

In Matt. 24:22 the words occur, "and except those days be shortened, there should no flesh be saved." We see in these words of Jesus the possibility which the great men of the world fear; that is, the complete destruction of the human race, if there were no intervention. But Jesus said, there would be an intervention, a shortening of the days of the great tribulation, particularly for the elect's sake, and generally so that all flesh would not be destroyed.

What did our Lord mean in this verse 22 when He said, "But for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened"? In this same chapter, we have two further references to the elect, in verses 24 and 31, the last mentioned verse reading—"And he shall send his angels with a great trumpet (proclamation of truth), and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven (religious heavens) to the other." We believe that this shortening of the days of trouble for the elect's sake has reference to the holding back of the trouble in different periods at the end of the age. In the end of the Gospel Age, when the harvest work of gathering the elect is in full swing, a certain shortening of the time of trouble is going on for the elect's sake in particular, and also in a general sense so that all flesh shall not be destroyed.

We have a helpful text in Rev. 7:1-3. This passage also tells us about holding back the winds of trouble for the elect's sake. The "earth, the sea and the trees" are symbols of the earth representing earthly society, the sea representing the masses of humanity, and the trees representing the nations at large. "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." This is a wonderfully enlightening Scripture. We can see that this prophecy, given so long ago, is depicting a time at the end of the Gospel Age when, if the winds were allowed to blow too soon, they would interfere with the harvesting work of God's servants, who not only need to be sealed in their hearts, but also intellectually, in their foreheads. They need to know in whom they believe, and why they believe certain doctrines of the Bible. They need to be fully informed of the wonderful plan of salvation—the hope for all humanity, as well as their own hope as Christians—because they are going to be associated with their Lord in the great work of redemption and restoration of all the families of the earth. Therefore, it is essential that they be well informed down here, and prepared to enter into the work awaiting them beyond the veil.

How important it is, then, that the winds of trouble are held back for the elect's sake, so that the work of sealing the servants of God shall be accomplished. Not that the Lord will hold up His plan for any dilatory disciple, but God has evidently set aside a certain time for the complete development of His servants, and none of the earthly events or forces can in the least interfere with this most important feature of God's Plan.

Turning to Psa. 46:10, we note the culmination of the trouble upon the earth shown in this prophecy from the Psalmist. After describing in the immediately preceding verses how the Lord will make desolations in the earth, and also wars to cease unto the ends of the earth, the prophet, speaking for the Lord, declares—"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth." These words surely indicate that when mankind has had sufficient humbling experiences, when they have really been taught the lesson of their own selfishness and realised what it has brought upon them of utter desolation, then the Lord will say, "Hush, enough, be still and know that I am God." With the hushing of humanity, the Lord will then turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon Him with one consent.

Do we not realise the bountifulness and loving kindness of the Lord's wonderful plan, in permitting only sufficient tribulation to accomplish His great, wise purposes in teaching humanity that of themselves they cannot bring in a happy, peaceful society, and much less can they gain life in this dying existence. Following the Lord's hushing of humanity, with Armageddon past, the wonderful resurrection time will begin. Generation after generation will come forth from the land of the enemy, and there will be no necessity for any to die at all from that time onward. No one will say to his neighbour, "I am sick," even. They will be gathering strength and character as they progress up the Highway of Holiness to eternal life—paradise restored, as in the Garden of Eden. That small garden was just a sample of what the whole world will be like, at that time.

While men generally, then, have good cause to fear the outcome of world events, seeing they are depending only upon fellow men, how should Christians view the world scenes today? Are they also fearful of the turn of events throughout this present evil world? At one time we may have had cause to be fearful of our Heavenly Father, when we wrongly supposed that He was acting as a great monster against the majority of men when they died. But having heard the Gospel of Hope, the Glad Tidings of Great Joy to all people, and not only having heard it, but having proved it true from God's own Word, we have an entirely different estimation of our Heavenly Father, who so loved the whole world of mankind that He sent His beloved Son to be the Saviour of all the willing and obedient of the human family when they have a full opportunity for salvation.

One Scripture that has helped many to clear away the great errors and misunderstandings respecting our loving Heavenly Father is the statement in Isa. 29:13. "Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their *fear* toward me is *taught by the precept of men*." Yes, the God-dishonouring doctrine of eternal torment, which still causes many to be fearful of God, is really man-made, and this is more and more manifest to all who investigate God's Word and His dealings with generations of the human family from the days of Adam and Eve.

Some people may say, but God did send a flood of waters in the days of Noah and destroyed most of the human race. Yes, that is true, but it was because mankind had become so corrupted by inter-mingling with the fallen angels that it was essential to start the human race again with uncontaminated stock, with righteous Noah and his family. (See Gen. 6:9; 7:7, 15, 16.) After Noah and his family, and all the animals had entered the Ark we note—"And the Lord shut him in." The Lord shut the door. And do you know that the Ark had no rudder, no way to steer it? Can you imagine anyone building a ship today without a rudder? Why didn't Noah put a rudder on the Ark? The Lord made no provision in His plans for it. That meant Noah was completely in the hands of God. Isn't that a lovely example for us today? Noah in the Ark without a rudder, and it was the Lord Himself who guided and steered the Ark throughout *all* those days of the Flood, and finally directed it to Mount Ararat. Isn't that a wonderful example of faith?

That is also a lovely picture of the Christian being in the Ark, Christ Jesus, of allowing the Lord to steer our barque, as it were, in full confidence and trust, without fear. We should not be over-concerned, but rather commit our lives into the care of God, just as Noah did. If we do that, we shall be saved so much of the struggles and perplexities of life.

After the Flood, Noah and his family and all the living creatures from the Ark settled down to a new life, and the words of Gen. 9:1 state—"And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth." And further,—"*and I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth, And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.*" (Gen. 9:11, 13, 14, 16.)

Isn't that a lovely promise again? Whenever we see a rainbow in the sky, doesn't it remind us of the sign which God gave to Noah? And there is much more in that symbol, for Christians. The dark clouds are encircling the earth today, but the bow is always in the cloud for true Christians. The Lord's people know that the clouds are for a particular purpose. Yes, in God's plan it is essential that there be cloudy experiences, and it is essential that Christians are able to trust God through all things. They know that the darkest hour is very often just before the morning is due to break. "Joy cometh in the morning" after weeping endures for a night. "The bow shall be in the cloud." This is surely a wonderful thought for us; haven't we found it so, as we have taken our pleas to the Lord, seeking His guidance and blessing? We surely have.

In Psa. 97:2 we read,—"*Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.*" Then the psalm goes on to show the passing of the heavens and earth, because judgment and righteousness are the habitation of His throne. It is required of God that the present order shall pass away, because He has a much better order prepared to take the place of the present one. (See also verses 9-12.) Yes, "*light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.*" Once we become acquainted with the righteous plan of God our outlook upon life is altered completely. We are not viewing the world at large and wondering which government is going to be installed in the various countries. It does not matter in the slightest which government is operating in this or other lands'. Light is sown for the righteous, the light of the Lord, the light of truth, and gladness for the upright in heart. And who can fail to be glad when they see the righteous judgments of God taking place in the earth? Righteous judgment is the habitation of His throne. It would not be

right for God to allow this present order to go on one day longer than it will serve His purpose. God is going to bring it down, because He stands for righteousness and judgment, and He will eliminate all the unrighteousness abroad in the earth, in the greatest time of trouble ever known. But the outcome will mean great blessings for the obedient of humanity. That is why those who can see this rejoice in *the* Lord, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness, for His holiness will be established from one end of the earth to the other when this present order is wiped away forever, and the Kingdom is the Lord's, and He is Governor among the nations.

We call to mind the message of Moses, inspired by the Lord, as Israel was approaching the Red Sea, as found in Exod. 14:13, 14,—”And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you today ; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.” What .a lovely message from Moses! “Stand still, and •see the salvation of God.” Very often, dear friends, if we would only stand still and listen to the Lord, arid wait upon Him we, too, would be saved from many troubles that are the result of hustling and bristling and getting excited in connection with the experiences along the Christian way. The One whom Moses typified desires us to fear not, but to trust Him fully for the great salvation promised in His Word.

Lovely words of consolation and assurance come to us also from the Shepherd Psalm, Psa. 23. In the opening verses *we* have David depicted as looking up to the great God above, he himself a sheep in the fold, knowing the love of the Shepherd and His care for the sheep, and knowing the Heavenly Shepherd was acting as he himself endeavoured to act in regard to his own flock of sheep. So he says, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. . . . Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of. death., I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” We are all walking through the valley of the shadow of death! Death overshadows us, but the Good Shepherd has given His life for the sheep, and for all mankind as well. Therefore David says,”I will fear no evil.” You know, it takes something, doesn't it, to fulfil those words,—”I will fear *no evil*.” No evil of any kind? Yes, that is what we really have to get down to. Sometimes it is the little things that trip us up, quite imperceptibly ; little things that get under the skin, so to speak. They are irritating, and sometimes we forget our contact with the Lord, the source of our strength and help in every time of need. We should, we must learn to look more to our Great Shepherd. “The Lord is MY shepherd.” That is absolutely personal; “I shall *not want*; I will *fear no evil*,” is the wonderful assurance we need to keep before us always.

The Psalmist, again, speaking for the David class, God's people of the present time, says in Psa. 46,—”God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.” The removing of the earth means the desolation of this order of things. The mountains carried into the midst of the sea means the kingdoms of this world being overthrown by the masses of humanity rising up against the governments. This is to take place for the removal of the present order, to make way for the kingdom of Christ. Verses 4 and 5 of this 46th Psalm help us to see why we need not fear. “There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most high. God is in the midst of her ; she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early.” And what is the city of God? It is God's people on the earth. God delights to dwell *in* His people (tabernacles of the most high), and this river of truth flows into their hearts and gives them confidence and trust and abiding peace and rest through every experience, so long as they are completely abiding and trusting in the great God who is their refuge and strength—surely their “very present help in trouble.”

Outstanding amongst the messages of hope in the New Testament is that proclaimed by the angels at the birth of our dear Redeemer. It does us good not only at Christmas time, but repeatedly, to call to mind this message in Luke 2:10. 11. We know that this message was given to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem. What an inspiration it must have been to those of right heart condition at that time! And the angel said unto them, “Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” These tidings of great joy are going to be to ALL PEOPLE in the resurrection day. Thousands upon thousands had gone into the grave, even then. The good tidings will be *good news* to them, just as much as to those who have lived in the two thousand years since. No one will be overlooked in God's wonderful plan of redemption. The restitution chapter of Isaiah 35 is in full agreement,—”Say to them that are of a fearful heart, *Be strong, fear not*; behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you.” (Isa. 35:4.)

The words of Jesus in Matthew 10, spoken to His disciples, come to us with very great meaning,—”Fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.” (Matt. 10:28-31.) At that time there were various sacrifices made to the Lord; some people were not able to bring a lamb, some brought even a small amount of flour. Even birds were offered in sacrifice. It

seems here, that the Lord was comparing the typical sacrifices with His followers offering themselves. "Fear not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." God acknowledged the typical sacrifices, but the disciples of the Lord are much more precious in His sight, because they are walking in the steps of the Redeemer. They are showing, their love for the Redeemer above all else, as they yield their lives fully and completely, presenting their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, a reasonable service. Our Lord's message to these is—"FEAR NOT, ye are of more value than many sparrows." Yes, God looks upon the devoted, faithful sacrifices of His people as very precious indeed, because yielded through the merit of Christ. Of ourselves we are of no account, but under the covering robe of Christ's righteousness all the little offerings of God's people are acceptable and precious to Him.

God's kingdom of two parts will truly glorify His name to the full, and we should surely *fear not* the process to bring this about. Over and over again through the Word of God the Gospel of Hope takes the place of all fear. Our Lord said, that when these things (evident world-wide today) begin to come to pass, lift up your heads and rejoice, for your deliverance draws nigh. So far from becoming fearful or anxious, we should rejoice, for the time is at hand for the passing of the present heavens and earth, so that the new heavens and earth may be established. God's faithful people shall compose the heavens, with the Redeemer. The new earthly order will be the means of bringing all the obedient of humanity back to the likeness and perfection of Adam in Eden. It will be paradise restored,—*"Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."*

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This Issue of Peoples Paper for October - November.

This issue of "Peoples Paper" is for the months of October and November. The next, published in December, will also be for two months—covering also the month of January, 1962. It will be determined in the new year if our "Peoples Paper" will be bi-monthly in future.

Baptism Service.

IT was a pleasure to attend a Baptism Service in Adelaide on Saturday, 9th September, when one of our sisters symbolized, by water immersion, her full consecration to be dead with Christ, and to follow in His steps. This means denying self, and pledging oneself to do God's will first and foremost. This is a very great privilege, and we rejoice with our beloved Sister, and we all pray that grace and wisdom and heavenly strength may be realised as this dear member seeks daily to tread the narrow way in the footprints of Him whose life was so fully devoted to the doing of God's will.

What a blessed privilege it is to be associated with our Lord Jesus Christ; first accepting Him as our Redeemer from all sin, and then devoting our justified humanity to be dead with Him,—entering the school of Christ, and seeking daily to learn of Him, and to be 'conformed to His character-likeness, so that we may be with Him in His Kingdom and share His great work of uplifting mankind in the grand "times of restitution" now so near.

Melbourne Christmas Convention.

The brethren of the Melbourne Class wish to announce that their Annual Convention will be held this year (D.V.) on December 23rd, 24th, 25th and 26th in the Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond, and all friends able to attend these gatherings are cordially invited to make their arrangement accordingly. Further information from the Class Secretary—Mr. J. B. Hiam, 16 Kennedy Street, South Oakleigh, S.E.13, Victoria.

Words That Burn

(Continued from last issue.)

(Reference to John 8:1-11, which was used towards the close of this article in last month's "Peoples Paper", was overlooked. This passage, appearing in the Authorized Version of John's Gospel, is really spurious. While it is usual for the brethren to base all statements on authentic Scriptural passages, it was found that the thoughts drawn from this quotation in John 8 could rightly apply to the Scriptures as a whole. The booklet "Our Bible Translated", which contains an article from our brethren in U.S.A., states concerning the verses in John 8:1-11—"A very interesting story, but evidently merely legendary." "Our Bible Translated" contains a list of the spurious passages found in the Authorized Version of the New Testament, and is supplied at 1/- per copy, post paid.)

YOU remember the disappointment and dashing of all hopes at the crucifixion of the Lord. They had trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel. Instead, He was crucified, they had been scattered, yet kept in fearful touch with each other. The third day had come, and certain women of the little company astonished them with the news that His body was not in the sepulchre, and that a vision of angels had declared He was alive. The leaders of the little band ran to the grave, to find it empty, but no sign of the Master. What now? Two loving disciples at wits' end thought it time to go home. Cleopas and his companion set out for Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and as they travelled they were recounting all the stupendous events of the last few days. So engrossed in their recollections, so confused, so sad, so disappointed, they scarcely noticed a stranger draw alongside and ask them the reason for their sadness; what could be the subject matter to make travellers returning home so sad? They told Him, as they linked themselves with the crucified Jesus, that they had not found in Calvary what they had been looking for. "We had hoped that He was the one." To them the cross spelt failure. Then the Stranger, like Elihu with Job and his three comforters, commanded attention with His burning words, opening up the Scriptures, gently chiding them for their slow-witted understanding, — "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." Later they chide themselves, too, — "Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us?" It was clear now to them, that they *should have* recognised the Christ by His moving exposition of the Scriptures.

If some are slow-witted, surrounded with doubts and fears that blot out blessings crying out to be experienced, others are not so dull of hearing, or *slow* to understand the full import of burning words. We think of two, among many outstanding cases. The woman to whom Jesus said it was "not meet to take from the children to give to the dogs," when the distressed daughter of Greece asked for help on behalf of her daughter. Folk with self-respect could hardly be blamed for taking offense at Jesus' reply, likening one to a dog. This woman worshipped Him, pleaded for help, was refused, and more, was taunted as an outcast from God's favor at this time. SELF was so obliterated from this woman's love that such stinging, burning words as Jesus used left her unaffected. Love could not let her go. Like Jacob, who wrestled with the angel until the break of day, refusing to break the contest until he had been blessed, the Gentile woman refused disappointment. She conceded the Lord's description of Jews and Gentiles as being true, but were there no crumbs for the dogs? Persistence in the face of such self-abrogation, an evidence of true love and devotion, won for her the blessing she desired for another.

Another outstanding case of instant appreciation of burning words is that of the man who was born blind. He needed no second bidding to effect his restoration of eyesight. Yet with his restoration of sight came troubles greater than when he was blind—disowned by his parents, opposed by Pharisees, and cast out of the Synagogue. Many would have preferred an easy pension to this harsh freedom, yet he loyally upheld the principles of righteousness, and no doubt his answer to Jesus' opponents,— "One thing I know that whereas I was blind, now I see,"—had a penetrating burning about them for his hearers, which of course they resented, the implication of their own blindness.

"He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." (Phil. 2:7.) -Unless these words burn into the understanding with the power of the Spirit of Truth, much of their beauty, strength, simplicity and wisdom are curtailed or even lost. Not that He did not HAVE a reputation, but He deliberately MADE Himself of NO reputation, of no consequence, according to world standards. This rule of conduct was tested and made firm by the nature of His temptation, and, overcoming it, in the wilderness. No miracle would be worked for His own comfort or convenience, neither would He demonstrate as an exhibitionist—much to Herod's disgust, for that dignitary set Him at nought, of no reputation. After the wilderness temptations "the devil left him," no doubt satisfied that if Jesus persisted in that way of life making Himself of no reputation, Satan had little **to fear** from such **a ministry**.

Let the Samaritans represent us since we all were outside of Covenant relationship. If the Samaritans could accept Jesus as the Saviour of the world, with little or no difficulty, so could we. But we propose to show that for

the Samaritans to do so, nothing short of a miracle was needed. It takes more than “no reputation” to tear superstition, ignorance and prejudice from sin-blinded eyes. Consider the account: They saw a man, a stranger, a foreigner, sitting on the edge of a well, their well. The stranger is VERY thirsty, hungry, tired, travel-stained (have you ever travelled in the heat and dust?); to our eyes He would appear as a tramp — one of those folk with no certain employment, getting a little food here and there, as opportunity offered. A casual glance would suffice to suggest we must be on our guard. No one would think it strange to see another sheltering from a merciless midday sun. But the stranger asks a favor of you; he wants a drink, at the same time telling you two of His companions have gone to buy some food. There are more of them, and your fears are now really alerted, for with a second look and their speech you discover they are enemies. The Jews are bitter opponents; no Jew, however poor, would ask a favor of, or give one to a Samaritan (remember the parable of the good Samaritan?) No Jew would sink to such a level; two of the chief apostles wanted to bring fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritans. The stranger not only asks a favor, but is willing to share your cup. The sun’s heat must have affected him or this is a deep-set trap to embarrass you. His appearance confirms your fears, too. Yet someone just whispered this was the Saviour, the Messiah. The King of the world, so poverty-stricken, so poor, so humble, so WEARY; could you blame anyone for refusing to entertain such a silly idea? It just didn’t make sense; the meanest of kings has something to give.

In case we may be biased because of outward appearances, we should examine the credentials of the person who raised such pretensions. In the forefront is a woman. She is reserved towards Jesus. On this hot, summer afternoon she is not in quest of the Saviour. Her needs are simple, but necessary. Why does she draw water in the heat of the day, instead of, as was customary, to wait for the cool of the evening? She is either shunned, an outcast, OR she has cut herself off from the fellowship of the village. She denies the stranger a drink, no doubt because of past sad, similar experiences that left her the poorer. Denying the stranger a favor is to her credit, for it indicates a change of heart; she has profited by past mistakes, and wants to avoid, not encourage, embarrassing situations. She knows Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. If this Jew wishes to share her cup there MUST be some ulterior motive; her refusal indicates repentance.

The Stranger deals ever so tenderly with one of society’s outcasts. He makes no charge, no humiliation, but proceeds to open to her the well of sin and misery. From this murky underground stream He offers her only a sip — “Call thy husband,”—and then, understandingly, opens a door barred with superstition and prejudice. She responds to His tenderness and is favored with one of those rare blessings—a personal revelation. She has no qualms now, no fears; her chief desire is to share her joy with kinsfolk who had nothing to share with her. But her testimony, from such a person as they all well knew her to be, concerning this Stranger whom they could see for themselves, complicated, rather than assisted the cause. This testimony doubly hindered an acknowledgment that here was the Messiah. No mortal eye or ear COULD assent, under these conditions and circumstances, that here was the Saviour. But for people who are prepared to overlook “no reputation,” words that burn soon flow freely to confirm faith and extend grace.

“Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart (of no reputation), and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” “Be still, and know that I am God.” “Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart.” “Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him.” “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” “The day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, and all who do wickedly shall be stubble; the day that cometh shall burn them up, leaving them neither root nor branch,” saith the Lord (Mal. 4:1). Peter also speaks of this awful time as the “heavens passing away with great *tumult*, the elements of society melting with *fervent heat*.”

In this day of trial and judgment, the Redeemer declared,—“By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words shalt thou be condemned,” and—“The words that I speak shall judge in the last day.” (John 12:48.) This looks very much like a battle of words — words that burn. No doubt there will be plenty of literal fire, more than enough, but the REAL destructive agent will be WORDS THAT BURN—TRUTH.

Satan will have his fiery darts, but He who is in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, “with eyes as a flame of fire, feet like unto fine brass as if burned in a furnace, his countenance as the sun shineth in his strength, and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword,” will quell the commotion, the voices, thunderings, lightnings, the storm of burning words that will sweep the earth. And after the storm will be heard the “still small voice,” with a message of hope and life, speaking “Peace, be still,” and “God is Love.” What a wonderful world it will be when these words burn their way through to everyone’s understanding.

The Word of Truth has met *fiery* opposition right down the age. Its adherents have suffered “cruel mockings, scourgings, bonds, imprisonment, stoned, sawn asunder, slain with the sword, sheepskins for clothing, destitute,

afflicted, tormented, with deserts, mountains and caves for dwelling places,” and as if that list were not enough to daunt the most fearless, Satan has added a couple more—”fed to wild beasts, and burnt at the stake.” Rather than reason with God, diabolical experiences are inflicted on those whose chief and only mission is brotherly love. Yet, despite all this fiery opposition, Truth, with its words that burn, still conquers. The Spirit, the Word of God, the Word made flesh, declared, with full authority, —”Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall never pass away.” Like the burning bush, the burning words coming from Jesus mention life and fellowship with God to those who abide in Him.

“I have *given them* the Word Thou gavest Me.” Just think, Jesus commissions us to take unto ourselves His lovely words of life, to comfort one another with these words, for a word in season, how good it is; and to take heed. unto the more sure word of prophecy. Words that burn will fill us with burning words—burning out the condemnation of sin, fearfulness, superstition, prejudice, ignorance, despondency, sadness, etc., making way for love, sympathy, understanding, to preach good tidings unto the meek, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, opening of the prison to them that are bound ; to proclaim the acceptable day of salvation, and the day of vengeance; to comfort those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.” These are the burning words He has given us, both to accept and give out. Excelling all this, including all within the compass of their meaning, .are these few simple words, but how they burn—”I HAVE GIVEN THEM THE WORD THOU GAVEST ME”

“My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me.”

O tenderness divine!
O glorious love of Thine!
That bids us come to Thee!
Thy sheep.

Those wondrous tones we hear—
And banished is our fear,
Our Guide will never leave
His sheep.

Each one Thou call'st by name,
And each Thou lov'st the same;
Thou gav'st Thy life for all
Thy sheep.

Can earthly power withstand
The might of His strong hand!
Nay! we are safe for aye!
His sheep.

FRANK & ERNEST TALKS Geelong, 3GL, 222 M. Sundays 10 a.m.