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Redeeming the Time.

“See, then, that ye walk circumspectly, not as tools, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil.”—Eph. 5 :1 5 16.

THIS text, like all injunctions in the Scriptures, is addressed to the Church of God, not to the world; for the Lord is not dealing with the world at present. It is an important thing to recognise this fact. Many, losing sight of it, are in confusion when they come to the study of the Bible. In His Word, the Lord is not telling the world what they should do, but is telling His servants what steps they should take from the time they become His people. Many think of the Bible as being addressed to the entire world, and then are surprised that the world cannot understand it. But we who know that our Lord said to His disciples, “To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven,” are not surprised that before any can understand God’s Word they must take the step of full consecration to Him.

It is to Christians, then, that the Lord gives this message of our text. God’s children should walk circumspectly, wisely, carefully, redeeming the time. Our time is redeemed, bought back, by making some sacrifice, that we may have that time to use profitably. There are certain natural claims upon our time. We need time to eat and to sleep, to earn and prepare our food. Besides this, there are other calls. Our families have some demands upon us, whether Christians or not. Husbands have some proper demands upon wives, and wives upon husbands; children upon parents, and parents upon children. Our neighbours have some proper call upon us in the way of helpfulness.

Then beyond all our obligations, the world now has many things to allure and attract, to please eye and ear. There are newspapers and periodicals, moving pictures and fairs, art galleries, concerts, and what not. Any one who has brains may have his time filled to the full in these multitudinous ways. The Lord’s children find that their entire time might be taken up by earthly interest, if they would permit it.

But God has called us to be New Creatures. He has put into our minds new plans, new interests, and into our lives new work, new obligations. The earthly ambitions have died since we received the new ambitions, since we have found that the Lord has invited us to become joint-heirs with His Son Jesus in, the glories of ‘the Kingdom. We say to ourselves, “All those earthly things are transitory, and never were worth very much at best. The riches which God has promised are everlasting and of infinite value.” So we wish to have our minds set upon these things.

God invites us to Himself through the promises of the Bible; and these promises work in us to will and to do His good pleasure. In selecting His Church the Lord is not using force. We are. not cattle to be driven,

but sheep to be led. The Heavenly Shepherd calls His sheep; and they follow Him; “They know His Voice”; but “they know not the voice of strangers.” The Good Shepherd’s voice sounds forth from the Bible; and if anybody says of some voice, “This is the voice of the Lord,” we are to make sure by going to the Bible and proving or disproving the claim. We might get some serious error ‘even from a friend. We must in every case, as Christians, prove all things by the Word and hold fast that which is good.

As we endeavour to meditate upon the things which God has promised, we find that we have very little time for that purpose. One may begin the day by thinking, “I will do thus and so on.” But difficulties and interruptions come ‘pressing in, and, fill the day. What shall be done? The Apostle says, Redeem the time—buy it back. Curtail some of the other things, that you may have some time to use in the cultivation of your own character, in the study of the Scriptures.

Presumably, as Bible students, we have all had experiences in reading the Scriptures without helps. We have read chapter after chapter, and often it did us little good. But we find that there is a different way to study the Bible, by which we may enjoy the Scriptures and be profited. We find that we have needed a kind of outline—from Creation down to the Deluge one great period; from the Deluge down to the First Coming of Christ another period; from the first Coming to His-Second Coming another period; then the Millennial Age; and lastly the ages of glory to follow.

This helps us to straighten matters out.

When we read, we should ask ourselves, “With what does this part of the Scripture deal?” The Bible is full of problems to solve, like an arithmetic. We do not merely read through an arithmetic; if we do we would learn little. We are to study the Bible according to dispensations, and according to what God outlines as His great Plan of the Ages. Nobody can comprehend the Divine Plan of the Ages (Eph. 3:11, Diaglott) without studying it. This Plan of God is outlined in the Bible. We must examine each Scripture in relation to its context. So we need considerable time to understand properly the Word of God.

The older we grow as Christians, the more we find is necessary for these spiritual things. Natural food is to make one strong, bright; intelligent, quick, as a natural man; and spiritual food is to make the New Creature intelligent, quick, well established, apt to teach, able to “rightly divide the Word of Truth.” As we mature wit need stronger food. It was sufficient that we had milk to start with. But milk will not suffice for adults.

Albeit we are growing to appreciate more the Word of God, the whole world is becoming filled with attractions.

But as we see the Day of Christ drawing on, yea, that it is even now upon us, we, as God’s children, must be more and more attentive to our Heavenly Calling. Why did not the Lord arrange things some other way, that we might have more time? He wishes to see whether we appreciate the spiritual things or not. Whoever is not hungry for spiritual food, has no desire, to go to the spiritual table, is not using his talents along spiritual lines. We should give a good share of our time to the study of the Truth as it is in Jesus. We should have a hunger for righteousness, for Bible Truth. The Lord is testing us. He knows that whoever is really hungry and thirsty for righteousness will redeem the time and the zeal with which we redeem the time and give it to the spiritual things is one of the evidences we give of growing real Christian character.

If we take time for a picture show, but do not take time for the study of God’s Word, this is abundant proof that we do not love Him supremely. We say that we are hungry for the Word of Truth. How much time do we spend with the newspaper? How much time do we spend with the Bible? There is no use in trying to deceive the Lord. “God is not mocked.” He knows all about what we are doing. He will not be

deceived in respect of our character.

We know that, as Christians, we have two natures to deal with. We have the old nature—reckoned dead—which has its ordinary appetites and desires, the same as other people. We like certain kinds of foods. We have a variety of natural tastes, all of which are clamouring for recognition. We desire to investigate machinery, to look into investments, to think about the triumphs of mankind, to study the sciences, etc. These are all right enough in their places. God does not say that it is wrong to have a desire to know; but He is putting things in such a way as to give us tests as to whether we are the more appreciative of these things or of the heavenly things.

Whoever spends his consecrated time in reading history, novels, etc., or in attending places of amusement, is not spending it in building up the New Creature. Each human being has his natural individual desires; but the New Creature is to put these natural cravings down. The New Creature is as yet only in the mind. He figuratively puts down his foot and says, “God has promised me His grace to rule this body. Backed up by His help, I can succeed. I agreed to sacrifice these earthly interests, and it SHALL BE DONE! I am determined to live on the spiritual plane: therefore I must grow; I must get stronger every day.” If we let ourselves drift, the flesh will take possession of everything: and we shall die of spiritual starvation.

The Apostle Paul wrote to certain of the Church in his day, implying that some were still babes. He says, “When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the doctrine of Christ and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.” (Heb. 5:12-14.)

We must not think that we are to do something for somebody else first, neglecting our own spiritual development.

As New Creatures we must build up ourselves first. Then we may do all that we can to assist others, “doing good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to the Household of Faith.” This is our personal contract with the Lord; and thus it is with the whole family of God. We are building up ourselves and one another. The faithful members of Christ’s Body are growing, everywhere; and soon, we believe, this spiritual family of God will be completed beyond the veil,

Many of the Lord’s people do not see the force of the Apostolic injunction that they should redeem the time; and therefore, they are living at a disadvantage. They do not notice the many minutes they waste in the twenty-four hours. Let us then, as consecrated children of God, see that we do not squander time. Let us see what we can lop off, how we can get the minutes under our control. If one can get sixty of them redeemed, he will have an hour. By pinching and economising here and there one may very easily save this hour for the service of the Lord or for Bible study.

“Because the days are evil,” says St. Paul. His thought is, “Realising that our days, as they are passing, are unfavourable to us as New Creatures.” This is particularly true of our own day. With all the enlightenment of today there are many blessings of an earthly kind coming in, preparatory to the New Age. The nearer we get to the establishment of God’s Kingdom, the greater is the pressure on every side from the world.

As we see that the Day of Christ is right upon us this should be all the more an incentive to draw us together as children of God. (Heb. 10:25.) We shall have special need of the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith, and all the Christian’s armour. (Eph. 6:12-18.) We have come down to the time when there is trouble all about us. It is the fire of the “great Day of the Lord.” This fire “Shall try every man’s work.” Some who have built their faith structure on traditions of men will find that they have built with

wood, hay and stubble. Others have built their faith with gold, silver and precious stones, God's revelations. All who have builded with combustible material will find that their structure will be consumed. Only those structures will stand that have been built with God's Truth.-1 Cor. 3:11-15.

If we wish' to make our "calling and election sure," we shall have special assistance, but we shall have trials to correspond. People to-day have many more trials than our grandfathers had. On Sundays they had little else to do but attend worship. They had much quiet in which to think about God and the Bible. We do not find it so. But God has so provided that His people of to-day have abundant supplies of grace to carry them through if they will eliminate the unnecessary things. But in order to make use of God's provisions we must deny ourselves these things that the flesh is craving. As the Apostle says, "Mortify your members which are upon the earth."—Col. 3:5-10.

There is a beauty about the Lord's Plan. He deals with us like this: "You have said that you have given your life to Me. I told you that you must redeem the time, which you have consecrated to Me. Now demonstrate your ingenuity in the matter, your earnestness and your spirit to sacrifice your earthly interests." If you thought that in your consecration your earthly interests are to be just as well taken care of as before, then either you do not understand the matter, or-else you are not living up to your covenant. Give less attention to bodily comforts. Give more time for spiritual food, to service for the Lord, the Truth and the brethren. We are happy to learn His will. He is not expecting anything unreasonable of us. But He does expect us to be careful of our time, of our conduct, of how we live our profession.

We know that God loves all His children, and desires to see them beautiful. Then why does the Apostle advise the Lord's people not to adorn themselves with "gold or pearls or costly array"? (1 Tim. 2:9, 10.) In the present time there are various reasons why God would advise us not to wear jewellery and expensive clothing.

In the first place, in our present fallen condition of mind, when we put gold or diamonds upon our fingers and in our ears, in the bosoms of our shirts, etc., it indicates a certain amount of pride, a factor that would not be advantageous to us. We are, naturally, like the rest of mankind, more or less susceptible to pride, although we have nothing of which to be proud. Moreover, it might have a bad effect upon others. Some might see a Christian elegantly appareled and say, "Look how that lady or that gentleman is decked out! And that ring must have cost 20, or

50!" Then they feel envious—"What right has he, or, What right has she, to have these things when I cannot have them?" Is it not better that Christians who have money should not wear such things and thus excite the envy of those who cannot afford them?

There are a great many people in the world who have a hard time to make a living, and never get enough to have the reasonable comforts of life. Why should a child of God put on diamonds or rich clothing to show himself or herself off as a picture, while many others lack food or clothing or medicine? Rather than wear such things, would he not prefer to give its value to somebody who needs it or to carry the Truth to others? Certainly this would be the mind of the Lord.

There is a further reason. As Christians, we stand more or less as reflections of God. We profess to have renounced the pride and vanity of the flesh, and to have set our affections on heavenly things, and to be putting on the spiritual adornments. We must, therefore, not follow our natural mind in this matter, but the mind of God, that we may show forth His praise "who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light."

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While it is our intention that these whims 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.

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Walk By This Rule.

"And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy."—Gal. 6:16.

Deep rest of mind, tranquility of soul, is a the happiness that all men crave, yet seek in vain, because they seek it where it cannot be found. God created man for His own pleasure (Rev. 4:11; Isa. 43:7) and in His own image, so that man's true pleasure, happiness, and peace should be found only in harmony, fellowship, and sympathy with his Creator, that thus the fellowship of the Creator and the creature might be responsive. He wanted that love should respond to love, admiration to admiration, virtue to virtue, and grace to grace, in the Creator and the creature as face answers to face in a glass. In this 'natural attitude of the Creator and the creature, generous benevolence and filial gratitude combine in mutual happiness. God is happy in the realisation and in the exercise of all the noble traits of His glorious character, which happiness is enhanced by appreciation of the same on the part of His creatures and manifestations in them of the same qualities and dispositions of mind and heart. And likewise man must both realise and exercise the noble endowments of his nature, and form a character modelled after that of his Heavenly Father and meeting His approval, if he would find that true happiness, which consists in the approval of his own conscience and of his Creator and Judge, in whose favour is life, and "at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore."—Psa. 16:11.

True, all men have lost much of the original likeness of God, but this does not alter the fact that they still crave the happiness and peace which never can be found except under the natural, original relations to their Creator. No matter how deep a man may sink in sin, how far he may stray from the path of rectitude, how low and vile he may become, he still remembers that he is a man, a member of that noble, though fallen race, which God created in His own likeness, and he knows and feels his degradation. He knows that he was made for higher and nobler ends than those towards which he is ever tending, although he has neither inclination nor desire to strive towards those nobler ends, not having the fortitude to resist the inherited and long-cultivated bias of his fallen nature.

In this painful realisation of the absence of true happiness and peace of mind and heart men have sought for happiness and peace in ways in harmony with the more or less depraved tendencies of the fallen nature—in the poor substitutes which pride, ambition, strife, rivalry, wealth, fame, power, etc., have to offer; but the happiness they find is only delusive, and at most very short-lived. The bubble of success may burst in an instant, and the peace and happiness built upon it be utterly wrecked.

There is no peace, therefore, to any man except in the re-established relationship between himself and his God. And since this relationship of sons can only be re-established through Christ there is no peace to any man out of Christ. "There is no peace saith the Lord to the wicked." (Isa. 48:22.) "And if any man be in

Christ he is a new creature. Old things have passed away, and behold all things have become new.” (2 Cor. 5:17.) He has “passed from death unto life,” and has found the peace which the world can neither give nor take away. He realises himself a son and heir of God. To these justified sons and heirs of this age God has not only granted His recognition, but also His special favour in offering to them great and precious promises—to become the sons of God on a higher plane. and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, the conditions of which relationship are that we follow in His footsteps of sacrifice even unto death.

Those who thus covenant with God are begotten of the spirit of God, and as many such as are henceforth led of the spirit of God, they are the recognised sons of God (Rom. 8:14), while those who fail to recognise, appreciate, and accept the great favour offered, lose the benefit of their reckoned justification in this age.

It is to these new creatures, begotten and led of the spirit of God, that the words of our text are addressed — as many such as walk by this rule, peace be on them and mercy. The rule referred to is the rule of the new creature mentioned in the preceding verse “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.” Forms and ceremonies are not the rule, but the new life itself; the new creature filled with the holy spirit of God and led of the spirit. “Walk ye in the spirit,” says the Apostle “and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh; for the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other.” (Gal. 5. 16, 17.)

To as many as walk by this rule are promised peace and mercy, mercy because our best efforts to walk after the leading of the holy spirit will be imperfect; but God who judges our heart’s desires and efforts, is merciful, and will not exact from us more than we are able to perform. And, therefore, notwithstanding our lameness and halting steps in following the lead of the spirit, He gives His blessed peace to all them that walk by this rule—the rule of the holy spirit, the rule of the new creature.

Now, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, he has put away the old man—the carnal nature, which is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be —with all his evil deeds, which the Apostle thus enumerates (Gal. 5:19-21) . Now, the works of the flesh (the carnal nature) are manifest, which are these:— Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.

While we might wonder that the Apostle in addressing the saints should make mention of the grosser forms of sin, which could only be predicated of those who have fallen from grace, when we consider, we see that it would not have done to leave these out, because they belong to the category of evils, which are opposed to the spirit of God, and can have no place in His Kingdom. Then again, they are the abominable ends to which the lesser evils inevitably tend, as the nature. of sin is always progressive. The Apostle gives fair warning that those who do such things, no matter how loud may be their professions, have no inheritance in the Kingdom of God, and, therefore, they have no right to the fellowship of the saints upon whom and in the cause of Christ in general, they bring only disgrace.

But the effect of the rule of the spirit, in all those who are truly new creatures, begotten of God, and led of His spirit is very differently described by the Apostle. He says, “But the fruit of the spirit is joy, love, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law. And they that, are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and desires.” If we are living according to the rule of the new nature, following the leading of the spirit of God, then we must have these fruits in some measure, even from the very start of our Christian experience; and if we are following on to know the Lord and to walk in the spirit, these fruits are surely growing and becoming more and

more manifest to all with whom we are associated.

If those who are in Christ would observe this principle and deal With each other as new creatures, much discord would be avoided, for the motives and endeavours of the new creature would be considered and not the frailties or mistakes of the earthen vessel. “Let us follow the things that make for peace.” (Rom. 14:19; 1 Thes. 5:13.)

Earthly Way Finished.

On the 16th of last month our elderly Brother Tippett, of Box Hill, Victoria, finished the pilgrim way.

About nine years ago our Brother Tippett contacted us from the country of Victoria through the radio - sessions over 3GL on Sundays: The message of truth appealed to him so fully; when realising that God’s plan of salvation will yet benefit the world of mankind as well as Christians, he wrote, saying—”If that is really the Bible truth I must know all about it, and pass it on to a number of young people I am teaching in Sunday School.” The Bible study “The Divine Plan of the Ages” was greatly appreciated and completely assured our dear Brother of the fulness of God’s love and mercy as revealed in His Word.

Coming to Melbourne some years ago Brother Tippett attended the meetings whenever possible, but for the past three years had become an invalid, being confined to his bed for the greater part of that time. However, he was always of a cheerful disposition, and appreciated greatly the regular visits of the brethren to sing hymns and have studies together in his home, where he was cared for in a wonderful manner by his daughter and family to the end of the earthly way. Our sincere sympathy is extended to Brother Tippett’s daughter and son and families in the loss sustained.

It was always a great pleasure to have fellowship with our dear Brother and he will be greatly missed; but we have very happy memories of his love and devotion to the Lord, and appreciation of truth now due to the Lord’s people. Thus we have confidence in his having entered into his reward in the heavenly home, by the Lord’s grace, now that we have reached the end of the Gospel Age, when the faithful overcomers do not “sleep” but are changed to be with the Lord, in preparation for the Millennial reign. (1 Cor. 15:51-57.) “Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Tracts Available.

The first article in last month’s “Peoples Paper” —”Is There a Second Chance for Salvation After Death?”—will be available in tract form shortly. Friends desiring copies may order what they may use to advantage, these tracts being supplied from the Tract Fund.

Humility In Service.

“Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud and showeth favour to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.”- 1 Pet. 3:8; 5:5, 6.

THE Apostle has been addressing the elders of the Church, exhorting them to give attention to the feeding of God’s flock, and pointing out what should be the constraining influence of such a service. That they may feel his sympathy with them, he points out that he also- is an elder; and then warns them against a tendency, natural to all fallen humanity in any place of influence, to misconstrue their position, and to think of themselves as lords of God’s heritage, rather than as servants of the flock.

In our day, the natural tendency in this direction is greatly accentuated by the long-established custom of all denominations of Christians to regard the ministers or servants of the Church as of a different class from the others of the flock—a class -vested with authority from God, and not amenable to the same regulations which govern all the members of the body. But how great a mistake this is! The Apostle distinctly points out that a servant is not a ruler, that a servant has no authority. Indeed, so far as the true Church is concerned, the only authority in it is the Lord, the Head of the Church, and His Word, and the words of those whom He specially chose to be His mouthpieces, the Apostles.

Where these speak, all the body of Christ are to give attention to hear. Where these are silent, no one has authority to speak. An elder should be chosen to the position of serving and feeding the flock, because of special aptness to teach, to point out the instructions of our Lord and the Apostles upon any subject. Such an elder should, therefore, in this way, be specially helpful to the body of Christ in drawing the attention of all to the inspired authority of the Word; nevertheless, any member of the body of Christ has the same privilege—not of exercising authority, but of calling the attention of his fellows to the Word of authority. The Apostle exhorts the elders that so far from, in any manner or degree, exercising a lordly or authoritative position in the Church, they should rather be “ensamples to the flock.” They should be examples in the matter of meekness, in the matter of patience, in the matter of brotherly kindness, in the matter of courtesy, so that the more any of the brethren would copy these elders the more would the spirit of the Lord prevail in the flock, and the fruits and graces of the spirit be manifested. On the contrary, we know that if the elder or leader of a little company of the Lord’s people be self-assertive, dogmatic, imperious in manner, tone, or look, the effect upon the company under his influence is to produce bickerings, rivalries, ambitions, strifes, as to who is greatest, etc.

Manifestly, whoever occupies the position of an elder amongst the Lord’s people, however small the group may be, occupies a position fraught with responsibilities to the Lord and to the flock, as well as besetments to himself. Great care should, therefore, be exercised by every company of the Lord’s people, to so far as possible select for the position of leaders or elders in the Church such persons as would not be -likely to be injured by the privilege of service, such as occupying this post would indeed be ensamples of the flock in humility, and in all of the graces of the Lord’s spirit. It would seem to be with reference to the special trial of such as occupy this position of service in the Church that the Apostle speaks, saying: -Be not many of you teachers, brethren, knowing that we (occupying such a position) shall receive the severer testing.”—James 3:1.

It may not be amiss that here we notice the fact that although the word “elder” has the significance of “older,” yet amongst the Lord’s brethren it is not merely years of natural life that is to be taken into consideration; in the Lord’s family we sometimes see “babes” with grey hairs. Nor can we even count eldership according to the number of years that have elapsed since the begetting of the spirit: for some grow rapidly and mature quickly; others who receive the truth permit the “thorns” or cares of this life and

the deceitfulness of riches to choke the Word, and hence never get beyond the position of “babes”—never bring forth the ripe fruits of the spirit.

Nor can we reckon this matter of relationship merely according to the degree of knowledge of the divine plan attained; for as the Apostle assures us, it is possible for some to have much knowledge and yet be but “tinkling cymbals,” according to the Lord’s standpoint of estimation. While, therefore, an elder, in order to be “apt to teach,” must have attained to some considerable degree of knowledge of the divine plan, nevertheless, the real evidence of his fitness for the service of an elder must not be determined by his knowledge merely, but, additionally, must be measured by his growth in grace. So, then, such of the brethren in any place as possess clear knowledge of the divine plan and are “apt to teach,” and who, additionally, give unmistakable evidence that they have grown in grace and are bearing in daily life the fruits of the spirit of the Lord, in considerable measure of maturity, may be considered qualified to be elders; and such may properly be chosen to the eldership by their brethren, regardless of their age according to the flesh.

According to the flesh, Peter and several others of the Apostles of our Lord were His elders, but according to the spirit, our Lord is the Elder Brother of all accepted to the family of God. According to the flesh, bosh Timothy and Titus were young men—young in years—so that the Apostle needed to write to one of them, “Let no man despise thy youth.” (1 Tim. 4:12.) And yet these young men the Apostle recognised as elders in the Church, who, because of their spiritual development and knowledge of the divine plan, and aptness to teach, were well qualified to feed the flock of God, and to be overseers in it—but not lords, not rulers, not masters, and not vested with any authority—merely privileged to call to the attention of the flock the voice of the great Shepherd and His twelve chosen assistants, and to lead them to the green pastures and still waters of divine truth.

It was after specially enjoining modesty and humility upon the ones most advanced and ,most capable of the flock that the Apostle, in the language of our text, urges that each one of the Lord’s sheep, so far from seeking to be a leader in the sense of a ruler, or lord, or master, should seek to be subject one to another—to hear gladly from the humblest of the flock, and be willing to yield his own preference so far as his judgment and conscience would permit. A Church operating under this spirit would not be rent with contention, for each would be so anxious for the interests of the cause and so willing to condescend to the wishes of others, that even the will of the majority would not be considered satisfactory, but rather all would seek, if possible, to reach such a modified conclusion as would meet with nearly or quite unanimous approval.

The Apostle most distinctly points out that the quality essential to such proper conduct on the part of the elders and on the part of all, is humility. How beautiful is his exhortation—“Be clothed with humility.” The thought would seem to be that outside of every other adornment of character, and covering all others, should be this robe of humble-mindedness, the opposite disposition to pride.

By way of clinching this argument, the Apostle reminds us of the principle upon which our Lord dealt with His flock and with all—that He disapproves of pride and that all who are actuated by pride may be sure that the Lord, so far from receiving them, fellowshiping them, leading them, blessing them, will resist them, push them from Him. The natural inference is that thus resisted of the Lord, the tendency of such as come under the influence of a spirit of pride and ambition will be not toward the truth nor toward any of the fruits and graces of the spirit, but further and further from these. “The Lord resisteth the proud, but supplies his favour to the humble.”

Let us cultivate this humility, which the Lord so loves and appreciates and promises to reward, that He may exalt us in due time.

Seeing that we are under this mighty hand of God. and that. too, by our own volition, how shall we act? Shall we yield ourselves to His will, and permit Him to “work in us both to will and to do His good pleasure,” and our ultimate exaltation, or shall we resist the Lord’s power, resist His Word of instruction, resist the example set us in the meek and lowly Lamb of God, and seek to exalt ourselves and to be somebodies, either in the world or in the Church? Nay, let us remember that it would be folly to attempt to work against the divine arrangement; we might to some extent seemingly succeed, and bring upon ourselves, and perhaps upon others also, more or less of separation from God through such resisting, on account of a wrong spirit; but in the end we should utterly fail of God’s favours, which He assures us will be bestowed only on the humble. -

As a result of true humility, the Lord may increase our opportunities in service in the present life, and perhaps He may not; but no matter for this. It is not for the present life that we are seeking and striving, but for the glory, honour and immortality which the Lord has promised to them that love Him; that love Him so much that they hearken to His Word and seek to develop those elements of character which are pleasing in His sight, seeking to become more and more copies of God’s dear Son.

The Apostle adds: “Casting all your care upon him.” All true saints of God have an interest and care in respect of the Lord’s work. Every elder must feel such a care, especially for the flock in connection with which he has been appointed to service, “to feed the flock of Christ”—not to shear them, not to frighten them, not to club them, not to exercise authority and lordship over them, but to feed them.

This care affecting the chosen elders (and all the elders or advanced ones in the Church) although it is a right sentiment in itself, might easily be so perverted as to be dangerous. The elders, either individually or collectively, might become so nervously careful of the flock as to destroy their own peace and joy in the holy spirit, and it might also lead them to take various improper steps, which in their over-zealous judgment they consider necessary for the welfare of the flock. We see such a spirit of carefulness and over - solicitude marked prominently by the various creeds and regulations and restraints put upon the Lord’s flock, contrary to the Scriptures, and to the liberty wherewith Christ makes free His people. The motive in some respects was sometimes good; the difficulty was that some elders, caring for the interests of the flock, forgot that they were only its servants, and that they were not authorised to make any laws or restraints whatsoever for the flock. They forget that the Lord Himself is the Good Shepherd of His flock still, that He has not given over His care of it, nor His authority to anyone, to permit such to exercise lordship or to make laws of any kind for it, He having made all the laws and regulations necessary and desiring that His sheep shall be free, with the liberty wherewith He made them free, in the fullest sense of the word.

The remedy for all such unauthorised over-carefulness for the interests of Zion is pointed out by the Apostle, saying: “Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.” Each sheep is to remember that the Shepherd’s mighty power is still in the midst of His people, and that because of His care we do not need to overburden ourselves with care, nor to feel that we must make changes in His plans and arrangements to meet what one might fancy to be new exigencies in the case. All such over-carefulness leads to fear, and fear indicates a lack of faith, a lack of confidence in the, Shepherd; and is generally used by the Adversary as one of His most powerful levers to lead the Lord’s people into a wrong course.

Let us all, then, have a’ care for the flock, but let us cast the weight of this care upon the Lord, and let our faith trust Him, that He who has been working out so grand and glorious a plan as His Word reveals to us now, has made full provision for every feature, every circumstance, every condition; and let us thus be ready to co-operate with Him in harmony with His Word, but not to run where we are not sent, nor in any manner to take our Lord’s place, nor attempt to do His ,work. But only the humble-minded are likely to receive any lasting blessing, present or future, at the hands of our Lord; for He resisteth the proud and showed) favour to the humble.

Bible Study Meetings.

Assemblies for undenominational Bible Study are to be found in the various States, and all earnest truth seekers will be very welcome.

Melbourne.—Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond (near Church Street)—Sundays, 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Geelong, Vic.—Sons of Temperance Hall, Ryrie Street—Sundays, 3 p.m.

Adelaide.—Builders and Contractors Rooms, 17 Way-mouth Street.—Sundays, 3 p.m. and 6.15 p.m.

Perth.—The Literary Institute, 1st Floor, Corner Hay and Pier Streets—Sundays, 3 p.m. and 5.30 p.m.

To bear another's weakness.
To soothe another's pain;
To cheer the heart repentant.
And to forgive again
This is my work to-day.

—Thomas a Kempis.

Keeping True to Principles of Divine Law.

People usually are attracted to wrong-doing by the thought that thus they escape difficulties or sufferings, or thus they gain advantages and blessings. But this is only a theory; as a matter of fact it is the reverse; every misdeed is costly.

Spiritual Israelites should never take this position—should never say, let us do evil that good may result, let us yield some principles for the sake of the harmony and the good of the cause. Alas, this seems to be the difficulty with the leaders of God's people all through the ages. The fear of man, that bringeth a snare, has interfered with the fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom. All Spiritual Israelites should learn, should fix it in their hearts, that while moderation and a disposition to be obliging and helpful and considerate of the wishes of others are prominent elements of Christian grace and to be cultivated, nevertheless, the principles of the divine law are never to be infringed, nor even compromised for the sake of blessing others. We are to remember that even when great emergencies arise God is superior to every one of them, and they can never be understood as His voice commanding us to violate the principles of righteousness which He has set before us. We are to do our duty in harmony with His law as kindly, as gently, as wisely, as possible, and leave all the results to Him—the Almighty. Whatever others may do, however others may think or compromise, let us take the Apostle's standpoint and say, "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." (2 Cor. 13:8.)

Our consciences will not permit us to compromise where principle is involved, though we should gladly be the readiest- of all to compromise where principle is not involved.

Revised Standard Version Bible,-1952. Copies of this Revised Bible are available, and will be found helpful for comparison in Bible study. Bound in strong cloth covers 50/-; in red rexine 60/-,

A New Picture Bible.—A Cambridge Bible, containing 30 coloured illustrations, with marginal references, and strong, black, cloth cover. A very good child's Bible; price 15/6.

FRANK & ERNEST TALKS

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

Sydney, 2KY, 294 M. 8.15 a.m.

Brisbane, 41(Q), 435 M. 9 a.m.

Perth, 6KY, 227 it 4.45 p.m.

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