PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM
UNDENOMINATIONAL
A RELIGIOUS NEWSPAPER

Volume XXXVI. No. 8 MELBOURNE, AUGUST, 1953
Price—Fourpence Halfpenny

Christ's Return. His Revealing and Manifestation.

"And He shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you, whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God bath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began."—Acts 3:20, 21.

THE little band of believers who had followed the Lord in His service of love and sacrifice during the three and a half years of His earthly ministry, were about to be sorely tried. How great had been their expectations! The mighty power of God had been wonderfully demonstrated in the works of mercy accomplished by the Master, as also by His words of wisdom and grace. There could be no question but that He was the Messiah, and Philip confidently informed Nathaniel, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and the prophets did write." "Come and see." Peter also boldly declared, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." How plaintive was the statement of Cleopas as he and another disciple were joined on the way to Emmaus by the Master disguised as a stranger. After having mentioned the terrible tragedy that had been enacted by the rulers of the people in slaying their Lord, he adds, "but we trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel."

We then remember how their hearts burned within them as He, Who spake as never man spake, in words of grace explained to them from Moses and all the prophets, how just what had happened was only fulfilling that "which was written." That it was necessary before Christ should enter His glory and Kingdom and commence the great work of delivering Israel and all the world from the oppression, not only of Rome, but of Satan and sin and its consequences, that He should first suffer. The first step in regard to the liberation of Israel and the world was to pay the price of sin.

The penalty of death was against humanity as a whole. Justice had condemned the race to death on account of one man's transgression. Adam represented the earthly family. It was in mercy that all were included in the transgression, so that in justice all could be included in the redemption wrought by one man Christ Jesus. This is clearly stated in Romans 5:11-19, and again in that beautiful chapter on the Resurrection — 1 Cor. 15:21, 22. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead, for as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Unless there could be a resurrection from the dead, then all the glorious promises of Messiah's Kingdom could avail nothing for the great majority of the human family. Millions of heathens and millions of children have died and never heard of God's great plan for blessing mankind, never heard of the only name whereby they could come to God and have salvation. Had not Christ undertaken to pay the price of sin, the death sentence could never have been lifted, and there could never have been any hope of a life to come, there could never have been any Resurrection at all. How necessary, then, was the great sacrificial work of our Redeemer at His first advent. The whole matter of His second presence in Kingdom glory, to "bless all the families of the earth" in accordance with the great Abrahamic promise, depended on it.

Not only on the way to Emmaus did the Lord point the disciples forward to the fulfilment of all the glorious prophecies of the Old Testament, but we read Acts 1:3, "To whom also He showed himself after his passion by many infallible proofs being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God." They also enquired of Him, "Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel,"

It had been a matter very much hidden in the scriptures of the Law and the prophets, that Messiah must first suffer, and thus make satisfaction for sin. Peter in his first epistle, chapter .1, tells us that the prophets did not understand their own utterances concerning the sufferings of Christ, but realised that the message was not unto themselves but was intended for those coming later—the church, the spiritual seed of Abraham. It was, then, not surprising that the disciples of our Lord should have such happy expectations regarding His presence. Not understanding the veiled utterances respecting the suffering they were more attracted by the beautiful expressions about the "King that should reign in righteousness." "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom to order and establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." "But with righteousness shall he judge the poor and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth." "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea," and "in that day shall there be a root out of Jesse which shall stand for an ensign of the people: to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious." "In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it." "And the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths .. and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.- "And they shall sit every man under his own vine and fig tree, and none shall make them afraid." (Isaiah 32:1; 9:7; 11:4-10; 25:6-9; and Micah 4:1-5.)

"I Will Come Again."

John 14:3—"If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also."

Nothing, then, can be more plainly stated than that our Lord Jesus is to come again and accomplish a great work for which the first advent was but the necessary preparation. The hope of Christ's return and kingdom has ever been the great stimulus to the Church in all her trials and sufferings.

The Gospel Age is the Age of faith, not that faith is a characteristic of mankind during this time, but that God is dealing only with such as have faith, and that faith in Christ's death is the means of justification and acceptance with God, in contrast with the Law Dispensation when perfect works were required, and also contrasting with the next Age, when under the New Covenant every man will be judged according to his works. (Rev. 20 :12, 13.) During this Age of Faith, God is selecting a certain class which will, when the Christ character has been formed in each, become the Bride of Christ, and "will sit down in his throne even as he overcame and is set down with the Father in his throne.- (Rev. 3:21.)

In one sense the Lord has ever been with His people according to His promise, "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." In the same way He is represented in Revelation as walking amidst the candlesticks". This was evidently the thought indicated by His words, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will pray the Father and he will send you another comforter even the spirit of the truth." (John 14:16-18.)

He would be with the Church in all her suffering. No member would be without His sympathy and gracious aid, His advocacy with the Father, and comfort of the holy spirit. Yet He is represented as being retained in the heavens -until the times of restitution of all things."

At His first advent He came to His own, the Jewish people, who represented God's Kingdom in the earth ; He offered Himself as their King, and was rejected. "His own received him not." They then failed to secure the privilege of becoming solely the Church class; the Kingdom of Heaven class. "The Law and the prophets were until John, since then the Kingdom of Heaven is preached." (Luke 16:16.) They rejected the "chief corner stone." They were the wicked husbandmen who slew the Son and Heir. Therefore, Jesus said "the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matt. 21:33-43.)

Peter refers to the rejection of the chief comer stone, and speaks of the Church, which is being selected from all nations, as being the nation of God. "Which before were not a people but are now the people of God.- (1 Peter 2:6- 10.)

Not until this Church class is complete will the Jews as a nation see that they crucified the Lord of Glory. Not until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in—the number, of God's elect completed —will blindness be removed from Israel, and they shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. (Matt. 23 :39 ; Rom. 11 :25, 27.)

James so concisely summarises the matter in Acts 15:14-17, -God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out a people for his name, and to this agree the words of the prophets as it is written, After this I will return and build again the Tabernacle of David, which is fallen down, and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up, that the residue of men might seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called saith the Lord, who doeth all these things."

This, too, is in accord with the Apostle's statement in Rom. 8:19-22. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God." In other words, waiting until the Church is complete and shines forth ''as the sun in the Kingdom," for the blessing of all the willing and obedient of mankind, "All the families of the earth."

The first and second advents are then closely related in that the purpose of the second coming could not he undertaken until the justice of God's throne had been met by the payment of the penalty for sin to redeem mankind.

It will be readily seen how necessary it was that our Saviour should become a man—not a sinful man, though born of a woman yet not of Adamic stock, but separate from sin, spotless, undefiled—in order that He might offer Himself as a perfect man, in the place of Adam, and thus allow the sinner to go free. "He gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time, '% so that "as all in Adam die, so all in Christ might be made alive again."

Thus it was that Christ came in the body of humiliation for the suffering of death, but the object at the second advent is so very different that He will not again appear in the flesh, of which He said, "My flesh I give for the life of the world," but we look for Him the second time "in power and great glory," "in the express image of the Father's person." He was "put to death flesh, but raised spirit," and comes to take control of earth, to bind Satan, the present "prince of this world," and to reign in his stead,—to stamp out evil and ultimately all evil doers, to bring in righteousness and peace, and make this earth a paradise, filled with the glory of the knowledge of the Lord.

The Apostle in Heb. 9:14-28 uses the typical high priest and the two sacrifices of atonement as illustrative of the first and second comings of Christ. He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and appeared in the presence of God for us. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and to them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin (without a sin offering) unto salvation. That will be, as in the type, where all Israel awaited the appearing of the High Priest, coming out of the Holy the second time; when Moses and Aaron then lifted up their hands and blessed the people." (Lev. 9:22, 23.) After the great time of trouble has swept over the earth, the people will have learned the sad lesson that no human government is capable of ruling in righteousness, nor able to bring peace and order in the earth. The desire of all nations will be the kingdom, which Christ will establish. Just as Israel awaited the second appearance of the High Priest Aaron who came forth and blessed them, so mankind is spoken of by Paul (Rom. 8:19-22) as the whole creation, groaning and travailing together in pain, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God—the Church—the joint heirs with Christ in His Kingdom—who are to sit with Him in His throne. (Rev. 3:21.)

He Comes To Reign.

At the second coming of Christ, then, there will be a great change of government. Satan and the fallen angels will be bound, they who have so long been ruling in the hearts of the disobedient, and enticing into sin and wickedness, deceiving millions in the many false religions and thousands in such cults as Theosophy, Christian Science and Spiritism, through witches and mediums. Instead of all this baneful influence there will be a new and happy influence towards righteousness, godliness, kindness and peace; because Christ and His saints will have taken control of the world, and the purpose is to raise the fallen, lift up' the oppressed, relieve the afflicted, and encourage all to walk up the highway of holiness, and to gain the reward of eternal life.

When we see that the purpose of Christ's return and kingdom is so very different from that of His first advent, we can see that He will not need to come again in a body of humiliation, but as He Himself has said, "In power and great glory, and all the holy angels with him." He has no need to again change His nature and become flesh. His mighty work can the better be accomplished in His power and might, as the glorious spirit being, "in the express image of the Father's person." (Heb. 1:3, 4.)

Let us enquire as to what will be the first work of our Lord on His return. Will He at once begin His millennial reign, or is there not some preparatory work to be done?

Parable Of The Young Nobleman.

Perhaps the Parable of the Young Nobleman in Luke 19:11-27 will be helpful to consider at this point. The reason stated for this parable being given is, "Because they thought that the Kingdom of God should immediately appear," and

“Because they were nigh to Jerusalem.” They were looking for a literal, human king and earthly kingdom, with Jerusalem as the capital of all the earth.

Our Lord had already informed them that the Kingdom (Luke 17:20) cometh not with outward show or with observation. His hearers were but naturally minded men. The holy spirit had not yet been given, and so they could not think of anything but an earthly Messiah. with an earthly throne and earthly armies going forth to conquer and thus establish His Kingdom in all the earth. How differently does the matter appear when we receive the spiritual mind, and compare scripture with scripture, for though Jerusalem is again to be restored, and Israel according to the flesh is to return to God’s favour, and will be the earthly representative of the Messianic Kingdom, yet the real kingdom class, Christ and His saints, His joint-heirs, will be spiritual. They will have much more power and control of earth’s affairs as spiritual beings than could be the case if they were in human form.

This parable of the young nobleman was given to help those who had ears to hear, to realise that there was much to be done before their expectations of seeing Jerusalem again a joy in the earth could he accomplished. Our Lord was represented by the young nobleman.

He would need to be absent for some time (the whole Gospel Age) . He would then return with full authority to set up the Kingdom. It also shows that even on His return He will first deal with His servants. The ten servants were each given a pound with which to trade, and on His return the Lord first requires of these an account. The pound appears to refer to justification, which comes to every Christian believer, and by putting this to the banker, or, in other words, by presenting our justified selves as living sacrifices to God, we receive the begettal of God’s holy spirit, and thereby start in the Christian race, and endeavour to produce the fruits of the holy spirit.

There appear to be four classes here dealt with by the Lord.

(1) The one who had gained ten pounds would appear to represent those who had faithfully used their privileges and opportunities, and had developed the perfect character—the likeness of Christ, and so received the abundant entrance into the Kingdom, “Have thou authority over ten cities.”

(2) The one who gained only five pounds may represent the great multitude who seem to, gain a second prize and serve before the throne. (Rev. 7:9.)

(3) The one who did no trading but simply handed back the pound would seem to be those who came so far as to see the justification by faith through the precious blood of Christ, but they do not go on to consecration, they did not go to the bank with their pound at all. They have never taken the step of offering their purchased lives to God. They are those “who seek to save their lives and so lose them.” They are those who “receive the grace of God in vain.” The pound is taken from them; they are not punished otherwise and will no doubt be judged with the world in the next Age.

(4) There are those who were rebellious and wilfully rejected the Lord’s provision for them, and turned against the King. “We will not have this man to rule over us.” These were slain, and would probably represent those who sin the sin unto death.

All this work or judgment among Christians is shown to be at the return of Christ to take the Kingdom, yet prior to His taking control of earth. So there would be some time during which Christ would be present among His people, yet unknown to the world.

(To be continued.)

God Worketh in You.

“Not yet thou knowest what I do
Within thine own weak breast;

To mould thee to My image true,
And fit thee for My rest;

But yield thee to My loving skill,
The veiled work of grace,

From day to day progressing still,
It is not thine to trace.”

“Yet walk by faith and not by sight
Fast clinging to My hand ;

Content to feel My love and might
Not yet to understand.

A little while thy course pursue,
Till grace to glory grow ;

Then what I am and what I do
Hereafter thou shalt know.”

—F. R. Havergal.

“Hymns of Dawn Music Book.”—Containing the original 333 hymns, 27 additional in an Appendix, well bound in strong cloth, with silver lettering, this new edition is priced at 10/- post paid.

“The Divine Plan of the Ages”.—A new supply of this wonderful study on the Bible is on hand. Blue cloth binding, handy pocket size. Price 4/6, post paid.

.. Collins’ Clear-Type Bible.—A supply of these Bibles is available. Dark, clear type, references, self-pronouncing, with Concordance. Strong binding; a very good everyday Bible. Price, 21/- post paid.

Other Bibles, good leather binding, 57/6, etc.

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.

If we would resemble Him in the Eternal Paradise, we must first pass an hour with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane.

—Archer Butler.

PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

(Monthly) 4/6 (85 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 column 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,

Shaking the Heavens.

WHILE there is undoubtedly a general shaking of the religious systems that has been in progress for many years, there is just as certainly a general testing of those who have learned the present truth. "Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire.- It is evidently possible to build upon the true foundation, Jesus Christ, wood, hay, and stubble: wrong teachings and wrong methods, but only if our faith structure be the gold, silver and precious stones, will it stand the fire (1 Cor. 3:10-14).

Some are apt to think that we take too narrow a view in respect of our privilege of knowledge of the present truth. They perceive that there are many good people still associated with the churches of Christendom, and seem to long after old fellowship and so be willing to compromise the truth.

It would seem that many forget the joy which the present truth brought them; also the responsibility of holding forth the Word of Life, and preserving the pureness of doctrine.

When we heard the "knock" (Rev. 3:20) of our Lord's presence, how glad we were; when we tasted of the feast to which He invited us (Luke 12:37), how sweet it was. No wonder we are admonished to "buy the truth and sell it not." The church of God is to be the pillar and ground of the truth, the preserver of the light. What kind of a light keeper would he be who did not keep the lens clear, so that the light should shine in all its power and beauty to guide the mariner on the ocean and guard from dangerous reefs?

There are, no doubt, many good people still bound in church associations, and even in such delusions as Christian Science or Theosophy, etc. There were many good living Pharisees in our Lord's day connected with the Synagogues, but those who clung to the "old bottles" could not enjoy the "new wine." The "wheat" had to come away or else be burned up with the "chaff."

Those who prefer to remain with Christendom, comprising (the Laodicean spirit) truth and principle, are to be taken as partaking in her sins and to receive of her plagues (Rev. 18:4) .

It is not for us to judge who is who, or to decide whether or not there are true Christians here or there. If we have heard the call to "come out of her my people," we should come out and stay out,—"Be ye separate." If the Lord says "come out,- it means that He is out, and we wish to be where He is—though "despised and rejected.- If He has "spued out Christendom" (Rev. 3:16) , which, we may say, daily shows evidence of having been "cast off," are we going to be like Lot's wife, looking back and longing for old associations. No, let us flee to the mountain (kingdom) , for He who is with us, is able to direct us and care for us "though all the world forsake."

Some who have "let slip the things we have heard,- have been busy spreading errors, and besides having reached the position of those who say, "the Lord delayeth His coming"—denying the parousia or presence of Christ, prior to His manifestation—they teach that He is to come again in human form, to be visible to all the world, though Jesus said, "The world seeth me no more. - They also deny that there is any personal devil, and teach the anti-ransom and anti-Christian theory of Universalism. This condition seems to illustrate the statement, "If the light that is in thee becomes

darkness, how great is that darkness.

While some let slip the things we have received, the truth remains as clear and beautiful as ever. One cannot add anything to the Divine Plan to make it any better, or take anything from it to make it more beautiful.

The circumstances of our day portend the coming climax. Soon the number of God's elect will be complete. The Bride will be made ready, the wise virgins will have entered the feast chamber and the door will be shut. The question is, shall we be inside, or outside among these who had no reserve of "oil"; whose light had gone out—to whom the light of truth respecting the Bridegroom's coming had dimmed.

Let us realise our responsibility of preserving the present truth in its purity and beauty, in all wisdom, gentleness, patience and sympathy, seeking to assist all who may be feeling after the "old paths."

"Be still my heart, these foolish fears,
These constant grumbles, and these tears,
All cast dishonour on thy Lord,
And contradict His gracious word,

Brought safely by His hand thus far,
He'll pilot thee across the bar.
How can you want, if He provide,
Or lose the way with such a Guide?"

The Value of Experience.

(Convention Address)

''Blessed is the man that endureth trial." (James 1:12.)

EXPERIENCE is a trial, or series of trials, or experiments; an active effort, or attempt to do, or prove something. Experience is the result of trial or observation; it is knowledge and wisdom acquired by suffering or enjoyment.

Men generally are experimenting; the Creator has permitted them to attempt a way of living which is not in harmony with His knowledge and wisdom, or His righteous principles. Their method and way of life, in the social and religious world are, even to themselves, very unsatisfactory and vain; but they hope, nevertheless. that the United Nations or perhaps One World Government will establish the desired peace, harmony, security and goodwill among all nations.

The result of these experiences is accumulating suffering, disorders, tribulations and fear on a gigantic scale; these added experiences are necessary for the ultimate good of mankind. They will be valuable in the age to come, as it is written—"Then shalt thou remember thy ways and be ashamed." (Ezek. 16:61-63.) The one important lesson will be impressed, namely, that God and His righteous will shall be exalted in the earth, and His name sanctified in the eyes of all nations. That is why experience is necessary for the disobedient; they will be brought to the condition where they will appreciate goodwill, righteousness, justice, truth and peace, and despise their former ways.

Although we, as Christians, have chosen to acquire heavenly wisdom and righteousness, we too gain much of this by experience, by trials, by an endeavour to do or put to the proof, or test. But we often learn the hard way and find that our own knowledge and wisdom, our own way, does not produce the best results; and so we learn to appreciate the words of the hymn more deeply:

Keep thou my way, O Lord;
My self I cannot guide;
Nor dare I trust my falt'ring steps
One moment from Thy side.
"I cannot live aright,
Save as I'm close to Thee;
My heart would fail without Thine aid;
Choose Thou my way for me.-

We have found those words true, have we not? Once we had a way or law unto ourselves, but this became a schoolmaster to lead us to a higher standard, a higher knowledge and wisdom—to Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Col. 2:3.) An old Christian lady put to proof the many promises to those who put

their trust in the Lord, and through this experience she could write alongside each promise in the Bible the word "Tested".

By choosing our own way, and by unbelief, we gain experiences which show us our folly and often leads to sufferings and disappointments. A lesson can be drawn from the consecrated nation of Israel. They had the Lord as their King, Provider and Director, but because of their selfish ways and desire to imitate the godless nations around them they brought upon themselves many sorrows, troubles and punishments. They had rejected the Lord as their King and wanted a human king; this increased their troubles and discord among them.

This is often repeated amongst the Lord's people during this Gospel Age. Some, by rejecting the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ, and His' instructions and guidance, desiring instead a human leader, have brought along much distress, discord trials and errors in doctrine and practice from which the consecrated have had to separate from time to time.

Another set of experiences arises from within ourselves. We need to know ourselves. The Apostle James says,

"Every man is tried when he is drawn away of his own desires and enticed; then when desire is conceived (in the mind) , it bringeth forth sin (transgression) ; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (James 1:14-16.)

This would be second death to those who sin wilfully after being enlightened and begotten of the holy spirit. We are exhorted to put off the old man with its deeds, and put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him. (Col. 3:5-14.)

The opposite of unbelief is faith. The exercise of faith leads to joy and hope; it imparts strength, fortifies endurance—it overcomes. "This is the (cause of) victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." (1 John 5:4.)

Many and varied are the experiences gained by faith, and if we would triumph and endure to the end in the experiences the Lord permits we must ever keep in mind the purpose of these trials. The Apostle Peter reminds us "that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 1:7.) And again, James 1:12 reads— ''Blessed is the man that endures trials, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord bath promised to them that love him."

The present trial state, and experiences associated with it, is often spoken of in the Scriptures as "the cup of the Lord,- or "the cup of salvation,"—"I will take the cup of salvation." (Psa. 116:13.) The Lord said—"Are you able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of." (Matt. 20:22.) And when He was tried to the uttermost, He said:

"If it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matt. 26:39.)

The very nature of Christian principles and active living draws opposition from unbelievers. If it does not, then we might well take stock of ourselves—are we letting our light shine? This gives us large and varied experiences which in turn develop strong characters who desire to know and rightly divide the word of Truth; this again teaches us how we ought to answer every man.

Our rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God enables us to glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope. (Rom.:2-4.1 This, you will agree, is a high spiritual development of character which adds no shame, for the great hope we entertain sanctifies us; it sets us apart from the great body of professing Christians. They will think you peculiar and will not seek your company, but are often ready to watch and criticise your conduct or word, and if possible to reduce you to their own level. This they cannot do if our prayer is sincere—Lord, place my feet on higher ground.

However, if you find yourself much like other people, then take heed. Quite likely we are acting from the world's standpoint, and not from the Divine standpoint in which the truth has placed us. Perhaps we are (maybe unconsciously) courting the friendship of outside friends or relatives who do not appreciate Present Truth, and our own relationship to the truth and to those begotten of the truth is gradually lost sight of, and all friends soon become our friends. Consequently, the light received is put under a bushel, and we adjust ourselves to the friendship of the world, forgetting our mission—building up the saints. But the Lord is faithful; He will give the right kind of experiences, and we will benefit if we desire to see and understand the purpose of Christian living. If we do not, then valuable opportunities and precious lessons are wasted upon us.

Let every occasion be a great occasion, let Present Truth be present every day; let Truth become permanently fixed in our hearts. You know, by our use or neglect of Present Truth you and I are being measured for a higher or lower place.

Present Truth is valuable; it is not given merely because we are right down in the end of the age, but to counteract present errors and enable the Lord's people to stand in this evil day, and to discern the signs of the times. What or where would we be without it? We would lack understanding of Christian experiences, and be barren of any definite hope, floating hither and thither in the ocean of humanity like a jelly fish without backbone or sense of direction.

We must develop a character in harmony with our Lord's—gentle, persevering, strong, and yet kind and firm. We are to let His light shine; He understood His mission and the purpose of living and dying. He, too, needed experience chiefly through suffering. It is written—"He learnt obedience by the things which he suffered; being made perfect." (Heb. 5:8, 9.) We, too, surely need experience; by nature we were more or less sons of disobedience inheriting a fleshly mind—contrary to the will of God, dead in trespasses and sins. We were like the block of marble—in the rough. The Sculptor can see an angel in that stone, and sets to work to get him out. Many are the blows, much chiselling, rubbing and polishing, much care and skill in the final touches are needed to make perfection. This block of marble becomes a masterpiece of art, of general admiration, displaying the skill and workmanship of the Great Sculptor—we are His workmanship. This lesson is taught beautifully in one of our hymns God's hand that saves, though kind, seems rough :

His methods sometimes rude;
Frail. shrinking nature cries, -Enough!"
Yet proves the Lord is good.
The temple stones God now prepares,
Oft cry, 'You hurt me sore" :
The Sculptor seeks their perfectness,
And trims them more and more
Until, by dint of strokes and blows.
The shapeless mass appears
Symmetric, polished, beautiful,
To stand th' eternal years.

"Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King." (Psa. 48:2.) "He bath chosen us in him . . . that we should be holy and without blame before him (that we should exist in front of Him) . In love having previously marked us out for sonship, through Christ Jesus for himself." "That in the ages to come he might -show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." (Eph.1:4, 5; 2:7.)

The work is an experience, and we are glad it is in the hands of One who knows His work, who loves and who cares. We should think kindly, too, of the tools He may use. Our part is to leave it to Him — to be resigned to His providences. The tools are in His hands, under His control.

Then, again, we need to beware of self-made experiences which come from not hearkening to the Lord's Word of counsel. For instance—"Suffer not as a busybody in other men's matters." (1 Pet. 4:15.) Or perhaps from an unwillingness to humble ourselves and correct an error, or through wrong notions fellowship with those of like faith is interrupted and loss of spirituality is certain to follow. This is an unfavourable experience, for along with this often comes self-delusion, and a failure to discern who are our brethren. We need a proper estimate of those whom the Lord has called.

We need to classify experiences, and this takes time and wisdom; we want to take note of favourable ones and avoid those that are unfavourable. Is our spiritual life becoming lean and weak, or strong and vigorous in the course of experience?

This is an important element in order to develop strong characters, like the green fruit on the tree which needs various climatic conditions, rain and sunshine: eventually the ripe, luscious fruit is matured and parts easily from the stem. Let us also go on to perfection-- "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." (James 1:4.)

Blessed Assurances

Do you need a counsellor to direct your paths? “Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.- (Psa. 73:24.)

Do you want a friend? “There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.- (Prov. 18:24.)

Are you discouraged? -Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.- (Psa. 31:24.)

Have you been wronged? “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.” (Matt. 5:44.)

Do you suffer for well-doing? “But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.” (1 Pet. 2:20.)

Are you heavy laden? “Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.- (Matt. 11:28.)

Are you ignorant? “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not: and it shall be given him.” (James 1:5.)

Are you tempted to do wrong? “If sinners entice thee, consent thou not.’’ (Prov. 1:10.)

Do you hunger after righteousness? “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” (Matt. 5:6.)

Are you fearful? “O Israel, trust thou in the Lord: he is their help and their shield.” (Psa. 115:9.)

Do you want sympathy? -”Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that reverence him.” (Psa. 103:13.)

The White Stone.

“To him that overcometh will I give . . . . a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it.” —Rev 2:17.

IN ancient times the Greeks and the Romans had 1 a custom of noting and perpetuating friendship by means of a white stone. This stone was divided into halves, and each person inscribed his name on the flat surface, after which the parts of the stone were exchanged. The production of either half was sufficient to ensure friendly aid, even from the descendants of those who first divided the stone. A similar custom was sometimes observed by a king, who would break a white stone into two parts, one of which he would retain and the other part give to a special ambassador.

That part could be sent to the king at any time and would ensure aid. Thus the divided stone became a mark of identification.

Rev. 2.17 seems to refer to this ancient custom. The white stone signifies a precious token of the Lord’s love, and the new name written in the stone suggests the Bridegroom’s name. The statement indicates a special acquaintance with the great King of kings, secret between Himself and the individual. The overcomers are not to be recognised merely as a class—the Bride class—but each will have the personal favour of the Lord. Of this no one will know save himself and the King. There is an individual and personal relationship between the Lord and the overcomers, who may be said to receive the mark of identification—the antitypical white stone—now, in this life.

This mark is the sealing of the holy spirit by which the Lord identifies the overcomers. While this is said to be a part of the final reward of the Church, vet from the very beginning of our experience we have this personal acquaintance with the Lord. The full seal of the holy spirit will be given in the resurrection, when we receive the new body. Then we shall have the complete knowledge of the name by which we shall be known to the Lord and He to us forever.

It is nothing for a man to hold up his head in a calm; but to maintain his post when all others have quitted theirs, and there to stand upright when other men are beaten down—this is praiseworthy–Seneca.