



**Volume LV No. 5 MELBOURNE, OCTOBER — NOVEMBER, 1972**

## **Trusting in God**

**(Convention Address)**

*“Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.” (Psa. 37:5.)*

THE prominence given in the Scriptures to the quality of trust, confidence in God, seems sufficient reason for giving much consideration to the subject of faith. Let us be reminded that the statement of the prophet in Habakkuk 2:4— “The just shall live by his faith,” is quoted by the apostle in the New Testament no less than three times. (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38.) Thus by His spirit does the Lord draw attention to this important quality four times in the same phraseology in His Word. It is the lesson of our lives—to take Him at His word. So weak in faith do we find ourselves at times that in circumstances and conditions in which we would have no difficulty in trusting an earthly parent, we hesitate to take refuge (for so this word “trust” is rendered in the Revised Version) in our Heavenly Father.

There is perhaps no way in which we can honor God more than by trusting Him wholly. Our Heavenly Father has given us many proofs of His love for us. We could do nothing to commend ourselves to God, “but God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”, (Rom. 5:8). In return, above all things else, God expects from His children, unreserved, wholehearted, loyal confidence in Him. He would hardly be looking for this kind of faith from those who do not know Him, for faith is based on knowledge; and as the apostle declares, “How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?” (Rom. 10: 14.) But as the Psalmist observes in Psa. 9:10, “They that know thy name will put their trust in thee.” Let us then seek fresh courage, fresh vigour to our faith, by noting the unreserved confidence and trust which the Psalmist displayed in a variety of circumstances.

On one occasion the Psalmist declared “I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people that have set themselves against me round about”, (Psa. 3:6). This was a Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom, his son. Could anything look much worse to human sight than that which confronted David? Whichever way he turned an enemy sought his life. Under these desperate conditions the Psalmist proved himself to be a man after God’s own heart by trustful confidence in Him.

And such should be the attitude of the Christian. “God’s counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure.’ The enemy may oppose; but God will ever prove Himself to be above him; and all we need is a spirit of simple, childlike confidence and repose in the Divine purpose. Unbelief will rather look at the enemy’s efforts to counter-vail than at God’s power to accomplish. It is on the latter that faith fixes its eye. Thus it obtains victory, and enjoys abiding peace. It has to do with God and His infallible faithfulness. It rests not upon the ever shifting sands of human affairs and earthly influences, but upon the immovable rock of God’s eternal Word. This is faith’s holy and solid resting-place. Come what may, it abides in that sanctuary of strength.”

The Christian may be called upon to undergo some very trying experience. Ruin may be staring him in the face; unemployment may deprive him of his usual means of support; sickness may attack his health; friends may become his enemies overnight; the blue sky may suddenly, without the least warning, become an ominous black; death may sever the closest earthly tie. How are we meeting these experiences? Are we telling all the world by our attitude in these trying conditions that our trust is complete? Oh, may it be ours to thus honour God in the midst of the difficulties. Shall we not strive to learn to say from the heart, though our lips may tremble as we say it,

“Though he slay me, yet will I trust him”, (Job 13:15). This will require a very high degree of faith indeed, yet we must surely be satisfied with nothing less than this. And relying on Him, reposing in Him, we shall prove the truth of His promise, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.”

“Eternal confusion shall be inscribed upon all the opposition of men. This gives sweet rest to the heart, in the midst of a scene where all is, apparently, so contrary to God and so contrary to faith. Were it not for the settled assurance that ‘the wrath of man shall praise Thee, the spirit would often be cast down, while contemplating the circumstances and influences which surround one in the world.

“Thank God, ‘we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal’, (2 Cor. 4: 18). In the power of this, we may well say, ‘rest in the Lord, and **wait patiently for him**; fret not thyself because of him who bringeth wicked devices to pass’, (Psa. 37:7). Faith brings the heart into the power of Divine and unseen things, and thus enables it to mount above every thing down here, in this place where death and darkness reign. Oh, for that simple child-like faith that sits beside the pure and eternal fountain of truth, there to drink those deep and refreshing draughts, which lift up the fainting spirit, and impart energy to the new man, in its upward and onward course!”

The Psalmist is not only ready to trust in the face of known difficulties, but he is ready also to trust God with the unknown future. “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.” It required great faith to trust the future unreservedly to God’s hands and leave it there. Many a child of God who had learned to lean hard upon the Heavenly Father in all times of known difficulty, trouble, adversity, sickness, has yet to learn how to rest the future, with God. Despite all that can be done, notwithstanding even prayers, doubts will assail the mind as to the uncertain future. All sorts of possible situations suggest themselves, and serious misgivings are entertained that under such and such circumstances their courage may fail. Ah, let us listen to the Lord, speaking through the Psalmist, “The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord”, (Psa. 37:23). Let us heed this lesson well, though to understand it fully, we may never be able this side of the veil. The future is in the hand of the Lord. Nothing, **not any thing** is hidden from Him. “In him is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”

The future may be hidden from you, dear child of God, and from me, but it is all plain to our Father. How clearly God is able to read the future may be readily seen by the student of prophecy, and of our Lord’s Revelation. Here, stretched out in panoramic scenery are the events of history, accurately related beforehand, so that, as our Master said, “when it is come to pass, ye may believe.” Dear Lord, we have indeed seen Thy sayings come to pass, and we do indeed believe. Help Thou our unbelief.

But as to those things yet future, what of these? Ah, in respect of these, how beautiful the sentiments of the hymn:

“God holds the key of all unknown,  
And I am glad;  
If other hands should hold the key,  
Or if He trusted it to me,  
I might be sad.

Let us, then, as the Psalmist exhorts, “**Roll** our way upon the Lord (marginal reading); trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass”, (Psa. 37:5). The Lord will take care of the future with all its possibilities. Our Master said that in some respects we should become as little children, (Luke 18:17). How little a child concerns itself with the worries of the future, and how completely it rests all this in the hands of its parents. Shall we not, even more, trust our great Heavenly Parent, and take no anxious thought for the morrow, for “sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

But some one says, “That is all very well, but I am so very weak in faith at times. Sometimes I can trust the Lord, even with the future, and at other times I find my faith wavering and the future seems very terrible.” Surely we can all sympathise with any having such an experience. Many of us have realised the same lack of faith. But what should be our course at such a time? What is the remedy for this doubt and unbelief? Ah, our help cometh from the Lord. Let us go to Him in prayer and seek to have His strength made perfect in our weakness. He has grace to help us in this very time of our need—grace, which He will give us, if, and only if, we ask Him for it. Seeking His counsel in prayer, and calling to mind the promises, waiting patiently for Him, we shall find our minds being turned away by the Lord from the unknown to the known. Thus reflecting on our own experiences, and upon the experiences of others, who with one voice declare that in all known circumstances He has never failed, fresh courage will take hold upon us. Realising that no matter how much we may try, we can make no adequate provision for an unknown contingency, our mind will be gradually turned from the discouraging uncer-

tainty to the Lord. We shall find Him reminding us that nothing can possibly occur in our experience by chance. Reflecting on the supervision which the Lord has promised to give our affairs, we shall find our faith, which was in very truth wavering, become strong again; and we shall have proved the truth of His Word, that “the steps of a good man **are** ordered by the Lord.” Not only so, but we shall be enabled all the better to fulfil in our future experience the words of the Psalmist which immediately follow, —”And he delighteth in his way.” Not only shall we be ready to trust in Him, but we shall delight in the way He leads also. We shall be able to declare to others not only out of the Psalms, but also out of our own experiences—”Though one of the Lord’s people fall, he shall not be utterly cast down for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.”

“Peace! perfect peace! the future all unknown?

Jesus we know, and He is on the throne.”

The Psalmist could trust God when conditions were adverse; he could trust Him also with the future. Looking into the future it was enough for the Psalmist that God would be in it. “I will not fear; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” He now tells us that he will continue to trust even when there is no apparent necessity for so doing. “I will not trust in my bow”, he says, “neither shall my sword save me”, (Psa. 44:6). How easy it is, apparently, for one who is well equipped from this world’s standpoint, to learn to trust in his equipment. Not so the Psalmist. Though fully equipped for conflict, his trust is not in his equipment, but in God. This does not mean that the Psalmist would discard his bow or sword. Being providentially at hand, he would use them should occasion arise; but his trust would be in God to give the victory. Notwithstanding the fact that these weapons had been proved, and had stood him in good stead in times past, his trust remained in God.

Many and various are the temptations which come to the Lord’s people to trust in the means which God graciously sends, instead of continuing their trust in the Great Provider of those means. Many, knowing the power that money still exercises in the world, have a sense of security with respect to the future if they can face its possibilities well equipped with liberal finances, a feeling of comfort which does not exist under contrary conditions. Shall we call that comfortable feeling by its right name? Surely it is nothing less than unbelief. When we have peace of mind in the presence of means that the Lord provides, which peace of mind we fail to possess in the absence of those provisions, is it not an evidence that we are trusting indeed in our bow, and expecting our sword to save us? And what becomes of that comfortable feeling when the bow, without the least warning, is suddenly snapped asunder; when the edge of our sword becomes rusty and blunted? Oh, then it is that the value of the faith in God is seen, for He is not dependent on these at all. Even if He were, “The silver and gold are his, and the cattle upon a thousand hills”, and His salvation can be brought to us with or without these means.

It may be that in His gracious arrangements the Lord has been pleased to bless us with the wise and faithful counsel of a tried and true friend. As we grew in Christian grace and knowledge, we found it a great comfort to be able to lean upon the human instrument who tried so patiently, and so courageously to teach us the ways of God. What then? Have we erred in finding comfort and support in the God-given leadership and counsel of a clear-visioned saint of God? By no means. When God brings into our individual lives the comfort and support of earthly friendships that tend to strengthen our character and our faith, would it not be a grievous mistake on our part if we failed to profit by such assistance? Most surely. And what applies to us as individuals in this respect, is equally true of the Church as a whole. When God would give fresh courage and vigor to the Church from time to time in its history, He has done so almost invariably through the leadership of one or more outstanding characters raised up by Him for that purpose. Was it wrong then, for our brethren of Luther’s day to find their hopes growing brighter under his strong and vigorous leadership? Surely not. Did we ourselves err in experiencing a gladness of heart that we had not previously known, as a very dear servant of the Lord in our own day awakened us to the fact that our Lord had returned, and that the brightness of the Millennial Day which He would shortly usher in would shine with such a splendour as we had not hitherto dreamed? Oh, no; therein we made no mistake.

But it is one thing to **lean** upon a staff which God provides for that purpose, and another thing altogether to take that staff, and as it were **plant** it and expect it to grow and spread itself out over our heads that we might take comfort in the shade its leaves will afford. Staffs are for the purpose of assisting us in our feebleness to **walk**, not to **sit down** in shady places; to make progress along the narrow way; to help us develop out of our sickly convalescing condition to strong and vigorous manhood. Let us then learn this lesson from the Psalmist. Let us hold in very precious memory the faithful leaders of the past; let us, if for no other reason, honour for their work’s sake the **faithful** leaders of the present; let us prize very highly those friendships which seem so assistful to us in our pilgrimage along the narrow way, but in and through and above all, let us remember God. In Him let our confidence repose. (See Psa. 146:3.)

“They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever”, (Psa.

125:1).

Many are the lessons of trust that we may learn from the Psalmist. Out of his rich experience he tells of his confidence in God and his determination to trust Him unreservedly at all times. *We* recall that David's whole life was a warfare, and that oftentimes very real dangers were imminent. Yet David's faith rises to the occasion, and he declares, "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep; for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety", (Psa. 4:8). To trustfully commit ourselves to God's care while asleep, may not seem to us any great achievement of faith, dwelling as we do in civilized lands, in times of peace and safety; but it was not so with David. Nevertheless, realising that he was God's anointed, and that God had selected him for his high office, he was able to commit himself unreservedly into the care of Him who neither slumbers nor sleeps.

It is no new thing for a child of God to be found in a condition of helplessness. Examples abound in the Scriptures of God's stalwart ones undergoing experiences in which they were quite helpless. Consider Elijah in the presence of 850 prophets of Baal and of the groves. Or take the case of Joseph in Potiphar's prison. What circumstances could we pass through in which we could feel more helpless than the three Hebrew children when they were thrown into the fiery furnace; or Daniel in the lions' den? Concerning His followers, spirit-begotten of the Father, our Master Himself said: "Behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves", (Luke 10:3). How pitifully helpless are lambs among wolves! From time to time along life's journey as we meet with an experience in which we feel utterly helpless, let us not lose courage, but let us realise that this is a great occasion for faith. We have the same God of love and of power as did the faithful ones of the past, and the Lord will not permit these experiences to work any real injury to us. Rather He seeks to teach us the lesson which even the great Apostle Paul took time to learn, — "My strength is made perfect in thy weakness", (2 Cor. 12:9).

This lesson is not an easy one. Rarely if ever is it learned in one experience. Even after we have learned to say with the Apostle, "When I am weak then am I strong", certain polishing experiences are required before our wise and loving and patient Instructor sees in us the required results. What makes this lesson so difficult? Ah, it is because it is just the exact opposite from what we would naturally expect. Naturally, that is, as natural men, we would prefer the opposite. Even after we have received the new mind, the mind of the flesh resents this instruction, and fain would have us cry: "Send us not out as lambs among wolves, dear Lord, but rather send us forth with power and strength, so that resting in the consciousness of our ability to take good care of ourselves we shall be afraid of nothing, and shall thus have our minds free from distraction to engage in more efficient service to Thee and Thy cause." We want to have that feeling, so comfortable to natural men, that we are personally able to do this or that—that we are equal in ourselves to meet any emergency. But that is not God's plan for us; and gradually *we* learn that His thoughts are indeed higher and grander far than ours. Presently we become acquainted with the fact taught in His Word, (Isa. 40:29), that it is not to the strong, but "to them that have no might he increaseth strength"; and ere long He confirms in our experience this truth learned from the written page. Let us then press on. Let us learn well the lesson that it is not by might nor by power, but by God's holy spirit that any lasting results will be secured. Thus learning in our weakness to trust in His mighty power, we shall be guided through life's journey, until following our Lord Jesus to the end, we, too, as we approach the utter, complete helplessness of death, shall be enabled as He did, to trustfully commit ourselves to our Father. There in the perfection of our weakness will be manifested the perfection of His strength, as He exerts His power in granting us a share in our Lord's resurrection.

Let us now note a somewhat peculiar expression from the Psalmist found in Psa. 56:3,—"What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." At first glance the declaration of the Psalmist seems almost paradoxical. How can he trust God unreservedly, how can he make God his refuge, how can he enjoy the rest of faith, "What time he is afraid"?

It is true that on some rare occasions persons are born whose natural courage is such that with them fear seems to be an unknown quantity. Such persons, however, are rare, and even these have their weaker moments. With the majority, however, this condition is a very real enemy, and one that we cannot afford to ignore. David himself, mighty man of valor, slayer of the lion and the bear in defense of his father's sheep, bold and courageous against the giant Goliath, magnificent warrior-king of Israel, of whom it was said that "Saul hath slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands", here plainly admits, and elsewhere confesses, that he was far from free from the spirit of natural fear.

Now this condition of natural fear does not necessarily imply sinfulness, although it may frequently be mixed with lack of faith, which of course is sin. But natural fear itself quite often is the result of a weak set of nerves in the physical body, and this distressing infirmity may overtake some just as headache or toothache may overtake others. Now while these things are all the concomitants of the death penalty which came upon father Adam and upon us, his children, because of sin, we know that the presence of these infirmities does not imply sinfulness

on the part of the afflicted ones. We recall *our* Lord's emphatic rejection of this implication when the question was put to Him,—“Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Natural fear may come upon us without our being able to prevent it. It may not be a specific act of unbelief at all. It may be merely the result of our nervous physical condition, but the best remedy for this condition will be found to be in the exercise of a simple faith in God.

Right here is where we need to be very much on our guard. The tempter will supply us with a line of reasoning that would keep us away from our loving Heavenly Father at these times when we need His encouragement most. Thoughts will be suggested to us as follows: “You have no right to be overcome in this unmanly or in this unwomanly fashion. You ought to learn how to control yourself better. There are no promises in God's Word which you can claim in a circumstance of this kind. If this were fear of a spiritual kind, it would alter matters, but this fear is all physical, and has to do with things of earth, present pain, future sufferings. You cannot carry a matter of this kind to God. He expects you to bear that burden alone.” Ah, we are not altogether ignorant of the devices of our wily adversary; but we know, because our Lord Jesus has told us, that he was a liar from the beginning.

What a libel such a line of reasoning would be upon the name of any human being worthy of the name of “father”; how much more upon the name and character of our gracious Heavenly Father! “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that reverence him.” Does an earthly parent find no time for his child's fears? The child's fears may be ill-founded. It may become alarmed at a strange face, a dark room, an unusual noise. From the father's viewpoint, the child's fears may be groundless, but if he is a real parent, he deals with the problem from the child's viewpoint. His child is suffering real fear, and so he acts accordingly, perhaps pointing out the absence of any cause for alarm, but certainly displacing fear by a sense of security as he takes his child in his arms in a tender embrace. Dear friends, it is not manifesting toward our Heavenly Father the trust and confidence due Him, to keep away from His loving arms when fear comes. “He remembereth our frame, he remembereth that *we* are but dust”, and “like as a father” so “He pitieth them that reverence him.”

When Peter “saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me”, (Matt. 14:30). What did Jesus say? Did he reprimand Peter? Did He offer no assistance? Ah, no. Our great Elder Brother had a heart of compassion. The record reads—“Immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him.” **Jesus has not changed.** “He is the same, yesterday, today, and forever”, and if we are not turning to Him in our moments of weakness and experiencing His strong support, *we* are failing sadly in that which is our privilege.

It is true that after saving Peter from sinking, our Lord said unto him, “O, thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” But these words were not in censure or rebuke, but were reassuring to the apostle; and together they journeyed on the water back to the ship.

Let us then resolve that our times of natural fear and discouragement shall be times of trust also. Thus shall we be able to say with the Psalmist, “What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee”; “I sought the Lord and he heard me and delivered me from all my fears”, (Psa. 34:4).

Few if any of us will be called upon to endure anything worthy to be compared with the trials which the saints of other days successfully endured. It is unlikely that we shall be surrounded by ten thousand men seeking our lives as was David; it is very improbable that we shall be called upon to suffer at the stake, as were our brethren of a few centuries ago. But as the poet has expressed.

“The trivial round, the common task,  
Will furnish all we ought to ask;  
Room to deny ourselves, a road  
To bring us daily nearer God.

“If on our daily course our mind  
Be set to hallow all we find,  
New treasures still of countless price  
God will provide for sacrifice.”

Let us then in the common walk of life cultivate a living, bright, happy, childlike trust in God. And having learned to trust God in these things that are least, we shall have developed a faith which God, if it please Him, will be able to use in the things that are greater, a faith which will enable us, as was the case with David, to trust God completely even when we cannot trace Him—that will enable us to say with the prophet Job—“Though he slay me, yet will I trust him.”

## Our Bad Goodness

The following short article from the “Christian World” was printed some years ago, but it is thought will be helpful and appreciated by many new readers, as well as all other friends again.

THERE are two famous prayers, apparently contradictory but really complementary, which I should like to put side by side that we may learn their lesson.

The first is Augustine’s anguished cry, “Domine, libera me a homine malo—a me ipso,” which may be freely translated, “Lord, save me from that evil man—myself.” The second is the well-known prayer of an early Wesleyan preacher, James Spence, “Lord, save me from that good man, James Spence.” I confess that I do not know which of the two is the greater or betrays the deeper insight. They are both typically Christian prayers, perhaps at different poles of life and thought: but there are moments in our experience in which each must be offered.

Every one can understand Augustine’s prayer. He had passed through the scorching fires of passion, and he was thinking of the downward pull of the lower desires. He knew the evil in himself, the evil that was himself! For he knew that we men and women are our own worst enemies. The things that hurt us are not outside us; the men that wound us are not other men: we are despoiled by the “evil man” within us. God’s best salvation is to save us from ourselves—from the lower dream, the pet passion, the fond indulgence.

But James Spence saw as deeply. He knew that a true Christian must be rescued not only from his sins but also from his virtues—the virtues on which he prides himself, the virtues on which he is too apt to rely. There is no greater moment of spiritual danger for a Christian than when he admires himself, or is complacent about his fine attainments. That good man, James Spence, is actually James Spence’s worst enemy, especially when he is conscious of how very good James Spence is as compared with other men. Thus I think that the Wesleyan’s prayer is the more discriminating of the two, “Save me from that good man, James Spence.”

Two men went up into the Temple to pray. One of them, a Publican, cried out in abandoned shame, “Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner.” This is the parallel of Augustine’s cry. “Save me from the evil that is in me—save me from that evil man, myself.” The other, a Pharisee, was a good man, undoubtedly a good man. He attended church, lived correctly, performed all his daily duties to his neighbour and his God, and was unquestionably the best kind of citizen of his own day. But alas, he knew it—and even told Almighty God all about it in his confessions! I think we must admit his virtues: every word he said was strictly true. It is quite nonsense to say he was a hypocrite. He was an ornament of that good class of men, the Puritans of their time, the Pharisees. But this should have been his prayer, “Lord, save me from that good man, James Spence.”

Our Lord never wearied of showing that a good man’s main danger lay in self-satisfaction, which is a milder or disguised form of pride. I imagine that in our human weakness no honest man can be wholly unaware of his own virtues and attainments. We know that we don’t drink, or misbehave, or shirk our duties, or dodge the income tax. A man cannot help knowing his virtues as well as his faults and sins. But the finest Christian prays to be saved both from his virtues and his sins! Our deadliest sin is self-satisfaction and pride, as Jesus showed in His parable: it kills the very virtue it exults in. Let us do anything at all with our hands except pat ourselves on the back. “Lord, save me from that good man, James Spence.”

## Is the Second Death a Blessing!

*“The wages of sin is death.” “He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.”—Rom. 6:23; Rev. 2:11.*

ANY are the ingenious devices of our great adversary for overthrowing the faith of the saints in the foundation principles of the Gospel of Christ. Among them is the widely accepted notion that death is really part of an evolution by which mankind must reach perfection. The thought is clearly expressed in the following lines of a popular hymn:

**“Death is the angel God hath sent  
To bear us to the sky.”**

Out of this theory, as a starting point, many grievous errors have grown. The fact that death is the penalty of sin is ignored, and the necessity of a ransom is denied by many; and even the second death, notwithstanding the plain Scriptural teachings and warnings with reference to it, is represented as a blessing.

In harmony with this error is the idea now prominently advanced, that the first, or Adamic death, is merely a death to righteousness, and that the second death is a death to sin. Thus it is said, Adam and all mankind died

to righteousness and became alive to sin; and that a man's conversion is the second death—a death to sin and a becoming alive to righteousness.

On this unscriptural hypothesis a theory is built which, to the undiscerning, has an appearance of plausibility; and it is a sad fact that only the few **search** the Scriptures, and still fewer “try the spirits” (doctrines) by comparing Scripture with Scripture, and therefore, error has always found it expedient to quote the Scriptures in its support.

In our Lord's temptation in the wilderness the same deception was attempted: Satan quoted, saying, “It is written . . . ;” but Jesus answered, “It is also written . . .” So should the disciple be as his Lord, and endeavor to rightly divide the Word of God—to apply it as the spirit designed, and not as every wind of doctrine might twist it out of harmony with its context.

Before proceeding to examine any theory the careful student will first inquire, How strong is **the foundation** on which it rests? for if the foundation of the theory be wrong, all that can be built upon it must be wrong. This is a short, sure, and safe test; the theory must stand or fall with its foundation.

In carefully examining the foundation of this view, it will be found first, that it has no Scriptural basis; and secondly, that it is directly opposed to the clearly expressed statements of the Scriptures on the subject. The Scripture quoted above shows that death is always the wages of sin; but this theory would make it sometimes the reward of righteousness, when it claims that to become righteous is to die to sin. This alone is clear proof that the theory is based upon an interpretation of death out of harmony with the Scriptures and hence unworthy of further consideration.

The passage relied on to prove the position, is Rom. 6:10—“In that he (Jesus) died, he died unto sin.” And as He was our example, therefore it is argued, that all mankind must likewise die unto sin and become alive unto God, or become righteous. But let us see if the harmony of the Scriptures will warrant such an interpretation of this passage. First we ask, Can that which is not alive be said to die? Certainly not. Then unless Jesus was **alive to sin**, that is, a person **living in sin**, He could not in that sense **die unto sin**. And just here we call to mind the question of Jesus Himself, “Which of you convinceth me of sin?”

If those Scriptures are true which say that Jesus was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, and knew no sin, does it not prove that the theory which makes this passage teach that Jesus died unto, or ceased from sin, is a false application of the passage, since He could not cease from that which He never began, never knew, but was always separate from?

That this is a misapplication of this Scripture is made positive by a glance at the preceding verse, which refers clearly and pointedly to the actual death of Jesus, and His actual resurrection—“Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.”

But let us see how this text may be interpreted in harmony with the context. In this verse the word **unto** expresses the idea much less clearly than the word “by”, as given in the Diaglott translation. The thought is that Jesus died by or on account of sin once. His death was “the wages of sin” as all death is, but not by reason of, nor on account of, nor as the wages of sin which **He committed**; but as elsewhere stated, “Christ died for **our** sins according to the scriptures” and “Jehovah hath laid upon him the iniquity **of us all**.” (1 Cor. 15:3; Isa. 53:6.)

The Apostle's reasoning in verse 11, can only be grasped by one who has clearly in mind his reasoning preceding, as presented in the fore part of the Epistle. Chapter 1 begins the subject away back before the Deluge, when men knew God but glorified Him not, but yielded to their own vain imaginings and their foolish heart became darkened, (verse 21). Chapter 2:1 shows that all men have come into some measure of the same darkness, and that the Jews as well as the Gentiles, are all **worthy** of condemnation, and **are all condemned**, because “There is none righteous, no not one.” (Rom. 3:9, 10, 19, 20.)

Having thus proved that “**all the world**” has “become guilty before God”, Paul introduces the work of Christ as the **remedy** for all this guilt; for though “**all** have sinned and come short of the glory of God”, He has justified them freely by His favor, **through the redemption** that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood (the life He gave to **redeem** ours), to manifest God's righteousness in condemning to death, and to accomplish a **remission** of sins. Verses 24, 26.

In chapter 4, the Apostle continues to further emphasize the justification from sin and death, to life and a condition of righteousness, accomplished as he has shown by Jesus' death, saying, “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin” (verses 7, 8), and repeats his testimony that the forgiveness and covering of our sins was through Him “who was **delivered**

for our offences and raised again for our justification” (verse 25). Chapter 5 carries the topic further and shows the result of **justification**, that it brings the condemned sinners back to a standing where they can have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (verse 1). And yet more, not only are we justified, but through Christ and through the justification which He accomplished for us, we have **access** into a still further favor of God— access into **this favor** wherein we stand and rejoice, in hope of the glory of God, (verses 1, 2). Not only then was our **human** nature justified and a right to the **glory of manhood** restored, but a door was **thereby** opened to us by which we may have a hope of reaching the **glory of God**—the Divine nature.

And not only have we obtained a hope of future glory, which causes rejoicing, but as we realise that that “glory of God” is promised as a reward for the sacrifice of the justified human nature, it enables us to rejoice in the tribulations by which alone that heavenly glory can be obtained, (verse 3).

After showing that the sacrifice of Christ was a full settlement of all condemnation and imperfection resulting directly and indirectly from Adam’s transgression (verses 15-21), he inquires (chapter 6:1) What shall we say then? If the sin of Adam has brought forth so much favor from God, shall we continue to sin in hope that still further favor would be manifested on our behalf? — and answers: God forbid. How shall **we** who have **died by sin** live any longer therein?

The **we** here mentioned is the same class mentioned in Chap. 5:2, 3, and 1:7, a class of saints who not only have been **justified** by faith in Jesus, the Redeemer, but have obtained by consecration, **sacrifice**, access into “THIS GRACE”—the begetting and promises of the **divine nature**—“the glory of God.” This class had **died**, that is, had consecrated to death, and now reckoned themselves dead indeed. This was as a payment for sin, as death always is the wages of sin. But in this case it was not a payment of the wages of their **own** sin. No; they had been justified from their own sin by the death of Jesus, and had afterward consecrated to death, and that death was to apply for the **sin of others** just as Jesus had died, not for sin of His own, for He had none, but “for our sins”. So these **saints** consecrated to die, not for **their own** sins, for they **had none**, since justified from all sin by Jesus’ death.

But, says some one, does not the death of **Jesus alone** constitute the redemption price for the sins of the whole world?

We answer, The **merit of Jesus** is the only merit which cancels the sin of the whole world; but whether that merit is applied directly to the world, **or** indirectly **through “the church**, which is his body”, is the question. This is the **favor** which is specially offered to the Gospel Church; namely, to share with Jesus in making the **sacrifice for sins**, being first ourselves **justified** through HIS SACRIFICE. This is the Apostle’s teaching when he speaks of **filling up** that which is **BEHIND** of the afflictions of Christ (Col. 1:24), and it was the teaching of Jesus when He said to the disciples: “Ye shall drink indeed of my cup (suffering) and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with” (death), Matt. 20:23. And that the Apostle is carrying out this same line of thought in the epistle we are now considering, is evident. How (with what consistency) can we that have died (consecrated to death) by sin (on account of or as sin sacrifices), consistently live any longer in sin, or have any fellowship with that which we are dying to destroy or remove? “Know ye not that **so many** of us were baptized INTO Jesus Christ (**into** membership in that body of which He is the head) were baptized (plunged, swallowed up, buried) into HIS DEATH?” His death was not Adamic death, but a ransom or substitution for it, and we share in **His death**, and hence share in the results of His death—the putting away of the sins of the whole world.

“We have therefore been entombed with him by the immersion into **that DEATH (in order)**, that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so also we should walk in a new life.” Our condition is a **reckoned** one, and if we reckon ourselves justified **by** Christ and then dead **with** Christ, we should go yet further and reckon ourselves **as though** we had been resurrected and were now actually spiritual beings, as Jesus now is, and we should act accordingly, abstaining from sin and rejoicing in communion and glory, **as though** we had been made already perfect as spiritual beings. “For (this is the reason why we should so reckon) if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death (or, in the like kind of **death—sacrificial**), certainly we shall be also in that of his resurrection” (we shall share a like resurrection; that is, a resurrection to spiritual perfection). “Knowing this (remembering in this connection), that our old man (our departed, sin-inclined selves, when under condemnation) was crucified with (more properly **‘in**) him (that is, was **represented** in Jesus when He was crucified), so that the body of sin might be destroyed (Jesus in His own person represented sin as a whole, and as such He was ‘made a curse for sin’), that we may no longer be enslaved to sin; for he who died (and only he who died **thus** representatively in Jesus’ death, that is, who accepts of the divine statement that Christ died for **his sins**, only such an one) has been **justified** from sin” (verses 6, 7).

“And if (after being thus as sinners represented in Jesus’ sacrifice, and justified thereby) we (as justified persons) died **with** him, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead,

dies no more; death no longer lords it over him. For the death which he died, he died by sin (our sin imputed to Him), but the life which he lives he lives by (the favor and reward of) God. Thus do you **account** yourselves dead indeed unto sin (as sharers with Jesus of the world's sin), but (as) living by (the favor or reward of) God in the anointed Jesus", (verses 8-11—Diaglott).

In view of these facts, "Let not sin therefore **reign** in your mortal body, that ye should obey its desires; neither present your members to sin as instruments of iniquity; but (according to your consecration, and in carrying out of that **death** which you already **reckon** accomplished) present yourselves to God as if alive from the dead (just as though you were risen actually, and possessed your promised immortal, spiritual body complete), and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness" that you may be used of Him as His agents and mouthpieces. (From "Reprints".)

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The brethren of the Melbourne Class extend a cordial invitation to all friends able to attend their Annual Convention to be held this year (D.V.) on December 23rd, 24th, 25th and 26th in the Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond. Further information from the Class Secretary—Mr. J. B. Hiam, 16 Kennedy Street, South Oakleigh, Victoria, 3167.

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How can you want, if He provide,  
Or lose the way with such a Guide?"

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