



“My Grace is Sufficient for Thee”

(Convention Address)

“Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong”—2 Cor. 12:7-10.

THIS passage is well known and loved. Nevertheless since it contains one of the greatest demands upon the Christian, as well as one of the greatest encouragements it is worthy of frequent review. It certainly merits our time here.

In verse 7 we are told that Paul had some “thorn in the flesh.” It could not have been a literal thorn, for that doubtless would have been dealt with by a human agency. However, it is consistent with our lesson to make little of problems we encounter, just as Paul did by describing his problem as a “thorn.”

From the fact that the inspired Word does not tell us the nature of Paul’s ailment, we can conclude that we do not need to know. One can see Divine wisdom in this. If we were told that it was an eye problem, we might associate the message in our passage with eye problems. Surely the “thorn in the flesh” is used to describe Paul’s ailment with a symbol which can stand for any difficulty or painful condition a Christian may encounter.

Verse 7 also tells us that Paul was blessed with knowledge as to the purpose of his thorn. Often we have to seek diligently to come to that position. Often, too, we find that the purpose is exactly as it was with Paul—to keep us humble. Divine guidance of this type is often referred to as the “chastening of the Lord.”

This aspect of our text in 2 Cor., enlarges on Hebrews chapter 12 in several ways.

The passage Heb. 12:1-15 is all profitable, but verse 11 will serve to remind us of its general message, and reads—“Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” The need to be exercised by the chastening is the climax of the instruction. Relating this to our passage in 2 Cor., we can note that Paul was exercised by his thorn.

Note, however, the importance of linking 2 Cor. 12 with Heb. 12. Chastening is corrective but it does not necessarily require a fault. The Scripture does not say that Paul had been exalted above measure but that the corrective or chastening was provided lest that should happen. These days we hear much of preventive medicine. Paul’s thorn was preventive medicine for the inner man.

It can be seen that our text expounds the chastening of the Lord in two particular features: (1) Paul’s attitude provides an example of the proper manner in which the guidance should be received—accepted with all readiness of mind. (2) By indicating that the treatment may be preventive, the Lord’s dealing with the Christian is shown to be better described as discipline than either chastening or correction. Discipline includes both corrective and preventive correction.

Looking ahead, there is also a link between the positive nature of our Lord’s reply and the subject of discipline or the chastening of the Lord. The positive way in which our Lord refused Paul implies that one should not wilt nor cringe under the Lord’s dealings. God’s will is to encourage. Divine strength is a positive power at the very least to overcome the fault or danger encountered. Paul’s life demonstrates proper submission to God’s will. He also explained it in 2 Tim. 1:7, which reads—“God hath not given us the spirit of fear;

but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

The purpose of the thorn, stated twice in verse 7, amounts to character building or edification. This is a good gift and from James 1:17 we know that God is the only source of good gifts. This verse reads—"Every good gift and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

Yet, our verse 7 also states that the thorn was the messenger of Satan. Clearly the purpose of character building is not at all compatible with the nature of Satan portrayed in the Bible. Any difficulty here, is only on the surface. The verse is consistent with God's use of His complete power. Firstly, God is all powerful and all that happens must be in accord either with God's deliberate will or His permissive will. Secondly, God is able to make all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose.

It would seem that Satan is ever ready to buffet or hurt those who are against him or if he thinks it will promote his interests. Providentially, God usually restrains Satan but where it will work together for good—for higher good—God permits Satan to have his evil way. Whilst this understanding is by implication from the opposing purposes of our verse, the limited permission was actually recorded in Job's case. Job 1:12 reads—"The LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand." So in our verse Satan's intent in his messenger of pain was to buffet Paul. God permitted Satan's evil because it furthered His intention to ensure humility in Paul.

If this understanding is accepted and taken to heart it gives a wonderful assurance. How good it is to know that nothing can happen to one unless it be permitted by the benevolent God who loves His creatures and who allows or disallows only for the creature's ultimate good.

Paul sought the removal of the thorn thrice. This indicates that asking for the same thing more than once is not a lack of faith nor a vain repetition. In Matt. 6:7 our Lord instructed that vain repetitions should not be used. He said—"When ye pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do." From Paul's example, it can be seen that simply praying again for an unfulfilled request could not be the error to which Christ referred. Paul loved God and always tried to please Him. Surely, the expression "vain repetitions" must refer to shallow and insincere prayers repeated as the "done thing" or perhaps chanted. On the contrary, Paul's attitude encourages persistence in prayer. This is the lesson Christ drew from the incident

with the Syrophenician woman in Mark 7:26-30.

It is also noted that Paul did not demand healing. He knew that he had no province to do so. He wanted God's will to be done, rather than his own. Instead of demanding, he gave the perfect example of the proper attitude to a malady the Lord did not see fit to remove. Not only did Paul accept and co-operate with the Lord's will but rejoiced in that will and in any afflictions the Lord permitted.

Paul's prayer of verse 8 was to the Lord. Whenever one ponders whether an expression refers to the Father or the Son it is good to be mindful of 1 Cor. 8:6—all things are of or out from the Father and all things are of or through the Son. Usually one prays to the Father using the special access possible through the Son. However, it seems likely, here, that Paul was addressing Christ. The Word tells us that on various occasions Paul had discourse with the raised Saviour. Examples are, on the road to Damascus in Acts chapter 9, the instruction on the Memorial in 1 Cor. 11, and the observation that it is more blessed to give than to receive in Acts 20:35. Because of the oneness between the Father and Son, one need not be too concerned to whom Paul refers. When the Father is named and when the Son is named, prayers ascend to the Father by way of the Son just as the strength is out of the Father by means of the Son.

The highlight of our passage is the reply made by our Lord. The request was denied. The words used to express the refusal show the wisdom that is from above defined in James 3:17. Instead of saying "No", our Lord stated in positive terms that which was best for Paul and which he was receiving. The words—"My grace is sufficient for thee" amount to—"You could not wish for more than you have by having My favour."

Some commentators limit the sufficiency of grace. They read our Lord's reply as saying—"You have asked for a painful thing to be removed. It is not to be removed but instead you will be given sufficient grace to overcome the problem and in particular to enable your desired work for the gospel." Certainly overcoming power is part of the grace. It would also be true that Paul's chief desire would be the furtherance of God's plan and the spread of the Gospel. However, the pleasure noticeable in Paul's zealous response indicates that he understood much more to be included in the profound "My grace is sufficient for thee." Consider for a moment just some of the things included in God's unmerited favour. Please read Eph. 2:4-7, and Rom. 8:16-19.

Can any Christian doubt the sufficiency of God's grace. Our very existence is by grace. Psalm 30:5 tells us—"In his favour is life." Paul told the Athenians in Acts 17:28—"In him we live, and move and have our being."

Almost every creature values and holds fast to life upon this earth. Of much greater value is the life of the New Creature begotten again from above. Along with the higher plane of life is the opportunity which attends it, by God's grace, of satisfying love by helping others find fullness of life.

Before moving on from the things included as part of the undeserved favour of God through Christ, one could return to the 8th chapter of Romans. It is full of these blessings—sonship, guidance, character development, hope, justification and even divine love. Verse 32 not only culminates thoughts of blessing but logically verifies God's inflexibility in that direction. It is as certain as the fact that Christ died, and reads—"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

The expression—"My strength is made perfect in weakness" is intriguing. A typical commentator paraphrases it as—"My strength has its most perfect manifestation in weakness." Does not this imply that the Lord wants weakness to manifest His strength? That would be like a mother wanting her child to remain an infant always in order that she could continue to shower it with the type of love and care suitable for babes.

The problem is also illustrated by the Living Bible. It gives our Lord's reply as—"No. But I am with you; that is all you need. My power shows up best in weak people." This can hardly be the real meaning. It implies that Paul was weak. It would follow that Paul rejoiced in that weakness and determined to continue in it. Instinctively, we know that Christ does not want us to be weak just to emphasize His own strength by contrast. The contrast is there and it does enhance Christ's strength but that meaning would not explain the refusal of Paul's prayer. Granting the plea would more obviously demonstrate the perfectness of Christ's strength.

There was adequate demonstration or manifestation of divine strength by contrast with the weakness of mankind long before Christ became a man. The weakness which best enables divine strength to prosper is along the lines of meekness, lacking in worldly wisdom, as outlined in 1 Cor. 1:21-29.

The Greek word rendered "made perfect" is said by Strong to mean "to complete, i.e., (lit.) accomplish, or (fig.) consummate (in character)." It is used elsewhere in the sense of finishing by making complete. Perhaps the occasion best known is Heb. 2:10, which reads—"For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." For the words "made perfect" to have a similar meaning in our text "weakness" would have to point to something culminating Christ's work. God

through Christ created all things. A weak creature would not bring as much credit to the Creator as a strong creature. It is suggested that the answer to the problem is the creative process. Removal of the thorn would show only sufficient strength to remove it. Overcoming strength would be more but still less than the reality.

Paul had a physical weakness. It was to remain so that Paul would grow and develop, by God's grace, through the nurture of Christ, to be conformed to the image of his Master. The parable of the vine and the branches well pictures this growth. The reason that the thorn was not removed was quite simply the reason it was allowed in the first place—lest Paul should be exalted above measure and his spiritual growth be stunted thereby. It is the process of creating the New Creature out of weakness which finishes by completion the strength of Christ. Please read Eph. 4:14, 15, 13.

Just as our Lord's reply to Paul provides incentive and encouragement, so also Paul's response provides example even to this day. The nature of the infirmities, reproaches, etc., have changed, but in God there is no variability. The process of developing the New Creature still involves its discipline. Pride and self-confidence are still prime dangers.

Paul's willingness to endure suffering and, even more, to take pleasure in infirmities must have resulted from his appreciation of the Lord's favour. Loving God as he did, Paul would have regarded the favour as incentive in itself. Paul knew, too, of the High Calling and the part which the New Creature was to play in the blessing of all the families of the earth. Could there be any greater incentive? His words—"When I am weak, then am I strong"—indicate his awareness of the need to be emptied of self. He knew that it was only to the extent that he suppressed self that the power of Christ could rest upon him. The role of the High Calling will demand the highest character. This is the reason for the heavy emphasis in the New Testament upon all the discipline which must accompany its edification.

Important to that development is humility. The thorn was allowed lest Paul be exalted above measure. At the same time a physical ailment might help him centre his thoughts away from things of this world. This growth requires a sense of values related to eternity rather than the fleeting time of this life. Character is the eventual outcome of this life for the New Creature. Its creation consists of getting followed by development. It is only those who co-operate in this creative work who may, like Paul, rejoice that the very weaknesses of the old creature redound to the glory of God.

(Continued on page 8.)

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Convention News

THE Christmas Convention 1981, arranged by the Melbourne Class and held over the four days of the Christmas period, proved to be another profitable occasion of spiritual refreshing. Thankfulness to our Heavenly Father is gratefully expressed for His blessings bestowed throughout the assemblies. The attendance was very good throughout, as visiting brethren were gladly welcomed from South Australia, Western Australia, New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria, and a Brother attending from U.S.A. Our Australian Polish brethren were also well in attendance and contributed helpfully during the gatherings. Special mention is called for, that four Sisters and two Brothers of the Bateson family attended, whose ages are 97, 92, 89, 87, 83 and 81. This is probably a world record for the members of one family to be blessed of the Lord with His truth, and we rejoice with them that they are thus favoured of God.

The Convention gatherings consisted of two Bible Studies, 17 addresses by the brethren, Fellowship and Testimony Meetings, a Hymn Session and general informal fellowship all contributing to the helpfulness of the gatherings.

Following the opening praise, prayer and address of welcome, the first Bible Study was conducted on the Scriptural passage in Eph. 4:1-6. This very inspiring exhortation from the Apostle Paul to the Ephesian Christians was most helpful, as each verse contained so much vital truth respecting the heavenly calling for Christians of this Gospel Age. In addition to the important doctrinal truths brought out during the study, the development of the fruits of the spirit was also equally impressed, as each of the Lord's people must "endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace", by the Lord's grace and strength.

The second Bible Study in 2 Cor. 5:14-21 was also most profitable. The thought of the love of God and Christ "constraining" all true followers of the Master in their Christian privileges was predominant throughout this passage. Indeed, this Scripture from the Apostle Paul revealing "that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" is one of the most inspiring to discipleship for all who are drawn of God to the Saviour in the present life. God reconciled a few worthy ones of humanity to Himself during the 4,000 years before Christ, that they may be "princes in all the earth" in the Kingdom Age—Psa.

45:16. The Bride of Christ has been in process of reconciliation to God during the 2,000 years of the Gospel Age, these being the "little flock" to whom it is "the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom"—Luke 12:32. Then, in the Millennial Age, all the willing and obedient of the masses of mankind will be reconciled to God through Christ in that resurrection day, to inherit the earthly kingdom, "prepared from the foundation of the world"—Matt. 25:34.

The importance of the Apostle's words in the closing verses of our study was well impressed. What a privilege it is for Christians already reconciled to God through the merit of the Saviour to be "ambassadors for Christ" to assist others to be "reconciled to God" even now while the heavenly calling is still available, "For he (God) hath made him (Christ) to be sin (to take the sinner's place) for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

The subjects selected by the brethren for their addresses were varied and helpful, as follows—"Freedom of Speech"; "God's Ways"; "Be Strong in the Lord"; "Trusting and Obeying"; "Loving Kindness"; "Job's Perplexity"; "My Grace is Sufficient for Thee"; "JESUS—He shall save His people from their Sins"; "Watching the Signs of Time"; "God's Promises to Abraham"; "The Third Day"; "Growing in Christ"; "Secret Things and Promises of God"; "Jesus Christ the Same Yesterday, Today and Forever"; "Development of the New Creation" and "God's Glory Declared."

Kindly greetings and Christian love with the assurance of prayers, were received in the numerous messages from Classes and brethren throughout Australia and from overseas, all of which were warmly appreciated. To all who thus remembered us and to our brethren in every place, the Scripture message from the Convention is found in Eph. 4:1-3, and along with Christian love is sent to all.

The Praise and Testimony Meetings also provided opportunities for expressions of thankfulness to the Lord for all His goodness and mercies received throughout the year past and day by day. The Hymns We Love session was enjoyed again as the selected hymns were sung in praise to the Lord. The labour of the Sisters in providing refreshments each day was also greatly appreciated, this being undertaken as a glad service to the Lord.

The number attending the closing session was the greatest we have had for years, as in addition to the brethren many well-wishers were gladly welcomed for the closing address and the Love Feast. The singing of the two well known hymns—"Blest be the tie that binds" and "God be with you till we meet again"—and the prayer of thanksgiving to God with request for His blessing and keeping upon all His people, concluded our very helpful Melbourne Convention for 1981.

Man—"A Little Lower Than Angels"

FAILING to see that the plan of God for mankind in general contemplates a restitution to their former estate—the human perfection lost in Eden—and that the Christian Church, as an exception to this general plan, is to have a change of nature from human to spiritual, Christian people generally have supposed that none will be saved except those who reach the spiritual nature. The Scriptures, however, while holding out promises of life and blessing and restitution to all the families of the earth, offer and promise the change to spiritual nature only to the Church selected during the Gospel Age; and not a single passage can be found which sustains such hopes for any others.

If the masses of mankind are saved from all the degradation, weakness, pain, misery, and death which result from sin, and are restored to the condition of human perfection enjoyed before the fall, they are as really and completely saved from that fall as those who, under the special "high-calling" of the Gospel Age, become "partakers of the divine nature."

The failure to understand rightly what constitutes a perfect man, the misapprehension of the terms mortal and immortal, and wrong ideas of justice, have together tended to this error, and mystified many Scriptures otherwise easily understood. It is a common view, though unsupported by a single text of Scripture, that a perfect man has never been on earth; that all that is seen of man on earth is only the partially developed man, and that to reach perfection he must become spiritual. This view makes confusion of the Scriptures instead of developing that harmony and beauty which result from "rightly dividing the Word of truth."

The Scriptures teach that there have been two, and only two, perfect men—Adam and Jesus. Adam was created in the image of God: that is, with the similar mental powers of reason, memory, judgment, and will, and the moral qualities of justice, benevolence, love, etc. "Of the earth, earthy", he was an earthly image of a spiritual being, possessing qualities of the same kind, though differing widely in degree, range, and scope. To such an extent is man an image of God that God can say even to the fallen man—"Come, let us reason together."

As Jehovah is ruler over all things, so man was made a ruler over all earthly things—After our likeness, let him have dominion over the beasts, fowl, fish, etc.—Gen. 1:26. Moses tells us—Gen. 1:31—that God recognized the man whom He had made—not merely commenced to make, but completed—and God considered His creature "very good", that is,

perfect; for in God's sight nothing short of perfection is **very good**, in His intelligent creatures.

The perfection of man, as created, is expressed in Psa. 8:5-8—"Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea." It has been suggested by some who would make the Bible conform to a theory of evolution, that the statement, "a little" in Heb. 2:7, might be understood to mean a little **while** lower, and not a little **degree** lower than the angels. (*) There is, however, neither authority nor reason for such an interpretation. This is a quotation from Psa. 8:5, and a critical comparison of the Hebrew and Greek texts can leave no doubt as to the import. The idea, clearly expressed is a little lower in degree than angels.

David, in the Psalm, refers to man in his original estate, and prophetically intimates that God has not abandoned His original plan, to have man in His own image and the king of earth, and that he will **remember** him, redeem him and restore him to the same again. The Apostle (Heb. 2:7-9) calls attention to the same fact—that God's original purpose has not been abandoned; that man, originally grand and perfect, the king of earth, is to be remembered, and visited, and restored. He then adds, We see not this promised restitution yet, but we do see the first step God is taking toward its accomplishment. We see Jesus crowned with this glory and honour of perfect manhood, that He, as a fitting ransom or substitute might by God's favor taste death for every man, and thus prepare the way for the restitution of man **to all that was lost**. Rotherham, one of the most scrupulous translators, renders this passage as follows:

"What is man, that thou rememberest him;
Or man's son, that thou visitest him?
Thou madest him **less some little** than
messengers:
With glory and honour thou crownedst
him,
And didst appoint him over the works of
thy hands."

From—"Divine Plan of the Ages."

(*) The Revised Standard Version, Moffatt, Companion Bible (footnote), and others give this misleading rendering.

"God's Great Plan of Salvation"

A booklet bearing the above title has been printed, and a copy is being supplied to all friends receiving this issue of "Peoples Paper." Extra copies are available, supplied through the General Tract Fund to all who can use them to advantage.

Thoughts on Isaiah 65:20

THERE is a very general impresson that Isa. 65:20 limits the time of trial to one hundred years in the early part of the Millennial Age. It is suggested that those who have made no progress towards perfection during that period will be cut off in eternal death without further opportunity. The idea rests solely upon this particular text; nowhere else is there any similar word given, and standing as it does, the text is in contradiction to those Scriptures that give one thousand years as the duration of mankind's "day of grace" in the Kingdom of Christ on earth.

First of all, then, let the words of the text be examined. "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old, shall be accursed." There is nothing said here about the death of the sinner, either at a hundred years or at any other time. The "child" is said to die at a hundred years—for what reason is not stated—and then the sinner who attains to a hundred years is apparently to be counted "accursed." Whether or no that involves death the prophet does not say.

Suppose, however, that the interpretation above referred to is the true one; that the sinner has one hundred years only to make a start in the way of righteousness. How does this accord with the fundamental principles of the Divine Plan?

In the Millennial Age, as in this present Age, repentance, conversion, and acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ, will be the essential first steps in coming to God. There will be no "progressing towards perfection" until those steps have been taken. Until then the sinner remains a sinner. After that time, he is a sinner no longer. He will have become justified by faith and enjoy peace with God. Thenceforward, progress towards human perfection, physical, mental and moral, will continue until the repentant one is ushered into his everlasting inheritance. This is a truth that has not been stressed in the past as much as it should. It has been customary to speak of man's progress towards perfection in the next Age as though it were a kind of mechanical process, based upon nothing much more than an intellectual acceptance of the Divine rule "Do right and live." There has been a distinct loss in this failure to recognize that repentance and conversion will be very important factors in the work of that Age. Now if the old idea of Isa. 65:20 were the correct one it would of necessity imply that the time allowed for repentance and conversion is limited to one hundred years, the first hundred years of life. None who have not taken at least that first step by the end of the first century of their awakening from death would survive. That in turn obviously limits the day

of grace, the day of salvation, for each man, to one hundred years. Yet "God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained"—Acts 17:31—and that day is one thousand years long! God has set apart such a day to give all men a full, fair opportunity of life. He waits for their repentance; like the father in the story of the Prodigal Son, He is anxious to receive them even at the eleventh hour, if so be that at so late a time they will lift up their eyes to heaven and say "I have sinned against heaven and before thee." It is entirely foreign to our knowledge of the Divine character to think that, if a man should remain obstinate and unrepentant for 900 years out of the thousand, and should then repent, the Father would refuse to have him. We hold firmly to the principle that God has ordained a time which is sufficient to give full opportunity for repentance to all who are capable of repentance—and must then conclude that the full benefits of that glorious Age will be available to all men.

Now let the text be examined critically. It is part of a passage—Isa. 65:11-25—that describes Divine judgment on the evil doers of the Millennial Age, and the ultimate victory of the righteous of that Age, culminating in the eternity of the Kingdom. Emphasis is laid upon the long duration of the Age compared with the brevity of human life now, and the blessedness of that Age compared with the miseries of the present. "The former troubles are forgotten"—verse 16—and God creates new heavens and a new earth in which there is peace and security, "and my chosen ones shall long enjoy the work of their hands"—verse 22. The key thought therefore is the longevity of Kingdom conditions—long life for all with freedom from fear and poverty. Verse 20 must fit into this key thought because it is part of the prophet's train of reasoning and intended to assist in the description of Millennial conditions which he is trying to draw.

Now let the verse itself be divided into its various parts. There is to be no longer an "infant of days"—"infant" is "ad", a baby—"Infant of few days" "a child that dies untimely" say other translators. That means there will be no short-lived babies—logical enough in an Age in which the Adamic death sentence has been abolished."... Nor an old man that hath not filled his days"; "shall not complete his time", "shall not have the full length of his days" say others. No man need expect premature death—he will have his full expectation of long life. Logical enough also! "For the child shall die an hundred years old." "Child" here is "naar", a lad or youth, anything from 14 to 24 or so. Taking the statement just like that it contradicts the previous one. If the young men, without any reason stated are to die at one hundred years old, how then are there to be any "old men" enjoying the full length

of their days? "But the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed." The conjunction "but" appears to indicate that the "accursed" condition of the hundred years old sinner is something less desirable than the affliction of death upon the one hundred-year-old youth who is not even said to be a sinner which appears to create an absurdity.

The first half of the verse, then, is understandable and the second half is not. Let the least understandable part be examined more closely.

In the Hebrew Bible the connecting word "for" in "for the child" etc., is explained by Gesenius, the most authoritative grammarian, to have the general meaning of "that". He devotes over three pages of his lexicon to explaining the usage of this word. In the text under consideration, the correct rendering into English is, "There shall be no more a short-lived babe... that the lad should die an hundred years old, and that the sinner, being an hundred years old, should be accursed." In other words, the days will not be so restricted that anyone will die at so early an age as one hundred years, or the patience of God so short that any sinner will be pronounced accursed at so brief a time as one hundred years of trial.

The literal word-for-word Hebrew rendering of these two phrases runs "...that the boy, son-of-a-hundred years, he-would-die, and-the-sinner, son-of-a-hundred years, he-would-be-accursed."

Thus seen, the text is in full accord with the Book of Revelation and the prophetic writings which speak of a long period of time, defined six times in Revelation as a thousand years in duration, set apart by God for the missionary work of the glorified Church, in this world, to effect the reconciliation to God, through repentance and acceptance of Christ, of "whosoever will." The door of hope does not close until the end of the Age. The General Resurrection takes place at its beginning, and thereafter throughout the entirety of that age there will be no death and no passing of final judgment. During its whole course none need fear that life will be cut short, or sentence be executed, either in so short a time as one hundred years, or in any other period short of the full time. There will be no short-lived children and no premature ageing, that men may die or sinners be condemned too soon. Only at the end will the King make the final apportionment and God's long Day of Grace come to its close. (From "Bible Study Monthly", England.)

Adelaide Easter Convention

The brethren of the Adelaide Class extend a cordial invitation to all friends able to attend the Easter Convention to be held (D.V.) on April 9th, 10th and 11th, at the M.U. Hall (2nd Floor), 16 Franklin Street, Adelaide. Further information from the Class Secretary—Mr. F. M. Grinstead, 1 Wendy Avenue, Valley View, South Australia, 5093.

Pilgrim Way Ended

ON the 18th November last our dear Brother Routley of Geelong, Victoria, finished the pilgrim way after nearly 40 years of appreciation of God's loving plan of salvation for humanity. Hearing the Frank and Ernest Broadcasts on 3GL Geelong prompted his interest in the Bible truth that Christ's sacrifice redeemed not only Christians for the heavenly kingdom, but also all mankind who shall believe in the Saviour for the earthly kingdom, when they shall have the opportunity in the Kingdom Age.—1 John 2:2.

After yielding his own life to the Lord, he joined with other truth loving brethren to form a small Bible Class in Geelong, which for a number of years enjoyed the Lord's blessing. Our Brother Routley also visited the Melbourne Class, and Melbourne Conventions, from time to time, being well-known and loved by many of the Australian brethren. His quiet and gentle nature reflected the sanctifying character of his Master to a marked degree. His addresses to the brethren were always of a deeply spiritual nature, indicating his own well developed spiritual life.

Being rather frail physically for some years, this condition increased after an operation from which he did not regain strength, but his faith and trust in the Lord remained steadfast to the end of his earthly pilgrimage. Sincere sympathy is extended to his wife and three children in their loss of a loving Christian husband and father. We feel confident that our dear Brother has gained an abundant entrance into the heavenly kingdom, by the Lord's grace. "They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels"—Mal. 3:17.

"Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body"—1 Cor. 6:19, 20.

At the opening of the new year, what lesson could be more important to us than this one, that we are not our own, but belong to another; that we are not, therefore, to seek to please ourselves, but to please Him; nor to seek to serve self, but to serve Him; nor to seek to obey self-will, but on the contrary His will? This means holiness in the most absolute and comprehensive sense of the word (not only separation from sin to righteousness, but separation from self to the will of God in Christ). Z. '97-35.

"The Ten Camels"

A supply of these helpful well-known Bible Stories for children is in stock. Of 144 pages with 4 illustrations, price \$1.00, plus postage 50c.

Continued from page 3

While instruction for this life must be the purpose of our passage, it is now suggested that the same words can give comfort and a beautiful picture of great hope for the ages to come. In the absolute sense, our Lord's strength will not be made perfect or complete or fully exercised until the Plan is complete. The resurrection itself, will show to all the strength which the Father has given to His Christ. Surely the ultimate weakness is death. Restoration to life will itself manifest great strength. How much more will this strength be demonstrated when all the weaknesses which have come upon mankind due to the fall are seen to have been rectified by Christ.

Sin has to be blamed for all man's frailties. But Christ's strength will be shown to be perfect when all the lame are healed. How glorious will be the day when imperfections are removed. Think of all those torn apart by war or accident, all the blind, those with physical handicaps, the mentally handicapped also. John 9:1-3 is seen to support the suggestion that our passage in 2 Cor. 12 can quite properly be applied to the new age. Please read John 9:1-3. The important part is that the works of God should be made manifest in the blind man. No doubt the same could be said of each person healed by Jesus during His earthly ministry. There were a number of them. Yet, all those healings of the first advent were a token only of the healing accomplished on the Cross. Just as original sin is the root cause of all infirmities and imperfections in this world, so the great sacrifice established the foundation for perfection in Christ's Kingdom.

When all are made perfect and dwell together in love, how they will delight to bow every knee to Jesus, acknowledging His strength made perfect. "My grace is sufficient for thee." That is a masterful understatement. The Lord's grace is abundant—and abundant for all.

God Bless Thee

God grant you grace, this coming year,
For ev'ry time of need;
And strength to follow day by day
Where'er your path may lead.

God give you peace and quietness,
Through storm or sunshine bright,
And clear your sky of ev'ry cloud,
And guide you with His light.

God send you blessings on your way,
And joy, and hope serene,
That you by faith may see His face,
And all that's now unseen.

God show'r upon you blessings rich,
To cheer you hour by hour,
And fill your heart and keep you through
His holy spirit's pow'r.

Extracts from Correspondence

Berean Bible Institute, Dear Brother—Greetings in our dear Redeemer's Name. I have just received the Dec.-Jan., issue of "Peoples Paper" with booklet. I continue to enjoy all your publications and pray our heavenly Father to bless you richly in all your work and labour of love for His name's sake. I'm enclosing cheque for £—— to use in the work. Your sister in Christ.

Dear Brethren—Loving greetings with a prayer for your welfare, in Jesus' Name, from Sister——and from me. It has been a long time since we have sent you a contribution, yet you faithfully continue to send the "Peoples Paper." We appreciate your love for the Lord and His truth, and your fellowship in the proclamation of the Gospel. How thankful we are for the manifested love of our Father and our Lord Jesus, revealed to us through the Scriptures, so we may have the glorious hope for both Church and world. God bless you. Greet the brethren for us. Much love in Christ.

Berean Bible Institute, Dear Friends—Thank you for continuing to send me the "Peoples Paper" and other literature. The enclosed is for subscription and to help in your work where useful. I would appreciate, however, a copy of "Tabernacle Shadows" and "God's Plan." Thanking you as His servants, and in our Redeemer's Name.

Berean Bible Institute, Dear Sirs—In with the little book that I requested, you enclosed a "Peoples Paper". I would be pleased to have it for one year at least: enclosed find \$1.00 and a stamp for the one you enclosed. Thanking you and wishing you a happy 1982. Yours faithfully.

Berean Bible Institute, Dear Sirs—Please find enclosed cheque for \$3.00 to subscribe to the "Peoples Paper" for 1982 and any change a donation to you. Thank you for the fine reading matter in the "Peoples Paper." Yours truly.

Dear Brother,—Loving greetings in Christ! Thank you for sending the "Peoples Paper" and the booklets, much appreciated. We send our Christian love and greetings to all the brethren at the Christmas Holiday Convention. May the Lord richly bless all able to attend. We greet all with 1 Pet. 5:10, 11. Your brethren by God's loving grace. P.S. Enclosed \$—— toward the "Peoples Paper" and booklets.

Berean Bible Institute, Dear Brothers in Christ—Thanks very much for all the literature which you have forwarded to me last year. "Daily Heavenly Manna" is a wonderful book; it makes me feel so uplifted in Christ as I read each daily text and the explanation which follows it. I thoroughly recommend it to other readers. Am enclosing \$5.00 to cover the cost of the "Papers" and the remainder is a donation towards God's work. Yours sincerely. Your sister in Christ.

Passover Memorial, 1982

The anniversary of the Memorial of Christ's death falls this year on the evening of Tuesday, 6th April. It is the privilege of the Lord's people to observe this memorial at this season "in remembrance of Christ."

Memorial Services

Melbourne—Sunday, 4th April, at 6 p.m., at Auxiliary Room, City Buildings, Charles Street, Kew.

Adelaide—Sunday, 4th April, at 6.15 p.m., at M.U. Hall (2nd Floor), 16 Franklin Street, Adelaide.