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The Prince of Peace Brings Peace Through His Kingdom

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.” (Isa. 9:6, 7.)

THIS wonderful prophecy of Isaiah’s, proclaimed hundreds of years before our Lord’s birth, gives us such an amazing insight into both Christ’s first and second advents. When we read verse 6,—“Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given”, we notice that the prophet is writing as though the Lord Jesus was already present in the earth at His first advent. Then we realise as he proclaims the prophecy he words it in the future tense,—“and the government **shall be** upon his shoulder; and his name **shall be** called Wonderful Counsellor”, etc. This is interesting, because it means that this verse in Isaiah covered our Lord’s birth as the Babe of Bethlehem, then as the spirit-begotten Son at the time of His consecration at 30 years of age, and also the Son given in complete sacrifice at Calvary, as a result of which “the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called . . . The Prince of Peace”,—from His second advent and throughout His kingdom reign.

Looking at the first part of verse 6,—“Unto us a child is born”—we recall that Isaiah was given this same information in chapter 7:14,—“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” This name Immanuel means “God with us.” And how beautiful is the record of the birth of Jesus as presented in Luke’s Gospel, chapter 2:7-14,—“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord . . . Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” We really do rejoice that these words are to be absolutely fulfilled to the letter in the kingdom age.

Then we have the record of the song of Simeon when Jesus was brought to Jerusalem to be presented to God, in Luke 2:25-33. “And it was revealed unto him (Simeon) by the holy spirit, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s Christ . . . For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.” Simeon knew by the spirit of God that this was the true Messiah, even as a Babe. “Mine eyes have seen thy salvation”,—he had beheld God’s anointed who will lighten every man who ever came into the world, in God’s due time.

When Jesus began His ministry and gathered His band of disciples around Him, it must have seemed strange to those somewhat acquainted with the words of our verses in Isaiah 9 respecting Jesus being the Prince of Peace, to find that He seemed to do nothing to fulfil this wonderful prophecy concerning Himself. Indeed, not only did our Lord seem to do nothing to fulfil Isaiah's prophecy, but His words recorded in Matt. 10:34-36 appear to be absolutely contrary. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword ... And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." We say these words of Jesus seemed to be contrary to the prophecy of Isaiah, but they are not really so. Our Lord's message was so opposed by the Adversary that Satan sought to turn the majority of mankind against those whom the Lord was calling to follow Him. Hence the opposition against the Lord's true disciples, even by those of their own households. This is to test the sincerity of Christ's followers. The same tests are being applied to the true Christian today. When the Lord's people remember this, they are not surprised at the opposition which comes to them as they seek to walk in the footsteps of the Master.

We call to mind when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the ass and was proclaimed King of Israel, a few days later when asked by Pilate, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" how strange His statement must have seemed at that time, as given in John 18:36,—"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world, . . . now is my kingdom not from hence." Our Lord wished to point out that He was not going to set up His kingdom at that time. Rather He was going to select a kingdom of heaven class, a band of people who would gladly walk in His steps of sacrifice and be prepared by the spirit of God, so that when His kingdom began they would be with Him to reign over the remainder of mankind in the wonderful Times of Restitution of all things. We can see, therefore, why our Lord said, My kingdom is not of this world—this order of things existing at that time. It was obvious that Jesus was not denying that He was a King, and would have a kingdom in due time, as indicated in John 18:37,—"Pilate said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou satest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." Everyone who is of the true disposition, everyone who has the heart desire to hear His voice, either at that time or through His Word right down to our own day, has been blessed by Jesus' words.

While, then, our Lord indicated His kingdom "was not from hence", not from that time onward, and He was not at that time fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy of establishing peace on earth, yet He did give an inward peace to His devoted followers before His death, and encouraged them to expect a greater peace in their hearts after His resurrection when the holy spirit was given, as indicated in the words of John 14:26, 27,—"But the Comforter, which is the holy spirit, which the Father will send in my name, it shall teach you all things . . . Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." These words to His little band, then, was a message of consolation to their hearts, that they might be sustained, supported and comforted when the crucial time came and the Master was taken and crucified. Could they then have peace? "Peace I leave with you ... Let not your heart be troubled." Coupled with this message of peace to the hearts of His people, the Lord warned against the trials and difficulties to be encountered on the Christian pathway, so His followers would not be unduly discouraged when He gave them the words found in John 16:32, 33,—"Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own . . . In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer;

I have overcome the world."

How impressive also are our Lord's words given in John 16:7, showing it was essential that He make the supreme sacrifice so the holy spirit, God's power, would come into the hearts of His people and direct and guide them throughout the whole Gospel Age, between Christ's first and second advents. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send it unto you." It was absolutely essential that the Lord provide the

sacrifice for mankind, be risen from the dead, and then the holy spirit would come upon certain ones to commence the selection of the Church members who are going to reign with Christ in His kingdom.

At the same time, Jesus was providing the sacrifice for the whole world of mankind. As John tells us in 1 John 2:

2,—”He is the propitiation (satisfaction) for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” So we see that while it was such a trial to lose the Master, it was expedient, absolutely essential that He pay the death penalty for mankind, and then God’s plan could go forward so beautifully in accordance with His wonderful provision at that time. Then, at the second advent, He would gather His true people into the heavenly kingdom, as He promised,—”I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am (to be) ye may be also.” All down the Gospel Age the Lord has been selecting His people, those whom the Father has been drawing by His holy spirit, selecting one here and there out of all nations, kindreds and tongues, that they might have a part with Christ in this wonderful kingdom He will establish following His second advent.

It is at this time Christ’s true followers are to be with Him in the heavenly phase of the kingdom, and the prophecy of Isaiah 9 will have its fulfilment. We notice how beautifully this prophecy is worded,—”The government shall be upon his shoulder.” The word “government” carries the thought of “empire, or princely power.” The word “shoulder” in the Hebrew means “the neck (between the shoulders) as the place of burdens.” How well is this illustrated by the pictures we have seen of Atlas, with the whole world on the back of his neck. That is the thought Isaiah gives us in this prophecy concerning our Lord,—”The government shall be upon his shoulder.” How re-assuring it is to know the Lord will shoulder all responsibility for world government in the “new heavens and new earth”, which follow the passing of this present heavens and earth—the passing of “this present evil world”,—from the Flood in Noah’s day to the time of Christ’s second advent.

Verse 6 continues, “And his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor.” The word “wonderful” in the Hebrew carries the thought of “a miracle, anything wonderful or singular.” The word “Counsellor” means to give counsel, to advise. What a reliable Adviser our Lord will be, in His wonderful Kingdom!

In addition to the Lord’s true followers of this Gospel Age being associated with Christ in His heavenly kingdom,

He is to have representatives also on earth, and these are also called “counsellors” in Isa. 1:26. This is a promise that when the Lord’s kingdom is established He will restore these capable leaders of men who were so used of God away back in the times prior to our Lord’s first advent. Speaking for God, Isaiah says,—”I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning.” What a wonderful time it will be, when the Lord brings back all these able administrators of past ages! They will be His representatives on the earth. The word “counsellor” in this verse is exactly the same as that used in respect of the Lord Himself. They will represent the Lord and administer the earthly kingdom. We have the same thought presented in Psa. 45; 16,—”Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.” These “princes” will be sent throughout the earth as Christ’s messengers, being the prophets and patriarchs mentioned in Hebrews 11,—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Moses, Joshua, Daniel, etc.,—and what wonderful counsellors they will be! They will be guided by the Chief Counsellor, even Christ and His Church associated with Him in heavenly glory.

Our verse in Isa. 9:6 continues, “The Mighty God.” In Heb. 1:3-5 the Apostle tells us about the Lord and how He first came to pay the sacrifice, and is risen to the Father’s right hand. “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person . . . when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels . . . For unto which of

the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" God did not say that to any of the angels, but He did say it to this great Son, even Christ. Heb. 1:8 reads,—”But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.” This is not implying the doctrine of the Trinity; Christ is a mighty god as the exalted Son at the Father’s right hand, but the eternal Jehovah is the Almighty Father. Christ is a mighty god, at the Father’s right hand, to administer the Kingdom as God’s representative. Incidentally, the word “mighty” carries the thought of all-powerful. This is translated “champion” in 1 Sam. 17:50, 51, in respect of the giant Goliath, whom David slew. “So David prevailed over the Philistine, . . . and when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.” What a mighty One our Lord will be, to champion the cause of all mankind,—those who will respond to the laws of His kingdom at that time!

Then comes the term “The Everlasting Father.” This is most interesting. Our Lord is called the “second or last Adam”, in contrast with the first Adam, in 1 Cor. 15:45, 47. We read in respect of the first Adam, “So it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.” This, of course, implies the Lord being raised a great spirit being, and He has the power, as a quickening spirit, to give life. That is the thought behind the words “Everlasting Father.” Adam was the father of the human race. Christ, being the great Saviour, is the second Adam, or second life-giver. There is a great distinction between our Lord being the Everlasting Father to all humanity, and God Himself being the Eternal Father, the source of all life. The Heavenly Father is the life-giver for the Church of this Gospel Age, the spiritual sons of God class. They are God’s sons, and Christ Himself is the great Chief Son of the Father. In Heb. 2:9 we read how the ransom of Christ is presented,—”We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels . . . that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” That means that every human being is to benefit by the sacrifice of Christ, and be raised in the resurrection day. Then in verse 11 we see that the relationship between Christ and His Church is such, that “he is not ashamed to call them brethren.” Isn’t that amazing, that the Lord Jesus is not ashamed to call His followers His brethren, for they are also sons of God, even as He is the Chief Son.

But now, in our prophecy of Isaiah, the Everlasting Father has reference to Christ as the life-giver to mankind, after the Church are with Him in glory. So we see the first Adam and the first Eve gave life to all humanity. The second Adam and Eve, Christ and the Church with Him, will give human life to all the families of the earth, because Christ “tasted death for every man.”

In Matt. 19:28, speaking to His disciples, His faithful followers, Jesus said, “Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” In the time of “regeneration”— resurrection, reawakening— when the Church is with Christ, they will awaken from the death condition all the families of the earth. “They that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.” What a wonderful time this is going to be, when all mankind are regenerated, resurrected, restored to life again! This will be “Times of restitution.” “Restitution” means to restore back to a condition previously enjoyed. Our first parents enjoyed the beautiful paradise in the Garden of Eden, and that is just what this world will be like. The earth shall yield her increase; the land that was desolate shall be like the Garden of Eden. What a wonderful time for all humanity!

“The Prince of Peace.” The word “prince” means “a head person.” It is also translated “general”, “keeper”, “ruler” and “governor.” Daniel 12:1 tells us about this same Prince of Peace,—”At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people.” This is the One who takes control of earth’s affairs, and with His Church will administer the world for a thousand years.

Again, in Psa. 22:27, 28 we have a lovely quotation in respect of our Lord’s princship, the word “governor” being translated from the same Hebrew as prince. “All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is

the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations." What a Governor! He will administer everything from on high with His Church, down through the heavenly angels no doubt, to the "princes in all the earth", and then to all the families of the earth for their blessing under the wonderful administration of the kingdom.

In Daniel 2 we are shown how the Lord's kingdom will dissolve the kingdoms of earth. This helps us to see the passing of this present order, and the setting up of God's kingdom of peace, of which our verse of Iso. 9 declares,—"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." Christ's kingdom will last for all time. He will lay justice to the line and righteousness to the plummet.

Psa. 72 also pictures the administration of Christ's kingdom and the blessings that are to flow out from the Prince of Peace, thus depicting in prophecy this same time Isaiah presents to us. "Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son. He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills by righteousness. He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. They shall fear (reverence) thee as long as the sun and moon endureth, throughout all generations." What a lovely picture this is of the refreshment the Lord will bestow! He will be the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in His wings. The Lord said of His followers that they also are to shine forth "as the sun in the kingdom of their Father",—shine forth with Him to heal and bless and uplift. "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth." There will be a regrowth, rein- vigation, new life. "In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.

He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." This means, of course, for all time. The earth abideth for ever, and no doubt will be a most wonderful place for restored humanity.

The closing words of our verses in Isaiah's prophecy are,—"The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this." The results do not depend upon man's strength, for the power of God will administer the kingdom through Christ, for the benefit of every individual on earth. The Lord is setting His seal that there can be no failure in His plans and purposes. They that will not hear (obey) "that Prophet" shall be destroyed from among the people. Then, even death itself will be done away with. "The last enemy to be destroyed is death",—it will be wiped away from the whole planet of earth.

So can we not rejoice in the message given at the birth of our Saviour,—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men", made possible by the sacrifice of Christ, the Prince of Peace, and to the praise of God for all eternity.

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Convention News

THE gatherings at the Annual Convention arranged by the Melbourne Class over the Christmas season were very helpful for all in attendance. We are very grateful to the Lord for His blessings throughout, making it a real season of refreshing. Brethren were gladly welcomed from five of the Australian States, and the attendance throughout was very good, especially on the last day of the assemblies.

During the Convention two Bible Studies were conducted on the Scriptures—Matt. 6:9-13, and Luke 12. 32-38. Both proved really helpful, giving all present opportunity for discussion on the main thoughts in The Lord's Prayer, and the passage in Luke 12 which has application to our own days as well as earlier in the Gospel Age. Thoughts on these studies are included in the Convention Notes now also available to all friends desiring these. The article in this issue of "Peoples Paper"—"Thoughts on Luke 12:32-38"—also provides helpful details on these verses.

The addresses by the brethren contributed largely to the benefits of the gatherings on the variety of subjects as follows—'Running the Race'; "The Firstfruits"; "Jesus Did Not Forfeit Human Life"; "Luke 2:14"; "Enabled By The Lord"; "Unbelief"; "Assyria and Nineveh in the Bible"; "The Sword of the Spirit"; "Chosen Vessels"; "The Secret Things of God"; "The Prince of Peace Brings Peace Through His Kingdom"; and "A Vessel Unto Honour, Sanctified." Notes on each of these addresses appear in the Convention Notes, and some will be published in full in the "Peoples Paper" as space allows. We were sorry that one of our brethren was hindered from contributing with an address on account of illness.

During the Fellowship Meetings messages of greetings with Christian love were conveyed to the gathering from Classes and individual brethren throughout Australia, and were warmly appreciated, as also were the messages from overseas from Brother and Sister Pollock of U.S.A. and Brother Mann of West Germany, both these coming to hand just after the Convention ended. The passage of Scripture—Luke 12:32-38—was sent from the Convention to all who had sent messages, and to all who love the Lord, with Christian greetings from all assembled. The "Hymns We Love and Why" session was also appreciated by all. It was encouraging also to have about a dozen newly interested friends present at the Public Lecture on the afternoon of the final day of Convention. Praise and Testimony was also given by a number of the brethren at two of the fellowship sessions; the expressions of gratitude to the Lord for all His favors being helpfully related.

It was a pleasure again to have in attendance a number of our Melbourne Polish brethren, and it is hoped that the language difference may be overcome to allow more fellowship with these brethren in the days ahead. As usual the Convention closed with the Love Feast while singing the hymns "Blest be the tie that binds", and "God be with you till we meet again." A final prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord, and seeking His blessing upon all assembled and His people everywhere concluded the very profitable 1968 Melbourne Convention.

Thoughts on Luke 12:32-38.

IN verse 32 we have a very wonderful promise; one of those very comforting and encouraging assurances which convey to the hearts of the Lord's true disciples His deep and loving concern for His consecrated church. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." We note the encouraging words, "Fear not." Our Lord frequently used this word of helpfulness to His followers. See Matt. 10:28-31; Rev. 1:17; John 16:33. By our Lord referring to His disciples as a "little flock", we are reminded that God's purpose during this Gospel Age has not been to convert whole nations, but rather to "take out of the world a people for his name", (Acts 15:14), in all a "little flock." "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." What an encouraging and inspiring thought is this! In Eph. 1:4 we are assured that "God hath chosen us (the church—the little flock) in Christ before the foundation of the world." See Eph. 2:4-10; John 16:26, 27; 10:27, 28; 17:21-24; 1 Thes. 2:12. God has very graciously stated and restated this matter in His Word, in order that all doubts may be removed from the hearts of His people; and to enable them to lay hold firmly upon these exceeding great and precious promises. See 2 Pet. 1:2-4; 1 Pet. 1:2; Rev. 3:21; Eph. 1:17-20. God really desires us,— "The Father himself loveth you." He wants us to respond earnestly to His call, and become copy-likenesses of Christ,—Rom. 8:29.

Then in verses 33, 34 our Lord gives further helpful instruction to those who are seeking to walk in the Master's footsteps of self-denial and sacrifice at the present time. Those who have consecrated themselves to the Lord have given their bodies and all their possessions to Him; and now we become His stewards of all we have of time, and strength, and means, that we may use these as His servants. We are to seek **first** (chiefly) the Kingdom of God and His righteousness—setting our affection upon things above.

Verse 33,— "Sell that ye have, and give alms." We are reminded of our Lord's advice to the rich young ruler; Matt. 19:21-23; also Matt. 13:44-46; and 1 Tim. 6:17-19. When our Lord sent out the twelve disciples He said, "Freely ye have received, freely give." (Matt. 10:8.) The Lord's consecrated people become stewards of all they possess of time and strength and means, to use these in His service and for His glory. (See Volume 6, pages 572-576.) "Provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth neither moth corrupteth." The word "bags" here, means purses, or the bags attached to their girdles, in which they carried their money. Diaglott—"Make for yourselves purses which grow not old." Our Lord means that we should lay up treasure in heaven. Purses, here, grow old and useless. Wealth takes to itself wings. Riches are easily scattered, or **we** must soon leave them; but that wealth which is in heaven abides forever. It is never corrupted; never flies away; never is to be left. It is not liable either to violence or to decay. (1 Pet. 1:4.)

Verse 34,— "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (See Col. 3:2; Matt. 6:19-21.) "Reprints"- 5396,— "From the time of making their full consecration to be the Lord's servants, faithful unto death in the service of righteousness, the Lord's people will regard that heavenly kingdom as the great treasure beyond all comparison of value. They will seek it daily, hourly. Their hearts will be there—with the treasure. It will be the theme of their thoughts by day and of their meditations by night. Earthly occupations will still be necessary to them, in order to provide things decent and honest; but no earthly prize will have any value in comparison to the heavenly prize in their estimation. Such will be successful heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to those who love Him more than they love houses or lands, parents or children or self." (Phil. 3:8; James 2:5.)

In verses 35-38 our Lord gives us a parable to illustrate and to teach His disciples the necessity of maintaining an alert and watchful attitude of heart and mind toward the Lord and His truth. Our Lord would have us to be like servants who maintain the attitude of alertness, vigilance, watchfulness—not

allowing ourselves to grow weary in well-doing. The loins are to be girded in readiness for service. The lamps are to be kept trimmed and burning in anticipation of the return of the master. Our Lord is certainly exhorting us here to watchfulness and prayerfulness. How we are reminded of our Lord's words in Luke 21:34-36, (please read), also Matt. 26:41.

“Reprints”-2692—“Our Lord gave a parable, as was His custom in teaching, to illustrate the lesson of the necessity for watchfulness. A wealthy house-holder is represented as absent for a considerable portion of the night at a wedding-feast, and expected on his return that the servants of the household would be awake and alert to receive him and any company he might bring with him. It was expected of such servants that they would not only not retire to bed, but that they would not even get drowsy. To give their master a proper reception they would be thoroughly awake, quick to hear and to respond to his knock, and ‘open unto him immediately.’ Hence in the parable, such servants are represented as having their loins girt about and their lamps burning brightly. The custom of Orientals at that time was to wear long, loose, flowing robes. These, when they were resting, were loosened at the girdle, but when attending to business they were drawn tightly at the waist with a girdle or belt, preventing them from interfering with proper service. Lamps, which were the mode of illumination, were also necessary in the night, and should not be permitted to grow dim, but be trimmed as necessity required. Our Lord points out that such faithful servants would be appreciated by their master, and that he would give them a reward—he would honour them by treating them as his friends, and bring forth to them of the good things from his pantry. He would indeed gird himself as a servant and serve these faithful ones; and for the master of the house to do this would imply the bringing forth of the very best that he possessed. But in order to fulfil the conditions and be thus acceptable to their master they must be ready in whatever hour of the night he might come.

“The parable, without question, refers to the second coming of our Lord Jesus, and points out to all of His faithful servants the proper attitude of watchfulness and preparation to receive Him at whatever time His second advent should occur. It also indicates that it was the Lord's good pleasure not to reveal definitely and positively to His people when to expect His arrival, but rather that all the way down through this night-time which is designated the Gospel Age, and which must necessarily precede the morning of the Millennial Age, they should be continually awake, alert, waiting for Him, ready to receive Him at any moment. They should have the loins of their minds girt up and be active in thought, in word and in deed, in every matter pertaining to the Master's service, that they might be approved of Him;—the lamp of the divine Word, so necessary to their enlightenment, should be with them, and well supplied with the oil of the holy spirit—and well trimmed, in the sense of rightly dividing the word of truth, and seeking to understand through it their proper attitude of heart and conduct, to be pleasing to their Master.

“The parable is a very simple one, and could scarcely be misapprehended by the class for whom all parables are intended—the consecrated church. These realise at once, that the central thought with them, as the Lord's servants, must be such readiness of heart and mind and character as will be pleasing to the Master when He shall come to gather

His jewels’—His watching, faithful servants. This thought of the return of the Lord, and of the blessings which He has promised to His faithful ones at that time, is the great incentive set before the called ones of this Gospel Age. It is for the Master's favour, and the consequent exaltation with Him to a share in His kingdom, then to be established, and a share in the great work of blessing the world of mankind, then to be accomplished, that all the saints are seeking, watching, praying, striving. See 1 Thes. 5:1-8; Rev. 3:20; 19:7, 8; Luke 17:34-37.”

Verse 37,—“Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.” See Volume 3, page 196,—“Already by faith the Lord's consecrated people are enjoying the promised feast, as the present Bridegroom makes known to them the exceeding great and precious things

in reservation for His elect Bride, and reveals to them His great work of blessing and restoring the world, in which it will be the privilege of the Bride to share. Surely, as we enter the reception room and see the evidence of the coming feast of Kingdom favour, we are already entering into the joys of our Lord. Already we have a foretaste of the good things to come. Already we are feasting mentally, upon the richest bounties of His grace. By faith we are already seated at the Master's table, and He Himself, according to promise (this verse 37), has come forth and is serving us. This feasting by faith on the precious truths disclosed during this harvest time began in 1875, at the close of the 1335 days (Daniel 12:12), in the beginning of the harvest, and is the blessedness foretold by the prophet, saying, 'Oh, the blessedness of him that waiteth earnestly and cometh unto the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days'."

Also Volume 2, page 171,—"During this time of our Lord's secret presence (His Parousia) the Lord has opened unto us the Scriptures, showing us truths concerning His present glorious nature, the object, manner, and time of His coming, and the character of His manifestations to the household of faith and to the world. He has drawn our attention to the prophecies which definitely locate us on the stream of time, and has shown us the order of His plan of operations in this harvest time. He has shown us, first of all, that it is a harvest of the saints, a time for their full ripening, and for their separation from the tares (Rev. 14:13-16); and secondly, that it is a time for the world to reap its whirlwind harvest—for the reaping of the vine of the earth, and the treading of its fruitage in the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God." (See **Rev. 14:1-4, 18-20.**)

Verse 38,—"And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants." Our Lord did not inform His servants beforehand of the exact time of His second presence. Withholding this information has had the beneficial effect of keeping His consecrated servants in the watchful, alert attitude of heart and mind. We are living today in a very favored period. Have we heard the Master's "knock"?—due to be heard in this Laodicean period of Church history. Rev. 3:20,—"Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." The Lord's consecrated ones may now discern by faith—with the eyes of their understanding,—the "signs of Christ's presence"; and with loins girded, and lamps (the Word of God) trimmed and burning, may hear the announcement—"Behold the Bridegroom"; and obey the call—"Go ye out to meet Him." (Matt. 25:6.) What a blessing awaits those who hear and obey this call. (See also Rev. 18:4.)

Our lamps are trimmed and burning,
Our robes are white and clean,
We've tarried for the Bridegroom,
And now we'll enter in.
We know we've nothing worthy
That we can call our own
The light, the oil, the robes we wear,
Are all from Him alone.

God's Inheritance in the Saints.

“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his (God's) inheritance in the saints.” (Eph. 1:18.)

WHEN we read and think about the subject of inheritance as presented in the Bible, our minds generally dwell upon the reward that the followers of the Lord will receive upon their proving faithful unto death. This we have stated in the latter part of Revelation 2:10—“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

This is quite understandable, for the majority of New Testament passages referring to an inheritance do apply to the heavenly reward of the saints of this Gospel Age. We believe that our text in Ephesians 1:18 is one of the few in the New Testament which refers so directly to the thought, not of the saints' inheritance, but to **God's inheritance in the saints**. Some people may ask, Is there really any difference in the two thoughts? A careful examination will show that the Lord and the Apostles revealed quite a difference, even though it is not apparent on the surface.

To illustrate, let us examine two texts of Scripture applying to the next age. Firstly, in Psa. 2:6-8, we have the record of God saying to Christ—“Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for **thine inheritance**, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” Christ has purchased the whole human race, and He is going to ask for them to be His inheritance in God's due time. Secondly, in Matthew 25:34 we have the reward for the world of mankind at the end of the Millennial Age revealed. “Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, **inherit the kingdom** prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Here we have the Lord assuring those who are of the “sheep” class that they will inherit this wonderful kingdom on the restored earth, whereas in the Psalm we see mankind is to be given to Christ for an inheritance.

In another comparison of texts which apply to the saints of this Gospel Age we have Daniel 7:22 and Mal. 3:17. In Daniel we read: “The Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints **possessed** the kingdom.” In other words, they are shown as entering into their inheritance, the wonderful heavenly reward; whereas in Malachi it is stated—“They **shall be mine**, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.” Does this mean that the saints become the possession of God only when they are “made up” as the Bride of Christ? No, indeed, they are prospectively His inheritance, His possession, from the beginning of the Christian way, but as there is a possibility of coming short or falling away, they are not fully His until proved faithful unto death.

Let us note some texts which help us to see that we really become the possession or inheritance of our Heavenly Father right from the beginning of the first impulses of the Christian life. In John 6:44 our Lord says—“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” We see here the Father's drawing influence upon those in a right heart condition, those who are yearning for something better than the present life. The Father acts upon their hearts and minds, drawing them towards the One whom He has sent to be the Saviour of the world. So accepting Christ, they become justified by faith.

We read further in Romans 12:1, “I beseech ye therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto **God**, which is your reasonable service.” God has drawn these to Jesus. In presenting their bodies now, they are acceptable to God. He is the One who is vitally and overall interested in them because they have accepted the sacrifice of His Son, the means of approach to Him and they really become God's possession when they present their lives to Him.

In 2 Cor. 1:21, 22 we read, “Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the spirit in our hearts.” When we grasp the meaning of the word “sealed” we begin to realise what a relationship is implied in being a member of God’s inheritance. It means to stamp with a signet or private mark, for security or preservation. This of course implies a marking as of ownership, and the same Greek word is used with reference to our Lord Jesus, as is used for the saints. In John 6:27 we have a reference to our Lord’s own sealing—“For him hath God the Father sealed.” We may ask, But did not Jesus always belong to the Father, even as the Logos? If so, what is implied by the Father sealing Him?

This undoubtedly refers to the begetting of our Lord Jesus when He was 30 years of age for the highest inheritance of all, the divine nature. And in being begotten for that heavenly inheritance He also became God’s inheritance or possession of the highest order; and this is the same sealing for possession or inheritance upon every member of the saints, who are walking in the steps of Christ.

Let us note Eph. 1:13, 14 in this connection. “In whom (Christ) ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance.” This refers to a foretaste or prepayment of our inheritance “until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

Of our Lord Jesus we read in Heb. 1:9, “Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” Of course, our Lord Jesus was anointed above all others, but we notice that these “fellows” are also anointed with the same “oil of gladness.” Just to realise that to the full! And we do well to ask ourselves, How is the “oil of gladness” working in our lives? Is it provoking us unto love and to good works amongst our “fellows” who are also members of God’s inheritance? We know it is possible for the work of the “oil of gladness” to be somewhat hindered by our own will, by self getting in the way, restricting the lubrication, so to speak, of our hearts and minds. A blockage in the lubrication system of any machinery is serious, and especially is this so in the hearts and minds of those called to be members of God’s inheritance.

The Apostle exhorts us along this line in Eph. 4:29-32. This helps us to co-operate with God in appreciation of the holy spirit dwelling in our hearts. Reading from verse 29—“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers. And grieve not the holy spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

2 Cor. 6:16, 18 helps us to see the favor of the Lord to those so blessed as to be invited into this wonderful inheritance of God, by the indwelling of the holy spirit. “Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And I will be a Father unto them, and they shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

I want to be marked for Thine own;
Thy seal on my forehead to wear;
To receive that “new name” on the mystic white stone,
Which only Thyself canst declare.

I want Thine own hand to unbind
Each tie to terrestrial things,
Too tenderly cherished, too closely entwined,
Where my heart too tenaciously clings.

I want, by mine aspect serene,
Mine actions and words, to declare
That my treasure is placed in a country unseen,
That my heart and affections are there.

I want, as a traveller, to haste
Straight onward, nor pause on my way,
No forethought or anxious contrivance to waste
On my tent, only pitched for a day.

Adelaide Easter Convention

The Adelaide brethren are arranging for their Easter Convention this year from Good Friday to Easter Monday (D.V.), in Manchester Unity Building (2nd Floor), 16 Franklin Street, Adelaide. Further information from the secretary—Mrs. R. Jordan, 14 Newark Road, Torrens Park, South Australia, 5062.

Passover Memorial 1969

The anniversary of the Memorial of Christ's death falls this year on the evening of Tuesday, 1st 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, 30th March, at 6.30 p.m., at Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond.

Adelaide—Sunday, 30th March, at 6.30 p.m., at Manchester Unity Building (2nd Floor), 16 Franklin Street, Adelaide.

Perth—Tuesday, 1st April, at 7.45 p.m., at 7 Harvest Terrace (opposite Parliament House).

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