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The Hidden Life with Christ.

THE more the child of God searches the Scriptures. the more firmly is he convinced, that of all those who have been called of God throughout this Gospel Age, and given a knowledge. of the plan of salvation, those who shall make up the class of chosen ones will be those who have in the complete sense hidden their lives in Christ. In other words, they will have given up all inheritance in the land, realising they have . . . continuing city here. but seek one to come. .

This by no means must be understood to indicate that the Christian must hide himself away from the world in which he lives, for every figure employed in the Scriptures to describe a follower of Christ teaches that it is impossible for him to live unto himself. If one is a true Christian, it will soon be known; his or her influence will be felt by others with whom there is association daily. Furthermore, these same figures teach that a Christian will at least be desirous that others will become followers of the one Master whom he is serving and seeking to please. No man can possibly be a Christian and enjoy a monopoly of its blessedness for himself. He will of necessity be more or less aggressive. And so we cannot be surprised that the worldly people with whom we come in contact should think us peculiar; it has been so with Christians all down the Gospel Age. When the Apostle Paul received the holy Spirit, inspiring him to newness of life, converting him from his former ways, his friends thought him beside himself. This, as we know, is because the worldly-minded cannot understand the things of God—they are foolishness to them.

We will remember our Lord's words to Nicodemus when he inquired concerning spiritual things. He said, "If I have told you earthly things, and you believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" The trouble with Nicodemus was that he did not have faith in Jesus; he was not in the proper condition to be taught concerning the spiritual riches. So it is with the vast majority of Christians to-day. There are so many who have accepted Jesus as their Saviour—have reached the condition of justification—but are content to go no further. They have never entered into the secret presence, and there alone with God given themselves to Him through Christ; by which means alone can the hidden riches of the spiritual life be received and understood.

So it is apparent that there are two acts of faith—the faith of justification and the faith of consecration. Our Lord Jesus did not require to take the first step, because He was never anything but just, or righteous. but He consecrated Himself by faith. He had such faith in His Father in heaven that He delighted to do His will. even though He knew that this meant the surrender of all His life rights as a human being; that He would be blotted out of existence, and that the mighty power of God would be required to raise Him from the dead to a new nature, the Divine nature. (Eph. 1:19, 20.) This does not require so much faith on

our part, because Christ was the first to rise from the dead. (Acts 26:23.) He led the way, and we know that what our Heavenly Father has done for Him He is abundantly .-able and willing to do for us.

The two acts of faith are shown in the fifth chapter of Romans. In the first verse we are told that it is by faith that we are justified and so have peace with God; and then in the next verse we are told further that it is by faith also that we have access into this grace wherein we stand, the grace or favour of sanctification, and so have hope of the glory of God. The first act of faith by which we are justified is the preparation of the ground, the heart. If the seed, the word or glad tidings of the .Kingdom is properly received into such a heart and takes root there, the New- Creature is 'begotten. The root is the faith of the New Creature, the second act of faith, the faith of consecration. It is the small beginning which eventually, if permitted to grow, will develop into the mature fruit-tree, the man of God, the New Creature in Christ Jesus.

In the first Psalm, verses one to three, the man of God is described ; "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law- of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season ; his leaf also shall not wither ; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

A tree planted by rivers of water, as a rule, has plenty-of life, because it has access to and absorbs plenty of water. The same tree, if transplanted to a desert, would soon die from lack of water. So it is with the man of God. It is only when he has access to the rivers of water of truth, the books of the Bible, that he can grow spiritually, and the more of the truth he absorbs and uses the more vitality he gets.

Before there can be a tree there must first be a seed, and when it is sown and takes root, no one is at first aware of the fact. It is not until the little root adds to itself a stem and the stern appears above the ground that we can say a seed has 'been planted there, and it has taken root.

When we present our bodies a living sacrifice to the Lord, the root of faith, the first step in the development of the " Creature is in our hearts, but at first no one knows it except ourselves. It is at this stage that our hidden life with Christ 'begins; but it is not until we add to our faith, fortitude, that others come to know that the Word of Truth has taken root. Fortitude is the first visible manifestation of the New Creature. If we do not develop fortitude our faith will die, just as in the case of the natural seed ; if a stem fails to appear the root will die.

Virtue or fortitude is that grace which enables us to give the truth to others, and to model our own lives by it, and to persevere in both in spite of opposition, and also in spite of repeated failures. At first, when we are only young plants, we bend at every blast of adversity; but, by and by, when we grow more mature. we are able to withstand any storm which may assail our faith in God and His truth. But we realise that anything we may accomplish in our own lives or in rendering assistance to others in the same Christian way is clone so by the holy spirit of God, the hidden influence, the illuminating power, without which no one can know the Lord. It has been truly said that there are a great number of people to-day who are religious, but of this number only a comparatively small portion live a spiritual life. And of those to whom the Lord has been pleased to bestow His spirit, all will agree that the Lord's power must continually dwell in us if we are to grow up strongly as New Creatures in Christ. ,Our Lord's own words are encouraging in this respect. He says: "The Heavenly Father is pleased to give the holy spirit to them that ask Him."

The Apostle Paul freely acknowledged that all that he and others had accomplished was through the influence of the power from on high. He writes encouragingly to the Hebrews, chapter 10, verses 32-34 : "Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions ; partly whilst ye were made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly

while ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.” The first impression that is conveyed by these words is that those to whom the Apostle is writing had received the Lord’s seal of sonship ; they had received the earnest of the spirit; they had been illuminated, and were thus able to endure a fight of afflictions ; they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods because, by the Lord’s spirit, they had their treasure in heaven. That sure hope was theirs, which all in the same condition have as an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast.

Having reached this condition, and endured faithfully to the present time, how much of fortitude, the courage of our faith all will need to hold fast to our home and also to be able to assist others.

To illustrate what is expected of the Christian we take the ‘figure employed by our Lord in the words, “Ye are the salt of the earth.” What is the nature of salt? Is it not to improve or give a beneficial savour to the substance with which it is mixed, or, as in one of its uses, to preserve that substance from corruption? As one has said, “An idea sometimes connected with salt is that it is transmissive of virtue; and if you, therefore, are the salt of the world, your part of the world will be touched by the savour of what you are, and so be benefited and blessed.” The figure of “salt” is used to show the silent, hidden, savoury influence or preservative qualities that go out from the Christian’s life, to a greater or less extent affecting others. That which produces this savoury influence may not always be known, and for this reason, if for no other, testimony for Christ and confession of Him will always be required and given.

The average Christian’s world, however, is very small. It is in this little world that his silent, hidden influence, like that of the salt, will be felt. However, the One who produces this influence will be confessed, otherwise the salt will have lost its savour, and is fit only to be thrown outside and trodden under the feet of men. (Matt. 5:13.)

Our Lord said also: “Ye are the light of the world.” A Christian, figuratively speaking, is a lamp lighted by the blessed truths of the Gospel. Is not a lamp lighted to diffuse light? If a man becomes a ‘Christian, the light of truth which has made him one will shine out to those around him. “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Cor. 4:6.)

The Christian’s world may be in the workshop, in the warehouse, the ‘bank, the farm or wherever he finds himself in God’s providence. It is in these places that the Lord designs his Christian profession to count. His home, however, is often the place where he needs to watch specially his influence. An English writer has said, “Some who are very ‘benevolent abroad, seem to have so expended their stores upon all mankind that they have not one ‘flash of sunshine for their own firesides. Some’ who are the greatest advocates in parliament for liberty to all are the greatest tyrants in their own homes.” The Christian needs to keep ever before his mind that, wherever and whenever he mingles with his fellowmen, his words, his conduct and even his manlier are having an influence for good or bad on the cause of Christ. For this reason he should cultivate the spirit of watchfulness and prayerfulness. It is in the little world in which we move six days in a week from morning to evening that our influence as Christians is felt. True Christianity does not lay aside its beautiful robe on Sunday night lest it should get soiled or become wrinkled by the rough year and tear of the week day. The true Christian recognises that it is his personal duty to do well the work that is assigned him in the “little world” in which God in His providence has placed him, and not to think that to do better it is necessary that his “little world” be enlarged. Our duty as bearers of the heavenly light is to let it shine in the sphere in which we find ourselves ; and when we have done this well, if the Master sees it best that we have wider sphere, He will also make provision for that.

On the other hand there are those who profess to be followers of our Lord and Saviour, who have obtained the impression that the more sanctity they possess the more they should keep by themselves and

avoid the society of the world altogether. There can be no question that there are scenes and places, many, in this world, that we are to avoid. Most of these are well known; a few are not so well known. The latter may only be discovered as we grow more spiritual, so that our consciences may be exercised to discern those things that do or do not exert an influence for our spiritual good and development. The very fact that there are in this world professed Christians—monks and nuns—who shun the world and live in monastries and convents, away from the world altogether, shows that there is a tendency, a temptation, at least, to go to extremes in that direction as well as in the other.

We should ever remember that our calling requires that we remain in the world, but not of it. Those who go into convents, if they are of those who be lights of the world, by so doing hide their light under a bushel, instead of letting it shine out in a world that is sadly in need of it. Those who have received the true light, and whose lives have been changed by it, are the very ones of whom the world has the greatest need.

(To be continued.)

How many people who can be generous with their money have yet to learn that the causes they would serve need something more powerful and less dangerous than their large donations—a humble spirit and a serving love?—Norman Goodall, M.A.

“What cloth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” How terrible is the thought that it is possible for one to exchange the “exceeding great and precious promises” of the eternal heavenly inheritance for the attainment of temporal earthly possessions and fleeting joys.

Guided by God's Eye.

"I will guide thee with Mine eye."—Psa. 32 : S.

THE eye is one of the most important organs of the body with which to give expression to the feelings. Either anger or pleasure are usually expressed by this means. One thought which we may take from the text is that one may be so desirous of doing the Divine will that he will be continually on the alert to please, just as a dutiful child, being on the alert to do the will of the parent, would look at the parent's eye, not waiting for the rod. So all of God's dear children of the Church should be looking unto Jesus for the expression of the Father's will concerning them. They look to Jesus as the Author of their faith and the One who shall be the Finisher of it. They look to Him as the great Counsellor and Guide of life. As we sometimes sing:

"Oh, let no earth-born cloud arise To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes"

Another thought is that as the eye is the symbol of wisdom, so God guides all things in wisdom. He sees to it that His children receive the necessary counsel, the necessary aid. Since He is the All ' One, nothing can escape His attention. Still another, thought is that as we recognise the Divine purpose, the Divine will, the Divine outworking of that will, we see that in the present time God is not trying to save the world, but only "the called." "the elect." who are obedient in sacrifice. All who are of the First-born should seek to follow the same course as God. to be co-workers with Him. They should have no will of their own, but do the Father's will.

One of the most important lessons for the spiritual Israelite to learn is to look to the Lord for leading in all of life's affairs—never to attempt any undertaking, either temporal or spiritual, without seeking to note the will of the Lord concerning it. We are marching toward the antitypical Canaan and know that other experiences are due us and must be undergone ere we can inherit the promises. 'Hie lesson for us is prompt and thorough obedience to the Lord's leadings without murmurings—with joyfulness ; and this can be expected only on the part of those who have learned the lessons previously given them, and above all, the lesson of faith—confidence in the Lord's power and goodness and faithfulness.

HEART PURITY.

“Thou must be true thyself If thou the truth would’st teach
Thy soul must overflow, if thou Another soul would’st reach;
It needs the overflow of heart To give the lips full speech.

“Think truly, and thy thoughts Shall the world’s famine feed;
Speak truly, and each word of thine Shall be a faithful seed;
Live truly, and thy life shall be A great and noble creed.”

PEOPLES PAPER.

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While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord’s Word,
we cannot accept responsibility for every expression ”sed, either in the correspondence or in the sermons
reported,

A Cross (x) on the wrapper indicates that the subscription to “ Peoples Paper” is overdue.

“The Christian World”

The following are cuttings from “The Christian World” :—

The topsy-turvydom of the economic-world has surely never before reached so ridiculous a position.
Delegate after delegate made the same point. The cry of every country was, “We have plenty to sell; we
are ready and anxious to buy the things we want for the things we possess in plenty.” Persia and Greece,
Haiti and Roumania, China, Japan, and the South American States, equally with the Great Powers,
proclaimed that in each of their lands was plenty of the good things of life, and that at the same time each
of their lands was hungry for the good things of other nations. Two things prevent a transfer—first, want
of confidence that credit is good; secondly, the tariff walls over which it is impossible to pass goods out
and receive goods back in exchange.—J. H. Harris, re League of Nations Assembly at Geneva.

Canon Raven, addressing the Modern Churchmen’s Conference at Oxford recently, said that “everywhere
mankind is aware that its development has reached a critical stage, everywhere it feels the restlessness
and excitement of the times, then with a certain exhilaration, then with an increasing perplexity, finally
with a dangerous conviction of its helplessness—a sense of impotence not far from despair, which is
liable to find expression rather in random grumbling or in sadder acceptance of wild and irrational
remedies.” . . . But Canon Raven, going deeper, discovers three features in the world crisis() The
necessity to secure world unity, (2) the necessity to exalt human personality above machinery and

possessions, and (3) the necessity to achieve a wider fellowship. which correspond to the three chief tenets of the Christian faith—(1) The universal Fatherhood of God with its corollary that mankind is one family, (2) belief in Jesus as embodying in His personality the revelation of God and demonstrating the supremacy of personality, and (3) belief in the Holy Spirit, whose first-fruits, love, joy, and peace, are made evident in fellowship binding humanity into an organic unity.

The Lord's words are being fulfilled in these days. "Men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for these he the days of vengeance that all things that are written may be fulfilled."—Luke 21:26, 22.

This fulfilment was noted in "The Age" editorial, February 17th, 1932 :—"While as a people we grapple with internal problems, it is essential, and may -be somewhat helpful, to reflect that these problems are but a microcosm of the wider world. Statesmen of all countries are palpably bewildered; there is inure than tacit agreement among them that the crisis has got beyond them."

All can now see the extremity to which mankind is being driven, and many of the best minds are being exercised to devise means to avoid if possible the breakdown of the present civilisation.

The human race is, however, too much steeped in sin, selfishness, greed, avarice, and ambition for wealth and position for any scheme of human invention to save it from wreck. It will be found that no human arm can bring the deliverance and inaugurate a state of equity and peace. That will be the work of "One that is mighty," One who will put "judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet." The selfish, greedy workers of iniquity will no longer be able to operate things.

All evil influences will be restrained, and instead of Satanic spirit of strife and wrong there will be the holy spirit of Christ, the new Prince—the Prince of Peace. The influences will be to encourage righteousness and brotherhood, "peace and goodwill toward God and man."

Students of prophecy have seen for many years that we were very near the close of this dispensation—we are living - in the end of the world or age—and that soon the new age would be ushered in, "the world to come wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Pet. 3:13.)

While we long to see this earth made a happy home for the human family, we recognise that the "day of vengeance" must first break down the pride of man and bring him to know that there can be no life or peace apart from God. Man's heart must be changed before peace and goodwill prevail. So it is that the Scriptures indicate the great time of trouble which we see approaching. It must prepare mankind for the new age, it being represented as a fiery time of trouble.

The end of the Jewish Age was also referred to in prophecy as a time when the "chaff" should be burned with fire -and the vine (Israel) be burned up. (Ezek. 15.)

When the present systems of unrighteousness have 'been destroyed in this fiery indignation that is to devour the whole earth (human society), then the people will turn to the Lord with one consent. The Kingdom of 'grist will be established and it will be just what every good heart longs for—"the desire of all nations." "He shall judge the people with righteousness and thy poor with judgment. The mountains shall bring peace to the people and the little hills by righteousness. He shall save the children of the needy and break in pieces the oppressor . . ." (Psa. 72.)

MEMORIAL OF OUR LORD'S DEATH.

All the Lord's consecrated people truly desire to memorialise His death with "unleavened bread" and "fruit of the vine," as emblems of His broken body and shed blood; and mention is made again, that, according to the Jewish date, the evening of Tuesday, April 19th, will be the appropriate time this year.

Some ecclesias may have chosen an earlier date, but, in any case, there is a special blessing in observing this annual privilege which none should neglect for any reason. If any feel discouraged there is special need to partake of the broken loaf, asking the Lord for a fresh realisation of justification and a fresh appreciation of our consecration to be broken (sacrificed) with Him, as reckoned members of the one loaf—His Church, His Body. Then as we taste of "this cup" remember that it speaks of our Lord's sufferings on our behalf—His tasting death for every man. Remember, also, that this is "our high calling "to suffer with Him that we may also reign with Him." This is the significance of His words, "Drink ye all of it."

Let nothing hinder us in deep and solemn, yet joyful appreciation—neither sins, nor coldness, nor feelings of unworthiness. Go to the Lord and make a clean breast of all shortcomings, also to any brethren whom we may have wronged, making full acknowledgment, whether they acknowledge faults toward us or not. Thus, getting right with the Lord, and so far as possible with every man, we may eat—feast upon the rich provision the Lord has made for all who accept, now, or in a later "due time,"

"AND SITTING DOWN THEY WATCHED HIM THERE."

(Matt. 27:36).

Sitting down, they watched Him there,
Watched Him, fairest of the fair,
Gazed with cold, un pitying eye,
While the jeering crowd passed by;

For His vesture cast a lot
(Seamless robe, without a spot);
Watched the "Man of Sorrows" there,
Who the world's great sin must bear;

Watched while darkness veiled the sun,
Watched until He cried, "'Tis done!"
God of heaven! forbid that I
Thus should gaze with pitiless eye

On a suffering child of Thine,
Watch him while his foes malign,
Watch him while his life-blood flows,
Watch until the dark day's close;

Grant me, Lord, a heart of love,
Make me like a tender dove;
Let me bring him strength and peace,
Until death shall send release!

—G.W.S.

Correspondence,

Victoria, 8/3/32.

Dear Brother,—Please find enclosed P. Note, in payment for another year of the “Peoples Paper.” Sorry have become over-due with my subscription.

However. I hope that you may have a very successful year with your work, strengthened by God’s good grace, and the helpful prayers of all the brethren. The surplus money please devote to whatsoever you deem most needful.

I remain, Yours in Christ, S.G M.,

New South Wales.

Dear Sirs and Brothers,—I am desirous of supplying a copy of “The Divine Plan of the Ages” to a friend, and should be pleased if you would send a copy to the address.

I am not much more than a child, but I have recently come to some knowledge of our dear Lord’s will. I have already read part of the book myself, and found it more helpful than words can express. I feel that God’s kingdom is very, very near to us at present.

With earnest Christian love and earnest hopes for the future. A.C.

New Zealand. Berean Biblical Institute.

Dear Sirs,—In your paper, “The Voice,” which I have read with a very great deal of pleasure, and received great help therefrom, you announce the free gift of literature on subjects of great interest to me, and I would, therefore, request that you, in your goodness, would please send me the complete set mentioned if you can spare them. If not able to spare the set, would you please send the following:—”Our Lord’s Return,” “Do the Dead Know Anything: Where are They ?” “The Bible Teaching on Hell and Spiritism.” These are subjects I am genuinely interested in, and would be glad if you would let me have what you can spare. I know you will think I am very greedy, but I plead the honest desire to help my fellows to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ; that being so, if you can spare two copies of each I will promise to see that they are given to people who will read them and who are deeply interested in everything which tends to spread the Gospel. Thanking you in anticipation and praying that God’s blessing may be upon your efforts.

I am, yours in Christian Service (Mrs.) H. L.

Show Me Thy Face_

Show me Thy face—one transient gleam
Of loveliness Divine,
And I shall never think or dream
Of other love than Thine;

All lesser lights will darken quite,
All lower glories wane,
The beautiful of earth will scarce
Seem beautiful again.

Show me Thy face—my faith and love
Shall henceforth fixed be,
And nothing here have power to move
My soul's serenity.

My life shall seem a trance, a dream,
And all I feel and see,
Illusive, visionary—
Thou The one reality.

Show me Thy face—I shall forget
The weary days of yore;
The fretting ghosts of vain regret
Shall haunt my soul no more.

All doubts and fears for future years
In quiet trust subside;
And naught but blest content and calm
Within my breast abide.

Show me Thy face—the heaviest cross
Will then seem light to bear;
There will be gain in every loss,
And peace with every care.

With such light feet the years will fleet,
Life will seem brief as blest,
Till I have laid by burden clown
And entered into rest.

To work fearlessly, to follow earnestly after truth, to rest with a childlike confidence in Gods guidance, to leave ones lot willingly and heartily to Him—this is my sermon to myself. If we could live more within sight of heaven, we should care less for the turmoil of earth. -

J.R.G.

To the Law and the Testimony.

(Extract from “Old Paths.”)

PERHAPS the most subtle of the various false prophet systems which have arisen amongst the Lord’s people to-day are those whose chief burden from the Lord is to the effect that doctrine is more or less unnecessary, if not indeed harmful, to the interests of the Lord’s people. Surely such teaching is the climax of ingenuity on the part of the great Adversary, and who but the arch-enemy himself would attempt to foist such a paradoxical theory upon the intelligence of the Lord’s people?

After all, what do we understand by doctrine? Many of the Lord’s followers seem to think that they can dispense with doctrine and still retain the truth. Such reasoning is all wrong, and this should be evident when we realise that the term doctrine is; merely descriptive of the truths which we have heard and believed and without which we would know nothing whatever of the will of God. Apart from the doctrines as set forth by our Lord and His Apostles and in the Scriptures generally. we have no truth concerning either God Himself, His character, His plan, or what His purpose is in this day.

The Adversary’s tactics, however, through these modern false prophets, are more subtle than bluntly to deny outright the importance and need of sound doctrine. In proclaiming their vision of the Lord, in regard to this matter, they are artful enough to state it both ways, that is, both for and against—in one breath seeming to affirm the importance of doctrine and in the next stating that it is non-essential. The result is that since their negative attitude towards the Christian doctrines cancels out their lukewarm support thereof, their hearers are left astonished at their marvellous wisdom. Should, however, any of the Lord’s sheep within hearing detect the sound of a strange voice, their fears may at once be allayed by the suggestion that it was their hearing and not the voice of the false shepherd which was at fault.

Why not demand from all such prophets, however, some Scriptural warrant for the vision which they proclaim, in the Lord’s name? Why not invite them to point to a single suggestion, or expression. either from the Lord Himself or from the Apostles, in support of their “no doctrine” gospel? This they will be unable to do, because the idea is entirely foreign to the teachings of the Word of God.

WHO IS ON THE LORD’S SIDE?

Included also amongst the false prophet systems of this day are those which belittle and undermine faith in the present truth. Such apparently either forget or did not properly grasp that it was the message of present truth which came to us through the writings of Brother Russell, that was the means used by the Lord in the deliverance of His people from Babylon. They overlook, too, the fact that the present truth concerning the Lord’s presence and work of harvest is the sickle which the Lord has placed in the hands of those who would become co-labourers with Him, in reaping and gathering home the wheat into the barn of safety—the Kingdom. Here, again, the Adversary’s methods are very subtle, for instead of denying, or openly attacking the harvest vision of truth, he relies mainly upon suggestions and witticisms which would belittle and discredit such teachings and those who uphold them.

Another method is to keep silent about the subject, and instead of sounding the trumpet of present truth, to direct the attention of the Lord’s people into other channels of activity, which appeal more to the general mass rather than to the few. Suggestions are made that in the past we have been too narrow and that we need to show a more broadminded spirit, which really means a lowering of the standard of truth. Why not break this conspiracy of silence and demand from all who profess to be prophets of the Lord, what is the vision of the present truth for this day?

Why not demand from all who take upon their lips the prophets’ formula “thus saith the Lord”—that they

set forth without any sleight of hand tactics and in simple language, what is the vision of the Lord concerning the work of harvest? If they will not do so, or cannot do so, you will then understand that their claims to be a prophet of the Lord are false and their vision of His will misleading.

WHERE IS THEN THE BLESSEDNESS YE SPARE, OF?

Surely if we realise that it was through the message of present truth that we were intelligently sealed in the forehead 'by the Angel from the sun-rising, we ought to know why we should lightly value it to-day, or hide this light under a bushel. Surely most will agree that it was the eating of the "little book" open in the hand of the mighty Angel (Christ), who came down from heaven at His second advent, that gave us sufficient 'strength and faith, as well as the necessary understanding to flee out of Babylon, and like the discerning eagles, to gather around the special food provided by the Lord for this day. (Luke 17:34-37.) Has all this changed, or is it that the light we then received and for a time rejoiced in, is now becoming darkness? 'Of one thing we can be assured, and that is that the Lord never changes, nor will the truth which He has so freely provided for our guidance in this evil day ever become error, or lead us in a direction contrary to the pathway along which it has led us heretofore.

If we find ourselves travelling in the opposite direction or on a different pathway from that upon which we set out when 'first we were illuminated by the present truth, we may be assured that it is neither the truth nor the same spirit that is leading us. The spirit of truth never leads in contrary or different directions, but always onward, along the same pathway, brighter and brighter towards the perfect day. (Prov. 4:18.)

Many seem to have forgotten that they were once delivered from Babylon's errors and bondage, and not a few, like the Israelites of old, after experiencing a little of the wilderness journey, are turning again with longing eyes towards the land from which they were delivered and the varied creed-'beds upon which they once reclined.

GO YE OUT TO MEET HIM.

The parable of the virgins is, we believe, being enacted to-day before our eyes. As conditions in the world become more turbulent and the end of the present order of things draws obviously near, we may expect, in accordance with the parable, a general awakening of the virgin class. The awakening will lead to a fresh trimming of lamps and involve a renewed searching of the Scriptures, with the endeavour to understand the significance of passing events and the outlook for the Lord's people. Those who, despite their slumbering, still retain the spirit of the truth (oil in their vessels) will quickly regain the full light and joy of harvest time, and in preparation to meet the Bridegroom beyond the van, will at once "go out" from the various forms of bondage and error into which they have been gradually led. These are the wise virgins of the parable.

The other class, described in the parable as foolish virgins, also awaken and realise the need for a fresh trimming of their lamps. In the case of these, however, the oil (spirit of the truth) in their lamps has become exhausted during the hours of slumber, and having no reserve of oil in their vessels, they apparently fail to appreciate the light they once rejoiced in and are therefore allured into by-paths by the various deceptions of the Adversary, permitted of the Lord for the very purpose. (Matt. 24:24.)

This crucial hour of testing upon the virgin class is, we believe, at the door, and never before was there greater need for a clear understanding of sound doctrine and a large measure of its spirit in the heart, as a protection to faith in this evil time. Do not therefore be misled by those teachers who would rob you of the clear vision of the truth, by suggesting that doctrines are non-essential and of minor importance to the Lord's people.

The Apostle John sums the position up in a few words when he declares : “Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ bath not God ; but he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ bath both the Father and the Son.” (2 John 9.)

Church History Repeats Itself During the Gospel Age.

The following is quoted from Milner’s Church History and refers to the Church at Galatia :—

SOON after Paul left them with the most pleasing hopes of their spiritual growth, he was astonished to hear of a change for the worse, which took place among them. Some Jews who were either their own countrymen or had recently arrived at Galatia took pains to pervert them. They made no attempts, indeed, to unsettle their minds in the views of the unity of the Godhead and the principle facts of Christianity ; nor did they endeavour to draw them hack to the worship of idols. They neither formerly denied the atonement of Christ nor persuaded the people to desist from Christian worship. Vet was it another gospel, though it deserved not the name of gospel, to the love of which they seduced them. They assured them that they could not be saved without circumcision and prevailed on them to Judaize so far as to observe the rites of Moses in various instances. They took pains to estrange them, from Paul and to draw them over to themselves and to a worldly spirit of conformity. loving to appear fair in the eyes of men and pretending to be zealous of good works while their real view was to avoid the persecution which attended the cross of Christ. To give better effect to their insinuations they instilled into them disrespectful ideas of Paul, as though he were far inferior to the other Apostles ; and, as it seems, they represented the Mother Church of Jerusalem, with the college of apostles there, as coinciding with themselves in doctrine

“These false teachers still called themselves Christians, and the mischief which they introduced may he decried at first sight no great one. So I doubt not that some fashionable perversions of evangelical truth at this day, of a similar kind, appear to many to be of no great consequence. The great evil lurking under all this art and zeal was the adulteration of the faith of Jesus, the sole author of our salvation. In no epistle does the Apostle speak so sharply or express himself so vehemently. His exhortation and rebuke came from a charitable heart just after the reception of the disagreeable tidings. He professes himself astonished at the defection of the Galatians from Christ, and execrates any man or even angel who shall preach any other way of salvation . . . He marks the merely worldly nature of the doctrine they were embracing ; it would make them bigotted Jews indeed, proud. self-righteous, void of the love of God and man, and no better in their spiritual state than they were while idolators . . . He informs them that the persecution, which he himself endured, was on account of this very doctrine. That it was that which stirred up the enmity of the human heart ; and this doctrine being lost, the gospel becomes a mere name, and ‘Christianity is lost in the group of common religions. It will be proper for us to bear in mind the Apostle’s reasonings on this subject, and to apply them to every period of church history.’”

So it surely is that the great Adversary has ever attacked any new unfolding of gospel truth. He seeks to “snatch away” the good seed, or to choke it by weeds. There is such an attempt being made to-day respecting the “present truth”; to belittle • its message, to put the light under a bushel, to persuade believers that after all, “it does not matter about doctrine,” that peace at any price should be attained even if it means that we keep silence on the joys of the harvest message and the feast of good things which the present Lord has provide;1; that we fail to be witnesses of the truths now due. We would indeed be foolish virgins to be so lulled into the easier, pleasanter way, where the cross may seem lighter. “Hold fast . . . that good thing which was committed unto thee.”-2 Tim. 1:13-14.

QUESTION BOX.

Question.—Do you think that there is any parallel between the 120 years of Noah's preaching and the second presence of Christ?

Answer—While there is nothing definitely indicating that the time of probation for the old world during which Noah preached of the coming flood is to have its parallel at the end of this “present evil world,” it certainly is not unreasonable to think that there may be a corresponding period “in the days of the Son of Man.” The Lord Himself has stated that there would be a parallel as far as conditions were concerned. Both Matthew and Luke record the statement that while Noah was preaching of the coming doom, the people went on in carelessness, following their own pursuits and pleasures.

It is quite clear, then, that as Noah was there present during that period of 120 years (Genesis 6:3) (these were “the days of Noah”), so also there were to be “the days of the Son of Man,” during which time there would also be preaching, warning of the impending doom—the destruction of the present order of things, religious (heavens) and social (the earth). (2 Pet. 3.) It is clear from this Scripture that the Son of Man was to be present for some time prior to the collapse of the present civilisation, although not recognised by the world, and it seems a reasonable conjecture that the period of time would be the same; yet it is but a conjecture, and therefore we do well not to dogmatise upon it. The Second Advent movement appears to have had its beginning about 1825-1829 with the Millerites, and it is possible that the “days of the Son of Man” commenced there. The fulfilment of the parable of the ten virgins appears to have been in course since about that date. “He that hath ears to hear let him hear.”

Question.—What is the explanation of Mark 4:12: “That seeing they may see and not perceive and hearing they may hear and not understand lest at any time they should be converted and their sins be forgiven”?

Answer.—To those who know only the usual church teachings, i.e., that this life is a trial time for all mankind, that when death comes the eternal condition is sealed for each and all, either for eternal life or otherwise, this passage would surely be beyond understanding. How out of accord with the gentleness and kindness of Christ to think that He would deliberately speak in parables so that sinners could not understand the way of salvation—so that that would not be converted. What is the Gospel for if not to convert the world! Ah, that is just where the mistake has been. We had failed to understand the great Divine plan of the ages in the past; but now that we can see that God's plan covers various ages during which certain features of His purpose are accomplished, the preceding verse (11) explains the matter. The Lord's intention was to select only a particular class during the present age: the rest of humanity would be dealt with later, during the Millennial Age.

The gospel message was therefore delivered in parables and dark sayings which only those of suitable disposition and aided by the holy Spirit could comprehend; “Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but unto them that are without all these things are done in parables.”

Thus by the gradual unfolding of Divine truths, God's purposes are accomplished, “No man cometh unto the Son except the Father draw him”; “No man can come unto Me, except it were given him of My Father”; “My sheep hear my voice”; and to the Scribes and Pharisees Jesus said. “Ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep.”

It is only those to whom God has granted “ears to hear” and “eyes to see” that can at present enjoy the Gospel ; but when “God’s elect”—the Church class—is complete, then “the residue of men will seek the Lord.”¹ (Acts 15:14-17.) Then it is that Christ “will draw all men unto Him,” when the “light shall lighten every man that cometh into the world,” for God has promised that the pure language will be turned to the people and all will call upon the name of the Lord. (Zeph. 3:8-9.) The way shall be made so plain that “the wayfaring man though a fool shall not err therein.” (Isa. 35:8-10.)

The difficulty has been that men generally do not see the purpose of revealed truth. The Word is God’s instrument in working out His purposes and selecting certain classes in preparation for the setting up of the Kingdom of Christ. The Bible unfolds its secrets in due time, and when necessary, in the progressive steps of the great Divine plan of blessing the poor groaning creation.

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

Honour to the true man ever, who takes his life in his hands, and at all hazards speaks the word which is given to him to utter, whether men will bear or forbear; -whether the end thereof is to be praise or censure, gratitude or hatred.— Whittier.

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

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

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