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The Voice of God.

(Convention Address.)

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto US by his Son.”—Heb. 1:1, 2.

HAVE we ever stopped to think just how highly honoured are those who have been privileged to hear the voice of God—that is, the voice of God speaking to them in such tones as would show clearly that they had His favour and blessing? Our thoughts go back to the nation of Israel. That nation heard God’s voice through the prophets, as we read in Hebrews, and those inspired mouthpieces were used by God to make many wonderful promises to the Israelites, and also the conditions upon which they could be assured of inheriting their fulfilment.

We know also that God’s voice warned the Israelites of tragedies which would befall the nation if they failed to comply as fully as possible with the conditions of God’s promises to them.

While God spoke to Israel as a nation through the prophets in olden times, He spoke more directly to individuals, but whether the voice of God is heard by individuals in special messages, or by groups through the medium of His servants, the purpose of the message He gives is practically always the same. It is not just to satisfy curiosity, but to invite cooperation in the outworking of His plans and purposes. Thus, while it is indeed a blessed experience to hear the voice of God, we must not forget that it involves a great personal responsibility, for it means that to the extent of the call or invitation one is required to devote himself unreservedly to the task in hand. During this present evil world, it involves the crossing of the will of the person who hears God’s call to co-operate with Him, in order that God’s will may be done. God does not look with Pleasure upon any half-hearted service. With Him it is, all, or nothing.

Let us pause for a moment here and ask ourselves the vital question: How do we know that we have heard the voice of God? Amid all the confusion of religious thoughts and doctrines, how are we to know that what we have accepted as the truth is in reality the voice of God, and in obeying that voice we are fulfilling the Divine will? This, friends, is a question of very great importance, as I am sure we all realize. It is a question which we should be able to answer to our satisfaction, or else we live in a condition of partial doubt and uncertainty.

There are many lines of approach to this question. We know we have heard the voice of God because—and this is important—what we have heard is in harmony with the entire Bible. It is also in harmony with what we should expect the character of God to be; with His infinite justice, His wisdom, His power, and above all His great love. It is also in harmony with all known historical facts and with our own experience as Christians, and our observations. What we have accepted as the voice of God, of truth, leaves no unanswered questions or problems. It does not tell us that there is no such thing as sickness when we know there is, and see evidence of it every day of our lives. It does not tell us that there is no death when we know that day by day people are dying all around us.

There is another manner in which we may assure ourselves that we have heard the voice of God, and that is upon the basis of His unchangeableness. The Scriptures tell us that God changes not, that in Him there is no shadow of turning. (Jas. 1:17.) This being

true, it means that the Divine purpose as revealed through God's prophets of old is still God's purpose. If we have heard the voice of God, we have heard the same things that that voice made known through the prophets. True, the working out of God's plan may vary in detail from age to age, but there is no variation in the plan itself. The great fundamental theme of God's plan, we might say the cardinal theme which characterises His messages through all the prophets, is identified by Peter and recorded in Acts 3:20-23. Here we have the Apostle telling of the blessing coming to all nations following the second advent of Jesus, and he describes these blessings as "Times of Restitution of all things." And note this—"Times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." It was to provide opportunity for restitution that Jesus died. Ransom and restitution, then, are the dominant chords in God's great theme song of love. There are various minor arrangements associated with the outworking of these Divine purposes, but the great objective to which these are leading is the blessing of all the families of the earth during the times of restitution.

Now have we heard and appreciated these great fundamental facts of truth? If so, then we have indeed heard the voice of God. If we have not, then God has not spoken to us. There are many incidentals of truth which are good in themselves, and many of which are understandable by those not fully enlightened by the voice of God. Even a natural-minded man or woman can appreciate to a large extent the value of kindness and mercy and self-control, as well as many other manifestations of righteousness. Those who believe in eternal torture of the wicked may adhere to very high aspirations in holy living. But no matter how valuable doctrine may be to us, apart from the theme song of God's love and His intention to bless all nations, it does not then constitute the voice of revelation.

We have already noted that it is a blessed thing to hear the voice of God, but we know also that it is costly, and we find this exemplified in the experiences of Noah so long ago. "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." (Gen. 6:8.)

As the narrative unfolds it shows that Divine favour was manifested towards Noah in that God used him to build the ark, and carry over a few human beings from the first to the second world. God also established a covenant with Noah concerning His intention never again to destroy all flesh. These Divinely appointed experiences of Noah are referred to in the New Testament by both Jesus and Peter, and are used to illustrate different features of the Divine Plan. We read about the building of the ark by Noah, but we may fail to realize what it meant in the way of wearying toil through

the long years it took him and his sons to build it. It was indeed a difficult task, for there was not only the work involved, but the scoffing of the world to endure. Noah preached, we remember, as well as worked. He preached to an unresponsive public, and there was no apparent result from his teaching. Those with limited faith and less appreciation of the fact that God had spoken to them would have been weary in well doing, concluding that God did not intend them to continue to bear witness to the Truth, and that they exerted only wasted effort on an ark, with no evidence of coming rain. But Noah had heard the voice of God, and by it was led to continue serving, irrespective of the result.

The due time had not arrived for a clear unfolding of the Divine programme for the blessing of all nations, but God used Noah as an illustration of certain phases of His plan, and this was a great honour. The covenant God made with Noah, that never again would He destroy all flesh from the earth, afforded a faint suggestion even at that early date of God's intention that mankind should live forever on the earth. Having heard God's voice, Noah was faithful to it, despite seeming failure of his effort and the cold indifference of virtually all by whom he was surrounded. He had heard the voice of God because God had something for him to do, and Noah responded with his whole heart and life to perform the Divine commission faithfully. Was it all for naught? By no means. Two important results accrued. Paul mentions them, saying he condemned the world, and became heir to the righteousness which is by faith. (Heb. 11:

7.) Noah's faithfulness in preaching righteousness to his generation proved the justice of God in destroying the world which then was. (2 Pet. 3:6.)

When God's plan is complete, the knowledge of God will fill the whole earth, the prophet tells us. This means the people will know that all the acts of God have been righteous, and that the suffering of humanity had been permitted for a particular purpose, and it will be seen that the great catastrophe of the flood which destroyed the first world was justified by lack of response to Noah's preaching, and the altogether too prevalent evil in those times.

Thus, while none but his own immediate family then gave heed to his message, Noah's seemingly fruitless preaching will in the coming age be known for what it was worth, and help to fill the earth with God's glory.

In addition to this satisfying result of his service, Noah's faith made him heir to the righteousness which is by faith, and among other things, that includes a "better resurrection." (Heb. 11:35.)

Psalm 45 indicates that those who obtain this "better resurrection" are to be made "Princes in all the earth." We ask ourselves then: Did Noah waste time and effort? Certainly not. He heard God's voice and obeyed Him, and was blessed in his obedience, and will yet be more fully compensated for every sacrifice which he made.

Then we might think of Abraham. In Genesis 12 we have the first definite statement of God's purpose to bless all the families of the earth. Here the melody of the Divine Plan began to sound forth with a definiteness over and above the incidental and harmonious accompaniment which throughout the ages has been associated with it. Surely Abraham was favoured to hear such a message; but as with Noah, it cost him very much. God spoke to Abraham, inviting his co-operation in the outworking of the Divine Plan. The message and the call were heard together. God said, In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed, but I want you to leave Your own people and your father's house and go into a land which I will show you. You shall be a blessing. But the patriarch discovered that in order for the promise to become a reality to him, it meant an uprooting of his whole way of life. The promise God made to Abraham was an unconditional one, and it will be fulfilled, regardless of what any individual may do about it. It means the blessing of all the families of the earth.

It is just so in all God's dealings; He causes His voice to be heard, then invites co-operation. Has it been so with us? How sweet was the voice of God, telling us of the great hope of restoration of the sin-cursed and dying world! It appealed to us as being just like God, and we rejoiced to think of all mankind walking over the highway of holiness, and finally inheriting the Kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. But we, too, soon realized that there was more than that to it. Together with God's sweet promise of life to all mankind, we heard the words of invitation to us, asking our participation in the Divine Plan. We too, like Abraham, were asked to leave our own people and our father's house (the Adamic household), and we recognised this as giving up the hope of restitution for ourselves, and in its place setting our affections on things above, not on things of the earth. (Col. 3:2.) This meant more than merely to exchange our earthly hope for a heavenly hope. It meant following in the footsteps of Jesus, in the way of sacrifice and suffering even unto death, until that which remained of our present earthly life was wholly consumed in the service of God.

Yes, it was more than to hear the voice of God; if we continue to respond faithfully it will finally cost us our lives. We do not belong to ourselves, but to Him who loved us and died for us. (1 Cor. (6:19, 20.) We will endeavour not to live for ourselves, but for God, participating in the sacrificial work of this age, devoting our bodies to God's service and keeping our sacrifice on the altar until it is wholly consumed.

Abraham was asked to give up his home in Ur, and for the remainder of his life he lived in tents, having no permanent home, no continuing city. Not only that, but God continued to test him, finally to the point of asking him to sacrifice his son Isaac, in which test he showed his utter willingness to do God's will. Abraham learned to know the voice of God more familiarly with the passing years, and he knew it was a voice which not only promised wonderful blessings, but which also invited co-operation and much sacrifice.

Time will not permit us to think of the voice of God to Moses and Samuel, etc.; but we will turn to the New Testament, to the time of the greater than Moses, the Prophet whom the Lord had promised to raise up, even Jesus Himself, and those who followed Him faithfully. Surely Jesus heard the voice of God!

When through Jesus God spoke to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road, this Israelite realized at once what it signified. Saul first made sure who was speaking, and being assured he was receiving a message from the God of Israel through the Messiah of Israel, responded with the inquiry, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Saul was acquainted with the manner in which God had dealt with His servants in the past. He knew that an experience of this kind implied more than the fact that he was being enlightened concerning the fact that Jesus was the Messiah. God allows people to continue in darkness until He has a place for them in His plan. Saul knew this, and now he was enlightened, he realized that God was calling him into His service. Yes, Paul was a chosen vessel. He had been selected to bear the Gospel to the Gentiles, and also to the children of Israel. What a great honour, but at what great cost! "I will show him what great things he must suffer for my name's sake," the Lord said. God had spoken. Truth had been revealed. Great things were to be suffered. The record of Paul's ministry demonstrates the sincerity of his question, "What wilt thou have me to do?"

In our verse in Hebrews the Apostle explains that in these last days God had spoken to us, to His people, through His Son. That was indeed very true of the early Church, and has been true through the entire Gospel Age. And it is true in a very special sense at this end of the Age, in the "last days" in which we are now privileged to be living.

In Luke 12 is recorded a promise of Jesus that at the end of the Age He would return, and serve the household with meat in due season. This promise has been wonderfully fulfilled. Through God's beloved Son now present among His people at His second advent, the Divine voice of truth has indeed been heard. We know and are assured that it is God's voice, because it is the same message given throughout the centuries, and has not changed. Like God's servants of old, we have rejoiced to learn that by means of the ransom, and by restitution processes, all the families of the earth are to be blessed with life and happiness.

The clear distinction made by the Truth between the heavenly calling of the Church and the restitution hope of the world helps to emphasize the importance of the latter in the plan of God. How truly satisfying it is to know that God has blessings for others besides ourselves! It is surely a lovely thought. How it enhances our appreciation of the Heavenly calling to know that there is a worthwhile purpose behind it, a glorious future work to do! But why have we been so highly favoured with this wonderful knowledge of truth? It is because He has a place for us in His plan. He has a service for us to render, a sacrifice of praise which

we can offer. We knew this when we first heard God's voice of truth and responded to it most enthusiastically. Do we still know it? Are we continuing to respond, or have we become weary in well doing? A crucial test has been upon God's people throughout the age, and this test has been that of holding to the truth. Paul warned the Christians in his day that there would come a falling away from the faith. It occurred, and one of the great manifestations of the apostacy was the dividing into two classes, clergy and laity, of God's people. The laity for the most part sat back, and the clergy received salaries for their service of God. Satan still knows how to foster this great deception. He likes to see only a few trying to serve the Lord, the remainder sitting back and becoming good listeners. But let us not be deceived along this line. Every truth-enlightened follower of the Master is fully commissioned to be a servant of God. All are not given the same service, but there is something for all the consecrated to do, some way in which each one, no matter how small a way, may play some part in co-operating with God in the great Plan which is being worked out.

It is well for us to have the spirit of humility, not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. At the same time, we should not underestimate the matter of the divine call to service. God has not asked us to build arks, or lead His people out of Egypt. He has not given us the keys of the kingdom of heaven, or appointed us to be special Apostles to the Gentiles. But God has given us the truth in these days, and through present truth God has spoken to us. His voice has enlightened us. Let us praise Him for that. And He has called us. We are no longer our own. By His truth He is leading us forth as light-bearers for Him, messengers for the Kingdom. Even the least opportunity to show our appreciation should be very highly regarded, and faithfully used to His glory. Let us not despise the day of small things, for if we are faithful, greater opportunities of service will be ours when we have made our calling and election sure as joint-heirs with Jesus in the Kingdom, even the joy of blessing all the families of the earth.

Passover Memorial, 1950.

The anniversary of the institution of the Memorial of Christ's death falls this year on Friday evening, 3 1st March, after sundown. This date will therefore be the appropriate time to keep the Remembrance as our Lord requested.

Friends desiring supplies of the unleavened bread and wine may obtain these from this office; early application should be made for same, and please state the number of friends to be served.

Memorial Services.

Services in remembrance of Christ our Passover will be held in the various States, to which all believers in the ransom sacrifice of Christ will be welcome.

Melbourne—Friday, 31st March, at 8 p.m., at Berean Bible Institute, 19 Ermington Place, Kew, E.4, Melbourne.

(For further information, write, or phone Hawthorn 6251.)

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Convention News.

It is a pleasure to report favourably on the Annual Convention held in Melbourne by the brethren in this city over the Christmas season now some weeks past. The Lord's blessing was very truly experienced throughout the four-day gatherings, and we lift up our hearts in gratitude to our Heavenly Father for His favours bestowed.

The Melbourne friends gladly welcomed a number of visiting brethren from Adelaide, Canberra and country parts of Victoria and the fellowship with these dear members throughout their stay in Melbourne was a spiritual joy indeed.

The Convention programme provided for a variety in the gatherings which was very refreshing. Two main Bible studies were conducted on the Scriptural passages in Romans 15:1-7 and Jeremiah 30:3-11. Both these studies proved of much interest and encouragement as the important lessons to all followers of the Lord during this Gospel Age were brought out from St. Paul's message to the Romans, and the prophetic message concerning God's ancient people as portrayed by Jeremiah over the centuries to the closing scenes of this age, with the establishment of Christ's Kingdom on earth, was viewed in the light of the Scriptures as a whole.

A wide range of subjects were dealt with by the eleven speakers during the Convention gatherings, and each address had its own particular message of encouragement, instruction and exhortation. The titles of the addresses are as follows:—"Rejoicing in the Lord"; "Jesus Wept"; "The Epistle of Christ"; "The New Mind, Its Care and Development"; "Why is the Church Persecuted?" "The Voice of God"; "Not Without Witness"; "Christmas Day Meditation"; "Praise"; "Godliness with Contentment" and "Lest ye be Wearied." It is hoped to be able to pass on some of the helpful thoughts from these addresses in the "Peoples Paper" from time to time.

A Question Meeting for examination of two Scriptures, Amos 9:13 and Matt. 10:29-31, was also helpful and enlightening. It was seen that the prophet Amos had expressed in symbol the closing scenes of the Gospel Age when the "plowman" (time of trouble) would "overtake" or complete the Gospel harvest, in accord with the Lord's will. Likewise the further symbols indicated the changing of dispensations and the establishment of Christ's Kingdom when the "sweet wine" will bring blessings to all the obedient of mankind, at which time all the "hills" or governments of earth shall have "melted"—passed away. The verses in Matthew 10 were seen to refer to God's wonderful oversight and care on behalf of His people who walk in the steps of Christ. A further important meaning was observed from the fact that birds were presented as sin-offerings under the Law arrangements, and these were acknowledged of God as representing the heart devotions of the people making the offerings. This being so, the words of Jesus were seen in deeper meaning—"Fear ye not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows." Yes, those to whom our Lord spoke, representing all His followers of this Gospel Age, were shortly to be "offered upon the sacrifice and service of faith," "to fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ" (Phil. 2:17; Col. 1:24), to be counted as the antitypical, secondary offering for sin, and as such would be very precious in the sight of God, (Psa. 116:15)—"of more value than many sparrows."

The more informal Fellowship Meetings for praise and testimony and "Hymns we love and why," proved very refreshing as the brethren expressed their sentiments of thankfulness and praise to the Lord in their own words or through the hymn writers.

The messages of greeting to the assembly from various classes and individual brethren were much appreciated and clearly indicated that our dear friends in other parts were with us in spirit, and remembering us in prayer. The blessings received throughout this Convention were reflected in the prayers of thankfulness and remembrance of all other members who had not enjoyed the same favours from the presence of the Lord. As a general greeting from the Convention, the Melbourne friends selected the passage of Scripture in Romans 15:4-7 to be sent with their warm Christian love to the brethren in every place.

The final session with the appropriate Love Feast and hymns "Blest be the tie" and "God be with you" seemed to come all too soon, but the many good things received surely filled to capacity our hearts and minds, and the concluding prayer of thankfulness also besought the Lord's blessing upon the assembly and the Israel of God in every place in the days to come.

On the following week-end, opening the New Year, further very helpful gatherings were held while some of the visiting brethren were still present. Two encouraging and timely addresses were given and two Bible studies were enjoyed on the passages John 12:20-26 and Psalm 84. One of our brethren has prepared some thoughts on this beautiful Psalm 84 which are presented in this issue of the "Paper."

Some Thoughts on Psalm 84.

PSALM 84 greatly resembles Psalm 42, and was probably composed on the same or a similar occasion. These two Psalms are remarkable for beauty of imagery, depth of religious emotion, and a noble and victorious struggle against despondency.

The Psalm expresses the intense longing of the faithful and loyal Israelites for the Temple worship.

Verses 1 and 2: “How lovely are Thy dwelling places, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.” See Psa. 42:1, 2; Psa. 63:1.

How the hearts of the faithful Israelites longed for the blessings and happy associations of the Temple and its worship and services.

Verse 2 (Leeser) : “My soul desired, yea, it also longed for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh shout with joy unto the living God.”

Verse 3: “Even as the sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young (have I found) Thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my king and my God.”

The little sparrow and swallow show a good example of zeal, earnestness and patient industry in building their nests; they also find satisfaction and contentment in carrying out their natural instincts in raising their little families, so the Psalmist earnestly seeks to find his longings satisfied in the altars of the house of God.

Verse 4: “Blessed (happy) are they that dwell in Thy house.” (Psa. 65:4.)

While it is helpful to see the primary application of this Psalm to the faithful Israelites of past ages, we see also how it applies to spiritual Israel, and the longings we have for the courts of the Lord, and the fellowship the New Creation may now enjoy in connection with building up of the true temple of God—His Church. (Eph. 2:19-22.) “How lovely are Thy dwelling-places, O Lord of hosts.” How good it is to come into a meeting-place of truly consecrated children of God. Each spirit-begotten child of God is a temple of the holy spirit (1 Cor. 6:19; John 14:23), and coming together in a spirit of reverence for God and for Christ our Head, and with loving respect for His instructions as contained in His Word, what a sobering thought it is to realise we are thus coming into the presence of God—the great Almighty Ruler of the Universe. We come to “behold the beauty of the Lord (as reflected in one and another of His children who have His spirit) and to enquire in His temple,” to seek to learn more of His Word and ways. (Psa. 27:4.)

Each truly consecrated child of God is lovely, but we have to be on guard because we have the treasure of the new mind in a fragile, earthen casket, and there is great danger that our “loveliness” may be marred if any spirit of pride or stubborn self-will is allowed to actuate us. We have sometimes seen consecrated children of God contending so earnestly for certain theories or forms of service that the spirit is grieved, and the “loveliness of Thy dwelling places” has been very disturbed and marred. How each one of God’s saints should watch and pray; that we “keep our hearts with all diligence,” so that our every contact with the fellow-members of the body may be helpful to them, and also to ourselves. The spirit of stubborn self-will can greatly hinder our usefulness to others of the Lord’s people.

Verse 5: “Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee; in whose heart are the high ways to Zion.” (R.V.) There was a blessing for the Israelite of old who trusted in God and who loved the ways of Zion. How much richer and fuller is the blessing now available for the footstep followers of Christ, who trust fully in Him, and find His strength and grace to walk the narrow way of self-denial. We are coming nearer and nearer to the Kingdom—the heavenly Zion. May our ears be attentive to hear the voice of Him who speaketh from heaven. (Heb. 12:25), inviting and encouraging us to walk closely in the footsteps of His Son.

Verse 6: “Passing through the valley of weeping they make it a place of springs; yea, the early rain covereth it with blessings.” (R.V.) The Israelites of old sometimes travelled long distances under slow, tedious conditions. But the delight they had in God’s house made the barren ravines through which they passed seem as lovely as if they were adorned and fertilized by fountains, and rendered the hot and wearisome journey as pleasant as if it were alleviated by refreshing showers. We who represent the Lord here to-day are passing through “the valley of weeping.” (Psa. 30:5.) Sorrow and sadness are about us as we traverse our way through “the valley of the shadow of death.” But thank God for His goodness and love, He has brought us under the “anointing” influence of His gracious spirit; we have the gospel message to bring comfort to those around us; we have a message of hope and cheer to spread abroad for those able to hear it; we can “comfort all that mourn, giving the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.” Let us tell others the good news; let us give others the sunshine, and tell Jesus about the things that cause us sorrow and heaviness. It does not help our friends, or others, to burden them by continually dwelling upon and repeating our difficulties and hard experiences. The little hymn, “Go bury thy sorrow,” has a good message for us all.

Let us wait on God in earnest prayer, for a larger infilling of His spirit of love and joy and peace; let us ask Him to make us messengers of comfort in Zion. (Isa. 40:28-31.)

So doing, we may hope to be of those referred to in verse 7: “They go from strength to strength; everyone of them appeareth before God in Zion.” The faithful, humble footstep followers of Christ who love God, His ways and His truth above all things else, will make their calling and election sure. Such will not allow earthly things to hinder their heavenward progress. (See Psa. 87:5, 6; 2 Cor. 3:18; Phil. 1:6 and 2 Pet. 1:5-11.)

Verses 8 and 9 contain an earnest prayer for God’s favour and blessing to be shown to His people. Israel as a typical people were greatly favoured of God; their kings and priests were anointed of God. From Israel would come the Anointed One—the Messiah. How much more favoured is spiritual Israel—the true Church whose Head is Christ. “Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.” This is an earnest plea for a realising sense of God’s favour and blessing. To show the face is a sign of favour. This is in line with that beautiful expression with which the priest pronounced blessing upon Israel—Numbers 6:24-26. “The Lord make His face to shine upon thee,” etc. We can do nothing without God’s blessing; we need to wait upon God in earnest prayer for His blessing and guidance that we may be led to do His will and understand His ways. (2 Cor. 1:21, 22.)

Verse 10: This verse expresses very deep love for God and appreciation of His laws and arrangements. “For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand (spent elsewhere). I would rather choose to wait at the threshold of the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.” This reminds us of the attitude of faithful Moses, who “chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach for the anointed greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.” (Heb. 11:25, 26.) We want to be where the Lord’s people are, though this may bring to us some loss of earthly things.

Verse 11: “For a sun (giving us light and warmth and comfort) and shield (affording us protection from dangers) is the Lord God; grace and glory will the Lord give (through Christ our Saviour and Advocate). He will not withhold any good from those that walk with integrity.” (Phil. 4:19; Rom. 8:28 and Psa. 115:9-11.)

Verse 12: “O Lord of hosts, happy is the man that trusteth in Thee.” (Jer. 17:7, 8.)

Adelaide Easter Convention.

The brethren in Adelaide wish to announce that they are holding their usual Convention at the Easter season this year, from Good Friday, 7th April, to Easter Monday, at Builders and Contractors Rooms, Waymouth Street, Adelaide. They extend a hearty invitation to all friends able to join them for these four-day gatherings. Further information is obtainable from the Class secretary—Mrs. H. Bartel, 10 Winston Avenue, Clarence Gardens, South Australia.

When spiritual comfort is given thee from God, receive it with thankfulness: but understand it is the gift of God, not any desert of thine.—Thomas A. Kempis.

The State of Israel

THE following extracts from the Jewish National Fund Calendar will no doubt be of interest to our friends, a clear indication of the fulfilment of prophecy in our days.

“On the fifth day of Iyar, 5708, towards the evening of the fourteenth day of May, 1948, after two thousand years of exile and statelessness, Medinath Israel, the State of Israel—was proclaimed.

“By virtue of the labour of generations of pioneers, and the unflinching courage of its defenders and liberators, strengthened by the historic decision of the United Nations, the Hebrew nation transmuted its dream into a vibrant reality. Half a century ago, the prophetic vision of Theodor Herzl declared: ‘If you will it, this is no legend.’ Today the legend has become a fact. The State of Israel exists. The rapid progress of the Ingathering of the exiles’ will soon double its population. The majority of the nations of the world have extended to it full diplomatic recognition. Its representatives are accepted as equals in the comity of the United Nations.

The State And The Zionist Movement.

“The Zionist Organisation was sometimes described as ‘the State on the way.’ Now that statehood has been achieved, it is necessary to clarify the new functions of the Zionist Movement.

“It is abundantly clear that far from rendering the Zionist Organisation superfluous, the emergence of the State of Israel has intensified its importance. The ‘State on the way’ will henceforth serve both as the bridge between the Jews in the Diaspora and the State of Israel and as the instrument by which the redemption of the soil is to be effected.

Hundreds Of New Jewish Settlements.

“In the eighty years of pioneering endeavour which preceded the foundation of the State of Israel, 335 Jewish settlements were established.

United States ..	5,200,000	Brazil .	110,000
Soviet Russia ..	1,900,000	South Africa	98,000
Israel ..	900,000	Iraq . .	90,000
Roumania ..	430,000	Turkey .	80,000
Argentine .	360,000	Poland	75,000
Great Britain	350,000	Egypt .	75,000
France ..	205,000	Tunisia	66,000
Hungary ..	• 180,000	Abyssinia .	51,000
Canada ..	• 180,000	Persia .	50,000
Morocco ..	•• 175,000	Australia ..	35,000
Algiers ..	120,000	New Zealand	3,500

“In the first year of Jewish Statehood, 75 villages were founded—in the North, in the arid South, in the Coastal Lowlands and in the Jerusalem Corridor, and an additional 20 established up till the publication of this calendar.”

The following comparison of periods of time and settlements founded speaks for itself—“Period 1870-1917 settlements founded 38; 1918-1929 there were 64; 1930-1935 produced 73; 1936-1947 the number was 160; 1948-1949 another 100.

Jews In The World.

“The number of Jews in all countries of the world was estimated at 11,500,000 in 1949, as against 16,643,000 in the year 1939, prior to the Nazi massacre. The following are the largest Jewish Communities in the world:—

“According to cultural-political the Jewish population can be divided as follows: Israel 900,000; Anglo-Saxon Countries 5,935,000; Latin American Countries 610,000; Western European Countries 460,000; Eastern European Countries 2,675,000; Arabian Countries 645,000; Other Countries 275,000; Total 11,500,000.

A Thousand Immigrants A Day!

“In the course of thirty years of Mandatory administration, the average annual immigration figure did not exceed 16,000. Moreover, the Jewish Return was constantly impeded by a mass of regulations and restrictions against so-called “illegal” immigration.

“In the course of the first year of Israel Statehood, when the gates of our country were flung wide open, over 200,000 newcomers entered. Since then, immigration continues at a rate of between 20,000 and 25,000 a month, that is nearly 1,000 per day. The long cherished vision of an Ingathering of the exiles’ is rapidly becoming a fact. From 70 far-flung lands of dispersion the exiles are returning to their liberated Homeland. From east and west, from north and south, by sea, air and land, the sons of Israel return. Their transport to our shores, however, is but the initial step. The second stage, their integration into the fabric of the State, is the decisive stage in the vast process. It is indeed the fundamental problem that confronts our country. The solution of this problem depends upon the provision of suitable accommodation, the finding of productive employment and the cultural absorption of the newcomers into the life of the State.”