



Volume XXII. No. 11 MELBOURNE, 1st NOVEMBER, 1939 Price-Twopence Halfpenny

The Epistle of Christ.

“Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink; but with the Spirit of the living God; not on tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart.”—2 Corin. 3:3.

THE writings of the Apostle Paul are rich with quotations and illustrations from the Old Testament Scriptures, thus furnishing us with most valuable inspired comments and explanations as to the meaning of the types and prophecies which God gave back there for the edification of His people “on whom the ends of the ages have come.” (1 Cor. 10:

11, Diaglott.) Our text is a wonderful example of how the inspired apostle presents type and anti type and makes a practical application of the lesson to the mission of the church in this age. Note his reference to the tables of the law, given by God to Moses, and of the suggested antitype, the “epistle of Christ” written in the hearts of the consecrated followers of the Master.

Those tables of the law constituted the basis of the old Law Covenant; hence we get the unmistakable thought that God, through His spirit, is now preparing His church to be associated with Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant, in the administration of its laws. Thus, also, do we see that the New Covenant has not yet been inaugurated for the reason that the preparatory work therefor has not yet been completed. How valuable, then, are these words of the apostle, in helping us to see the harmonious arrangements of God’s covenants, in His divine plan for human reconciliation.

In Exodus 24:12, we are told that the tables of the law were given to Moses in order that he might teach the people. Such is the mediatorial relationship of the entire Christ to the New Covenant which is to be inaugurated with Israel and through Israel with the whole world at the beginning of the thousand-year period. In 2 Cor. 3:6, the apostle tells us that we are made “able ministers of the New Testament,” or Covenant. Moses was a servant of the old Law Covenant, Indeed, he served that Covenant even while it was being prepared. So we are now serving the New Covenant, in the sense that we are participants in the work of preparing it, getting ready to minister it to the people. The fact that faithful Christians of this gospel age are thus shown to be servants of ‘the Covenant indicates clearly that they are not to be among those to be blessed or served by that Covenant.

In 2 Cor. 5:18, 19, the apostle indicates that our ministry of the Covenant is one of reconciliation. Indeed, the great work of The Christ during the next age will be to reconcile the world to God. But those who are to be judged worthy of participating in that future glorious work of reconciliation must themselves first be reconciled to God, and be prepared as the epistles of Christ to administer the laws of that New Covenant. We are admonished to walk honestly as in the day; that is, we are to live now as though the righteous laws

of the Kingdom were already in force. Even so, while the New Covenant is as yet merely in the course of preparation, its “law, which will then be in force, should even now become a part of our being. It is upon this basis that the “epistle of Christ,” the antitypical tables of stone, are now being written, not with ink, “but with the spirit-of the living God.”

The apostle adds a further word of explanation by saying that these “epistles of Christ” are “ministered by us” -by the apostles, and by all the church, as we build each other up in the most holy faith. True, this epistle is being written “by the spirit of the living God,” yet that spirit, during this age, operates through the truth, and each consecrated follower of the Master is authorised by the spirit to be a communicator of the truth-a minister of God and of His spirit. Yes, it is as we speak the truth in love that we grow up into Him in all things-Eph. 4:15; 5:18, 19.

Thus we have brought home to us, in still another way, the fact that the work of the church in this age is not to convert or reconcile the world to God but to make herself ready for participation with Christ in that blessed future work of the Kingdom. But, in carrying on this present work of the ministry, we are to be energetic in proclaiming the truth; for in God’s plan He has arranged that, through such faithfulness in witnessing, all the ministers of the New Covenant will be found and prepared for their future work.

Inasmuch as the apostle makes it clear that the tables of stone on which was written the Law in Moses’ day are illustrative of the “epistle of Christ” being written in the hearts of God’s people during this gospel age, it is in resting to note some of the circumstances in connected with the preparation of that typical “epistle”- the great tat* 61 Sinai.

An account of this is given us in Exodus 34:4=7, as follows:-

‘And He [Moses] hewed two tables of stone like unto the’ first, and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up. into Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded and took in his hand the two tables of stone. And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and’ gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.”

Typical and Antitypical Features

The original tables of law were destroyed by Moses on account of the sin of Israel in turning away from God and worshipping the golden calf. This reminds us that the original covenant relationship that existed between God and man was destroyed because of man’s sin. Also that the Law Covenant was broken because of sin-”which My covenant they brake,” the Lord tells us. (Jer. 31:32.) Thus it would seem that the second two tables of stone on which God wrote His Law would very fittingly represent the Law of the New Covenant; or, to be more exact, the method by which that Law would reach the people; and in our text Paul shows that this will be through the church, as the “epistle of Christ.”

Moses hewed those stones and took them up unto Mount Sinai, and there God wrote His law on them. So the “epistle of Christ” is hewn or called out from the world, by Christ. After His resurrection from the dead, He ascended to the Father’s presence and there “appeared for us.” Thus, He bore His followers before the Father, and throughout the age these have been seated together in “heavenly places in Christ Jesus”-not on literal Mount Sinai, but by faith, on Mount Zion. (Eph. 2:6.) It was while Moses, bearing the tables of stone, was with the Lord in the cloud that God’s Law was written on those tables; so, it is while the prospective joint-heirs of Christ are, throughout the age, dwelling with Him in heavenly places and thus by faith in the presence of God, that the Law of God, the Law of the New Covenant, is written in

their hearts and they are thus prepared to administer that Law as co-judges with Christ in the Mediatorial Kingdom yet future.

And how wonderful was the experience of Moses in connection with the preparation of those typical Tables of the Law ! God talked to Israel's leader and told him of His own glorious attributes. So in the antitype, God talked to Christ, and through Christ-who "hath in these last days spoken unto us"-that same message of God's glory comes to us. And thus it is, that while seated with Christ in heavenly places we hear the voice of God, through the glorious truth of His plan, and thereby learn of His glory in order that His attributes may be written in our hearts.

The object of the Mediatorial reign of The Christ is that the world of mankind may be brought back into harmony with:, God and restored to His image and likeness. Thus it is necessary that the Law of that New Covenant as it will be presented to the people by those who now are constituted the "epistle_ of Christ," reflect the glorious attributes of , Jehovah's character in order that the people, through obedience to that Law, may learn to know and serve God acceptably. Indeed, the Lord tells us that this is to be the ,happy result of the making of that New Covenant-"for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." Jer. 31:34.

God's Plan in Review.

What a wonderful vision of God's glorious character was given to Moses at the time those typical tables of the Law were prepared-"And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation!"

And, brethren, through Christ, and by means of the spirit of truth, God speaks to us now; and in that glorious message of truth, we see reflected all the various qualities of the Divine Character that were briefly stated to Moses. Indeed, the import of the divine-plan message is that through it we may learn to know God, receive the impress of His character in our hearts, and thereby be prepared to be co-workers with Him, as the "epistle of Christ," in causing the knowledge of His glory to fill the whole earth "as the waters cover the sea."-Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14.

Let us note the qualities of God's character as they were stated to Moses on Mount Sinai: "Merciful and gracious." How wonderfully the divine plan reveals to us the mercy and graciousness, or grace, of God ! And how absolutely void of these characteristics is the demon god of the dark-age creeds! Here, again, is brought forcibly to our attention the vital importance of the truth in the Christian life; for it is by the truth, not error, that we are set apart to the divine service. Yes, God is merciful and full of grace. We see this manifested in the fact that while His justice condemned our first parents to death because of their disobedience, and through them the whole world lost life, yet He was not content to let it go that way forever; so His mercy and grace and love "contrived 'a way to save rebellious man."

And "longsuffering." Oh, how longsuffering our Heavenly Father has been! For six thousand years He has witnessed the rebellion and sin of His earthly creatures; yet He still loves them, and still plans to bless them. And He is also longsuffering toward His saints, who because of their fleshly imperfections often fall far short of the goal in their efforts to do His will. How glad we are for the many promises of His longsuffering attitude toward us! We could not truly know and appreciate our Heavenly Father's longsuffering toward us and toward the world in any other way except through an understanding of the divine plan.

“Abundant in goodness.” Yes, “God so loved the world ‘that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.’” (John 3:16.) What an abundance of goodness we thus see manifested in the One who is so loving, that it is said of Him that “He is love.” Not only does the divine plan reveal this abundant love and goodness of our Heavenly Father in the gift of His Son to be man’s Redeemer, but it shows, also, a still further manifestation of His love in the wonderful arrangement He has made whereby the merit accruing from His great gift may become available for the actual blessing of the world. Think of the love that is revealed in His plan to select a hundred and forty-four thousand representatives from among the world of mankind to sit with Christ on the board of mediation which is to reconcile the world to God during the Kingdom period. And how could we see this vision of God’s love except through the divine plan ?

And He is abundant in “truth” also. The thought of the word truth, in this instance, is probably equity or justice.

Yes, God is just, even as He is loving; and that is the reason we can depend upon Him. This thought is amplified in the further statement made to Moses; namely, “keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,” and yet, “will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.” A wonderful balance of the divine attributes of Love and Justice is furnished us in these words,

Yes, God is love, and merciful, yet at the same time, just. It was His justice that condemned the race to death because of sin; and it is only through the divine plan that we can understand how it is possible for Him to continue being just in this’ matter, and yet be the “justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Rom, 3:26.) Thank God for this glorious truth which has so clearly revealed the divine character to us! Yes, it is the truth that reveals why God has permitted evil, how His justice has operated, how His love is manifested, how His Wisdom planned it all, and how His almighty Power guarantees the accomplishment of His loving, just, and wise designs.

The Vision is Important,

And how important is this vision of truth to us who are now being prepared as the “epistle of Christ.” We must know God in order to be like Him and put our trust in Him. If God were not just, for example, how could we depend upon Him ? This seems to be the import of the information given to Moses, that God would

by no means clear the guilty. God wanted Moses to understand, and He wants us to understand-indeed, through the divine plan, has already made us to understand-that while He is abundant in goodness and mercy, longsuffering and kind, yet that the wages of sin is death and that those found wilfully guilty must suffer that penalty, and that through the law of heredity, the penalty has passed on down through the centuries affecting the succeeding generations.

That’s the way God’s justice was operating in ‘Moses’ day, yet His love and His wisdom were all the while planning for a future blessing for the people in that the original penalty of death was to be set aside by another. But even when the Adamic condemnation is set aside, still God’s justice will operate; and it will still be true that He will by no means “clear the guilty.” Then, however, each one will be dealt with individually. No longer will it be a case of the father eating the sour grape of sin, and his children’s teeth being set on edge; but every one shall die for his own iniquity. See Jeremiah 31:29, 30, and note that this is descriptive of God’s method of dealing with the people under the New Covenant, as shown in verses 31-34.

Thus we are learning to know God, not only as a God of love, but also as a dependable God, a God who

makes promises and keeps them, who has established a penalty for sin, and inflicts it. In fact, every attribute of His glorious character is becoming more and more apparent to us as we continue to look into and study His divine plan for human salvation. And as the brightness of the vision increases, the beauties of God's character and Law should become more and more indelibly stamped upon and imbedded in our hearts.

The Sealing Work.

The great message of truth back in the type was spoken directly to Moses while he had the tables of stone with him on Sinai. In the antitype this is also true: We receive the message through Christ, as it is passed on from one to another of His faithful followers. (See Heb. 1:1, 2; 2:3.) Thus it is that by our faithfulness in disseminating the truth and manifesting its spirit, we are helping to write the "epistle of Christ"-helping to impress the seal of His character as it is displayed in His plan, upon the hearts of the consecrated ones. Paul says that this "epistle of Christ" is being written by the Spirit of God; and, as the Spirit of God is writing this message of life and love on His willing and obedient servants, its grandeur, harmony and beauty is also being transmitted through them to yet others-their lives thus reflecting the truth of the Divine Plan.

Now let us note briefly the final conclusion which the inspired apostle reaches with respect to those said to be the "epistle of Christ" and the purpose for which this epistle is now being written. Throughout the third, fourth and fifth chapters of 2 Corinthians he discusses various details of God's plan for human reconciliation, calling our attention to type and antitype-with an occasional parenthetical suggestion not so directly related to his main theme. He reminds us of the present ministry of suffering in which the church participates, preparatory to the glory that shall follow, as typified by the glory on Moses' countenance as He came down from Sinai. He tells us of the ministry of reconciliation that has been given to us, as servants of the New Covenant, and that as such servants we are co-workers with Christ and with God.

And then, in the second verse of the sixth chapter he reaches the final point of his lesson and quotes his proof text from the Old Testament. He admonishes us not to receive in vain this great favour of being a co-worker with God, and assures us of divine grace and help to carry on if we will but do our part. "For He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted," he quotes from Isaiah, and then adds, "now is the accepted time." Turning back to Isaiah 49:8-10 from which Paul quotes, we find a wonderful prophecy of the New Covenant and the restitution blessings it will bring to the people.

We quote "Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time [which Paul shows is this Gospel age] have I heard thee [Paul applies this to the church] and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages: that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves, They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them."

What a glorious blessing is thus coming to the world, when those who are the "epistle of Christ" are given "for a covenant of the people." In the type, Moses came down from Mount Sinai bringing with him the tables of stone upon which was written the Law which formed the basis of that typical covenant; and here the Lord is telling us—and Paul has explained it for us—that the joint-heirs of Christ, in whose hearts has been written the unchangeable Law of God, the Law of the New Covenant, will be presented as "covenant of the people." Or, to put it in other phrase: Just as the typical tables of the law were given to Moses in order that he might teach the people, so these antitypical tables, the "epistle of Christ," are to be used throughout the age as the instrumentalities through whom Christ, their Head, will instruct the world in the

Law of the New Covenant. Thus they are indeed given “for a covenant of the people.”

No wonder Paul declares that the whole creation is waiting “for the manifestation of the sons of God”! No wonder he says that we are being “baptised for the dead.” No wonder we are promised a share in the glory of The Christ. No wonder we are said to be “ministers of reconciliation.” Paul gives us a further beautiful thought in this connection, in Romans 11:26, 27, saying, “And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the

Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant with them [Jer. 31:31-34] when I shall take away their sins.” Moses came out of Sinai and established the typical covenant and here the apostle is telling us that the greater than Moses shall “come out of Sion,” and establish the antitypical covenant. Moses brought with him the tables of the Law, and Christ will bring with Him, as His joint-heirs, all those who are His “epistle,” to be given as a “covenant of the people,” and through this glorious mediatorial arrangement, ungodliness will be turned away from Jacob and from the world—they will be taught to know the Lord and to be like Him.—Isa. 54:13.

So completely and universally will these who are the “epistle of Christ” proclaim and teach the knowledge of God and of His, law throughout the thousand years during which the New Covenant is being made with the people, that when the work is complete there will be no further need of teachers or epistles of any kind; for, says the prophet:

“They shall no more teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother saying ‘Know the Lord’: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” —Jer. 31:34. —From “The Dawn.”

Children’s Books and Cards.

“The Ten Camels”—This little book of Bible Stories is proving of much value in the homes of the friends. Highly recommended; bound in strong cloth covers, bright appearance, 1/9 (40 cents) per copy. A few available in strong paper covers at 9d. per copy, while they last.

“God’s Best Gift.”—For children. A helpful little book on the Divine. Plan to suit young mind’s. each.

“The Story of Mary Jones and Her Bible.”—A most interesting and inspiring story, showing how the Bible was cherished by one, in the days when few were procurable. Paper covers, 4d. per copy.

Children’s Cards.—A very fine series of card’s for children, known as the Parkside Series, is now on hand. These are prepared from both Old and New Testaments and have very good pictures with Scripture explanations on the back. Complete sets contain 90 cards (45 for each of the Old and New Testaments) and are priced at 3/-posted. Half sets of either, at 1/6, post paid. These cards make very helpful and interesting presents for children.

Melbourne Convention.

Arrangements are being made for the Christmas Convention to be held (D.V.) over the four days 23rd to 26th December inclusive and the Melbourne friends will gladly welcome all able to attend.

Additional information will appear in December issue, or obtainable from the Class Secretary—Mr. J. B. Hiam, 44 Heath Avenue, Oakleigh, S.E.12, Victoria.

Bible Class Assemblies.

Melbourne.—Clyde House, 182 Collins Street (near Town Hall), First Floor, Room 7 Sundays, 3.30 p.m. and 6.45 p.m.; Thursdays, 7.45 p.m.

Adelaide.—R.A.O.B. Hall, 48 Flinders Street, (near Lawler place), Sundays, 3 p.m. and 6.30 p.m.; Wednesdays,

7.30 p.m.

Perth — Druid's Chambers, (The Basement), 459 Hay Street, East,—Sundays, 3.45 p.m. and 6.45 p.m.

Sydney.— Child Study Rooms, 75 Liverpool Street—Sundays 3.30 p.m. and 6 p.m.

“ Poems of Dawn”

NEW EDITION. 190 PAGES

This is a collection of beautiful poems of consecration and encouragement for Christians, nearly 300 in number and numerous page fillers. Helpful at all times; an Excellent Gift,

Attractive appearance, bound in strong cloth covers, title gold blocked,

Price 3/. (70 cents) per copy. Reduction for Three or more BEREAN BIBLE INSTITUTE,

19 Ermington Place, Kew, E4, Melbourne, Vic., Aug.

PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

Published by the Berean Bible Institute, 19 Ermington Place, Kew, E4, Melbourne,

Victoria, Australia.

(Monthly) 2/6 (60 cents) per annum, post paid.

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 used, 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 Weapons of our Warfare.

The question has been raised as to what Scriptures forbid Christians engaging in present day warfare, and this is a matter of vital importance to the Lord's people.

The whole example and teachings of Jesus were to the effect that His followers while in the world should not be of it. In other words, their hopes, aims and ambitions must be set on things above and having no continuing city here (Col. 3:2; Heb. 13:14); they are in the position of strangers or aliens in whatever country they may be situated (Psa. 39:12; 1 Pet. 2:11).

A quotation from "The New Creation" is thought very helpful on this point, and is as follows:-"Aliens must be obedient to the laws; so must we. Aliens must pay taxes according to the laws; so must we. Aliens may look for protection under the laws; so may we. But aliens would not feel compelled to fight against their own King, the allegiance which they recognise primarily; and we would prefer to be in the same position, so far as possible, for are not we 'translated out of the kingdom of this world' into the Kingdom of God's dear Son,'-in its embryotic condition ? (Col. 1:13.)

"Are not we subjects of the great King? And are not all the kingdoms of this world more or less identified with 'the prince of this world' and his law of selfishness ? Are not we, therefore, strangers and pilgrims here, and to some extent aliens and foreigners ? It is. eminently proper that we should love and appreciate every good law' and all the servants of earthly laws . . . hence, we neither traduce our country, its rulers, or its laws; but this does not mean that we must fight for these with carnal weapons.

"True, government may not always exempt those opposed to war from participating in it, although a very gracious provision of this kind has in the past been made for some who, like ourselves, believe war to be unrighteous. We may be required to do military service, and if required we would be obliged to obey the powers that be, and should consider that the Lord's providence had permitted the conscription and that He was able to overrule it to the good of ourselves or others. In such event we would consider it not amiss to make a partial explanation to the proper officers, and to request a transference to the medical or hospital department, where our services could be used with the full consent of our consciences; but even if compelled to serve in the ranks and to fire our guns we need not feel compelled to shoot a fellow-creature."

Further, our Lord's words to Peter, "Put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:52), impresses the principle, as also expressed by the Apostle-"whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," and "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

While it is true, then, that the Lord's people "through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God," the above Scriptures show that the tribulation should not be the 'result of using carnal weapons. Truly, the followers of the Master delight to walk in His steps, and in harmony with His words, "The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save them," so they will continue in His approval as they lay down their lives in His service-preaching the glad tidings of the Kingdom which embraces the spiritual hope for the Church during this Gospel Age and the earthly inheritance for all the willing and obedient in the age to come.

Thus witnessing and comforting other members in the Body of Christ, each one who is fully consecrated

to God, will continue, until his sacrifice is completed in the way and manner that the High Priest sees best to permit. It may be that some severe experiences will come upon the last members of the Church very shortly, but all who have fully “set their affections on things above” will come through triumphantly in harmony with the promise-”The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.” (Psa. 34:7.)

Comments on “The Ten Camels”

QUITE a number of favourable reports respecting the Bible Stories, “The Ten Camels,” are now to hand, and the following comments ‘on the importance of fulfilling responsibilities towards the children will no doubt be appreciated by all.

“This little book should be a great help to parents to know how to lead the minds of their children to love the Bible and so learning to love

God and our Saviour as they learn the truth of God’s great purpose of blessing all the willing and obedient of. the human family.

“Perhaps some items could have been omitted and some statements may not be quite correct, though nothing that is of importance.

“To treat a child as this mother dealt with her little daughter is surely one of the greatest joys of human life; to see the little eyes brightened with interest and have the little questions and to note- the increasing interest and ultimately to see the happy result, is surely a crowning joy, for the children grow up to call their parents ‘blessed.’

“Truly it is the general failure of parents to thus nurture the minds of their children that has led to the present decline of godliness and increase of paganism in what we call Christian lands and to the sad condition the poor world has reached to-day,

“The church has been ‘the salt of the earth,’ the ‘light of the world,’ but the salt has lost its savour. All down the dark ages many false doctrines beclouded the truths of the Bible but still there existed, a reverence for God, and a seasoning of righteousness affected the people and the laws of nations. Then there arose the teachings of the ‘higher critics’—clergymen who seemed intent on proving the Bible untrue, uninspired of God—and the people lost faith and concluded that if there was no real revelation of God, there was nothing certain. They became careless and the instruction of children was neglected and thus the condition foretold by Paul has collie about-1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1, 2, etc. Whole nations that were called. Christian nations have become pagan. Even Germany, the land of Luther and the Reformation, became the hot-bed of the Higher Criticism Infidelity and, like the pagan nations of old, has plunged Europe into the horrors of war of the most diabolical kind.

“How far, may we ask, is the neglect of parents regarding Christian instruction of their children responsible for the present cataclysm ? How great is the responsibility of parenthood; what a stewardship ! How sad at the end of the way if the steward cannot give a good account, if the children have grown up ‘weeds’ instead of lovely blooms. What joy if, on the other hand, there has been careful Christian training and they not only receive the present joys of loving reverence of their sons and daughters but also the ‘well done good and faithful servant’ from the Lord.”

The Patience of Christ.

(Contributed.)

“And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.”-2 Thess. 3:5.

Possibly there is no pure teaching of God’s Word that has received greater violence at the hands of Christendom than the second advent of our Lord. One finds professing teachers and expounders of God’s Word ‘frankly admitting that the whole subject to them is “vague.” What, then, could we expect of the masses ? The fact remains, however, that all truly consecrated Christians down through the ages have loved and longed for the promised second advent, and it can be asserted that it is one of the sure tests today regarding truth and error. There are those who still dare to assert that there is no second advent until the whole world is converted to God through the agency of the church systems. How ridiculous ! If God’s Word told us this was to be so we would certainly believe it, but it shows quite plainly that it is not so. What it does tell us, is that when the Son of Man cometh there will be very few who cling to true faith founded upon His Word (Luke 18:8), and that there will be many scoffers regarding His presence (2 Peter 3:3, 4).

We are also told that the days of the Son of Man will be like unto the days of Noah (Matt. 24:37). There was nothing about the conditions of Noah’s day that would give us a thought of a converted world, but quite a deal that would harmonize the Scriptures concerning scoffers, for they scoffed at Noah’s warning of the impending flood. Likewise, as there were a few then who heeded God’s Word, so now in the days of the Son of Man there are a faithful few who are warned of God of things not seen as yet (Heb. 11:7). The erroneous teaching that the church is to convert the world in this age has much beclouded the issue. The Scriptures certainly show that it is God’s design that at last the world shall be converted unto Him through Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:10, 11; 1 Tim. 6:15). When the whole earth is at last filled with a full and true knowledge of God through Christ (that is the consummation of the prayer “Thy Kingdom come”) the earth truly will be a beautiful place. Many, however, who are captivated with the vision of a perfect earth, fail to discern the plan of God which He has ordained to its accomplishment, and work with more fervour than knowledge for its attainment. We should all be quite familiar with the special mission of our Lord Jesus at His first advent, the giving of His life a ransom for all, dying the just for the unjust-the price of sin paid that man might be redeemed from the power of the grave. Because of His (sacrificial) death, life has and will be proffered to all who will accept it at His hands.

In and through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, God -had in mind two objectives which were to work out eventually one purpose, viz., the full establishment of His kingdom of righteousness. The objectives • were--first, the outcalling, perfecting, and gathering together of the Church which is Christ’s body (Col. 1:18, 24); second, thus through the first objective accomplished, to inaugurate the order whereby God’s blessings should flow to all mankind. To clearly understand the Scripture it is most essential that we keep these two parts of the one Plan distinct and separate in our mind. Failure to do so will surely confuse.

Much is written in the Scriptures concerning the establishment of God’s righteous kingdom on earth, and many prophecies paint mind pictures of what will be during, the glorious Kingdom Age, and it is no wonder that all who have caught the vision of these things, both now and in the past. have longed for and prayed earnestly “Thy Kingdom. come.” However, of that which is to be accomplished first (the outcalling of the church) there appears to be little foretold directly in the Old Testament. It has been a great mystery, revealed only since Christ’s death and resurrection by His holy apostles and prophets with the aid of the holy spirit (Eph. 3:3, 5, 9, 10). Through such revelation we discern that the New Testament scriptures have been written chiefly for the benefit of this class-to perfect the saints, to build up the body of Christ (Eph. 4:11-16).

This, then, has been the work in progress since Pentecost, and not, as some have supposed, “world conversion.”

We are thankful to our God to know that this will all come “in due time” (1 Tim. 2; 6), after the Church has been perfected in Christ and is complete. If as students of God’s Word we find it clearly foretold that a time of glory is to be over all the earth-when tears shall be wiped from off all faces; no more death or pain (Rev. 21:3, 4); when there shall be no more wars nor the fear of such (Isaiah 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-3), and the way of righteousness be made perfectly clear to everybody (Hab. 2:14; Zeph. 3:9; Isaiah 11:9; 35:8); then as we look around us and behold sorrow, pain and death prevalent everywhere, nations frantically preparing for war on a scale never before realised and the hearts of all men failing them for fear of the consequences, and all this together with the intense confusion of religious thought caused by divided denominations each proclaiming differing doctrines, do we not ardently look for the dawning of the new day that will bring such far-reaching blessings to all mankind ! Surely we do. But this also we will learn as students of the Word-before this- glad time is ushered in, the church must be complete, the last member of the Bride of Christ gathered home preparatory for the marriage (Rev. 19:7). Then .will be complete the Christ (Head and Body) who is to bless the whole world (“all the families of the earth”) (Eph. 5:23-32; Gen. 28:14; Gal. 3:29).

So whilst we joyfully anticipate the blessings due to the world by Christ’s Kingdom established, we discern that a degree of patience is required “until the due time.” Meanwhile that which is necessary of accomplishment first (the outcalling of the Church) continues. This, then, is the objective of the Christian-that he or she should daily seek by the grace of God in Christ to make their own calling and election sure, whilst the acceptable time for perfecting the joint-heirs with Christ is still open (2 Peter 1:10, 11; Rom. 8:17), as also doing all we can to help others of like precious faith “to gain the crown” (2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Thess. 5:11). This is not as easy as it may seem. If we are faithful in presenting our bodies living sacrifices, not being conformed to this world (Rom. 12:1, 2), we shall find that the way is well defined as “narrow.” The renewing of our minds must not be forgotten for a day, in order that God’s transforming work might continue in us. The way is very exacting and we shall need much patience as we seek by grace “to keep the body under,” “to overcome the world,” “to fight the good fight of faith.” Quite often, too, in seeking to help others of like precious faith our way is beset with difficulties which prove or test our fidelity and patience in the race set before us. So as we plod along this narrow way, so often reminded of our own weaknesses, and daily coming into contact with the forces of “this present evil world,” as well as beholding the suffering of humanity generally “groaning and travailing in pain,” we are tempted to become impatient and to give way to doubts and fears that assail from within and without.

The Revised Version of the text reads: “And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and .in to the patience of Christ.” The apostle would have us attain the patience of Christ. Quietly meditating over the Scriptures which tell of the life of Jesus upon earth, it is clearly manifest how patient He was. The calm which seemed to permeate all His utterances and actions was. surely born of patience. What was the secret of His calm and patient spirit ? If we know, surely we are well on the way of attaining the patience of Christ. Was it not His unswerving faith in His loving Heavenly Father’s word? In the agonies of Gethsemane it was. “Thy will be done.” As He claimed to be the Son of God, His enemies railed on Him to prove His authority, but He bore it all patiently, understanding quite well that the time to exert His authority and to show His power lay in the future.

The Jewish people. who refused Jesus, knowing not the time of their visitation, caused Him much sorrow at heart, evidenced by His lament over them in Matthew 23:37. We feel and know how sad He was in declaring their house desolate (v. 38), yet He remained quite calm and patient because He knew that according to His Father’s word all hope was not gone. While verse 39 meant little or nothing, then, to those who were addressed, yet, He who uttered it, quietly rejoiced in a knowledge of the Word which

revealed that yet they would say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

So then, if we have little Gethsemanes to pass through in our daily walk, what better antidote against the natural tendencies to meet reviling with reviling, etc., than a mind saturated with knowledge of the Word that explains why we must have these oppositions (1 Peter 4:12-14; Rom:8:17; 2 Tim. 3:12). If we have this, we will rejoice by experiencing a calm in such testing times.

Paul, so clear in knowledge of God and His plan in its various features down through the ages, revered God from his heart, and his experiences show how he had the indwelling of the spirit of the patience of Christ. He wished and prayed that others may be directed to this love of God and patience of Christ which he himself enjoyed (Acts 26:29; Eph. 3:13-19). So now as we see the world so disturbed and in a state of chaos, cannot the Christian remain calm? Whilst we should do what we can to alleviate distress, we realise how little we can do. And does not a knowledge of the Word of God explain all this trouble? Does it not point us to the glorious outcome of it all? Let us then, with the patience of Christ, wait God's appointed time, meantime calmly and quietly going about doing good unto all as we have opportunity (Gal. 6:10).

Let us not forget to seek grace that we might ever be patient in seeking to bring others to a knowledge of the truth of God's Word. Should we be tempted to impatience along this line, let us consider how patient God was in dealing with us, and how patiently He deals with us still. Such reflection will immediately suppress any feeling of impatience with others. If, as Jesus found "His own" (John 1:11), we encounter any who refuse to listen to the gracious messages that come forth from the Word, shall we despair? If our hearts are full of the love of God we will naturally feel it rather keenly when some refuse to investigate the truth, and in their ignorance continue in the ways of vanity which we know will assuredly end in loss and vexation of spirit; yet in a knowledge of God's Word we can be patient in Christ to know there is still a ray of light and hope that even these may at last echo the words, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Aids to Bible Study.

"Foregleams of the Golden Age."—A most useful book on numerous Bible subjects. Berean questions with Scriptural answers after each chapter. Blue cloth, gold lettering. 2/6 (60 cents) per copy.

"Divine Plan of the Ages." — This well-known Bible study, a key to the Scriptures. In pocket size, very handy and attractive. 1/6 per copy; red cloth edition, 1/- each.

"Photo-Drama of Creation." — This book of 96 short articles and nearly 400 illustrations is most useful in explaining God's Plan of the Ages. It is very interesting for children as well as instructive for all. In two bindings—with strong paper covers, now priced at 3/-; in de luxe. beautifully bound, with gold edges, at 4/6.

"Life and Teachings of the Lord."—Continuous Narrative of the Four Gospels according to the Revised Version; helpful for studying the life of our Lord. Supply limited, in attractive limp binding, gold edges. Price, 3/6 per copy.

"A Review of the Doctrines."—A book of 92 pages, by H. J. Shearn, of England; in paper cover at 6d. per copy. "Tabernacle Shadows."—This well-known booklet; most helpful to a clear understanding of the plan of salvation.

Paper covers, 1/- each.

“Zionism in Prophecy,” instructive for both Jews and Gentiles, and especially appropriate for the present days.

Priced at 1/- per copy.

“Evolutionists at the Crossroads.”--A very useful book on this subject; 126 pages. Price 1/- per copy, posted. “God’s

Covenants.”—An instructive booklet on these subjects. Priced at 6d. each.

“Song of Our Syrian Guest.”—An interesting booklet on the 23rd Psalm, at 3d. each.

Various Items.

“The Scripture Art Calendar for 1940.”—This turnover calendar is a very fine production with Scripture texts and readings for every day of the year, also 12 fine colour plates beautifully reproduced and a large frontispiece of the River Jordan, size 11 x 8in., all in full colours; well worth framing, adding beauty and charm to every Christian home. Friends desiring these for presents, etc., are advised to order early to avoid disappointment. Price, 2/- per copy, post paid. Four copies for 7/6. A folder illustrating this calendar, will be gladly sent to all who make request.

“Daily Heavenly Manna.”—This well-known little book in vest pocket size is now to be had in dark blue leatherette binding, in addition to leather and cloth. This new binding is very serviceable and attractive, and the title is blocked in gold as in the other bindings. Prices: Black leather 2/6 (60 cents); dark blue leatherette, 2/3 (55 cents); dark green or black cloth, 1/10 (45 cents).

Tabernacle Charts.—These are nicely painted on—linen, 30in. x 20in., and very suitable for the home or meeting place. Price, 5/- each.

Post Cards.--A good variety of post cards with appropriate Scriptures and helpful verses for the Christmas and New Year seasons is expected to arrive shortly. Very fine cards with glossed surface, including Post Card Calendars, 2/6 per dozen; second variety, also good, 1/4 per dozen; others at 1/- per dozen.

“Hymns of Dawn.” — Containing music and words of the original Hymnal; well bound in blue cloth, with gold lettering. Price, 4/- per copy.

“Bible Students Hymnal.”—A fine selection of hymns, words only, 462 in number and comprising all in the former books, with additions. Prices: Bound with cloth boards, 1/9; limp cloth, 1/6.

Poem Books.— “Comforted of God” and “Call of the Bride”; two fine little books of helpful poems, 1/6 per copy.

Published by Berean Bible Institute, 19 Ermington Place, Kew, 54.

Printed by Hickling & Powell Pty: Ltd., Brunswick, Vic