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Why Do the Nations War?

THIS subject is important, as well as timely, and we believe that the Scriptures contain a complete and satisfactory answer to all right-thinking people. We equally believe that this answer cannot be gained from any other source than the Bible.

When we ask the question—Why do the nations war?—our thoughts often formulate another question—Why should the nations war? It is most repulsive to our minds to meditate upon actual warfare, and yet there has hardly been a time, over centuries past, when there was not a war, large or small, raging on the earth in some quarter.

Years ago when we were called on to learn history at school, many lessons seemed to be based on various wars, and one war that greatly impressed was the "Hundred Years' War", the very title of which seemed to be past comprehension. Not that war raged, as we know it today, for one hundred years on end; but nevertheless, that particular war lasted, off and on, for a century, so we were informed.

In this present century, many people living today have clearly in mind the events covering the last two World Wars. About seventy years ago the claim was made generally that the world was becoming too civilized to go to war. That was the strong belief prior to the time when the German Kaiser began training and equipping his soldiers, in preparation for 1914. One of the saddest features of those times was the fact that the militaristic power of Germany arose in the very land of the great reformer, Luther. Someone may ask—What did Luther's Christianity do for Germany? We answer; no doubt there were millions of people in Germany who were ashamed of that nation's military power. However, during that 1914-18 war, the assurance of certain statesmen was given that it was "a war to end war."

There was certainly a noble effort on the part of some nations, with the League of Nations, and their generous disarmament agreements, to make

war a thing of the past, following that First World War. We think of Britain in particular, who disarmed to the point of great peril in the 1920s. When it was realised what was happening over in Europe, Britain was compelled to hurriedly rearm, as they had discarded much of their armaments, expecting that other nations would do the same. Within a few years we are aware of the rise of the dictators, particularly in Italy and Germany, and with the rearming of millions of men, and the aggressive tactics produced the Second World War, with the renewal of assurances when that war was over, that "it must not happen again." The Atlantic Charter and other agreements were well meant, but what we have observed world wide since the Second World War, with the inability of the United Nations to control acts of warfare, shows that the greatest powers on earth cannot maintain peace and bring happiness to the world.

We do not need to contemplate the dread possibility of another war amongst the great powers today, with the atomic bombs and other deadly weapons. Our subject is—Why do the nations war? Why was it that the courageous work of the reformer Martin Luther failed to inspire the nation of Germany to better things, than that of military conquest? Was it the fault of his form of Christianity? If so, is there a form of Christianity today, that can save the world? We often hear outstanding evangelists today, such as Billy Graham, pleading with people to come to the Lord to save America. These preachers can see the deterioration in America and other countries and their well-meaning appeals to people to accept the Lord are intended to save this present world order of things. But does the Lord desire the present world order saved? We shall see.

The Apostle Paul gives us an inspired review of mankind, looking back over the centuries prior to our Lord's first advent, and which helps us to understand the position today. Following the fall of our first parents into disobedience and sin, the apostle gives us a clear picture of the effect upon succeeding generations in the pas-

sage in Rom. 1:21-25, which please read. Verse 21 states—"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." Then verse 28 reads—"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind"—margin, "a mind void of judgment"—they had lost their judgment as true human beings. We note the expression—"God gave them over"—showing that God permitted the free-will of men to operate, even though it was very detrimental at that time.

The prophet Isaiah had previously expressed the waywardness of mankind in the words—"The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked"—Isa. 57:20, 21. The wicked are like the troubled sea; they are void of judgment. God gave them over, because they wished to exercise their own will, and God allowed mankind to experience their own waywardness for a lasting lesson.

Also in Eccles. 7:29 we have the words of the wise man which are enlightening—"Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." God made man upright, created in the image of God, with the Garden of Eden in perfection, and if man had lived in obedience to God the human family would have been brought forth perfect, and enjoyed the blessings of everlasting life. The Garden of Eden no doubt would have been extended to accommodate the increasing human family, and the whole world would have been a paradise. But disobedience brought sin, the death sentence had to be pronounced upon Adam, and all mankind being condemned in Adam, death passed upon the whole human family.

The Hebrew word in Eccles. 7:29 translated "inventions" means—"A contrivance, that is, a warlike machine." To illustrate, we have the passage in 2 Chron. 26—"Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning of the wall, and fortified them. And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal"—verses 9 and 15. The word "engines" in this passage is from the same Hebrew word as "inventions" in Eccles. 7:29. Here we see the beginning of fortifications, with the "engines" to shoot arrows and great stones, like cannon balls. "God made man upright"—perfect, noble—but "they sought out many inventions"—warlike machines, to gain advantage over their fellow men. "Their foolish heart was darkened"—obscured—as we saw from the apostle in Romans 1.

If it was truly said of mankind in those ancient times, "they have sought out many inventions", what can be said of the last half century, with the same meaning to the word inventions—contriv-

ances, war-like machines? It is unnecessary to enumerate the mass of warlike machines in the world today; but we believe the fulfilment of the Scripture—"they have sought out many inventions", is the answer to our question—Why do the nations war? It is the spirit of the Adversary, working one against the other to gain advantage, that has brought about this competition to develop warlike machines, to destroy one another for earthly gain. God created man upright—free-willed, in His image—but by disobedience and sin, mankind has gone its own way. God in His wisdom has permitted this, for a lasting lesson for all the families of the earth. Truly, as the prophet Hosea declared—"For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind"—Hos. 8:7. Man has brought about present world conditions himself, and being a free-will agent, by God allowing him to go his own way, he will learn the lesson the hard way, with every generation tasting the sour grape of sin and death.

But is Christianity at fault, in the world today? Is it the failure of the message of Christ, or the lack of zeal on the part of His followers that accounts for present world conditions? Let us note the words of our Lord in Matt. 24:4-14, which please read. In this 24th chapter of Matthew our Lord gives us more or less a history of the Gospel Age. Verse 14 is of particular importance—"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." The Lord did not say that the gospel would bring about the conversion of the world, would turn back that evil spirit which the Adversary has exerted amongst mankind from the time of the fall of Adam. The Lord did not say that the witness of the gospel in all the world would bring about a reformation of mankind. The witness of the kingdom message has been to "take out a people for God's name", a comparatively few of humanity. We remember that our Lord, the perfect preacher, gave the perfect message to Israel, and how many believed?—a comparative few. Why only a few? Because the majority were not worthy to be called for the heavenly inheritance. Only the Israelites indeed, in whom was no guile, were drawn to Jesus. And the witness of the gospel of the kingdom has been finding only the "Israelites indeed" throughout this Gospel Age since Jesus' day, that these, proving faithful unto death, may reign with Christ over the remainder of mankind, to uplift and bless all the obedient with lasting life on the restored earth. How thankful we are that God had offered this "gospel of the kingdom" to those who are worthy of it, that they may respond to it, yielding their lives gladly and joyfully in sacrifice with Christ, that they may prove worthy to reign with Him in the promised kingdom.

Turning to Matt. 13:24-30 we have outlined the parable of the Wheat and the Tares, which our Lord gave to illustrate the selection of the kingdom of heaven class, the "wheat" class. The "tares" of the parable picture the imitation Chris-

tians of this Gospel Age. Verse 30 shows that the wheat and tares were to grow together throughout the Gospel Age, and then in the harvest, at the end of the age, separation would take place. The tares were to be gathered together in bundles—the church systems of today—while the wheat would be gathered into the heavenly barn. The “wheat” are shown as not being included in any of the bundles; they do not belong to any particular denomination of Christendom, they belong to the Lord. During the harvest of this Gospel Age, in which we are living today and have been for some considerable time, the Lord is drawing His people to Himself from the ecclesiastical heavens, as revealed in Rev. 18:4—“Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” Those who are the Lord’s people will respond to this call, forsaking the bundles of tares—the churches of nominal Christendom. The call is not to another denomination, but to the Lord Himself. Reading on in Matt. 13:36-43 we have the explanation of our Lord respecting the gathering of the wheat into the heavenly garner—“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

In confirmation of the Lord gathering His people out of the “present evil world” in preparation for the kingdom to come, we have Jesus’ words to Pilate in John 18:36—“My kingdom is not of this world”—this kosmos, or order of things—“if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.” If the Lord desired His kingdom to be established at His first advent, He would have commissioned His disciples to fight that He should not be delivered to the Jews, humanly speaking. But the Lord does not require nor desire His disciples to fight for His cause in any shape or form. This was well illustrated when Peter thought he had to defend his Master when He was being apprehended in the Garden of Gethsemane. See Matt. 26:51-54—“Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?” “They that take the sword shall perish with the sword.” That is the principle operating throughout the world today, but humanly speaking nations cannot avoid preparing for war; if they did not, they would be overrun by other nations. Nevertheless, it will be proved correct that “they that take the sword shall perish with the sword”, because all nations will become involved in a mighty conflict which none will be able to avoid. This will result in the passing of the present order of things, in which the Lord’s people are warned to have no part in any shape or form.

James 1:27 helps the Lord’s people to see what is expected of them as they follow in the

steps of their Master. The verse reads—“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” How are the Lord’s people to keep “unspotted from the world”, not affected by the world’s spirit, to preserve the spirit of the Lord in their devotions at all times? This latter part of the verse shows that the Lord’s people are not to become involved in the world’s affairs, in politics, or any other branch of this world’s activities. They are called out of the world, and have neither the desire, nor the time to be concerned with the affairs of this “present evil world.” This is clearly indicated in the prayer of our Lord on the last night of His earthly life, on behalf of His true followers, as given in John 17:15, 16—“I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” What a standard does the Lord set there in that lovely prayer! Our Lord sought not to have the slightest influence upon any of the world’s affairs throughout His ministry, and that is what He said of His true followers—“they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” See also James 4:4, where we read—“Friendship of the world is enmity with God.” This does not mean the Lord’s people are not to be friendly with the people of the world, but rather they are not to be friendly with worldly affairs, for “whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

Turning to 2 Pet. 3:10-13 we have a Scripture which gives us encouragement and hope despite the passing of the “heavens and earth” of this present order of things. Verse 10 speaks of the religious heavens passing away with a great noise, and the elements melting with fervent heat; that is, the various sections of Christendom will disintegrate, to make way for the “new heavens”; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up, to make way for the “new earth”. Verse 11 is most important—“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.” “All these things shall be dissolved”; how much the Lord’s people need to keep this in mind at all times. All our governments, all our worldly institutions are going to be dissolved, and each Christian needs to ask himself, How much am I involved in the world in which I live? Do we feel sometimes that we would like the present order to go on a little longer, for our benefit? And all the time we are praying—“Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.” Do we want the kingdom delayed, or would we rather see the present order dissolved quickly, so that the kingdom could come quickly? For the Apostle declares in verse 13—“Nevertheless we (Christians) according to his (God’s) promise, look for new heavens and a new

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Understanding the Mass

ROME, September 12.—Pope Paul and rebel French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre met for an hour yesterday at the Pope's summer residence at Castel Grandolfo but apparently failed to solve the dispute between them. Monsignor Lefebvre's rebellion within the church came into the open when he was suspended from all priestly functions in July for ordaining priests in his seminary at Ecône in Switzerland, in defiance of Papal instructions. He defied his suspension to celebrate a Mass in the superseded Latin Tridentine rite at Lille in France earlier this month, and harshly criticised reforms in the church since the Second Vatican Council 10 years ago.

The above news report appeared in the Melbourne "Age" on September 13. On the Australian scene, the following was reported in the same newspaper on September 3—"Father Augustine Cummins—the leading priest in the Australian Tridentine Mass row—yesterday set himself for a collision with the Roman Catholic hierarchy. 'I would be violating my conscience to change now. I will not give in', he said.

"The gentle, earnest priest—who regularly celebrates the forbidden Tridentine rite for more than 300 Catholics in Victoria, N.S. Wales and South Australia—said he was planning to step-up his activities. 'I am only doing what I was ordained to do 30 years ago. I will continue to do it', he said. 'I couldn't care what they say, I know where I stand; I'm right in the eyes of God', he said."

To all thinking people outside the Roman Catholic Church, the stand taken by the French Archbishop, and the Australian priest may seem correct. If a certain form of Mass was supposed to be pleasing to the Lord over a long period up to 10 years ago, why should a change be essential and the celebrants be forced to adopt a new form sanctioned only by the Papacy? Another more important question could be asked—Is the Mass in any form really Scriptural, and pleasing to the Lord?

In answer, it is probably generally assumed that the Mass celebrated so often in Roman Catholic services is merely the Lord's Supper, under another name. But that is not so—it is wholly different! The Lord's Supper celebrates the death of Christ accomplished at Calvary. The Mass rep-

resents a new sacrifice for sins made every time the Mass is performed. Roman Catholics believe that when the priest blesses the wafer it becomes the actual body of Christ in his hands, for the very purpose of sacrificing Him afresh. High Mass is a particular sacrifice of Christ for a particular sin of a particular individual. Low Mass is a sacrifice of Christ for the general sins of a congregation. Roman Catholics claim to believe in the merit of Christ's sacrifice at Calvary—that it covered original sin, general sins that are past; but they claim also that the daily sins, short-comings, blemishes of every individual, require to be cleansed by fresh sacrifices of Christ from time to time. Thus, from their standpoint, as represented in the Mass, and as practised by the Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics and High Church Episcopalians, Christ is being sacrificed afresh all the world over every day. This in the Scriptures is called an "abomination"—Matt. 24:15—in God's sight, because it disregards, sets at naught, the fact as stated in the Bible, that Christ dieth no more, "that by one sacrifice he hath perfected forever all who come unto the Father through him"—Rom. 6:9; Heb. 10:14.

Discipleship

(Contributed Address)

IN his letter to Rome, Paul deals in great depth with the inner significance of Christian baptism. He points out how it pictures total surrender of personal ambition and self-will and the beginning of a new life of service to Jesus Christ as Master of all that life may have in store. In this letter and others, he also sets out what the consecrated believer may expect as he goes on his Christian way in newness of life, and also the precious reward to those who continue faithful to the end of that way.

These precious themes which the apostle so wonderfully expounds in his letters, we can find also in the Gospel accounts of our Lord's earthly ministry, as He invited one here and one there to follow Him in the paths of discipleship. So under this theme of discipleship, let us consider the calling of the first disciples, let us think over what following Jesus meant to them and still does to His disciples; let us see what experiences they and we may expect and what is the ultimate reward of discipleship.

As our text, let us take the Lord's lovely invitation as recorded in Matt. 11:28-30—"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

To take His yoke upon one and learn of Him is the essence of discipleship, for a disciple is first and foremost a learner, a pupil, a follower, an imitator. This is surely what all believers are seeking to do, to learn of Him by the heavenly

Father's grace and with His help and guidance. It has been said that we are pupils in the school of Jesus Christ—what a privilege surely it is to be allowed to enrol in such a school. It is of interest to note that in Gal. 3:24, where the apostle refers to the law as a schoolmaster to lead to Jesus Christ, the word "schoolmaster" refers more to a servant engaged to actually take some nobleman's son along to school and only to some extent assist him in his learning. Primarily to lead him to the real Master who would instruct and pass on His own wisdom to the pupil.

We are invited to come to the Saviour, Jesus Christ, the righteous, the only true, the only all-wise Master and Teacher, the one greater than Solomon for wisdom and glory. Just as He did in the days of His flesh, this blessed Master still calls those who have ears to hear to follow Him. "Learn of me", He says, "for I am meek and lowly of heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Unlike most earthly masters, particularly of our day, this greatest of all teachers is meek and lowly of heart. He could say to His early disciples—"He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve—I am among you as one that serveth"—Luke 22:26, 27. In this as in all things, how wonderfully He sets the pattern for all who would learn of Him.

Let us look then at the call of the early disciples, their backgrounds and the circumstances of their call. We see that as the Apostle Paul later wrote to Corinth, not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble (that is, in worldly eyes) are called. Rather God chooses mainly the foolish, the weak and the base in human estimation to be the followers of His dear Son, who becomes to each one their wisdom and their strength. In general, these are poor in this world's goods, but they are rich in faith, the great pre-requisite for successful scholarship and growth in the school of Jesus Christ.

In the first 12 disciples, whom Jesus chose as His close companions, we see men of lowly station and no outstanding accomplishments, apart from their faith and love and loyalty to Him. These are nevertheless the basic ingredients for all faithful service, without which the greatest talent or skill will be quite useless.

Later on, in the Apostle Paul, we find a disciple of considerable learning and standing among the religious leaders of his day, but all those things which before were his pride and joy he gladly counted as worthless for the great privilege of knowing Jesus Christ, whom he was happy to acknowledge as his Lord and Master. Like Paul, we must all empty out self if we are to be filled by Christ.

Of the first 12 disciples, it is evident that several were formerly disciples of John the Baptist, and their hearts had no doubt been touched by his call to national and personal repentance

and return to the God of their fathers. So when John pointed them to the Lamb of God they would take heed and be prepared to hear Him who spake as never man spake.

According to John's gospel, it was at Jordan that Jesus first spoke to James and John, Simon and Andrew, Philip and Nathanael. So later on by the Sea of Galilee as He passed them by at their nets, the four fishermen disciples were ready to heed His loving invitation—"Follow me and I will make you fishers of men"—Matt. 4:19.

In Luke 5:27-32, we read of the call of Matthew (or Levi) the tax-gatherer. Like the fishermen, he too left all and followed Jesus, but he did more, he made a feast and invited his friends to come and meet his new Master. There are lessons here for us today, for He still calls to discipleship, and He still desires the same willing response.

Firstly, we note that in nearly all cases, there has been some preparation for the Saviour's call. Perhaps even over many years, the message of the Gospel has been heard, but there comes the time when in a very real and positive way, the challenge comes—"Follow me". It is then, that like the early disciples, we need the ready response, to hear and heed, and in faith to say—"Lord, I would follow thee, in all the way thy weary feet have trod—yes, if I may." For as the hymn writer so well points out, to follow Jesus now is a rare privilege, not previously extended and never again to be granted. Great indeed are the favour and reward of discipleship to those who in this age hear His call—Follow me, learn of me.

Secondly, the account of Levi's call also reminds us of the privilege of telling others about Him whom we have come to know. His way of doing so was to make a feast, we may do so as we speak a word for the Saviour to any we meet who may have an ear to hear. The good seed is still available for sowing, and even today there are still some who hunger and thirst after righteousness. That hunger and that thirst only Jesus the Living Bread and the Water of Life can satisfy.

Andrew and Philip here too set us a good example, for we see that both went off to tell a friend, in one case his brother Simon, in the other his fellow-countryman Nathanael, the Israelite indeed. "We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth." If our own discovery has meant anything to us, surely we will want by word and even more by our lives to let others know and see that we are His followers.

It is clear that the early disciples left all to be with Jesus, sometimes to sit at His feet as He taught by the way, sometimes to go out to preach to others. Down through the years, others of the Lord's followers also have heard the call to

"full time" service as we might call it. But really all of us are to be in full time service as we witness for our Master at home, at school, at work, or wherever we may be, looking for every opportunity to learn more of His will and daily to put it into practice. For such reasons, fellowship together is so important as well as private reading and study of His Word. There is need for group learning and discussion as well as the private tutorial.

What then did the response to the call to discipleship cost the early followers of Jesus and what reward, if any, was to be theirs for doing so? Peter asked Jesus this very question, and this and the Master's reply are found in Matt. 19:27-30. (Please read.) Verse 28 refers to the apostles in particular, but verse 29 is the answer for all who are ready and willing to give up personal ambition and self-will to learn of Jesus and to serve Him.

Luke's corresponding account adds that manifold blessings are theirs in this present time with eternal life in the age to come. Surely, all those who have followed on can testify to the magnitude of God's blessings compared with whatever has been given up.

The Lord's requirements for discipleship are given in Luke 9:23-26 (please read) and there are three essentials. **First** and foremost there must be denial of self, for no man can serve two masters, Self-will must give way to His will, self-pleasing to Christ pleasing, thinking of self to learning of Him. **Second**, there must be the daily laying down of life in the service of our Master and the Heavenly Father, so that we may live out what we have learnt in every act of life, in thought and word and deed. **Third**, there must be total submission and obedience so that we may be sensitive to our Father's will for us every day and every hour. We must be ready to catch the tender whisper of His call, as we seek to follow in the footsteps of God's dear Son, our Master and Friend who has trod the way before.

These are stringent requirements and cannot be entered into lightly but in full willingness of mind and heart and in full assurance of faith in Him who is Lord and Master of us all. Though the path may differ in detail for each one, the goal is the same and like the Apostle Paul, each must keep his eyes fixed firmly on that goal, like a runner looking towards the distant finishing line. Nothing must distract, nothing must hinder the run and anything that will slow down or turn aside must be avoided.

For all of us, the tests of Phil. 4:8 still hold good, our thoughts and hence our words and actions must be directed only to those things which have the positive virtues listed by the apostle. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak and pre-occupation with what is not pure, honest, lovely, of good report and so on, will surely and certainly reflect in the daily life.

This does not of course mean neglect of necessary duties and obligations to others, rather all these should be carried out as if we were doing them specifically for the Lord Himself. Since we have crowned Him Lord of our lives this is exactly the case, for as Frances Havergal's lovely consecration hymn puts it, discipleship for each one of us means giving over—my hands, my feet, my voice, my lips, my goods, my time, my intellect, my will, my heart, my love, myself.

The Apostle Paul was called on to endure much for our Lord, but his testimony was that in good or bad times and circumstances—"I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me"—Phil. 4:13. He who so enabled the great apostle to win through has also promised to be with all who are His disciples even to the end of the age. All power in heaven and in earth has been given to Him.

What experiences are promised to each one who enrolls as His disciple. We have already seen that there must be self-denial and full submission to the Master's will as it is being learned. But there is the promise of tribulation, even persecution as the differences in outlook, in interests, in priorities are seen by those around. This has varied from age to age and in our time the Christian in the Western world at least may expect mainly scorn or contempt and only occasionally active opposition.

On the other hand, the great trend in our world is to blur the outlines of what is good and beneficial and what is damaging or unprofitable to Christian discipleship. If there is any doubt, leave it out is still good advice, and unless any line of thought or action will meet the Bible test of "any virtue and any praise" it is best left well alone. We do well to remember that in the last times deceptions are to increase so as to delude even the very elect, if that were possible.

All of us, whether young or old in the Way, need to take advice of the hymn—

My soul, be on thy guard;
Ten thousand foes arise;
The hosts of sin are pressing hard
To draw thee from the prize.

The weapons of our self-defence against these are listed in Eph. 6, and if we are wise we will never lay them down until the fight is over and the victory won.

And what is the prize of faithful discipleship—as we have seen, there are blessings in this life, for though in the world we may have trials, yet in Jesus Christ we are assured of **peace**—His peace amid strife and unrest, the assurance as of a safe shelter in the storm, peace of heart and peace of mind. And there is **joy** also, the joy of knowing that our Saviour's care is over each individual one, and that all life's experiences work for good to those who are called of God. And there is **hope** too, for the disciple of Jesus must have an unrepentant optimism, not optimism based on frail human effort, but on the sure prom-

ises of God's Word and on the experiences of his discipleship and its blessings.

And when the course is completed, and this is a life-time course, the promise is eternal life. For the Master has assured us in John 14:2, 3—"I go to prepare a place for you (in my Father's house) and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also."

Meantime, each of the Master's disciples is himself or herself being trained for higher service. The lessons learned in this life, how suitably they will have fitted each one for service, when all is finished and the final report card is made out—"Well done, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

The Apostle John, recording the Master's words, tells us there are three evidences in particular of true discipleship. John 8:31—"If ye **continue** in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." John 13:35—"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have **love** one for another." John 15:8—"Herein is my Father glorified if ye bear much **fruit**—so shall ye be my disciples." These are fundamental keys to faithful discipleship, learning, loving, fruit-bearing.

The invitation to discipleship, to footstep following of the Saviour, to learn of Him, is a privilege beyond all comparison; blessed indeed are they who hear the Master's invitation "Follow me" and in full submission daily seek to learn of Him. May we allow nothing to draw us aside or hinder our scholarship in the school of Jesus Christ, but rather may we follow the Apostle Peter's advice in 2 Pet. 3:18—"But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Convention News

A wonderful time of Christian fellowship was experienced again this year at the 4th Nambour Convention, for which we especially give thanks to the Lord. The number present was slightly in excess of last year. It was a great privilege to have so many present from Melbourne and Geelong, especially when we realise it meant a journey of about 1,300 miles for them to be with us. We were also pleased to welcome friends from Brisbane, Toowoomba and Harvey's Siding. We are very grateful to the brethren for their labours in preparing interesting addresses and studies.

The topics of the addresses were as follows—"The Shield of Faith"; "Jacob's Trouble—the Jew First"; "The Foundation of Our Faith"; "How can we Walk with God"; "The Heavenly Vision"; "Wisdom"; and "The Ransom and the Sin Offering".

A Bible Study was taken in Heb. 9:23-28. Other studies were—"Our Lord's Second Ad-

vent" and "Our Lord's Prophecy", plus Question Time. A short Testimony Meeting was also held. We wish to express our appreciation to the sisters who laboured to provide our temporal food. We know all these services were performed as unto the Lord.

We were pleased to receive many wonderful messages of Christian love and greetings from Classes and individual brethren throughout Australia; it was indeed good to know that so many were thinking of us at our time of gathering together. Christian love and greetings with the message from Gal. 6:9, 10 were sent from the Convention to all those who remembered us, and to all brethren everywhere.

On Sunday morning we had an unscheduled event, when a young Polish brother from Melbourne decided to symbolize his consecration by water baptism. We were very pleased to be able to comply with his wishes. An appropriate address was given in the hall, after which we moved to a Nambour park, where the immersion took place in a creek, in a lovely rural setting amongst trees. Our thoughts went back to the baptism of our Lord in the Jordan River centuries ago.

The Convention closed with a Love Feast to the singing of "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love" and "God be with you till we meet again." We all went away spiritually refreshed and with a deep feeling of thankfulness to our Heavenly Father for the rich blessings poured out upon us all so abundantly.

Melbourne Christmas Convention

The brethren of the Melbourne Class extend a cordial invitation to all friends able to attend their Annual Convention to be held this year (D.V.) on December 25th, 26th, 27th and 28th, in the Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond. Further information from the Class secretary—Mr. J. B. Hiam, 13 Bunker Crescent, Glen Waverley, Victoria, 3150.

Pocket "Daily Heavenly Manna"

Copies of the pocket "Daily Heavenly Manna" are now on hand. These are nicely printed and bound in semi-flexible covers, and are very handy for the pocket or hand-bag. Three indexes make it more valuable—Manna Article Index; Scripture Index to Manna, and Topical Index. Priced at 75c plus 33c postage.

The Ten Camels

This book of helpful Bible Stories for children by the late Sister Poole is now in stock. Of 144 pages, bound in strong paper covers, with 4 illustrations, priced at 80c, plus 40c postage.

Oxford Teachers' Bible, with References, India paper, Brevier clear type, Persian Morocco binding, with Oxford Helps, Subject Index and Concordance, \$21.00, plus postage.

Oxford Reference Bible, with References, India paper, Brevier clear type, Leatherex binding, thumb index, \$19.00, plus postage.

World Bible, with References, red letter edition, 16 illustrations, medium dark type, Concordance, Bible Study Helps, Bible Dictionary, a gift at \$4.00, plus postage.

(Continued from page 3.)

earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Do we desire delay with the passing of the present order? Only the Lord knows the timetable, which will work out perfectly in harmony with His will. We do not wish God's plan hurried or delayed do we? We are not really attached to this present world are we? True Christians do not belong here, for the Apostle says—"Our citizenship is in heaven." Living up to our citizenship hopes then, we shall continually "Set our affections on things above, not on things on the earth." So doing, we shall not be disappointed in the least when "all these things shall be dissolved."

While then Christians in the world are not to be of the world, what is the position of the world of mankind generally? Must wars continue, as they have in the past? Some people are apt to say—"There always have been wars, and always will be." The Bible says no! Wars are not to continue! Speaking for the Lord the Psalmist declares—"He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth"—Psa. 46:9, 10. Understandably it will take time to establish peace in the world when the kingdom is established. In symbolic language the prophet Nahum was used of the Lord to describe the passing of the present order, and give the assurance that earth's reign of sin and death will not be repeated. See Nahum 1:3-9—"What do ye imagine against the Lord? he will make an utter end; affliction shall not rise up the second time." One great experience in the waywardness and sinfulness of sin God sees will be sufficient to bring the obedient of mankind to their senses, as we have it expressed by the prophet Haggai—"For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the **desire of all nations shall come**"—Hag. 2:6, 7. See also Zeph. 3:8, 9—"For then (after the removing of the present order) will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent."

Isa. 2:2-4 tells us also of the glorious time God has in store for all the obedient of mankind when Christ's kingdom is operating throughout the world—"It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain (kingdom) of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains . . . And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion (Christ and His Church) shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their

spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, **neither shall they learn war any more.**"

What a privilege the Lord's people enjoy to know of God's gracious plan of salvation for a world of sinners lost and ruined by the fall, and to show by their faith and devotion to the Lord that they are in tune with Him, and resting in His love and care as they seek to serve Him in spirit and in truth in these last days of their pilgrimage on earth. The words of the Psalmist express very well the sentiments of God's people as they view world events indicating the end of the present order at hand—"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion; in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me upon a rock. When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord"—Psa. 27:1, 4, 5, 8, 14.

Books Available

In view of increased postal charges, literature prices are now as follows:—

- "**God's Promises Come True**"—\$2.00 (postage from 86c to \$2.15, according to distance in Australia).
- "**The Divine Plan of the Ages**", Cloth—75c (postage 60c). Paper bound—50c, postage 60c).
- "**The Creator's Grand Design**"—\$1.00 (postage 60c).
- "**The Book of Books**"—\$1.00 (postage 60c).
- "**Daily Heavenly Manna**"—\$1.00 (postage 60c).
- "**Songs in the Night**"—\$1.00 (postage 40c).
- "**Poems of Dawn**"—\$2.20 (postage 40c).
- "**Emphatic Diaglott**", N. Testament—\$2.00 (postage 60c).
- "**Tabernacle Shadows**"—50c (postage 40c).
- "**God and Reason**"—10c (postage 20c).
- "**God's Plan**"—10c (postage 20c).
- "**Hope Beyond the Grave**"—10c (postage 20c).
- "**Israel in History and Prophecy**"—10c (postage 20c).
- "**Our Lord's Great Prophecy**"—10c (postage 20c).
- "**Manner of Christ's Return**"—10c (postage 20c).
- "**Christ's Return**"—10c (postage 20c).
- "**Some of the Parables**"—10c (postage 20c).
- "**Where Are the Dead**"—10c (postage 20c).
- "**Lights and Shadows in Christian Experience**"—10c (postage 20c).
- "**Our Bible Translated**"—10c (postage 20c).

Numerous other smaller booklets.

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