



Message to the Church at Pergamos

Rev. 2:12-17—"And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it".

AS in respect of the messages to previous churches we again have an appropriate introduction to this message to the church at Pergamos. In each case some one of the features seen by John, in the One who spake with him is used, and each appropriately symbolises the Lord's work or operation with His people of the particular church.

To Ephesus, He was as one holding the seven stars in His right hand, and walking amidst the candlesticks. This would indicate that He was ever noting their progress or retrogression, and could read even their hearts.

To Smyrna He was — "He that liveth and was dead and is alive again"; so speaking in comforting encouraging sympathy to a church that was particularly to walk in His steps of suffering and death — martyrdom.

To Pergamos, He is — "He that hath the sharp sword with two edges." This would indicate that the truth would cause division.

Our Lord had forewarned His disciples that the truth would indeed cause separation. "Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household"—Matt. 10:34-36.

The apostle also uses the same figure in Heb. 4:12, 13—"For the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." So that with this introduction to the message to the church at Pergamos we should be prepared to find some separation process in their experience.

We should also notice that the names of these churches are significant and appropriate. Smyrna means bitter, and was most applicable to the Smyrna Church, which may well be termed the suffering church. It felt all the weight of the Pagan persecution.

Pergamos has the meaning of being raised up —elevated—fortified, also the thought of marriage seems to be in it. It is this meaning that helps us to identify the period of the church's history to which this message applies.

First, the message was no doubt sent to the Elder of the church at the city of Pergamos. It was a centre of Pagan worship, and thus the remark—"I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is." The pagan god particularly worshipped in Pergamos was represented by an extended serpent. "Satan's seat" indicates that paganism was satan's religion, by which he would hinder the progress of the true religion of Jesus Christ.

The church was not reprovved because they dwelt in such a place, but the Lord seems to com-

mend them for works, faith and loyalty, making mention of some particular time when persecution had visited them; and one brother, Antipas, who was evidently particularly loved and faithful, had been triumphant in a martyr's death. History records that there were such martyrdoms in this city. This evidently happened in John's day, and before he had received the revelation.

Notwithstanding the dangers from such close association with paganism and worldly allurements, the church at Pergamos had kept faithful in doctrine and loyal under persecution. There were, however, some things in the church which He who "had the sharp twoedged sword" disapproved, or had against them.

They had among them those who held the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things offered to idols, and to commit fornication. So also there were some among them who held the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing the Lord hated, and unless these matters were corrected, He would come and use the sword of His mouth.

What a sorry story is that of Balaam, as related in Numbers, chapters 22-24. How he wanted to do God's will and declare what he knew to be true, and yet he desired also the reward of King Balak, which could be obtained by uttering a curse on Israel. God compelled Balaam to utter the blessing, and then Balaam explained to King Balak how, while he might not conquer Israel by the sword, it might be that the beautiful daughters of Midian could seduce the men of Israel, and induce them to take them to be their wives, and to worship their gods, and thus the anger of God would be enkindled against Israel, and they would suffer a severe punishment. The Scriptures inform us how all this was successfully carried out, and that when these men of Israel were reprov'd and commanded to put away their strange wives, there was a rebellion, and the Lord sent a plague upon Israel, and the transgressors were slain.

The Lord had this against the church at Pergamos that there were those among them who were attracted by pagan doctrines, and were enticed to enjoy the pleasures of the world. They also allowed the Nicolaitanes, who sought to be leaders, to lord it over them. In this they were just the reverse of the Ephesian Church, of whom we read—"But this thou hast that thou hatest, the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate." Pergamos had failed to hold to the Head of the church, Christ. They allowed men to assume authority to rule and control them; they made idols of their elders.

From the prophetic or historical view, there would appear to be no doubt that this third message refers to the church living in the period commencing with about 313 A.D., and reaching down to about 539 A.D., when we think that the next message would begin to apply. It was during this period that the conditions which existed in

the church at Pergamos seemed to be duplicated, only on a much larger scale, as though the church at Pergamos was but a symbol of the church throughout the world in this third distinct epoch of ecclesiastical history.

We previously saw how the Smyrna period closed with the conversion of Emperor Constantine, and his gaining control of all the Eastern Roman Empire. From that time there was never any more open pagan persecution.

With this accession of "the powers that be", however, there came even a greater danger to the church than the days of persecution had been. Persecution had kept the church pure, but now the great adversary could use the methods of Balaam, and entice Christians into worldly ways and social entanglements, and stir up a spirit of ambition for prominence and desire for gain. Emperors actually sought the favour of Christians, and they extolled the clergy, and the effect of such exaltation to worldly favours and honours was the great loss of the true spirit of Christ. Consequently, the clergy gradually assumed authority, and this is what appears to be referred to by Nicolaitanism. This is in accord with the prophetic statement—"Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Israel to sin, and the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." The words of the Lord—"Call no man master, for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren"—were forgotten or ignored by many, but not by all. There were still those who held to the pure teachings and spirit of Christ. The reproof is not that all had been ensnared, but that they permitted those who did those things, and evidently supported them, being submissive to them.

They did not take a sufficiently firm stand against the wrong. Ephesus, on the contrary, had been firm, and would not allow others to rule them, nor recognise any who falsely claimed to be authorities, even apostles; they recognised "One is the Master", and all believers were just brethren.

The church has suffered all down the age from this weakness, the failure to recognise the necessity of standing against those who make such claims, and not holding to the Head. There are those who seem to think that anyone making great claims of being heaven's favourites or of having great powers and authorities, must be accepted and supported. Indeed, the experience even in our own times has been that the larger the claims and boasts, and the more loudly a man may declare against others, and point to himself, the more people seem to run after him. This is just what occurred in the 4th, 5th and 6th centuries; the clergy class became more and more exalted, and looked upon the laity as being of a lower class, who should simply obey their "betters." Bishops became authorities not only in spiritual matters, but gradually gained influence in civil matters also. Then the Bishop of Rome was

recognised as the head of the church on earth—the Pope.

The warning of Him—"who hath the sharp sword with two edges", was "repent, or else I will come quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth."

The church of that period did not repent, but Balaamism and Nicolaitanism continued to develop. That is, that more and more those prominent in the church were enticed into worldly desires and ambitions, and thought more of gaining the rewards of office than they did of the privileges of ministering to the church. And the people allowed the clergy to rule over them. Therefore, we find that the sword of the Lord's mouth was used, and the church was distracted by divisions.

It was in this period that the great separation occurred between the East and the West. Then it was that the schism occurred between the Arians and the Trinitarians. The Arians seem to have held the truth, but the Trinitarians consolidated their doctrine, and formulated their creeds. The shocking thing is that great bitterness was shown on both sides, and there was acute strife between Arius and Athanasius.

Great councils were convened, and the matter discussed and decided in favour of the Trinitarian view. Each side then sought to gain influence with the Emperor, and cruelly persecuted each other. Sometimes the Trinitarian view was favoured at court, and again the Arians came into favour, but ultimately the doctrine of the Trinitarians became fixed as church doctrine, and the Athanasius creed became part of the church service.

This, however, is not all that appears to be intimated in this warning—"Else I will come unto thee quickly, and fight against them." The Pergamos condition has been with the church ever since that time, and it would appear that these words—"I will come quickly and fight against them"—will have their final fulfilment at the second coming of Christ, when the great anti-Christian system that has developed will be destroyed. This is shown by the Apostle Paul in 2 Thes. 2:3-11—"For that day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped. . . . For the mystery of iniquity doth already work. . . . Then shall that wicked be revealed whom the Lord shall consume with the sword of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his presence."

As in the city of Pergamos, there were those who did not bow the knee to Baal, so there were many in the Pergamos period who faithfully resisted the temptations of worldly emoluments and kingly favours, and Paul in 2 Thes. 1:7-9 speaks of those who will be troubled, out of accord with such spirit and deeds, at the end of the age, at Christ's reappearing—"And to you

who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

The Wider Viewpoint

While the historical aspect of the Book of Revelation is so interesting and helpful, we should surely fail of the blessedness promised to those who come to understand this wonderful message to the church did we not seek the personal application of its truth, its exhortations and promises so graciously expressed.

(1) Let us note the necessity, as a church, or company of Christ's followers, of avoiding the evils of Balaamism and of the Nicolaitanes. It is every bit as necessary for us today, as it was for the church of the 4th, 5th and 6th centuries. If we allow ourselves to be attracted by worldly splendour or desires of making a show in the flesh, to attract numbers by employing worldly methods; if we sell the truth for worldly gain or social pleasures; if we allow our hearts to become divided by social or business attractions, then we may expect that "He who has the sharp sword with two edges" will use that weapon, and there will be divisions, separations of those who cling to the way and Word of the Lord in simplicity and truth, from those who love the present trifling rewards of the world.

(2) If we as a church should allow our elders to domineer us, to rule us like the Nicolaitanes did; if we begin to voluntarily submit ourselves to such rule and sort of worship, or make idols of our elders, we shall doubtless in due time receive the attention of Him who has the sharp sword.

Both these matters must be guarded against if our fellowship is to continue in the happy bonds of Unity, in Love, Joy and Peace.

Not only does this danger threaten the church as a whole. The cunning tactics which Balaam advised against Israel were employed against individuals. This, then, is the most important feature of this subject, that each personally must be so completely armoured, with Helmet, Sword and Breastplate of righteousness, as to be able to ward off the fiery darts of the wicked one. The beautiful reward is only to the overcomers. What, then, does this message contain particularly for us as followers of Jesus Christ?

(1) Balaamism—What dangers are there along this line for us to avoid? As we have seen Balaam sought to make merchandise out of his service for God. He longed after the things of the world, and he caused Balak to put a stumbling block in Israel's way, along the lines of the world and the flesh and idol worship. How cunningly was the scheme devised and carried out,

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PEOPLES PAPER
AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM
(Bi-Monthly) 85 cents per annum, post paid.)

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The Institute's Work

WITH the close of the month of April another year's work for the Berean Bible Institute has been completed, and this brief report on the efforts is presented at this time. It is with much gratitude to the Lord for all His blessings realised that all has been undertaken from our centre here in Melbourne. The generous co-operation of the brethren throughout Australia and also overseas has been of great help and encouragement throughout the past year again. Sincere thanks is expressed to all who have assisted so well, enabling our work to continue, in the Lord's providence. As in past times, the main efforts in our work have been to present the truths of God's Word for the encouragement of our brethren, and to present a witness of the glad message of the kingdom to all others who have hearing ears.

The publication of our bi-monthly "Peoples Paper" provides a regular contact with many brethren and friends throughout Australia and overseas. Expressions of appreciation of the messages in our "Paper" continue to be received, which is encouraging as we seek to serve the Lord's cause of truth, by His grace. The series of articles on the "Messages to the Churches" now appearing in the "Peoples Paper" are being especially appreciated by a number of brethren. These messages were compiled by the late Brother Nicholson many years ago, and it is a pleasure to reprint them for the benefit of present day readers. Sincere thanks is expressed also at this time to other brethren who have contributed to the pages of our "Peoples Paper"; this assistance is greatly appreciated, being most helpful in the service of the Lord.

There has been some increase in publishing costs in the past year, and the postage rates in Australia have continued at their high level. However, the subscription to "Peoples Paper" is still 85c per annum, to enable all who desire the "Paper" to receive it. The postage on one or up to three copies is \$1.08 per annum throughout Australia and \$1.20 for overseas, and the General Tract Fund covers this expense, this Fund being supported by many of our brethren. Also some subscribers, realising the high postage rates, cover the postage as well as their subscriptions, and this is greatly appreciated. The General Tract Fund also meets the deficiency in the publication of "Peoples Paper", and this is compensated by supplying free copies of the "Paper" to many new friends to encourage their interest in the truths of God's Word. Supplies of the

"Peoples Paper" and "Voice" tracts are also provided free to the brethren in India for distribution amongst readers of English. Some of our Melbourne friends continue to give helpful assistance with shorthand and typing of articles for our "Paper", as well as proof reading and other work in the dispatch of our little journal, all of which is very much appreciated in the Lord's service.

Additional financial assistance during the past year has enabled further advertising of booklets in some of the popular weekly magazines, and the response has been quite encouraging. Numerous replies have been received from all Australian States and New Zealand, with odd enquiries from Fiji and New Guinea. To all these new enquirers free copies of "Peoples Paper" are supplied for some months to encourage the interest. New friends who read this report are assured that we have no desire to press our teachings on them, but rather wish to encourage them to prove from the Bible all that is published. Tracts are also supplied free through the General Tract Fund for wise distribution by all able to engage in this witness to the truths of God's Word.

The message of the Kingdom continues to be broadcast through 3GL Geelong on Sunday mornings with encouraging results. Additional advertising of the radio sessions has been possible, and it is evident that the messages given by "Frank and Ernest" are heard and appreciated over a wide area. The offer of the printed copies of all broadcasts, as well as other literature, prompts people to respond, and it is encouraging to have earnest folk telephone and write in for the printed copies. All who respond to the broadcasts also receive some months' copies of "Peoples Paper" free, to encourage their interest. Efforts during the year to broadcast the messages in South Australia were not successful, but at the present time there are indications that radio 6AM in Northam, Western Australia, will be broadcasting the Frank and Ernest Dialogues on Sunday mornings, in the near future. We are thankful and have faith that the Lord will add the increase as He sees good, at the present time, or in the kingdom age when all shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest.

The financial position of the Institute is revealed in the balance sheets of the General Tract Fund and Radio Fund. In the Lord's providence, the voluntary contributions of our brethren and friends generally have enabled an increase in the work to be undertaken. Sincere thanks are expressed to all who have gladly sacrificed earthly good things to assist the efforts so well; we realise that all has been rendered as unto the Lord, in the service of His truth in which they rejoice. World conditions are such that there is grave cause for alarm, humanly speaking, but the "distress of nations" is clearly fulfilling Bible prophecy more and more in our day. The passing of this "present evil world" prompts the Lord's

people to thank God the more that His kingdom of peace is at hand for the blessing of all the obedient of humanity. When prophesying of the very happenings of our day, Jesus said to His disciples—"When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh"—Luke 21:28. The prayers of all our dear friends are requested for the Lord's blessing and guidance upon the efforts in His name, that faith and humility may be exercised in all our privileges of service for the Lord and His cause.

General Tract Fund

To Credit Balance 1/5/77	\$305.30
.. Donations	6,833.58
	<u>\$7,138.88</u>
By Free Tracts and Deficiency "Peoples Paper"	\$858.00
.. Advertising "New Idea" magazine	912.00
.. Advertising "Woman's Day" magazine	942.00
.. Advertising "Weekly Times"	143.80
.. Other Advertising, Lectures, etc.	97.65
.. General Expenses (Office, Phone, etc.)	717.39
.. Household Expenses (Rates, Gas, Insurance, etc.)	594.09
.. Postage	839.95
.. Printing Paper	238.63
.. Assistance in the work	422.00
.. Assistance to brethren	304.00
.. Service to brethren	192.00
.. Credit Balance 1/5/78	877.37
	<u>\$7,138.88</u>

Radio Fund

To Credit Balance 1/5/77	\$290.50
.. Donations	\$3,125.40
	<u>\$3,415.90</u>
By Radio Station 3GL	\$1,526.40
.. Advertising "Age" Radio Guide	941.74
.. Advertising "Listener-In"	204.80
.. Tapes for broadcasting	92.10
.. Printing Dialogues, Stencils, etc.	33.47
.. Travel and Sundries	42.60
.. Bank Charges	39.47
.. Credit Balance	535.32
	<u>\$3,415.90</u>

Memorial Observances

Melbourne

THE Memorial of our Saviour's death was gladly observed by the brethren in Melbourne at the Memorial season in response to the request of our Lord that we "do this in remembrance of me." This is considered a great privilege at each anniversary of His death, and our constant desire is that the spirit of the Memorial may continue with us from one observance to the next.

Previous studies in Isa. 53, and Matt. 26:17-29 proved helpful in impressing the sacredness and privilege of "keeping the feast"—1 Cor. 5:8—in fellowship with all fellow members in Christ, known and unknown to us. Prayers of thankful-

ness to God for the gift of our Saviour and on behalf of brethren everywhere were offered, appropriate hymns were sung and Scripture readings, together with a helpful address preceded the partaking of the emblems in the spirit of devotion to our Lord, who has done so much for us. By the Lord's grace may we all prove faithful as we walk in the steps of our loving Redeemer.

Geelong

A very small number met at the Memorial season in an endeavour to bring heart and mind into an appreciative attitude of our Saviour's great sacrifice on our behalf. A short service consisted of hymns, a reading round from Matt. 26:14 through to chapter 27:50, and an address, after which we partook of the emblems. Our thoughts centred round our Lord's last words—"It is finished"—thankful that we can comprehend to some extent the importance attached to Jesus accomplishing satisfactorily the work His Father had sent Him to do. It is our hope and prayer that we may continue to avail ourselves of the promised grace sufficient to follow Him in the way He opened up for us, and to finish our course with quiet confidence. Though difficulties assail, may "none of these things move us... that we may finish our course with joy..."—Acts 20:24. If persecution be our lot in some degree, may we ever rest confident in the assurance that out of all these things the Lord will deliver us—2 Cor. 11:24-28; 2 Tim. 3:11; 4:6-8.

Adelaide

It is with thankful hearts that the brethren of the Adelaide Class met together to keep the Memorial of our Saviour's sacrificial death for us and for all mankind. This service is always a blessed one, and we gladly observe it in obedience to our Lord's request—"This do in remembrance of me"—1 Cor. 11:23-26.

We are thankful to our Heavenly Father for the gift of justification through faith in the precious blood of Christ—Rom. 5:1. We are grateful too for the privilege of consecrating our justified humanity to God in this "acceptable day"—Rom. 12:1-2. We are thankful also to our Lord Jesus for what He has done for us in laying down His perfect life, as the ransom price to redeem us and all mankind from the curse of sin and death.

We seek daily for grace and strength to help us walk faithfully in the steps of our Lord in the "narrow way" that leads to life eternal. We do well to heed the Apostle's words in Heb. 12:1-3, to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us... looking unto Jesus."

The Memorial Service becomes an occasion for all fully consecrated followers of Christ to renew our consecration to be dead with Christ, and to seek for renewed grace to enable us to follow in the Master's footsteps. The emblems so fittingly symbolize our Lord's broken body and shed blood. So we partook of these with thankful hearts, praying also for all the Lord's consecrated ones that

God's grace and blessing may enable us all to be faithful to our vows of consecration, even unto death.

Perth

The W.A. Ecclesia reverently partook of our dear Lord's Memorial as He requested us to remember His death until He come. Our hearts were well prepared beforehand as our minds had been dwelling on our Lord's last days, culminating on the cross at Calvary, thus bearing our sins. Our Lord here "gave his flesh for the life of the world."

It was a time of sincere gratitude for what the Saviour bore for us, also it was a time of heart searching and rededicating our lives into conformity to His. We gladly accept our life through the justification we receive through acceptance of His broken body and shed blood, and thankfully accept the further offer to follow Him, despite our human failings. Without any merit of our own we are deeply privileged to be partakers of the one loaf and to drink of the one cup, representing our participating in Christ's sacrifice unto death. "We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end"—Heb. 3:14.

Sydney

The little group here in Sydney gladly remembered the Lord's death—the death that ransomed us and all mankind condemned to death in Adam. We commenced with a hymn and prayer, followed by an address which brought forward the many points dear to all believers—the old Passover observance and the Lord's Supper, and of course the connection between the two. It was noted that Jesus never intimated that this sacred ceremony should be changed to many times a year, and it was not to be a meal. On the contrary it was to be a ceremony of spiritual benefit and of sanctification of the flesh.

In silence we partook of the bread and wine, trying to keep within sight the agony of our Lord. The service finished with the hymn—"Man of Sorrows"—and we departed thanking God for all things, above all for giving us a Redeemer in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Brisbane

A small group of brethren kept the Memorial of our Lord's death again this year, thanking God for the privilege of so doing. Our Lord's words—"With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer"—Luke 22:15—indicated that that Jewish Passover was the end of the type and the Memorial then instituted by Jesus was, and still is to be observed in memory of His death—to continue until the establishment of the kingdom.

In partaking of the bread and drinking of the cup it was seen how beautifully these pictured our Lord's body as the "true bread of life"—John 6:51—and our Lord's blood, His life which He gave for us and all mankind—1 Pet. 1:19.

In observing this Memorial we asked our beloved Heavenly Father to bless all His dear children that they may be one family of God.

Nambour—Queensland

By the Lord's grace the small group of the Nambour Class was able to meet together again this year to keep the Memorial of our Saviour's sacrificial death. A helpful study was taken in John 6:47-58. We discussed how Jesus gave His flesh, His perfect human life, for us; He purchased back what was lost in Adam—perfect earthly life—which in accordance with God's will we are pleased to lay down again in sacrifice in order to receive that "better thing" that has been promised to us, our heavenly inheritance as joint heirs with Christ.

An address was also given on the subject—"God's Dealings with the New Creation"—which showed God's great mercy and justice in His dealings with us. With grateful and thankful hearts and minds we partook of the emblems as the Master requested, thinking also of others of His followers who do likewise. May each of us be faithful, not only in the remembrance, but also in giving of ourselves to be broken with Him.

Toowoomba—Queensland

By God's grace we were again able to keep the Memorial, and we were grateful for the privilege of remembering our Lord's death and what it means to us. We were few in number but we sincerely rejoiced in our privilege. Apart from our own expressions, we listened to an excellent address which we all enjoyed, and remembered our own consecration to our precious Lord.

Convention News

THE Easter Convention at Adelaide was a very helpful season of spiritual fellowship, by the Lord's grace. Our hearts are filled with thankful praise to our gracious Heavenly Father for the many blessings bestowed during the three days of happy fellowship around His precious Word.

It was a pleasure to welcome a number of brethren from the Melbourne and Geelong Classes, and three brethren were able to make the long trip from the Perth Class; also we were glad to have with us three brethren from country districts of South Australia.

A Bible Study in Gal. 5:22-6:2 claimed our attention on the first day of Convention. This study was very helpful to us all as it explains the various aspects of the fruit of the spirit which is Love. Joy, as one has expressed it is Love exultant; Peace — Love in repose; Long-suffering — Love enduring; Gentleness — Love in society; Goodness — Love in action; Faith — Love on the battlefield of life; Meekness — Love in resignation; Temperance — Love in training. We were encouraged to earnestly seek the Lord's grace to assist us in the cultivation and development of the crowning grace of heavenly love. "Beloved,

let us love one another; for love is of God", says the Apostle John. See 1 John 4:7-21.

The topics of the addresses given were as follows — "Be of Good Courage" — Psa. 31:24; "Loveable Law"; "A Man of Sorrows" — Isa. 52:13-53:12; "Keep thy Heart with all Diligence"; "The Vision of Peace"; "Following the Lord—Afterwards" — John 13:36; "Priesthood Blemishes" — Lev. 21:17; "All One in Christ Jesus" — Heb. 2:11; "Take My Yoke"; "For this is My Blood of the New Covenant" — Matt. 26:27, 28; "Stirring up Your Pure Minds"; and "The Second Advent."

Many messages of Christian love and greetings were received from several Bible Classes and individual brethren throughout Australia, and also from U.S.A. These messages of Christian love and assurances of the prayers of the brethren were much appreciated. The Christian love and greetings from the Convention were sent to all brethren who kindly remembered us, and to all brethren everywhere, together with the Scripture found in 2 Thes. 1:11, 12.

The Praise and Testimony meetings gave opportunity for expressions of gratitude and thankfulness to our Heavenly Father for all His loving-kindness and tender mercy. We are very thankful to the Lord for the lovely hymns which enable His people to express thankful praise with heart and voice. The "Hymns we Love and Why" session afforded opportunity to sing some of these hymns of praise to our Heavenly Father.

We are thankful to all those brethren who helped us in the various services and Bible study. Much appreciation also is expressed for the loving services of the sisters who attended helpfully to our needs by supplying refreshments at the tea table. We are assured that all these services are rendered as unto the Lord, and we give all thanks and praise to Him from whom all blessings flow.

The Convention concluded with the Love Feast, and singing of the hymns "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian Love", and "God be with you till we meet again." Then followed the closing prayer of thanks and praise to God for a very helpful season of spiritual fellowship and asking His grace to help us to serve Him faithfully in the coming days, and requesting His blessing upon the Israel of God in every place.

Bible Translations

OVER recent years the attention of Christians has been directed to a considerable number of translations of the Bible. Sometimes, over the radio, a Bible reading is heard in modern language from the translation of one or another of these publications, and often the expressions seem quite out of place to record the sacred information contained in God's Word.

Those of the Lord's people who have become acquainted with the language of the Authorized

Version, perhaps from childhood, seem to find in its general expression a flow of majestic language which adds beauty and blessing to the message from the Lord and His servants of both Old and New Testaments. As an illustration, we quote the opening words of Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews—"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, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." Could there be more beautiful language to present such an amount of truth respecting God's Plan of the Ages, and His methods of communication to those who have been "spoken unto" throughout the ages of the past and present? We know of no other rendering to compare with this translation, and the same can be said, in a general way, for the language of the Authorized Version as a whole.

This does not mean, of course, that the Authorized Version is sufficient for the student of God's Word. The Lord has permitted some valuable manuscripts to be found since the Authorized Version was translated in 1611, and as sincere students of God's Word we do well to appreciate and use the additional helps available, especially those which are based on the oldest MSS. From these oldest manuscripts it is found that some statements in the Authorized Version of the Bible are not really Scriptural. This comes as a shock to some people, but when it is understood that mistakes have crept into the sacred text through copyists' errors, and this can be proved by comparing Scripture with Scripture, then all who love the Lord's true Word only, will surely give thanks to God that He has overruled that these mistakes are revealed to all who are sufficiently alert and interested enough to detect them by means of the additional helps now available. However, for Bible study classes, where practically all members have the Authorized Version before them, it seems that this Version is the most helpful for general reading, and where occasion requires, a variation can be quoted as giving a clearer presentation of the truth on any particular subject.

Amongst the numerous translations of the New Testament there can be no doubt that the Emphatic Diaglott is one of the most valuable for comparative study, and for those who have Tischendorf's Notes (based on the three oldest manuscripts; but now, unfortunately, out of print) much additional help is available. For the complete Bible the Revised Standard Version is most helpful for the Bible student. As an illustration of the clarity of the R.S. Version we quote Gen. 4:7, being the Lord's words to Cain—"If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not well, sin is crouching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it." (Compare Authorized Version, and note the improvement of the R.S. Version.)

A note of warning is offered against accepting any translation of the Bible without careful ex-

amination. The following is presented from one of our brethren—"A copy of the Epistles by J. B. Phillips in modern version has been sent to me, but I regard it as one of the poorest of all for doctrinal teaching, for he does not abide by the original words, but brings his sectarian creed into it so many times. For instance, in 1 Cor. 15:51—"We shall not all sleep"—he puts—"We shall not all die." One can trace the sectarian view in many important passages. In portions not relating to doctrine I think it is perhaps a good translation, but to a student is very mischievous, leading away from the real truth . . . I see that Moffatt, too, puts the same text—"Not all of us are to die", which seems to show that these men have expressed their own views instead of what the Lord intended to teach. Again, in 1 Thes. 5:15-17, Phillips says—"One word of command, one shout from the archangel, one blast from the trumpet of God, and God in person will come down from heaven." It gives the wrong thought, don't you think?"

There can be no doubt that the translations above quoted are very misleading, and it is necessary for all the Lord's people to thoroughly test all that they receive as truth. To this end the Bible Concordances, especially Strong's and Young's, are most helpful in determining the meanings of the Hebrew and Greek words; indeed, one or other of these concordances is essential for detailed study of the Bible.

Then, along with all the careful study given to determine correct translations, it is most essential that the spirit of the Lord be the guiding power to bless the truths of His Word to the hearts and minds of God's people, that the truth may have a sanctifying effect, to the Lord's praise. Thus, and thus only, may sincere Christians grow both in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

(Continued from page 3.)

and our wily foe is just as cunning. What a little thing it may be that is first thrown in our path. How easy a matter it is not to notice sin's small beginnings, but fleshly desires once allowed even without consciousness will soon increase. Worldly or social influences soon grow stronger, and we should soon find that desires for spiritual things become weaker, and we may end up by realising that the joys of the truth have all departed, and that we have sold the truth for a mess of pottage and lost the birthright. If we will preserve our peace, our love, our joy, we must guard against the influences of the world and the flesh, or the cunning devices of Balaamism.

(2) Nicolaitanism — Are there dangers along this line for us, who have come away from the great ecclesiastical systems? Can there be dangers of again falling into the same errors? Yes, indeed, there are still these dangers, still the possibility of the fear of man operating. It is again so easy for us to love those who help us, and there becomes a desire to accept all they may say without verifying it from the Scriptures;

we might thus allow these to become authorities to us or gradually they may become an idol, they may occupy a position to us which only belongs to Christ as Head of the Church. Let us keep ourselves from idols, and "hold to our Head", Christ. Hold to God's Word as our infallible guide, make the truth our own, and hold it in simple earnest faith.

The Reward

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." "The hidden manna" is just another way of expressing the great reward of immortality. The same reward is expressed to Ephesus as—"to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God", and to Smyrna it was—"I will give thee a crown of life." The reference to this third church, Pergamos, appears to be to the bowl of manna which was placed in the ark of the covenant. The manna which was supplied daily was typical of the flesh of the Son of Man which He gave for the life of the world, but the bowl of manna hidden in the Most Holy and miraculously preserved seemed to speak of immortality, which is the hope of the Church of Christ, a higher life than what is promised to the rest of mankind. It is only to him that overcometh.

Then what a precious white stone it is that the Lord gives to those overcomers. The white stone is split in two parts, each part then will only fit the other; no other split stone will fit either of those parts. The Lord writes a new name in the stone; it is a little confidential secret, a bond between friends, a tie of love and friendship. He owns us as His own, and has given us His own best name of love; it is our betrothal; we are to be His Bride. What beautiful, encouraging words and hopes the Lord presents to His Church. Surely He is to us the fairest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely one, and shall we not more diligently seek to honour His name, and by His grace be overcomers and inheritors of these exceeding great and precious promises, by which we may be made partakers of the Divine nature. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches."

Nambour Convention

The Nambour Convention is to be held (D.V.) on 29th and 30th July, in the Staff Room, State School, Coronation Drive, Nambour, to which interested friends are invited. Further information from—Mr. G. Tosh, M.S. 58, Paynters Creek Road, Nambour, Queensland, 4560.

"The Greatest of These is Love"

A booklet bearing the above title has been printed, and a copy is being supplied to all friends receiving this issue of "Peoples Paper." We understand this was an address given by the late Brother R. E. Streeter, at a London Convention in 1922. It is a very helpful explanation of the Apostle Paul's lovely chapter 1 Cor. 13, and extra copies are available, supplied through the General Tract Fund to all who can use them to advantage.