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God's Plan Revealed Through His Covenants

GOD has revealed His loving plan of salvation for mankind through the covenants He has made with His people. The word "covenant" is not generally in use today as it was in the past. Now the words "agreement" and "contract" are more frequently employed instead. The word "promise" is also closely related to the word "covenant." God promises to do certain things and these promises constitute a covenant, or agreement. If we are to participate in this divine plan as individuals and receive the blessings promised to those who are faithful co-workers with the Lord, then we must abide by the conditions attached to God's promises.

A covenant implies harmony and agreement between those who enter into it. Before his transgression Adam was in covenant relationship with God. The terms of his covenant with the Creator are partially set forth in Gen. 2:15-17—"... And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." That was a very important covenant; the terms were simple but exacting. They called for Adam's obedience, based upon the simple test of not eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Thus Adam's part in this covenant was to obey. But we know Adam did not remain faithful to his part of the original covenant, as the prophet Hosea 6:7, margin, wrote, he "transgressed the covenant." This meant that instead of continuing on a friendly relationship with God, Adam was alienated from Him. God's displeasure was manifested in that He pronounced the sentence of death upon Adam, and he was cast out of the Garden of Eden. All mankind came under the same manifestation of disfavour.

The Apostle Paul explains that helpfully to us in 1 Cor. 15:21, 22. This Scripture is most important in respect of the plan of salvation. "For since by man (Adam) came death, by man (Jesus) came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall

all be made alive." What an all-comprehensive statement we have here! We have the plan of God outlined in a nutshell.

While God was no longer in covenant relationship with His earthly creatures as a whole, from time to time He made covenants with certain individuals who through faith and obedience were pleasing to Him. The first one of these was with Noah, after the Flood. Noah had demonstrated his faith in God by his obedience in building the Ark in preparation for the Flood. There had never been any rain on the earth when Noah was commanded by God to build an Ark to save himself and his house. By faith Noah obeyed God, and Noah's family held the same faith as their father, and later shared in the covenant God made with Noah.

This covenant promised that all flesh would not again be destroyed by the waters of a flood. This is found in Gen. 9:8-11, which please read. That was a very definite promise of God to faithful Noah. In the previous chapter also, the closing verse of chapter 8, we read—"While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." That is very definite too. Some people say, that is only "while the earth remaineth." But Eccles. 1:4 says—"the earth abideth forever." It is not going to be destroyed. Those promises are sure. They are the covenants God made with Noah. This is important in God's plan for the recovery of the human race from sin and death. While the promise assured Noah and his family that the earth would not be destroyed by water, it is reasonable to think that it would not be destroyed in any way. God created the earth to be man's home, and we can rest assured that neither the earth nor the human race will be destroyed. See Isa. 45:18 in connection with this important matter. God created the earth to be inhabited.

The fulfilment of God's promises relative to the redemption and recovery of His earthly creatures from sin and death calls for a resurrection from the dead. This means that all the pure Adamic stock who died in the Flood did

not perish forever. God's covenant with Noah is a wonderful reminder that the Lord created man to live, and not to be destroyed, and through the other covenants His love is revealed, and an opportunity of salvation is provided for all mankind.

A few hundred years after the Flood God made a covenant with Abram, whose name was later changed to Abraham. This is found in Gen. 12:1-3, which please read. This wonderful man God selected out of so many at that time; God looked into the heart of Abram, and invited him to go forward to the particular location on the earth God had marked out. The last words of this promise to Abram read—"in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." This promise was reiterated to Abraham later, in Gen. 22. God tested Abraham's faith in connection with his son Isaac, whom Abraham believed was at least the first of the "seed" which God had promised. Isaac was born when Abraham and his wife Sarah were very old; and they recognised that God had performed a miracle to give them this child of promise. When Isaac was grown, God asked Abraham to offer this miracle child in sacrifice. This was a severe test of Abraham's faith, but he demonstrated his willingness to obey. In the New Testament it is revealed that Abraham believed God would raise Isaac from the dead if he had been sacrificed as a burnt offering. See Heb. 11:17-19.

When Abraham demonstrated his faith by placing Isaac on the altar, his hand was stayed by an angel, who instructed him to use a lamb which God had provided as a substitute. God was very pleased with Abraham because of this marvellous demonstration of faith, and said to him in the oath-bound covenant of Gen. 22:16-18—"By myself have I sworn . . . I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven . . . and in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

Turning to the New Testament, we read in Gal. 3:8—"The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." The 16th verse of Gal. 3 reads—"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made, He saith not, And to thy seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." From this it is clear that when God promised Abraham that his "seed" would bless all the families of the earth, the One He had chiefly in mind as the blesser of the people was Jesus, the Christ of the New Testament, and the Messiah of the Old. Then the Apostle gives us further information concerning the "seed" of promise in Gal. 3:27-29—"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ . . . And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." This means that the faithful followers of Christ during the Gospel Age are the children of the covenant which God made with Abraham.

Paul further states in Gal. 4:28—"Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." Then in Heb. 6:13-20 the Apostle Paul again associates the followers of Christ with God's oath-bound covenant with Abraham. Please read Heb. 6:13-20. What an assurance is there given in respect of this oath-bound covenant, that God is going to bless all the families of the earth through Christ and His associates, His Bride, those who walk faithfully in the steps of Christ. How very closely Paul associates the Gospel Church with the Abrahamic Covenant, showing that true Christians are developed under the Covenant made with Abraham.

Following the Exodus, when the Israelites came out of Egypt, God entered into a covenant with the natural descendants of Abraham. We speak of this as the Law Covenant because it was based upon an expression of God's law as outlined in the Ten Commandments. Moses served as mediator between God and the Israelites in the making of this covenant. In the Early Church there were some differences of opinion as to whether or not the followers of Jesus were bound by the terms of the Law Covenant. Paul explained the truth on this matter, saying in Gal. 3:19 that the Law was "added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the (original) promise was made." Then in verse 24 of Gal. 3 the Apostle says—"the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." It is obvious from these statements, that Christians are not under the Law Covenant, although they certainly are in harmony with all its righteous requirements. However, for the natural descendants of Abraham the Law Covenant served a good purpose. First, as Paul explains—"It was added because of transgressions till the (promised) seed should come." God knew that it would be many centuries before His due time for bringing forth the true, faith seed of Abraham. It was in His plan that the Head of this faith seed should come from the nation of Israel. But because of the transgressions of this people, the chances were that before the due time came for the Messiah to appear, the nation would wander completely away from God. The Law Covenant served as a deterrent to this trend. While the Israelites were not too faithful in keeping the Law, it did hold them in check sufficiently, so that there was a small nation of Israelites into which Jesus was born, and to whom He presented Himself as Messiah.

The Law Covenant was a "schoolmaster" to bring the Israelites to Christ; that is, it demonstrated the need of a Redeemer. Paul wrote in Rom. 5:14—"Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." Adam's transgression could have been avoided. Had he elected to do so, he could have refrained from partaking of the forbidden fruit and thus

bringing the sentence of death upon himself. But Adam's progeny came under condemnation to death through him, and not because of individual sins of their own. This situation continued, Paul explains, until Moses—referring to the time of the giving of the Law. It was then, in the case of the one small nation of Israel, that a change took place.

This change was brought about through the Law Covenant, through which God promised that if they would and could keep His law they would live. In Lev. 18:5, quoted in Rom. 10:5, we read—"The man which doeth those things shall live by them." This meant that any Jew who lived perfectly to the terms of the Law Covenant, would no longer need to die because of Adam's transgression. However, none of the Israelites could meet the requirements of the Law Covenant, so, as explained by Paul, the Law served as a schoolmaster, a teacher and leader, to emphasize the need of Christ, and the provision God has made through Him to give life to all who lost life through Adam. Not many of the Jewish nation have as yet learned this lesson. Indeed, very few of the Gentiles have learned it. But when the plan of God shall have accomplished its full purpose, all will be fully enlightened and only those who wilfully turn against this light will fail to gain everlasting life.

In Gal. 4:22-26 Paul presents a further aspect of the covenant God made with Abraham, and the Law Covenant into which He entered with Israel. Please read Gal. 4:22-26. The "Jerusalem" which is the "mother of us all", that is, of all true Christians, according to Paul's lesson, was represented by Sarah, the "freewoman." Thus the Apostle refutes the argument of Christians in his day who desired to be in bondage to the Law Covenant.

Another of God's covenants is brought to our attention in Jer. 31:31-34. It is referred to as a "new" covenant, and the promise is that it will be made "with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah." Please read Jer. 31:31-34. At the time this promise was made the Hebrew people were divided. One segment was known as the house of Israel, and the other as the house of Judah. God included both to emphasize that this promise applied to all the natural descendants of Abraham. Indeed, since the promise to Abraham was that "all families", or nations, of the earth were to be blessed, all outside of the Jewish people will eventually have an opportunity of receiving the blessings of the promised New Covenant. First of all, however, those who were disobedient to the first, or Law Covenant, will be given the opportunity of entering into the New Covenant arrangement. The Lord explains that the New Covenant will be "not according" to the covenant which He made with their fathers. It will be different, in that the law of the New Covenant will not be written on tables of stone, as was the case with the original Law Covenant, but will be

written in the "inward parts" of the people, and in their "hearts." This is a marked difference. We see, then, that these restoration blessings of the New Covenant will be world-wide—"They shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." Because of this, when the law of the New Covenant shall be written in the "inward parts" there will be no more need for the services of teachers to instruct people in the ways of the Lord. That will be the time when the Lord will pour out His spirit upon all flesh.

The Lord's introduction to His promise of the New Covenant is very enlightening as to the time when the promise would be fulfilled, as outlined in Jer. 31:28, referring to the scattered Israelites. The verse reads—"It shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord." The beginning of that has been going on for some time, but it will be much more fully evident respecting the restoration of Israel in the early days of the Kingdom age.

In the next two verses of Jeremiah 31, verses 29 and 30, we have located the time when the New Covenant is made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah—"In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die (who does die) for his own iniquity; every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge." Everyone will then be tried as an individual in respect of life and death. Then follows, from verse 31 of Jer. 31, God's promise of the New Covenant and its blessings, emphasizing that when the time comes for its fulfilment there will be a complete change in the position of the human race so far as its relationship to sin and its consequences are concerned. Figuratively speaking, we could say that it was Adam who ate the sour grape of disobedience to divine law. Not only were his own teeth set on edge, but the result of his disobedience was passed on to the entire human race. In preparation for the making of the New Covenant, Christ gave His life to redeem mankind from death, thus to provide all with an individual opportunity to obey divine law. This opportunity will reach the Israelites and the people of all nations in connection with the making of the New Covenant.

In Matt. 26:28 we have a helpful verse in connection with the Lord giving His Memorial to His eleven disciples, and the Memorial that we keep annually in remembrance of Christ's sacrifice and our participation with Him. Jesus spoke of His blood, the symbol of His sacrificed life, as the blood of the New Testament, or the New Covenant—"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." It is His blood that ratifies

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Forgetting Things Behind

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"—Phil. 3:13, 14.

THE Apostle had a very definite and clear view of the real Christian life. To him it was no mere expression, but a vital fact that he had presented himself a living sacrifice to God. All that he had, all that he had hoped for, all his ambitions, aims, objects of life, his education, social standing, business prospects, his wealth, his strength, everything was earnestly devoted to God, to be used in His service to His glory. He had indeed experienced the great change—"old things had passed away and all things had become new." His object in life was to do, not his own will but God's will; his prospect was no longer earthly gain, but heavenly hopes. Oh, how many things he learned to forget, to neglect, while he pressed toward the mark for the great prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

With this forgetting of the old things, such as advantages of birth and station in life, education and wealth, we all come unto Christ on a common level, and find a happy brotherhood irrespective of social standing. How necessary it is to keep forgetting those things that are behind; how easy it might be to long for some of the good things that were laid on the altar. Remember Lot's wife, remember the things before us. "How vain is all beneath the skies, how transient every earthly bliss."

Surely there are many things which ought to be forgotten, which will keep coming up. Sometimes personal injuries are apt to keep wrangling in the mind; we have forgotten that we yielded ourselves, our reputation, and our all to the Lord, and, therefore, can cast on Him our every care, all insults and injuries, and leave them at His feet—forget them. Maybe there are lessons for us in the incidents, and we should not forget these lessons. Nor does it mean that we would not remember the circumstances, but we would forget in the sense that all is past, and not a trace of ill-will or unkind thought remains.

Sometimes we may be apt to keep remembering our own wrong doings, our sins, and become depressed. Let us remember the lessons and grow stronger from the realisation of the failure, but having come to the Lord and laid it all at the foot of the Cross, let us do as the Lord has promised to do for us for Jesus' sake—"Cast our sins behind his back."

Let us press forward with more determination, and look to the wonderful hope before us—"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith"—Heb. 12:1, 2. There are many things we should remember, and by exercising our memories on these lines it will not be so hard to forget things which are better forgotten. Let us remember the pit from whence we were taken, the grace of God which stooped to lift us up and set our feet on the rock—Jesus Christ. Let us remember the patient long-suffering of God towards us, as we have tried to walk the narrow way, with so many faults, weaknesses and falls. Surely His grace has abounded towards us. Let us ever remember what it cost the Father to permit His Son to die for us, and what it cost our Redeemer to pay the price of sin on our behalf.

The Day of Salvation

(Convention Address)

"I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation"—2 Cor. 6:2.

GOD'S plan for the salvation of mankind from death is the essence of the Gospel. In Rom. 1:16 Paul said—"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." The Gospel is the power unto salvation. But there is a time limit. This is what Paul is saying in our text in 2 Cor. 6:2 when he says—"Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

Now a "day" is a finite period of time. It has a beginning, and it has an ending. The Day of Salvation is no exception. It also has a time of beginning and a time of ending. Therein lie two questions: When does the day of salvation begin? and when does it end?

When did the day of salvation begin? Perhaps we should assure ourselves that in fact there was a beginning, for salvation has not always been available. Just to bear this point out, we would like to refer to 1 Pet. 1, beginning at verse 9—"Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." That expresses the thought that salvation is the essence of our faith. Verse 10—"Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you." We know that a prophet is one who foretells a coming event. Verse 11—"Searching what, or what

manner of time the spirit which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." So the prophets looked ahead and could see vaguely this promise of salvation, of which salvation they had enquired and searched diligently.

So we come to understand the full significance of the message of the angel at Jesus' birth—"Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." We know why He came, don't we? We have it explained in John 3:17—"God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

The fact that Jesus was that prophesied Messiah is confirmed to us by the Apostle Peter at Pentecost. Reading from Acts 2, beginning at verse 22, Peter says—"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." The prophets foretold the sufferings of Christ, and here they are being fulfilled. "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." Verses 32 and 33—"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the holy spirit, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." Verse 36—"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." So we can see why Paul was so anxious for the Corinthians—"Behold, now is the day of salvation."

What about the ending of the day of salvation—when does it end? That has probably been the most incorrectly answered question of all time. Some think that the day of salvation ends at the time of death for the individual. Some think it ends at the end of the world. Some think it might go on and on. When does the day of salvation end?

That is one of the big mysteries of the Scriptures. One thing we can be sure of is that it is not going to end until the work God has planned to do in it is completed. In Isa. 55:11 we have the words—"My word . . . shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." If God has set out a certain amount of work to be done during the day of salvation, it will not end until that work is complete.

The mystery comes because very few people are privileged to see that the day of salvation is in two parts. We have called them Phase 1 and

Phase 2, but there are at least six individual themes which show that the work of salvation is in two parts. We shall mention three of them.

The first is the theme of the Church. The meaning of the word is called-out ones—ecclesia. That indicates straight away that God's message of salvation is not going to everyone. If it was going to everyone, there could not be a calling out. We shall read a verse or two to familiarise ourselves with the theme of the Church. In 1 Cor. 1:1, 2 Paul says—"Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God . . . unto the church of God which is at Corinth"—that is to the called-out ones. The concordance says—"To the assembly of the called out." "Called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord." Verse 23—"We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness." Verse 26—"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." In John 6:44 Jesus is speaking, and says—"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day." So we see that only a few are called and are even able to "come."

The second theme which indicates that the work of salvation is in two parts is the theme of Israel. This theme takes much time to trace out; we shall mention Rom. 11:7-11—"What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded"—please read on. Then verse 11 is the crux of the matter—"I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid; but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy." Let us do some reasoning from that verse—"Have they stumbled that they should fall?" Straight away we see that the Jews have missed out on their chance of the heavenly calling because they have stumbled. What would have happened had they not stumbled? He says—"God forbid. But rather salvation is come to the Gentiles." So therefore if the Jews had not stumbled, salvation would not have come to the Gentiles for the heavenly calling. So straight away we see God's message of salvation was not originally intended for everyone, at that time.

The third theme which indicates that God's work of salvation is in two parts, the first part being reserved for a small group, is the theme of the Divine Wedding. We read about that in Eph. 5:22, 23 then 31 and 32—"Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the saviour of the body." "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and

shall be joined unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church." This is a great mystery, how a person is drawn away from his parents, after all their love and devotion; even in the natural field it is a great mystery. But listen to the last few words—"I speak concerning Christ and the church." Just as a man will leave his parental home and be drawn unto his wife, so also the Church leaves their fleshly home and is drawn to their husband, Christ, the Head of the Church. When a man goes out to get a wife, he does not go out to choose everyone, but one person, an individual, a selected one. What happens when he has made his selection? That is how we see there are two parts to the work of salvation.

In Rev. 19 we see the beginning of the second part of the work of salvation, reading from verses 1, 6 and 7—"And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God." "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters... Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." So we see that when the Bride of Christ is complete, when His wife has made herself ready, then comes the saying—"Salvation and glory and honour and power." There is similar language used in Rev. 21; please read verses 1-5. All referred to there is for us to look forward to when the New Jerusalem is complete, when the Bride in fact is adorned for her husband.

The theme of Israel, while showing God's salvation is not yet available for all, also shows that eventually it will be for the earthly kingdom. Reading from Rom. 11:12, 15—"Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?" "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" We know that Israel will be received for the earthly inheritance. Verses 25 and 26—"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob."

So we see that as the fall of Israel enabled the Gospel to be preached to the Gentiles for the heavenly calling, when the Gentiles have fulfilled the required number, then salvation will return to the Israelites for the earthly inheritance.

Likewise, the theme of the Church also shows there is a second positive side to this theme of salvation. Recalling the text read previously in

John 6:44—"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." Now in contrast we will read John 12:32, where Jesus is also speaking and says—"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me"—during the earthly kingdom. So we see there is the second part of the work of salvation.

Now, when does the day of salvation end? There will be an end, as we see in Acts 3:23. Reading verses 20-23—"He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from amongst the people." Therein is the end of the day of salvation.

As a summary, we will read Psalms 98—"O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory. The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the heathen." That is the second phase of the day of salvation. God's salvation has not been shown openly yet.

From verse 3—"He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel"—that is also part of the second phase. "All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth; make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise. Sing unto the Lord with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm. With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King. Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together before the Lord; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity." So do we not praise the Lord for the Day of Salvation!

Divine Guidance

"In the mysteries of my life

Where the threads all twist and twine,

'Mid the shadow and the strife,

Sadly missing His design,

With its gracious, loving pleading,

Breaks the tender Voice divine—

'Let Me take the threads in My hands,

Child, before they pass through thine.'

"Lo, a beauteous pattern growing

On a deep'ning ground of love,

Tints all blending, shining, glowing—

Mirror fairer things above;

And the quiet hands rest sweetly

In that strong, sure clasp of Thine,

All the threads now pass through Thy hands,

Dear Lord, e'er they come to mine."

—Selected.

(Continued from page 3.)

God's promise of the New Covenant, and makes possible its fulfilment. The reason is simple. The New Covenant will give life to those with whom it is made, who, prior to the making of the covenant, are members of the condemned and dying race. It is only through Jesus, and His sacrificial death on behalf of Adam and his children, that they can have an opportunity to gain everlasting life.

In Heb. 12:24 we are told that Jesus is the Mediator of the New Covenant. Moses was the Mediator of the Law Covenant, and part of his work as a mediator was the providing of blood with which to sprinkle both "the book" and "the people." See Exod. 24:3-8. Moses sprinkled the book and the people, which was an important picture in type of Christ's blood sprinkling all mankind figuratively when they come under the law of the New Covenant in the Kingdom time. As Mediator of the New Covenant, it was necessary also for Jesus to provide blood, not of animals, but His own precious blood—blood being a symbol of His sacrificed, or poured-out life. Thus we see that Jesus' sacrificial ministry was in preparation for mediating the New Covenant.

Jesus will have associates in His work of mediating the New Covenant. These are the faithful followers of Jesus throughout the Gospel Age, who follow Him into death. In Matt. 16:24 we have the words of our Lord—"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." All who do this faithfully are Jesus' associates referred to in Psa. 50:5—"Gather my saints together unto me, those who have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." That is an individual matter, referred to again by the Apostle in Rom. 6:5—"If we have been planted together in the likeness of his (Christ's) death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." These are the associates who, with their Lord, are to administer the New Covenant in the wonderful kingdom time.

In 2 Cor. 3:3 these true Christians are spoken of as epistles of Christ—"written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart." Here Paul is not referring to God's promise of the New Covenant when His law is to be written in the "inward parts" of the people, but is comparing the "epistles of Christ" with the tables of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written. We do well to meditate on that verse continually—"Written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God", that we may be "epistles of Christ", to represent Christ, as His ambassadors, "known and read of all men."

The entire Gospel Age is set aside in the plan of God for the preparation of these epistles or representatives of Christ, referred to in verse

6 of this same chapter as "able ministers of the New Covenant." Not until these "ministers" have all been prepared **can the inauguration of the New Covenant take place.** Since all of these were originally members of the sin-cursed and dying race, the blood of Christ is essential to give them a standing before God, and to make their sacrifice acceptable to Him. See Rom. 12:1. All true followers of the Master surely enjoy a wonderful hope of sharing with Jesus, as the promised Seed of Abraham, in the work of blessing all the families of the earth.

Do we not rejoice in the covenants God has made down the centuries with Adam, Noah, Israel through Moses, Christ the Head of the spiritual Seed, and the Church associated with Him to bring blessings to all mankind through the New Covenant, all made possible through the sacrifice of God's dear Son.

Have You Been in the Valley?

Have you been in the valley of sorrow and grief
Where there's nothing but death and despair?
Where the mists are so dark
And your life seems so stark
And there seems to be no one to care?

Through the storm that is beating around you today
Destroy all you have cherished so dear,
Though your loved ones forsake you,
Temptations o'ertake you,
Look up for the Master is near.

There'll be light in the midst of your sorrow and grief
If you'll just take the hand He extends.
He'll stay close by your side,
With His wisdom will guide,
Relief for your trouble He'll send.

There'll be visions of joy in the valley of grief
Which Christ in His love will unfold.
Then lift up your eyes
To the light in the skies
And His love and His mercy behold.

In the depths of the valley of sorrow and grief
The stars of His presence appear.
Come close to His side,
With the Saviour abide
And the shadows will soon disappear.

There'll be hope in the valley of sorrow and grief
When once you've discovered His love.
And the way will grow bright
To your wondering sight
When the Father smiles down from above.

L.K.P.

Adelaide Easter Convention

The brethren of the Adelaide Class extend a cordial invitation to all friends able to attend the Easter Convention to be held (D.V.) on April 4th, 5th and 6th, at the M.U. Hall (2nd Floor), 16 Franklin Street, Adelaide. Further information from the Class Secretary—Mr. F. M. Grinstead, 1 Wendy Avenue, Valley View, South Australia, 5093.

Oxford Reference Bible, with References, India paper, Brevier clear type, Leatherex binding, thumb index, \$21.00, plus postage, according to distance.

Extracts from Correspondence

Frank and Ernest, Dear Sirs—Please find enclosed a cheque which I hope will continue to supply our copies of "Peoples Paper" and other very lovely booklets which accompany the issues. "Watch Israel—God's Time Clock", the latest small booklet to arrive is, I suppose, the best and most timely piece of literature to date, and both of us liked it so much. As time marches on so fast, I feel sometimes as if I am so far behind in posting for subscription purposes; I hope you will forgive the delay. So with abiding love to you all and earnest prayers. Your brethren in Christ.

Dear Sir—Happy new year. I am writing in to let you know that I believe the Lord is my Shepherd. As King David of old tasted it and saw it, I believe He is the Shepherd of all other shepherds on this earth. I want to know the Creator better than any other thing in my life today. Please Sir, help my believing to know more about Him and Him only. Please I want this explanation of the lovely Shepherd Psalm 23, from an undenominational standpoint. I am a New Hebridean, I enjoy reading what the good Shepherd is doing for me in the past, present and future. I hope that you will send my booklet today. God bless you. Yours sincerely.

Berean Bible Institute, Dear Sir—I would like to have the little booklet—"The Lord is My Shepherd." In 1974 after I asked for a book you advertised, you continued for some time to send me "Peoples Paper" which I enjoyed very much. I still have the copies which I've read over and over. Later you asked if I still wished to receive this, and I think you mentioned the cost per year was \$1.00.

At the time my husband had a stroke and has been in hospital ever since, until he died recently. I did not get to send the money, but I would like to have your books; I enjoy them very much. I enclose \$1.00, and if it is more I will send balance: Thank you; yours sincerely.

Dear Friend—Thank you for posting my books so quickly. I am so pleased with the children's stories—"The Ten Camels." I am hoping I can have 9 more. I want to send one to each of my families to read to their children. We were a family of 10. I think parents and children can gain a lot out of it, as well as the pleasure of families sharing together; it is well written and presented, so much love and truth in a very natural way. I am enclosing a cheque; if any over, I would be glad for you to use it. Thanking you.

Frank and Ernest—I would like to receive a copy of your discussion—"Why Does God Favor Some People?"—and be eligible for your booklet at the end of these discussions. I do so enjoy your programme each Sunday night. Thanking you. Yours faithfully.

The following is from previous correspondence

Islam is on the march. They are building immense mosques in many parts of the world, and plan to build in Rome to rival St. Peters. Also they plan to place mosques in England throughout the land. Some of us are beginning to wonder whether "the false prophet" is not "Islam" for surely they will be right in the fray at Armageddon. If she is "the false prophet" then how aptly named, as Mahomet claimed to be that prophet of Deut. 18:15, and it is claimed he ascended to heaven like our Lord. It's just a thought, and as the precious oil has brought immense wealth to the Arab world, they can become powerful and even use blackmail. It won't alter the setting up of the Kingdom, for that is in good hands, and all nations will yet bow down to the King of kings.

About Christ's First and Second Advent

At Christ's first advent He lived here a fleshly human being for thirty years, before He was recognised as the Son of God.

All Bible students know that our Saviour comes the second time with His glorious spiritual body. With our human physical eyes we cannot see spirits. We cannot see God nor Satan because they are spiritual beings, then why should it seem incredible, that Christ, at His second advent, should appear in His glorious spiritual body, and yet be invisible to our physical eyes? Though we were educated to believe that we would see our Saviour at His second coming with our physical eyes, that education was erroneous. Bible students all over the world now agree that the only way we can see Christ before our resurrection change is with our mental eyes—the eyes of our understanding. See Eph. 1:18.

Cure for Eye Cataract

Make a solution of Epsom Salts, made up of ½ an ounce to a pint of boiling water. Use a little warm with an eye glass two or three times a day. This simple treatment has restored the sight to a number of people we know.

Books Available

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

- "God's Promises Come True"—\$2.00 (postage from 90c to \$2.60, according to distance in Australia).
- "The Divine Plan of the Ages"—50c (Postage 70c in Victoria; 80c interstate).
- "The Creator's Grand Design"—50c (Postage 70c and 80c).
- "The Book of Books"—50c (Postage 70c and 80c).
- "Daily Heavenly Manna"—50c (Postage 70c and 80c).
- "Daily Heavenly Manna" pocket size—75c (postage 45c).
- "Songs in the Night"—50c (Postage 45c).
- "Emphatic Diaglott", New Testament—\$2.00 (Postage 70c and 80c).
- "Poems of Dawn"—\$2.75 (Postage 70c and 80c).
- "Tabernacle Shadows"—50c (Postage 45c).
- "God and Reason"—10c (Postage 25c).
- "God's Plan"—10c (Postage 25c).
- "Hope Beyond the Grave"—10c (Postage 25c).
- "Israel in History and Prophecy"—10c (Postage 25c).
- "Our Lord's Great Prophecy"—10c (Postage 25c).
- "Manner of Christ's Return"—10c (Postage 25c).
- "Christ's Return"—10c (Postage 25c).
- "Some of the Parables"—10c (Postage 25c).
- "Where are the Dead?"—10c (postage 20c).

Numerous other smaller booklets.

The postage quoted on booklets is for single copies; proportionately less for more than one copy.

BEREAN BIBLE INSTITUTE

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FRANK & ERNEST TALKS
3GL Geelong, 1350Kc. — Sundays 11.05 p.m.