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## God Has a Plan and You Are In It

REVIEWING human history we are able to determine the cause of the terrible distress of nations the world over. All intelligent people will admit that this world-wide distress is increasing despite the twentieth-century civilization which many people feel, with the great increase of knowledge, should help to eliminate rather than increase the “distress of nations with perplexity”, which Jesus predicted at His first advent would be experienced at this time in which we are now living.

What is the primary cause of this state of affairs which Jesus said would be so pronounced in this end of the Gospel Age, with men’s hearts failing them for fear as they beheld the things coming to pass on the earth? In a word, the primary cause of the present world distress is **disobedience** to our loving Creator.

Turning to the apostle’s words in Romans 5:19 we read—”For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.” How many were made sinners by one man’s, Adam’s, disobedience? We have the answer in verse 12 of this 5th chapter of Romans —”Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon **all men**, for that all have sinned.” Again, in 1 Cor. 15:22 we read—”For as in Adam **all die**”

—all lost life in Adam. Further, in Rom. 6:23, the first part of the verse reads—”The wages of sin is death.” That was the penalty God imposed in the Garden of Eden—”In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” This is the A.B.C. of Bible truth, so to speak. We know that death in the Bible means death, the opposite of life. It is essential that this be kept in mind when considering our subject.

Let us examine some texts of Scripture which assure us that death means death, and not life in any sphere of existence throughout the Universe. The Psalmist was inspired of God and has given many helpful messages for our benefit, as follows—”For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks”; “The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence”; “His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish”—Psa. 6:5; 115:17; 146:4. The wise man was also inspired of God, and has given us helpful information—”For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten”; “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest”—Eccles. 9:5, 10. Who would contradict all these Scriptures? In Christendom today, when a person dies he is considered even more alive than ever. Such teaching is contrary to the whole Word of God from beginning to end.

Looking at the New Testament, in John 11 we have the occasion when Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, became ill and the sisters sent word to Jesus—”Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.” Jesus did not hasten back to cure the sickness of Lazarus; He waited where he was and returned on the fourth day, and raised Lazarus from the dead. We realise that Lazarus was asleep in the death condition for those four days; if he had been in heaven, the Lord would have been doing him a disfavour to bring him back to the sorrows of earth. Lazarus lived

on a few years; he possibly became a faithful Christian and finished his course, to be raised in the resurrection day. Our Lord's words respecting Lazarus—"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep", and "Lazarus is dead", was the truth, and what we need to believe as the basis for grasping further truth in God's wonderful plan of the ages. What a wonderful rejoicing it was when Jesus restored Lazarus to life! That is a beautiful illustration of what the Lord will do for every human being who has ever lived—they will come again from the land of the enemy, the great enemy, death.

If you believe that the disobedience of Adam was sin, and sin brought death, and all mankind are condemned in Adam and also suffer the penalty of real death, then you are better informed than all the great theologians in Christendom. You understand God's simple foundation truth respecting the need for His help in our condemnation in Adam. The leaders in Christendom who believe that death means life of some kind, claiming a continuing life without God's help, would fulfil the words of the Apostle Peter respecting a denial of the Lord who bought them, whether they realise this or not. If people are really alive in death they do not need a Saviour to bring them back to life. The lines of a hymn express this situation rather well—"That I may read, with childlike eyes, truths that are hidden from the wise." They are hidden from the great theologians. *We* need a childlike faith in the simple statements of God's Word.

Having established our great need of God's help in our condemnation, let us consider some of the same Scriptures in full. Turning again to Rom. 5:19, we read—"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." As many as were sinners have the possibility of being made righteous. Why do we say they have the possibility of being made righteous? Because there are conditions attached, to which reference will be made later.

Next we refer to 1 Cor. 15:22—"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." As many as have died in Adam are to be made alive in Christ. That is all-comprehensive; it embraces every human being throughout the wide world.

In Rom. 6:23 *we* read—"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Why is eternal life spoken of as a gift of God? We read in Rom. 5:6-8--"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we *were yet* sinners, Christ died for us." Eternal life is a **gift** of God because God could have quite justly allowed all mankind to remain in death after the death penalty took effect. But God commended His love toward us, in providing Christ to be our Redeemer, as we see in this passage.

In Heb. 2:9 we are told of the condescension of Jesus to come down to man's estate, to the same nature as man represented in father Adam in the Garden of Eden—"We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." This is God's plan. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. "God commendeth his love." God has a plan, that Christ should "taste death for every man." God has a plan for every human being and **you are in it!** Do you feel you are in God's plan? Whether you feel you are or not at present, we are sure that everyone is in God's plan, because Christ tasted death for everyone. That includes all living in Melbourne, all in Australia, all people in the world. Think of that—Christ tasted death for every humanbeing! Notice it does not say Christ tasted death for every believer only, in the first instance.

This wonderful truth is beautifully presented for us again in 1 Tim. 2:4-6. The Apostle says—"God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." What a lovely text this is! Here we are assured all mankind will be saved from death in Adam. They will have a resurrection from the dead, and come to the full knowledge of the truth, that the man Christ Jesus gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. This is God's wonderful plan, and **you are in it!** Every human being throughout the world is in this plan of God, because Jesus paid the "ransom" or corresponding price for Adam and also for all mankind—"As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Notice also the wonderful provision that this ransom for all is to be testified or revealed to all in God's due time. This lovely truth reminds us of John 1:9—"That was the true Light, which light-

eth every man that cometh into the world.” We might say, Not so. Jesus has not lightened every man that cometh into the world. But in due time He will, and that is what the text means, What each individual does with the true light when it is revealed to him will be his own responsibility. The verse quoted in 1 Tim. 2:4, that “God will have all men to be saved”, is not saying all will be saved eternally, but all will be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth that Christ paid the ransom for them, that they may accept Him as their Saviour and gain lasting salvation, lasting life.

This wonderful provision brings us to the words of Jesus in John 10:10, 11—”I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” Jesus came that He might give Himself a ransom or corresponding price for Adam and all mankind in Adam. But additionally, within this general salvation for humanity, He came to give life **more abundantly** to a comparatively few of mankind who would be willing, yes, and delight to walk in His steps of sacrifice, that they might also live with Him in His heavenly kingdom. So we are not wrong in saying that God has two plans, or one plan in two parts, for the salvation of the human race. One part is to give human life on the restored earth to all the families of the earth, and the other part is to give more abundant life, spiritual life, to those whom God is drawing to Jesus during this Gospel Age, as described in John 6:44, 45. Our Lord speaking says—”No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him . . . And they shall all be taught of God.” All those drawn of God to Jesus shall be taught of God, by His spirit. They come to Jesus because He is the Way, the Truth and the Life, the only means of salvation that God provided in this wonderful Saviour. Those who are drawn of God to Jesus during this Gospel Age have the privilege of presenting their lives fully in His service, if they feel the Lord is calling them for sonship. It is no use pretending to be a Christian if God is not drawing us; we will never be a Christian if God is not drawing us to Jesus.

The words of the Apostle Paul in 2 Cor. 5:14 help us in this matter—”For the love of Christ constraineth us.” The meaning of the Greek word translated “constraineth” is “to hold together.” If you have felt the Lord’s drawing power and His influence to yield your life to Him day by day, this is for the special plan of God, and **you are in it!** This is God’s special plan during this Gospel Age, when He is selecting the Bride of Christ to be associated with our Lord in His heavenly kingdom. Those who feel they are drawn to God are in this special plan, and should accept it day by day and improve their privileges as God’s children. It is our privilege as well as responsibility to stay in this plan of God for us, as we allow God to work in us to will and do His good pleasure. We have an important part to play by staying in this plan of God for us, this special plan for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Shortly after our Lord commenced His ministry, after His baptism in the River Jordan by John the Baptist, symbolizing His consecration unto death for the redemption of humanity, and following His temptation in the wilderness when He resisted the devil so resolutely, we have a helpful account of His visit to Nazareth, where He had been brought up as a boy. He visited the synagogue, and gave a sermon on the prophecy of Isa. 61 concerning Himself. He knew, of course, that the prophecy had been spoken under God’s inspiration concerning Himself. The record of this outline of our Lord’s ministry is found in Luke 4:14-22. This record is given quite briefly, for He must have preached a wonderful sermon, if we only had the full account of it. Jesus was anointed by God’s holy spirit at His baptism, so in the quotation from Isa. 61, in Luke 4:18, we read—”The spirit of the Lord (Jehovah) is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor”—not poor in money matters, but the meek and lowly. “The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way”, Psa. 25:9. Our Lord was sent “to heal the brokenhearted.” There were plenty of people broken-hearted in Jesus’ day, as well as since. Our Lord’s message does comfort and heal such hearts, as indicated 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 in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy (gracious), and my burden is light.” The Lord’s yoke is not burdensome, because the Lord is in the yoke with His people; He guides and comforts and directs them as they walk the Christian way with Him.

Our Lord was also anointed “to preach deliverance to the captives.” This is expressed very well for the Gospel Age followers of the Master in Col. 1:13—”God hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.” God’s Word supports His people so they are able to resist the power of dark-

ness, being translated prospectively into the kingdom of Christ. Also in Eph. 4:8, referring to the Lord's ascension, we read—"When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive." The meaning is, "he led forth a multitude of captives"—first of all His own dear people who gain life during this Gospel Age, as they are delivered out of captivity in death. These are passed from death unto life in Christ.

Jesus was also anointed to give "recovering of sight to the blind." In Eph. 1:18 we read—"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." In regard to our inner sight, the message of 2 Cor. 4:6 is very helpful—"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." This would be the object of our Lord's preaching—the recovering of sight to the spiritually blind, that they may see, as quoted previously, truths hidden from the wise.

Our Lord was also commissioned "to set at liberty them that are bruised." The "bruised" or oppressed would be those crushed by the sin of this present evil world, and who would be in a heart condition to respond to God's drawing to Jesus. The words of Jesus in John 8:31, 32, 35 are helpful—"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." What a lovely thought, to be free in Christ Jesus.

Further, Jesus was anointed "to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." This is a reference to this Gospel Age, between Christ's first and second advents, when God is "taking out a people for his name" for the heavenly calling, well expressed by the Apostle in 2 Cor. 6:1, 2—"We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. For he saith, 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." How often is this Scripture misused to imply that the present life is the only acceptable time for all mankind to be saved. Rather, it is the only acceptable time for the heavenly calling. For those who, by the Lord's grace, are receiving life more abundantly, this is the acceptable time.

But what about the majority of mankind, all the remainder of humanity for whom the Lord died, and who shall receive, not life more abundant in heaven, but a resurrection to life on earth. They will gain lasting life on earth, when obedient to the laws of the kingdom. The prophecy of [Isa. 61, explained briefly by Jesus in Luke 4, will also be fulfilled for "all the families of the earth." This is indicated in Isa. 61:2. After referring to "proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord", the prophecy adds—"and the day of vengeance of our God" which Jesus omitted in Luke 4, as not being applicable at His first advent. We know that the great time of trouble at the end of the Gospel Age is necessary so that a new order, Christ's kingdom, can take over for the "times of restitution of all things" on the earth. The latter part of verse 2 and verse 3 of Isa. 61 have application during this Gospel Age, but will also apply for all the obedient of mankind following the "day of vengeance of our God." Then verse 4 brings in the great restoration throughout the earth—"And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations." The comforting of all that mourn, and of all who are brokenhearted and ready for the blessings of Christ's kingdom will proceed, as described in Zech. 12:10—"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." Here we see that when Israel has been through "Jacob's trouble", God's blessing will be due to come down upon them. The spirit of grace and supplication will be poured out. They will look upon the Lord whom they pierced, not literally, for the Lord will not come back to earth as a man to be observed. But their minds will go back to the time of His crucifixion—they will realise they crucified the Lord of Glory, and the majority we believe, will repent of such a dreadful act. Israel will then receive the blessings of the Lord.

In Isa. 61 the Lord has promised blessings for all who mourn, and so the position of those who desire to be right with God and come into line with the laws of His kingdom will be favourable. Of that time, when all nations will be **in God's plan**, we read in Isa. 2:2-4 a prophecy which reveals the benefits to result from the establishment of Christ's kingdom throughout the earth. See also Isa 11:1-11; 25:6-9; 52:9, 10.

In this plan of God, in which every human being who has ever lived is included, human problems will be overcome. Many people are concerned about the over-population of this planet, and rightly so. The greatest thinkers today are greatly troubled because they think the present order as we have it today will continue indefinitely. God told our first parents in the Garden of Eden that they should increase and fill the earth; not over-fill it. God has a plan, and it is a perfect plan. It will not get out of hand, because when the kingdom comes, the present problems of earth will be solved. In Luke 20:27-36 we have a passage of Scripture which explains the matter of world population for the future. The words of Jesus in verses 34 and 35 are explanatory—"The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world (the Millennial Age), and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage." There will be no more family circles as we have them today, but mankind on the earth will be one great family of God.

Many people are also concerned about the extreme pollution of our planet. This is also of great importance.

We would like to quote a report from the Melbourne "Age" of May 10th under the heading—"Our River too can Sparkle with Coal Char." The report is as follows—"Fancy the Yarra River cleansed of 99.9 per cent, of its sewage germs? Such a clean-up has already been achieved by Melbourne University researchers—on samples of polluted water. They ran the water through beds of brown coal char to extract the bacteria. Mr. Geoffrey Cullen talked about the discovery at the University of Melbourne, where he heads the Institute of Materials Research in the Department of Metallurgy. 'Two years of research have shown that char produced from brown coal can purify water polluted by bacteria', he announced. 'If this process is further developed the water now polluted by sewage ought to be made not only swimmable but drinkable.'

"Mr. Cullen's team took water from the Yarra near Princes Bridge during a drought, when it contained 250,000 E. Coli organisms a litre, 200 times the number considered safe for swimming. Two hours treatment with brown coal char removed 99.9 per cent, of the 'bugs. Water taken from septic sewers at Croydon contained 10 million E. Coli per litre; these were reduced by 99.6 per cent, by five minutes treatment with the char. The brown coal char works because of the expanse of inner surfaces in its porous structure, which absorbs—that is, chemically and physically takes hold of—atoms, molecules and micro-organisms. A single gram of char has 700 square metres of inside surface. Another material currently used in absorption of bacteria from polluted water is called activated carbon. Mr. Cullen said the brown coal char would give a comparable purification for one tenth of the cost. Further, the char can be regenerated by roasting it red hot in a furnace now and then. This disposes of the 'garbage load of bugs' stored inside and destroys only 5 per cent. of the char body."

If man can accomplish such things in his imperfection, what can God do, when the time comes to clean up this planet for the habitation of the renewed human family! We remember our Lord said, "Behold, I make all things new." He is going to make all things new for everybody in His plan. In the kingdom age all the obedient of mankind are **in His plan** for the general earthly salvation throughout the world, and Christ's true followers of this Gospel Age are **in His plan** for the wonderful heavenly calling of God in Christ Jesus. In Rev. 21:1-5 we have revealed God's wonderful new order established throughout this earth for the benefit of redeemed humanity—"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea"—no more restless masses of humanity—"And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."

## Revelation 7.

THE sincere student of God's Word will have no difficulty in determining that the first three verses of chapter 7 apply to the harvest period of this Gospel Age, when Christ, the "angel ascending from the east," (verse 2) takes control of events as they affect the "sealing of the servants of our God in their foreheads." The command to hold back the winds until the work of sealing is accomplished, shows that the Lord will not permit the commotions of earth to interfere with the gathering and full intellectual development of His servants during this period of the presence of Christ as the Chief Reaper, throughout the harvest of this age.

In Matt. 24:34 the same harvest work is described as follows: “And he (Christ) shall send his angels with a great trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

It is very evident that the “heavens” here mentioned is the ecclesiastical heavens, from which all the true servants of God are called during the harvest of the age, that they might be fully informed of all the truth respecting the harvest and kingdom work, “sealed in their foreheads,” in preparation for their reigning in kingdom power with Christ, as they prove faithful to their consecration vows, by His grace.

The holding back of the four winds “that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree”, being only for a specified time, implies that the “earth”, “sea” and “trees” (all symbols of the present order of society) will be “hurt” when the winds are released. While there is much trouble and suffering in the world, it is evident that the “four winds” are not *yet* loose, for the various elements of society still exist; however, before the close of this age, the “great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world”, (Matt. 24:21) will bring about the passing of the present order, in readiness for the time when the “new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness”, shall operate for the blessing of all mankind (2 Pet. 3:13).

The statement that the winds are restrained “till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads”, (verse 3) agrees with the words of our Lord in Matt. 24:22—“Except those days (of tribulation) should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved, but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.” The implication is, that the shortening of the days of tribulation “for the elect’s sake”, means the holding back of the severity of the trouble before it bursts upon the world, while the last members of the elect are still in the flesh—till they are sealed in their foreheads—and so are then able to prove victorious through whatever portion of the tribulation the Lord sees fit they should experience, prior to their deliverance to the heavenly inheritance.

“The sealing in the forehead,” as described in verse 3, refers not so much to character development, as to a full intellectual understanding being gained by those servants who have the character-likeness of Christ as their pattern, and which they are ever seeking to copy, by His grace. In other words, it will be only those servants who have the heart desire for characters pleasing to the Lord who will be “sealed in their foreheads”—being informed of all the details of the harvest and kingdom work, that they may be fitted to co-operate in the grand work in the heavenly kingdom. That this is the correct thought is further indicated in verses 4 to 8, where it is stated that the number of the sealed ones was 144,000. It will be realised that this number comprises the whole Bride of Christ, the members of which have been selected from the world of mankind throughout the Gospel Age. Further, it will be evident that only a portion of this number would be living in the harvest period of the Gospel Age, and receive their sealing in the forehead while still in the flesh. It therefore follows, that those servants who proved faithful to their consecration vows prior to the harvest, when the light of truth was not completely revealed, would be sealed in their foreheads—intellectually—at their resurrection, when, early in the harvest period “the dead in Christ would rise first.” It is one thing to be fully faithful to the vows of consecration, and still another to be “sealed in the forehead” with the intellectual knowledge necessary to prepare all the Bride of Christ for their work with Him in His Kingdom.

The fact that the 144,000 sealed ones are divided into the twelve tribes of Israelites, with 12,000 in each tribe, indicates that the offer to make up the Bride of Christ was made to Israel at our Lord’s first advent. However, only a limited number of Israelites were worthy, and were received into God’s family, and so, as the Scriptures clearly show, the call went to the Gentiles to make up the required number. These are grafted into the original olive tree (see Rom. 11), as Israelites indeed—by becoming Christ’s, they are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise. (Gal. 3:29.) “The fulness from the Gentiles will come in”, (Rom. 11:25) and sufficient will be allotted to each of the tribes to make up the required number, as predetermined of God before the foundation of the world. (Eph. 1:3-6.)

The verses 9 to 17 explain the last vision seen by St. John under the sixth seal, and describe a great multitude of saved ones from all nations, kindreds and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, in contrast with the definite number of the sealed ones of verses 4-8.

That this innumerable multitude is a spiritual class is clearly shown by the setting of the vision; there can be no doubt that the throne mentioned in verse 9 is the rainbow circled throne of God (Rev. 4:3), and the presence of the Lamb, and the elders and four beasts, etc., leaves no doubt on this matter.

This class of spiritual beings could be none other than those who have been redeemed from the earth throughout the Gospel Age, and who, on account of various hindrances have not proved worthy of a place in the Bride of Christ, to sit with Him in His throne (Rev. 3:21), yet, by coming through great tribulation their robes are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, and they are granted a place “before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple.”

While there is no call to the Great Company of this vision, this class is, nevertheless, mentioned in various Scriptures. They are the “foolish virgins” of the parable in Matt. 25:1-13, and are mentioned by St. Paul especially, in his Epistle to the Corinthians. (See 1 Cor. 3:15; 5:5.) This class is also pictured in Psalm 45:14, as “the virgins her companions that follow her”—those who follow the Bride. While those who comprise the Great Multitude will be disappointed at first, in not gaining the chief prize for which they were called, yet, they will quickly realise that they were not fully zealous during their pilgrimage on earth, and on being raised to the place of honour before the throne will proclaim in the words of Rev. 19:7—“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.”

Verses 16 and 17 clearly show that the position of the Great Company, while not being of the divine nature like the Bride of Christ, will be a favoured inheritance in the heavenly realm, and the work they will do in serving God day and night in His temple will no doubt be in connection with the uplift of the world of mankind, in co-operation with Christ and His saints who will direct the Kingdom work, to the praise and glory of God.

## “HER CREED”

She stood before the chosen few,  
With modest air and eyes of blue;  
A gentle creature, in whose face  
ere mingled tenderness and grace.

“You wish to join our fold,” they said  
“Do you believe in all that’s read  
From ritual and written creed,  
Essential to our human need?”

A troubled look was in her eyes;  
She answered as in vague surprise,  
As though the sense to her were dim,  
“I only strive to follow Him.”

Creeds change as ages come and go,  
We see by faith, and little know;  
Perchance the sense was not so dim  
To her who “strove to follow Him.”

—Selected.

## Paul Speaks as Under the Law

MUCH perplexity has been caused to many Christian minds by the statements of the 7th chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Some have concluded that he here teaches that he lived a life of sin, according to the flesh, but a life of righteousness according to his mind. Yet they are ready to concede that this is rather a perplexing, unreasonable and unsatisfactory view of the matter. Others reach the conclusion that the Apostle must here be describing his condition of heart and mind before conversion, while he was still a sinner; yet these also find difficulties, and confess that many features of such a view are quite inconsistent with the Apostle's language. The following is submitted as being a helpful and correct understanding of the matter.

In his letter to the Romans (chapter 7), the Apostle reasons to Jewish converts to Christianity; "For", he says, "I speak to them that know the Law." He then represents the Law Covenant as a husband, and Israelites bound by it as a wife to a husband. He shows that as it would be a sin for the woman to unite with another man while her husband lives, so it would be wrong for Israel to leave Moses, and to unite with Christ, unless released by death—either the death of the Law Covenant or their death to the Law Covenant.

It is a common mistake to suppose the Scriptures to teach that the Law Covenant died, or was destroyed by our Lord. **It still lives**; and all the children of Jacob are still bound by it, **unless they have died to it**. Only those who realise that they could not gain everlasting life through their union with Moses (the Law Covenant) are ready to abandon all hope of saving their life by that union with Moses, to become **dead** to all such expectations, and to accept the death of Christ, the ransom for Adam and all his race, as the basis of a **new** hope and of a **new** life. Hence, only such Israelites as by faith reckon themselves hopelessly **dead** under the Law Covenant, and as risen with Christ to a new life secured by His sacrifice, and who in **will are dead** to sin—only such could be united to Christ as the new husband. Thus, according to the Apostle's reasoning, the thought of being united to both Moses and Christ, was wholly out of the question—compare Rom. 6:2.

The text, "Christ is the end (or fulfilment) of the Law (Covenant) for righteousness **to everyone (under it) that believeth**" (Rom. 10:4), does not conflict with the above, because only believers are specified. (Compare Rom. 3:31; Gal. 2:19). Eph. 2:15 should be read: "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity of the law of commandments contained in ordinances", etc. Col. 2:13, 14 refers to "quicken" Jewish believers for whom the handwriting of ordinances is blotted out. Verse 20 refers to the Gentile converts who had to become **dead** to the "rudiments of the world", even as the Jews must become **dead** to the rudiments of their Law Covenant.

That the Law Covenant with Israel is still binding upon that nation is further evident from the fact that upon their national rejection of Christ, they were nationally blinded until the end of the Gospel Age (Rom. 11:7, 25), and that God declares that He has "not cast away his people" of that Covenant, but that He will yet open their eyes to see Christ as the only door or hope, and that of a **new** life purchased with His own, (Rom. 11:2 27, 29; compare Deut. 30:1-9). Meanwhile, we have the evidence that their Covenant continues in force in the fact that, as a nation, they have for centuries been receiving the very "curses" specified under their Covenant—see Deut. 28:15-67.

Rom. 7:6 is not out of harmony with this explanation (that the Israelite who would unite with Christ must **die** to his nation's Covenant, and that the Law Covenant is not yet dead); for, properly rendered, it reads, "But now we are delivered from the Law (Covenant), being dead to that wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit (with our minds, our wills), and not (be required to serve) the very letter of the old, Law Covenant, which has passed away."

What was defective in the old or Law Covenant? Was it sinful or bad? No. How came it, then, that under that Covenant we learned so much about sin?

Because, previous to receiving the Law, Israelites were like the remainder of the world—dead in trespasses and sins; and, being already under sentence of death, we were like the remainder, unrecognised of God, and without any special commands; and hence we could not disobey or increase our sin by disobedience, until the Law Cov-

enant began to command us.

But, notwithstanding that death sentence under which we and all the world rested, we Israelites were “**alive**” before the Law Covenant came, because God had promised our father Abraham that somehow and at some time He would **bless his seed**, and through it all the families of the earth. Thus, in God’s promise to Abraham, a **future life** assured to us all, before the Mosaic Covenant was made; but just as soon as that Law Covenant went into force, and required that we must obey its every command, in order to secure life, that soon we found that we could not absolutely control our poor, fallen bodies, however much we willed to do so with our minds. And, as sin developed, **we died**—our hopes of life expired, because we could not keep that Law Covenant. I speak for, or as representing, our whole nation. Thus we found that the Law Covenant, promising **life** to the obedient, really sentenced us to death, because we **could not obey its requirements**.

Thus we acknowledge that the law and the Covenant were good in themselves, but not helpful to us, because we were fallen beings. But God intended that it should show us how imperfect we really are—verse 13. For the Law is adapted to all who are in full harmony with God’s spirit—perfect beings—and this we Israelites were not; we were and are by nature carnal, depraved, even as others.

And if our hearts be right, we can and will admit that we are unable to obey God’s perfect law and that perfection is not to be found in our fallen flesh, even though in our mind we approve God’s law and would gladly obey it.

This is the wretched condition in which we find ourselves (verse 24), wanting to obey God’s law, and to have His favour and the everlasting life promised to them that love and obey Him, and yet unable to do so because of our dead bodies—fallen and sentenced through Adam’s transgression. Oh, how can we get release from this, our difficulty! We cannot obey God’s law, and God cannot give us an **imperfect** law to suit our fallen condition. Oh, wretched hopeless condition!

But no, brethren, there is hope in Christ! Not a hope of our fulfilling the Law Covenant—no hope of doing those things commanded, and **living** as a result; nor any hope of saving anything out of the wreck of Adam’s fall and sentence. That must all be abandoned. We Israelites must **die** under the Law Covenant, as unsaved by it as we were before it was made, as unsaved as the Gentiles who never had a share in it. But as we realise ourselves **dead** under the terms of the Law Covenant, we see that Christ has **died** for Adam’s sin, paid his penalty and thus redeemed him and all—lost through his disobedience—Jew and Gentile, bond and free, male and female. And this relieves us Jews, because Christ was a Jew, “born under the Law” Covenant, that He might redeem those who were under it—Gal. 4:4, 5. In consequence, therefore, God can be just and accept all who serve His law in their minds and wills, and whose only hindrance from perfect obedience is the weakness of the fallen flesh.

Thanks be unto God for this unspeakable **gift**; a new life, purchased by the precious blood. This we can obtain through Christ, even though we could never justify the Adamic life by obedience to any law that God could give.

## THE BEST WINE

“Thou hast kept the good wine until now.”—John 2:10.

When from life’s feast the glory has departed,  
And weariness creeps on,  
When on thy lips the bread has turned to ashes  
And all the wine is gone.

Then fill the jars once more, though but with water,  
And fill them to the brim;  
And *to* the waiting guests about thy table,  
Pour out thy best—for Him.

His power only waits for thy small effort,  
To add His mighty touch,  
Transmuting thy poor gift to His rich vintage,  
Making thy little—much.

So shalt thou know again the joy of service  
That thou hadst thought was past,  
And find the Master of the Feast has given  
The best wine at the last.

—Annie J. Flint.

### OUR BIBLE TRANSLATED

A new print has been made recently of the very interesting and informative booklet, “Our Bible Translated”, compiled some time ago by the brethren *of* “The Dawn”. To cover cost of materials this booklet is supplied at 10c per copy, post paid.

(Continued from page 3.)

## Correspondence

U.S.A.

Berean Bible Institute, Dear Brethren in the Lord. Greetings of peace in the precious name of Jesus!

Thank you for the “Peoples Paper” which has been coming quite regularly and which we enjoy immensely together with the Convention Report Notes. May the Good Lord be with you in your endeavours to serve Him and His people.

If they are still available, we would appreciate receiving 3 copies of “Why We Observe the Lord’s Supper Annually”, and also 3 copies of “Index for Songs in the Night” alone. We have the book, just the Index is what we would very much appreciate. *We* are enclosing one dollar to cover cost of printing and mailing, for which we thank you very kindly.

May God bless you through Jesus Christ, and may you eventually lay hold on eternal life by fighting the good fight

of faith-1 Tim. 6:12; Rom. 2:7. *We* send much love in the Lord to all God's dear children. Psa. 100. Your brethren by God's grace.

Queensland

Berean Bible Institute, Dear Sir—Thank you so much for all the copies of your “Peoples Paper” which you have sent over the last few months. It is a truly wonderful “Paper” and I have enjoyed it tremendously; it has quite a lot of helpful and useful information in it, for all to read.

I have been meaning to write ever since I received the second issue, but just haven't got around to it, and in the recent issue was a little note telling me of the price annually for a subscription to it. I enclose the subscription, plus some extra to cover the issues you've sent me free, plus a bit to help with your policy of giving issues free to those who perhaps can't afford to subscribe to it, or to those like myself, who forget.

Please advise me when the year's subscription is up, as I have a shocking memory, and please continue to send it to me. Yours in Him.

(For some time now, all subscriptions to “Peoples Paper” expire at the end of the year; this arrangement is working well, the work is greatly assisted by subscriptions being kept up to date.—B.B. Institute.)

A very good Oxford Bible, with References, India paper, thumb index, Brevier clear type, Persian Morocco binding, is now available at \$10.50.

## The Lord is My Shepherd

THE story is told of a noted actor and an aged Christian who were at a social gathering. Someone suggested that the actor be asked to repeat the 23rd Psalm, the request being supported by the venerable man of God. Obliging the actor consented, and with a voice thoroughly disciplined by the most perfect elocution, all the shades of tone, all the delicate accents and meaningful inflections were goldenly evident as he repeated, “The Lord is my Shepherd.”

Then, after the actor had finished, someone asked the old Christian if he would not also repeat the Psalm. Naturally timid under the spell of the actor's elocution, the Christian hesitated for a time, but finally consented. And as he finished, the faces of the company were not aglow with admiration, but hushed and rapt and washed with something akin to tears. Taking the Christian's hand in his, the magnanimous actor said to him: “I know the Psalm; you know the Shepherd.”

Many of our readers have appreciated the booklet “The Lord is My Shepherd” in the past, and supplies are still available. Like the story above, it is hoped this booklet may be used further to reveal the Shepherd, as well as the Psalm, to others mindful of spiritual things. This booklet of 24 pages is supplied at 12c per copy, or 4 copies for 30c post paid.

Oxford Teachers' Bible, with References, India paper, thumb index, Brevier clear type, Persian Morocco binding, with Oxford **Helps, Subject Index and Concordance, \$16.00.**

#### Books Available

"God's Promises Corns True"—\$2.00, plus postage.

"The Divine Plan of the Ages," Cloth bound—\$1.00, including 24e postage. Paper covers-75c, including 24e postage.

"Emphatic Diaglott," New Testament—\$2.00, plus postage.

"**Daily H ...** ly Manna", birthday pages—\$1.25, post paid.

"Tabernacle Shadows"-75c, post paid.

"The Book of Books," Reviewing the Bible as a whole—\$1.25, Post paid. "Our Lord's Great Prophecy"-16c post paid.

"Manner of Christ's Return"-16e, post paid.

"Christ's Return-16c, post paid.

"Some of the Parables"-16e, post paid.

"Hope Beyond the Grave"-16c, post paid.

"God and Reason"-16c, post paid.

"Where are the Dead?"-12c, post paid.

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