



Refrain Thy Voice from Weeping

THE Lord through the prophet Jeremiah sends a message of consolation for the heart of every bereaved parent trusting in Him. We read—"A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Thus saith the Lord: Refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy—Jeremiah 31:15,16.

Five items in our text are worthy of attention.

First. Sorrow for the dead, which is universal, as the Apostle declares—"The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together."

Second. The nature of the comfort described—the hope of a resurrection, the hope of the recovery of the dead—"They shall come again", they shall be restored to life.

Third. That in death our dear ones are in "the land of the enemy", in harmony with the Apostle's declaration—"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death"—1 Cor. 15:26.

Fourth. That the labours of the parents in endeavouring to properly rear their children are not lost—"Thy work shall be rewarded."

Fifth. Last but not least in importance in this text is the declaration that this is the Word of the Lord, which cannot be broken—the Word which is sure of fulfilment, however different it may be from the word of man on this subject.

Tears Not Weakness—"Jesus Wept."

Sorrow for the dead is not a sign of weakness, but rather the reverse—a sign of love and sympathy, of something more than selfishness. If any demonstration of this thought were necessary it is furnished us in the statement of the shortest verse in the Bible—"Jesus wept"—John 11:35. Our Lord's tears were

shed on a funeral occasion, too; Lazarus, His friend, the brother of Martha and Mary, was dead. Our Lord entered fully into the spirit of the occasion, with a deeper appreciation of the awful meaning of the word, death, than could possibly be entertained by those about Him. He appreciated more than any of the fallen, dying race the great blessing and privilege of living, and what a terrible affliction was death—destruction, annihilation.

On the other hand, however, He understood more clearly than any of His hearers the gracious plan of God for the rescue of the race from annihilation. He realized that for this purpose He had come into the world, that He might give His life as a ransom price for Adam, and thus incidentally for every member of the Adamic race involved in death through the first transgression in Eden. The Master realized from the standpoint of faith in the Father's plan, and His confident intention to carry out His own part in that plan and to lay down His life as our redemption price, that thus resurrection blessings would come to every member of the race.

Not Dead Eternally, But Sleeping

Let us note carefully the nature of the consolation which our Lord rendered to the sorrowing ones about Him on this occasion. Let us be assured that "He who spake as never man spake" gave the soundest and best comfort. The consolation which He gave was that Lazarus is not dead for all time. He neither spake of him nor thought of him as being dead in the sense of annihilation, because He had full confidence in the divine plan of redemption and in the resurrection blessings resulting. Hence the interim of death He spoke of as sleep, quiet, restful, waiting sleep.

What a wonderful figure is this, so frequently used throughout the Scriptures by all those who trusted in the divine plan of a resurrection morning. In the Old Testament Scriptures we read frequently of sleep. Abraham slept with

his fathers, so did Isaac, so did Jacob, so did all the Prophets, so did all Israel.

In the New Testament it is the same. Not only did our Lord speak of Lazarus sleeping, but the Apostles frequently used this same figure of sleep to represent their hope of a resurrection—that the dear ones who went down into death are not annihilated, as our text declares—"They will come again from the land of the enemy"—will awaken in the resurrection morning.

Thus too, of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, it is written that though stoned to death, he "fell asleep", sweetly, restfully, trusting in Jesus and the great power which He ultimately would exercise to call forth from the power of death all redeemed by the precious blood. This, too, we remember, was the comfort the Apostle set before the early church, saying—"Comfort one another with these words"—"They that sleep in Jesus shall God bring with him"—1 Thes. 4:14-18. Referring to the matter on one occasion the Apostle remarked—"We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed"—1 Cor. 15:51. He referred to those who would be living at the second coming of Christ, whose resurrection "change" will not be preceded by a period of unconsciousness in death.

Let us go back to Jesus and the sorrowing sisters at Bethany, and hearken to the words of comfort extended to the bereaved on that occasion. We cannot improve upon the great Teacher and the lessons which He presented. Let us hearken to His conversation with Martha. He says—"Thy brother shall rise again." He does not say thy brother is living now. He did not say, as some erroneously teach today, thy brother is more alive in death than he was before he died. No. No! The Lord would not thus mock the common sense and reason of His hearer, nor could He thus violate the truth and declare the dead not dead.

Hearken! The Lord admits that a calamity has befallen the household. He says not a word about His friend Lazarus having gone to heaven—not an intimation of the sort. On the contrary, He has tears of sympathy, and holds out as the strongest and only truthful solution of the sorrow, the hope of a resurrection—"Thy brother shall rise again." "I am the resurrection and the life!" The hope of all the dead centres in Me. My death will effect the cancellation of the original Adamic condemnation, and I shall have the right then in harmony with the Father's plan to call forth all the dead from the great prison house of death, from the tomb. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth"—John 5:28,29.

The Resurrection Morning

At the close of His conversation with Martha, explaining that her hope must centre in a resurrection of the dead and that He was the centre of that resurrection hope, our Lord asked to be taken to the tomb, intent upon giving an illustration of the power which by and by in the resurrection morning will be exercised toward the whole world of mankind. Standing at the door of the tomb our Lord cried with a loud voice—"Lazarus come forth"—and the dead came forth—he had been dead, he was quickened by our Lord's power and authority.

This, like other miracles performed by our dear Redeemer at His first advent, we are particularly told, was a fore-manifestation of His coming glory and power, an illustration of what He will do at His second advent, only that the work at the second advent will be universal, higher, deeper, broader every way. "All the blind eyes shall be opened and all the deaf ears shall be unstopped"; all that are in their graves shall come forth, not merely to relapse again into blindness and death, but a permanent recovery—not only recovery from the loss of natural sight and hearing, but the eyes and ears of their understanding will be opened also; not merely aroused from a sleep of death to a few years more under present conditions, but aroused to the intent that by obedience to the divine arrangement of the Millennial Age all the awakened ones may attain to all the glorious perfections, mental, moral and physical, lost by Adam's disobedience.

"Times of Restitution Shall Come"

Glorious hope of a glorious time! What wonder that the Lord speaks through the Apostle of those years of the Millennial Age as "times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began"—Acts 3:20,21.

Lazarus died again, Jairus' daughter died again, the son of the widow of Nain died again. Their awakening from the tomb was merely a temporary matter, merely an illustration of the Lord's power, as it is written—"This beginning of miracles did Jesus . . . and manifested forth his glory"—John 2:11. These were merely foregleams of the coming power and glory and blessed work of the gracious Prophet, Priest and King whom God has appointed not only to redeem the world, but to grant to all, in due time, the opportunities secured by that redemptive sacrifice.

We cannot go into more detail, but we here endeavour to show amongst other things that the great blessing which will ultimately be for the world of mankind, as well as for the Church, centres in the coming of our Lord and

Master, our Redeemer and King, and that the great blessings promised are not merely temporary, but designed of God to be everlasting and eternal to those who accept divine favours in the right spirit, reverently, thankfully, obediently.

Death "The Land of the Enemy"

Why should death be called "The land of the enemy"? Why should it be written—"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death"?—1 Cor. 15:26. All because, disguise the facts as we may, death is an enemy. The suggestion that it is a friend comes not from the Word of God, but from heathen philosophies. The suggestion that it is unreal comes not from the Scriptures, but from heathendom. The suggestion that the dead are more alive than they were before they died is totally out of harmony with the Scriptural declaration—"The dead know not anything"—"His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them" because "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest"—Job 14:21; Eccles. 9:5,10. The suggestion that we deceive ourselves and imagine without reason that the moment of death is the moment of greater life is of the Adversary, who contradicted the Lord's statement in Eden to our first parents—"Ye shall surely die"—for your sin, declaring in opposition—"Ye shall not surely die"—Gen. 3:4.

The Adversary has kept up this false teaching for 6,000 years, and at last not only heathendom is deceived by his misrepresentation of facts, but very, very many of Christendom likewise trust to the word of Satan—"Ye shall not surely die"—and believe that the dead are not dead, and reject the testimony of God's Word that "the wages of sin is death", that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die", that "death has passed upon all men because all are sinners", and that the hope of the Church as well as the hope for the world lies in the fact that Christ died for our sins and redeemed us from the death sentence, and in the Father's due time is to effect a resurrection of the dead.

The Key of Death's Prison

Let us comfort our hearts with the true comfort, the substantial comfort of the Word of God—there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust—Acts 24:15. "All that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and shall come forth". The thousands of millions who have gone down into the great prison-house of death shall be released, because the Great Redeemer has the "key", the power, the authority, to bid the prisoners come forth, even as the Scriptures declare.

What a glorious resurrection morning that will be! What a glorious reunion! We under-

stand the Scriptural teaching to be that the awakening processes will continue throughout a considerable portion of the Millennial Age, the thousand-year day of resurrection and restitution. First will come the resurrection of the Church, the "Bride", the "Lamb's Wife", the "Body of Christ." These, as the Scriptures declare, will constitute the first resurrection—not only first in order of time, but first in the sense of chief. In that company will be none except the saints, as it is written—"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years"—Rev. 20:6. Nevertheless that will be but a little flock, as the Scriptures declare, including—"not many wise, not many mighty, not many learned, but chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith, heirs of the Kingdom"—1 Cor. 1:26,27; James 2:5.

Not long after the First Resurrection, the glorification of the Church, will come the resurrection of the Ancient Worthies—the overcomers of olden times prior to the Gospel Age. The assurance is that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the holy prophets—yes, all who were approved of God by their faith and their efforts to obedience—will come forth from the tomb to human conditions, glorious, grand, earthly illustrations of the heavenly Creator, to constitute the earthly representatives of the Kingdom, the instructors of mankind.

The instruction of the world will forthwith proceed. We are assured that—"the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea"—Hab. 2:14—to such an extent that—"They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD"—Jer. 31:34. We cannot stop to describe that glorious time and the grand opportunities it will give to every creature to know the Lord, to obey Him, to attain to resurrection in its full significance—a raising up to mental, moral and physical perfection.

The Last First, The First Last.

After the Kingdom of God shall have been fully established in the earth, and Satan shall have been bound, after the darkness shall have rolled away and the true light shall have lightened every creature, the time will come for the awakening of all the families of the earth—not all at once, but gradually,—"they shall come again from the land of the enemy"—Jer. 31:16. The Scriptures do not go into detail on this subject; they leave much to faith, but give us a firm foundation for that faith, nevertheless, in the positive promise of the Lord's Word.

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John the Baptist's Ministry

(Luke 3:15,22.)

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"—John 1:29.

SEVERAL points in this familiar narrative are worthy of special notice—(1) The deep and wide influence of John's preaching. The prepared instruments of the Lord are powerful in His hand. The whole nation was aroused, the multitudes were baptized with the baptism of repentance—Mark 1:4,5—and the expectation of the immediate advent of the Messiah was everywhere manifest.

(2) The humility and sincerity of John, which was not changed in the least by the popular favour, is seen in his denial of the suggestion that he might be the Messiah. Had he made the claim, how readily would the people have accepted it! But this prepared vessel of the Lord was so established in righteousness as to be superior to any such temptation.

(3) In disclaiming this honour for himself, John compared his own work and the work of the coming Messiah, and showed them the difference. Referring to himself, he claimed great inferiority. And his own work he described as only preparatory—"I indeed baptize you with water, but. . . he shall baptize you with the holy spirit and with fire"—Luke 3:16. It is very manifest that all of the multitudes who were baptized with water were not baptized with the holy spirit. The baptism of the holy spirit came at Pentecost after the Lord was glorified, but only upon a small minority of the Jewish nation. The baptism of fire came later—in the end of the Jewish harvest (A.D. 70), when Jerusalem was destroyed and their national existence terminated in the midst of a great time of trouble. Verse 17 is in reference to the great separating work of the Jewish harvest, and the gathering of the worthy remnant into the garner of the Gospel Age, and the fiery judgments upon the unworthy chaff.

(4) In the baptism of Jesus we see that the ordinance received a new significance. His baptism was not unto repentance; for He had no sins of which to repent. "He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners"—Heb.

7:26. With the accustomed view of baptism, John declined to baptize Jesus in whom there was no sin; nevertheless, though he could not understand why He should desire it, John complied with His request—"Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness"—Matt. 3:15.

The righteousness of God's law which could by no means clear the guilty—Exod. 34:7—without a satisfaction of the claims of justice by the sacrifice of a life for a life—Exod. 21:23; Lev. 24:17-21; Deut. 19:21—He was about to fulfil by the sacrifice of Himself. He was about to give His flesh for the life of the world—giving His life for the life of Adam, in whom we were all condemned, that as all his posterity were included in the condemnation, so they might likewise have a share in the redemption. And all who desire to follow in the footsteps of Christ must likewise present their bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable through Christ. Thus it becometh us (the Christ, Head and Body) to fulfil all righteousness.

With the baptism of Christ, then, the ordinance received the new signification of entire consecration to God as living sacrifices, even unto death. And in this new view of the matter some of the Jewish converts were baptized again. See the baptism of John and the baptism of Christ and His Body, the Church, contrasted in Acts 19:3-5.

Athanasia and Aphtharsia Distinguished

A Word Study

IN the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans the Apostle has shown that the Gentiles, apart from "his" gospel of a "faith-righteousness" are without hope. In this his Jewish readers would readily concur; but they could not believe that the same was true of themselves. They "had Abraham as their father", etc. To convince them that their case was just as hopeless as that of the Gentiles, the Apostle presents, in a most tactful way, a very simple argument—an argument simple enough to a mind open to truth—one which could be revealed even to "babes"—Matt. 11:25—but which was very difficult for the Jews to grasp, because of the prejudice which they held. Briefly stated, the position of the Apostle is this; God's judgment will be absolutely impartial. Questions of birth or other privileges can never enter into His decisions—Rom. 2:2. He will render to every man according to his deeds, including, as the word translated "deeds" suggests, the motives actuating those deeds. Nothing else will be considered—Rom. 2:6. No questions will be asked as to whether an individual is a Jew or a Gentile—the only

matter of moment will be as to his aim and course in life. Patient continuance in well doing will be rewarded with eternal life; the opposite aim and course will be suitably punished—Rom. 2:7-9. Clinching his argument, the Apostle maintains that no matter whether the individual be Jew or Gentile, strict, impartial judgment according to character qualifications must obtain in that day—"for there is no respect of persons with God"—Rom. 2:11.

The whole purpose of his argument, it seems to us, is to prepare their minds for "his" gospel of faith-righteousness (justification by faith). If they can but be brought to realize that God's judgment will be according to "deeds" and that in themselves they are incapable of "well-doing" in the Scriptural sense of that word, they will have reached the frame of mind capable of responding to the well-nigh irresistible appeal of the Gospel—a state of mind in which the Gospel will be able to prove itself "the power of God" unto their salvation.

Such a line of reasoning on the Apostle's part is so elementary to students of the Bible that it would be unnecessary to elaborate the matter further if it were not for the word "immortality."

Immortality Appears in only Three Scriptures

The difficulty which stands in the way of the English reader to hinder a proper understanding of the Apostle's meaning lies in the fact that frequently the words "immortality" and "incorruption" are not properly distinguished, but are thought of as synonymous terms. This, however, is not true of the English words, and scholars have observed that it is also untrue of the Greek words from which they are translated. These two Greek words are "Athanasia" and "Aphtharsia."

Athanasia signifies "deathlessness." It appears only three times in the New Testament and in those places is properly translated "immortality." The three passages in which Athanasia appears are as follows:

"This mortal must put on **immortality**"—1 Cor. 15:53.

"When this mortal shall have put on **immortality**"—1 Cor. 15:54.

"Who only hath **immortality**"—1 Tim. 6:16.

We understand that the first two of these Scriptures relate to the individual members of the glorified Church, and the third to our glorified Lord Jesus, the Father here, as elsewhere in the Scriptures, being excepted from comparison.

The other Greek word "Aphtharsia" (and "Aphthartos", an adjective from the same root as the noun Aphtharsia) are rendered **immortality** twice, **immortal** once, **sincerity** twice, but would more properly be rendered **incorruption** and **incorruptible**, and are generally so

rendered by lexicographers. Aphtharsia signifies "incapable of decay." The following represent all the passages in the Bible in which it (or aphthartos) occurs:

"The glory of the uncorruptible (aphthartos—incorruptible) God"—Rom. 1:23.

"To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality (aphtharsia—incorruption)"—Rom. 2:7.

"They do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible (aphthartos)"—1 Cor. 9:25.

"It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption (aphtharsia)"—1 Cor. 15:42.

"Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption (aphtharsia)"—1 Cor. 15:50.

"The dead shall be raised incorruptible (aphthartos)"—1 Cor. 15:52.

"This corruptible must put on incorruption (aphtharsia)"—1 Cor. 15:53.

"When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption (aphtharsia)"—1 Cor. 15:54.

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity (aphtharsia—incorruptness)"—Eph. 6:24.

"Now unto the King eternal, immortal (aphthartos—incorruptible), invisible, the only wise God"—1 Tim. 1:17.

"Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality (aphtharsia—incorruption) to light through the Gospel"—2 Tim. 1:10.

"In doctrine showing uncorruptness (adiaphthoria), gravity, sincerity (aphtharsia—incorruption)"—Tit. 2:7.

In Tit. 2:7 aphtharsia is omitted by the best authorities—adiaphthoria, (aphthoria according to Westcott and Hort) is very similar in derivation and meaning.

"To an inheritance incorruptible (aphthartos), and undefiled, and that fadeth not away"—1 Pet. 1:4.

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible (aphthartos)"—1 Pet. 1:23.

"That which is not corruptible (aphthartos), even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit"—1 Pet. 3:4.

Incruption may Refer to Character

From the above Scriptural usage of these two words, athanasia and aphtharsia (and its objective aphthartos) the following distinctions will be noted:

(1) Athanasia (immortality) in each of the three passages in which it occurs, refers to sentient beings, whereas this is not always the case with Aphtharsia (incorruption).

(2) Athanasia not only refers only to sentient beings, but in each instance refers to the **life principle** by which their organisms are animated.

Aphtharsia, on the contrary, in those instances in which it is applied to sentient beings, does not refer to the life principle, but to either their organisms or characters. For example, in Rom. 1:23, the Apostle may be referring to the fact that the organism or body of Jehovah is incapable of decay, or he may be referring (and it is our thought that he is referring) to the fact that the moral worth (the character) of Jehovah is of such excellent quality as to be impossible to corrupt. In any case the Apostle is not referring to God's deathlessness; had he desired to do so, he would have used the word Athanasia.

(3) Aphtharsia while sometimes referring to sentient beings, does not always do so, but in several instances refers to inanimate things such as the Christian's crown—1 Cor. 9:25—his inheritance—1 Pet. 1:4—the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit—1 Pet. 3:4—the quality of love possessed by believers still in the flesh—Eph. 6:24—etc. It is possible, for believers, here and now to love our Lord Jesus (yes, and each other too), with incorruptness, but all can see that the word immortality would be quite out of place in this connection.

Our Lord's Flesh Incorruptible but not Immortal

Perhaps it may further assist us to a proper distinction between these two words if we call to mind what the Scriptures say with respect to our Lord's flesh. They declare that it should not see corruption—Acts 2:27,31; 13:35—yet nowhere do they speak of it as immortal. Students of the Bible well know that it would be a denial of the doctrine of the Ransom to intelligently hold that it is now animated by any principle of life whatever, inherent or sustained, yet none the less it is or was incorruptible. It was not permitted to undergo the loathsome process of decay. What became of it we do not know, except that it did not decay. Many readers will remember the observation in "Scripture Studies"—"Whether it was dissolved into gases or whether it is still preserved somewhere as the grand memorial of God's love, of Christ's obedience, and of our redemption, no one knows;—nor is such knowledge necessary. That God did miraculously hide the body of Moses, we are assured—Deut. 34:6; Jude 9—and that as a memorial God did miraculously preserve from corruption the manna in the golden bowl, which was placed in the Ark under the Mercy Seat in the Tabernacle, and that it was a symbol of our Lord's flesh, the bread from heaven, we also know—Exod. 16:20,33; Heb. 9:4; John 6:51-58"—"Scripture Studies", Vol. 2; pages 129, 130.

The Church to be both Incorruptible and Immortal

In one celebrated passage the Apostle uses both words—"For this corruptible must put on

incorruption (aphtharsia), and this mortal must put on immortality (athanasia). So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption (aphtharsia), and this mortal shall have put on immortality (athanasia), then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written—"Death is swallowed up in victory"—1 Cor. 15:53,54. If the word "incorruption" meant precisely the same as the word "immortality", the Apostle would be multiplying words to no purpose. On the contrary we understand him to be distinguishing between them. It is as though he were to say: When this organism which is capable of decay gives place to one that is not, and when this life-principle which is one that is sustained gives place to one that is inherent, then shall be brought to pass, etc.

Let us by Patient Continuance in Well-doing Seek a Character Incorruptible

With these distinctions in mind and giving consideration also to the context, we are led to the following conclusions with regard to Rom. 2:7:

(1) The word immortality in the Authorized Version is more properly translated "incorruption" or "Incorruptibility." See Emphatic Diaglott, American Revised Version, Strong's Concordance, etc.

(2) Since Aphtharsia is the word used (not Athanasia) the Apostle cannot be referring to the life principle which animates the organisms of Divine beings.

(3) While Aphtharsia never refers to a life principle inherent or sustained, but sometimes refers to the organism of living beings, yet it does not always do even this, but in several instances refers to inanimate things. In a recent "Herald" we quoted an eminent writer to the effect that the context in which this verse appears would seem to require that the word be regarded as an adjective employed to qualify the nouns, glory and honor. This suggestion seems not unreasonable to us especially as a paraphrase, although the fact that it is the noun (aphtharsia) not the adjective (aphthartos) that is used is not in its favor as a literal translation. However, the essential thought would not be very different if, as we have seen is permissible, we regard the incorruptibility sought by patient continuance in well doing to be an incorruptibility of character. It is certainly true that some men seek glory and honour from each other—John 5:44. Such glory and honor is capable of and soon experiences decay. Other men by patient continuance in well doing may be said to seek the glory and honor that is incorruptible, incapable of decay, or if the other view be taken, they may be said to seek glory and honor and a third thing, namely a crystallized character incapable of corruption. Surely such a character will be the possession of all, on whatever plane of existence, who are counted worthy of eternal life.

Ultimately, if they persist in such seeking, they will either in this life or the next, meet with the Gospel and receive the grace necessary to embrace it. By embracing the gracious provisions of the Gospel they will secure the incorruptible glory and honor they sought (or if we take the other view, they will secure the glory and honor and the incorruptible character they sought). They will also receive eternal life. It is true that some of these (the faithful overcomers of the Gospel Age, the Little Flock, the Church) will receive eternal life on the highest plane of existence, namely the Divine plane. Such will indeed be possessors of immortality. This, however, is in our opinion, entirely outside the scope of the first two chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. (Reprinted from "The Herald of Christ's Kingdom.")

Convention News

A VERY helpful season of spiritual refreshing was again experienced this year at the tenth Nambour Convention, in Queensland. The attendance was not as large as on some previous occasions, but we remembered the words of our Master when He said—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"—Matt. 18:20.

How good it is to meet together with fellow travellers on the narrow way and discuss the precious truths of God's Word. We are grateful to our loving Heavenly Father, the Giver of every good gift, for the blessings received, and the privilege of service. It was a pleasure to welcome friends from Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne.

A helpful study was taken in 2 Cor. 3:5-8; 4:1,6,7. A number of interesting questions were submitted and two Question Meetings proved helpful. The topics of the addresses by the brethren were as follows—"Entering Into God's Rest"; "Consider the Lilies of the Field"; "Bond Slave of Christ, Yet Free Man"; "The Wheat Harvest"; "The Firstborn and the Firstfruits"; "God's Power"; "Armageddon—the Battle"; "Learning"—a Young People's Address.

It was a pleasure to receive many messages and greetings from various Classes and individual brethren. Christian love is sent from the Convention to all who thus remembered us, and to brethren everywhere, together with the Scriptural message in 1 Pet. 5:7-9. We would like to express our appreciation to all those who served the Convention in any way—those who prepared addresses, studies, questions, comments, etc. Our thanks also go out to the Sisters who catered so well for our temporal needs.

Many lovely hymns were sung throughout the Convention, which closed with the singing

of "God be with you till we meet again." Prayers of gratitude were offered to our Heavenly Father for the blessings received, and a request for His continued guidance in the days ahead, for ourselves and for His people everywhere.

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To our understanding those who have fallen asleep last, will be among the first to be called back from the land of the enemy, to be awakened, and thus the work of awakening the sleeping ones will progress backward, as we might express it. The living ones will prepare for their brothers and sisters and parents, and they in turn for their brothers and sisters and parents, and so on all the way back, until finally father Adam and mother Eve shall come back to see the world filled with their progeny, in accord with the Lord's original commission that they multiply and fill the earth.

They will behold with astonishment the showers of blessing that have come upon the race from the Heavenly Father and through the Heavenly Saviour; they will see what havoc was wrought, by their disobedience, but that God in His wisdom and power was both able and willing to overrule the matter and to bring order out of confusion and resurrection out of death. They will realize something of the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the Love of God. The grand plan of salvation shall loom up before them; they will see how Abel, their son, who suffered for righteousness, was a type and picture of the great Son of God who suffered for righteousness and for our deliverance, and they will see how His blood speaks peace for all for whom it was shed, speaks forgiveness and renewed harmony with God.

The Tragedy of Sin and Death

They will learn, too, of the terrible degradation which came upon their race subsequently to their death; they will read with appalled hearts and bated breath of the terrible famines and pestilences which came upon the race as a part of the original sentence or death curse; they will learn about the mental aberrations which afflicted the world, so that men thought they were doing God service in persecuting one another because of religious differences of opinion, and how others, more or less consumed with selfishness, land hunger, etc., warred and fought and devised engines of destruction against each other, and killed one another by the thousands in battle. They will wonder at the patience of God in so long permitting the evil.

Then truly they will see what God has wrought: First, His justice, which provided the great redemption price and would not otherwise clear the guilty. Second, His love, manifested in the same connection in the giv-

ing of His Son. Third, they will come to understand how that during this Gospel Age God has been selecting His Church to be the Bride of Christ and joint-heir with Him in the Kingdom. Fourth, they will perceive that when this election was complete and the members of the glorified company had all been tried and polished and tested and glorified, then the blessing of the world through the glorified Christ, Head and Body, came upon all mankind in the restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began—Acts 3:20,21.

O, how they and all of their posterity would naturally be prompted to say, glory, honour, dominion, majesty, power and might be unto Him who sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever!

O, how glad they will be to see the glorious outcome which the power of God will thus have wrought! How glad they will be that the divine plan is that ultimately all imperfection shall be eradicated and that all of the race that will, may live eternally under divine favour and blessing, while those otherwise minded will be destroyed from among the people in the second death. They will surely cry, "Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty. Who shall not come and worship before Thee: Thy righteous acts are made manifest"?—Rev. 15:3,4.

"Thy Work Shall be Rewarded."

Finally, consider the Lord's word to us all as a race, and particularly His word to parents—"Thy work shall be rewarded." What a blessing and comfort, what a consolation and encouragement are in these words to those parents who, seeking to train up their children in the way they should go, are sadly wounded and discouraged when the arrow of death smites the dear ones they had so loved and cherished. They are disposed at first to say, Ah, my love, my counsel, my motherly care, my fatherly provision, were wasted. But not so, saith the Lord, thy works shall be rewarded.

How Rewarded?

You shall see the fruits of your labour in the future; we shall know as we are known, by and by. Our dear ones will be with us, and to whatever extent time and effort will have been expended upon them to mould and fashion them along the lines of righteousness and truth, uprightness and godliness, these surely have not been spent in vain. The child shall come forth that much more advanced in its mental and moral development; to that much more easy attainment of the grand heights which the Lord will then open up before it.

On the other hand, the parent who has been careless of his children, neglectful of his privileges and obligations as a parent, will undoubtedly have his negligence rewarded in the

future as he shall see what he might have done for his children but did not.

And more than this. By a divine law or reaction, every parent who is faithful in the discharge of his parental duties shall have his work rewarded in himself, and likewise every parent neglectful of his duties shall have his work rewarded in himself. For who does not realize that there is no greater privilege or opportunity for self-development than comes to the parent in his endeavour to train up his children in the way they should go, in the reverence and admonition of the Lord?

Character Building is Included

Undoubtedly it is true, too, that every effort to do good unto others, especially to your own children, has its compensating blessings upon your own hearts. May this blessing deepen as the years go on.

In conclusion we say to you, not only for today, but for the future days, "Comfort one another with these words" of our Lord to the effect that your little ones shall come again from the land of the enemy, and that their return shall even be made more blessed, under much more favourable conditions than at present. Then, the great King reigning, all evil will be in subjection, all evil doers will be under restraint, all the influences of righteousness will be let loose, and the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the great deep. Blessed prospects are these before us, and to Him who loved us and bought us, and to the Heavenly Father who designed the great plan, we give everlasting thanks and praises, and show this by our daily lives!

"Mankind Coming Back from Hell"

A booklet bearing the above title has been printed, and a copy is being supplied to all friends receiving this issue of "Peoples Paper." Extra copies are available, supplied through the General Tract Fund to all who can use them to advantage.

Melbourne Christmas Convention

The brethren of the Melbourne Class extend a cordial invitation to all friends able to attend their Annual Convention to be held this year (D.V.) on December 25th, 26th, 27th and 28th, in the Auxiliary Room, Kew City Buildings, Charles Street, Kew. Further information from the Class secretary—Mr. J. B. Hiam, 27 Redhill Avenue, Burwood East, Victoria, 3151.

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