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The Power to Overcome.

(Continued from last issue.)

LET us consider some of the good results that may be expected after receiving the Lord's spirit, so that we may mark any good progress in our lives and in the lives of others, and thus be encouraged to seek more and more to be armed with the mind of Christ.

In proportion, as the Lord's people are filled with His holy spirit or influence, and are expanded and enlarged by it, they have less of the spirit of fear which is at the present time filling the hearts of men. 'The spirit of fear in a Christian is a spirit of doubt, and marks a lack of faith, a lack of the holy spirit. The spirit of fear is a fruitful source of evil in spiritual matters, in every feature of the Christian growth, individually, and as a Church. The child of God who is filled with the holy spirit, is a giant in comparison with his own natural self; because his fears are quelled, his heart is established, his faith is rooted and grounded, and his soul is anchored sure and steadfast within the veil. Thus he is held from being driven on to the rocks of disaster, when the 'stormy winds of trouble prevail. The holy spirit is thus a power to those who possess it which has often caused amazement to their enemies.

This spirit of God in the Christian is not only a spirit of power, but a spirit of love, says the Apostle. The love' here mentioned is not that natural love possessed to some extent by all mankind and even by the brute creation — in large measure a spirit of selfishness. In those who receive the holy spirit of love, this natural love should become intensified, broadened, deepened, and should more and more' lose its selfish characteristics, and become a generous love, a self-sacrificing love, based not upon selfishness, but upon principles of righteousness, truth, goodness, and the possession in general of the spirit, disposition of God. And this spirit of love should continue, increasing and abounding until that which is perfect is come, that which is in part having passed away.—1 Cor. 13:10.

There is no more wonderful manifestation of the holy spirit in the Lord's people than that which the Apostle denominates, "The spirit of a sound mind." The Lord's people, by nature, are not more sound of mind than are the world's people; quite the contrary. The tendency of the Gospel is to attract the more imperfect who realise their own weakness, and their need of grace and strength from on high, rather than to influence those who are of stronger and sounder minds, who, comparing themselves with others, have a self-satisfied, self-righteous spirit or mind. But wherever the Truth is received into good and honest hearts and brings forth its legitimate fruitage, the Lord's people become partakers of His holy spirit; whether naturally strong or weak they thereby obtain "the spirit of a sound mind,"—their judgments are clearer, truer, more trustworthy than before. This is because they have before their minds, first of all, the explicit

directions of the Lord's Word in respect of what they should do, and what they should not do—directions which cover almost every feature and aim of life. Those who have accepted the Lord as their Instructor and Teacher, who have His spirit in their hearts are thus preserved from the snares and' difficulties which befall those who have not the guidance and direction of superhuman wisdom.

The question arises, how or wherein does the impartation of the holy spirit to the Christian serve to repair his judgment and become to him the spirit of a sound mind? The Divine mind is perfect, "sound," and consequently to whatever extent Christians are able to set aside their own minds or judgments on any or all matters, and to accept instead the Divine mind, will, judgment, for the control of their lives, to that extent they will have the spirit or disposition of a sound mind—God's mind. It is not implied by this that the brains of Christians undergo a change or a reversal of the order of nature in their operation, but that under the guidance of the holy spirit such learn gradually to rectify the errors of their own judgments in respect of all the various questions and affairs of life.

When we measure our judgments with the perfect standard, we find that we are either too fast or too slow, too weak or too strong in our mental and physical emotions. And while we are quite unable to alter our methods of thought and action so as to have them perfect and in full accord with those of our Lord Jesus—being armed perfectly with His mind—nevertheless, we are enabled to regulate our thoughts, our judgment, according to the standard which is before our minds, in a way and to a degree which those who have not this perfect standard, or who are not seeking to be regulated by it, will neither appreciate nor be able to copy. To those who thus seek to place themselves completely under the control of the Lord, and have Him come in and sup with them, receiving richly of His power there is the feeling of being well armed to withstand the tests and difficulties of the narrow way.

There is no doubt much of satisfaction in, the joy and peace received under such conditions, under the smile of the Lord's countenance, when we have realised His blessing; but probably we have felt that our joys and rejoicings in the spirit of to-day, have often faded into a measure of disappointment on the morrow, and seeking to know the reason, we have no doubt found that something has come into our minds and hearts, and, these being not as fully submitted to the Lord as previously, He has not been able to fill us with the same measure of His spirit.

Why is it that this condition comes about, so that we lose some of the spiritual blessings we might have had and which we desire to have? The natural, earthly disposition is for the mind to be drawn to material things, for which the fleshy body appeals; and although the human will is reckoned dead when we gave ourselves to the Lord, it will not be actually dead until our earthly course is finished, when that which is in part shall merge into that which will be perfect. So, to keep the mind from wandering on those things beyond what is necessary, we need to feed it with good spiritual food and have it set in the right direction.

We want to get so fenced off from the world that we will no longer desire those things, but as the Apostle says, "Set your affections on things above, not on things of the earth." This word "set" is one that indicates continual setting.

We want to keep setting; set the mind to-day and to-morrow set it early, and if it slips off early set it back again, and if it slips off set it back again. By 'and by we will find that there, is less inclination for the mind to think on the unprofitable things and we will thus be gaining the victory over the Old nature. If we could always keep in mind that we 'are following Christ all our days and all our hours, desiring to have His mind dwell in us continually, what a help it would be in the moments of temptation.

Regarding our days and hours, our consecrated time, the following is quoted from the writings of one on this subject—"In things spiritual, the greater does not always include the less, but the less more often includes the greater. So, in this case, time is entrusted to us to be traded with, for our Lord. But we cannot

grasp it as a whole. We instinctively break it up ere we can deal with it for any purpose. So, when a New Year comes round we commit it with special earnestness to the Lord. But as we do so, are we not conscious of a feeling that a year is too much for us to deal with?

“And does not this feeling that we are dealing with a larger thing than we can grasp take away from the sense of reality? Thus we are brought to a more manageable measure, and as the Sunday mornings or the Monday mornings come around, we thankfully commit the opening week to Him, and the sense of help and rest is renewed and strengthened. But not even the six or seven days are close enough to our hand; even to-morrow exceeds our tiny grasp, and even to-morrow’s grace is therefore not given to us. So we find the need of considering our lives as a matter of day by day, and that any more general committal and consecration of our time does not meet the case so truly. Here we have found much comfort and help, and if results have not been entirely satisfactory, they have been more so than before we reached this point of subdivision.

“But if we have found help and blessing by going a certain distance in one direction, is it not probable we shall find more if we go further in the same? And so, if we may commit the days to our Lord, why not the hours, and why not the moments? And may we not expect a fresh and special blessing in so doing?

“Maybe we do not always realise the importance of moments. Only let us consider those two sayings about them, “In a moment shall they (lie,” and “We shall all be changed in a moment,” and we shall think less lightly of them. Eternal issues may hang upon any one of them,, but it has come and gone before we can even think about it. Nothing seems less within the possibility of our own keeping, yet nothing is more inclusive of all other keeping. Therefore let us ask Him to keep them for us.

“Are they not the tiny joints in the harness through which the darts of temptation pierce us? Only give us time, we think, and we shall not be overcome. Only give us time, and we could pray and resist, and the devil would flee from us! But he comes all in a moment, and if it is an unguarded, unkept one, we utter the hasty or exaggerated word, or think the un-Christ-like thought, or feel the unChrist-like impatience or resentment.”

How clearly, then, in moments like these we have demonstrated to us our own weakness, and that without the keeping, guarding and guiding of the Lord in the heart and mind there can be no overcoming at all. And since the Lord has called us by His divine power, adopted us as sons into His household and given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, it then rests with us as to whether we are making full use of the privileges and opportunities thus provided for us through Christ.

How encouraging is the exhortation of the Apostle, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,” As though he would say, “the Lord is just waiting to fill us with His spirit, if we are only in the fit condition to receive. it:”—the mind or disposition displayed as He willingly made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, being found in fashion as a man, humbling Himself and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Here we see in Christ, humility in perfection; one of the most beautiful and admirable characteristics that adorned His life and death. How truly were His own words exemplified throughout His ministry—”Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.”

How appealing were His actions and words, when His disciples were found disputing who would be the greatest in the Kingdom, by calling a little child and thus indicating the necessity of such humility, innocence and purity in the hearts of all who would hope to enter into His Kingdom. And could there be a more suggestive lesson than that which He gave as He and His disciples gathered to partake of the last Passover supper and the institution of the Memorial of His death — the washing of their feet, the meanest duty that had been overlooked. “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.”

The servant is not greater than his Lord, and as we seek to do the humblest service for our Lord, in our own upbuilding or assisting each other in the Christian way, we must realise that it is “not by might nor by power,” from which any good results may be obtained, but “by My spirit, saith the Lord.”

Realising, then, the rich provision that the Lord has made available to all His faithful people, who, like their Master, have set their faces Zionwards, going forth to Him without the camp, hearing His reproach, having no continuing city here, let us with the Psalmist of old declare—”One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in His temple. For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me up upon a rock. Though his host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. When thou shalt say, ‘Seek ye my face,’ my heart said unto Thee, ‘Thy face, Lord, will I seek.’ I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord: be of good courage and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say on the Lord.” (Psa. 27:4, 5, 3, 8, 13, 14.)

PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST’S KINGDOM.

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While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord’s Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression used, either in the correspondence or in the sermons reported.

A Cross (a) on the wrapper indicates that the Subscription to “Peoples Paper” is overdue.

Gathered as Christian citizens

SPEAKING at the Intercessory Services for World Peace, recently held in Melbourne Town Hall, the Archbishop is reported to have said:—

“Those present had gathered as Christian citizens realising that God had attempted to redeem the world,” and that “they realised that God was love and that He advocated peace on earth and with one another.”

The inference seemed to be that God was unable to deliver mankind from all the oppression of wicked men, unable to accomplish His purpose of peace and good will on earth.

How the words of the Lord through the prophet Isaiah contrast with such a conception of Divine power. Isa. 55:

8-11,—” . . . So shall my word be that goeth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please; it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it.” Isa. 43:13,—”I will work and who shall hinder it,” and again Isa. 14:24,27,—”The Lord of Hosts hath sworn saying, Surely as I have thought so shall it come to pass and as I have purposed so shall it stand . . . for the Lord of Hosts has purposed and who shall disannul it and His hand is stretched out and who shall turn back.”

It is very true that God has purposed that in due time righteousness, peace and good will shall abound on earth, but it would be quite untrue to say that He has attempted to establish such conditions among men. God does not “attempt” and fail as man so generally does; what God desires He simply does and none can hinder. The difficulty which presents itself in the present permission of evil arises from the lack of understanding of the Bible and the great Divine Plan of the Ages. (Eph. 3:9-11, Diaglott.)

The usual thought, that God has been trying to convert the world all down the ages, is quite unscriptural. Each age in the past has had its purpose which has been accomplished and step by step the Divine Plan progresses. In the meantime mankind generally is having experience of the consequences of disobedience to Divine arrangements, of learning how utterly hopeless is the prospect of even the best efforts of men ever being able to bring in the Golden Age and that there can be no happy lasting condition of peace and good will, health and life on earth until God shall establish His Kingdom and put judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet. That is why we are taught to pray, “Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” “Give the King (Christ) Thy judgment O God, and Thy righteousness unto the King’s son. He shall judge Thy people with righteousness and Thy poor with judgment. The mountains shall bring peace to the people and the little hills by righteousness. He shall judge the poor of the people and shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor . . . In His days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth etc.” (Psalm 72.)

The present distressing conditions so evident throughout the world, causing men to fear as to “what is coming on the earth” (Luke 21:26), are such as have been so abundantly prophesied concerning our day and will result in a general breaking down of the unrighteous elements of society and nations, thus preparing for Messiah’s reign—the new age so soon to dawn. “The morning promised long when truth and right and holy might shall overthrow the wrong.”

My Jewels

“Shall I hold them back—my jewels
Time has travelled many a day
Since I laid them by forever,
Safely locking them away;
And I thought them yielded wholly,
When I dared no longer wear
Gems contrasting, oh, so sadly!
With the adorning I would bear.

“Shall I keep them still—my jewels?
Shall I, can I, yet withhold
From that living, loving Saviour,
Aught of silver or of gold?
Gold so needed that His gospel
May resound from sea to sea;
Can I know Christ’s service lacketh
Yet forget His ‘Unto Me.’!”

“No; I lay them down—my jewels,
Truly on the altar now.
Stay I see a vision passing
Of a gem-encircled brow
Heavenly treasure won by Jesus,
Souls won through
Thy gift outpoured;
Freely, gladly, I will offer
Jewels thus to crown my Lord!”—Selected.

Christmas Convention.

The brethren of the Melbourne Class extend a hearty invitation to all friends able to attend with them at the forthcoming Annual Convention, to be held over the Christmas season in Melbourne. It is expected to be a very profitable time with Bible Studies, Addresses and Fellowship before the Lord.

The gatherings will be held (D. V.) in the usual meeting room in Clyde House, 182 Collins Street, Melbourne, and it would assist with the program if all visitors expecting to attend would kindly so advise as soon as possible.

Further particulars will appear in next issue. A Baptism Service will be held should any friends desire to symbolise their consecration to the Lord.

Correspondence

Canada. Berean Bible Institute.

Dear Brethren,

It is quite a long time since we had any correspondence, but we think of you continually, and remember all our brethren even though we do not know all by name. Enclosed please find Money Order for —, for which please send ten V.P. leather “Mannar,” (I presume the price is the same as the last shipment). We would be very pleased to receive them as soon as possible, and may the Lord bless your efforts to Him and His.

Yours in His service,

B.C.H.

Dear Brother, U.S.A. Your letter just arrived; thanks for credit.

Glad you sent the sample pages of the hook you are getting out on the Covenants, etc. I have been advertising now for several months for these books, and no replies. Have about given up ever securing any, so I am placing an order with you for two of your books as soon as you are ready to send them.

With Christian love and best wishes for your work in His name,

Sincerely yours,

Queensland.

Dear Friends,

Enclosed is 2/6 for another year's “People's Paper,” also 1/9 for “Daily Heavenly Manna,” and “Zionism in Prophecy” 1/-. I am enclosing also for postage.

I am greatly interested in the events in Palestine, and if it will not inconvenience you, I would be so pleased to know what you think of things there.

With all good wishes for the Institute,

Yours faithfully, C.R.A.

Tasmania. Dear Brother,

Thank you for letters, also tracts. I was delighted to get so many; they will keep us busy for some time. Thank you also for help on the booklet, "The Gentile Times Now Ending"; I feel sure you are right, and I do not want any thing I cannot pass on to others, so please do not send for them. Please send me instead "Zionism in Prophecy" (one copy), "Foregleams of the Golden Age," and "A Review of the Doctrines."

I would like to take "Watchers of the Morning." The "People's Papers" are a great help to me; I love to have them to give to others.. Just at present there are a few others enjoying reading them; I pray they may be helped, too.

With Christian love to Sister and yourself,

Your Sister by His grace,

FK.M.

Tasmania. Dear Bro. in Christ,

Please find enclosed P.N. for my subscription to "People's Paper."

I must say how helpful I find the messages in them from time to time; one truly gets food for thought, and many helpful thoughts along the truth of Christian doctrine.

I would be pleased, dear Brother, if you could let me have a copy of the book you are now printing "What P.R. Taught." I intended ordering one before this, but neglected to do so.

Christian love from your Brother in Christ, M.C.E.

B.L.R.

The Tabernacle.

(Continued from last Issue.)

The Consecration of the Priesthood.

IN the previous article we considered the construction of the Tabernacle and some of the matters connected with Christian experiences, conditions and hopes so beautifully foreshadowed in symbol and type. How strengthening to faith in the inspiration of God's Word it is, to see these things foretold so definitely some fifteen centuries prior to the beginning of their fulfilment. There can be no reasonable solution of this fact other than that a supernatural mind was directing the writers, as Peter expresses it,—”Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the holy spirit.” We can understand too the Divine injunction to Moses referred to by Paul (Heb. 8:5,) “See thou make all things according to the pattern shown to thee in the mount.”

When all the structure and furnishings of the Tabernacle were complete as recorded in the last chapters of Exodus, the priest and underpriests had to be consecrated before the service for the people could be inaugurated.

In the first seven chapters of Leviticus we find general instructions respecting the ceremonies, the offerings etc., and in the eighth chapter comes the consecration of Aaron and his sons. As this foreshadowed the consecration of Jesus, “the High Priest of our profession,” and those whom, “He is not ashamed to call His brethren,” as underpriests —”Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood” (1 Pet. 2:9.)—the verses 14-36 of this chapter of Leviticus are of very special interest to us.

We will remember how the firstborns of Israel were saved on that dark night in Egypt when the Passover was kept prior to the deliverance of all Israel on the following day. These firstborns—the first fruits of the deliverance—were taken to be particularly the Lord's but later the Tribe of Levi was accepted by the Lord as instead of the firstborns in all the land. The Levites then were not given any portion in the land but were the Lord's people to serve in regard to the Tabernacle. They could serve in the Court and so represented those justified by faith in the cross of Christ. Aaron's house was chosen for the priesthood, out of the house of Levi, and just so the “Royal Priesthood,” members in the Body of Christ, are chosen from believers during this Gospel Age.

In this consecration ceremony of Aaron and his sons, typifying Jesus the High Priest and the members in Christ as the underpriests, we have a beautiful picture of how intimately the Lord has associated the Church with Christ. The bullock for the sin-offering was first brought and Aaron and his sons put their hands on it, thus indicating that the bullock represented themselves—their humanity—the perfect humanity of Jesus and the reckoned perfect humanity (justified) of the members in Christ, the Church. It was then slain, showing that if we are to be of the Royal Priesthood, made like our great High Priest, the human nature must be yielded up as a sin-offering. The Apostle exhorts, “I beseech you brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God.”

The blood (the life) of the bullock was put about the horns of the altar by the finger of Moses, and then poured at the foot of the altar in the Court, “to make reconciliation upon it.” The vitals and the fat were burned upon the altar as a sweet savour unto the Lord and the carcass. etc., was taken outside the Camp and burned. This all so clearly indicates how in the Divine purpose and working out of the great plan of redemption, the Lord has been pleased to associate the Church with Christ in the sin-offering. “If we suffer with Him we shall reign with Him” “If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him.” “Know ye not that as many as are baptised into Christ are baptised into His death.”

As the animal represents the humanity of the priests, so the priests entering under the first veil represent the new creatures in Christ. The animal must be slain. It is when this sacrifice of earthly good things, earthly hopes, prospects, desires and aims are surrendered in entire consecration to the will of God—"To tread and bruise beneath the feet • the world entire; its prides, ambitions, hopes desires, and having thus behind him thrown. what seemed so good and fair, must lowly kneeling this prayer pray, Thy will be done howe'er it cross my own"—that the holy spirit is given and the new creatures have their beginning and we are, as it were, in the Holy of the Tabernacle.

The fact that the vital parts of the bullock along with the fat were burned upon the altar "a sweet savour unto the Lord" indicates how as new creatures with much "fat" (love for the Lord), our best abilities, energies, will be used in joyful service. "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken your mortal bodies by His spirit that dwelleth in you." Rom. 8:11.. The more "fat," the more flame, the more joyfulness in the sacrificial service while seeking to learn the necessary lessons in the school of Christ, in the study and application of the truth and by experiences and afflictions.

The Ram of Burnt Offering was then brought and again Aaron and his sons put their hands upon it, indicating that it represented Christ the Head and the Church, His Body. The ram was then cut into pieces, the head being placed first on the altar and then piece by piece (member by member of the Body) was laid to it and burned on the altar, showing the Divine acceptance of their sacrifice. So, in the fulfilment, Jesus, the Head was first laid on the altar, and the Church, member by member, has been following His steps. (1 Pet. 2:21.) "Planted in the likeness of His death,"—"suffering with Him." "Filling up that which is left over of the afflictions of Christ for His Body's sake," (to complete the Body). (Col. 1:24.) "As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long (the Gospel Age), we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." (Rom. 8:36.)

Then the Ram of Consecration was brought and again Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon it, representing also both Christ, the Head, and the Church, His Body. It was -slain, thus indicating that the consecration of the Church is unto death, the human body and its abilities to be spent unto the Lord. The blood was put upon the right ear, the right thumb and the right toe of priest and underpriests. This seemed like vowing unto the lord, and signing the contract with one's own blood; that as new creatures in Christ we would be quick and diligent to hearken to and obey the Lord's Word, to learn of His Will, by the hearing of faith. "O speak and I will hear, command and I obey." Doing all things as unto the Lord,—to the glory of God. To do as nearly as we can like our Master who could say, "I do always those things that please Him." "Walking in the light as children of the light ;" "walking in newness of life, not as other Gentiles walk." "Walk by faith"; "walk in Him" (Christ).

If we are walking in the Tabernacle as priests in the Holy, in the light of the golden candlestick, feeding upon the shewbread, and sending up joyful praises and prayers upon the golden altar of incense, until the narrow way is run, we may pass under the second veil and join the great "High priest" of our profession."

For every joy of faith,
And every high design
For all of good my soul can know
The glory, Lord, be Thine.
O! speak, and I will hear;
Command and I obey;
My willing feet with joy shall haste
To run Thy righteous way."

The Wave Offering.

The wave offering placed on the hands of Aaron and his sons seems to mean that our consecration is unto the Lord for ever. We present ourselves a living sacrifice to spend all our lives now and always unto the Lord. This is also shown in that Aaron and his sons had to remain in the Tabernacle for seven days. The same thing is indicated in the Passover Feast after the lamb was slain. No leaven, which always typifies sin, corruption, confusion, adulteration, or impurity, was to be eaten nor found in their houses for seven days. It was the feast of unleavened bread and means that when we have been redeemed by the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, our endeavour must be to live lives of holiness unto the Lord all our days—for ever.

The fat, rump and vitals of the Ram of Consecration were placed on the hands of Aaron and his sons together with three cakes:— (1) An unleavened cake which would seem to represent the actual purity of Jesus and the imputed purity of the members in Christ as men, as attested by the Law of Moses— justification. “The righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.” (Rom. 8:4.) (2) An unleavened cake mingled with oil, which refers to the sanctification of the spirit. “If the spirit of Him that raiseth up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His spirit that dwelleth in you.” (Rom. 8:11.) (3) The wafer (usually made with honey) would indicate our hope and faith in the exceeding great and precious promises.

The whole wave offering was then waved before the Lord; it was not laid down by Aaron nor his sons, but Moses took it and placing it for the Lord’s acceptance upon the altar it was burned by fire. “They were consecrations for a sweet savour; an offering- made by fire unto the Lord.” (Lev. 8:28.) Then Aaron and his sons were sprinkled with the blood and oil showing the contract complete; consecrations accepted, they were now constituted priests of God.

Thus is shown that our consecration to the Lord means the using of all our strength and best powers in His service, even unto death. It is only during this Gospel Age that the antitypical priesthood is being chosen. Jesus the great High Priest was anointed at Jordan and the underpriests have been in course of selection since Pentecost. No one prior to this, had the wonderful opportunity of so running as to gain this prize of the “high calling of God” and once the full number is complete, the Gospel Age will close—this door will be shut and no others can enter.

It is good to know, however, that this priesthood is being chosen so as to bring a blessing on all the remainder of mankind in the ‘Kingdom Age, which will soon open up. During this Age it has been a “narrow way” of salvation; few have found it, for it has meant trials and difficulties, going against the stream and a sacrificing of natural privileges and blessings. But in the coming Age another door will open, an easier way—a highway—on which the wayfaring man though simple need not err. The truth of God’s great plan revealed’ in His Word will be made so plain—there will be no stumbling through ignorance. Righteousness and goodness will be rewarded by health, joy and life, and wickedness will receive corrective punishments, but the incorrigible, wilful sinner will go into second death. “All the wicked will God destroy.” The willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land; and “Nothing shall hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain (Kingdom).” (Isa. 11:9; 65:25.) “When thy judgments are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” (Isa. 26:9.)

The Harvest Time.

(Matt. 13:39.)

WHEN the Lord tells us that the “harvest” is the end of the world, He does not mean the destruction of the earth. Many Scriptures clearly show that the physical earth will never come to an end, and that, when rightly understood, our Lord was referring to the close of this age, resulting in a change of dispensation.—Eccl. 1:4; Matt. 24:3.

Nor is the thought of a “harvest” associated only with the Gospel Age: the end of the Jewish Age is also described by our Lord as a harvest time, while He Himself, with His disciples, were the active reapers in that harvest.—John 4:35-38. We have reason to believe too that the close of the next age --the Millennium—will be marked by an experience which will correspond in many respects with that of a “harvest.”—Rev. 20:7-10.

The fact, then, that our Lord has chosen the familiar figure of the natural harvest to illustrate the experiences and activities of His people in the close of this age and that none of God’s people can escape these experiences are ample reasons why we should give earnest heed to the consideration of this important subject.

Time of Harvest.

In considering this feature we must not only seek to harmonise all scriptural references bearing on the point, but also to have in mind the various aspects of the figure itself. The Lord undoubtedly intended us to look for their correspondencies in the harvest of this age. It has been suggested that the entire Gospel Age has been a harvest time, and that all the saints of God who lived and died since our Lord’s day have been active reapers in the Lord’s harvest. Now, while it is true that there have been faithful saints all down the age, doing the master’s will to the extent of their knowledge and ability yet nothing could be farther from His thought than that this was a harvest work. Besides, such a suggestion is quite out of harmony with the thought which our Lord intended us to gather from the figure of the natural harvest. Our Lord did not say that the harvest occupied the entire age, nor that the harvest was the beginning of the age, but He did most clearly state that the harvest was the end of the age. (Matt. 13:29.) Everyone knows, too, that in the natural order of things the harvest always comes at the end of the season.

As further emphasising the above thought our Lord points out that the beginning of this age was a sowing time, when He Himself and His followers scattered the good seed of the kingdom. (Matt. 13:37.) Again, He said: “Let both (wheat and tares) grow together till the harvest time”; clearly indicating that the work and activities of the harvest would be quite distinct from any previous part of the age. (Matt. 13:30.)

The time of harvest, then, we suggest, is a definite period at the end of this age during which all the saints (living and dead) will be gathered and receive their rewards in the kingdom. (Psa. 50:5.)

Work of Harvest.

The chief thought in harvesting is that of gathering in or bringing home to safety the fruitage of the age. From this it will be noted that the work of harvesting is altogether different from that of sowing. This thought is indicated in the parable of the wheat and tares. There was a time of sowing and developing during which both wheat and tares must be left to grow together, but when the harvest time arrives, a complete separation and clearing of the field would be accomplished. (Matt. 13:30- 42.)

The parable of the “net” also illustrates the same thought. The net representing the message contained in

the Gospel was cast into the sea (amongst humanity), gathering fish of every kind. When at the end of the age—harvest—the net is full, it is drawn to shore and the work of separating the good fish from the bad begins. Our Lord explains that this illustrates the harvest work in its relation to the previous work of the age. (Matt. 13:47-49.)

Harvesting in the natural order of things is a result of the direct intervention of the Husbandman. Were it not that he actively intervenes at the appropriate moment in order to secure the result of his season's efforts, all his labours would be lost; the winter's storms quickly follow, and very soon all the unreaped and exposed wheat would be lost.

Similarly, the harvest of this age is a result of the direct intervention of Jehovah at the appropriate time in the Divine plan. Our Lord as the Father's representative during His Parousia is the one who directs the work and sends forth His messengers to reap and gather the elect. (Matt. 13:30, Matt. 24:31; Rev. 14:14; Psa. 50:5.)

Reaping is only one aspect of harvesting. After reaping, the wheat requires much attention in order to be properly winnowed and made ready for the barn. It is so also in respect of the harvest of this age; not only is it necessary for the harvesters to cast in the sickle of truth in order to liberate the wheat class from bondage and error, etc., but after being thus liberated, further severe testings are necessary in order to prove their loyalty to the Lord and the principles of righteousness. The harvest work will thus continue so long as there are, any of the wheat class still this side the veil.

The Sickle.

Harvesting is impossible without a sickle. The sickle in this harvest is the truth—truth along certain lines. The sickle is not the general truths of salvation as proclaimed all down the age, but a dispensational truth.

This truth concerns the Lord's presence, the end of the age, and the immediate deliverance of the saints." (Rev. 11:15.) It is this message which separates the wheat from the tares—the mere professors from those who are earnestly looking for the kingdom of God.

Our Lord illustrates the effect of this sickle in Luke 17:34-37. "Two shall be in the field; the one shall be taken near (literal Greek), and the other left." And they answered, where Lord? "Where the body (food) is, thither will the eagles be gathered together."

"Though coming out of Babylon is one step and a long one in the direction of complete overcoming, it is by no means the last one; and we should be careful to guard against a disposition to rest after every advance step of the way." (Vol. 3., 188, S.S.) "The true teacher's place and the true Bible student's place is outside of all human bondage, free to examine and feed upon all portions of the good word of God, and untrammelled to follow the Lamb whithersoever he leads." (Vol. 3., 145, S.S.)

Many view-points of the harvest message or "present truth" are given us in the Scriptures, as, for instance, Rev. 14:14; Rev. 10:1-10; Rev. 7:23; Rev. 11:1.5. -

Sowing or Harvesting.

It will be seen from the foregoing that the will of God for His people in this day is to co-operate with the Chief Reaper in gathering His saints—"I will say to the reapers . . . gather the wheat into My barn." (Matt. 13:30; Psa. 50:5.) The "barn" of safety into which our Lord is gathering them is not any sect or party or under any human leader; but first of all into full liberty and fellowship with the Lord through the truth, and, having thus the opportunity of putting on the "whole Armour of God," they will be fitted

eventually to be gathered unto the Lord Himself beyond. the veil. 2 Thess. 2:1.

In view of this, then, a very important question suggests itself to every professing child of God; are we using the sickle of “present truth,” or are we ignoring the voice of the Chief Reaper when he says to us through His word “the net is drawn to shore”; the time for separation has begun. Matt. 13:48. If our consecration is wholly to the Lord, then we will delight to do the will of God and find inestimable joy in so doing, and we will let no other consideration hinder us from following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. Rev. 14:4.

The harvest work is clearly on behalf of the wheat class—the Christian Church; but when the sickle of present truth is applied it makes manifest that the bulk of the professing Church of Christ are tares. The true wheat class rejoice in the knowledge of the Bridegroom’s presence, and prepare themselves for the marriage, now’ so -near at hand; but the same message has a .different effect upon the tare element; their indifference or opposition to it binds them closer in their sectarian bundles preparatory to being consumed by the great fire of trouble just at hand. Matt. 13:42

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