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Can a True Christian Engage in Warfare?

(In response to requests that thoughts on this subject be made available, this article is presented as fully as space allows.)

OUR subject is surely of vital importance to all Christians, and one which is not easily understood by some who are sincerely seeking to walk in the footsteps of Christ. From a careful examination of the Scriptures, however, we believe that it is possible to arrive at a correct and satisfactory answer to this question; an answer that will be satisfying to both heart and mind of the truly consecrated follower of Christ.

In the words of John's Gospel, chapter 17, we have a memorable prayer of Christ's to His Father, poured forth a matter of hours only before His crucifixion. This prayer was especially on behalf of our Lord's followers, and in verse 16 we read—"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

If we can grasp the implication of Jesus' words respecting Himself, "even as I am not of the world," we shall have a true guide respecting the meaning of the words regarding His followers—"they are not of the world." We think of our Lord's life on earth, the transferring of His life in heaven with the Father, to the earthly form of a human babe.

The account is given with sufficient detail in Luke 1 to be clearly understood by all thinking people. In verse 35 of this chapter we have the angel's message to Mary, the mother of Jesus, as follows:—"The holy spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." These are wonderful words, and help us to see the overruling of God respecting the transfer of our Lord's life in heaven, which He had with the Father before the world was, His pre-human existence, to come to the earth and be born as a human babe.

After the birth of Jesus" the manifestation to the shepherds in the fields by the heavenly host, and the shepherds' visit to Bethlehem and finding Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger, as recorded in Luke 2:6-18, we read in verse 19—"But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart." It seemed so immense, so wonderful, outside all her comprehension that she should be chosen for this important mission of bringing forth the One to be called the Son of God. She kept all these things, pondering them over and wondering if they were really true. It seemed almost like a dream to her. So even the mother of Jesus seemed overwhelmed by the things connected with the birth of her child.

There is nothing recorded of Jesus between the time of his return from Egypt as a child and when he was twelve years of age, when we are told He took the trip to Jerusalem with His parents to attend certain ceremonies at the Temple. We find the boy had forgotten all about His earthly parents; they were on their return journey and then found that Jesus was not in the caravan party, and they went back to look for Him. So the story goes on in Luke 2, from verse 46. When told that His parents sought Him sorrowing, His response was, "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Then verse 50 reads—"And they understood not the saying which He spake unto them." They seemed unable to understand this wonderful boy who could confer with the learned doctors of the law, not only asking questions but answering them as well. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" This was beyond the understanding of His parents again.

Then, after a period of about eighteen years, during which time Jesus' mind would be working upon the plan of God, as

found in the Old Testament Scriptures, He knew that at the age of thirty the time was due to present Himself fully and completely to God, and to start upon the last and most important part of His whole earthly life. In presenting Himself to John the Baptist for immersion, to symbolise His consecration to His Heavenly Father, we find that John was amazed to think that the One whom he knew to be the Messiah should come to him for baptism. John was not able to appreciate the fact that the immersion of

Jesus was not for the same purpose as John's baptism for the Jews, namely, for remission of sins. No, our Lord's immersion signified His baptism into death, that thus He may taste death for every man. He then received the begetting of the holy spirit, as pictured by a dove; this was the symbol indicating to John that He was really the One who should take away the sin of the world.

During our Lord's ministry, we have such words from His lips as recorded in John 8:42—"1 proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me." And again—"My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." (John 7:16.) These words reveal in no uncertain way that Jesus was the perfect One, sent by the Heavenly Father above.

Then, following our Lord's crucifixion, we have a record which is important; it was an acknowledgement of our Lord by the centurion, as the result of the manifestations from heaven which made a lasting impression upon that generation and all generations since. It is found in Matt. 27:54—"Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God."

Another very marked manifestation' was given on our Lord's behalf on the morning .of His resurrection. This is recorded in Matt. 28, from verse 2—"And behold, there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men." Then followed the angel's words of cheer to the women who had come to the sepulchre to embalm the body of Jesus—"Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said."

Do not all these references to our Lord, from the time of the transference of His life from heaven to earth, right through to His death and resurrection to the Father's right hand, help us to understand the meaning of His words—"I am not of the world"? The word "world" is from the Greek word "kosmos" which means the orderly arrangement, or order of things, then existing in the world.

But how could our Lord say of His true disciples, "They are not of the world"? They are not perfect as was Jesus; they have earthly fathers, as well as earthly mothers. How can these belong not to the world?

A clear explanation is shown in the life of Saul of Tarsus, who afterwards became Paul, the Apostle of Christ.

In Acts, chapters 8 and 9, we find Saul engaged upon a terrible persecution of the followers of Christ, in which he thought he was doing God service. He was truly of this world at that time. But what happened? There has never been anything like it, either before or since. We have a most amazing record of the Lord appearing to Him as a light from heaven, Saul being stricken down, and the voice from heaven saying—'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, "Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Saul's response was—"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Following the instructions given, we find Saul a fully converted disciple of the Lord. And what a conversion this was! Here was Saul on a mission breathing out slaughter to the followers of Christ, but the Lord's message to Ananias was--He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." And didn't Paul respond (his name changed from Saul), and rejoice to be shown the things to be suffered for Christ's sake! He glorified in the fact that he was counted worthy to be invited into the ministry of His Lord.

By this wonderful conversion of Paul, his accepting Christ as his personal Saviour, he was justified by faith. Then we find Paul presenting his all to the Lord, his conversion is so complete; the changeover was absolute. God having accepted Paul's offering of himself in full consecration, we find him filled with the holy spirit, and he was raised to the plane of spirit-begetting.

From this standpoint, our Lord could say of His consecrated followers, in His prayer to the Father, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Our Lord spoke primarily of His own little band of disciples at that time, but included all who would' become His throughout the Gospel Age, as His prayer indicated—"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." (John 17:20.) So we claim that the Scriptures are abundantly clear that on the basis of justification by faith and full consecration to God the Lord accepts His followers out of the world. They are a separated class unto Him for the heavenly calling, of whom our Lord said, "Few

there be that find it.”

The Apostle Paul, as an example of all true Christians, was raised to the plane of spirit-begetting following his full submission of his whole being to the Lord. In reviewing his own conversion and calling of God in Acts 26:19, he declared—.”I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.” No, that was the most momentous occasion in Paul’s life, and his the most wonderful conversion, and it is placed on record that we may see in it the turning point of Christians generally. There must be a definite conversion, a turning again; there can be no gradual emerging and hanging on to some of the worldly life while seeking to walk also in the Christian life. Paul’s conversion was complete and absolute. He repented with his whole being, and henceforth, throughout his whole life, his soul was poured out unto death in the cause of Christ.

All who, like Paul, have consecrated their lives to God during this Gospel Age have also this same spiritual life begun in them, and they are also raised to the plane of spirit-begetting. Do we see, then, the meaning of our Lord’s words in John’s Gospel, that those the Father had given Him out of the world are not of the world? Do we see, also, that those who are not of the world could not conscientiously engage in warfare in any shape or form, because warfare belongs absolutely to the plane of fallen humanity? It belongs to the plane of degradation on which all mankind are travelling except those, who, by the grace of God, are lifted out of this world, first to the plane ofjustification by faith, and then to the plane of spirit-begetting, because they lay their all on the altar of sacrifice, even as did Jesus. There can be no doubt about it, no compromising in any sense in respect of warfare: it is absolutely carried on on the plane of human degradation and sin. Those who have been lifted out of the world by the Lord’s grace can have no part in warfare at all. If they do, they are forsaking the real Christian way. Paul said that’ he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. That is something we also ought to ask ourselves. Have we at all been disobedient to the heavenly calling, the drawing of our Lord to the heavenly inheritance? We do not receive a heavenly Vision similar to Paul’s, but we do receive a heavenly enlightenment, and must not be disobedient to this great favour granted to us. If we engage in any of this world’s affairs, strife or chaos of any kind, we are repudiating our heavenly enlightenment, doing despite to the grace of God and returning to the world again, and would not be fit for the kingdom in any shape or form.

In the Old Testament there are records which appear to some minds to be contrary to the teachings of the New Testament. When Israel was passing over Jordan into Canaan, the Lord gave certain instructions which are found in Joshua 3. Verses 9 and 10 read—”And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the Lord your God. And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites.”

Some have been inclined to question the justice of God in giving to Israel the land of Canaan, already inhabited by others,—the justice of not only permitting but commanding them to destroy the inhabitants of that land, and to take possession of it as their own.

Knowing that “the earth is the Lord’s and the fulness therof,” He, therefore, had the right to give Canaan to the descendants of Abraham without giving a reason why to any creature. He had a right to give it when and how and to whom He pleased. He does, however, condescend to inform us that in blotting out these many little nations of Palestine, descendants of Noah’s grandson, Canaan, He did so not along arbitrary lines, but along lines ofjustice. These Canaanites were not ignorant savages, but quite civilized peoples who, after the manner of the Sodomites, had gone into great excesses of licentious idolatry. In Abraham’s time God foresaw where their course would lead them, but He delayed to bring the promised seed of Abraham into their land for a time, because, as we read in Gen. 15:16— ”the iniquity of the Amorites was, not yet come to the full.”

These people were to be destroyed by the Israel-it, for two reasons; first, to have permitted them to live and to become incorporated with the Israelites in the land, by intermarriage, etc., would have been injurious to the seed of Abraham which God intended to develop, and of which He intended to make types of spiritual Israel. Furthermore, in the type which the Lord was making on a large scale, these Canaanites or Amorites represented the weaknesses and imperfections of the fallen nature. ‘T hey symbolized sin, and their destruction by the Israelites prefigured the destruction of sin, the blotting out of the blemishes of sin, and the gradual uplifting of God’s people in the antitype of Canaan—in the Millennial Kingdom.

The chief difficulty in most minds, to connection with this slaughtering of the inhabitants of Canaan, lies in the unscriptural thought, brought into Christian creeds during the dark ages, that the apparent death of an individual is really his entrance into more abundant life, either under pleasurable or tormenting conditions. Since these Canaanites were declared to be disapproved of God, the general thought respecting them is that while the Israelites killed them and took possession of their property, they, without further opportunity, were thrown at once under the control of devils and into an eternity of torture. There is nothing of this kind connected with the Bible narrative. It is all the addition of

human imagination, built upon numerous fantastic speculations of the dark ages. According to the Scriptures, death is really death, and these Canaanites, when slain by the sword of Israel, became unconscious, and will remain so until the Lord's time shall come for their awakening from the sleep of death. They shall come forth in the resurrection in the Millennial morning, to the earthly paradise, as our Lord's words indicate "All that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth."

Thus we see that God was using the Israelites as a typical people, through whom He was making types and shadows of coming blessings. He would give Canaan to Israel, and thus make another type of how the anti-typical Israel will enter and possess the anti-typical Canaan. He would make the slaughter of the people of the land to illustrate the destruction of the works of the flesh and the devil which His people are to accomplish in themselves by fighting the good fight of faith and overcoming the evil tendencies which have become intrenched in their own flesh.

There are some New Testament texts which also prove difficult to some people to understand. One is in John 2:15. This text has been used to show, mistakenly, that our Lord used force on humanity at the time of His first advent. But a correct rendering of this verse helps us to see that Jesus, in using the whip of cords, used it only on the animals. —"So he plaited a whip of rushes, and drove all—both sheep and bullocks—out of the Temple." We see the Lord was not violating the principles He laid down, that the use of force on humanity by the consecrated Christian is not required.

Another text which causes some difficulty is in Luke 22:36,—"Let him buy a sword." The occasion was right near the end of our Lord's ministry. The disciples said, Yes, there are two swords here, and the Lord said, It is enough. We find that when Peter later used the sword our Lord, rebuking him and healing the ear of the high priest's servant, said "Put up thy sword into its place; for he that takes the sword shall perish by the sword." This is a direct contradiction of the assumption by some that the Lord intended even His people to engage in defensive warfare. The sword then, at the time of our Lord's betrayal, was for the purpose of showing that He voluntarily permitted Himself to be taken. They had the weapons, and they would have used them had it been right to do so. However, in Matt. 26:53 the Lord assured them that He could have prayed to the Father, and He would send more than twelve legions of angels to defend Him, if His cause required it. This seemed to be the only defence our Lord would countenance to support the cause of His Heavenly Father, and we take it that this is the only defence He desires and requires His people to adopt throughout their Christian life, after they have been taken out of the world.

The closing days of John the Baptist also present a helpful lesson to us. John was a wonderful character, having prepared the way of the Lord, and then introduced the Bridegroom to Israel — to as many as could receive Him.

John had been cast into prison, and by a wicked scheme this holy prophet of God was beheaded. And yet Jesus did nothing about it, though He must have been acquainted with all the details beforehand. Our Lord apparently knew that John had performed his work, knew he had been faithful to his mission, and knew that he would receive a wonderful resurrection, not to the heavenly inheritance, but to the earthly inheritance of the Ancient Worthies, of whom the world was not worthy. Christ knew, then, that it was not required of John to live on. So sometimes God allows His servants to be taken, perhaps in a despicable way, when their work is completed.

Our Lord could have sent twelve legions of angels to prevent John's death; they were certainly at His disposal. Isn't that a lesson that God knows His own plan, knows the mission of each of His people, and not a hair of their heads shall perish without His knowledge, especially in regard to the spiritual ones? This is figurative language, to show that the minutest detail is known to God, and not one is going to be overlooked in any experience of life. Doesn't it give us confidence and trust in God, to know that He has everything under control! He has His heavenly messengers to act on His directions and authority in regard to all His people. Jesus did not go to war on behalf of His greatest earthly friend at that time, because it was not right to do so. John's mission was fulfilled, and the glorious resurrection with a future life on earth will compensate for anything that John might have desired.

The words of Paul in 2 Cor. 10:3-6 have proved another wonderful guide to many in regard to their Christian warfare. Paul is here speaking of those who had taken up the Christian way, those who had reached the plane of spirit-begetting, even though they may not have been very faithful followers up to the time of Paul's writing. They were carnal at times and really babes in Christ. The passage reads—"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not walk after the flesh; for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; and having in readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled." This is the Christian's only warfare, and it will occupy and require every moment of his time, if he is a faithful soldier of the cross.

We know that God will provide means whereby this true warfare can be accomplished, so long as the Christian co-operates with the spirit of the Lord, which will so transform him during the period of his pilgrimage on earth, that he

will be conformed to the likeness of God's dear Son eventually. The "pulling down of strongholds" relates to those things in our minds and hearts which belong to this present evil world. They are to be eliminated during the earthly lives of Christians since they were called out of the world. What a work we see before us!

We are not to be concerned with the disobedience of the nations. We have not been called to associate in trying to put down the disobedience of the systems of this present evil world. God is going to revenge all disobedience, in His own good time and way,, but not until the obedience of the Church has been fulfilled. To complete the testing, proving, polishing and developing of the Church of Christ is God's present work—the perfection of our obedience. "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

We have been drawn and called out of this present evil world, receiving a spirit which will transform us unto the likeness of our Lord and Head, and our obedience will be completed. Nothing is going amiss because Christians do not participate in supporting this or that form of government; and it is only those who have really grasped what it means to be a true Christian, that are able to live in the world, and be not of the world.

In writing to the Philippians, Paul gave a personal testimony of his own life in the steps of Christ in chapter 2, verse 17.—"Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all." Paul was wholly used up, absorbed, poured out in the service to which he had committed his whole being. And, "I joy and rejoice with you all." That must be the disposition of all of us, to joy in this service—in this offering of ourselves—however small it be. Isn't it wonderful to think that God has accepted the little offerings of the individual members of the Church! With Paul, they have been offered upon the sacrifice and service of faith, and they must joy and rejoice with all other members of this same sacrificial company. They have all come into Christ out of the world.

This calls to mind another precious thought, as given in 1 Cora 6:20,—"Ye are bought with a price." Yes, even the precious blood of Christ. We do not belong to another, therefore, it would be absolutely false on our part to give our service to anything opposed to the spirit of Christ. If we are bought with a price, such a price, we cannot give ourselves to any form of warfare. The whole life must be devoted to Christ, fully and completely. We must not be disobedient to the vision that God has given us in respect of these things. In other words, we must "follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. 12:14.)

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Justice, the Foundation of God’s Throne.

THE decision of the Victorian Government to support fully the law of the land with respect to the crime of murder, and the carrying Out of this decision recently with the execution of one woman and two men convicted of the murder of an elderly man, has raised the question in some minds as to whether it is right to take the life of another person under any circumstance.

Those who object to the execution of any human being, even after full and fair trial and conviction on the clearest of evidence, are usually of the opinion that such a person at death is consigned to eternal torture; but when the plan of God for the salvation of the human race is really understood, a plan in which every human being’who has not sinned against full light will have a full opportunity to gain everlasting life, in due time, then this subject takes on quite a different outlook.

The Apostle Paul in Acts 24:15 declared, “There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.” The “unjust” in this text would include those who have even committed premeditated murder. If these are to receive lasting benefit from the resurrection in the age to come, they will be required to repent fully of the personal guilt which contributed to the terrible act of murder. The fact that some have been executed, after having been found guilty by courts as correct as present imperfections allow, may have a beneficial effect upon the characters of such in the resurrection day, possibly assisting them to the full and complete repentance which will be absolutely necessary before anyone could progress on to everlasting life in the Kingdom of Christ.

There are others, again, who may feel that as we are now living in the day of grace, since our Lord’s sacrifice has been provided for the salvation of mankind, that leniency should be extended to those who commit even premeditated murder.

It should be realised, however, that the sacrifice of Christ does not provide pardon for wilful sin, either in this age, or in the age to come. In this connection, a Scripture, which is sometimes used to support the idea of pardon for sins without the necessity for repentance, is found to be omitted in the original manuscripts; hence, it is not a part of the inspired Bible. This passage is in Luke 23:34, being the words of Jesus when He was on the cross. It reads: “Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” We cannot think that Jesus would ask the Father to violate the principle of justice, the very foundation of His throne, inasmuch as Jesus had come to earth to pay the sacrifice for sin, so that the Father “might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.” (Rom. 3:2426.) Repentance and conversion are essential for any forgiveness which the Father may extend to any of the human family. (Acts 3:19, etc.) There fore, the disposition which in this life would commit premeditated murder, which is to a large degree. wilful, if not corrected and punished, may lead to wilful transgression in the resurrection day, when the punishment then would be second death, from which there will be no resurrection. (Acts 3:23.) It would seem, therefore, that no injustice is done to those who do commit premeditated murder should. they be executed in this life; rather, the punishment inflicted may help to impress the seriousness of the crime upon the individuals, and thus assist in their full repentance and conversion under the judgments of the age to come.

The laws which God gave to Israel, through Moses, very clearly uphold the principle of God’s justice, while also providing mercy under appropriate circumstances, and are a good guide for us today, as well as pointing forward to the requirements for all mankind in the age to come. A short article is presented below, being written many years ago on the subject of Israel’s cities of refuge, and should prove helpful on the matter before us. It is as follows:

“The cities of refuge were appointed in Israel for the protection against summary punishment of any one who might accidentally take human life, but not for any wilful murderer. There were six of these cities in central localities, to any one of which the man-slayer might flee and there find protection until his case could be legally tried. These cities did not shelter the wilful murderer; but the authorities, after a fair trial, delivered such up to the just penalty of their crime, which was death.—Deut. 19:11-13; Num. 35:30-34.

“If the killing proved to be accidental the man-slayer must still remain in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest then in office. This restraint upon his liberty was the penalty for his carelessness, and thus an additional protection to human life.

“This feature of the typical Mosaic law strongly foreshadowed the refuge which the sinner may find in Christ. He is our shield and hiding-place from the penalty of all sin, save that which is wilful. He is no shelter for obstinate, unrepentant sinners; ,but for every one bom in sin and shapen in iniquity --and thus sinners by birth, yet earnestly desirous of escaping from sin and its just consequences, and seeking refuge in Him by faith—there is protection. We are all under sentence of death; justice is the avenger and only those in Christ are shielded.

“But, mark you, the sinner must continue to abide in this city of refuge as long as the high priest liveth —that is, as long’ as Christ continues in the priestly ,office, which will be until He is able to present all the redeemed, who abide in Him, faultless before the throne of God, at the end of His Millennial reign as King and Priest. Then, being made actually perfect by the great Redeemer-Physician, they will be able to stand, not in the imputed or reckoned right-eousness of another, but in their own glorious perfection, yet never forgetful of the great atoning sacrifice, and the patient work of restitution which made possible such a glorious consummation.

“Like the cities of refuge, Christ is easy of access to all who diligently seek Him, and who have no will in opposition to righteousness, nor to any of His measures ofjust and righteous, discipline.”

The Privilege of Prayer

Convention Address.

GOD speaks to us through Nature and His Word, through His providences and by the influence of His spirit, but we need also to pour out our hearts to Him in order to have spiritual life and energy. Our minds may be drawn towards Him, meditating upon His works and His blessings. This is not in the fullest sense communing with Him. In order to commune with God we must have something to say to Him about our love. Prayer is opening the heart to Him as to a friend, in order to enable us to receive His assistance. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but takes us up to Him.

When Jesus was on earth He taught I his disciples to pray. He directed them to put their needs before God. The assurance was that their petitions should be heard, and that is an assurance also for us. Jesus Himself was often engaged in prayer. Our Saviour identified Himself with our needs and weaknesses in that He sought from His Father fresh supplies of strength, that He might overcome the many trials that beset Him. He is our example in all things, having taken upon Himself our infirmities, .and being in all points tempted like as we are.

Jesus found prayer a necessity and privilege. He found comfort and joy in communion with His Father; and if the Son of God felt the need of prayer, how much more should feeble, sinners feel the necessity of fervent, constant ‘prayer. It is our privilege to come to Him in prayer and partake of this blessing. The wonder is that we pray so little. God is able and willing to hear the sincere prayers of His humble children. Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray when ‘prayer is the key to the storehouse of His power? Without it we are in danger of growing careless and straying from the right path. The Adversary strives to obstruct the way to the Mercy Seat.

There are certain conditions upon which God will hear and answer our prayers. One of the first of these is that we feel our need of help from Him. In Isa. 44:3 we read, “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.” Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness may be sure they will be filled. The heart must be open to the spirit’s influence, or God’s blessing cannot be received. God, of course, is a loving Father, and knows our needs even before we ask Him, but He has to be sought after to do things for us. “Ask and it shall be given you.” “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”

If we are walking in any known sin the ‘Lord will not hear us, but the prayer of the penitent, contrite soul is always acceptable. We may believe God will answer out petitions; but our own merits will never commend us to the favour of God, it is the worthiness of Jesus that will save us. But we have our part to do in the conditions of acceptance.

Another essential is faith—”Without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” (Heb. 11:6.) Jesus also said to his disciples, “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” (Mark 11:24.) When we do not receive the very things we ask for at the time we ask, we are still to believe the Lord hears us. In our fallen, weak state we may sometimes ask for things that would not be a blessing, and our Father gives us what would be eventually for our good, and the things we would desire if we could see all things as He does. The time of answering will surely come, and we will receive the blessing we need most. He will not withhold anything from them that walk uprightly and rely on His sure promises.

We can pray to God at all times. There is nothing to prevent us lifting up our hearts in prayer as we go about our daily duties. Although our surroundings may be tainted and corrupted, we need not be influenced by them. We can lift up our soul to God through prayer. Those whose hearts are open to receive the blessing of God will walk in a holier atmosphere.

We need to have a clear view of Jesus and a clear understanding of the value of eternal things. We may keep so near to

God that in every unexpected trial our thoughts will turn to Him naturally, and we will place all our joys and wants and sorrows and griefs before Him. We cannot weary or overburden Him. Jesus said, “Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, it shall be given unto you.” To pray in the name of Jesus is something more than a mere mention of His name at the beginning and the ending of a prayer; it is to pray in the mind and spirit of Jesus, while we believe His promises, rely upon His grace, and do His works. God does not mean that any of us should become hermits and retire .from the world in order to de- vote ourselves to acts of worship. If prayer is not accompanied by works we will soon cease to pray, or our prayers will become a mere formality. If we would but think of God as often as we have evidence of His care for us, we would keep Him ever in our thoughts, and would delight to talk of Him and praise Him.

We talk of temporal things because we have an interest in them. We talk of our friends because we love them; our joys and sorrows are bound up with them. Yet, we have a much greater reason to love God than to love our earthly friends, and it should be the most natural thing to make Him first in all our thoughts, to talk of His .goodness and tell of His power. God’s wonderfully rich gifts are to remind us of Him and to bind us with love and gratitude to our Heavenly Father.

Our devotional exercises should not consist wholly of asking and receiving. Let us not be always thinking of our wants and never of the benefits we receive. We are constantly receiving God’s mercies, and yet how little gratitude we express, how little we praise Him for what He has done for us. Our God is a tender, merciful Father. His service should not be looked upon as a heart-saddening, distressing exercise; it should be a pleasure to worship the Lord and to help in His work however small our task. He is our best Friend and when we worship Him, he expects to be with us to bless and comfort, filling our hearts with love and joy. The Lord wants us to find comfort in worship, and pleasure in His work. He wants us to worship Him with precious thoughts of His care and love, that we may be encouraged in all the employments of daily life, and have grace to deal honestly and faithfully in all things. We must come to the cross of Christ; “Him crucified” should be the centre of our thoughts and conversation. We should keep in our thoughts every blessing we receive from God, and when we realise His great love we should be willing to trust everything to the One who was crucified for us.

In Psa. 31 we read how David asked God to help him, and praised Him for His great goodness—”In thee, 0 Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed; deliver me in thy righteousness. Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily; be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me. For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name’s sake lead me, and guide me. . . . 0 love the Lord, all ye his saints; for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer. Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.”

Sydney Meetings.

The friends in Sydney give notification of a new address for Sunday meetings (3 p.m., and 5.15 p.m.) at Schaffer’s Upholstery, 229 Liverpool Road, Strathfield. Intending visitors should join No. 27 red bus from Strathfield Station (on left side of station coming from Sydney) , and ask to be set down at Schaffer’s Upholstery.

“Our Most Holy Faith.”—This is a splendid volume of most helpful articles and sermons by the author of Studies in the Scriptures, published by the brethren of “The Dawn” in U.S.A. Containing 719 pages, including Index, and well bound, with silver lettering, it is priced at 19 / - post paid.

“Hymns of Dawn Music Book.”—Containing the original 333 hymns. 27 additional in an Appendix, well bound in strong cloth, with silver lettering, this new edition is priced at 10/- post paid.

“The Everlasting Gospel”—A 64-page booklet dealing with the Sabbath question and other important connected subjects, highly recommended, heavy paper cover, price 1/6.

“God and Reason.”—This booklet of 125 pages in vest-pocket size explains the following in a very helpful manner—The Way Out; Creator and Creation; The Bow Promise; Has Christianity Failed? The End of the World;

Signs of the End; The World’s Only Hope; God’s New Order. Pries 6d. per copy; 6 copies for 2/6, posted.

Pilgrim Way Ended.

Word has been received from our Brother Nicholson of Perth, W. Aust., respecting the passing of his sister, Sister Clipsham, of England. There is always a measure of sadness with the passing of those dear members who have gladly walked in the steps of the Master, but we rejoice also in the victory being gained by the faithful overcomers, by the. Lord's grace. Sincere sympathy is extended to all members of the family circle, so many of whom, it. is a joy to realise, are rejoicing in the truth, and thus able to praise the Lord for all His goodness. Our Brother Nicholson's message is as follows:

"I have just received a wire from London telling me that my good sister (Mrs. M. E. B. Clipsham) has reached the end of her earthly journey. As you know, she has always been so faithful and earnest in the service of present truth, and not only her loved ones of the earthly family will miss her kind sympathy and help in so many ways, but there are many others who will miss her, who are associated in present truth.

"I think it is 53 or 54 years since she came into the clearer knowledge of the Bible and the Divine purpose, not only to select the Church as the Bride of Christ, but also through Christ—Head and Body —to save all the willing and obedient of mankind during the next dispensation. •

"To me she has been a wonderful sister and I can thank God at every remembrance of her. Her two sons and daughter were so trained and instructed in the way of the Lord, that they in turn have been a blessing and comfort to her, and they and everyone else who knew her appreciated her gentle, kind and wise ways.

"It is very wonderful to think that she may be one of whom it is written, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, from henceforth"—i.e., since we are living in the days of the Son of Man, the second presence of Christ, only recognised by those represented as the "five wise" virgins. So, as I Thes. 4:13-18 tells us, those who remain (on earth) after the sleeping saints have been raised—"the dead in Christ rise first"—have no need to sleep in death, when they finish the earthly way, but are to be changed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," from mortality to immortality, from earthly to heavenly surroundings—"caught away to be with the Lord in the heavens."

"So, indeed, we sorrow not as do others who have no hope, yet we still feel the breaking of such tender ties, while we thank the God of all comfort for the comfort wherewith He has comforted us, through the marvellous light of the Gospel of Grace that has shined so clearly in these last days of the Gospel Age."