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Palms of Victory, Crowns of Glory.

(Contributed Address.)

THE Bible speaks of sporting events; so we are going to look into the Olympic Games, especially the parts which the Apostle Paul mentioned. He was always alert to take advantage of the environment in which he found himself, and he alluded to things with which the people were well acquainted. Jesus did likewise. When the Master wanted to put across a great lesson, He referred to something the people saw and understood, and drew a spiritual lesson by making reference to the things about Him. We want to throw a little more light on some portions of the Apostle Paul's writings, and give you the background of certain portions of Scripture. We are not going to discuss Australian Rules, but the rules of the Greeks and Romans in connection with the Games of their time.

The Greeks and Romans had many sporting events, because they had great strong armies, and the way to have a strong army in those days was to have strong men, because mortal combat was involved. They had to meet their combatants hand to hand, and the result was that the strongest people were the victors. The only way they could train and prepare men for battle properly was to have them involved in some physical exercise, so they pushed the idea of sport.

Timothy was caught in this environment as a youth, and apparently he was an athlete. 1 Tim. 4:8 reads: "For bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Paul did not say to Timothy, Now listen, what you are engaged in is all humbug, there is no good in it. He said, It does profit little. He admitted that. But he urged Timothy to reach for something greater—godliness—and put on the fruits and graces of the spirit, which would not only benefit Timothy in this life, but in that which is to come as well. As a youth, Timothy was looking to the future. All young people do. They look ahead. Paul was urging Timothy, Remember that while you are engaged in athletic contests, you may get some profit, but it is only for a little while. What I am trying to encourage you to do is to reach out and grasp godliness. So it was good advice to Timothy, and Paul was very careful and tactful how he approached the matter. Timothy must have been no more than 21 years of age when he went with Paul on his first journey; so he was really a young man. Especially, amongst the Jews, a person was not a man until 30 years, so Timothy was but a youngster.

We have to grasp what was behind Paul's statement. Let us turn first to Matt. 5:41. This is not directly on the subject, but it is indirectly related to what we wish to talk about. Here we read something that on the surface does not convey all that was meant. Here Jesus is addressing the Jews. "Whosoever shall compel thee to go with him a mile, go with him twain." Now it was not a case of being a good sport. That is not what the Master had in mind. If it was just that, it would not have been so hard to take. But this was a bitter saying for the Jews to grasp. The Jews were the subjects of Romans. According to Roman law, a Roman soldier could compel a subject to carry a burden one mile. When the Jews were chafing under the Roman yoke, Jesus told them, If someone says to you, Come a mile, then go with him two.

It was bad enough to have to go a mile. Jesus said to go two miles. Such sayings of Jesus were hard for the Jews to accept. He urged them to go one better than was required. When the Master was carrying the cross, Simon was pressed into service in this way.

In Luke 15:8, 9 we get another point. We read there about the lost coin. "Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found, it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost." Why was this? The finding of lost coins is not usually a cause for merriment of this sort. Was it because this coin was so valuable in itself? Not at all. In those days a girl who was engaged to be married did not get a

ring, but a string of coins like a necklace. This she had to maintain faithfully until the day of marriage. If she lost it, or one or two pieces from it, it would indicate carelessness, indolence and so forth, and her husband-to-be would say, Well, if this is the sort of woman I am to marry, I will have nothing to do with her. So when this woman lost one coin, she looked in every nook and cranny to find it. When it was found, she called all her friends to celebrate. If she had lost the coin, it may have meant the wedding would not take place. So the young lady was very concerned about this matter ; and that is the background to this account. You do not find that on the surface. It is only when you get to know the customs of the land that you see the significance of some of these things. So it is important, we believe, to know the customs that prevailed back there in those days.

For instance, certain words were used that meant a lot more than the translators were able to convey to us in our English rendering. If you quote an Old Testament passage in English, to an Israeli, he will say, "Ah, but you should read it in Hebrew !" It is difficult to convey the proper depth of meaning unless you can speak two or three languages. In each of these other languages there are certain words which are difficult to translate into English. They have a certain background that is very difficult to convey into another language. It is often impossible to get the true meaning across without going into great detail. So the sayings of Jesus are more understandable in the light of the customs that prevailed.

We are going to discuss the Olympic Games of the time when the Apostle Paul wrote, bearing in mind that the Apostle Paul was an Apostle to the Gentiles. When he wrote to the church at Corinth, at Galatia, at Ephesus, he wrote primarily to the Gentile churches. These Gentiles were acquainted with Gentile customs and practices. The Apostle Paul was very well versed in them. Tarsus was north of Palestine, so Paul was acquainted with many of the things that took place in those days. There was to be found in the Roman cities a hippodrome, a stadium or something of the kind. Paul saw about him these various contests. From a boy he was acquainted with these things. When he wanted to get a spiritual lesson across to the brethren at Corinth or other places, he alluded to the Games quite often. In those days the athletic preparations were associated with preparations for war. So when Paul spoke of our "race", you will note that his writings are dealing with the warfare a Christian wages, and how we must prepare for battle and wage war, not against physical forces as much as against unseen powers.

We understand from history that these contests were held periodically, for instance in Corinth, sometimes every four years, or every two years. Your memory is fresh on the Olympic Games held here some time ago. We were amazed at the beautiful white marble stadium at Athens. When we visited various parts of the world where these contests were held, we could not help thinking of the times when Paul made reference to these Games. They were so popular that they engaged the attention of all the people. It was a great honour to qualify for one of the races. Today it is mostly young people, 17 or so years of age who compete, but in those days even some of the Roman Senators qualified in competition with young men to engage in these contests.

The preparations were very rigorous. Sometimes we have wondered why these people thought it was worth it. At Athens it was required of the contestants that they were to train for ten months before the contest. Just think—a man who was going to run one race had to train for ten months, every day under careful scrutiny. They were subject, as well, to certain rules and regulations. One of these rules we read about in 1 Cor. 9:25; where the Apostle says, "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." He was referring to the contestants in the Games. How temperate were they? They could not drink any alcoholic drinks. Not only that, but according to the rules of these contests, these men were fed on coarse meal bread. They had to eat specially nourishing foods, and they could not go out and eat meats and other savoury things that they may have been accustomed to. They had to go on a diet. According to the rules, these men had to live fully under the scrutiny of the judges. They were watched. Each city wanted its representatives to excel in the contest, so they made rigid rules and regulations. Anyone not abiding by the rules was disqualified. So the Apostle Paul tells us here, "If any man would strive for the mastery, he must be temperate in all things." They had to have plenty of rest and so forth. We had at home an old Bible Encyclopaedia, over 100 years old. It was a rich source of information. It emphasized the importance of diet for the contestants.

After they had qualified as far as the training was concerned, then came the contests themselves. The Apostle Paul in the same chapter, v. 24, tells us, "know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain." The Apostle Paul was referring to the races held in his day, and even to this day the races play a very important part in the Olympic Games. He was not speaking of a foot-race as far as the brethren were concerned, but the prize of their High Calling. Run to obtain the prize, run with the same fervour as a man running to obtain an earthly prize. These men ran with real fervour, each one was out to win the prize. So the Apostle was urging the brethren to run in like manner, determined to obtain that prize.

Turning to Gal. 2:2, we see what Paul had in mind when we think of the Games. "And, I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain." He was careful to qualify in his ministry. He did not want to preach

in such a way as to have run in vain. The runners back there had to qualify in every respect, so Paul in his spiritual race wanted to make sure he did not fail and be disqualified. He was careful lest he should have run in vain. He turns the tables on the Galatians when he puts the shoe on the other foot ; “Ye did run well; who did hinder you, that you should not obey the truth?” Just because someone tried to trip them up, they gave up the race. But the one who tried to trip them would himself be disqualified. Paul tried to set them a good example in this race.

In Heb. 12:1 we have a reference to the games or contests held. The Apostle tells us, “Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” Do you know what they did in practising? The men engaged in the foot race used to tie weights to their feet. This added weight to their whole body. It slowed them up. But when the day of the contest came, they threw off these weights, and their feet felt like feathers. The Apostle Paul, knowing how they prepared for the race, said, “Let us cast off these weights which beset us.” If a man ran in the contest with the weights, he would certainly lose. Let us cast off our weights ! He was referring to certain sins that beset us. Run with patience the race set before us. So it is wonderfully helpful to get the proper background to these various statements.

It is also of interest to turn to Phil. 3:14. There the Apostle Paul is again alluding to the race. He says, “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Another rendering is, “I press down upon the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” In this race, according to what we read in the historical records, they had a post. Today we have a line across, and everyone tries to reach that and hit the line with his chest before the others do. In those days they had a post, a mark. When they started their course, at the beginning of the race they put their eye on that place, and they would “press down on the mark” for that goal. In addition to this goal-post, around the rim of the stadium at the end of the course, they would have the crowns displayed. The runners would see the crown they wanted. This spurred them on to reach the end of their course. We can see the spiritual lesson there. Press down on the mark for the prize that is also set before us. So with Jesus, it was said of Him that He suffered gladly “for the joy that was set before him.”

As part of these ancient contests, there were also wrestling matches. In Ephesians Paul makes reference to the wrestling contest. He says (Eph. 6:12)—“We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of the world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” These wrestling matches were not for show. They meant business. If you were thrown by one of these men, you felt it. You had to be prepared. Sometimes one of the wrestlers would suffer death itself. It was a very strenuous event indeed. The Apostle Paul said, Brethren, we have some drastic foes that we wrestle against. But our foes are not visible to the human eye, in many cases. So he urges the brethren, Fight a good Christian fight.

If the wrestling was difficult, boxing was even worse. In 1 Tim. 6:12 Paul refers, to the boxing matches of those days. He says, “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.” Notice the wording here—“fight the good fight of faith”, “before many witnesses.” Turning now to 2 Tim. 4:7, the Apostle says, “I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith.” In Heb. 10:32 he also speaks of waging this good fight. “Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions.” Back in those days, the boxing matches were no soft stuff. Today when a boxer goes into the ring he wears big, soft gloves. But back there they used to have a “cestus,” made of leather, tied around the fist and studded with nails. You know what that meant. It meant on many occasions that men died in the ring. Today, once in a while we hear of a boxer dying after a boxing match, but back there it was a very common thing. These boxing matches were for tough fellows. The Apostle Paul speaks of this event as a “fight of faith”. He urges the brethren to wage a good fight. He urged Timothy to do the same — “not as one that beateth the air.”

What is our fight? We do not fight the people of the world, but the spirit of the world. We fight our own failings and weaknesses, and human shortcomings. In many cases we do not see our enemies, so to speak. Sometimes our adversaries are very subtle; and it is difficult to fight something you cannot grasp.

Our adversary goes around as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. It is a difficult proposition to fight the good fight of faith. In those days, just as today, boxers used to beat what they called the “windbag,” bags filled with air. They used to practise by punching them. But Paul said that this was just beating the air. This is not the way we should fight.

Another point to note is that when the judges were selected to supervise these matches, they were selected because of their great integrity. When Paul writes to Timothy, he makes reference to the great Judge— (2 Tim. 4:8). “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing.” Paul knew that Timothy knew well the earthly judges in the matches never showed partiality toward one contestant or another. They were very fair. Therefore you could not win just because you knew so-and-so. You had to win strictly on merit. We, too, have a righteous Judge.

We are told we have a judge who knows no partiality. He will give unto each one, that which he has earned. He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. The Lord will not withhold from us that which He has promised. If we qualify, the crown is ours. In the contests back there, one man got the prize; but insofar as the Christian course is concerned, more than one gets the crown of life. Paul reminds us that the crown was not only for himself, but for all those who love the Lord's appearing.

Those men did not engage in contests just privately. They were not performing simply before the judges, but in the stadium which accommodated thousands of people. Some stadiums were built in the form of a horseshoe, so the contestants were surrounded by spectators. The Apostle in Hebrews refers to this when he says in Hebrews 12 that we have what he calls a "cloud of witnesses." "Wherefore, seeing we also are encompassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Many people witnessed the contests. We, too, are engaged in a contest, and we also have witnesses. The angels desire to look into these things which are revealed to us. Not only that, but we have our neighbours watching us. They expect a lot from us. Why? We say we are followers of the Master. People naturally are watching us. Some people say they do not like to live in a fish bowl. We are living in a fish bowl as it were, with angels looking down from above, people around us always observing our conduct, whether we are living up to our profession. So we should be careful of the way we run. The Apostle Paul in Hebrews 11 refers to great heroes of faith who had gone on before and set us a noble example. He goes on to tell us what we should do to be faithful. In the races, the victory was not always certain. Why? A man might finish in the race ahead of everyone else; but he was never sure of victory until the judges pointed a finger at him, and pronounced his name, then he would step forward and they would declare him the victor. Why was an apparent victory never sure? Because in the course of the race, he may have done something to disqualify him. He could have interfered with another runner, or he may not have observed some of the

rules. He may have been too anxious to start, "jumped the gun". There were other factors. So with us. The Apostle Paul said that he feared lest he should become a castaway. A man who was disqualified was called a castaway. So Paul feared. There is the possibility with us also, that if we do not run well we may be castaways. We can be assured of the Lord's great mercy. We have a great power positively on our side only by asking for it. Far greater blessings than we could think of, await us. We are human and in the flesh. We are called to put away the things that would hinder us in the way set before us. We have our weaknesses, our besetments, our shortcomings. One of us has one thing, another has something else. We need this same strength that the Apostle had to carry on and succeed in the race set before us.

Now let us refer to the crown as used in those days. You would be surprised—in one of the games they gave the victor a laurel wreath placed on his head. This is the crown they got, and the best one was given at Corinth. It was a wreath of parsley. How long would it last? Is it any wonder the Apostle Paul said, "They do it & obtain a corruptible crown"? Their crowns did not last very long. But we are promised an "incorruptible" crown. It helps us to appreciate this Scripture when we know the type of crowns they received in those days. The Apostle makes the contrast. What a difference! Those brethren knew the nature of the crowns the athletes were given back there.

We have a reference again to crowns in 1 Pet. 5:4, where I think we will get another thought in connection with the crowns that the Lord's people receive as a result of their faithfulness in their race. Here the Apostle says, "And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." In a couple of days, the crowns which those athletes received were gone. The crowns the faithful are to receive fade not away.

When the victor was pronounced by the judges, and they indicated before the whole audience that here was a man from Athens, or Rome, or elsewhere who had won the race, what happened? It is interesting to read that they first sent a herald around the stadium in a chariot. This herald shouted, not the name of the victor, but the victor's father's name and the city where he was born. When you think of it, you can see how in our Christian course we are to honour our Father. That should be our prime object. Is not this just what Jesus did? He delighted to honour the Father. He did not say to His Heavenly Father, Now I have done all this, give me the very highest reward. He asked only to be restored to that same position He had before. He asked for no reward. His delight was to do the will of the Father. So these athletes also delighted in honouring their fathers. What they were was due to a good extent to their fathers, and maybe they inherited certain physical powers from their fathers, so they honoured the father first. Then the herald would go round again, announcing the victor's name. Finally, they would place the victor in a chariot, in his right hand a palm branch, symbolic of victory, and with the crown placed on his head. Then he would be driven around to great acclaim. But this was not the end of the triumph. If the victor was from Athens, when he returned to his own city, before he entered, a herald was sent on ahead of him. The people of the city were ready. The victor was not permitted to go through the gate, but a hole was broken in the city wall, and he entered through that. All the inhabitants would acclaim their great son, who was so great that he triumphed over all the others in that part of the civilized world. He returned to his own city in a triumphant procession. Flowers were strewn in his pathway.

We also are promised an "abundant entrance"—"An entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the kingdom of

our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Any ancient city that had such a strong son considered itself very fortunate, even as not to need walls. That was just a symbolic gesture.

So you can see how the Apostle Paul frequently referred to these contests in one way or another to illustrate the spiritual lesson he was trying to convey to the brethren. So we hope we will be able to appreciate more the value of some of these passages, and how very strong these words were in the minds of the brethren to whom Paul wrote. No doubt they read with full meaning and appreciation, knowing what was behind these words. We must remember that 2,000 years have slipped by, so our customs are different today. So with the Scriptures written so many years ago, meanings were known to those to whom letters were written, but may be obscure to us.

So may God bless us as *we* continue our study of the Word of God, that we do not study just to impress the brethren with our knowledge, but to apply the lessons of the Word to ourselves. It is so easy to give a discourse as to how we should live, what we should do, and so on. It is quite another thing to practise these things. But if we do, we may be assured of an “abundant entrance” to the Kingdom. He loved us first, and was willing to die for us. We are enjoined to walk in His steps.

PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST’S KINGDOM.

Melbourne, Victoria Australia

Broadcasts Continue on 2KY

SINCE reference was made in last month’s “Peoples Paper” that the Frank and Ernest Broadcasts would be discontinued on 2KY Sydney on October 9th, mainly on account of the great increase in broadcasting fees, several expressions of regret were at once received from the area covered by 2KY. As some further assistance to the work came along from another source at the same time, it was decided to continue with the witness to the truth over 2KY Sydney for some time ahead at least.

Most of our friends will know that no appeals for funds are ever made in connection with any feature of the work carried on by the Institute, but if the voluntary assistance to the radio work continues, especially from the area covered by 2KY, then this will be a guide as to how long the message over the radio should continue in that locality. The following are some of the messages received with reference to the broadcasts over 2KY Sydney.

“Dear Brother, it is with much disappointment that we are not to hear Frank and Ernest after next Sunday. I was wondering if I could contribute, say, £100 towards paying the extra cost to keep it on the air for a little longer. I would like you to consider it seriously.”

“We were very distressed to hear on Sunday that the Frank and Ernest Session was to be temporarily discontinued ; I do hope it is only temporary—we would miss it so.”

“Please send me your 2KY broadcast copy for Sunday, 2nd October, and today’s, 9th October. I will miss you as I always listen in.”

“This letter is long overdue. I was so pleased to hear that you would be continuing to broadcast on Sunday mornings as the only fault I find with your talks is that they are not long enough. I have been a student of Biblical subjects, coupled with their archaeological proofs, for some 25 years. Could you please send me a copy of your last broadcast, also the booklet mentioned and any other literature you have available on the subject? I am sending you herewith a small donation to use as you wish, as your work must be costly. Wishing you success and a long term of broadcasting.”

Water of Life.

(John 4.)

(Contributed Article).

THE term “water of life” is used in the Bible to describe the Word of God. It is a very good description because everywhere we can see how much pure water is appreciated. We have only to look around us today to see how mankind depends on water for progress and life. Here in Australia, as well as in all other countries, huge water projects are being constructed to conserve water. Everywhere that man lives he must have water.

While life is capable of being sustained without food for some considerable time, it is not possible without water—a few days at most without water and death will result. Water, then, becomes a symbol of life. Thirst is another symbol indicating desire—a craving. Physical thirst is said to be very painful; it continues and intensifies hourly until the very last breath. Water satisfies the demand of nature, and there is also soul thirst and a water of life which alone can quench it, satisfy it.

Every ambition and desire is a thirst. In our every-day language we say that an ambitious person thirsts after knowledge. Those who are drawn to Jesus by the Father, thirst after knowledge also, but it is a knowledge that will lead to everlasting life. All the knowledge of this world’s arrangements one can store up in his mind will not lead to everlasting life, but a greater understanding of the Word of God and His will for His people during this present time acted upon, will bring everlasting life.

It seems that the water of life of which Jesus spoke was the truths recorded in the Word of God. By the Word of God, however, we are not referring to the paper and ink with which the Bible is printed, but rather the thoughts and purposes of God conveyed to our minds by these means. The printed page may perish, but God’s thoughts will not perish, nor will His purposes fail.

At the first, the Gospel was preached by word of mouth only, but it was none the less the power of God unto salvation to all who believed it. It was just as much water of life to thirsty souls, just as much the Word of God, as later, when it came to be expressed in printed form.

When we speak of the Word of God and remember how our Lord described it as the “water of life,” we have in mind the message of the Gospel of Christ, wherein is revealed God’s purposes and plans, not only for our salvation now, but also for all mankind in due time. This message of salvation is based on the redemptive work of our, Lord Jesus. It is the partaking or embracing of this message that gives one the desire for greater understanding of the plan of God.

We call to mind the words of our Lord to the woman at the well—“Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but whosoever shall drink of the water I shall give him, shall never thirst, but the water I shall give him shall be a well of water springing up unto eternal life.” How wonderful this statement must have appeared to the woman at the well, and how wonderful it appears to us, even after we have learned its real meaning. We are continually learning more and more from this “water of life,” appreciating it more each day we live, and finding still greater refreshment in it, as we continue to partake of it.

Those who have truly found Jesus and who have made a full consecration of their hearts to God have found the happiness which the world is seeking in vain in other directions. They have found a heart satisfaction which is able to offset trials, sorrows, difficulties and disappointments, and to glory in the realization that their experiences are working to their advantage, proving them, and preparing them for still greater riches by and by.

For one to gain eternal life during this Gospel Age, the teachings of God’s Word respecting His plans and purposes must be fully embraced. As we read in John 17:3,—“This is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”

Other Scriptures also refer to the value of the Word of God. In John 6:67-69, we read —“Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Again, in 1 Pet. 1:23-25, the Apostle Peter speaks of believers as being begotten again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. Then he goes on to say, “For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away, but the word of the Lord endureth forever. This is the *Word* which by the gospel is preached unto you.” This passage indicates the great

power behind the Word of God—so great that it is life, *water of life*, for it can and does lead one to the position where he becomes begotten of the spirit.

Further, in Phil. 2:15,16, the thought of “holding forth the word of life” is spoken of those who have partaken of the water of life—the truths revealed in the Word of God—and have consecrated their lives to God. The important thing about this is that they desire to pass this good news of the Word of God on to others. The Apostle here expresses it as “holding forth the word of life.”

The water of life is always refreshing to the Lord’s people. No matter how often we turn to the Word. of God, it is always the same ; it does not lose its refreshing taste. For instance, we turn to Psa. 23; we all know the Psalm, but verse 2 is appropriate here,—”He leadeth me beside the still *waters*.”

In Psa. 119:105 we read—”Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” We can always turn to appropriate Scriptures to suit the occasion of our needs, for, as in past times, the Word of God today is indeed the water of life to the Christian.

At the beginning of this Gospel Age our Lord gave out enough truths to satisfy the needs of His followers at that time. He told them that He had many things to tell them, but they could not bear them. Now, at the end of the age, God’s Word has been revealed to us, giving us a knowledge of His plans and purposes, not only for the church during the present time, but also for the world of mankind in the Millennial Age.

It is interesting to note that in the Millennial Age God’s Word is spoken of as the water of life also. “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the *waters*, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” (Isa. 55:1.)

In Rev. 22:1, 2,17 we also read—”And he showed me a pure river of *water of life*, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on; either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And the spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the *water of life* freely.” So, whether it is now, or in the next age, salvation can come only through partaking of the water of life, of which Jehovah Himself is the fountain.

The presence of God calms the soul, and gives it quiet and repose even during the day, and in the midst of occupation—but we must be given up to God without reserve.

—Fenelon.

Melbourne Christmas Convention.

The brethren of the Melbourne Class wish to announce that their Annual Convention will be held this year (D.V.) on December 24th, 25th, 26th and 27th in the Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond, and all friends able to attend these gatherings are cordially invited to make their arrangement accordingly. Further information from the Class Secretary—Mr. J. B. Hiam, 16 Kennedy Street, South Oakleigh, S.E.13, Victoria.

A very good Oxford Bible, with References, India paper, thumb index, Brevier clear type, **Persian** Morocca binding, is now available at 60/- . Same Bible with Concordance and Subject Index at ‘70/-.

Revised Standard Version.—A new edition of this Bible is now available in strong cloth binding at 26/- post paid.

Pilgrimage Ended.

ON the evening of October 19th, the pilgrim way of our dear Brother Gibson, of Melbourne, was brought to a close after a life of upwards of forty years as a devoted follower and servant of the Master.

A native of Scotland, our Brother Gibson had come to Australia in the early years of this century, and also visited Canada from time to time since first coming to Australia. In the year 1922, while in Canada, the truths of the Bible having been fully accepted, and consecration to the Lord having been fully entered upon, the symbol of baptism was gladly taken as demonstrating his delight to serve the Lord in spirit and truth throughout the earthly pilgrimage, in hope of gaining the heavenly inheritance to which the Lord invites all His dear children to aspire, by His grace and strength.

Returning to Australia with our dear Sister Gibson about the year 1924, various parts of Australia were visited as they felt led in serving the Lord's cause to the best of their ability. In the course of years some changes in association with other Christians were found necessary, and it was a pleasure to hear our dear Brother declare, some years ago now, that he felt very happy and delighted to assemble with us at the Berean Bible Class in Melbourne for fellowship and study in the Lord's name and spirit.

This happy association with our dear Brother Gibson continued over some years at the regular gatherings in Melbourne, and his assistance at the Bible studies and with addresses at various times was very helpful and profitable in the service of the Lord's cause. Our dear Brother possessed a notable talent for explaining the Scriptures at the Bible studies, and he did not spare himself when often physical strength was much reduced. Over the past twelve months in particular ill-health prevented him from attending the gatherings, and our Brother was much missed by us all. The last occasion when our Brother Gibson joined the gathering was for the Memorial of our Lord's death, in April this year, at which time it was evident that our dear Brother's strength was failing greatly. However, he always presented a brave and cheerful outlook, and it was always a pleasure to visit him in his home and to note his readiness to converse on the truths of the Bible which were always his delight. In accord with the Lord's promise to His faithful followers, we have every confidence in our dear Brother Gibson gaining an abundant entrance into the heavenly kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in the first resurrection.

Warm and loving sympathy is extended to our dear Sister Gibson in the loss of such a devoted Christian husband, but we feel sure her heart response will be that the Lord does all things well, for He knows best the time and manner for the closing of each earthly pilgrimage, in the hope of the glorious reuniting beyond the vale of all members of the Bride of the Lamb, to the praise of God.

"For ever with the Lord!"
Amen, so let it be!
Life from the dead is in that word,
'Tis immortality.

"For ever with the Lord!"
Father, Thy blessed will
We're learning daily through Thy Word,
And seeking to fulfil.

And when our latest breath
Shall rend the veil in twain,
Through merit of our Saviour's death
We hope this bliss to gain.

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