



Volume XX. No. 9 MELBOURNE, 1st SEPTEMBER, 1937.
Price—Twopence Halfpenny

Beheaded for the Witness of Jesus.

“And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”—Rev.20:4

REVELATION is a beautiful, symbolic Book picturing truth. The chapter from which this text is taken contains in itself several pictures in few words covering the entire Messianic Age. Satan's binding at the beginning of the Age is first shown; then the judgment of those who are sitting upon the thrones of the earth; then the exaltation of the true Church to reign with Christ. The governments, of the world, while capable perhaps of giving some blessing, are not satisfactory, and must soon give place to the new Government under God's dear Son, which will bring blessing to all the families of the earth.

A brief mention is made respecting what shall occur at the close of the thousand years of Christ's Reign. After men have been made perfect, they must be tested, while Satan shall be “loosed for a little season,” prior to his destruction. Then the Revelator depicts the Great White Throne, before which all the world, the living and the dead, are to be brought for judgment, for trial, having received the wonderful opportunities of the glorious Kingdom of Christ.

How These Souls Are “Beheaded.”

But our subject relates to a part of verse 4. The word soul signifies person. Through erroneous doctrines this word has come to have attached to it a wrong meaning, as being something that people possess rather than something that they are. St. John the Revelator was given a vision of the persons who would be beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God. He was given a foreview of what would be their portion—first of suffering, then of glory and reward. Their reward would be to live and reign with Christ. These were a special class, who had been beheaded for a certain reason. The word “beheaded” here is symbolic. . All the true Church were to be beheaded. We know that Christ and the majority of the Apostles were not literally beheaded. And but few of Jesus's followers have been beheaded literally.

The Bible shows that God has appointed that those who come into Christ shall renounce their own headship, their own will, and receive instead the Will of Him whom God has chosen to be their Head--Jesus. Christ. They are to be members of Christ's Body. “God hath given Him (Jesus) to be the Head over the Church, which is His Body.” (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22, 23; 1 Cor. 12:27.) Jesus is the great Mediator for

the world. During this Gospel Age, God has been preparing a Church class, who are to be the members of His Body, and to be associated with Him in His great future work for mankind. The first members of this Body were the Apostles. These freely gave up their lives in the cause of Christ. They gave up their wills, submitting themselves to the will of God — they were beheaded.

Down through this present Age, members have been added to Christ, first from the Jews, then from the Gentiles— from every nation, kindred, and tongue. The only way that anyone can become a member of this anointed Body of Christ is to present himself a sacrifice to God, first trusting in the sacrificial merit of Jesus. He is our great Substitute, who has redeemed us from the death penalty resting upon Adam's race. Accepting Him thus, and presenting ourselves to God through Christ, His merit is imputed to us, and we are accepted as joint sacrificers with Jesus, who then becomes our Head. We are thus beheaded. Our own will is dead. So during this Age there has been, a little company of people who have taken a course different from that of the remainder of the world, different from that of the apostate systems. These become sons of God. They are dead with Jesus as human beings, and are begotten to a new, a spiritual nature.—Col. 3:3.

What This Beheading Signifies.

It is important that all those who make a consecration of themselves to God, understand clearly that they are thus renouncing all the hopes and ambitions of the world for the far grander and heavenly hopes now held out to those who become disciples of Christ, who deny themselves to take up their cross and follow Him. The question for each one who has made this choice is: Am I faithfully following in the footsteps of Jesus? Jesus gave up His will wholly to the Father. He said, "I came not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." We are to follow His example, to walk in His steps. We are to lay down our lives for the brethren, as He laid down His life.

The losing of our heads, our wills, does not mean that, we actually have no will; but that our wills are fully submitted to God's will. Whatever we see to be contrary to His will for us is to be wholly relinquished. We may be sure that our Saviour, when on earth, being a perfect man, had a will, a strong will; but that will was entirely submitted to the will of His Heavenly Father. "Not My will, but Thine, be done," was His expression. "The cup which My Father hath poured for Me, shall I not drink it?" He said.

Because our Lord Jesus fully gave up His will to God, and was obedient even unto the ignominious death of the cross, the Father highly exalted Him, giving Him a name "far above angels, principalities and powers, and every name that is named." (Eph. 1:20-23.) And we, His Church, if faithful to our heavenly calling, are to be exalted with Him and under Him as our Head. The Bible presents a beautiful picture: God, the Father of all; our Lord Jesus Christ next to the Father; the Church, the Body, or Bride of Christ next; then the lower spiritual orders of being; lastly, will be the restored world, when God's great Plan is complete. How wonderful it seems! How much more wonderful than anything we could possibly have conceived of ourselves! What a great and good God we have!

God's Character, Long Traduced, Now Understood.

How great has been the misconceptions of God's character which have for so many centuries beclouded men's minds. These nations calling themselves Christian have made God out as worse even than heathen nations represent their gods. While we declared, "God is Love," we pictured Him in our creeds as the veriest Demon—taking pleasure in carrying out a programme which would mean an eternity of torture to thousands of millions of our race. "But while we were long blinded by the Adversary to thus think of our gracious God., we have great cause for thankfulness that our eyes are now opening more and more widely, and we can something of the lengths, and breadths, and heights, and depths of God's love.

When we see how the Father has exalted our Saviour for His faithfulness, we who are following in Jesus' footsteps have sure grounds for faith that will also exalt us with Him. Otherwise we might be inclined to say, "Oh, it is too wonderful! The thought- that we have been invited to be sons of God and to share the Divine Nature with Jesus seems too marvellous for belief." But when we see how the Father fulfilled His promises to our Lord and Head, and realise that we have been called to share His glory and throne as His bride, surely we can believe. Jesus verifies the Father's promise to us, saying, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne, even as I also overcame and am, set down with My Father in His Throne."—Rev. 3: '21.

Door To High Calling Still Open.

There is still opportunity for some to gain this "High Calling." The "door" to this great favour is not yet closed, There is, a little time remaining. If any could gain the whole world and yet lose this great prize, they would be losing much—oh, so much! Nothing that earth can offer can compare with it. All the wealth of a multi-millionaire would be as nothing.

When we give up our wills to the Lord this is not all. We are then to take up our cross and follow Jesus. We are to carry out our consecration vows. Our time, our influence, our money, our property, our all, now belong to God. The Lord does not mislead us into thinking, that fulfilling our consecration is something easy. It does not mean merely going to church. It means living as Christ lived. It means walking the way of the cross even unto death. The world will consider such a course very foolish. They will say, "Don't do it! Have some pleasure in life. Don't give up you', will to anybody!" This would be sound advice if our will were to be given up to any other than God Himself. The Adversary would like to make us think that giving our will to God is a most foolish thing, and then he will endeavour to entrap us so that we are completely in bondage to his will, which is a wholly evil will.

Satan also seeks to ensnare and destroy the individual will through hypnotism, mesmerism, etc. These are dangerous things. Were it not that God has implanted a strong will in mankind, we cannot doubt that Satan and his evil angels would long ago have led the entire world into complete captivity to sin. He puts light for darkness and darkness for light. We are to be on guard against the machinations of these evil spirits through spiritism. All these are methods by which he Adversary seeks to seize and capture the will. When our will is given to the Lord, however, it means the turning of it in, a direction that bring our own highest blessing and welfare. Our will is not captured, but guided and strengthened in the right way. We have found by experience how unsatisfactory has been the result of trying to guide ourselves, of following our own will, without the leading of the Lord. Our very best endeavours, unaided by Divine Grace, are very defective, and the results disappointing. How glad we are, then, to have the Lord, take charge of us, and guide our wills and our efforts. We know that thus we are safe.

If anyone is afraid to trust the Lord for fear that He will require something that would be harmful, he must wait until he comes to see how fully we can trust the Almighty. If He were the God we once supposed Him to be we might well be afraid to place ourselves in His hands. But since we have learned of His love for us; of His wonderful provision for us notwithstanding our fallen condition; of His provision of Restitution for the world, and of the High Calling for the Church, we can well acclaim: "Oh this is the very personification of Justice and Love!" We rejoice in this great loving God, and are so glad to give ourselves to Him and call Him our Father.

That is a very beautiful hymn of consecration by Frances Ridley Havergal: "Take my life and let it be, Lord, acceptable to Thee." Yes, we are acceptable to God through Christ. Thus only can we come. We give Him our whole life. "Take. my hands and let them move at the impulse of Thy love." Yes, but our hands are imperfect, and it is only through Jesus that our work is acceptable to God, that our hands may glorify Him. "Take my feet, and let them be swift on errands, Lord, for Thee." Yes, we wish Him to use

our feet in His dear service. Gladly will we hasten on errands of love for Him. "Take My voice, and let it bring honour always to my King." Yes, we wish Him to take our voice. But our words are very imperfect. Our brain and our tongue are faulty. But the Father says, "I will cover you with the merit of Jesus. He was perfect, and I will credit His perfection to you. Your voice may have sometimes been used to slander another; the tongue has great power for evil as well as good. But now you have submitted that voice, that tongue, to Me, I will make it a power for good."

"Take my lips, and let them be moved with messages from Thee." Yes, that is the thought. Let the blessed message of salvation and grace overflow our lips to God's praise, and to the blessing of others. "Take my silver and my gold; nothing, Lord, would I withhold." The Lord answers, "Yes dear child, I will take this which you give to Me. I do not need your gold and silver; for 'all the silver and gold are Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.' But I will receive it as a mark of your love, as an indication of your devotion to Me."

"Take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless praise." We often fear that our moments may not always praise the Lord as they ought, and our days are not always just what we would like them to be. But our Lord lovingly answers our troubled hearts and says, "I know even better than you do how imperfect you are in word and deed. But through Christ I receive you, and accept your imperfect works and endeavours. He will make up for your unavoidable deficiencies." So we take courage and strive that our days and hours and moments May indeed bring glory to our King who so loves us and whom we so love. His arrangement for us in Christ is so wonderful.

"Take my will and make it Thine." Ah, yes! That is the very first thing to be done. "It shall be no longer mine."

We wish our will to be the Lord's and His alone. If we have any self-will God cannot use us. "Take my heart, it is Thine own." Yes, we have consecrated our heart with all its impulses and affections to the Lord. "Thus in me Thyself enthrone." Our heart shall be His royal throne for evermore.

"Take my love, my God, I pour At Thy feet its treasure-store.

Take myself—I wish to be Ever only, all for Thee!"

This is indeed our sentiment. The doing of all this is a life-work. While our consecration was the work of a moment, yet the fulfilling of it is the work of our entire lives. "Be thou faithful unto' death, and I will give thee a crowd of life." So while in one sense Our beheading, mitt' decapitation, is an instantaneous matter, yet we must continue to keep ourselves beheaded even unto death. Then we shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years; and be His associates in all His glory and honour for evermore. Glory, honour, immortality! Wonderful, wonderful! If such a prize cities not appeal to our hearts, what would? When' we see the loyalty and courage manifested by the soldiers of the nations, how they are willing to go down to death for their nations, often not knowing even for what they are fighting, how loyal should we be to our heavenly King—we who have hopes so glorious held out to us, who have a King so infinitely worthy of our zeal and loyalty? Our King does not say, "Go," He says, "Come." Gladly will we be beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God.

Divine Guidance.

“In the mysteries of my life
Where the threads all twist and twine,
‘Mid the shadow and the strife,
Sadly missing His design,
With its gracious, loving pleading,
Breaks the tender Voice divine—

’Let Me take the threads in My hands,
Child, before they pass through Thine.’
“Lo, a beauteous pattern growing
On a deep’ning ground of love,
Tints all blending, shining glowing

Mirror fairer things above;
And the quiet hands rest sweetly
In that strong, sure clasp of Thine,
All the threads now pass through
Thy hands, Dear Lord, e’er they come to mine.”

—Selected.

PEOPLES PAPER.

Published by the Denim Bible Institute, 19 Ermington Place, Kew, E4, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

(Monthly) 2/6 (60 cents) per annum, post paid,

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 need, either in the correspondence or in the sermons reported.

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

The World and the Gospel.

UNDER the above heading and bearing a picture of the world, with the words, “The whole world for Jesus Now,” also the quotation from Matt. 28:19, the following appears in a church paper, sent in by one of our brethren recently

Less than 150 years ago it was estimated that 481 Millions did not have an intelligent knowledge of Jesus Christ. Four years ago, it was estimated that the population of the world was 1958 millions, and that of these no less than 1370 millions were unreached by the Gospel. Thus in under 150 years the heathen world had increased almost threefold.

“Church of Christ, arise! Our Master’s command still holds; the need of the world is immense; we have the means of meeting the need.”

When it is realised that the increasing number of heathen quoted above has come about during practically the same time as that recorded in Daniel —”The time of the end; (when) many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased” (Dan. 12:4)—a time of enlightenment which from the natural standpoint should have been the most favourable for extending the Gospel message to every human being, does not the truth of this matter indicate that the time for winning “the whole world for Jesus” is not yet? Surely it does, and there is abundant Scriptural testimony to this effect for all ‘who in spirit and truth seek to “rightly divide the word of truth.” (2 Tim. 2:15.)

In John 18:36 we have the words of Jesus, “My kingdom is not of this world.” How strange, then, it would be if His words in Matt. 28:19 were intended to convey a contrary meaning, as though His disciples should, during this Gospel Age, teach all people of all nations and so bring about the conversion of the world. The margin reading of this verse states, “Make disciples, or Christians of all nations,” and this is in accord with Matt. 24:15, “... This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for witness unto all nations.” There is a great difference between the gospel being preached as a witness, to make disciples of, or from all nations, and striving to gain “the whole world for Jesus now.”

How important it is that all who have come to know of the salvation in Christ Jesus should also seek to understand how the Lord is pleased to work out the various features of His great plan for the redemption of mankind, that they may thus work in harmony with His designs and not be following ideas of their own.

As the Scriptures indicate, the Lord is “taking out a people for His name,” during this Gospel Age, prior to the work of the Millennial Age—of “building again the tabernacle of David . . . that the residue of men might seek after the Lord.” (Acts 15:14-18.) So, the great increase in the number of the heathen is only to be expected, inasmuch as the conversion of these multitudes is not yet intended of the Lord. Further, the Apostle indicates that the so-called Christian nations in these very days would be manifest as ungodly, largely, being “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof,” (2 Tim. 3:1-5,) and this, after the gospel has been preached in their midst for hundreds of years. Even if every individual of the heathen could be reached with the Gospel at present, if the effect was no better than what has taken place in those countries claiming to be Christian, they would still need to be converted and brought to a knowledge of the truth, when “the times of restitution” are operating for the blessing of all, at our Lord’s second advent. (1 Tim. 2:4-6; Acts 3:20, 21.)

While, then, the need of the world may seem immense, and surely is, yet the Church, the Body of Christ must first be completed before any effective work takes place for the deliverance of the masses of mankind from sin and death.

In the new age, when the “new heavens” (Christ and His saints) are reigning over the world, all shall know the Lord from the least unto the greatest, and the blessings then flowing out will bring peace and everlasting life to all the willing and obedient, ‘upon the restored earth. (Eph. 4:11., 12; Rev. 21:1-5.)

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QUESTION BOX.

Question.--"Tabernacle Shadows," page 97, last sentence. Is it right to refer to the broken body of the Christ as a ransom?

Answer.—Although all the ransom price for the sins of the world was provided by the Head, "The Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," yet it has pleased God that those who "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth" (Rev. 14:4) should be very closely associated with Christ. Paul uses language in Rom. 8:36 (quoted from Psa. 44:22) similar to that referring to Christ in Isaiah 53, "For thy sake we are killed all the (Gospel) day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

The picture in the "Tabernacle Shadows" is a very beautiful one. The Head was first to suffer and to be laid on the altar, then member by member throughout this Gospel Age has "suffered with Him," been "baptised into His death," being partakers of the sufferings of Christ, "planted in the likeness of His death"--a sacrificial death—thus "filling up that which is behind (left over) of the afflictions of Christ for His Body's sake." "Till we all come . . . unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"--a perfect man. Thus the afflictions of Christ will be complete when all the members have been laid on the altar with the Head.

Possibly this sentence referred to could be better stated, that when the world of mankind in the next age come to an understanding of the working out of the Divine Plan of the ages, they will recognise God's love and wisdom as manifested in the broken body of the Christ, by which means the ransom or redemption of all was accomplished, although "Jesus paid it all." "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing-." (Rev. 5:12.)

A Little at a Time

"As thy days, so shall thy strength be."—Dent. 33:25.

A mother once said to her little girl who was sewing: "If you look the whole length of your seam you will get disheartened, for it seems so long: look only on the little bit between your thumb and finger."

Our life is mercifully cut up into "littles." God knows that if its "whole" were presented at once, it would crush us down. Let us live to-day and ask for grace to set about doing cheerfully the "littles" of to-morrow.

The Divine Plan of the Ages.

THIS article is a reprint of the closing chapter of the book, "Divine Plan of the Ages," and is presented as a most profitable summary of this helpful work. Those who have studied this book can testify to its great value in assisting to a clear understanding of God's Word and it is highly recommended to all truth seekers. Various editions available will be noted at the close of this chapter.

Our Duty toward the Truth—Its Cost, Its Value, Its Profit.

IN the preceding chapters we have seen that both the light of nature and that of revelation clearly demonstrate the fact that an intelligent, wise, almighty and righteous God is the Creator of all things and that He is the supreme and rightful Lord of all; that all things animate and inanimate are subject to His control; and that the Bible is the revelation of His character and plans so far as He is pleased to disclose them to men. From it we have learned that though evil now predominates among some of His creatures, it exists for only a limited time and to a limited extent, and, by His permission, for wise ends which He has in view. We have also learned that though darkness now covers the earth, and gross darkness the people, yet God's light will in due time dispel all the darkness, and the whole earth will be filled with His glory.

We have seen that His great plan is one that has required ages for its accomplishment thus far, and that yet another age will be required to complete it; and that during all the dark ages of the past, when God seemed to have almost forgotten His creatures, His plan for their future blessing has been silently but grandly working out, though during all those ages the mysteries of His plan have been wisely hidden from men. We have also seen that the day or age which is now about to dawn upon the world is to be the day of the world's judgment or trial, and that all previous preparation has been for the purpose of giving mankind in general as favourable an opportunity as possible, when, as individuals, they will be placed on trial for eternal life. The long period of six thousand years has greatly multiplied the race, and their buffetings and sufferings under the dominion of evil have given them an experience which will be greatly to their advantage when they are brought to judgment. And though the race as a whole has been permitted thus to suffer for six thousand years, yet as individuals they have run their course in a few brief years.

We have seen that, while the race was undergoing this necessary discipline, in due time God sent His Son to redeem them; and that while the mass of mankind did not recognise the Redeemer in His humiliation, and would not believe that the Lord's Anointed would thus come to their rescue, yet from among those whose hearts were toward God, and who believed His promises, God has been, during these ages past, selecting two companies to receive the honours of His kingdom—the honours of sharing in the execution of the divine plan. These two select companies, we have seen, are to constitute the two phases of the Kingdom of God. And from the prophets we learn that this kingdom is soon to be established in the earth; that under its wise and just administration all the families of the earth will be blessed with a most favourable opportunity to prove themselves worthy of everlasting life; that, as the result of their redemption by the precious blood of Christ, a grand highway of holiness will be cast up; that the ransomed of the Lord (all mankind —Heb. 2:9) may walk in it; that it will be a public thoroughfare made comparatively easy for all who earnestly desire to become pure, holy; and that all the stumbling-stones will be gathered out, and all the snares, allurements and pitfalls removed, and blessed will all those be who go up thereon to perfection and everlasting life.

It is manifest that this judgment, or rulership, cannot begin until Christ, whom Jehovah hath appointed to be the Judge or Ruler of the world, has come again—not again in humiliation, but in power and great glory; not again to redeem the world, but to judge (rule) the world in righteousness. A trial can in no case proceed until the judge is on the bench and the court in session at the appointed time, though before that

time there may be a great preparatory work. Then shall the King sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He shall judge them during that age by their works, opening to them the books of the Scriptures and filling the earth with the knowledge of the Lord. And by their conduct under all that favour and assistance, He shall decide who of them are worthy of life everlasting in the ages of glory and joy to follow.--Matt. 25:31; Rev. 20:11-13.

Thus we have seen that the second advent of Messiah, to set up His kingdom in the earth, is an event in which all classes of men may have hope, an event which, when fully understood, will bring joy and gladness to all hearts. It is the day when the Lord's "little flock" of consecrated saints has the greatest cause for rejoicing. It is the glad day when the espoused virgin Church with joy becomes the Bride, the Lamb's wife; when she comes up out of the wilderness leaning upon the arm of her Beloved, and enters into His glorious inheritance. It is the day when the true Church glorified with its Head, will be endued with divine authority and power, and will begin the great work for the world, the result of which will be the complete restitution of all things. And it will be a glad day for the world when the great Adversary is bound, when the fetters that have held the race for six thousand years are broken, and when the knowledge of the Lord fills the whole earth as the waters cover the sea.

A knowledge of these things, and the evidences that they are nigh, even at the door, should have a powerful influence upon all, but especially upon the consecrated children of God, who are seeking the prize of the divine nature. We urge such, while they lift up their heads and rejoice, knowing that their redemption draweth nigh, to lay aside every weight and hindrance, and to run patiently the -race in which they have started. Look away from self and its unavoidable weaknesses and imperfections, knowing that all such weaknesses are covered fully by the merits of the ransom given by Christ Jesus our Lord, and that your sacrifices and self-denials are acceptable to God through our Redeemer and Lord—and thus only. Let us remember that the strength sufficient which God has promised us, and by use of which we can be "overcomers," is provided in His Word. It is a strength derived from a knowledge of His character and plans, and of the conditions upon which we may share in them. Thus Peter expresses it, saying, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ our Lord, according as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature."-2 Pet. 1:2-4.

But to obtain this knowledge and this strength, which God thus proposes to supply to each runner for the heavenly prize, will surely test the sincerity of your consecration vows. You have consecrated all your time, all your talents, to the Lord; now the question is, How much of it are you giving? Are you still willing, according to your covenant of consecration, to give up all—to give up your own plans and methods, and the theories of yourselves and others, to accept of God's plan and way and time of doing His great work? Are you willing to do this at the cost of earthly friendships and social ties? And are you willing to give up time from other things for the investigation of these glorious themes so heart-cheering to the truly consecrated; with the certain knowledge that it will cost you this selfdenial? If all is not consecrated, or if you only half meant it when you gave all to the Lord, then you will begrudge the time and effort needful to search His Word as for hid treasure, to obtain thus the strength needful for all the trials of faith incident to the present, above other times.

But think not that the giving will end with the giving of the needful time and energy to this study: it will not. The sincerity of your sacrifice of self will be tested in full, and will prove you either worthy or unworthy of membership in that "little flock," the overcoming Church, which will receive the honours of the kingdom- If you give diligence to the Word of God, and receive its truths into a good, honest, consecrated heart, it will beget in you such a love for God and His plan, and such a desire to tell the good tidings, to preach the gospel. that it will become the all-absorbing theme of life thereafter; and this will not only separate you from the world and from many nominal Christians, in spirit, but it will lead to

separation from such entirely. They will think you peculiar and separate you from their company, and you will be despised and counted a fool for Christ's sake; because they know us not, even as they knew not the Lord.—2 Cor. 4:8-10; Luke 6:22; John 3:1; 1 Cor. 3:18.

Are you willing to follow on to know the Lord through evil and through good report? Are you willing to forsake all, to follow as He may lead you by His Word?—to ignore the wishes of friends, as well as your own desires? It is hoped that many of the consecrated who read this volume may by it be so quickened to fresh zeal and fervency of spirit, through a clearer apprehension of the divine plan, that they will be able to say, “By the grace of God, I will follow on to know and to serve the Lord, whatever may be the sacrifice involved.” Like the noble Bereans (Acts 17:11), let such studiously set themselves to prove what has been presented in the foregoing pages. Prove it, not by the conflicting traditions and creeds of men, but by the only correct and divinely authorised standard—God's own Word. It is to facilitate such investigation that we have cited so many scriptures.

It will be useless to attempt to harmonise the divine plan herein set forth with many of the ideas previously held and supposed to be Scriptural, yet not proved so. It will be observed that the divine plan is complete and harmonious with itself in every part, and that it is in perfect harmony with the character which the Scriptures ascribe to its great Author. It is a marvellous display of wisdom, justice, love and power. It carries with it its own evidence of superhuman design, being beyond the power of human invention, and almost beyond the power of human comprehension,

Doubtless questions will arise on various points inquiring for solution according to the plan herein presented. Careful, thoughtful Bible study will settle many of these at once; and to all we can confidently say, “No question which you raise need go without a sufficient answer, fully in harmony with the views herein presented.” Succeeding volumes elaborate the various branches of this one plan, disclosing at every step that matchless harmony of which the truth alone can boast. And be it known that no other system of theology even claims, or has ever attempted, to harmonise in itself every statement of the Bible; yet—nothing short of this can we claim for these views. This harmony not only with the Bible, but with the divine character and with sanctified common sense, must have arrested the attention of the conscientious reader already, and filled him with awe, as well as with hope and confidence. It is marvellous indeed, yet just what we should expect of the TRUTH, and of God's infinitely wise and beneficent plan.

And while the Bible is thus opening up from this standpoint, and disclosing wondrous things (Psa. 119:1.8), the light of the present day upon the various creeds and traditions of men is affecting them in an opposite manner. They are being recognised even by their worshippers as imperfect and deformed, and hence they are being measurably ignored; and though still subscribed to, they are seldom elaborated, for very shame. And the shame attaching to these human creeds and traditions is spreading to the Bible, which is supposed to uphold these deformities of thought as of divine origin. Hence the freedom with which the various advanced thinkers, so-called, are beginning to deny various parts of the Bible not congenial to their views. How striking, then, the providence of God, which at this very time opens before His children this truly glorious and harmonious plan—a plan that reject: not one, but harmonises every part and item of His Word. Truth, when due, becomes meat for the household of faith, that they may grow thereby. Matt. 24:45.) Whoever comes in contact with truth, realising its character, has thereby a responsibility with reference to it. It must be either received and acted upon, or rejected and despised. To ignore it does not release from responsibility. If we accept it ourselves, we have a responsibility toward it also, because it is for all the household of faith; and each one receiving it becomes its debtor, and, if a faithful steward, must dispense it to the other members of the family of God. Let your light shine! if it again become darkness, how great will be the darkness. Lift up the light! Lift up a standard for the people!

“The Divine Plan of the Ages”

This Bible Study, revealing God’s wonderful Plan of the Ages, will be deeply appreciated by all who love the Lord and His righteousness. Containing 350 pages, it is highly interesting and instructive, and most suitable for general use amongst old and young, learned and unlearned.

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BEREAN BIBLE INSTITUTE,

Partaking of the Fruits and Laboring.

“The Husbandman that laboreth must first partaker of the fruits.” 2 Tim. 2:6.

It is a very significant fact to all who search the Scriptures that very rarely does the truth lie on the surface.

Because this is so, many give up Bible reading altogether. No beauty is found between the covers of the Sacred Book very often, just because the reader expects the unfolding as simply as reading a novel. We must read carefully and thoughtfully, and above everything else with prayer to God that He, through the Spirit, may shed light upon our searching.

If we were looking at the above text on the surface only we might say “Oh, well, it simply means that the man who does the work is entitled to the first share in the dividends, or to his wages; or that the farmer who ploughs, sows and reaps is entitled to the first portion of the crop.” There is a sense in which this may be so, but it does not appear to have been the Apostle’s thought here, as evidenced by the following verse:—
”Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.”

There is a deeper meaning if we can but grasp it. While many have taken the words to infer that before we can expect to receive the fruits or to be partaker of the fruits we must be prepared to labor, the Apostle’s thought seems to have been somewhat contrary — that before we can labor effectively, we must be first partaker of the fruits.

We all know that in the varied experiences of our earthly course, if we find someone in trouble or distress of any kind, that we can help far more effectively, and are always more readily sympathetic, if we have passed through some similar experience ourselves. So it seems that the Apostle Paul is trying to show us that before we can become effective laborers in God’s vineyard we must be first partakers of the fruits.

What is the fruit of which we must be partakers? We have the answer surely in Gal. 5:22,23. “The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” We are told that against all such there is no law. There can be no doubt that this is the fruit to which be our Lord Himself referred in John 15:8, “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples.”

We shall not make a detailed study of the ninefold fruit of the spirit, for at this time we are concerned only as to how we can be partakers of it. There is but one way of receiving this fruit of the spirit and that is by Him who said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” Some even dare to think they can partake of the fruits otherwise. They realize that to be patient, humble, unselfish, kind, pure, etc., are good and right but they trust in their own strength to obtain or partake of them.. As one writer has put it—”Some are ready to doff the cap to Christ but unwilling to bow the knee.” We find that the Apostle is warning against such in this same passage—in the preceding verse—”If a man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully.”

In the realm of sport, etc., we see men striving for masteries, striving it is true for a corruptible crown, but even such a crown is not won unless the competitors strive lawfully. There are rules and regulations always to be observed. If these are not adhered to, the race or game ends not in a crown but disqualification. It behoves us each one to see then, that striving for the crown, “incorruptible and that fadeth not away,” we do not presume to stand before our God without the wedding garment of our Lord’s imputed righteousness, and without taking His yoke upon us and learning of His meekness and lowliness of heart. It is in this way that we become partakers of the fruits of the spirit, the fruits which we must partake of first. before we can hope to be used of the Lord in imparting them to others. The laboring husband-men need the testimony of the Samaritans (John ‘4:39.-42). We believe, not because of another’s saying, but we have heard Him ourselves. We are partakers of the fruit of His Gospel, and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the World.

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Published by &teen Bible Institute, 19 Ermington Place, Kew, E4 Printed by Hickling & Powell, Brunswick Victoria.