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Abiding in the Doctrine of Christ.

(Convention)

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."-2 John 9.

AS the end of this Gospel Age draws on apace the saints of God are aware that it is a time beset with many and peculiar difficulties. When Jesus was questioned by His disciples on the Mount of Olives respecting events of this Age, He told them that many false teachers would arise and deceive many, and because iniquity would abound the love of many would wax cold. (Matt. 24:11, 12.)

Throughout the age these false teachers have been rising and performing their foretold work—deceiving many. The result has been to cause iniquity to abound, and to becloud the truth; and because of the strong trait of man to follow the popular majority, the love of many for the true, beautiful, holy and right had indeed waxed cold, so cold that we seem to be approaching the crest of the wave of time foretold in the prophecy of Amos 8:11—"A famine in the land, not of bread or water but of hearing the true words of the Lord."

Probably wickedness in some forms has never been more strongly entrenched in the earth than it is today; but wickedness has always abounded in the earth, therefore, we conclude that the particular ones whom false teachers have deceived and caused to fall away, are not those of the world at all, but those who have claimed higher regimentation—even professing Christians.

Many things make for the distress of our day, but a large share is attributable to professing Christians deceived by the teachings of false teachers. Nor can we lay the entire blame upon the false teachers. Those accepting their teaching and conforming to it without proper investigation have also displeased the Lord. What happened in Jeremiah's day has happened again—"the prophets prophesy falsely. .. and the people love to have it so." (Jer. 5:31.)

Jesus said to His followers, "Ye are the salt of the earth." Has this proved to be so? Yes, as far as true followers are concerned. Wherever the gospel of truth has been promulgated and practised it has had a purifying influence in the world. But once let the deceptions of false teachers creep in and the salt immediately begins to lose its savour—it has no more real influence for good but is fit only to be cast out. Christendom is at this point today.

We read in Jer. 51:7, "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad." The "Babylon" referred to, represents the false religious systems of the world which came into being gradually by deception, and which had its beginning as early as Paul's day, for he said in 2 Thes. 2:7, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work."

That Babylon's roots reached back to the early Church is discerned in the first statement that she had been a golden cup in the Lord's hands, but was later filled with the wine of false doctrines, of which all the nations of the earth have partaken—therefore, "the nations are mad." Also we read in Rev. 18:2, 3—''Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies." Tracing the events of our day as fulfilling these prophecies, what else do the Scriptures tell us of them? They tell all earnest followers of Christ to separate themselves from every organization that retains and teaches false doctrines. In 2 Cor. 6:16-18 we read, "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in

them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thine: and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Also, following on in Rev. 18:4 from where we have already quoted, we read "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." Manifestly it is the harvest time referred to, as in Matt. 13:30, and it is no longer the will of God that tares and wheat should grow together.

Then, of course, we have the words of 2 Tim. 3:1-5. We have read them many times; they portray vividly the conditions ruling in the last days of the age, and they dovetail so neatly with what we now behold that there is only one conclusion a Bible student can arrive at—that we are in those days. It is a day in which according to 2 Tim. 4:3, they (those comprising Babylon) will not endure sound doctrine (wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ —1 Tim. 6:3) but instead, choose teachers who will please their itching ears with unsound doctrines which do not interfere unduly with works of darkness.

Everywhere in the Scripture where the subject is mentioned, it is impressed upon us, that in the last days of the age error, false doctrine and its adherents will flourish (2 Tim. 3:13), while truth in its purity as taught by Jesus and His inspired apostles will decrease, practically to the point of extinction.

In the light of these facts we can see that the experiences of the last, true members of "The Christ" remaining on earth "in the last days" will be lonely. This constitutes a great temptation. A very pronounced trait of humanity, especially amongst the unregenerate, is a strong desire for company. I have noticed many a time how men need to have their minds occupied, and if there should come any period of quiet when they can sit and meditate, instead they turn the wireless on; the very fact of some noise seems to be comforting to them; it seems to be something happening in these last days.

Those of the spiritual mind do not crave fellowship in that way. More often than not we are very pleased to find some quiet spot to get away on our own. But still, at the same time we do crave fellowship, we long for fellowship with those whose hearts are set upon higher things than earth, someone to converse with on these things. If living in isolation from other brethren, we can at times become very lonely and long for someone with whom to fellowship. But we must be careful with whom we fellowship, for it is possible to dishonour our Lord's cause in this way.

We hear the bold assertion of some that they are not one-eyed or bigoted, but can worship the true God in any company. Others again think the fittest place to worship God is where the senses are pleased—pleasant surroundings, sweet singing, lovely organ strains etc. These things are excellent; we are enabled to praise the Lord by these means, but these things do not constitute worship of God in themselves. "The Father seeketh those to worship Him who worship Him in spirit and in truth," and these are they who know doctrine—the one true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, and His great plan of the ages for the redemption of men. Once we are versed in the pure doctrines of God's Word and brought to an understanding of the wrong teachings respecting hell, purgatory, Trinity, immortality of the soul, and world conversion in this age etc., promulgated by false teachers, there can be no real fellowship again with unfruitful works of darkness which false doctrines inspire.

"Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God." Some earnest students have said that without full knowledge of all the circumstances surrounding, they find difficulty in fully understanding some portions of these short epistles of John. However, by reading carefully the previous verses it seems that John had in mind one particular doctrine which he regarded as a great transgression and a danger to the church of which the elect lady and her children were members. The particular deception was a denial that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh, and is recorded in verse 7,—"For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."

There does not seem to be any reason to doubt that a denial of the truth that Jesus was made flesh for the suffering of death for the specific purpose of ransoming men once for all from the consequences of the Fall, was the thin edge of the wedge that ever widened into all the false doctrines which today plague Christendom. We can easily see how a denial of the ransom sacrifice of Jesus gave rise to such heresies as the institution of the Mass, and how one false doctrine quickly led to another.

So in John's day we see the great need for his warning against those who were denying this most essential doctrine, that Jesus Christ came in the flesh, as a sin offering, to give His life a ransom for all to be testified in due time. (1 Tim. 2:6.) Right throughout the age and now in the end of the age it is still a most essential doctrine—the very touchstone of all truth.

Whilst the divinely inspired writings of the Apostles were all written at the inception of the Christian Church, we find that their exhortations were not confined to that era, but have shown themselves ever the guide of the Lord's people as the light has shone more and more toward the perfect day. Therefore to read John's words now about abiding in the doctrine of Christ, our thoughts are carried beyond what was in his mind then.

The spirit of antichrist, was in John's day only , beginning and it widened throughout the age until in our day it has almost swallowed up the truth altogether. If Pilate was so confused that he asked, "What is truth? how much more could the question be raised in the doctrinal strife of our so-called Christian world? The great falling away of the Christian faith and the revelation of "the man of sin" that Paul spoke of in 2 Thes. 2 was still future when John wrote the epistle we now have in mind. As we survey things today, the falling away is past history, the "man of sin" has long been revealed and is now in course of destruction. (2 Thes. 2:8.) The harvest of the age is here, the second presence of our Lord is discerned. John warned against deceivers who confessed not that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh to accomplish the work of His first advent. The Church now is faced with the defence of the truth that our Lord has come in His glorious spirit body to accomplish the work of His second advent — gathering the Church unto Himself, wrecking nations, humbling men and binding Satan, all in •preparation for the glorious thousand year reign of His Kingdom. Thus, additional features called "present truth" are now embraced with other doctrines, and all combined are surely still the doctrine of Christ that it is necessary to know in this end of the age, in order to know both the Father and the Son.

Do we want to continue in the love of God? Then let us follow John's advice in verse 8—"Look to yourselves that ye lose not those things which ye have gained, but that ye receive a full reward." (Marginal rendering.) Those who have made a study know that the most fruitful source of true knowledge of God and the doctrine of Christ has come through the way the Bible has been opened up to clearer understanding by writings revealing God's plan of the ages and harvest truths in these last days. So then, let us continue to study with the Bible at our elbow to "prove all things" and we will continue to grow until at last we attain "fulness of stature" in spiritual things, by God's grace in Christ.

Hear John in the 4th verse of his second epistle, and also the 3rd and 4th verses of his third epistle, say "I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father." "For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." We are at one with the apostle here. How our hearts rejoice to perceive spiritual children walking in the truth. Worldly people measure success by earthly prosperity. God's people measure progress by wideness of spiritual growth. No joy can surpass that of a disciple when he sees others attesting their love for the Lord Jesus Christ and enquiring for further truth, receiving it and continuing to walk in it. (See also 1 Thes. 2:13, 19, 20.)

An abler pen than mine has made this comment on spiritual growth and development:—''Development and maturity of Christian life and character are not of instantaneous acquirement. To the contrary, gradual progression through time and experience, and by the spirit of God is the lesson impressed upon consecrated believers throughout all the apostolic writings. 'Thus runs the apostle Peter's admonition, 'As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby, if so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' (1 Pet. 2:2, 3.) Those of whom the Apostle was speaking may have been men of mature years, yet they were but babes, beginning a new life; indeed, from one standpoint, a new existence—members of a New Creation. And the Apostle counsels them as newborn babes, to earnestly desire the sincere milk of the Word, evidently meaning the simpler truth, peculiarly adopted to those beginning the new experience as disciples of Christ. Those who in simple faith accept the truth in meekness and who as the Apostle says, laying aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envies and all evil speakings, endeavour to walk worthy of this salvation, esteeming it only a reasonable service to surrender themselves to the will of God, are accepted upon the higher plane of spirit begetting and realise that theirs is a spiritual atmosphere, a spiritual realm, inasmuch as such come under the anointing of the holy spirit. Precious indeed are these little ones in the Lord's sight. It was with reference to such that the Lord said to Peter, 'Feed my lambs.' In another place His tender solicitude for these babes of the family is shown, 'It is not the will of my Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish,' "

Now a few words by yet another writer:—"The infant derives its early nourishment from milk; does not the 'babe in Christ' feed upon the milk of the Word—the first principles. Later as he matures and comes of age, he requires strong meat as does a human individual. And when he has become an adult (in things spiritual) he no longer puts things indiscriminately into his mouth (as does an infant), he discriminates between sound and unsound doctrine. He is of those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.Heb. 5:12-14."

I was interested, also, to note a marginal rendering of Heb. 6:1,—"Therefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ let us go on unto completeness, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works," etc. It is like building a house; the foundation is very important. It is necessary to exercise great care that everything is right or the building will not go up square, but once the foundation is properly laid and the building commenced, there is positively

no need to go back over the excavating, measuring and lining up again. From thenceforth ones energies are directed wholly to the other work which beautifies and completes the building as a whole. It is in like manner with the Christian. Once realising our undone condition and repenting of dead works and accepting the provision for our justification and exercising faith toward God, we do not need to be continually going back over the same ground, but we consecrate our lives to God and learn from the master builders—the prophets, apostles, teachers etc.,—He has provided for the perfecting of the saints, for the building up of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man (not a babe or a child) but unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. (Eph. 4:11-13; 1 Cor. 3:9-13.)

Let us seek, then, to abide in the doctrine of Christ, feeding the lambs with the sincere milk of the Word that they might grow thereby, and dispensing “strong meat” to those who are ready for it. And if any come bringing not the true doctrine of Christ according to the written word, as the spirit has given us understanding, then the Scripture says, “Receive him not into your house (do not recognise him in your assembly as a brother in the truth), nor bid him God speed (display friendly feelings towards promulgation of his doctrines). This does not mean that we refuse hospitality to any, for in another place the Word says, “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have entertained angels unawares.”

There are many things a Christian is counselled to avoid that others do every day without restraint, and while we sojourn here below we must often enter the homes and mix with such people in the daily round. We would have to go out of the world altogether, otherwise. But when we have knowledge that one who is called a Brother is doing the things forbidden to the Christian we must break fellowship—”with such an one, no not to eat.” (1 Cor. 5:9-11.)

Though it may bring loneliness in these last days let us recognise as teachers only those whom we are satisfied “abide in the doctrine of Christ,” knowing the true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent,—the Father and the Son—for only these can render any real spiritual assistance to either “babes” or more mature ones.

CONVENTION NEWS.

THE brethren in Melbourne held another four-day Annual Convention over the Christmas period. Looking back on the occasion it is with sincere thankfulness to the Lord whose rich blessing made it one of the most profitable seasons ever held by the friends in Melbourne. The predominant theme from the opening to the closing session of the gatherings was that of praise and deep gratitude to God for all His favours bestowed, especially over the year then drawing to a close.

It was a great pleasure to the friends in Melbourne to welcome a nice number of visiting brethren from four of the Australian States, and these dear friends contributed considerably in making the occasion so spiritually helpful. While the attendance was very good throughout, all present were sorry that some more friends intending to come from Adelaide and country parts of Victoria were unable to travel on account of train restrictions and sickness, etc.

Following the address of welcome on the opening day, and praise and prayer on each day of the gatherings, a Bible study proved a most helpful session, the passages of Scripture examined at these meetings being:—Deut. 32:1-4; Luke 12:4-12; Luke 12:32-40; and John 17:1-11.

A number of addresses by the brethren on a variety of subjects were much appreciated by all, the selected topics being:—"Abiding in the Doctrine of Christ” (2 John 9); “Heb. 12:11”; “The New Creature and its Obligations”; “If ye do These Things” (2 Pet. 1:10); “The Peace of Christ’s Kingdom”; “In the Steps of Christ”; “If Christ came to Melbourne” (Luke 18:8); “Separating Yourselves”; and “The Hopes and Difficulties of the New Creation.”

Praise and Testimony meetings and a session on “Hymns we love” provided opportunity for personal expression concerning the Lord’s care and favours bestowed and how precious the truths of God’s Word are esteemed in these last days of the age; these sessions were most refreshing. Numerous messages of greetings and encouragement from Classes and friends in various parts of Australia were gratefully appreciated, and the Convention message to all these brethren and the Lord’s people everywhere, together with the Christian love of the assembly, is found in Luke 12:3237.

As the Convention was drawing to a close the sentiment of the brethren, in reviewing the blessings of the Lord over the four days, seemed to be beautifully expressed by the Psalmist—”Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness.” A fitting conclusion was the usual Love Feast, and hymns “Blest be the tie,” and “God be with you till we meet again,” with a parting prayer of thanksgiving for all God’s mercies, and desire for His guidance and protection in all the days ahead.

The following report has been received from Perth, W.A., respecting the gatherings held there by the brethren:

Over the Christmas season the Perth friends held their first Convention for very many years, and all privileged to be present felt that it was a period of very special blessing and spiritual uplift. While it is evident that the present order of things will not last much longer, it is the hope of the friends to make this an annual arrangement, God willing. It is hoped that longer notice will enablemore of our country friends to be present.

The program consisted of Studies, Addresses, Praise and Testimony and general informal fellowship. Each session was most helpful. The Studies in Phil. 3:7-14, 1 Thess. 4:13-18, and Psalm 19:9-14 were particularly good. Helpful addresses were given by various brethren on the following subjects:—"The Present Truth and Bible Prophecy," "Idolatry," "What Constitutes a Christian," "Creation —God's Delight," "God's Wonderful Plan of Salvation," "Stocktaking," "The Unity of the Brethren," and "The Inheritance of the Saints." On the closing day, there was a good Praise and Testimony Meeting, the thoughts being along the lines of the opening words of Psalm 116—"I love the Lord because—."

It was good to know that the friends in other parts were thinking of us as was shown by the messages received.

President Truman says:

Gird Ourselves for Work Ahead.

Washington, December 25th (A.A.P.)

Broadcasting to the nation after turning on the lights of the White House Christmas tree, President Truman said:

"This is the Christmas a war-weary world prayed for through long and awful years. We meet in the spirit of the first Christmas when the midnight choir sang, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will towards men,'

"With our enemies vanquished, we must gird ourselves for the work that lies ahead. Peace has its victories no less hard won than success at arms. We must not fail or falter. We must strive without ceasing, and make real Isaiah's prophecy, 'They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, their spears into pruning hooks, and nation shall not lift up the sword against nation. Neither shall they learn war any more.' "

While appreciating the sentiments of President Truman, how clear it is that man's best efforts to bring in lasting peace cannot succeed, the reason being that selfishness within all nations must first be eradicated. The Lord has promised to do this by permitting mankind to wreck their own boasted civilization.

Dr. Harold Urey, one of the men responsible for the atom bomb, viewing the world with the secular eye of science, offers no plan for peace, but warns that war means the end of everything. "I am a frightened man, all the scientists I know are frightened—frightened for their lives, frightened for your life," says Dr. Urey. So we have fulfilled today, as never before, the words of our Lord—"Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." (Luke 21 :26.)

The Psalmist gives us a clear indication of the course of events in these last days of this age—"Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He hath made in the earth (permitting nations to fully wreck each other). He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth." (Psa. 46:8-10.)

If Ye Do These Things.

(2 Pet. 1:1-12.) (Convention Address.)

THESE words of the Apostle imply a promise on conditions. The Apostle Peter has shown us a way to make our calling and election sure, which is most important to us. How has he gained this knowledge? What makes him so sure about the conditions of this promise? Did flesh and blood reveal this to him? No. He had been following Jesus and learned of Him; he was speaking from experience and experience is the best teacher.

How helpful it is to hear these words from St. Peter. He who once denied our Lord, with such confidence tells us—"if ye do these things." To our sorrow we have sometimes leamt the truth of this statement. Does it mean that if we fall or slip we have fallen away from the truth? By no means! (See Psa. 37:23, 24; Prov. 24:16.) But our slips can be the means of leading us. away from the truth if we do not at once go to the throne of grace. (See "Daily Manna" January 13th.)

The Apostle Peter tells us on what conditions we may receive the kingdom joint-heirship with Christ. That little word "if" is all important. Are we putting forth the effort this "if' requires? Are we faithfully cultivating all the fruits of the spirit here enumerated. Giving all diligence add to your faith—which is the foundation, or the tree, which must produce the fruits—virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love.

What follower of Christ would not like to have these fruits in their perfection. They are the standard for which we must strive, and we must develop them all to a degree acceptable to the Lord if we would gain the Kingdom.

To become successful in the development of these fruits we must watch and pray, assemble ourselves together for spiritual profit, and become self-sacrificing.

The Apostle says—"add to your faith." We must first of all do what Jesus says—''Have faith in God." We certainly cannot add all the fruits of the spirit if our faith is not sound. If our faith is real the fruits will become real and acceptable to the Master. We shall know the truth and it will make free indeed from error in doctrine and conduct "if we do these things." (See "Daily Manna" November 20th.)

Has it ever occurred to you how often "the kingdom" is mentioned in the Scriptures; how really full they are of this most important of all things to us, and not only for us but for the whole world. Do you not experience a thrill of joy when you consider our very great high calling? Why, we never could aspire to attain this, but it is nothing less than our Father's favour to us. How humble we should be, how faithful, how careful we should work out our salvation. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation." Which means we have a great responsibility as representatives of His truth.

Let us acknowledge the Lord in all our ways that He may direct our paths; let us pray that He will guide us with His eye; let us watch and pray that we may get the needed assistance to do these things that our Father wishes, that we may become characters worthy of His name. It is, indeed, no easy matter to walk the narrow way; what with our own imperfections and the arts of the devil we may well be dismayed, except that our Father who is mindful of such a small matter as the "hairs of our head" has provided an armour for us that we may "fight the good fight of faith," and we are promised certain victory over all the giants of evil, and thus gain an abundance entrance into the kingdom, in harmony with the further promise—"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them."

Let us also consider the prophet Micah 6:8—"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." How reasonable these words are. All the requirements of the Lord are reasonable and for our very best welfare and happiness. If it were not for the necessity of suffering for righteousness sake our pathway would be a very pleasant way indeed, but as it was necessary for our Master to learn by experience with evil and opposition the way the Father wished Him to go, so it is with us, His body members. When we hear of the unspeakable sufferings of some people in the present time of trouble we are amazed at their fortitude and this without hope of a future reward. How careful we should be to neither murmur or repine at what the Lord's providence may permit.

When we first came into the truth how ready and willing we were to suffer for righteousness sake, but when age comes on, when health fails, it is not so easy to be kind and thoughtful, unless through habit of much prayer and waiting on the Lord we "have done these things."

Ye are more Value than Many Sparrows.

-Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore : ye are of more value than many sparrows." (Luke 12:6, 7.)

THESE words of the Master's, which, as verse one of the chapter shows "He began to say unto His disciples first of all," have no doubt been of very great comfort and encouragement to His true followers who, without such assurance of the care of their heavenly Father, may at times have thought they were wholly forgotten amidst severe trials and persecutions throughout the centuries of the Gospel Age.

Right through this 12th chapter of Luke's Gospel the same lesson of the assurance of God's utmost care over the followers of Christ is brought out for the benefit of all who have been, and are yet walking in the "narrow way" of sacrifice in the steps of their Master. Verses 24, 27 and 28 are especially noteworthy—''Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap. . . and God feedeth them; how much more are ye better than the fowls?" "Consider the lilies, how they grow; . . . Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass. . . how much more will He clothe you, 0 ye of little faith."

But is this the only meaning our Lord intended? The question may arise as to why the Lord mentioned the sale of the sparrows—"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings?"—or as Matt. 10:29 reads—"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?" Then again, what is the connection between the sale of these birds and "one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father"? Why should God be so specially interested in remembering these birds as they "fall on the ground" after their sale at small cost?

From the Old Testament we find that God accepted typical sacrifices of animals and birds as sin-offerings, or even a portion of fine flour when a person was very poor, and these offerings to the Lord (through the priest appointed) made satisfaction for sins in a typical way, prior to Christ's sacrifice on Calvary. This is explained in Lev. 5:7-10—"And if he be not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring for his trespass, which he hath committed, two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, unto the Lord; one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering. And he shall bring them unto the priest, who shall offer that which is for the sin offering first," etc. It is of interest to find that the Hebrew word for sparrow is used for all sorts of clean birds, or such whose use was not forbidden by the law; and in most of the passages where sparrow is read, we may understand a bird of any kind.

It would seem that our Lord in speaking to the disciples about "two sparrows sold for a farthing" or "five sparrows sold for two farthings" was reminding them of the typical sacrifices for sin, and in a way fitting to their own cases, which no doubt they would understand,—they being men of small means who could not likely offer a lamb for sacrifice. Then He would lead their thoughts from the typical sacrifices which God was still remembering (until

Christ's sacrifice was complete) to the much more important sacrifices, even the privilege of offering themselves as sacrifices through the merit of His precious blood shortly to be shed at Calvary.

It is truly a great privilege for all the consecrated followers of Christ to be counted in with His sacrifice in the offerings for sin, the "better sacrifices" which will indeed take away the sins of the world, all the value or merit being in Christ himself.—"Fear not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." (See Col. 1:24.)

One has stated respecting this subject:—"The more I consider Luke 12:6, 7, the more sure I feel that our Lord was indeed referring to the typical sacrifices. Naturally He would often behold these birds being bought and used for the purposes of sacrifice. We know the typical sacrifices were intended to impress that 'without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.' Therefore, while our Lord would note sympathetically the fall of the birds, He would rejoice in the Father's good pleasure being accomplished, in that, then the requirements for atonement were being complied with. How much more, indeed, would God take note of the 'better sacrifices' which in His providence are to mean so much in the way of blessing to all people."

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Correspondence.

Victoria.

Dear Brother—I find myself with a few minutes tonight and think I can't do better than write you a few lines to say how very blessed I found those four Convention days.

It was easily the most happy and refreshing Convention I have ever attended and I trust the dear Brethren in Melbourne have realised the Lord's blessing upon their effort to make possible such a happy reunion of Christians from near and far.

I wrote at length this morning to Sisters and hope that some of the inspiration I received has been passed on to them.

Brother too I must not forget, but feel unable to write at length again today. I visited Brother this afternoon and enjoyed some time with him. Dear old brother was eager to know about the Convention, and many thoughts I could call to mind. We discussed "the sparrows sold for a farthing" in the light of Lev. 5:7-9, and we both were of opinion that it was extremely likely that that was what our Lord had in mind. Brother seemed pleased to have that thought and it opened up a profitable further discourse on the sin offerings and then to baptism. I found the time spent with him very profitable and saw some points even clearer than ever before. . .

I expect this week will about see the last of the Convention friends who were able to linger awhile longer making homewards. Warm Christian love. Your Brother in Christ.

England Blitz.

My Dear Brother—Greetings of love in the Lord. The arrival of the "Peoples Paper" for October reminded me that it is a long time since I heard from you, and about time that I wrote thanking you for so kindly sending me this excellent little "Paper" so regularly all through the long and terrible war which we have all passed through, you dear ones as well as us. Well, we have been mercifully preserved and our loved ones and we are grateful to our dear Father. The nearest one to us who was killed was my wife's cousin, and we miss her very much. . . We were mercifully blessed all through the blitzes and our home was only very slightly damaged ; for this we thank God.

Some of the brethren suffered the loss of homes and others severe damage but none as far as we know were killed ; the meetings suffered most owing to the blackout and danger of assembling ourselves together, but all are free now and rejoicing in the Lord and in this freedom, though we all rejoice in a greater freedom, that of the sons of God, for he whom the Son makes free is free indeed, so there is much to rejoice about and we do.

I am still confined to bed with unseen chains, but the spirit is free--Though sundered far, By faith we meet, Around our Father's mercy-seat." 'Tis there He loves to meet us and it's there we love to meet Him and the brethren in spirit everywhere ; some day the meetings will be real and we shall all rejoice together in the presence of the Lord whom we adore.

With grateful thanks and a hope for your continued kind favour ; every good wish in the Lord to you all, I am by His grace your Brother in Christ.

India.

Berean Bible Institute, Dearly beloved brethren in Christ—Greetings and salutations. Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:2.)

I do want to write and thank you for the literature you have sent me, which I shall distribute at opportunities presented. There doesn't seem to be much interest shown, especially with the war over—the only thing is in their minds, "when do we go home." Have had occasion to speak to Indian natives and they are very interested in such talk : praise be unto the heavenly Father. I pray I may fulfil all that be a pleasure in the Lord's sight—"sweet savoir unto Him"— that I may grow more humble, meek, kind and loving to shine forth a reflection unto our Master. (Rev. 4:11.)

I have been richly blessed in reading the various literature you sent me, including August and November "Peoples Paper.' My heart doth rejoice from the news I received from America of the stand of Polish brethren during the war. Have read of one brother being shot account of not acknowledging Hitler's regime—he bath stood firm unto the end. I

have read his farewell letter to his wife and also to brethren throughout the world. I know news of this would spur you on. He sent his love to all ; so I'm conveying it to you.

Truly the brethren are very dear to me and the Lord provides for all ; I have specially realised this being away from all them, but yet in oneness of spirit. Thanks be unto God fpr all. Asking the Lord's blessings upon thee and the good work being put forth in His service. Christian love unto all ; thy Bro. in His service.

P.S.—Am sending £ 1 via Money Order ; this for continued work.

Northern Territory.

Dear Brother—I was very pleased to receive your letter a few days ago. I am writing to tell you that I am to proceed to Darwin (D.V.) by air. . . I have been chosen for the good position of Estimating Foreman, and should be relieved of much responsibility and many worries. . . and my desire is to keep fit and well that I may "glorify God in my body': and that my sacrifice may be a worthy one.

I have not heard from Brother since before Christmas.

He also was an applicant for a good position, and it seems probable that he has been chosen. . . He has a wonderful, Christlike disposition, always calm and pleasant under every kind of circumstance.

Yes, the case concerning Mr. is a very interesting one,

and it will indeed be very nice if we are able to meet in Darwin, when, by God's grace, I will endeavour to assist him to a higher level than he can hope to attain in the nominal systems ; and also to relieve his mind concerning the welfare of the Chinese millions, including those that "sleep."

Our little Class is still progressing happily; had I been remaining here I'm confident I could have secured the attendance of quite a few more young people. Only yesterday a lady told me that her daughters would be very happy to attend, as would also their girl friends. I do not, of course, like to miss an opportunity such as this to render spiritual help to these splendid young creatures, and I am prayerfully considering the possibility of endeavouring to assist them through the post, although I know this would be no easy task for me. However, I am not looking for, or desiring easy tasks, as one cannot become an overcomer that way. I will earnestly endeavour to fulfil the Lord's will in this, as in all matters.

The news that the Lectures in Melbourne created good interest was very pleasing and especially the success of the Convention, and it will be good to read the news of this and also the addresses from time to time in the "P. Paper." I am pleased to learn that Brother--was able to attend, but regret that other friends were unable to procure seats in the train.

One of my little friends in Sydney closed a recent letter in these words : "Last night I had a lovely dream. I dreamt that the family and I arrived back in Darwin and you were there to meet us : we started our Sunday School and had a picnic. It was the loveliest dream I've had, and I hope it comes true, don't you ? It will be lovely."

I have recently made another contact here in the person in charge of a Mission station nearly 30 miles out of town. It is apparently a government controlled station and Mr. and Mrs. are at present undenominational; in fact, I think that in spirit they are anti-denominational, although they have apparently been raised under these systems, and have not yet the light of Present Truth. They seem very sincere people and during my few minutes conversation with Mr. he

was very interested and gladly accepted a copy each of "Hope Beyond the Grave," "God and Reason," and "Hell, Death, Spiritism." I also loaned him a copy of "Foregleams." We are hoping to meet again next Tuesday ; I hope you will be hearing from him later.

I may succeed in getting a few of the young folks to assist me in the writing up of postal lessons for the children. This would be grand exercise for the young people if they would do it, and in writing up these lessons they would be providing themselves with a grand opportunity to learn well, as well as helping to crowd worldly pleasures and attraction out of their lives.

Must close now, dear Brother, for this time. Yours in Christian fellowship.

Victoria

Frank and Ernest, Dear Christian Friends—I am enclosing .L 1 for renewal of subscription of “Peoples Paper” which is I think due and would you send me some broadcasting cards and some Dialogues as I have given ‘all you sent away to friends who are interested. The balance you can use for the expense of broadcasting.

There is no mistake we are living in a wonderful time, when we will soon see God’s Kingdom set up in the earth and then there will be peace on earth and good will to men—there will be no more war. Frank and Ernest, we both find your Talks very interesting ; we listen every Sunday morning. I think it is a wonderful way of spreading the truth to the people and we both wish your Talks every success. Yours sincerely.

Frank and Ernest, Dear Friends—Enclosed please find 4/-; 3/- for another year’s subscription to “P. Paper” and 1/- towards funds. I enjoy your little paper; it is packed with good news and I look forward to its arrival as it greatly helps me in my Bible Study. I am at present unable to help financially as I would like. but through bad season and so much illness this year our income is very small, so hope you will understand. Wishing you God’s blessing on you good work. Your very sincere friend.

Frank and Ernest, Dear Sirs—Many thanks for sending me on your monthly “Paper” and other interesting reading matter enclosed. I enjoyed reading “Good News” and will pass it on to others. Please find enclosed postal note for 3/-;

I think that will be to the end of July. I feel I would like to continue with it as it’s very helpful. Accept the best of greetings and for a bright and better new year. Yours sincerely.

Frank and Ernest, Dear Sirs—Would you please send me about six of the leaflets of your Dialogue put over the air last Sunday, as I would like distant friends of mine to read them. I hope your good work will continue till the Kingdom is here. To me the Jewish question is a problem. Won’t the New Kingdom be all nations, a New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven to all His faithful?

Trusting you are well and thanking you Sirs for the “Peoples Paper.” I am enclosing a few shillings for general expenses. Yours gratefully.

(The position of the Jews is explained by St. Paul in Rom. 1 I:25-29. Following the full number from the Gentiles making up the Bride of Christ (verse 25) , Israel shall be saved from ignorance and brought to the light of Christ’s Kingdom, after being delivered from a national calamity in “Jacob’s trouble.” Then, James tells us in Acts 15:16-18, that following the “building again of the tabernacle of David” the way will be open for “the residue of men to seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom His name is called.” This means that the blessings of Christ’s Kingdom will reach all nations through Israel established in the Holy Land. See also Isa. 2:2-4.—B.B. Institute.)

South Australia.

Frank and Ernest, Dear Sirs—Being unable to hear your Talks over the air, the services being discontinued, I am at a loss on Sunday mornings, as I have received a lot of help from your Talks both from a spiritual and an educational standpoint, so I will be obliged to you if when you forward the “Peoples Paper” you will please enclose the weekly Talks with the same. I remain ; Yours in the good work.

(The weekly Dialogues are gladly supplied to all friends who make personal application for same and promise to use them to good advantage. These copies are supplied free from the General Funds.—B.B. Institute.)

N. S. Wales.

Berean Bible Institute, Dear Brothers—It is a long time since I have written to you, but many thanks for the “P.P.” and literature that you send along every month ; it is all so helpful.

Above all I am so thankful that God our Father is making it possible for you to continue putting out the message of truth, so necessary for all people. You reach so many over the air that would not get it any other way.

I am enclosing the money for the renewal of my subscription to the “Peoples Paper.” It falls due about this time I think, and the few shillings over I would like to be put to the Radio Fund. Trusting that you have all had a very beneficial and pleasant time during your Xmas Convention. With kindest regards to yourselves.