



## Volume 80 No.2 MELBOURNE, MARCH/APRIL 1997 IN MEMORY OF THE SAVIOUR'S LOVE

(Memorial Address)

Each year it is our privilege and joy to gather at the table of the Lord and in a special way, the way indeed which He Himself appointed, to remember Him. This service of memorial is in itself a simple one but very full of meaning to each who in faith and sincerity takes part. Not only is it an occasion of remembrance of our Saviour's life of obedience even unto death and of all that entails not only for us but eventually for all mankind, but a time for review and renewal of our own consecration vows as a sign of our continued willingness and desire to be identified with our Master in daily following Him.

### THE UPPER ROOM

Let us briefly recall the events of that final passover evening which our Lord spent with His disciples nearly two thousand years ago. Along with the women who followed and ministered to Him, and others who had been drawn to this marvellous teacher, the disciples had heard His gracious words, had seen His mighty acts, had marvelled as He boldly rebuked the false religionists of His day and had come to realise something of His perfect character. The twelve whom He had specially chosen had sojourned with Him for some three and a half years and had no doubt previously shared with Him in the Jewish Passover service; but this year as the season approached He had been talking of going up to Jerusalem and there being arrested, tried and put to death, but to rise again on the third day.

These sayings were hard for them to come to terms with, as they made ready for what was to be their final passover with their Master, whose own sentiments are shown in His words recorded by Luke: *"With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer, for I say unto you, I will not eat any more thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God."* (Luke 22:15,16) This was to be a special occasion, foreshadowing His own death as the **Lamb of God**, yet our Lord could look through and beyond even that to that great

### THE PASSOVER

As we look back, we see how the beautiful and detailed type of Israel's Passover was about to be gloriously fulfilled in the Lamb of God, in that One in their midst whom the disciples had come to love and respect so much as their Master and Friend. How beautifully, indeed, in all its facets the Passover of Israel pointed forward to "Christ our Passover" as Paul describes our Saviour in 1Cor. 5:7. We note the various features from Exodus 12 -

\*\*The lamb was to be specially selected and must be without blemish. How well this pictures our Lord as Peter reminds us in 1 Peter 1:18, 19 - *"Forasmuch as ye were not redeemed with corruptible things ... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."* From the following verse, we note that He was foreordained for this purpose before the foundation of the world in God's eternal plans.

\*\*The lamb was to be slain. We recall the apostle's words in Heb. 9:22 that *"without the shedding of blood there is no remission"* and John the Baptist's words - *"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."* (John 1:29)

\*\*The blood of the slain lamb was to be sprinkled on the lintel and sideposts of each household in Israel to secure the safety of those within - a beautiful picture of the saving and cleansing blood of our Saviour sprinkled on the believing heart. Paul tells us that God has accepted us in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption or deliverance through His (Jesus') blood. (Eph. 1:6, 7)

As for Israel, there is no other place of safety for the Lord's people than "under the blood". Furthermore,

while the sprinkling of the blood on the doorposts was important for all the Israelites, it was critical for the firstborn of each household - it was in fact a matter of life or death for these. This points to believers of this Gospel Age who are spoken of as "first-fruits unto God" in James 1:18 and as the "church of the firstborn" in Heb. 12:23. These have been called by God for special service and are on trial now for life and the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus. If faithful, they are to be "*priests of God and of Christ and reign with Him a thousand years.*" (Rev. 20:6)

How fitting then are the apostle's words to the Corinthians and to each of us - "*For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*" (1 Cor 5:7,8) Here Paul points us to the ongoing nature of our feasting upon our Saviour, remembering all that He has done for us, especially at this Memorial season but also each day of the year. The Israelites were instructed that at each year's remembrance of their deliverance from Egypt, their children were to have the story of their deliverance recounted to them and the significance of the occasion explained. There was to be not only a remembering of the event but a proclaiming of its meaning.

### **"IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME"**

So too we pause awhile each year to meditate upon the means of our deliverance from sin and death, upon its resultant blessings, upon our own privileges and responsibilities, and to recall again its cost to our dear Saviour and our Heavenly Father. To remember Him in the simple way that He set forth was our Saviour's specific wish and command and the apostle Paul tells us that each time we partake of the bread and the cup, which represent His broken body and shed blood, we show forth our Lord's death till He comes. So not only do we remember all that He has done for us, His perfect obedience even unto death, the death of the cross, but we proclaim the grand message of redemption in His blood, eventually to flow on to all people.

As we prepare to partake of what has fittingly been termed "this simple feast" - simple in form but profound in meaning - let us reflect upon the deliverance which it commemorates, upon the privileges of fellowship with our Saviour in His death and with others of like precious faith, upon our personal consecration to follow in His steps of obedience, sacrifice and service. Once more we stand, as it were, where our Christian life began - at the foot of the cross of Christ. Again, we confess with the apostle - "*God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.*" (Gal. 6:14)

Our presence with others of the Lord's people on such occasions is firstly an act of loving obedience to our Master, for when He instituted this service of memorial in the presence of His nearest and dearest friends, His clear and loving words to them and to all who have followed after were simply - "*This do in remembrance of me.*" There are no penalties set down for not doing so, but there are rich blessings for all who love Him and gladly accept His invitation, and who strive to obey His words in this and in all matters of discipleship. So amid the solemnity of the occasion, there is an inner joy which attends obedience to the will of Him whom "yet unseen we love" and the sense of fellowship in this service with all who are likewise seeking to follow Him.

### **PARTICIPATION**

Our taking part in this service is a recognition of the great price with which our deliverance has been bought, and each of us should be daily mindful of the so great love of God shown in the gift of His dear Son and of the Son's willing obedience. For in a special way, this annual remembrance points us again to the very heart of all God's plans and purposes, to that which is central to the standing in God's sight of every Christian and to that on which the ultimate blessing of all mankind depends. In showing forth His death, we proclaim that we are relying solely and fully on the perfect redemption which by His death our Saviour has purchased for us. We are confessing that in ourselves we have nothing to offer to God of our own, that there is no other way to Him than the way of the cross and that there is no name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, other than the precious name of Jesus.

But even as we remember His suffering and death, let us not overlook that we are also witnessing a victory. As we read: "*and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*" Phil. 2:8-11. And again: "*we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*" Heb. 2:9.

Further, this service unites all who love and trust in the Saviour with Him and all who are His. This is

beautifully brought out by the Apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 10:16: *“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread.”* The word translated “communion” has the thought of sharing or participation, and we are reminded that we have the privilege of suffering with Jesus, of taking up the cross daily, having been baptised into the likeness of His death. *“To you it is given on behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him but to suffer for His sake.” Phil. 1:29.* Paul’s great desire was to *“know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.” Phil. 3:10.* “It is our privilege also to follow our Saviour, to share in His sufferings now and later in His glory, now in obedience and faithfulness, in the age to come in the work of blessing all mankind.

## REVIEW AND RENEWAL

As each year we reflect again on the realities which the emblems represent to us in life and salvation, in blessed communion with our dear Lord here and now but even more so when we are changed into His perfect likeness in the heavenly home, who is worthy to come to this table of the Lord? How thankful we may be that it is in His righteousness and by reason of our appropriation by faith of the merit of His perfect sacrifice that we may come confidently in response to His invitation - *“This do in remembrance of me.”* A life lived to His praise should certainly be our daily objective but the measure of our attainment is not what is required of those who come to His table.

Personal achievement or worth is not what the apostle is speaking of when he refers to partaking worthily or unworthily; if it were, none would qualify. Rather it is the recognition of our dear Lord’s body broken for us personally, our acknowledgement of all that He has done for us that is so important, to see in the emblems what He endured, to confess again our total dependence on Him and the merit of His blood, to appreciate even more fully the gracious call of God to be identified with our Saviour and with all His faithful ones now, that by and by we may be glorified together.

So as each Memorial season comes around, it is good for us all to review and renew our consecration to follow in our Saviour’s steps. The apostle’s instruction is to examine ourselves and then, in full assurance of faith and renewed commitment to His service, to partake of the bread and the cup gladly and with gratitude, in remembrance of Him. Let us also, as our Saviour did on that night so long ago, look forward joyfully to that glorious time when with all God’s faithful children we shall drink the new wine of rejoicing with our Master in the kingdom.

## - THE PRAYER OF A BELIEVING HEART (Psalm 139)

*“Any small thoughts that we may have of God are magnificently transcended by this psalm; yet for all its height and depth it remains intensely personal from first to last.” (D Kidner)*

It has been written: “Not only do many readers fail to appreciate the glorious poetry of the psalms, but they also read them too casually to perceive the *structural beauty* which many of them possess.” The last words are particularly applicable to Psalm 139. This psalm has 24 verses comprising 4 stanzas of 6 verses each. The first 6 verses display God’s *omniscience* (infinite knowledge); the second 6 verses His *omnipresence*; the third 6 verses His *omnipotence*; and in the last 6 verses we have the psalmist’s own reactions to these elevated thoughts, bringing him to utter his adoration and fervent supplication toward God.

### DIVINE OMNISCIENCE

The comprehensiveness of God’s *omniscience*, as it concerns us individually, is wonderfully detailed:

*Our hearts:* “O Lord, thou hast searched me” (‘my heart’ as in v.23) - verse 1.

*Our thoughts:* “Thou understandest my thought afar off” - verse 2.

*Our actions:* “Thou . . . art acquainted with all my ways” - verse 3.

*Our words:* “Not a word in my tongue but . . . thou knowest it altogether” - verse 4.

This first stanza comprehends all aspects of our activities: Our downsitting when the day’s work is over; our uprising after a night’s sleep; our journeys from place to place. (“Thou compasses my path”). Nevertheless God lovingly sets limitations on our lives. “Behind and before hast thou shut me in, and hast laid on me thine outspread hand” (Roth). This but enhances the completeness of our Father’s knowledge of us. He knows all the movements we can make and limits them, and as the psalmist thus brings the wonder of the Divine omniscience into full light - comprehending as it does our hearts, our thinking, our actions and our words - it is not surprising that he exclaims: “Too wonderful is thy knowledge for me, inaccessible! I cannot attain to it”.

(Roth).

## **DIVINE OMNIPRESENCE**

The psalm now turns to Divine *omnipresence*. By this quality, we do *not* believe, as do Pantheists, that everything created is literally a part of God. Indeed, the psalmist shows that this was not his view, for in verse seven he clearly indicates that he is concerned with the *spirit* of God. The Divine Being may be likened to the sun, and His spirit to the rays of the sun. We frequently speak of the “sun being in a room” of our dwelling, but what we mean is that the *effects* of the sun are there - in light, in warmth, and in health-giving power. So it is with God and His spirit.

David now proceeds to put a question to the test, whether by *distance* he can hide himself from God. The answer given is No; whether it be the distant height or the distant depth, or even the distant breadth. He says: “If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there”; “If I spread out sheol as my couch, behold thee!” (Roth.); “If I take the wings of the morning (to the sunrise, and therefore to the east); and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea” (a reference to the Mediterranean Sea, and therefore to the west). David is only *testing* the question (“Whither shall I go from thy spirit?”) in all the forms his thought can appreciate. He does not say he *wishes* to escape; in fact, he almost implies that he does not, for he assumes the love of the Omnipotent One: “Even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me”.

Having tested the question of escape from God by means of “distance”, David propounds the question whether by means of *darkness* such escape were possible. Again he concludes No. Darkness is no darkness to Jehovah God, for “the darkness and the light are both alike to thee”. So height, depth, east, west, light, darkness, God is present by His spirit in them all.

## **DIVINE OMNIPOTENCE**

The third group of six verses (13-18) is descriptive of Divine *omnipotence*. Verse 13 commences with “For . . .”, that is to say, “Because . . .”, and leads to this concept: “Thou hast such intimate knowledge of me as neither change of activity, nor distance, nor darkness can obstruct, because thou didst fashion me; because I am Thy child; because Thou hast created me. Thou didst originate the first rudiments of my being. Thou didst weave me together. Thou didst construct my bony framework, and skilfully imparted the whole variegated web-work of my nerves and blood vessels”. At least three times in verses 13 to 16 Jehovah’s handiwork in creating the human frame is affirmed.

To sum up the psalmist’s words: God knows me thoroughly because He made me. This is precisely what he says. David sees the human race originally brought forth out of the underparts of the earth. (Man was formed “of the dust of the ground”). So the individual is at birth brought forth from the maternal concealment corresponding thereto. This is not to say that even God, at our first birth, brought a clean thing out of an unclean; but it is to say, that our first birth, with all its drawbacks, lays a foundation for the second; a second birth whose very object will be to bring a clean thing out of an unclean. The first creation was followed by condemnation; the second is brought about by salvation through Christ.

In verse 2, the word translated “thought” really means “purpose”, so that in now considering verse 17, we must read it thus: “How precious also are thy purposes unto me, O God”. God has more than thoughts about us; He has benevolent designs. Although this was a *personal* confession of David’s, every Christian believer should make a similar declaration. David does not say, nor should we say: “Because I am a good man, therefore are thy purposes to me so precious”. The position for us is rather: “Because I love Thee and because I have been called by Thee according to Thy purpose in Christ, therefore all things fall within Thy plan for me and I see them as precious.”

David sees God’s thoughts, purposes, dealings concerning him as *innumerable*, and it would appear that when he adds: “When I awake, I am still with thee”, while he may be expressing his own conviction, he is certainly putting words into our mouths, having reference to *resurrection* to a higher life. J.B. Rotherham translates: “I awake -my continued being is with thee”, and in a note this translator adds that “continued being” is literally “my continuance”. When the psalmist says “with thee”, the meaning is more than he is *thinking* of God; rather, the words mean “in company with thee” or “in thy presence”. There are parallels for considering “awake” to have a richer meaning than “to awaken from literal sleep”. Isa. 26:19 reads: “*Awake* and sing, ye that dwell in the dust”, and Psa. 17:15 has “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I *awake*, with thy likeness”. The God who purposes to bestow on the faithful immortality, will He not also “purpose” to prepare them for that great inheritance? Has He not “purposed” their redemption and sanctification through the necessary discipline of suffering, and eventually “purposed” their victory? So that we may well exclaim: “How numerous Thy purposes leading me up to the Great Awakening -the first resurrection!”

**“SEARCH ME, O GOD”**

Finally, we consider the fourth stanza of the psalm (verses 19-24). David has reflected on the Divine attributes of omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence, and now he reflects on God's holiness. Verses 19 and 20 have been literally translated: "Oh! if thou wouldst smite the wicked, O God! (Ye men of violence depart from me) for they rebel against thee with wicked deeds, and lift up against thee vainly". Although David utters strong words about sin in others, he also expresses intense concern about sin in himself. He does not propose to slay the wicked himself; rather he commits them to the judgment of God; He judges not, that he himself be not judged; and in verses 23 and 24 he is on his knees, baring his own heart before His Maker: "Search me. O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked (hurtful) way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting". For us the way everlasting leads up to and through the Great Awakening, to our life more abundant that shall abide to the ages.

(F.G.M. 78)

## **"EVEN YOUR SANCTIFICATION"**

*"As He who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy." 1 Peter 1:15,16*

*"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." 1 Thess. 4:3.*

These words of the Apostles Peter and Paul are I addressed to consecrated Christians. They are an exhortation to full development as God's children, to full setting apart for God. It is not sufficient to make a profession of consecration, to promise to live a sanctified life merely; it is of utmost importance to fulfil our vows to the Lord, to day by day fulfil our vow of consecration. It is not sufficient that we become branches in the true Vine; we must bear the fruitage of the Spirit. Having come into Christ through faith and consecration we must allow His Spirit to dwell in us and cause us to become fully set apart for the Master's use. The word sanctification means a setting apart to holy service. God is holy; and any instrument that He would use and recognize must also be holy. So He says to us: Be ye holy, for I am holy."

### **THE CALL**

But how can we who were sinful by nature be holy? It is through faith in Christ as our Saviour that we are justified as Paul says, in 1 Cor. 6:11: "Ye are washed ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God." It is faith in Christ that brings us into a condition of peace with God, as we read in Rom. 5:1. Then, to the justified believer comes the call of consecration to God. This means to devote ourselves and all our talents and powers of mind and body to the Lord, as we have it expressed in Rom. 12:1. The only way to attain to holiness of character now is to become footstep followers of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must take up our cross daily and renounce the world and all its attractions; we must give up our own will, lay aside our own preferences and accept heartily the will and way of the Lord as set before us in His Word and exemplified in the life of Christ.

God purposes to use the Church in a special way in the Age to come. The Scriptures tell us that the overcoming Church of this Gospel Age will be kings and priests and they will, with Christ their Lord and Head, reign over the earth for 1000 years, for the purpose of blessing mankind, and bringing the willing and obedient back into harmony with God. The world will then be called into holiness. They will be required to become holy before they can be pleasing to the Father or have fellowship with Him.

The setting apart of the Church during the Gospel Age is different from the setting apart to righteousness which will be the world's experience during the Millennial Age. The Church's setting apart, or sanctification, requires the grace of God in large measure, for they are called to a sacrificial death. That they may be able to sacrifice themselves, a special provision for the covering of their blemishes is necessary. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believers. We are made acceptable in the Beloved. We have no righteousness, no perfection apart from Christ. Only as we abide in Him by living faith and active obedience can our sanctification progress. We must trust our Lord not only for grace and mercy to make us acceptable to the Father at the commencement of our consecration, but we must also trust God to supply us with the help of His Spirit which comes to us through our union with Christ, and which will enable us to finish our course and become wholly sanctified.

### **THE MEANS**

The words of the Apostle (1 Pet. 1:2) state the means whereby our sanctification is effected. It is through the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. We need first of all the imputation of Christ's righteousness to make our sacrifice acceptable to God; next, we need the help of the Holy Spirit by which we are begotten to newness of life and hope; then we need to nourish the new mind by feeding upon the Word of God, and we need the application of the blood of Christ daily to cleanse us from the defilement of the world, and the shortcomings and failures of thought, word and deed which come upon us because of the weakness of our flesh. (1 John 1:7, 9.)

Our perfection at the present time is a reckoned one, not actual. Before we reach that condition of actual perfection of holiness in the resurrection we must be tested as to our loyalty to God. There are certain difficulties to overcome. The difficulty with our setting apart at this time lies in the fact that it means to go contrary to our own preferences, because of the present disordered condition of things in the world in which we live, a condition which is manifested in ourselves as human beings. Hence, the sanctification for which God now calls is the doing of His will under unfavourable circumstances, within and without. Those who do His will under these unfavourable circumstances have set before them the high reward of becoming joined in heirship with Christ in His Kingdom, sharers of His glory and power.

Our sanctification begins at the time when we consecrate ourselves to the Lord. Having accepted us through Christ, God imparts to us His Spirit and brings us into the anointed Body. (2 Cor. 1:21, 22) The sanctification is to progress more and more. It is for this that Paul prays:—"The very God of peace sanctify you wholly." (1 Thess. 5:23.) As we progress, our sanctification should take in a broader and deeper scope. We are to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Day by day the Lord shows us more fully His will, and so we want to manifest more of that earnest desire of heart that longs to know and do His will.

## **DEVELOPMENT**

The Christian way leads onwards to fullness of character development. Our daily experiences are testing our hearts; and this is by the will of the Lord. He knows that if our hearts are loyal we will do the best we can to control our flesh; and it is our earnest endeavour to walk faithfully in the narrow way, that He is watching to see. After we have been set apart, sanctified, as a babe in Christ, we gradually become sanctified on a larger scale. We become developed in this process of sanctification, growing more and more like our Lord.

As we come in daily contact with the world of mankind we should seek to do them good. Our Lord always endeavoured to do good and bless those with whom He came in contact. So also the Apostle says: "Do good to all men as you have opportunity, especially to the household of faith." We are to "lay down our lives for the brethren"; seeking to build one another up in our most holy faith; and to encourage each other along in the narrow way.

As followers of Christ, our greatest work is in ourselves - subduing our own flesh, conquering and uprooting the earth-ward tendencies, and resolutely training them heavenward. This is a matter that requires great patience and perseverance. Only in the Lord's strength can we hope to succeed in this great work of ruling our own spirit - of mortifying the earthly tendencies of our flesh and setting our minds, our affections, on the heavenly things. (Col. 3:1, 2.)

## **TWO ASPECTS**

There are two parts to sanctification. The first part is our own, and the second part belongs to God. He sanctifies only those who sanctify themselves - "Sanctify yourselves and I will sanctify you." We must first give up our own will and accept His will, setting ourselves apart for the Lord. In such He is pleased to do a great work. The initial part of that work is the begetting of the Holy Spirit. This makes of us New Creatures in Christ, members of the Anointed Body. Our sanctification is thus begun.

We are then prepared to grow, and not until then; for before that time there is no embryo New Creature, the new life has not even begun. But after we receive the new will, the will to do God's will, we are ready to make progress, both in grace and in knowledge. Having now come into the family of God, we are to learn of Him as obedient children. We are to study the Word of God that thus we may know what is the will of God for us. The Lord's people must be inducted into a knowledge of God's glorious character and of His will concerning us, His children. Through this knowledge we shall be enabled to grow up into the likeness of our Lord and Head - the Pattern furnished us by the Father.

Thus the work of development leads into all the avenues of our being. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification" - your complete setting apart for God's use and service. The Spirit of the Lord is to abound in us. The influence of the precious promises and of words of counsel have more and more a sanctifying effect upon our hearts and lives. This leads us to a still deeper appreciation of God and His love and of those who are His. Thus we grow in grace, in further knowledge, and in all the precious fruits of the Holy Spirit - "Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control. Against such there is no law." (Gal. 5:22, 23.) This is the complete sanctification which God purposes to accomplish in all those who set themselves apart for Him, providing that they keep their sacrifice firmly bound to the altar until it is wholly consumed.

When we fully consecrate ourselves to the Lord, we become disciples of Christ; we are in the school of Christ - the condition represented in the tabernacle by the Holy. We have the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit and we are able to see and appreciate the spiritual things. Gradually we come to appreciate more fully the great hope of our calling, and we come to love and appreciate the great attributes of God - His wisdom and

justice and love. We learn also of our own frailties and shortcomings, we see where we are lacking and this causes us to seek for mercy and grace to enable us to overcome our weaknesses and to put on more and more of the Lord's character-likeness.

## **THE WORD OF GOD**

The more we absorb and assimilate the Word of God, the stronger we shall be in character. To the faithful, the Apostle Peter assures us, the Lord will minister "an abundant entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Whoever neglects to use the means provided for his development cannot progress properly. The sanctifying power of the Word and of prayer must accomplish their designed work in us; otherwise, we shall never gain the promised reward of the faithful overcomer.

All the instruction which we receive from the Lord comes to us through the written Word. "The Word of God is sufficient," declares the Apostle, "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. 3:15-17.) Again declares the same Apostle: "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word." (Eph. 5:25, 26.) Let us keep close to the written Word "which is able to make us wise unto salvation."

As we contemplate the things that are lovely as embodied in Christ, and the things that are pure and holy and beautiful as shown in the Bible, we are changed little by little into the same blessed likeness, from glory to glory. Let this good work of sanctification go on until every grace adorns the spotless robe of imputed righteousness given us by our Father through Christ. Let us mark well the love of the Master. Let us consider Christ, His gentleness, His patience, His meekness, His zeal, His self-sacrificing spirit. Keeping the example of Christ and the great hope of our calling well before our minds will greatly assist us in our progress toward the mark for the prize. (Col. 1:23; 2: 6, 7.)

(P.P. 12/41)

## **Millennial Kingdom Prospects**

*"And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. "-Rev. 21:1-5.*

## **GOD'S ALL-EMBRACING PLANS**

Just as Scripture distinguishes between the saved and the lost, and between different classes of the one and of the other, so it also distinguishes between the future portion of the Church of Christ, that of the Jewish people, and that of the nations of the earth. Too many in their thoughts of the future leave out this last; the destiny of the Church of this dispensation figures so largely in their anticipations, that they seem almost to forget that "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the *world*," and to lose sight of the blessed prospect that, not only is the present Church to be saved out of the ruined world to become the Eve of the second Adam, but that the ruined earth itself is yet to be renewed, and to become the happy home of saved nations, who participate in the results of redemption.

The narrowness which sees nothing but the salvation of the Church of this dispensation is born of human selfishness, and not of Divine love; it is founded not on the teaching of Scripture, but on tradition and prejudice. The Bible in this [the Book of Revelation], its last revelation on the subject, plainly teaches that, while the peculiar glories of the Church are hers, and hers alone, that while the special privileges of the natural seed of Abraham belong to Israel, and to Israel only, there is yet a blessed future awaiting mankind also under the gracious government of Immanuel; that one of the effects of the completed work of Christ will be to place the saved nations of the eternal Kingdom in a restored paradise, completely delivered from the tempter, and so established in righteousness that the Holy One can take up his abode among them for ever. "He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death; neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

The salvation of the Church of this dispensation is not the whole result of the death of Christ. There is to be in addition the establishment for ever of a kingdom of God, in which His will shall be as fully done by men on earth as it is now done by angels in heaven. The consummation, for which we daily pray, is destined to come at last; and holy and happy service, without a flaw and without an interruption, is yet to be rendered to God, not merely by the glorified saints of the new Jerusalem, but by redeemed nations on the earth, who walk for ever in the light of the celestial city.

Such is the sublime vista of the future of our race, and of our earth in the eternal ages, with which Scripture closes.

### **“I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW”**

The human race are God’s children by creation -the work of His hands - and His plan with reference to them is clearly revealed in His Word. Paul says that the first man (who was a sample of what the race will be when perfect) was of the earth, earthy; and his posterity, with the exception of the Gospel Church, will in the resurrection still be earthy, human, adapted to the earth. (1 Cor. 15:38,44) David declares that man was made only a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory, honour, dominion, etc. (Psalm 8:4-8) And Peter, our Lord, and all the prophets since the world began, declare that the human race is to be restored to that glorious perfection, and is again to have dominion over earth, as its representative, Adam, had -- Acts 3:19-21.

It is this portion that God has elected to give to the human race. And what a glorious portion! Close your eyes for a moment to the scenes of misery and woe, degradation and sorrow that yet prevail on account of sin, and picture before your mental vision the glory of the perfect earth. Not a stain of sin mars the harmony and peace of a perfect society; not a bitter thought, not an unkind look or word; love, welling up from every heart, meets a kindred response in every other heart, and benevolence marks every act. There sickness shall be no more; not an ache nor a pain, nor any evidence of decay - not even the fear of such things. Think of all the pictures of comparative health and beauty of human form and feature that you have ever seen, and know that perfect humanity will be of still surpassing loveliness. The inward purity and mental and moral perfection will stamp and glorify every radiant countenance. Such will earth’s society be; and weeping bereaved ones will have their tears all wiped away, when thus they realize the resurrection work complete.-Revelation 21:4.

### **PARADISE RESTORED**

And this is the change in human society only. We call to mind also that the earth, which was “made to be inhabited” by such a race of beings, is to be a fit and pleasing abode for them, as represented in the Edenic paradise, in which the representative man was at first placed. Paradise shall be restored. The earth shall no more bring forth thorns and briers, and require the sweat of man’s face to yield his bread, but “the earth shall [easily and naturally] yield her increase.” “The desert shall blossom as the rose”; the lower animal creation will be perfect, willing, and obedient servants; nature with all its pleasing variety will call to man from every direction to seek and know the glory and power and love of God; and mind and heart will rejoice in **Him**.

The restless desire for something new, that now prevails, is not a natural but an abnormal condition, due to our imperfection, and to our present unsatisfactory surroundings. It is not Godlike restlessly to crave something new. Most things are old to God; and He rejoices most in those things which are old and perfect. So will it be with man when restored to the image of God. The perfect man will not know or appreciate fully, and hence will not prefer, the glory of spiritual being, being of a different nature, just as fishes and birds, for the same reason, prefer and enjoy each their own nature and element most.

Man will be so absorbed and enraptured with the glory that surrounds him on the human plane that he will have no aspiration to, nor preference for, another nature or other conditions than those possessed. A glance at the present experience of the Church will illustrate this. “How hardly,” with what difficulty, shall those who are rich in this world’s goods enter into the Kingdom of God. The few good things possessed even under the present reign of evil and death, so captivate the human nature that we need special help from God to keep our eye and purpose fixed on the spiritual promises.

### **HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM**

That the Christian Church, the Body of Christ, is an exception to God’s general plan for mankind, is evident from the statement that its selection was determined in the divine plan before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4, 5), at which time God not only foresaw the fall of the race into sin, but also predetermined the justification, the sanctification and the glorification of this class, which, during the Gospel Age, He has been calling out of the world to be conformed to the image of His Son, to be partakers of the divine nature and to be fellow-heirs with Christ Jesus of the Millennial Kingdom for the establishment of universal righteousness and peace.-Romans 8:28-31.