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## The Binding of Satan

THE vision of the conflict between good and evil in the Book of Revelation comes at length to a time when a mighty angel is seen descending from heaven with a great chain in his hands, and having arrived on earth he takes forcible hold of the great red dragon which alone survives of the enemies of righteousness, binds him with a chain, casts him into the abyss, and seals the entrance with the sign of Divine authority that the nations should be deceived no more throughout the thousand years—the Millennium. Ardent longing for that day has led many to watch earnestly the signs of the times, and the questions “Is Satan now bound? Is he in process of being bound? Is he yet to be bound?” are common.

What is this binding? Quite evidently it is closely connected with the restraint of evil which is a feature of the Millennial Age. Revelation 20:1 indicates clearly that its fulfilment is at the commencement of that Age. This does not necessarily mean, though, that the binding must take place simultaneously with the commencement of the Second Advent. The dragon of Rev. 20 is apparently the last enemy of righteousness to be dealt with after the other great enemies, the “Beast” and the “False Prophet” have been cast into the Lake of Fire. Now, since Rev. 19 dealing with the warfare between the Rider on the white horse and these two enemies, is evidently a phase of the Second Advent, the binding of the great red dragon, coming next in order, would seem to belong to a later phase of that Advent. This binding also coincides with the commencement of the reign of the saints, and since that reign does not commence until the saints have been “changed” and the marriage has been completed, and the Lord must return “for” His saints before the marriage feast and His subsequent revelation to the world “with” His saints, it would seem clear that the “binding of Satan” is to occur after all these things, at the time of the establishment of Christ’s kingdom in power in the earth. That time has not yet come.

From that time onward, the practise of evil shall be restrained. “Nothing shall hurt nor destroy in all

my holy mountain”. (Isa 11:9.) Men will not be prevented from thinking evil thoughts or harbouring evil desires; some will yield “feigned obedience” (Psa. 18:44, marg.); but the power to inflict evil or harm, physical, mental or moral, upon another will be lost. We do not know how. Divine power will be exercised here in a fashion of which we have little, if any, conception today. But it will be true that although a man may formulate an intention to do evil to another, he will find himself physically or mentally powerless to put that intention into effect. That restraint will operate throughout the Millennial Age.

A little thought suggests that the same restraint must of necessity be placed upon Satan. He must be rendered powerless to influence the minds of men by evil suggestions. Hence the “binding of Satan” will be a restraint upon his power, at present enjoyed by Divine permission, of instilling evil thoughts and influences into the minds of men. His personal freedom of movement need not be limited any more than is the personal freedom of evilly disposed men on earth during that Age, but he will find himself quite powerless to reach men’s minds in any way.

A glance at daily events should make it clear that the binding of Satan has not yet taken place and is not yet even in progress. The powers of evil have greater control today in earth’s affairs than they have ever had, except, perhaps, in the early days in the period of the Deluge. Many of the devices and acts of certain classes of men are characterised by a cold-blooded ferocity and disregard for human suffering which can quite literally be said to be devil-inspired. The fearful experiences through which so many of earth’s peoples must pass today are evidences that the archangel of evil is still the god of this world, and that his subjects still render him service. It is sometimes suggested that these facts are the results of Satan’s struggles to resist his binding, and are evidences therefore that the binding is actually in progress, but this idea is built upon a purely human conception of the binding, as though the Most High God finds it

necessary to wage war and use the heavenly equivalent of physical force to achieve His end of rendering Satan powerless. Nothing of the sort. God is always master of the situation, and when in His wisdom the time comes for Satan to be bound and his influence to be restrained, one word from the Almighty and it will be done. It will not require battalions of angels drawn up in martial array, archangels in command of detachments and some spiritual equivalent of carnal weapons, with which to wage an invisible conflict with the hosts of Satan in the fashion in which fallen man wages war today.

Against this view it is sometimes argued that the 12th chapter of Revelation does contain a very vivid description of war in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting with the devil and his angels, resulting in the devil being cast out of heaven to the earth, and that this surely constitutes a detailed description of the binding or partial binding of Satan at the end of this Age.

It is suggested in this connection that Revelation 12 has nothing in common with Revelation 20, except that the same red dragon is a figure in the symbolism. The time of fulfilment of Rev. 12 is clearly much earlier than the end of the Gospel Age—the final verses show that much, the picture closing with the dragon going forth to make war with the remnant of the woman's seed, which is quite opposite to the idea of binding and restriction. Whatever the teaching behind this symbolism of war in heaven between Michael and the dragon, it has no connection with the descent of the angel to bind Satan at the commencement of the thousand years. By some this vision in Rev. 12 has been made the basis of a view of the "binding" which declares that at some specified time in history the Lord Jesus Christ did engage in combat with Satan and expel him from heaven, in consequence of which the latter has come down to earth and is continuing the warfare against his opponent with this earth as the battleground. Whilst this view springs from a very sincere desire to explain the apocalyptic imagery of the Scriptures in terms of present-day events and expectations, it is none the less a form of interpretation which debases rather than enhances our understanding of the spiritual world to which we aspire and which we hope one day to enter. And Christians who believe in the propriety of war and conflict between spiritual beings for the suppression of evil forces can hardly complain if the powers of this world demand similar services in earthly armies, for the principle is the same.

#### **"Peoples Paper" Subscriptions.**

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It is important to realise that God is omnipotent. "He spake, and it was done: He commanded, and it stood fast." Although He allows His ends to be achieved by means of orderly development, "first the grain, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear," and although He permits the continuance of evil up to a predetermined limit for a wise purpose, yet when God's time to act against evil and evil-doers has come, there is none that can resist His will. The fortunes of war—in earthly or spiritual realm—have no place in the Divine order. He brought the evil of the antediluvian world to an end instantly without calling upon the help of Noah. He destroyed the Cities of the Plain without using His heavenly messengers other than to convey the news to Abraham of what He Himself was about to do. When the hosts of this world converge upon the Holy Land in the last great day of trouble it is to be God Himself, alone, who will act. As in the days of Jehoshaphat, "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle"; "For this battle is not yours, but God's" (2 Chron. 20:15-17). So with the binding of Satan. The vision is a picture of the power of God operating from the seat of His government to end, in one instant of time, every scrap of power and influence Satan may possess over men and spirit.

But, one may ask, is it not likely that Satan foresees this catastrophe, and is making preparations to resist his fate; and does this not imply something very much like war between him and the forces which will effect his binding? It may very reasonably be asked in reply whether Satan, a fallen being separated from God by millenniums of sin, really believes in his heart that he will be bound.

Consider man. Men today, in general, do not believe in God. They have lost this knowledge of God, and with it any vital belief in the power or at least the care of God. How common it is to hear—"If God does exist, He either does not care or has not the power to alter things, or He would have done so and put the world right long ago." That sentiment fairly expresses the considered judgment of the natural man who has been separated from God's presence by sin for many thousands of years.

Yet man at the beginning knew God, walked with God, talked with God, and believed in the power of God. That is clear from the Genesis story. What has wrought the difference? The separation wrought by sin! "Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over . . ." (Rom. 1:28.) So that today man does not believe that God can or will put things right!

Is it not reasonable to think that the same principle must hold good in the case of Satan? He, too, had the privilege of knowing God, walking with Him, talking with Him, and appreciating His mighty power. He, too, fell into sin, and since nothing that is of sin can stand in the Divine presence, he, too, from that day must have been banished, separated from God just as truly as was Adam. "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold

evil!" For thousands of years, then, Satan has been as far from God as has man, and through all that time has enjoyed full liberty to work out his evil designs. It is true he witnessed the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and knew that he at least had escaped his power—but it is in the highest degree unlikely that Satan has any nearer access to the resurrected Christ than has man, and two thousand years have passed since the Lord passed out of man's, and Satan's ken into the heaven or heavens from which He had come. Would it be surprising therefore, if Satan, like man, blinded by sin, has concluded that God cannot or will not complete His work on earth, and that Satan's rebellion will, therefore, continue its apparently successful course?

If this be the right conclusion, the great enemy of man will be busy with his plans, continuing still to wage war against all that is holy and true and lovely on earth, unbelieving until the hour has struck. In the heyday of his power, attendant angels carrying out his dark orders, men on earth busy about his fallen designs, the cry of his suffering prisoners going up to heaven, his powers will vanish as one snaps off the electric light. Like a certain dictator whose edifice of twenty years vanished overnight, he will stand bereft of power, of influence, of servants, of an empire—alone. Too late he will realise that the omnipotence of God has waited for this moment; that right has prevailed, and as the shades of the abyss close around him he will enter into the terrible solitude of an evil mind left entirely alone with its evil.

Can one picture that lonely spirit through all the thousand years of earth's jubilee? Free to roam through the vast spaces of God's creation; free to observe, to meditate, to scheme, but powerless to affect or influence in any way the mind or the heart of the weakest or humblest of God's creatures. A being apart, seeing all, hearing all, unable to interfere. The seal of Divine authority marks him out and sets him apart like Cain—an outcast, an exile, one upon whom is the judgment of God.

Perchance his presence will linger around this earth until the knowledge of man's happiness under the Messianic kingdom, and the renovation of the once desolate earth, becomes unendurable, and drives him off to far recesses of our universe, where, other worlds in the making, other instances of Divine creative energy, recall to his dark mind the earlier history of our own planet when, a happy and righteous being, he may have been one of the morning stars who "sang together" (Job 38:7). He may translate himself from this material universe which glitters around us every night into that spiritual sphere which is beyond the scope of human sense or understanding, and wander through the celestial land as alone and as remote from the presence and the knowledge of God as when he presided over earth's destinies. He may come back, out of eternity into our realm of time and space, to find the thousand years of restitution still in progress; but wherever he goes and whatever he does,

Satan will be bound, altogether unable to interfere further in the plans of God for His creation.

Of the loosing again at the end of the Age we cannot write; we know so little. It would seem that the thousand years of opportunity does not profit the Evil One, for a time is to come, when, freed from the restraints for a "little season," he attempts once more to deceive and enslave humanity. There is apparently no repentance, nothing but an irrevocable determination to fight against God.

And that determination, in God's due time, brings about the only possible sequel. "I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth . . . and never shalt thou be any more." (Ezek. 28:18,19.) (From "Bible Study Monthly")

## *The Christ — Head and Body*

THE philosophy of the sin offering and the Church's association with it is frequently misunderstood, and must never be confused with the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

Whatever blessing ultimately shall come to every man must result from the death of Jesus however others may be subsequently associated with Him in the work.

The grand truth that none can ever have eternal life except by relationship with Jesus in no way hinders the Lord from using the Church as His assistant and agent in bringing the world into that blessed state.

Truly, our Lord is already the propitiation for the Church's sins, because He appeared in the presence of God for us. It is also true that the satisfaction of justice which He effects will ultimately be extended to all mankind at the close of this Age, but this does not hinder our Lord from accepting the Church as members of His body and sacrificing them as such during this antitypical atonement day.

Our Lord truly gave Himself a ransom for all nineteen centuries ago, but evidently He has not applied the benefits to any but the household of faith . . . By the Father's Plan our Redeemer reckons to adopt the Church as members of His body, and allows these to participate in the sufferings of Christ in this present time, and thus also to share coming glories.

We believers have no personal standing before God, nor share in the sacrifice of the sin offering. It is only those who are "beheaded," and thus cease to be themselves and are accepted as members of the Anointed One, of Christ.

All the under priests are represented in the High Priest, The Christ, that participate in the suffering or glory as His members. They all are associated, but the Head is the recognised representative of all.

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## *At the Feet of Christ*

ONE of the most helpful records given in the Scripture in connection with the birth of our Lord is that concerning the wise men of the East, who came seeking the new-born Jesus, the King of the Jews, with presents of myrrh, frankincense and gold, and we should be able to gather from this incident some valuable suggestions respecting our obligations to the great Messiah, and the propriety of renewing these and increasing them now as we approach the opening of another year.

The wise men—according to tradition, three in number—arrived in Jerusalem and began making inquiries respecting the newly-born Jewish King. The news soon spread, and the holy city was in commotion because, according to the prophets, Messiah, promised for centuries, was due to appear about that time; and we read again, "All men were in expectation of Him." This expectancy naturally would be heightened by the coming of the wise men or magi from a far country—supposedly Persia—to show homage to Messiah. Furthermore, there were Jews scattered abroad throughout that country who still more or less kept alive the thought of Israel's hope for the great Messiah so long promised of God, prophesied of as the bringer of blessings not only to Israel but through them to all the families of the earth.

God chose as messengers of His good tidings not only wise men but reverential men, men of faith; and His choice of these messengers from the east to arouse the people of Judea and Jerusalem and to be heralds of the great King was not an exception to the rule. Although heathen men, in the sense of not being of the nation with which God had thus far dealt and to whom He had thus far confined His gracious promises, they were, nevertheless, good men, reverential men, who delighted to know of the coming blessing of peace on earth and good will amongst men through whatever channel or nationality the Lord should be pleased to find His representative and messenger.

In one respect many of Christendom could learn numerous important lessons from these wise Gentiles. No false patriotism stood in their way to hinder their appreciation of any manifestation of divine favour to the children of men. And when they found the Saviour they were nothing daunted by the fact that His home surroundings were of the humbler sort. They worshipped Him in three

senses of the word:—(1) They fell before Him, prostrated themselves, thus physically expressing their reverence. (2) They worshipped Him in their hearts and with the tongue gave expression to their rejoicing and confidence. (3) They opened their treasure-box and presented to Him three gifts appropriate to royalty: the myrrh representing submission, frankincense representing praise, gold representing obedience.

The reverent spirit of these noble heathen men who had so little light, so little knowledge respecting the great Messiah and His work, will bring to our cheeks the blush of shame as we reflect that, favoured with still brighter light to guide us to the Lamb of God, having seen His star in a still better and truer sense, having been guided to Him by the prophecies, having found Him not only a babe, but one that in prospect would bear our sorrows and carry our griefs and make His soul an offering for sin, that we by His stripes might be healed, what manner of oblation should we pour at the feet of Him who loved us and bought us with His precious blood? With what deep reverence have we bowed the knee, prostrated ourselves, given outward evidence through our bodies of full submission to our great King, of whom we not only know but of whose gracious provisions for us and for the world of mankind we have heard, not uncertainly, but with the voice of Him who speaketh from heaven? Have we offered our myrrh? Have we shown a willingness for service even to the extent of bitterness, a joy to honour the King to the extent of suffering with Him? Have we worshipped Him in heart, not with an outward form of godliness without the power—in other words, have we offered Him the frankincense of heart adoration, appreciation and gratitude?

Have we laid at His feet our earthly substance—our gold? Have we realised that all that we have and all that we are are offerings far too small to be worthy of acceptance by the great King Emmanuel? Is this our present attitude? And will it be our attitude through coming days even until the end of the present pilgrimage?

The Apostle's words, "Present your bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God, your reasonable service," apply not only to the primary consecration of our hearts to the Lord, but are, as the Scriptures express it, a covenant of sacrifice, an agreement to die daily to self and to be alive daily more and more in the Lord's service to glorify Him in our bodies and spirits which are His. If this has not been our attitude in the past, shall it not be our future course? Shall we not in any event continue to grow in knowledge, to grow in love, in service, in worship and in the privilege of having our little all at the feet of Him who is our gracious heavenly King, whose kingdom is so soon to be established, and who has invited us to sit with Him in His throne, to share His glory, to be participants as spiritual Israel in the great work of pouring out blessings upon the world of mankind, every kindred, people, nation and tongue?

When we give our hearts it includes all that we have and are in the highest and noblest and fullest sense—that which was illustrated by the three gifts of the wise men is all represented in the brief statement, "My son, give me thine heart." Whoever gives his heart to the Lord fully and unreservedly, gives his body, gives his worship and reverence and praise, and gives his earthly treasure, time, talents, influence, money—all—to be used in joyful service for the glory of the King.

To those who have never taken this step a prompt acceptance is urged upon them, irrespective of the gracious hope we have of a transcendent reward of glory, honour and immortality. As the Apostle declares, it is our reasonable service. Reasonable people ought to be glad of the knowledge that God is willing to accept our service, and of the opportunity to present themselves under the covering of the merit of the dear Redeemer's robe of righteousness.

To those who have already accepted the Lord's favour, who have already presented their bodies living sacrifices, who have already given the Lord their hearts, we urge a remembrance of the fact that the sacrifice once put upon the altar must remain there, and that the longer it remains the more joyful should be the service, the more appreciated every opportunity for sacrifice, the more thankful should be the heart and the more rich should be the experience in the peace of God which passeth all understanding, ruling in our hearts and preparing us more and more through the graces of the spirit for the glorious things which God hath in reservation for them that so love Him and so reverence His Son.

"What shall I render unto Thee  
What praise sufficient could there be  
For all Thy benefits toward me,  
O Thou Most Holy?"

"I'll drink Salvation's cup to-day  
Which Thou hast poured. Be Thou my stay!  
Assist me as Thy saint to pay  
My vows to Thee."

"Remembering Thy Heavenly call,  
I'll strive to be sincere to all.  
I pray for grace lest I should fall  
From Thine own way."

"In thought, in word, in all my ways  
Thy holy standard I would raise,  
Nor please nor honor self, but praise  
My Worthy King."

"Today in matters small or great,  
I'll serve with faithfulness and wait  
For further joys. Oh, blessed state,  
Thus serving Thee!"

"I'll strive to 'choose things that excel';  
All anxious cares I'll seek to quell,  
And all discouragements repel,  
And be content."

"I'll neither murmur nor repine!  
I'll trust my heart to care Divine  
To make of it a sacred shrine  
Where Thou canst dwell."

—V.N.S.

## The Divine Nature

IN the August-September 1971 issue of "Peoples Paper" a Convention address entitled "The Divine Nature" was published in the front pages. This address has been appreciated by readers respecting the development of Christian character like unto our Heavenly Father, by the indwelling of His holy spirit, which is essential for all Christians. However, a mistake was made in using the text in 2 Pet. 1:4, to refer to the divine character. Our friends of the Auckland Class, New Zealand, have made a study of this matter, and the following article which they submit is gladly printed showing the correct meaning of the Greek in the term "divine nature."

In studying this important subject, let us first see what is the meaning of the word "phusis"—"nature", as used in the Word of God. Strong's Concordance shows clearly the meaning, as we can see from the derivation of the word, and the Scripture usage can be seen clearly from the texts in which the word occurs. **Phusis** (Greek word)—Growth (by germination or expansion), i.e., (by implication) natural production (lineal descent); **genus or sort**; Figuratively, **native** disposition, constitution or usage. Dictionary meaning of native—"not acquired" etc.

Its use in the Scriptures: The following list includes every case in which the word is used. (The word "phusis" is translated "nature" and "kind" as follows).

Romans 1:26. The meaning is obvious. The reference is to behaviour appropriate and inappropriate to the human "phusis" or genus or sort of being. The verse is stating what is "natural" or unnatural to the human being as created by God. Thus, behaviour that is contrary to "nature" is wrong. Such behaviour could be quite in harmony with their fallen characters or dispositions, but that is by no means what is being said here. This conduct is "unnatural." It is against nature (phusis).

Romans 2:14. The meaning here is also clear. God has so made the human genus or sort of being that he has a conscience, an in-built awareness of the difference between right and wrong, and thus the Gentiles are guilty before God, even though they were never given the set of laws that were given to the Jews. They do "by nature", "by phusis", that is, they act according to their human genus, of which the conscience is an integral factor. (Verse 15. Similar verse 27).

Romans 11:24. "Wild olive"—"wild by nature" (by "phusis"), i.e., because of its natural constitution, its genus. See verse 21—the adjective from the same word. "Natural" branches are branches that, by genus, by "phusis", belong to the root and to the tree.

1 Cor. 11:14. "Doth not nature itself teach . . ." Again it is obvious that the reference is to the essential human genus, the nature, the "phusis" of

humankind,—no reference to acquired disposition or character.

Gal. 2:15. "Jews by nature"—that is, by birth by genus, by race. (It is clear that Paul is not referring here to disposition or character, but, as in other Scriptures, to the genus).

Gal. 4:8. The reference here again is clear. The idols, the gods of wood or stone, are by their very nature, genus, "phusis", no gods at all. "They have eyes but they see not; they have ears but they hear not . . . ." Psa. 115:4-7. There is no possible reference to "disposition" or "character". How could there be? "By nature (phusis) they are no gods."

Eph. 2:3. "By nature (phusis) children of wrath, even as others." Here the meaning is helped by the past tense. "We **were** by nature . . ." We were by birth, by race, by genus members of the human race, therefore "children of wrath", under condemnation. That describes the condition **before spirit-begerring**, which is the beginning of a change of nature. This thought was clearly in the Apostle's mind, as we read in verse 5 of the "quickenings." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 8:1) Character development is very necessary, of course, but that is another matter. (Note that when the disposition, mind, character **are** the thought totally different words are used, never "phusis").

James 3:7. Here we have the two cases when "phusis" is not translated by the word "nature" but is translated "kind",—in the second case in association with "anthropinos"—human. How very clear is the meaning and the usage of "phusis." "Every kind (phusis) of beasts, and of birds . . . . is tamed, and hath been tamed of **mankind** (the human genus or sort of being)." The lower forms of life, the creatures of lower or inferior genus, have been tamed by the members of the human genus. (This is not saying that bad animals are tamed by good men—It is simply saying that the one "genus" has tamed the other "genus").

2 Pet. 1:4. In this verse it would seem very clear that the reference is to the "nature" of God (phusis = nature; theios = divine). The word "phusis" in this context means the same as elsewhere. It means the genus or sort of being, in this case the genus or sort of being of which God Himself was the only member until the time when, at Jesus' resurrection, He (God) exalted His beloved Son to the same plane of being as Himself. In the Scripture above cited Peter was expressing a most wonderful truth, harmonious, beautiful, awe-inspiring. The meaning of the passage seems quite clear. We have been given the "great and precious promises" that **by these** (dia = through, by means of) we might be "partakers of the divine nature." (Partakers—koinonos = sharers, associates, partners).

It is clear, then, that the wonderful promises have been given to us to enable us to become "more than conquerors" and in due time to become "partakers of the divine nature." But something has already been done. By the power of God

and through the merit of Christ we have been lifted out of the corruption that is in the world. We have been justified by faith. We have been begotten of the spirit. But there must also be sanctification. There must be the making of our "calling and election sure." Therefore, the Apostle tells us that, "having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust", we must go further. We must "add to our faith . . . . etc." This exhortation follows through to the assurance or verses 10 and 11, in which we are told that "an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." This then is the connection between verse 4, where we are told of the opportunity to "partake of the divine nature", and verse 11, where we are assured that, if the faithful endeavour to fulfil the conditions is continued to the end, that glorious and wonderful privilege will be ours.

Thus we see that in 2 Pet. 1:4, as in other Scriptures, the word "nature" does not mean "disposition" or "character." We know that the Christian does need to grow in the character-likeness of the Lord, to put on or develop the new "mind", the "mind of Christ." But that is another thought. It is not what Peter was saying in verse 4 cited above.

A brief note on the word "divine." The Greek word "**theios**" is used only **three times** in the Scriptures. It is derived from the word "theos" and is translated "**divine**" twice, in 2 Pet. 1:3, 4. Once it is translated "**godhead**" in Acts 17:29. In the case in Acts 17 it is evident that Paul was contrasting the idol gods worshipped by the Athenians with the true God whose "deity" or divine nature is not of any material kind. Two other allied words are used, once each. These are abstract nouns—"theiotes" in Rom 1:20 and "theotes" in Col. 2:9. The word "divinity" conveys the meaning.

This detailed study of the subject satisfied us fully that the expression "partakers of the divine nature" means just what we and other Bible Students have always understood it to mean, and we recommend a careful re-reading of the chapter on "Natures Distinct" from page 173 of "The Divine Plan of the Ages." (See footnote page 176). There are also helpful references in Vol. 5.

## "Songs in the Night"

**W**HILE the perplexities and difficulties of recent years are deepening the world over, causing much travail of mind amongst statesmen of all lands, and with mankind in general greatly concerned as to the outcome of this period of gloom, it may be asked how the Lord's people can at this time truly sing "songs in the night."

The year past has surely witnessed a continuation of the night of weeping. Sickness, sorrow, sighing and dying continue, but those who have been brought to know the Lord and His plan of salvation realise that these conditions, under the reign of

"the prince of this world," exist only for a limited time—until the glorious morning of Messiah's Kingdom—and so they have great cause to rejoice that while "Weeping may endure for the night, joy cometh in the morning." (Ps. 30:5.) How glad we are that we have learned from God's Word that, then, the glorious change will come to earth! St. Paul confirms this truth when he declares, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God." (Rom. 8:22.)

At present these sons of God are comparatively little known or recognised amongst men; frequently they are considered "peculiar people," because of their zeal for righteousness and truth and for God. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Soon the Lord will establish His kingdom under the whole heaven. Soon the Church class, the saintly, "the elect," will be glorified, and then the time will come for the blessing of the non-elect—for their restitution to human perfection and to a world-wide Paradise which Messiah's kingdom and power will produce. "He must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet; the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Death will be destroyed; sheol, hades, the grave, will be destroyed, by the resurrection of the dead therefrom—"Everyone in his own order."

While the whole creation groans under its load of sin and sorrow, the saintly few may sing, may rejoice, even in the midst of all the sorrows of life, and even though they share the results of sin as fully or even more fully than do others. The secret of their joy is twofold: (1) They have experienced reconciliation to God. (2) They have submitted their wills to His will. They obtained this new relationship by the way of faith in the Redeemer—faith in His blood of Atonement. They entered by the "strait gate" and "narrow way" of consecration to God—surrendering their own wills and covenanting to do the Divine will to the best of their ability.

This submission of the will to God and the realisation that all their life's affairs are in God's keeping, and under His supervision gives rest to the heart. They have a rest and peace in this surrendered condition which they never knew when they sought to gratify self-will and ignored the right of their Creator to the homage of their hearts and the obedience of their lives.

Similarly, these have joy and peace and songs of thankfulness to God because to them He grants a knowledge of His Divine purposes, and shows them things to come. These see beyond the trials and tribulations of the present time—they see the glories that will follow the present time of suffering. These see that the Church, the saintly few from all denominations and of all nationalities, are prospective heirs of God—heirs of glory, honour and immortality and association with the Redeemer in His glorious Kingdom. This encourages

them. They see also the outlines of the Divine Programme for the blessing of all the families of the earth. When they thus perceive that God is interested in their dear ones who are not saints, and interested in the whole human family, very few of whom are saints, it causes them rejoicing. When they perceive that God has arranged that through Christ and the glorified Church all the families of the earth shall be blessed, it makes them "joyful in the house of their pilgrimage"—while pressing on in the narrow way, and fully realising how light are their own afflictions in comparison with the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

## The Carpenter's Shop

IN a carpenter's shop the tools are overheard to discuss in a critical spirit the greater or less importance of the tasks for which they are respectively fitted.

Dr. Gimlet a philosopher of a penetrative mind, had been speaking in terms of depreciation of the work of Brother Plane. He continued: I know he is very active, even fussy, and to look at the shavings flying about you really would think that he was doing great things, but I notice his work is all on the surface, whereupon the Rev. Heavy Hammer reminded Dr. Gimlet that although his powers of penetration were indisputably great his influence was confined to a very narrow circle. This remark provoked a quick retort from a sharp pointed nail, who said that Mr. Hammer's preaching was far too controversial; he is never happy unless he is having a knock at somebody. Brother Chisel was roused by this criticism of his friend, and declared that only those who were closely associated with Brother Hammer could duly appreciate his strength and perseverance. He and I have been colleagues more than once, and to his powerful influence I ascribe whatever good I have been able to do. Then a horseshoe that happened to be lying on the workshop floor said, I should have derived little benefit from all Mr. Hammer's vigorous preaching had it not been for the zealous labours of another of his colleagues, I refer to Brother Bellows. It was, as I listened to him, that the fire began to glow in my heart; it seems to me that warmth is the great essential.

As the discussion proceeded, Professor Whetstone, who was busily engaged in sharpening young axes, had been observed to pause in his work. His voice was now heard, "Do not be offended when, in spite of all the confident statements first made, I maintain that neither energy nor fire, nor both together, are sufficient, the tool must have a fine polish and a keen edge if it is to do efficient service." This was too much for Brother Screw who spoke with a strong provincial accent, which betrayed his want of culture. I know that I have precious little polish and I also know that I should object to any of old Whetstone's grinding; my motto

is: Lay hold whenever you have a chance, and when once you lay hold never let go. Two close friends are heard conversing in an undertone. Their names are Rule and Square. The latter now ventured to remark that in their estimation all who had previously spoken had the capacity for doing excellent service, if only they would submit to Method and Span. Brother Rule and I have observed with regret that harm is continually being done by those people who will not work within regular lines. Why, replied Brother Hammer, the only rule that I ever had is "Hit hard," and I've driven many a nail home. But he forgot that even he was guided by a Higher hand.

At this moment the carpenter's son entered the workshop. In his presence all sounds of strife are hushed. He is making the model of a Temple; skilfully he takes hold of now, Hammer, then Plane or Gimlet or Screw, the one giving place to the other as the progress of the work required and each finding his special reward as the building grew in beauty and in strength. (Parable adapted from the German by Professor Tasker)

### "Pictures From the Past"

The book of Bible Stories for children—"Pictures From the Past"—mentioned in last issue of "Peoples Paper" was completed in October, and quite a number have been supplied to the brethren. Of 173 large pages, with stiff covers, the price is \$1.20 to cover cost of materials, plus postage, which varies according to distance from 35c within 30 miles of Melbourne, to 75c to Western Australia and Queensland. However, up to 5 copies may be sent for 75c to the distant states.

One of our friends who has had a number of these Story Books writes—"I am giving the Bible Stories to nephews, nieces and friends with children. I have read it right through and find the stories and the way they are told most delightful, and I am sure the children will enjoy them."

### "God's Best Gift."

A booklet for children—"God's Best Gift"—of 20 pages, compiled on the Divine Plan of the Ages years ago in U.S.A., has been produced in our office again recently. Written in childish language it is a splendid little book to convey the main outlines of God's Plan to young people. To cover cost of materials it is supplied at 10c per copy, 17c posted, single copies; less postage on a number.

#### THE FIND.

"Mother, I've found an old dusty thing  
High on a shelf—just look!"  
"Why, that's a Bible, Tommy dear,  
Be careful, that's God's book."  
"God's book," the child exclaimed,  
"Then, mother, before we lose it,  
We'd better send it back to God,  
For you know we never use it."

—The "Churchman"

## Making Pearls

IN the last book of the Bible we are shown a vision of the City of God with its twelve gates, every gate a pearl. Every road into the Holy City, every entrance into the heavenly life, is through a gate of pearl.

What does it mean? It all becomes plain enough if we learn how a pearl is made. And here is the story, as science tells it.

A wound is made in a shell, and a grain of sand, perhaps, gets embedded in the wound. At once all the resources of repair are rushed to the place of hurt. The wound may be made by any of the thousand accidents and vicissitudes of the life of the shell. But when the hurt has been healed, a softly tinted pearl is found closing the wound.

In other words, the Gates of Pearl, by which we enter the City of God, are made by our defeats, injuries, hurts, losses and heartaches on earth; every gate a Pearl. There is no easy way to the highest life, no rosy road to clear insight and understanding. If to us life sometimes seems to be too hard, it is because we do not know what we are saying.

But, it may be asked, does suffering always ennoble us? Manifestly not. In suffering as such, there is no value or meaning apart from the way we take it. The natural reaction to pain, suffering, defeat, is resentment, rebellion, and if it is long continued, bitter despair if not degradation. That is to turn defeat into disaster.

There is another way of facing the worst that can happen to us, without letting it make the worst of us: There is a way of finding in our own souls a faith, a courage, a power by which we may endure and triumph over anything that life or death can do to us, turning darkness into light, making a hurt into a gem.

It is not a pious theory; it is a matter of observable fact. Look into the lives of those whom you most admire for their worth and beauty of character, and you will find that each of them has faced loss, difficulty, pain, disappointment—and won out. God knows it is not easy to do, but it can be done, it has been done, and we can do it, too!—Selected.

### Melbourne Christmas Convention

The brethren of the Melbourne Class extend a cordial invitation to all friends able to attend their Annual Convention to be held this year (D.V.) on December 25th, 26th, 27th and 28th in the Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond. Further information from the Class Secretary—Mr. J. B. Hiam, 16 Kennedy Street, South Oakleigh, Victoria, 3167.

## FRANK & ERNEST TALKS

Geelong, 3GL, 222 M. Sundays 10 a.m.