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God's Plan of the Ages.

(Eph. 3:11). (Contributed) .

ALL attentive readers of God's Word — those who, like the Psalmist, meditate upon it day and night — are aware that we are living in the closing days of a dispensation. It must be apparent to all rational minds that to set the world's ills right, much more is needed than that this or that nation should win a war. God must intervene. Many enquire why He has not done so before this; why He allows the dreadful events of our day to continue.

Whilst we have been blessed with a knowledge of the mystery of God of which Paul speaks from the 3rd verse onwards of our chapter, we, with the Apostle, in the 8th verse, discount any worthiness of ourselves to receive it. It is solely by the grace of God in Christ.

God has a plan which is in perfect accord with the attributes of His character, viz., love, justice, wisdom and power. By His plan and full use of the attributes of His character, He will in due time prove to all, the length, breadth, depth and height of His love. To impulsive, impatient humans one thing God seems not to have studied greatly is time.

Many to-day seem in danger of stumbling at this stumbling stone. Because for so long sin and death has reigned, they conclude that the arm of Almighty God is no longer strong to save and are taking matters into their own hands; thus, as of yore, limiting the Holy One of Israel. (Psa. 78:41).

It is our endeavor to show that while God's plan may seem slow, it is ordered and sure and that at last all men shall declare: "He hath done all things well." There is a central figure which we meet at every turn in the Plan of God and that is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. We know of Him as having been with the Father before the world was (John 1:1-3); of giving up such station to become a man for the suffering of death, to give His life a ransom for sinners, and then, exalted to God's right hand He is appointed to rule o'er all the earth in due time. (Phil. 2:6-11).

Let us look at our text. Benjamin Wilson renders it as follows: "According to a plan of the ages which he formed for the anointed Jesus our Lord." More recent Bible helps do not tend to upset such rendering and it is an indisputable fact that the word rendered "eternal" in our Common Version is in Eph. 2:7 rendered "ages."

Now, what constitutes God's plan? When God created man He created him perfect "in the likeness of God." All was well, both from God's and man's point of view — "very good." All that was necessary for it to continue so, was the simple obedience of the created being to the all-wise Creator. This was made clear and the result of disobedience equally clear. By way of illustration: A man has a horse yoked to a vehicle. So long as man and beast work in unison — the horse answering the rein and obeying the commands of his wise master — all is well. The driver is satisfied, the horse will not be harmed and the vehicle is so handled in the thoroughfare that there is no danger to any. But let the horse get out of hand and refuse the direction of the master. What then! A greatly distressed driver, a maddened horse in grave danger of injury to itself and all yoked to it, and spreading fear in the hearts of all wherever it madly careers. Such is man out of harmony with the Lord; bringing nothing but ultimate sorrow to himself and causing a pained heart to His Creator.

But God wills to retrieve man from the fall, back to a position in harmony with Himself, where he can again enjoy all the beneficence which God alone can bestow. We can be assured that in His infinite wisdom God would use the very best way possible to bring this about. Since he decreed that "the wages of sin is death," and He does not disannul His Word, death has reigned right on from Adam's day. All have sinned and all in Adam die. Therefore it becomes

necessary for God to bring man back out of death, and this the Scripture abundantly testifies He intends to do.

The plan is so comprehensive, however, that a long time has been required for its completion, but at last God's justice, wisdom and love will be apparent to all. Man was created a free will agent and ever remains so, but with his fall into sin God foresees that in order to choose well, it is necessary for him to know what he chooses. That is why for so long God has not intervened greatly in the affairs of men. He stands waiting until the lessons of disobedience have been well learnt—the exceeding sinfulness of sin. All the dreadful wars and revolutions, famine and carnage recorded on the pages of history are in no way blamable to God, but are the direct and indirect result of man's fall into sin. Likewise the droughts, pests, thistles and weeds, etc., with which man has to contend are the result of the curse placed upon the earth because of transgression. (Gen. 3:17-19; 5:29.)

Just prior to the flood man had become so alienated from God that it repented Him that he had made man. (Gen. 6:5, 6.) So to the flood and the saving of righteous Noah, the first dispensation closes and another opens up. It is the one that began there that is now closing, giving way to a 3rd and better dispensation. The 2nd dispensation is marked with various epochs or ages. First, God instructed the people through individual leaders whom we now designate the ancient patriarchs. Next came God's selection of the people Israel and the giving of the Mosaic Law. So the patriarchal age gave way to what we know as the Jewish Age. Then came the birth of Christ duly closing the Jewish Age, and opening the Gospel Age.

The whole of the 2nd dispensation, however, has been as the Apostle described it: "this present evil world," with little righteousness, evil predominating, and Christians are everywhere exhorted in the Scripture to look to the next dispensation for the fulfilment of the prophecies that speak of a restored earth, when God's will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Nevertheless, the 2nd dispensation has served a purpose in God's plan. His choosing of the typical people, Israel, and establishing all His favor with them, overlooking all others right up to and a little after the death of Christ, was all for a purpose. The giving of the Law and the instituting of the blood of animals as a covering for sin, whilst serving typically to appease the sins of the people, were a pointer to Jesus the Mediator of a better covenant, who, in conformity with God's plan came to establish the better sacrifices, thus doing away with the blood of bulls and of goats. (Heb. 10:1-4.)

It was written of Jesus: "Lo I come to do thy will O God," and briefly, God's will was that His life should be made an offering for sin, that He should die "the just for the unjust," to reconcile men to God. (2 Con 5:19.) That was why in the garden of Gethsemane though praying if possible for the cup of ignominy and shame to pass, He complied with the Father's will.

Now with the death of Jesus and His resurrection by the power of the Father, another part of God's plan is brought to view and to all true Christians this is the most momentous. God reveals that it is His will to grant unto others to be joint heirs with Jesus in the throne of His Kingdom which shall in due time be set up for blessing all the families of the earth. They become sons of God by recognising Jesus as their Redeemer, thus coming back into harmony with God, thereafter consecrating their lives to His will, to be fitted and prepared for the great work to which He calls them, i.e., kings and priests of the next age, rulers with Jesus when the new dispensation — Christ's righteous kingdom — is fully ushered in.

There is, however, another side concerning the true Church. Whilst they in due time will reign with Jesus in power and glory, yet their earthly course is one of suffering with (Rom. 8:17.) It is good to note further, however, that the Apostle counted the present sufferings as not worthy of comparison with the glory to come. He further describes them as "light afflictions which are but for a moment" and when we as Christians, rejoicing in the truth of God's plan of the ages, comprehend something of the limitless ages of eternity, we can well understand how the tribulations, etc., of a few short years of this life can be likened to "a moment."

There are several Scriptures that show the Church is Christ's body, therefore they are part and parcel with Him. It has pleased God to count the Church in with Jesus, as members of His body in the great atonement sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. The curse will not be lifted from the earth or the great work of resurrecting the dead of the world begun until The Christ, head and body is complete. That is not to say that we, as prospective members of the body of Christ, have anything of ourselves to impart as an offering for sin. "There is none righteous no not one."

All have sinned and have come short. It is only as we accept Christ as our Saviour, only as His blood makes us right before God that we can then carry out the exhortation of Paul: "I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God (the mercies of God are all bound up in the blood of Christ shed for the remission of sins) that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice." In knowledge of the truth we realize this as Paul describes "a reasonable service."

It was the knowledge of all that was implied, that caused Jesus to warn His disciples that it was no easy way they were taking up. "Can ye drink of the cup (of suffering) that I shall drink of?" He asks two. And again to others:

"Count the cost." It seems that these warnings and instructions were given by Jesus, that His disciples might be fully alive to the way at the outset, and thus not be easily turned back when sufferings, trials and persecutions came upon them because of faithfulness to the Word of God. "He who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is not fit for the kingdom of God." If any will follow, he must deny himself and take up the cross and follow Christ faithful unto death; and he shall receive the crown of life that fadeth not away.

There are numerous Scriptures to prove beyond doubt that none shall attain unto joint heirship with Jesus in the throne, without first suffering with Him in this "present evil world." The favor of this "high calling" was extended first, exclusively to the Jews. Since they in the main rejected it, we hear Paul speaking: "It was necessary that it be first preached (or offered) to you but seeing ye put it from you, lo we turn to the Gentiles." (Acts 13:4-6.) Since then the "little flock," the elect Church, has been chosen almost exclusively from the Gentiles, with the Jews blinded to the spiritual high calling. (Rom. 1 1:25.)

With the completion of the Church (we believe now at hand) the old dispensation will definitely close and the new will open up. It will then no longer be necessary or possible to "suffer with Christ" for the door will be shut and the marriage of the Lamb and His Bride (the elect Church) will take place. The Christ (Head and Body) will then be complete; the offerings of all kinds for sin will be over, and the glorified Christ will then inaugurate the glad time of restitution o'er all the earth. In due time every trace of sin will be effaced and the earth will bring forth bountifully and man no longer need "much sweat of face" to earn his bread. Not only the living amongst the nations but all that are in the graves also shall come back again to participate in the rejoicing of that glad time, but it shall be to the Jews first and then extend to all people.

Whilst the selection of the Church has been going on during the Gospel Age, the rest of mankind, steeped in sin and misled by the arts and devices of the great deceiver, (Satan, the ruler of this present evil world), have been having experiences which in the wisdom of God will profit them to all eternity. They will have had their experience of the reign of sin and death, and when they come forth to earth which will be restored as paradise, and realise how obedience to Christ brings them continued life and happiness, then, having experienced both courses (man ever remaining a free-will agent) they will be required to "choose whom they will serve." We do not think there will be many in that day who will refuse to obey "that ruling Prophet" but should there be any they will be utterly destroyed from amongst the people in second death. (Acts 3:23.)

The prophet Jeremiah Ch. 31:29, 30, speaking of the Kingdom Age, shows how it will no longer be in Adam all die, but "every man shall die for his own iniquity." The order of the Kingdom Age will be, obedience and conformity to the ruler Christ — life; disobedience and nonconformity — second death, destroyed from amongst the people. Wilful evil-doers will not be tolerated in that day for nothing shall hurt nor destroy in the holy kingdom. The motivating principle will be love in the absolute sense. It will be the full answer to the prayer: "Thy Kingdom come," and "the desire of all nations" — perfect peace. With Christ ruling and Satan bound, men of all nations will recognise a perfectly righteous law, and the brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God be real and lasting. Gone for ever will be the selfishness that has caused all wars, so men will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks in the perfect harmony that will exist amongst men of all nations in that day.

The comparison of the following Scriptures is found very interesting. They were found arrayed thus in a monthly religious journal. The first mentioned in each instance is applicable to the present age, the latter to the next age, Christ's righteous Kingdom: John 14:30—Ps. 72:8; 2 Tim. 3:12—Ps. 72:7; Ps. 119:105—Isa. 11:9; Mal. 3:15—Acts 3:23; Matt. 7:14—Isa. 35:8; Isa. 60:2 and Ps. 82:5—Jer. 31:34; John 6:44—John 12:32 (Christ head and body to be lifted up); Ps. 23:4—Rev. 21:4.

Look up, O Earth; no storm can last
Beyond the limits God hath set.
When its appointed work is past,
In joy thou shalt thy grief forget,

Where sorrow's plowshare hath swept through,
Thy fairest flowers of life shall spring
For God shall grant thee life anew,
And all thy wastes shall laugh and sing,

Hope thou in Him; His plan for thee
Shall end in triumph and release.
Fear not, for thou shalt surely see
His afterward of peace.

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The same story, in smaller size without illustrations, at 4d. each, and four for 1/..

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Christ's Millennial Reign.

THE following thoughts respecting the reign of Christ are to hand from on-2 of our brethren: "There seems to be different ways of looking at such. It is clear to me that Michael has stood up, thus the great time of trouble which will yet increase greatly. While in the days of these kings His (Christ's) Kingdom is being established (prepared, made ready) I cannot see that we could yet speak of Christ's reign as having begun. Must not Satan be bound before Christ actually reigns? and must not Christ be complete before His reign begins? If so, then the marriage of the Lamb and His Bride comes first and this cannot be until all the members have passed beyond the veil. Therefore, if Christ were reigning now, the only hope for any in the flesh would be 'the great company.' To me Christ's Kingdom is being prepared (set up) and is nearly ready to reign in full power and glory, but is not yet.

"I seem to remember reading the thought that Satan is not fully bound when Christ's reign commences, but that at

that time his binding is proceeding and is finalised during the Millennium. Now, I had thought that Satan would be bound when Christ's reign commences, although it says the Millennium shall be a day neither dark nor light but at the end of it (the evening) it shall be light (wholly light). Is it Satan operating to some extent that causes the part light and part dark? I would not think so. It would seem to me that at that time Satan will be fully bound that he could no longer deceive and that mankind will then know without doubt of the deceptions that he practised upon them. But while they will be clear thus far, they will not understand all at once just what the perfect will of the Lord is for them, and so the Millennial years will pass as they progress in true light, until at last 'all is clear.' What do you think of these thoughts?"

A careful reading of the opening verses of Rev. 20, confirms much that is stated above. It seems very clear that the binding of Satan for a thousand years is the same period of time when the saints shall "live and reign with Christ a thousand years." That we are still living in the time spoken of by Paul as "this present evil world" should be evident to all; therefore, the "new heavens" (Christ and His saints, 2 Pet. 3:13), are not yet operating in reigning power. It will surely be necessary for all the elect members to be with Christ beyond the veil before the reigning could commence, however much preparatory work is necessary in the meantime — "in the day of His preparation." (Nahum 2:3.)

Further, from the Scriptures as a whole, it is evident that not only the Bride of Christ, but also the Great Company shall be delivered and beyond the veil before the reign of Christ commences. This is shown in the type of Israel's Atonement Day in Lev. 16. After the two animals for the sin-offering are killed and their blood sprinkled in the Most Holy, the scapegoat (picturing the Great Company) is then dealt with, and following this we read, verse 23: "And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there: And he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments;" that is, his usual garments of glory and beauty.

In the type Aaron pictures our Lord, the High Priest of the new order of priests, and the linen garments were worn by the typical high priest during the sacrificing and sprinkling of the blood of the animals offered for sins, and until the scapegoat is dealt with. This represents our Lord in His sacrificial robes during the whole of this Gospel Age and until the Great Company has finished its course. It will be noticed that the linen garments and the garments of glory and beauty were not worn at the same time by the typical high priest. So, it is fitting that Christ, in the antitype, could not be wearing the garments of the sacrificing High Priest and also those of glory and beauty which He will put on when His reign begins.

The garments of glory and beauty will be put on at a later time — when all the sacrificing is over — and will be worn not only by the Lord, the great High Priest, but also by the members of His Body, and then His millennial reign will begin, but not before. There are no Scriptures that we know of to imply that our Lord is reigning while He is sacrificing on earth.

All the many deceptions of our day impress that Satan is still very active, while at the same time there are indications that his kingdom is shortly to fall, in harmony with our Lord's words: "If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand?" Very shortly, it would seem, the stronger man (Christ) shall bind the strong man (Satan), and with the present "heavens passing away with a great noise," there shall then come into operation "the new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness."

For a complete explanation of the tabernacle shadows and how the development of the spiritual people must first be accomplished prior to the Millennial Age, the interested reader is advised to send for the volume "The Bible Teachings on the Covenants, Mediator, Ransom, Sin Offering, Atonement," written by the author of "Studies in the Scriptures." An article on "The Binding of Satan" is also available to all desiring it.

Ask God to give thee skill
In comfort's art,
That thou mayest consecrated be,
And set apart
Unto a life of sympathy.
For heavy is the weight of ill
In every heart;
And comforters are needed much
Of Christ-like touch.

A. E. Hamilton.

Shall a Nation be Born at Once ?

“Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a Man child. Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.--Isa. 66. 7, 8.

THE name “Zion” was anciently applied to a prominent hill of Jerusalem, generally regarded as the southwestern and highest of those on which the city was built. It included the most ancient part of the city, with the citadel; and having been first occupied by a palace, it was called “the city of David.” (2 Chron. 5:2.) It was also called the “holy hill,” or “hill of the sanctuary” (Psa. 2:6), being the original site of the tabernacle pitched by David for the reception of the ark.

By the Prophets the name “Zion” was often put for Jerusalem itself, and also for its inhabitants, who were sometimes called sons and daughters of Zion. The word was often used in a wider sense, as was Jerusalem also, to signify the entire nation of Israel. And since fleshly Israel was typical of Spiritual Israel, the name “Zion” applies with still deeper significance to the Gospel Church, a term which throughout the Gospel Age included the entire body of professed Christians, of whom all the truly consecrated are on probation for full membership in the Church triumphant — the true Church, the Zion of the future and the true Zion of the present Age, the Elect Little Flock, to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom. (Luke 12:32.) In the symbolic application of the term we must, therefore, judge from the character of the prophecy whether the reference is to the fleshly or to the Spiritual House of Israel, or to both; and, if to the latter, whether it applies in its broadest sense to the nominal Gospel Church, or to the Elect Little Flock, the only true Church in God's estimation.

The symbolic travail in the above prophecy is a reference to the great time of trouble — the travail that is to come upon the nominal Gospel Church, great “Babylon,” from which some are to be accounted worthy to escape. (Luke 21:36.) This is indicated by the preceding verses, which locate the time of this prophecy as synchronous with that wherein is heard “a voice of noise [confusion] from the city” [Babylon], and “a voice [of truth and warning] from the Temple” [the Elect Little Flock of consecrated and faithful ones], and “a voice of Jehovah, that rendereth recompense to His enemies” — in the great time of trouble.. —Isa. 66:6.

The travail that is coming upon nominal Zion — “Christendom,” “Babylon”—will be a great and sore affliction, “a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation.” (Dan. 12:1.) But the marvellous thing the Prophet here has to record is that a Man child is to be born out of Zion before this travail comes. This is a striking reference to the fact, elsewhere clearly taught, that the ripe wheat of the Gospel Church are to be separated from the tares, that they are to be gathered into the barn condition of safety before the burning, the consuming trouble, shall come upon the latter. (Matt. 13:30.) This Man child, therefore, is the Little Flock — the true Zion In God's estimation, the Body of Christ; as it is written, “There shall come out of Zion the nominal Gospel Church] the Deliverer [The Christ, Head and Body], and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob fleshy Israel, or Zion.” — Rom. 11:26.

Two Classes Born in Zion.

This is the Man child that is to bless all the families of the earth. (Gen. 28:14; Gal. 3:16, 29.) The birth of the Man child is the First Resurrection. Blessed and holy are all they that have part in the First Resurrection. (Rev. 20:6.) Such are now begotten of God by the Word of Truth, and quickened by the holy spirit (James 1:18; Eph. 2:1; Rom. 8:11), and in due time—before the travail —they will be born in the glorious likeness of Christ.

The birth of the Man child began over eighteen hundred year,-, ago with the resurrection of Christ Jesus. There the Head of this Body of Christ came forth; and as surely as the Head has been born, so surely shall the Body come forth. “Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord: shall I cause to bring forth and shut the womb?

saith thy God.” (Isa. 66:9). Ah, no: “the Man child,” The Christ complete, the Great Deliverer, shall come forth!

Yet “who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things?” for not only shall the Body of Christ, the true overcoming Zion, the “holy nation, the peculiar people,” be delivered out of nominal Zion before the travail; but when she travails, a Great Company of other children will be born. This is the Great Company described in the Apocalypse as coming up out of the great tribulation, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev. 7:14.) The Body of Christ, the Man child, born before the travail, will be composed of those who heard and obeyed the call, “Come out of her, My people,” etc. (Rev. 18:4), and who were counted worthy to have a part in the First Resurrection.

The many children born through the great tribulation will be those believers in nominal Zion, Babylon, who have allowed themselves to become measurably intoxicated by the spirit of Babylon, the spirit of the world, and who, therefore, are not quick to discern and prompt to obey the voice of the Lord in this harvest time. They fail to see that it is harvest time, and consequently fail to understand the separating work which the sickle of Present Truth is accomplishing. They regard those servants of God who wield the sickle as enemies, who oppose them and the Lord, whom they serve.

The great tribulation, or travail, that is coming upon nominal Zion is the only thing that can convince such as these. This class includes a large number of believing children of God, whose manner of life is righteous and generally circumspect, but who are nevertheless worldly-minded, and who are not rendering themselves a living sacrifice to God, following the Lord through evil and through good report, and meekly bearing the reproach of Christ. They have respect to men’s opinions, traditions and plans, and fail to submit themselves fully to the will and plan of the Lord. And only when they behold the wreck of nominal Zion — Christendom, Babylon — will they realise its gross errors and be delivered from them and it.

Christ a Stumbling-Stone to Spiritual Israel.

“Behold,” says the Prophet, “I lay in Zion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence; and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.” (Rom. 9:33; Isa. 8:14, 15; 28:16.) That stumbling-stone is redemption through the precious blood of Christ. At that stone the fleshly Zion stumbled, and so now the nominal spiritual Israel is stumbling at the same stone; for it was to be “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel” (Isa. 8:14)—the fleshly and the spiritual.

The Elect Little Flock of overcomers do not so stumble, but recognise this as the chief corner-stone of the true Zion, remembering the words of the Prophet, “Behold I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone elect, precious; and he that believeth

on Him shall not be confounded. Unto you, therefore, which believe [in Christ as your Redeemer who bought you with His precious blood] He is precious; but unto them which be disobedient, . . . the same is made . . . a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient; whereunto also they were appointed.” (I Peter 2:6-8.) God does not purpose to deliver His Kingdom unto any of the disobedient. They need the fiery trial of the coming tribulation to bring them into a proper attitude before God; and hence they must come up through the great tribulation.

While those who are truly begotten of God, who have been quickened by His Spirit to the new spiritual life, and who are faithful in fulfilling their covenant of entire consecration as living sacrifices unto God, may well rejoice in hope of the First Resurrection, and of being born before the travail upon nominal Zion, it is also a cause of rejoicing that many of the weaker children of God, now stumbling with nominal Zion, will, nevertheless, by and by be recovered and saved so as by fire [born] through the great tribulation [travail], in which nominal Zion shall expire, but from which they shall come forth.

Rejoice with Jerusalem.

“Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her.” “Behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem and joy in My people, and the voice of weeping shall no more be heard in her, nor the voice of crying.”—Isa. 66:10; 65:18, 19.

This call to rejoice with Jerusalem immediately follows the prophetic announcement of the birth of Zion, the terms Zion and Jerusalem being here used interchangeably. The birth of Zion, the exaltation of the Body of Christ to Kingdom power and glory, will indeed be a cause for rejoicing on the part of all people. It is for this exaltation and manifestation of the sons of God that the whole creation waits, groaning and travailing.—Rom. 8:19-23.

When the true Zion is thus exalted, then will follow the great work of the Kingdom. The travail upon nominal Zion immediately succeeding will quickly liberate the true children of God still in her, and they shall come forth to larger views and higher principles, and to develop into nobler characters. The rule of the iron rod will quickly subdue all things, completely breaking up the whole present social fabric and accomplishing the leveling process which will make ready for the reign of righteousness.

Then the great Millennial reign of righteousness will begin, when every man will have a full, fair opportunity to gain everlasting life by faith and obedience to the New Covenant. And no man's opportunity will be less than a hundred years; though if he wastes all of that time without taking any steps towards reformation, he will be considered unworthy of life and will be cut off in the Second Death. (Isa. 65:20.) But the obedient shall eat the good of the land. (Isa. 1:19.) "They shall build houses and inhabit them [there will not be so many houses to let in those days probably, but improved and cultivated homesteads, in which the owners shall take pleasure and comfort]; and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree are the days of My people ["They shall renew their strength" — Isa. 40:31]; and Mine Elect [all the faithful and obedient then] shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed I the children] of the blessed of the Lord [the Church], and their offspring with them." — Isa. 65:21-23.

"And it shall come to pass that before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear" — so near will the Lord be, so mindful of all their interests. "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together [The reference here may be to men formerly of wolf-like or lamb-like character, or to animals, or to both — the expression signifying in any case a reign of peace]; and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock, and dust shall be the serpent's meat [—another expression similar to, 'His enemies shall lick the dust,' signifying the destruction of the serpent, or rather of Satan, whom the serpent symbolises. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain [Kingdom], saith the Lord." — Isa. 65:24, 25.

Thus the birth of the true Zion will be a cause for rejoicing among all who truly love righteousness: for though it will first dash in pieces all their long cherished hopes, it is the dawn of real hope for all the world. It will humble all their pride, despoil them of all their cherished possessions and what they have come to esteem their rights, break down all their boasted institutions, civil, social and religious, and completely wreck all order and all hope, until they begin to see hope in the new order of things inaugurated by the Kingdom of God.

Yes, rejoice with Jerusalem, Zion, and be glad with her, all ye that love her, as well as all ye that mourn for her now and try to dissuade her from her course, not seeing the prize at the end of her life of faithful self-sacrifice; for soon her glory will appear, not only to her own exceeding joy, but also to the joy and blessing of "all the families of the earth."

The Christian Way.

THE matter of the Christian's call and duty to separate himself from the world is well illustrated in Pharaoh's four subtle objections to the full deliverance of God's ancient people from the land of Egypt. The first objection is expressed in his words to Moses: "Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land (of Egypt)." (Exod. 8:25.) The object in this proposal of Pharaoh, doubtless instigated by Satan, was to hinder full obedience to the command of the Lord to separate entirely from Egypt and its evil, idolatrous influences. Egypt is very generally understood to represent the world. Deliverance from Egypt represents deliverance from this "present evil world." (Gal. 1:4.) The tendency of professed Christians in defining what constitutes "the world" or worldliness is to place it a point or two lower than the standard they themselves have reached. God's Word, however, defines it very explicitly and informs us that it is "all that is not of the Father" (1 John 2:16); hence the deeper our sense of fellowship with the Father, the keener will be our sense of what is worldly. The more we are enabled in the power of an ungrieved spirit to drink in Christ's revelation of the Father, the more accurate does our judgment become as to what constitutes worldliness. It is most difficult to define where worldliness begins. One has said that it is shaded off gradually from black to white. It seems impossible to place a hound and say: "this is where worldliness begins"; but as the Christian walks close to the Lord, the keen sensibilities of his inner spiritual nature discern it. Possessing the power of the "new life" enables the individual Christian to mark the dividing line.

Moses' reply to Pharaoh was: "It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abominations of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the Lord our God, as He shall command us." (Exod. 8:26, 27.) There seems to be illustrated in Moses' reply what is meant by true separation from the world. The "three days' journey into the wilderness" seems to represent what the death, and the resurrection of Christ three days after, signify to a true Christian believer, namely his identification with Him in His justification, and his identification with Him in His consecration, being quickened by the spirit of Truth, to walk in a new life of separation from sin and worldliness.

Pharaoh's reply: "I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away," indicates that if he could not keep them in Egypt, he would at least keep them near it, so that he might act upon them by its varied influences. In this way they might be brought back again, and the testimony more effectually quashed than if they had never left Egypt. There is always much more serious damage done to the cause of Christ by persons seeming to give up the world and returning to it again, than if they had remained entirely of it; for they virtually confess that, having tried heavenly things, they have discovered that earthly things are better and more satisfying.

The third objection of Pharaoh was to the Israelites taking their children when they should go to worship and sacrifice to God in the wilderness. The lesson seems to be to spiritual Israel — that they are required to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4), a lesson to which many Christians fail to take heed.

Pharaoh's fourth objection was to their taking their flocks and herds. Moses' reply to this last attempt of Pharaoh to cause the Lord's people to compromise, is a grand illustration of how in consecration, the Lord requires not only that we give ourselves, but all that we have — all that we possess. "Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind." (Exod. 10:25-27.) It is only when God's people take their stand upon this elevated ground of entire consecration, on which by faith Christ's death and resurrection places them, that they can have any clear sense of what the claims of consecration are. Moses' words: "We know not with what we must serve the Lord, until we come thither," seems to teach that no one can have a knowledge of the Divine claim, or their responsibility, until they have, figuratively speaking, gone three days' journey into the wilderness." It is only then that we know that "we are not our own; we are bought with a price." (Extract from "Revelation of Jesus Christ").

Melbourne Christmas Convention.

The brethren of the Melbourne Class desire to make known to all interested friends that their Annual Convention will be held again (D.V.) over the Christmas season.

A hearty invitation is extended to all able to attend the gatherings, and notification of attendance should be sent to the Secretary, Mr. J. B. Hiam, 44 Heath Avenue, Oakleigh, S.E. 12, Vic., as soon as possible.

Further information will appear in December issue, and our brethren generally are asked to join with us in prayer for the Lord's blessing upon this season of fellowship and refreshing in His name.

Used Books for Disposal.

Cruden's Concordance.—This is a complete concordance in very good-binding, and in first-class condition. Containing 720 large pages, it is priced at 7/ 6, plus 1/3 postage.

“Sermon Books.”—A limited number of these books are available in good used condition; they are well known to many of our readers, and contain many most helpful sermons on various subjects pertaining to the Christian's hope, and truth generally. Price 3/-, post paid.

Special Issue of “The Dawn.”

Our U.S.A. brethren have prepared a special issue of “The Dawn” for witness work, and a supply of these is on hand for the benefit of the friends in Australasia. This is a very appropriate and helpful number for general use, and also to pass to other brethren. It is priced at 9d. per copy, post paid.

To Readers Overseas.

In view of the fact that mails are now uncertain and fail to arrive from time to time our oversea brethren are advised to keep a copy of all particular items mentioned in correspondence, and especially the numbers of Money Orders or Drafts forwarded. This information could then be sent later should acknowledgment of any previous communication not be received from this office within reasonable time.

Office of Advocate and Mediator Contrasted

THE fact that the Church is “the mystery of God” has become more clear within the last thirty years. We know that Christ and the Church are separate and distinct from the world in every particular. They are neither under the Law Covenant, nor under the New Law Covenant, but are a peculiar people, called, sanctified, developed under a special covenant by themselves. This the Scripture styles the Covenant of Sacrifice. “Gather My saints (holy ones) together unto Me (saith the Lord) those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.” —Psalm 50:5.

This special class of saints, or holy ones, who make the covenant of sacrifice have as their Head the Lord Jesus Himself. When this company shall have completed their covenant by sacrifice, this present age will end. Moses of the Law Covenant given to Israel represented specially the Law Covenant, which will be given to the world through the antitype of Moses — the Christ. In other words, the Mediator of the Law Covenant was one man, but the Mediator of the New Law Covenant of the Millennial Age is the New Man, of which Jesus is the Head, and the apostle declares that the members are made up of those elected both from Jews and Gentiles. From the time of Jesus down, the Mediator of the New Covenant has been in process of selection, and “the better sacrifices” as the basis for the New Covenant have been in process of offering.

During this Gospel Age Jesus has, not exercised His office as Mediator for the world, and the world has no relationship with God, but still lies in the wicked one. The Mediator Himself has been in process of development.

As the apostle declares: God raised up Jesus first, and since has been raising up the Church, and soon will finish the raising up. It is this Mediator or Prophet of whom St. Peter speaks in Acts 3:22, 23. (See also 1 Tim. 2:5, 6.) No mediating can be done until the Mediator of “many members” has qualified for the office. His qualification consists of his sacrificing according to his Covenant of Sacrifice. The Christ, Head and Body, are, therefore, the Mediator for the world in a prospective sense, in the same sense as Jesus the Babe could be spoken of as the Saviour, and the King. He is only now becoming the King, and has yet saved only a few of His people.

There is a wide distinction between the work of a mediator and the work of an advocate. The great Mediator between God and man — the Christ of glory — will fill His mediatorial office for a thousand years, and complete it only by the end of that time, when He will deliver over to the Father, fully reconciled all who can be brought into harmony with the Divine arrangement.

The work of an advocate is different, and, according to the Bible, relates only to the work which Jesus accomplishes on behalf of the Church during this age. The Church will need no advocate in the future. The world has no advocate now. We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. It is Jesus individually, who is the Advocate for us — “the Church, His body.” He advocates our cause, first of all, by imputing to us the merit of His sacrifice, thus making us presentable in the Father's presence and acceptable as sons of God. Because of this advocacy, we have received the holy spirit, and are new creatures in Christ. As new creatures we still need our Advocate, because we cannot do the things that we would perfectly. We have imperfections of the flesh, which as new creatures we cannot fully control. Hence we need a Throne of Grace and an Advocate through Whom we may maintain our present relationship with the Father, and thus not be condemned with the world.

Paradise in Eden.

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A very helpful poem booklet is now in stock for the benefit of our readers. It was announced in a truth paper in U.S.A., as follows:—"This beautiful poem may be briefly described as 'The Divine Plan of the Ages in Verse.' Its rhythm is superb and its message worthy of the cardinal features of the Divine purpose concerning human salvation.

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