



Volume XLVI I No. 6 MELBOURNE. DECEMBER —JANUARY 1965 Price— Sixpence

Evolution in the Light of the Bible.

THE part of the evolution theory which concerns us mostly as Christians is the claim that man was not created by God a perfect human being, but rather that the human creature reached the stage recorded in the Bible as being able to commune with the heavenly Creator by a long process of development, commencing with a low form of life and taking many thousands of years to attain to human intelligence. In other words, the thought is expressed quite often that Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden were merely symbolic of the human race, and were not the first human pair. People who speak in this way are not taking the Bible as their guide at all, but accepting man's wisdom as being superior to the plain statements of Scripture.

The Bible record respecting the creation of man is very clear and understandable for everyone of average intelligence, as found in the well-known text in Gen. 2:7. Here we have the statement that "God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." Here we see that

God created the human body, with all the elements required to live ; a perfect body but without life. Every organ was perfect, and then God breathed into that body the breath of life, and the body began to live ; the lungs began to breathe, the heart began to pump the blood, and all the senses came to life. Man *became* "a living soul" by the union of the body with the breath of life. But how few, comparatively, of mankind understand that simple creation of our first parents.

In this connection we have an interesting verse in Eccles. 12:7, which reads—"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was ; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." This spirit refers to the breath of life that God gave to man to create him a living soul by union with the perfect though lifeless body. Many people think of the spirit returning to God as the soul returning to God. It is nothing of the kind. It takes the breath of life and the body to create a living soul, and when the breath returns to God, at death, there is no living soul. The union of two things creates the soul; if there is only one left, there is no soul until in the resurrection the two are united again.

In 1 Cor. 15:45, we have the Apostle Paul quoting from Gen. 2:7, when he says, "So it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul." The fact that the inspired Apostle refers to Adam as the *first man* certainly confirms the record of Genesis. Who that esteems the Bible as God's Word would contradict the Apostle Paul and claim that he was wrong in his plain declaration that Adam was *made* a living soul? Adam did not reach that stage of development over hundreds or thousands of years. He was made a living soul in the first instance, and also "in the image of God." (Gen. 1:27.)

The Psalmist's inspired account of man's creation is also of much interest and help to Bible students, as found in Psa. 8:3-9. "When I consider thy heavens . . . which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him?

. . . For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour,"—of perfect human life. We note particularly the wording of verse 5,—"**MADE** him a little lower than the angels," and NOT that it took thousands of years of evolutionary processes to reach that state. Some people interpret it that man was made a little while lower than the angels. This was not the case ! He was made a little lower in degree, is the thought in the text, not that man would evolve to something higher in course of time.

Further, when we have the Apostle Paul in Heb. 2:6-8 quoting the very words of the Psalmist respecting man's creation, we see how important it is for us to accept the Bible's testimony on this subject. After quoting the words from Psa. 8,

Paul adds—"But now we see not yet all things put under him"—under man. No, fallen man is unworthy to control earth's affairs. If he had continued faithful in the Garden of Eden he would have been an obedient human king of the earth, and would have had all things under his control for all time. While then "we see not yet all things put under him," verse 9 of Heb. 2 contains a lovely assurance to Christians of the wonderful plan of God, and eventually what could have been in the Garden of Eden will really come to pass in the kingdom of Christ. We read—"We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels (the same nature as perfect Adam) for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." Paul was looking back on our Lord's sacrifice, knowing that He was willing to be made a "little lower than the angels". He was a corresponding-price to pay the sacrifice on behalf of Adam and all mankind condemned in him. Our Lord was crowned with glory and honour as a perfect man, as Adam had been in the Garden of Eden. This equality of Christ's sacrifice for the fallen Adam is the secret of the doctrine of the ransom.

What Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 15:21, 22 reveals the beauty and simplicity of God's plan; how it reflects the love and mercy of God in providing our Saviour to be the Redeemer of all mankind—"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

In full agreement are the words in 1 Tim. 2:4-6. "God will have all men to be saved (from Adamic death in the resurrection, and then) come unto the knowledge of the truth . . . that the man Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom (corresponding-price) for all, to be testified in due time." But if the evolutionary theory was correct, man has been and is evolving to higher and higher attainments, and needs no salvation. In other words, evolution denies the fall of man, and has no place in its teachings for a Saviour. So we see how erroneous and deceptive a teaching evolution really is, being based on man's exalted idea of his own wisdom.

How clearly did the Apostle Paul describe the wisdom of the worldly wise, in 1 Cor. 1:18-24. ". . . Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world.... But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks (Gentiles) foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." This is a lovely presentation, to show the difference between the simplicity of the appealing message of the gospel of the cross of Christ, in comparison with the exalted ideas of the wisdom of the wise men of this world.

It is very evident that in the theory of evolution there is no place for the cross of Christ; but the Gospel message of hope for humanity because "Christ died for our sins" is the main theme of the Bible from beginning to end. (See 1 Cor. 15:1-4.)

How important also that we understand and appreciate the Bible's teachings on restitution for the majority of the human family, as declared in Acts 3:20, 21. The teaching of restitution was lost and hidden over the greater part of the Gospel Age, but God through His servants made it known again following the Reformation period, and when understood it is seen that this part of the Plan of God is just as important for the majority of humanity as is the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus for the Church. "And he (God) shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you ; whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." This must be a very important message for God to have put it into the mouths of all His holy prophets, every one of them, that there were to be times of restitution of all things at our Lord's second advent. The word translated "restitution" in the Greek carries the thought of "reconstitution, or restoration." The question naturally arises, Restitution to what? Our friends believing in evolution must answer, Restoring to a very low state of intelligence, even the very lowest form of life. Can we imagine that to be part of God's plan for His human family created in His own image ? How poor and weak, how unscriptural, how unlike God, is the theory of evolution! But how lovely is the thought of mankind being restored to that perfection enjoyed by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, as our Lord declared—"For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10.)

We call to mind the promise of our Lord to the thief on the cross, as recorded in Luke 23:42, 43. Our Lord was crucified between two thieves. One apparently had a wrong spirit in respect of our Lord, and the other one appealed for help when he saw, perhaps, the notice on the Lord's cross, "This is the king of the Jews." He felt there would be no harm in asking the Lord to remember him when He came into His kingdom. "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee today (this very day I am on the cross, and it seems I will never have a kingdom, humanly speaking), shalt thou be with me in paradise." That is the very paradise to which all mankind are to be restored in the "times of restitution". It is a lovely picture of the Garden of Eden conditions which will exist throughout the lengths and breadths of the whole earth. That thief will be resurrected and come forth when the other millions of humanity return from the "land of the enemy" to paradise conditions. That *is* what "restitution" really means.

Paul quotes from the Old Testament records in Gal. 3:8 with reference to the blessings of restitution. "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham,

saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.” This is the message of the glad tidings of great joy to all people, when they are able to receive it into their hearts in the Millennial Age.

In Acts 3:21 we read that the “times of restitution” have been proclaimed by “all God’s holy prophets since the world began.” If any prophets did not proclaim the “times of restitution” it would prove they were not God’s true prophets. To realise that all true prophets of God have proclaimed the restitution of mankind, a restoration of what was lost in Adam, strengthens our faith in the Word of God. It is clear also that the restitution message was not the prophets’ own idea of what God’s plan for mankind should be, but rather it was that *“which God hath spoken”*. The prophets were merely His servants. Paul tells us in Heb. 1:2 that “God hath spoken unto us by his Son,” and just as truly God has spoken through the ancient prophets.

As an example of the many prophecies revealing the wonderful message of restitution back to the perfection lost in Adam and redeemed through Christ, Ezekiel 36:6-38 is most enlightening. (Please read.) Who, that reads these verses would not be convinced respecting the “times of restitution”. Israel, the nations, all mankind, rejoice in the wonderful restoring time—back to that which was lost. It even mentions the Garden of Eden. “This land which was desolate is become like the Garden of Eden. . . . Then the heathen that are left round about you (Israel) shall know that I the Lord build the ruined places ... I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it.” (Verses 35, 36.)

Let us not be misunderstood, however. While restitution is a wonderful provision for mankind generally in the Kingdom of Christ during the Kingdom age, it is not God’s plan for the followers of Christ during this Gospel Age—between our Lord’s first and second advent. The Apostle’s statement in Heb. 11:39, 40 shows a clear distinction between the people of God prior to our Lord’s first advent, and those who become His followers since,—“And these all (having lived before the Gospel Age) having obtained a good report through faith, received not (the fulfilment of) the promise ; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”

The “us” class refers to Christians since our Lord’s first advent, and the “better thing” for Christ’s followers is well described as “so great salvation,” even the “heavenly calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (See Heb. 2:3 ; 3:1.) Of much importance is the fact that this heavenly inheritance is not gained through any evolutionary process; in other words, no one after accepting Christ as their Saviour can become a Christian by progressive steps of an evolutionary nature. The only way to enter the real Christian way is to commit one’s life fully and completely to God, after being justified by faith in Christ’s sacrifice, and then, and then only, being begotten by God’s holy spirit, as a member of the New Creation. No one becomes a true Christian by a sincere desire to live a good life and become better and better and please the Lord that way. No, but only by full consecration to God, and His spirit beginning a new spiritual life within. See 2 Cor. 1:21, 22; James 1:17, 18; 1 Pet. 1:3-5. “Of his own will (God’s will) begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.” “God hath begotten us again unto a lively hope.”

It will be seen that the illustration sometimes used to prove the theory of evolution respecting mankind; namely, the process of the grub or caterpillar entering its cocoon and coming out a moth or butterfly is totally out of place.

That process is quite normal in the development of the butterfly, but we do not find the butterfly continuing a further process to become a bird- or anything else. So, mankind in general in going into death are not transformed into angels by any process of evolution, but will be raised human beings to inherit the restored earth in the “times of restitution”. True Christians, on the other hand, begotten of God’s holy spirit in this life, and proving faithful unto death in sacrifice, are given spirit bodies in the first resurrection. That is why Paul spoke as he did, when he stated—“We have this treasure (of the new mind, the new creature) in earthen vessels, that the power may be of God, and not of us.” (2 Cor. 4:6, 7.) Further, in 2 Cor. 5:1, we read respecting the spiritual resurrection for true Christians—“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” A clear explanation of the earthly and heavenly resurrections is also found in the Apostle’s masterly presentation in 1 Cor. 15:37, 38,—“That which thou sowest (in death) thou sowest not that body that shall be. . . . But God giveth it (the being to be restored) a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.” To those begotten of the holy spirit, on their proving faithful unto death God gives a spirit body. For all others, “of the earth, earthy,” human, fleshly bodies will be given in the resurrection, that they may inhabit the earth. (See 1 Cor. 15:45-50.)

How clear it is that evolution viewed in the light of the Bible is an erroneous and deceptive teaching and is absolutely opposed to the salvation of mankind through the sacrifice of Christ. Paul’s words to Timothy seem very applicable as a warning to us today against the errors of evolution and other anti-ransom doctrines.—“O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so-called; which some professing have erred concerning the faith.” (2 Tim. 6:20, 21.)

PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM. (B.-Monthly) 6/- (60 cents) per annum, post paid.

Published by the Berean Bible Institute, 19 Ermington Place, Kew, E.4, Melbourne, Victoria Australia

While it is our Intention that these columns be used for teaching, strictly In accord with the Lord's Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression used, either in the correspondence or In the sermons reported.

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Christmas Hopes and Joys

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:11.)

CHRISTMAS (or Christ's festival) by general usage is celebrated on December 25th ; and since its commemoration is not enjoined in the Scriptures, but is merely a voluntary commemoration of a great fact rather than of a particular date, we do well to celebrate it decorously at the usual time—notwithstanding the fact that we disagree with the date, and hold, according to the evidences, that our Lord was born about October 1st, and that December 25th, nine months previous, was probably the date of the annunciation.—Luke 1:30, 31.

Our confidence in Jesus that He was the sent of God, the Redeemer, the Messiah, the Deliverer of His people, rests not merely upon the testimony of the apostles in the New Testament records, wonderful and convincing as these testimonies are; they gain nine-tenths of their weight and importance from the fact that they evidence the fulfilment of promises, types and prophecies given by the Lord with more or less explicitness from time to time throughout the preceding 4,000 years. He who does not discern something, at least, of the divine plan of the ages in connection with our Saviour, His birth, His three and one-half years' ministry, His sacrificial death, His resurrection, His ascension, etc., fails to get the real strength of the divine revelation, designed by the Lord to be the firm foundation for His people's confidence in Him and in all the glorious things which He has promised He would yet accomplish through this great Saviour.

Note the original promise of the Saviour shortly after sin had wounded our first parents and brought them under divine sentence (Gen. 3:15). Note the promise made to Abraham respecting Messiah that He should be of his posterity (Gen. 22:18). Notice the same to Jacob (Gen. 28:14) and to David (2 Sam. 7:12-16). Through Isaiah the prophet, His coming and His greatness are foretold (9:6, 7; 11:1-9). Daniel the prophet, also refers to the importance of His work of making an end of sin and bringing in everlasting righteousness, and thus sealing the visions and prophecies which the Lord had just given respecting Him and the favor to come through Him (Dan. 9:24). We recall also how He was typified by Isaac, who was not only the heir of the promises made to Abraham, but who was also in a figure put to death and received again from the dead. We remember also the types and figures of the Mosaic arrangement, and how Moses himself was declared to be like unto the greater one to come after him.

According to the flesh, Jesus Christ took hold of the seed of Abraham, as the Apostle explains; but He was indirectly related also to the outside world through His mother. All of this is interesting to us, but nothing to be compared to our still greater interest in the fact that our Lord Jesus, although born a Jew under the law, and redeeming those who were under the law, did more than this, in that His death as planned and accepted by the Father was a propitiation "for the sins of the whole world." He died as the ransom price for Adam and his sin, and thus purchased from condemnation not only Adam, but his entire posterity involved through his transgression; hence, as the Apostle points out, "He is able to save (deliver) unto the uttermost all who come unto God through him," (Heb. 7:25). Not only so, but our Lord's circumstances of birth and early experiences in comparative poverty as a working man, impress us with the thought that He is indeed able to sympathise with mankind in every station of life; having passed from the glory of the Father to the lowest condition of humanity and back again, He is surely able to appreciate and to sympathize with all conditions and classes.

The narrative of our lesson is so simple as to require few comments ; our chief interest centres in the message which our Heavenly Father sent us through the angels at the time they announced the birth of Jesus; "Fear not" —the angel understood well that through sin and degradation a fearful apprehension comes over man when he finds himself in contact with spirit beings; he is apprehensive of certain further condemnation or punishment ; his acquaintance with men in influence, authority and power, leads him to dread the still greater authority and power of the Almighty, lest it should be injurious to him. Only the true Christian, having the eyes of his understanding opened to appreciate the length and breadth and height and depth of the love of God, can have that perfect love toward the Heavenly Father, which is built upon an intimate knowledge of His Word, and which casteth out all fear. We are reminded of the prophet's words respecting the Lord's people of today. "Their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men," (Isa.

29:13). The Lord would have His people free from this fear, though not free from a proper reverence toward Him.

The message continues, "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." How slow the Lord's people have been to believe this message and to accept the Saviour at His full worth! How prone they seem to be to suppose first of all that He was to be a Saviour merely for the Jews; or secondly, a Saviour merely for a special elect class; or thirdly, a Saviour only for those who under present darkness, ignorance, prejudice, superstition and devilish influences, manifest a special love for righteousness! But how broad is the statement—great joy—for all people! Our faith is not broader than the positive declaration of the Scriptures, when we hold firmly that our God graciously has arranged that every member of our poor fallen race shall yet be blessed with a clear understanding not only of his own weaknesses and imperfections through the fall, but also by a clear understanding of the great redemption price paid by the Saviour, and a share in the glorious opportunities thus secured to return, if he will, back to full harmony with God and to full blessings and everlasting life.

The angels did not declare that our Lord came to bring universal and everlasting salvation to all people; but they did declare that the good message of joy, of privilege, love and hope shall extend to all people. The explanation of this is that a Saviour had been born, a Deliverer of the weak, the helpless, the dying, able to succor to the utmost all who would come to the Father through Him; able to open the blind eyes and to unstop the deaf ears that all may come to an appreciation of the goodness of God shining toward them in the face of the Lord Jesus.

No wonder after this message had been delivered, the Lord permitted an angel host to serenade the proclamation, and incidentally to prophesy also of the grand results yet to flow from the great work of redemption, which was then only beginning in the birth of the Redeemer! Properly the anthem begins with praise to Him that sitteth upon the throne, to Him who devised the great and wonderful plan of redemption and who sent His son, our willing Redeemer; glory to Him in the highest—in the highest strain of heart and voice, with fullest appreciation of Him as a Saviour! Next came the consequences on earth; namely, peace—not such a peace as men might patch up between themselves and between nations and parties, and that under present conditions would be sure very soon to be scattered to the winds; but a peace with God, a peace which comes from a restoration to the race of the divine good will. It was because divine justice could not spare the guilty that the sentence of death, the "curse," has borne down upon our race for now six thousand years. Under that divine sentence of death the dying race has become impoverished, not only physically, but mentally and morally, and selfishness has become the rule, and in its wake have come all our selfish ambitions and pride and strife and vain-glory and money love which have caused so much of the trouble that mankind has experienced.

But now, glory to God in the highest! because peace has been established upon a firm foundation—the lifting of the curse through the payment of our penalty by the Lord's own arrangement! As soon as the body of Christ has suffered with the Head, the great anti-typical day of atonement will be complete, and peace between God and man will be established, will be renewed, and as a consequence the Redeemer shall take to Himself His great power and reign for the purpose of blessing and uplifting those whom He purchased with His own precious blood. In their interest it will be necessary that the great peace shall be introduced by the breaking in pieces of present institutions with the iron rod of the new kingdom, as the vessel of a potter they shall be crushed as henceforth useless; that in their stead may come the grander and perfect institutions of the Lord's kingdom. He will wound to heal, to bless, to bring in peace on the basis of everlasting righteousness; for ultimately He will destroy all those who, after being brought to a knowledge of the truth, will still love unrighteousness and tend to the corruption of the earth. He will destroy them, not in anger but in justice, in love, that an everlasting peace in full accord with that which is in heaven may prevail upon earth.

Wherever the story of God's redeeming love has gone, even though confused by various falsities, it has carried more or less of blessing with it;—even to the neglectful hearers and not doers of the Word it has brought blessing; and still more blessing to others who hear partly and obey partly; but its greatest blessing has been to the little flock, the royal priesthood who, entering into the spirit of the divine arrangement, have realised themselves justified through faith in the precious blood, and in harmony with the invitation of the Lord have gone forward, presenting themselves living sacrifices that they might have fellowship in the sufferings of this present time, and also, by and by, in the kingdom glories that shall follow. It is this class chiefly that is now rejoicing in a still fuller opening up of the divine Word so long beclouded by the falsities coming down from the dark ages; it is this class that is chiefly now rejoicing in the discernment of the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the divine love and of the divine plan which has purchased the whole world and will eventually recover from present degradation all who under the favorable conditions of the Millennial kingdom will develop the character which God demands of all who shall have eternal life—a love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity.

Pilgrim Way Ended.

INFORMATION respecting the passing of our elderly Brother Middleton, of Maryborough, Queensland, was received some time ago, but details of his Christian life were not available for the last issue of "Peoples Paper". Now it is known that our dear Brother Middleton came into the truth in 1909, and with Sister Middleton engaged in the colporteur work for about eight years, then being required to leave it for health reasons, but no doubt had the privilege of passing on the glad message of the kingdom to many in those early years of the harvest work in Australia.

While Brother Middleton had been in touch with the office in Melbourne from time to time, it was in more recent years that he and Sister Middleton attended Conventions in Melbourne and Adelaide and became acquainted with the brethren at these gatherings. His love and zeal for the Lord and His truth was most apparent at the studies and fellowship. It was also no easy task to undertake such long journeys at his advanced age, and this was a good witness in the sacrifice of strength and means to associate with the Lord's people.

The close of our dear Brother's earthly life was very peaceful and really unexpected, and sincere sympathy is extended to Sister Middleton in the great loss of her life's partner. However the assurance of the heavenly Home for all the faithful followers of the Master is a great comfort, and we give thanks to the Lord that our dear Brother Middleton shall have entered into the joys of the heavenly kingdom, by His grace and strength.

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The Gift of Wisdom.

(Convention Address)

(Continued from last issue)

WHAT a priceless *gem* is wisdom. Do we value its excellency ; see our need and the unspeakable advantages it carries? It cannot be purchased with all the wealth of the world; it cannot be willed in an inheritance for another. It is written of a well-known Bible commentator. He was near the end of his earthly course and recorded: "I have now disposed of all my property to my family ; there is one thing more I wish I could give them, and that is the Christian religion. If they had that and I had not given them one shilling, they would be rich ; and if they had not had that and I had given them all the world, they would be poor." Nor does wisdom pass to us through the traits of heredity. It is a gift of God, and excels folly as much as light excels darkness. (See Prov. 3:13-24.)

History records many men travelling great distances in search of wisdom. They crossed the seas, deserts, mountains to visit seats of learning in quest of what Paul describes—the hidden mystery of God. (1 Cor. 2:6, 7.) One outstanding figure was the Queen of Sheba. She had heard from others of the great wisdom and fame of Solomon. "There came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth which had heard of his wisdom." It is commonly known how in the telling of strange and wonderful things there is a tendency, especially where fame is concerned, to exaggerate. The queen decided to discover for herself. She was so confounded and amazed at such wisdom and skill that "there was no more spirit in her." Solomon "*gave her of his royal bounty.*" He instructed a diligent pupil concerning this gift of wisdom, which was so appreciated she in return gave out of her treasures gold, precious stones, and of spices a very great store. There came no more such abundance of spices as these which the Queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. (1 Kings 10:1-9.)

Jesus alluded to her. "The Queen of the south came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon," and no doubt He was saddened by the disregard of the princes of this world for the Greater than Solomon. However, as He imparts to those with the ears to hear something of God's wisdom, does it not also leave us floundering, amazed, "with no more spirit in us"? Do we not applaud Paul who says, "the thousandth part was not told." The Queen said of what she thought was an exaggerated report, that not only was it true, but the half was never told. She expressed her appreciation in gifts. We may lack the silver and gold she was able to give, but what about the spices? The Wise Men of the East gave of such to our Lord. Have we any spices to give in gratitude?

We know from the Parable of the Talents that when anything good *is* buried it profits no one. On the other hand, when some good thing, wisdom for example, is possessed and put to good use, many people benefit. In this connection let us read Eccles. 9:13-18. Briefly the facts are: A poor wise man in a little city, or a poor man in a poor city. He was, one could say, buried alive in poverty and obscurity. Despite this, when opportunity came, he employed his wisdom to good account; he rendered valuable service in a time of public distress and danger. All his friends and neighbours benefited.

Embodied in this story must be some peculiar features for the wise man to conclude that to him this type of wisdom seemed great. Scanning it more particularly we find a few abnormal, unrealistic features: Since the city is so insignificant and so few in it, why did such a great king send such a great army and so many armaments against it? Surely he could have no reason to fear it, containing as it did, so few and they being so poor. We know that those who intimidate go out of their way and to great lengths to crush the timid and the weak, but the circumstances in this instance seem out of proportion. The city is besieged and the inhabitants examine their citizens for military strength. This poor man had nothing to contribute except his wisdom. They discovered his wisdom; we uncover his unnatural quality—selflessness. This poor wise man might have hidden his wisdom and no one be the wiser as to this selfish act. He might well have reasoned, "What have I to lose except my poverty? What does it matter to me who governs this place? With a change of administration, I may even be rewarded for my services." Putting aside his private, personal interests, he served the public good. The moral is, "Wisdom is better than strength and better than weapons of war." Now we understand why he was soon forgotten. Where do we find this brand of selflessness being rewarded, acknowledged, respected?

In substance we could find many applications where this great wisdom and selflessness were employed for general benefit. For instance, when the Philistines encamped against Israel and the poor wise man (the shepherd boy, David) delivered the weak Israelites from the mighty hand of the oppressors with Goliath at their head. In fact it could be applied to all the prophets, including Moses and all those poor wise men of their time who did so much and received so little—soon forgotten, "of whom the world was not worthy." Another application, the best of all, suggests itself, although it may not be found similarly applied by known writers.

"A poor wise man"—He who was so rich became so poor, having not where to lay His head, that we through His

poverty might become rich. "In a little city"—Nazareth; so poor, so mean and despised that people questioned whether any good thing could come out of Nazareth. "There came a great king against it, besieged it and built great bulwarks against it"—the prince of this evil world; he feared this poor man and his great wisdom; the evil one's dominion was threatened. Hence the bulwark of armaments: all the machinery of the Roman army and empire being brought into the assault. "A poor wise man was found"—He taught them in their synagogues, warned them and prepared them for the oncoming assault. They were astonished, amazed; "whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works?" Never man spake as He, and all wondered at the gracious words He spake. He rendered invaluable service in a time of public distress and danger. A crisis had come to Israel; long outstanding accounts from Abel to that time were close to settlement date. Public distress was acute; poverty, sickness, doubt, fear and death filled the ranks of the fifth column in the city whilst outside were the evil hordes of Satan. The siege lasted three and a half years. The little city of Zion was delivered; the prince of this world was defeated, for through death this poor wise man is to destroy him who had the power of death. Christ, the power of God, the Wisdom of God, triumphed. Those few men in the little city, the despised sect of the Nazarenes, delivered, now enjoyed a peculiar type of immunity; the consolation for this little flock was not to fear, the Heavenly Father had much also in store for them. "And the poor wise man was soon forgotten"—He left them temporarily, promising to return, but "When the Son of Man cometh will he find faith in the earth?"

It is interesting to contrast earthly wisdom with heavenly wisdom. Both these influences present claims to our affections. Their methods and what they have to offer are set out comparatively in Prov. 9. The heavenly has a *sacrifice*, bread and wine, and from the highest places invited the simple (those seeking instruction) to eat and drink bread and wine, and at the same time to forsake the foolish and live anew, in the paths of understanding.

The earthly wisdom, pictured as a foolish woman, also occupies a prominent and respectable high place of esteem in the city of men. She *also* calls to the simple—passengers out of their way; seeking, seeking, something . . . the advice these unfortunate people are given is that "stolen waters are sweet and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." This so-called wisdom is earthy, sensual; that is, appealing to natural appetites, to a sense of pleasure and desire of gratification. If gratified, conscience and love (with all its wonderful attributes) are slowly but surely strangled by envy, strife, hatred, confusion, and every evil device. The heavenly wisdom is satisfying and entire for all the understanding; it glows with a light and purity; is a guidance for will, cleansing for the conscience and still more, strength for a practical expression of a Christian life. "Her ways are ways of pleasantness and her paths are peace" (with God). "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom—wisdom is the principal thing," because a "man of understanding hath wisdom."

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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 secretary—Mr. J. B. Hiam, 16 Kennedy Street, South Oakleigh, S.E.13, Victoria.

Adelaide Easter Convention.

This early announcement is made for the benefit of friends wishing to make their bookings for travel to the Easter Convention in Adelaide to be held (D.V.) April 16th to 19th next. A cordial invitation is extended to all able to assemble with the brethren in Adelaide, and further information is obtainable from the secretary—Mr. J. Jordan, 14 Newark Road, Torrens Park, South Australia,

WATCH AND PRAY!

Watch and pray, the storm clouds hover over,
Fierce billows gather near with threat'ning shock;
Watch and pray, no harm can e'er come nigh thee,
If thou art safely anchored to the Rock.

Watch and pray, the powers of night and darkness
Determine to engulf thee in their sway;
But swift the answer cometh from our Tower,
"I still am with thee, loved one—watch and pray."

Watch and pray, temptations round thee gather,
Cling to the Rock—its shelter hideth thee,
Tho' thousands fall, thou'rt safe if thou art watching,
Safe in its shelter, from the angry sea.

Watch and pray, trust fully, thou wilt never
Be swept away, then, by the seething foam.
A little while, the storms will all be over,
Then, child, a loving God will take thee Home.

—W. H.B.