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## Growing.

(Convention Address)

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine. . . . But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ.” (Eph. 4:14, 15.)

FOR anything to grow there must of necessity have been something from which to start. With vegetables, flowers and trees a seed is put into the ground or it may be blown by the wind into various places, but if the ground is dry, without any moisture, the growing will not take place. It will not grow without that life-giving fluid, water.

Then notice how much care is bestowed upon these small things; how much we water and nurse them when they are small so that they may become hardy enough to grow with a little less care, and as they grow stronger they can survive longer without water. In their young and tender beginning they put forth leaves, showing some results for the care bestowed. So, with early stages of believers, it is usually very small. Where such have been brought up from infancy in the nurture of the Lord, they will show pleasing results in their growth to those who have nursed them; this will be more noticeable than with those not brought up in the same way.

Taking notice of a tree, it will be found putting forth leaves until a certain age, then it will begin to blossom--a further stage of growth. With the breaking out in blossom it is pleasing to the eye, gives off in general a pleasant smell, and we see that a future result will be to bring forth some fruit. So with the Christian, when he begins to blossom out, we note the progress; it is also pleasing to behold and is a sweet smelling savour to the husbandman who anticipates some fruitage.

If the tree is well watered it will be manifest in healthy looking growth, as well as rapid growth, and it will become sturdy and able to produce more. But let it lack this life-giving fluid and it is shown in a sickly, shrivelling foliage and will gradually wither away or put on a stunted growth. How similar is the Christian. He needs to be irrigated with the water of life—the truth—but like trees, much of the irrigation may be lost if the roots do not come in proper contact and absorb it. If the truth is not absorbed by the Christian all irrigation may be lost, but where it is taken in we notice the refreshing results. The prophet says: “Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, etc.” (See Ter. 17:7, 8.)

All who have taken notice see how beautifully green and fresh the trees and vegetation in general look along the course of a river of water. You can trace it winding along through what looks like a desert in the summer time—dry and barren, sand slopes with the trees suffering from the dryness and the heat; but how different with the trees near the river, that “shall not see when heat cometh,” because their roots are spread out Where the water of life flows and therefore keep growing --”her leaf shall be green.”

The Psalmist expresses the same thought in Psa. 1:1-3; and while one grows near the water of life and his roots are spread out in the right direction, his hopes will not wither or fade but keep growing stronger in the faith and the promises, and by absorbing the truth will bring forth his fruitage in his season, his due time. As the prophet intimates, his hopes will be kept fresh in the time of drought, in the time of restraint or dearth. While drought may be upon the surrounding country his rootings extend unto the river, from whence comes the strengthening food, therefore there will be no anxiety, neither will there be any cessation from bearing fruit, because “Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord and whose hope the Lord is.”

With the Christian it is necessary that he plant himself down near the stream of life, where the food is so satisfying—near that river where the fruits of the spirit grow. He must, therefore, grow from the leaf and blossom condition, which is more the outward appearance, to the fruit-bearing stage—to progress in the development of growing in the image and likeness of the great Founder. Time and the processes of growth are most important factors in the production of Christian character.

While every child of God is engaged to a greater or less extent in the work of character building, some grow steadily stronger, whereas others are weak through lack of consecrated effort, being measurably swayed by the influence of the world, the flesh or the devil, yet not entirely so, but still making some effort towards righteousness. Such characters are not willing to be closely identified with the Body of Christ but would follow afar off. They are not quite willing to share the reproaches of Christ and so keep at a convenient distance. Such have not learned to view character from God’s standpoint and to appreciate it and the Truth which develops it, and are thus weak and generally unworthy of their privileges.

If we have taken the Lord’s standpoint, which is the only one of actual merit, we should learn to value the truth and those who have been, and are being moulded and fashioned by it, above all other considerations and not be ashamed to be identified with it or them. Such strong characters God loves and honours, while He is not well pleased with those weak ones who follow Him afar off.

There are many ways of showing ourselves ashamed of Christ. We are ashamed of Him if we are ashamed of any member of His Body--to be identified as their friend and companion—however humble or poor or unlearned. We are ashamed of Christ if we are ashamed of His doctrine, either as a whole or in part.

We are told to be “transformed by the renewing of our minds,” and the Apostle writes further, “If any man be in Christ Jesus he is a new creature and with painstaking care he unfolds to us in his various epistles the progressive steps comprehended in the development of this new creation. The term, new creation, is in itself a suggestive one. We have in it a clear distinction made between all previous creative acts and the operation of Divine power which now calls forth this new order of beings. The Apostle says, “Ye are God’s workmanship created in Christ Jesus,” and “It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do His good pleasure.” If we be co-workers together with Him, we are therefore to have revealed in us the power of Him by whom all creative work has been accomplished. Surely, then, we cannot fail to be appreciative of the great privilege of being thus transformed by the renewing of our minds in harmony with the Divine will, until we shall prove or experience in full that good and acceptable and perfect will of God, which the final intention is our complete conformity in character and nature to our Lord Jesus

Christ.

As a definite witness of the spirit whereby we may know of our standing in Divine favour, nothing can be more desired than the confidence that this transformation is being verified in our experience. Anyone who understands the character-forming influence of thought, may grasp just how we are transformed by the constant renewing of our minds towards the things of God. In harmony with all Scripture bearing on this, it teaches that this goal of God's purpose respecting us is reached by a gradual process of development, a growth made possible by Divine love, to those who delight themselves in the perfect will of God.

Our first acts of faith are to be followed by a perpetual upturning of our minds toward the things of God, laying hold of that for which God has separated us from the things of earth. Then will come the assurance that if our minds are thus fixed and our ideals thus centred in God's working in us, and the spirit given unhindered sway in our lives to

make these things more and more real to us, we shall eventually realise that He who is the Author of our faith will also be its Finisher.

In His first definite statement regarding the special work of the holy spirit, our Lord declared it would be a work of convincing of sin, judgment and righteousness. This is specially worthy of note, for it clearly teaches that these are fundamental facts upon which all our progress will subsequently depend. How important that we give much thought to the great need of clean hands and a pure heart. Since so much depends on our appreciation of holiness and the eagerness with which we seek it, it becomes a matter of special importance that we analyse our reactions toward this requirement. It will not be a sufficient assurance or a correct vision to find ourselves out of tune with the more conspicuous forms of sin, and exercised in mind to be free from such transgressions. If we would secure a real anchorage for our faith and hope, it must be found in the most positive demonstration that we love righteousness and hate iniquity with the intense desire to be wholly filled with the former and completely separated from the latter.

As a test, then, of our real condition of mind, what are the reactions we experience when brought face to face with such statements as, "Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect"; "Follow after holiness without which no man shall see the Lord"; and "Cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the reverence of the Lord"? To the pure in heart these Scriptures are like jewels set in the Word of God, the influence of which is most encouraging to their hearts.

On the other hand our reactions may be such as to make manifest our lack of development. Some who, instead of thus renewing their minds in this upward progressive way, seem to form the habit of attempting to live in the reverse order. They are familiar with these Scriptures but are disposed to view them from a different angle; perhaps like the servant who had the one talent. If their innermost thoughts were expressed they would say, "I know that thou wert a hard man," therefore I have made no real effort to meet your requirements. Would we not be taking this attitude when we look at the possibilities of the Christian life and say, "I have too many weaknesses, too many influences within and without to overcome, therefore I can never be such as these Scriptures demand." We need to be very careful here, for quite unconsciously we may be exhibiting not only a deficient faith, but more serious still a failure to manifest a supreme love for righteousness and thus raise an effectual barrier to the very thing God wants to will and to do in us. The stream cannot rise higher than its source, and if we are thinking in such terms of defeat and hopelessness how can we enter into the possibilities of being acceptable. To such the words of the Apostle are a forceful reminder that in viewing it that way there would be no progress. He says, "Ye are God's workmanship"; "It is God that worketh in you."

In developing His new creation God's special purpose is not chiefly the exercise of His forgiving grace,

but it is rather the accomplishment of the great end to which He has thus opened the door—our sanctification and complete holiness. To those, then, who see themselves largely in the condition of defeat before a standard so high we would repeat, “Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Turn the mind upward in a daily renewal toward the things that are possible in the hands of God and then greater things ye shall yet see. We are urged, therefore, by the Apostle’s admonition to “grow up into Christ.”

The operations of growth in all animal and vegetable life are too deep to be fully comprehended by the human mind, but we can understand its laws sufficiently to gather valuable lessons therefrom. This is illustrated in the statement of Jesus: “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” The glory of Solomon was the product of human agencies, but the beauty of the lily was due to the fact that it was God’s handiwork. This lesson is not intended to teach easygoing unconcern, but to show the fundamental secret of growth, to reinforce the fact that no man by taking thought, by self effort, can add one cubit to his stature. Growth is from within, and as with the lily, so with us; it is a matter of extracting from the soil and sunshine the elements of growth. “Work out your own salvation,” relying upon the promises and power of God’s Word. Here is soil in which our characters are to take root.

The Apostle tells us to concentrate our minds on the things that are pure, just, good and lovely; things worthy of praise and of good report, and by so doing a work is being accomplished in us day by day. And so by feeding upon and assimilating that which produces spiritual life, by taking hold of these holy aspirations, these fervent desires and longings after holiness will be woven into our characters by the holy spirit.

If in our dividing of the Word of truth we have not been recognising the special importance of our own growth in true holiness and deep spiritual life, we have failed to act consistent with the advice given by the Apostle and we have been hindering the work of God in our own hearts. Would we then experience a deepening of our joy and peace, and realise a stronger faith in the power of God’s Word to transform us? Let us study the subject of prayer, earnestly entreating God to reveal its possibilities to us, to deepen our love for the secret place and increase our faith to receive, and then there will be growth. This renewing of our mind, producing that atmosphere in which the holy spirit now moves, will assure the growth we seek, God’s workmanship progressing to its completeness.

When we think of the deep spirituality of Paul or some of the faithful characters of the past, and feel: ourselves drawn toward that same attainment, it behooves us to let God do the work for us. Let our minds be filled with the things that are spiritual, devotional and elevating. May we throw our minds open to the influence of that leading of the spirit which will enable us to comprehend with all saints the lengths and breadths, heights and depths of Divine love, and then we shall experience a definite growth upwards into the fuller life. If we do these things we will not be troubled about the growing, but just grow.

If we visualise a more fruitful life, either through the Word or by observing the manner of life of some other saint of God, and our hearts thrill with desire to experience these things ourselves, let it be remembered that such desires repeated, meditated upon, taken to God in supplications, will eventually shed abroad in our hearts their blessed fruitage. God’s work will have been going quietly on.

Our upturned minds assimilating His Word, picturing His completed purposes in our lives, will bring this transformation, if we only let God do what we have long since learned we can never do for ourselves, and how great will be the realisation that He is working in us to will His good pleasure, even our sanctification. It would seem that St. James was speaking from this standpoint when he tells us that the one who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues therein as a doer of the work, obediently performing what he sees to be God’s will, shall be blessed in his deed. How manifest it is that we are to think of God continually and earnestly contemplate His messages in order that we may understand what

He would' have us do, and how He would have us live.

#### PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

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While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings 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,

A Cross (30 on the wrapper indicates that the Subscription to "Peoples Paper" is overdue.

## ANOTHER year for the Berean Bible

ANOTHER year for the Berean Bible Institute was completed with the month of April - and a short review of the work is presented believing that the majority of our readers are interested in that in which we are privileged to engage, as unto the Lord. While praise and thanksgiving to God are comely for all intelligent creatures, especially is this so on the part, Of the Lord's people who are favoured to serve Him and His cause. We would, then, at this time, once again express due thankfulness to our Heavenly Father for all His benefits and blessings. bestowed in connection with the work of the Institute. Also much gratitude is extended to the dear brethren generally, in the Classes and as individuals,- who have assisted and encouraged the work by various means, in the Lord's providence.

While the efforts each year are directed on well established lines, there are some differences that should prove of interest to all. An increase in correspondence with brethren in other lands has been in evidence over the past year and that with the friends throughout Australasia has been well maintained. All these communications are gladly received, and as the Institute exists wholly for the purpose of serving the friends in any possible way for good, none should feel they are imposing in any way through their correspondence.

The visits of our monthly "People's Paper" have continued to all desiring it, irrespective of whether the subscription could be forwarded or not, and this provision will be gladly continued to all on the free list so long as our funds permit. All that is necessary is to state the request each year. The continued support by the regular subscribers is greatly appreciated and as the "Paper" is not self-supporting any new subscribers added to the list by the efforts of the brethren is of much assistance, thereby lessening the balance to be made up from the Tract Fund. Extra copies are available free to all who can use samples to pass on to the interested. Many of our friends have expressed appreciation of the contents of the "People's Paper," and we are indebted to a number of brethren for contributing articles on various topics. It is desired that the message of "present truth" always be prominent in the columns of our journal, realising that the harvest truths are all important for the up-building of the members of the Body of Christ. Over the past year the production of the book, "The Bible Teachings on the Covenants, Mediator, Ransom, Sin-Offering and Atonement," has added to the general literature and a quantity has been placed with the brethren overseas and throughout this land, in addition to other study aids. This book on the above subjects is recommended to all desiring to be acquainted with a clear explanation of these important matters.

The use of coupons in suitable newspapers, making free literature available to all interested enough to send for it, has not been neglected; some Classes have again co-operated in this feature of the work, though the means available has not permitted as much to be done as formerly from this Office. However, some good enquiries have been received, indicating definite good being done, and it is hoped that more may be possible in this branch of the work in the year ahead. There are still good opportunities for Classes or individual brethren able to co-operate with the insertion of free literature coupons in suitable publications.

Quantities of tracts have also been distributed over a wide area by the brethren throughout the year. This literature is provided by the Tract Fund and while the visible results are not great, the efforts in this direction have undoubtedly brought blessings to some, as shown by continued interest in asking for further reading matter. All the friends should feel a desire to have a supply of tracts to use wisely on behalf of those who will promise to read. Quantities of various topics are on hand to meet all requirements.

Another means of finding those who may be feeling after the truths of God's Word is by the distribution of what is termed Kingdom Cards.; These cards have been used successfully by the brethren in England and also more recently in U.S.A., and are similar to the Query Cards sent out from this Office some years ago. 'The advantage of the Kingdom Cards is that they can be produced at much less cost than the tract; and the little effort required on the part of the interested (writing their name and mailing the card for free literature) would give some guarantee of the papers being definitely desired and also carefully read. The brethren of the Bible Students Committee, England, have kindly sent samples, and a supply, of these cards is being provided and will be available shortly for use by the brethren as they see fit. An announcement to this effect is made on another page of this issue.

The inclusion of the Tract Fund Account as shown below reveals the financial assistance received from the brethren, and the use to which it has been applied throughout the past year. The loving help from the friends generally is most encouraging, and while the credit balance has been greatly reduced no doubt the amount contributed comprises much self-denial and sacrifice of the good things of the present life. Realising that all has been rendered as unto the Lord, the dear friends may have confidence that He is not unrighteous to forget any sacrifice or labour of love done in His name. The expenses are those that we feel would have the Lord's approval.

The assurance of the prayers of the brethren on our account has been a source of much strength and comfort, in addition to the many cheering messages received from far and near. While some difficulties have been experienced, the blessings have much more than compensated, and we continue to look to the Lord with confidence and trust for His continued guidance and blessing in the days ahead, and would desire continued remembrance in the prayers of the brethren to that end, assuring all, known and unknown, of our warm Christian love and prayers on their account. While viewing the momentous days ahead, let us also realise that every day is most important to us, as we seek to "redeem the time," and "show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light." "Therefore, beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:58.)

## TRACT FUND ACCOUNT.

To Balance Carried Forward ..	f26	7 2
„ Donations Received	111	14 8
#138		1 10
By Advertising, etc. ..		£3 15 4
16 19 6		
„ Free Tracts and Deficiency “People’s Paper” 75 19		8
General Expenses (Office, etc.) ..		28 3 8
13		3 8
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## The Smitten Rock.

(Convention Address. Read Exod. 17:1-7.)

Let us notice, in passing, the great number of this company. Two years after their deliverance from Egypt we find a total of 603,550 people above the age of twenty years; then there were the women and children and the tribe of Levi. Does it need a great amount of imagination to visualise the organisation and the huge amount of provision needed to satisfy the wants of such a company, and all the while travelling or sojourning in desolate lands? Surely apart from the miraculous deliverance, the sustenance and needs of this company being supplied are no less wonderful. The animals, too, needed food and water. Anyone who has ever been in want of this precious fluid will sympathetically understand their lack, and what suffering would be experienced because of no water. The water gushes forth, though, from the smitten rock, and we can imagine the blessed relief.

A similar miracle to satisfy a similar need was ahead of them and for this account let us note Numbers 20:1-13 (which please read).

Let us briefly trace the journey of the children of Israel. In Exod. 14 is the account of the deliverance from Egypt and the miraculous escape from Pharaoh in the Red Sea, the waters of which brought about the destruction of their enemies. "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed, Thou has guided them in strength unto Thy holy habitation." (Exod. 15:12.)

They soon came to Marah, and the water there was bitter, but their thirst was assuaged with waters of sweetness and they passed on to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees, and they camped there by the waters. But they took their journey from Elim, and came to the Wilderness of Sin, which was between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after leaving Egypt. Whilst here there was considerable murmuring: "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full." But the Lord sustained them; flesh in the evening and bread in the morning being provided abundantly. (Exod. 16:8.)

Then they came to Rephidim from the Wilderness of Sin where we are particularly concerned with their doings, and note that a little later they came to Sinai where they camped against the Mount, where the Law Covenant was given that was to conditionally guarantee them for obedience, "A kingdom of priests and an holy nation." This was in the third month after leaving Egypt. How much could be said in regard to the subsequent journeyings, the hardships endured, but against this the care of the Lord over them. Many lessons had to be learned, and many had to be unlearned; the constant murmurings, sometimes overlooked by the Lord and sometimes meriting punishment.

Kadesh, the place where we find the Miracle of Waters from the rock again performed for them, was reached during the fortieth year after Egypt, and it is interesting to note the similarity of the places, and the incidents connected with it. Such significant matters as the miracles that are now presented in the account of the Water from the Rock, and the method of obtaining, could easily embody deeper and more important issues than those of which we read having happened in the material world. Can we trace in these two occurrences, two important features of Christ's actual redeeming work?

Not merely the Law Covenant and its rites and ceremonies were typical, for our Lord said that "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the Wilderness, so also would the Son of Man be lifted up." (John 3:14.) Paul declares that the fathers of Israel "were baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that Spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ." .

. . . “Now these things were for our examples,” (figs. mar.). “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples (types, mar.), and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come.” (1 Cor. 10:2-11.)

If so, they particularly interest the Church at this time, for surely we are now in the period of “the ends of the ages.” All previous ages presaged this period before the commencement of the “age without end.”

The dominant features before us are the Waters of Life flowing twice from the Rock of life.

Can we claim having come to Rephidim, standing before that Rock, and smiting it? “I will stand before thee upon the rock of Horeb.” The rock had to be smitten lawfully and we can imagine the disappointment that would have been experienced had not the Lord been there upon the rock. “He is the Rock, His work is perfect,” sang Moses.

And so, Jehovah could not avail us of any life waters until the Rock He had put before us was smitten lawfully—sin atoned for—and the new life begun with the draught of water of life. “He that believeth on me shall never thirst.” “Whosoever drinketh of this water,” the Lord told the woman of Samaria, “shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” (John 4:10-14.) So, our deepest and most vital necessity—water (of life)—was unsatisfied until our Rock was smitten.

### That Rock was Christ.

“Yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God.” “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” When He stood on the Rock, it was to be smitten for us, a sacrifice that later presented before the Mercy Seat of the Greater and more perfect Tabernacle (not made with hands) enabled the windows from on High to be opened, and supplies of water, living streams of life, which still make glad the City of God, gushed forth. Can you imagine how the water was appreciated at Rephidim? Did the “water of life” satisfy us just the same? Yes, but there was a journey before them to the Promised Land; and so with the Church, there is a journey before her, but she need never thirst again because the Rock that followed those in the Wilderness follows us, and as they all drank of that Rock so may we. Their journey— did it evidence God’s care over and for them? Does ours? Or do we need to have the same bitter experiences because of “murmurings”?

Would any be bold enough to declare that the antitypical Israel have not languished for the water of Life? The evidences are only too glaring that she has been in a “wilderness condition” for a greater period than forty years.

Why? Because she, too, has had her murmurers; she, too, has had those among her who worship “the golden calf,”

(this caused confusion and sorrow in Israel). She also has had to endure the pain of carrying undeveloped brethren.

It was undeveloped and under-age Israel that called for the meat. The manna of God’s provision did not suffice (the sincere milk of the Word is too simple). Remembrance of all the delicacies of Egypt brought whole-sale complainings. Strong meat brought in its wake untold trouble and suffering, because they were not able to withstand God’s anger. If our senses, with so much in our favour for development, are unable to “discern both good and evil,” will we, like they, suffer accordingly? How much more? Have there been among the Church any with the failings of Aaron and Miriam? “Of your own selves,” says the Apostle,

“men shall arise, speaking perverse things, seeking to draw away disciples after them.” And so we could trace the history of the Church along with that of Israel, and see the experiences of typical and antitypical identical in many respects.

Let us not forget, though, that with all the unworthiness, the Rock still followed them; still had their interests at heart; still ready to supply the water of life. Israel nears the end of its journey of forty years. It draws near to Kadesh in the Wilderness of Zin, which is entered for the second time, back to where they started forty years previously, but a little farther on than Rephidim, in the Wilderness of Sin. There surely must be some significance in the condition of the people by the use of the names of the deserts. First Sin, next Zin; different, yes, but so alike. Delivered from Sin by the Water from the smitten Rock; delivered from Kadesh by the water from the (should have been) spoken Rock.

The Scriptures declare that there will be two outpourings of this Water of Life. The prophet Zechariah, speaking of the day when Christ would be on the Mount of Olives, which we understand to be when He would once again have in mind the “building of the tabernacle of David which is fallen down, and building again the ruins thereof . . . that the residue of men might seek after the Lord and all the Gentiles upon whom My Name is called saith the Lord,” (Acts 15:16, 17), declares that it shall be “in that day that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem.” (Zech. 14:8.) Joel, speaking of the same time, says, “The mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord.” (Joel 3:18.) Ezek.

47:1-12 portrays vividly the strength and amount of the water of life that is yet to flow; yet to heal, and to restore life to the waste places; and Rev. 22:1 shows a “pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” Still from the Rock of Ages flows water of life.

## At Kadesh.

Is there any significant feature for us in the events that transpired there? “Take the Rod,” (which Rod?) the rod of

Aaron, not this time the rod of Moses, but that which had budded before the Testimony, as an emblem for all time of his priestly authority. It was the Rod that “was before the Lord” that they were commanded to take, and holding it were to speak to the Rock before the eyes of the whole congregation of Israel. “Taking the Rod” should have conveyed some lesson to these leaders. If they spoke with any authority it should have been noted that they, however true their declaration, spoke by the authority of the Lord, and not by their own authority. Instead, we find them declaring, “Hear now, ye rebels, are we to bring you water from out this rock ?” They failed to note that though they may have been chosen leaders the authority of the declarations should have been devoid of their own personal feelings or expressions.

The lesson for us is, that whatever we teach as truth it must be according to the “law and testimony,” and being so, we have no voice or expression that we should speak of our own authority, as if we were someone above our fellows. Our Lord, Himself, with great care taught of the “oneness”; and, irrespective of what position any may hold, “all ye are brethren.” Little errors lead to bigger ones, and so it is no wonder we find Moses and Aaron making another greater mistake. Full of themselves, and possibly irritated with the ever-learning and never coming to a knowledge of the truth of their brethren, they are blinded to the direct will of God for themselves. Forgetting by what authority they were to perform the duty of speaking to the Rock, they smote the Rock, and so emphatic that they smote it twice.

But the Water of Life cannot be withheld from the Rock because of the failure of those in responsible positions; no, it gushes forth to satisfy the thirst of the troubled community, and the leaders are reproved

with severity, and the truth is brought home to them, “Because ye believed not in Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.”

If the foregoing incidents are at all significant to us, this Smiting instead of Speaking is important also. What can it mean? We are all agreed what the “smiting of the Rock” at Rephidim means. We know that the Water of Life could not flow until the Rock of Christ was smitten, and surely the first outpouring was at Pentecost. The vital point before us, then, is the Ransom sacrifice of Christ; that was typically before Moses at Rephidim in the Smitten Rock. “I will stand before thee on the rock in Horeb.”

The Water of Life flows twice, though—for the Church and for the world—“after those days I will pour out My spirit on all flesh.” Before the second outpouring, the Church of the Firstborns are assembled, just as the general assembly in Israel, and we then are invited to speak to the Rock—no need to Smite it, that has already been accomplished—and the Ransom sacrifice of Christ is sufficient not only for the Church’s sins but for all the world’s, even though it be testified to in due time. “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and to those who look for Him shall He appear a second time without sin unto salvation.” “By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” “It is finished”—the smiting needs no repetition. The Rock once smitten, the sacrifice once appropriated needs no duplication, for to think so will lead us to believing that acceptance with God is not a present blessing to be enjoyed by the believer now, but rather a result to be attained after a long series of painful efforts and self-imposed sufferings (as happened to typical Israel). Once smitten, the Rock needs only to be spoken to to continue to draw water from the Well of Salvation. “If any man thirst let him come to Me and drink.” “Whoso drinketh . . . shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

Someone may say, “But what about the sin-offering, or rather the Church’s part in the sin-offering?” Many texts refer to suffering with Christ to share His glory and we would not dissent that all have their place in the Plan of God. Moses truly suffered much on the way to the Promised Land, and so will all “who live godly in Christ Jesus.” However, the Church may learn from the lesson before us, of the necessity for keeping the Ransom distinct from the Sin-offering, for to confuse the issue may result in declaring that because of rebellion, sin, (“Hear now ye rebels,” said Moses), the Rock needs to be smitten twice more, suggesting the sacrifice of the Lord’s goat and the Scapegoat. Not so, but let us remember that although we may have to bear with many failings, we too have enjoyed all the while the blessing of the Lord (which maketh rich), and we drank from the stream of life because of the favour of the Rock of our Salvation, and not because we had in ourselves any virtue or quality to recommend us as vessels of honour. Keep this always before us and it cannot but assist to help us to remain humble and not self-satisfied. It is folly to think the Plan of God would not progress without our assistance.

What a contrast with the “must we fetch you water from out this rock,” with the willingness of Christ to go before and be smitten. It is the latter disposition we want to cultivate, and when the time is ripe for the Water of Life to flow again, we trust that our doctrine will be pure. The Ransom needs no repetition, and when mankind come before this Rock, should we make the same mistake as Moses and Aaron we cannot stop the flow, but we ourselves will be losers.

If we are ever privileged to lead any to this Rock, let us not forget it is, as the Psalmist declares, “Higher than I.” Whatever we teach as truth, we will not be able to elevate this Rock higher than what God has already done, for He has given Him “a name above every other name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” It is in our category to elevate ourselves rather higher than we should, and to do so we will suffer loss, and our brethren also, just as with Israel of old. The Memorial which is so fresh in our minds was surely a symbol of God’s greatest gift, and Christ’s mightiest work for all; a symbol that the Water of Life is available for all because of the Smitten Rock. (1. Tim. 2:5, 6.)

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### Notice.

The attention of all intending to visit the Adelaide Class is directed to the change of the meeting place from Liverpool Buildings, Flinders Street, to O. B. I. Hall, Wakefield Street. Adelaide. Note—"Bible Class Assemblies," in this issue.

### Bible Class Assemblies.

Melbourne.—Clyde House, 182 Collins Street (near Town Hall), First Floor, Room 7—Sundays, 3.30 p.m. and 6.45 p.m.; Thursdays, 7.45 p.m.

Adelaide.—O. B. I. Hall, Wakefield Street, Sundays 3 p.m. and 6.30 p.m.; Wednesdays, 7.30 p.m.

Perth.—The Basement, Druids' Chambers 459 Hay Street East—Sundays, 3.45 p.m. and 6.45 p.m.

Sydney.—Child Study Rooms, 75 Liverpool Street—Sundays, 3.30 p.m. and 6 p.m.

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