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The New Dispensation.

"Of all the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you, for yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night; for, when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief; ye are children of the light."-1 Thes. 5:1-5.

THE common tendency of the human mind is expressed by the Apostle Peter, who prophesies of the present time that the worldly will be saying, "Where is the promise of His presence? All things continue as they were from the foundation of the world." Ignorance of God's Plan is to be expected of the world, but the true people of God have the promise of His special instruction so that they need not be in darkness respecting the Divine Programme.

Our world for about six thousand years has been the battlefield between the forces of light and darkness, truth and error, righteousness and sin; the Prince of Darkness, otherwise styled the "Prince of this world," has led and is still controlling them. The Prince of Light is represented in a feeble way by ambassadors who are specially cautioned by Him that they must not use carnal weapons nor carnal methods, but must in meekness correct those who oppose them.

They must be subject to "the powers that be" to the extent that their consciences will permit, and so far as possible live peaceably with all men.

This experience of subjection to the powers of evil has been a hard lesson, difficult to learn; a trial of faith as well as of endurance, the value of which has been difficult sometimes to appreciate. But these must walk by faith and not by sight if they would please the captain of their salvation. For centuries the prayer has gone up to God from their hearts, "How long, O Lord !" Reason assures them that it cannot be the Divine purpose to forever permit the victory of sin and death under the Prince of Darkness.

God represents Himself as a great Husbandman. Each Age is a "season" and bears its own crop. Each Age has its own time for the ploughing of the field, the sowing of the good seed, and the harvest work. As Bible students we have already noted the work accomplished in the Age which ended with the Flood, the different work accomplished during the Patriarchal Age, and the still different work accomplished during the Jewish Age, which lasted from the death of Jacob, and particularly from the giving of the Law, down to the death of Jesus.

Our Lord's ministry of three and a half years was a harvest time to the Jewish people in the close of their Age of favour or "day of visitation." He said to His disciples, "I send you forth to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour; other men laboured and ye are entered into their labours." (John 4:38) . The ploughing and sowing connected with the Jewish Dispensation was in the far past. The Egyptian bondage served to do a ploughing work, as also Israel's escape from that bondage and the forty years of wandering in the wilderness before they reached Canaan. The giving of the Law and the establishment of them as a people, the lessons of their sacrifices, and the exhortation of their Prophets, all constituted a seed-sowing, harrowing and cultivating experience. In the end of their Age, Jesus gathered the ripe fruitage of that experience—those sanctified thereby and developed in character and obedience to God.

The crop gathered by our Lord and the Apostles in the Jewish harvest numbered thousands. These were gathered out of Judaism and from under the Law Covenant into Christianity—gathered under a Covenant applying only to the "Church which is the Body of Christ." This Covenant, under which they become associated with Messiah, reads, "Gather together My saints (holy ones) unto Me," saith the Lord, "those who have made a Covenant with Me by sacrifice." (Psa. 50:5.) All coming thus into relationship to Jehovah as members of the Body of Messiah came by way of the cross—through a recognition of their own imperfection, and of Jesus and His sacrifice as the satisfaction for their sins, a covering for their blemishes, by which alone their sacrifices were rendered "holy and acceptable to God."—Rom. 12:1.

The reaping work of the Jewish Age merged into the sowing work of the Gospel Age as the invitation to become joint-sacrificers with Jesus was extended to those having hearing ears amongst nations aside from the Jews. For nineteeen centuries this sowing work, with "harrowing" experiences and various cultivations, has been in progress. Now in turn we have arrived at the harvest of this Gospel Age —the reaping time, the time of gathering into the garner—beyond the veil—by the power of the First Resurrection.

"None of the wicked shall understand but the wise shall understand" (Daniel 12:10) , is the Lord's declaration. Our text declares that "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness" respecting this time. This implies, either that the brethren are very few, or that a considerable number of them have not yet become sufficiently awake to a discernment of the times and seasons in which we are living. Many of the brethren and many of the world and many of the "wicked" do realise that we are living in strange times and under peculiar conditions. These try to persuade themselves, however, that what we see to-day is merely a recurrence of what has repeated itself time and again during the past centuries. Thus these lull themselves, saying, "Peace and safety !"

This attitude is what the Scriptures foretold, "When they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them." It is only "ye, brethren," who are privileged to have the clearer light respecting present and future conditions. We know that we are in the Harvest time of this Age—the reckoning time—the testing time—the time when the "wheat" is to be gathered into the heavenly "garner"—the time when the field is to be cleared of all "tares" in a fiery trouble—the time when the ploughshare of trouble will be run through the world of mankind to prepare the whole world for the New Dispensation.

So accurately timed is every feature of the Divine Plan that part fits to part, and work to work closely. The Harvest of the present time is the gathering of the fruitage of this Gospel Age—the gathering of the "Church of the First-born, whose names are written in heaven" —those who have made a Covenant with Jehovah by sacrifice.

The Head of the saintly Messiah, developed and glorified nineteen centuries ago, is Jesus. The members of the Body of this Messiah have been gathered from every nation, first from the Jews and then from all

nations. God's call and selection of saintly sacrificers in this Gospel Age ignores all sectarian, all denominational, all national lines—"The Lord knoweth them that are His." The winds of violence, "the powers of the air," which will shortly be loosed, and which will produce the terrific "storm" are being held back until the sealing of God's servants in their foreheads shall have been accomplished.

This sealing in the forehead implies an intellectual appreciation of heavenly things, and is intimately associated with the harvest work —the sealed are the ripe wheat being gathered for the heavenly garner. As soon as the sealing work shall have been accomplished the winds of strife and trouble will be let loose according to the Master's declaration, and the result will be a "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation"—no, nor ever shall be the like again. The awful lessons which will then be learned by humanity will be sufficient for all time. The strife, the hatred, the malignity, die anarchy of that day of trouble are depicted in various places in the Word of God.

The trouble time impending is indeed declared to be a time of Divine wrath, and we must not lose sight of that feature of it. Divine Justice has indignation against inequity and selfishness in general, for selfishness is but another name for sin. All sin is selfish, and all selfishness is sin. The captains of industry, the captains of education, and captains of wealth have to-day greater opportunities and therefore greater responsibilities than the kings of the earth, for their dealings with their fellowmen.

Similarly, there are leaders of the people, presidents, and secretaries of unions, etc., who are also captains, and who also have great responsibility. All perceive that the world of humanity is rapidly nearing a crisis. The almost miraculous opening of the eyes of understanding which God has recently granted has brought to the world mechanical inventions and chemical processes which are making the world rich with amazing rapidity.

Although these blessings are in considerable measure reaching the masses of mankind and uplifting all to a higher plane of comfort, nevertheless general education has opened the eyes of human understanding correspondingly. The "common people" are looking with amazement at the luxury of the rich as the barbarians of old looked upon the much lesser splendours of Rome. They are covetous, they are hungry for what they term their "share" of the bounties being dispensed by Providence with so lavish a hand.

Even if the vast increase of wealth through machinery, chemistry, etc., were to be evenly distributed, we doubt if it would satisfy these new-born minds.

There seems to be two possible solutions: (1) To convert all of the wealthy into saints, whose pleasure it would be to administer the flood of wealth now rolling in upon them for the general blessing of mankind, along the most benevolent lines imaginable, or (2) To convert into saints the masses of mankind and to so imbue them with heavenly hopes and prospects that they would not particularly care for earthly good things nor crave them, but rather rejoice to be "the poor of this world, rich in faith, heirs of the heavenly Kingdom."

We confess that neither solution seems to be practicable. We cannot believe that either can be accomplished; hence we must believe what the Bible teaches, that an awful conflict is to take place between these two classes, because neither one nor the other can be fully converted to the Lord's way. How glad we are that the Bible shows that the culmination of the conflict will bring everlasting peace—a just, loving, equitable and satisfactory adjustment of earth's affairs, under Messiah's glorious reign of a thousand years.

Someone may ask, Would not these same difficulties beset any new government which Messiah or others might institute? Will not the element of selfishness forever persist in the human heart, and will not this imply that to all eternity, there will be a strife of selfish interests? We answer, No. The Divine Plan solves

the problem perfectly. Jesus has demonstrated His unselfishness as respects earthly things. His laying down of His life not only proved His loyalty to righteousness, and to the Father's will, but proved also His unselfishness—His love—''greater love hath no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13.)

This Friend of humanity is to be the great King of the world in the New Dispensation, and His associates in the Kingdom, the Bride class, are to be such only as have His spirit and disposition of obedience to the Father's will— self-sacrifice and love for fellowman—unselfish love. Under present conditions, these may not always be known, nor their true character and unselfishness be discerned, because they have the treasure in "earthen" vessels which do not always fully represent their true benevolence of heart.

The Divine provision is that such of these as shall demonstrate their unselfishness of heart and loyalty to the Lord shall be given new bodies in-the resurrection—"sown in weakness, they will be raised in power; sown in dishonour, raised in glory ;" sown an animal body, with Adamic weaknesses and fleshly imperfections, they will be "raised spirit bodies"—perfect, complete, lacking nothing.-l Cor. 15:42-44.

These, in association with their Redeemer, will constitute the Kingdom class which is to rule the world for a thousand years under the Headship of Jesus. Surely, we can trust these, we can have confidence in them. The fact that God has selected them, and that He is pleased to give over to them the rulership of the world for a thousand years testifies beyond peradventure their worthiness and capability.

That Government will not be a republic, but a monarchy, a theocracy, a Divine Kingdom. Christ and His Bride will be the King and Queen of the New Dispensation, supplanting Satan and the fallen angels, who for centuries have been in control. The Kingdom of God will be as invisible as the kingdom of darkness has been. It will operate through human agencies, as does the other. But even its human agents have been provided. The Scriptures inform us that the worthy ones of the Jewish Dispensation and before, will be the Princes in all the earth who will represent Messiah's Kingdom amongst men. Not only so, but they will be perfect men, made so by participation in the "resurrection of life." How grand the prospect !

The time of trouble will be awful, as typed in the terrible trouble which came upon the Jewish nation following the harvest work of their Age. Then will come the levelling process, which in the Divine order will prove to be a blessing to everybody. In other words, the socialists and anarchists are not so far from a correct conception of what must ultimately prevail, but they are far astray respecting the methods by which it shall be obtained. Their attempt to grasp the rudder of the world's affairs shows an awful lack of appreciation of the mighty influences with which they seek to contend. Their efforts will merely precipitate upon themselves and upon others the terrible trouble which the Scriptures foretell.

God's people are distinctly warned that they must keep hands off, must not interfere with the powers that be—their reliance must be upon the Lord and not in the use of carnal weapons. James, writing on this subject, declares the coming trouble, and tells that it will be specially severe upon the rich; "Go to now, ye rich men; weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you." (James 5:1.) No doubt, the troubles will be equally upon the poor; but to them they will seem less severe since they have been accustomed to less. To God's people is the me "Be patient, brethren, the coming of the Lord draweth nigh"; "Wait ye upon Me, saith the Lord." (Zeph. 3:8.)

Melbourne Christmas Convention.

The brethren of the Melbourne Class wish to announce that their Annual Christmas Convention is to be held this year over the four days at the Christmas period D.V., in Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond, on December 23rd, 24th, 25th and 26th. Also additional gatherings will be held in the same hall on the 29th and 30th December.

A cordial invitation is extended to all able to attend this Convention, and further information is procurable from the Secretary, C/- Berean Bible Institute, Kew, E.4, Victoria.

Greeting Cards.

One, of our brethren in the printing trade has kindly produced some Greeting Cards and sent them along with the request that the proceeds from the sale of them be donated to the General Tract Fund to assist in the work of the Institute. This is very much appreciated, in the service of the Lord.

These cards are quite nice and are suitable for general greetings, but they are not Christmas Cards. The price is 3/- per dozen, post paid.

Bible Student's Hymnal (Music).—A supply of these music hymnals is now available. Containing 462 hymns with appropriate tunes, and well bound, these books are priced at 25/- post paid.

"Daily Heavenly Manna."—A new supply of this helpful book is in stock. In good, strong binding, with birthday recording pages, this one dollar edition is priced at 10/-,

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If We Suffer With Him.

“The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, their heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together ”—Rom. 8:16, 17.

THE Apostle Jude speaks of “our common salvation”—a salvation from sin, from death, from human imperfection to human perfection—to all that God intended that our race should be, to all that our race lost through Adam’s disobedience. The Divine provision is, as expressed by our Lord, “to seek and to recover that which was lost.” (Matt. 18:11.)

The world is to be sought and to be recovered during the Messianic Age, its period for being judged (disciplined), its trial for life eternal. Then the faithful and obedient of all peoples will obtain full Restitution and life eternal. But now, in advance, this “common salvation” comes by faith to a certain class—to those who have the hearing of faith and the eye of faith, and obedient hearts. These, by virtue of the merit of Christ applied to them when Jesus “ascended up on high, there to appear in the presence of God for us,” are reckoned as having all the advantages of restitution imputed to them on account of their faith. They do not get restitution actually, but reckonedly. Their faith is counted to them for righteousness or perfection.,

Why is there this discrimination in Divine providence—that some now hear the voice of the Son of man, and live, through justification of faith, while others will not hear the voice of the Son of man and come to life and perfection until the next age, and then actually and not reckonedly ? “Verily, verily, the hour is coming, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear (obey) shall live.” (John 5:25.)

The answer is that this is a part of the “mystery” of God; that the Lord is now seeking for and electing a special class to be joint heirs with His Son—joint sufferers with Him in His sacrifice, and joint sharers in His kingdom glory, “the Bride, the Lamb’s wife.” The special arrangement permitting these to be justified by faith instead of being actually justified (or perfected) is with a view to their being privileged to offer a proper sacrifice—”holy, acceptable to God, their reasonable service.” (Rom. 12:1.) This Justification by faith is necessary because nothing unholy or unclean may come to the Lord’s altar, as the Law clearly taught, and the types clearly showed. Every sacrifice for the Lord’s altar must be “without spot or blemish.” Every member of our race was spotted and blemished by inherited sin and imperfection, and hence the necessity for the Divine provision of justification by faith—faith in the precious blood of Christ, “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.” This faith grasps the fact that while the sin of the world has not yet been taken away by the Lamb of God, and the world still lies under condemnation, nevertheless, the merit of the blood has been applied on behalf of the “household” of faith—and in due time will be made efficacious, under the New Covenant, for the bringing of forgiveness to every creature, with the opportunity of eternal life.

But under which Covenant does God purpose to receive the faith-justified ones as sacrificers? The answer is that the Divine proposal to the Redeemer was that He sacrifice and as a reward of His sacrifice be highly exalted to the Divine nature and glory. This blessing (which belongs only to Jesus and was applied only to His sacrifice) has, by the gracious plan of God, been extended to include all those of this Gospel Age, who have the character-likeness of the Redeemer. They are invited to share in His sacrifice, and are promised that if faithful they shall share in His glory.

These members are “elect according to God’s foreknowledge through sanctification of the spirit and the belief of the truth” (1 Pet. 1:2). Their selection is not a change in the Divine programme, for they were

“chosen in him before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4). Their selection was unexpected of the angels and of men, and hence was a “mystery”, and still is a “mystery” to mankind. “The world knoweth us not, even as it knew him not” (1 John 3:1).

But the selection of this class was always the Divine purpose. “The God and Father of our Lord Jesus foreknew us also by Jesus.”

Whatever, therefore, was the Divine programme for the Master, the Forerunner, the Chief Priest, is the Divine programme for His members—they must “walk in His steps,” they must “suffer with Him,” they must “fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ.” If any decline so to do, he loses his place as a member of the Body. We know, nevertheless, that the full number of the “elect” will ultimately be found, and all of them will be sacrificers, for none others are members of His Body. It is the spirit of the Head coming upon these that produce the sacrifice of the flesh (the justified flesh), “holy, acceptable to God” (Rom. 12:1).

There is only one object in the sacrifice which God has provided for, the sacrifice which Jesus accomplished, and is accomplishing, in all those who will become members—that is a sacrifice for sin. It is presented to God, holy and acceptable. In this respect it differs from other sacrifices which men make, as, for instance, a father or mother may sacrifice comfort or even sacrifice life, on behalf of their offspring, but such sacrifices, however appropriate, are not the sacrifice of Christ—are not of the “better sacrifices” typified in the sacrifices of the bulls and goats.

The Apostle Paul calls our attention to the fact that only those sacrifices which were burned outside the camp were a Sin Offering. Next he shows how our Lord was the Sin Offering. Then he points out how, if faithful members of His Body, we also must suffer outside the camp—as members of the sin-offering—represented in “the Lord’s goat.” This sacrifice is not yet completed. It is in process. Hence the apostle’s expression, “Let us go to him outside the camp, bearing his reproach”—just as the slain goat was carried outside the camp and there consumed, as the bullock had been. (Heb. 13:11-13). These matters, dear readers, are amongst the “deep things of God, which no man knoweth, except by the spirit of God” (1 Cor. 2:10). The world knows nothing about them. “To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, but to others all these things are spoken in parables” (Matt. 13:11). The few have been permitted to enter into the banqueting halls and to see the glorious beauties of the riches of Divine grace. Blessed are your eyes that see, and your ears that hear. As for those who never saw, they properly have our sympathy, nor should we expect so much of them as of ourselves, who have been blessed with the knowledge of this important sacrifice, and of its glorious reward. Furthermore, as we are now in the sifting and testing time, it must not surprise us if some who once saw eye to eye with us in these matters become blind to them, and drift into the “outer darkness” as respects these matters and others—we know not how far. Truths so interweave that one lost or perverted injures presently the beauty of the entire fabric.

Let us not forget that He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified (His members) are all one. He is in us all. In our consecration we lose our humanity and all of its rights, exchanging these for our spiritual membership as new creatures in the body of Christ.

Out of the Abundance of the Heart.

(Contributed)

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." (Matt. 12:34, 37.)

THE above words of our Lord indicate that the heart and the mouth are under very special scrutiny, the former representing the individual character, and the latter being an index of the character. It is in this same view of the matter that these words of wisdom were penned—"Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee." (Prov. 4:23, 24.) The indication is clear that a right condition of the heart is necessary to right words, for "out of the, abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," as experience testifies to every man. It is therefore just that our words should be a criterion ofjudgment in the Lord's estimation, as He tells us they are.

Our first concern, then, should be for the heart, that its affections and dispositions may be fully under the control of divine grace, that every principle of truth and righteousness may be enthroned there; that justice, mercy, brotherly kindness, faith, meekness, temperance and love may be firmly fixed as the governing principles of life. If these principles be fixed, established in the heart, then out of the good treasures of the heart, the mouth will speak forth words of truth, soberness, wisdom and grace. Of our Lord Jesus, whose heart was perfect, in whom was no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, it was said, "Grace is poured into thy lips," and again, "All bare him witness and wondered at the gracious words that proceedeth out of his mouth." (Psa. 45:2; Luke 4:22.)

So wise, just, and true were the Lord's words, that though His enemies were continually seeking to find some fault, it is said, "They could not take hold of his words before the people; and they marvelled at his answers, and held their peace." (Luke 20:26). And others said, "Never man spake like this man." (John 7:46.) Thus our Lord left a worthy example to His people, which the Apostle urges all to follow, saying—"Let your speech be always with grace (with manifest love and kindness) seasoned with salt." (Col. 4:6.) And Peter adds, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God,"—wisely and in accordance with the spirit and mind of the Lord. Again, it is written, "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak no guile." "Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles." "The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious words, but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself. The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness; and the end of his talk is mischievous madness." "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God, for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few.' (Psa. 34:13; Prov. 21:23; Eccles. 10:12, 13; 5:2.)

Job, in the midst of all his afflictions, was very careful not to sin with his lips. He knew that his words would be taken by the Lord as an index of his heart, and he was careful to keep both the heart and his words right, saying, "What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil (or troubles for disciplining) . The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 2:10; 1:21.) There was no spirit of rebellion in a heart out of whose abundance came such words of loving submission, patience and faith under severe testings, and that, too, without a clear vision of the divine wisdom in permitting them.

The Psalmist puts into the mouths of God's consecrated and tried people these words of firm resolution—"I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth in a bridle, while the wicked is before me." (Psa. 39:1.) How necessary to the stability of Christian character is such a resolution, and the self control which develops under an adherence to it. The world, the flesh and the devil oppose our way; there are fightings within and storms without, and many are the arrows and darts aimed

at the righteous, and the safe attitude of the Christian in the face of the opposition of the world is to be silent, and to allow the Lord to work all these trials for our good, for the servant is not above his Lord. As Jesus took the opposition of sinners against Himself with such humble patience, so we too should "go therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach ;" and He said, "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake." So the Psalmist suggests, saying—"I was dumb with silence; I held my peace even from good" (or from doing what seemed good in my sight). Again it is written—"He that keepeth his mouth, keepeth his life, but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction." (Prov. 13:3.)

So we see what importance the Lord attaches to our words, for if our words are rebellious, or disloyal, or frivolous, or flippant, or unkind, unthankful, unholy, or impure, the heart is judged accordingly on the principle that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Thus, our words in all the varied circumstances of our daily life are bearing testimony before God of the condition of our hearts, and the Psalmist puts this prayer into the lips of all the Lord's people—"Set a watch, 0 Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips. Permit not my heart to incline after any evil things. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, 0 Lord, my strength, and my redeemer. My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes. My tongue shall speak of thy word; for all thy commandments are righteousness. Let thine hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts. I have longed for thy salvation (and for the perfection and beauty of holiness), 0 Lord; and thy law is my delight." (Psa. 141:3, 4; 19:14; 119:171- 174) .

In many things we are all faulty. If any one does not err in word he is a perfect man, able to control the whole body. (James 3:2.) But such a man does not exist; we all need to continually plead the merit of our Saviour and Advocate, while we strive daily to perfect holiness in the reverence of the Lord. Therefore, let thy words be few; let them be thoughtful and wise, as uttered before God, and not rash, hasty and ill considered. Let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Phil. 4:8.) Thus, out of the good treasure of the heart we shall be able to speak words of truth and soberness, and so honour and glorify Jesus and our loving Heavenly Father.

Endeavour to be patient in bearing with the defects and infirmities of others, of what sort soever they be: for thou thyself also hast many failings which must be borne with by others.—Thomas A. Kempis.

The best way to bear crosses is to consecrate them all in silence to God.—Fletcher.

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Question Box’

Question.—To what time would the Sabbath Day refer in Matthew 24:20?

Answer.—First of all it would seem clear that this passage could not refer to the typical Sabbath, because the distress referred to is to come not upon the nation of Israel so much as upon the nominal Christian world, and the Law Covenant with its commandments, the fourth of which relates to the Sabbath, has never been made binding upon any other people than Israel. It would make no difference to those not under the Law, whether they fled on the Sabbath or not: it would be no more hardship to flee on that day than on any other.

It is quite clear that the real fulfilment of this great prophecy is yet to be, and refers to the overthrow of Christendom in the time of trouble spoken of by Daniel 12:1 to take place at the second presence of Christ. The whole passage is in highly figurative language, in which it was customary for our Lord to speak. Were we to endeavour to take the passage in a literal way, how could they flee from Judea into the mountains, if they were not to come down from the housetops (see verses 16 and 17) ? But each expression has its own instruction to those who have “ears to hear.”

So it is in the 20th verse, the Lord is not referring to the literal winter time nor the typical Jewish Sabbath Day. The reference appears to be to the gathering out from the condemned systems, those who are truly the Lord’s people.

When the Harvest is complete, the four winds of trouble will be let loose, (Rev. 7:1) and those still clinging to the old associations of nominal Christendom will partake in her plagues in the winter time of trouble. Immediately following upon the great time of trouble, the great anti-typical Sabbath will commence. A day when the poor groaning creation, which has been travailing in pain together for six one-thousand year days of labour and sweat of face to earn a living, will cease from its heavy labour and find that by complying with the righteous rule of Christ and His saints (Satan and the wicked spirits having been bound or restrained), all labouring under heavy burdens, under the bondage of sin, Satan and death, pain and sorrow, will cease. (Rom. 8:19, 22.)

The Church of Christ have by faith already entered into this rest in God’s will, the rest of faith. (Heb. 4:1-4.)

The thought contained in our Lord’s words of verse 20 seems to be that some may delay coming away from the systems of error which have been “spued out” (Rev. 3:16) and be like the foolish virgins in the parable following. They will be too late to enter the marriage chamber of the Bridegroom and Bride, for it will then be proclaimed “the marriage of the Lamb has come, and the Bride has made herself ready.”

How necessary it is for those who come to a knowledge of present truth and of the second presence of Christ to take a positive stand against the grave errors that are being taught and to enter into the work of the harvest. The Lord being present, is surely controlling matters among His people and judging respecting the use of their talents and exercise in service, which is to “gather the elect from the four winds of heaven,” from the four quarters of Christendom. “Take heed that no man take thy crown.” “Take heed that thy flight be not on the Sabbath,” when the door will be found to have been shut.

The fact of the exhortation to avoid the winter time and the Sabbath for flight indicates the possibility of avoiding both. If, as some imagine, that Christ was coming and would accomplish the judgment all in twenty-four hours, then, however any might watch or “take heed,” they could not alter whatever day it might be, but as we are already living in “the days of the Son of man” and the gathering of the elect is proceeding, the exhortation is most appropriate.

Question.—What is the significance of “baptism for the dead” as referred to in 1 Cor. 15:29-30?

Answer.—This is said to be the most difficult portion of all the Scriptures to understand. One must have a clear understanding of what constitutes the real or true baptism in order to grasp the meaning of the Apostle’s words here. Elsewhere he says, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death.” (Rom. 6:3.) The Apostle does not mention water in this connection, and is evidently not referring to water baptism at all. Our Lord’s real baptism, of which the water immersion was merely the symbol, was His burial or immersion into death. His death—which was a sacrificial one, began at Jordan, when He gave Himself in full consecration to God and received the anointing of the holy spirit—was completed when, dying upon Calvary, He said, “It is finished.” His death or baptism was for the dead, the world of mankind, the entire human race condemned to death through Adam’s disobedience. In the Divine arrangements, all the sanctified followers of Christ, those who are baptized into Him, becoming members of His Body (1 Cor. 12:12, 13), are likewise immersed into His death. They are privileged to share with Him in His sacrificial sufferings and death (Col. 1:24).

This baptism or death of the entire Christ, Head and Body, Jesus and the Church, is on behalf of or for the dead, the world of mankind. When the last member of the Body of Christ has been offered up in sacrifice as a sin-offering on behalf of the world, then the entire race will be released from death.

Christian Way Ended.

Our elderly Sister Hammond of Adelaide reached the end of the earthly way on September 24th last. Our Sister was in her 85th year and had been in the truth for a good number of years. Sister Hammond was much loved by the Adelaide friends, and much esteemed for her meek and gentle dispositon, combined with a good, clear knowledge of God’s wonderful plan of salvation. Our Sister was one who had trusted the Lord and was very zealous to attend the Sunday meetings, to enjoy the fellowship around God’s Word.

It is good to know that the “Lord knoweth those who are His,” and to feel that He is supervising in respect of all the interests of His people. “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints,”—the daily dying to self, and to the things of the world—and then when the time comes when His little ones must leave the scenes and toils of this world, how good to realise that we are completely in the hands of Him who said, “Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the age.”

Word has been received recently of the passing of Brother Bray of Sydney last month, and one of our brethren has sent the following information:-

“Our Brother Bray had first appreciated the message of truth when coming in contact with a Brother in the country, at which time a weekly home meeting was held, as a result of which Brother Bray rejoiced very fully in God’s plan of the ages. Coming to Sydney later Brother Bray attended the Sydney Class regularly, and after three years symbolised his consecration to the Lord.

“Returning about five years ago from a visit to England with relatives our dear Brother’s memory began to fail, and had got worse in more recent times. Brother Bray was in the truth for over ten years and was a very devoted follower of the Lord, being very zealous for the truth, and was much loved by all who came in contact with him. Knowing our Brother as we did, we feel sure that he has made his calling and election sure.”

“Hymns of Dawn Music Book.”’—Containing the original 333 hymns, 27 additional in an Appendix, well bound in strong cloth, with silver lettering, this new edition is priced at 10/- post paid.