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## The Sum of All Graces is Love (Convention Address)

“Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love”.-1 Cor. 13:13.

IN the preceding chapter the Apostle has recounted the various “gifts” of the holy spirit conferred upon the early church for its establishment. He starts the chapter with the exhortation that while esteeming all of these gifts, each member of the church should covet earnestly the superior ones; and then, he adds: “Yet show I unto you a more excellent way”—something still better than any of those gifts of the holy spirit. Our lesson pertains to this more excellent ambition which should actuate every child of God; namely, the acquisition and development of the spirit of love, the spirit of the Lord. In proportion as we have the mind of Christ, in proportion as the holy spirit dwells in us and abounds, in that same proportion our love abounds.

There are different kinds of love, however, and the Apostle is here not speaking of general love, but of one particular kind, which belongs to God, and to the New Creation begotten of Him. There is an animal love, such as the brute creation exercises toward its young, a love which frequently leads to the sacrifice of life in its devotion. This same kind of love inheres in the natural man, even in his fallen condition. It is all more or less selfish love, ready perhaps, at times to rob others that it might lavish good things upon those it favours. This is not the love which the Apostle describes, nor is he addressing his language to the natural man. He addresses the New Creation, informing them that the natural man will not be able to receive, to appreciate, to comply with, that which he presents. In order to a clear comprehension of this love, and a hearty acceptance of it as the rule of life, it is apparently necessary that we be “begotten” from above.

It seems impossible to describe love itself; the best we can do is to describe its conduct. Those who possess a love with such characteristics are able to appreciate it, but not able otherwise to explain it—it is of God, godlikeness in the heart, in the tongue, in the hands, in the thoughts—supervising all the human attributes and seeking fully to control them.

Before describing the operation of love, the Apostle impresses upon us its importance, assuring us that if we possess the very choicest of the “gifts” already explained, and do not have therewith love, we will still lack the evidence of our being new creatures in Christ Jesus. We should be merely “sounding brass or cymbal”—making a noise, but having no acceptable feeling or virtue in ourselves in connection with our words. He assures us thus that ability to speak fluently on gospel themes, even might not be a proof of our relationship to the Lord as new creatures. The Apostle’s declaration is introduced with an “if”, which might be challenged, to a certain extent, by the assertion that no one could speak forth with power, with force, the gospel of God’s dear Son unless he possessed the spirit of love. Although we have all met public speakers who could deliver beautiful essays, we have generally perceived a hollowness in their teaching unless they spoke from the heart, prompted by love of the truth—not love of applause, nor love of money.

Amongst the gifts, prophecy or oratory was one which the Apostle commended, and large faith FA reckoned amongst the chief of the Christian requirements; yet the Apostle declares that if he possessed all of these in their

fullest measure, and love were absent, he would be nothing, a mere cypher—not a member of the New Creation at all, since love is the very spirit of the begetting to the new nature.

What a wonderful test this is; let us each apply it to himself. Whether I am something or nothing in God's estimation is to be measured by **my love** for Him, for the brethren, for His cause, for the world in general, and even for my enemies — rather than by my knowledge or fame or oratory. Yet we are not to understand that one could have a knowledge of the deep mysteries of God without having been begotten by the holy spirit of love; for the deep things of God knoweth no man, but by the spirit of God; but one might lose the spirit before losing the knowledge it brought him. In the measurement of character, therefore, *we* are to put love first, and to consider it the chief test of our nearness and acceptance to the Lord.

The Apostle next takes another line of argument; his hearers already understood benevolence, almsgiving to the needy, to be commendable; and to impress upon them the importance of having love as the controlling principle of their hearts, the Apostle declares that if he should give all his goods to feed the poor, keeping nothing back, and yet do this without proper love as the mainspring to the conduct, it would profit him nothing. He goes still further and declares that even if he should become a martyr, and be burned at the stake, it would not bring him the blessed reward sought, unless that martyrdom were prompted, impelled by love.

But it may be inquired. How could anyone practise such self-denial, such sacrifice, such faith, etc., and yet be without love? It is not our thought that they could practise these and be devoid of love; there must be some measure of love. We understand the Apostle to make this strong statement of the case in order to show us that our almsgiving, our sacrifices, our knowledge, our teaching, are acceptable to the Lord and appreciated by Him, only to the extent that they have love behind them. If love enters slightly into them, then they are slightly appreciated; if love enters largely into them, then God appreciates them largely. If they are prompted wholly by love, then God accepts them fully. If love be only a part of the motive power behind our conduct as new creatures, it implies that other motives are active in us, tending to neutralize in the Lord's esteem even services and sacrifices performed in His name, and upon worthy objects. Let us be on our guard against these neutralizing influences, and earnestly seek to be whole-hearted, full of love; that our every service of the Lord and of the brethren and of the truth be from a pure heart and free from personal ambition, pride, etc.

Having given us such a conception of the importance of love, the Apostle proceeds to describe what is and what it is not—how it operates, and how it does not operate or conduct itself. Let us each make a practical application of this matter to himself, and inquire within; Have I such love, especially for the household of faith, as leads me to suffer considerably for a long time, and yet to be kind? How quickly do I get offended? If very quickly it surely indicates that I have very little of the spirit of the Lord—love. If I am disposed to resent the trifling wrongs of life, if I have the spirit of resentment, am disposed to render evil for evil, and railing for railing—it marks my deficiency in this greatest of all the graces, so essential to my ultimate passing as an overcomer, the divine inspection.

Of our heavenly Father it is said that “He is kind to the unthankful.” Have I this spirit of kindness?—His spirit. Am I kind to my friends, gentle, courteous? Have I this mark of love pervading my actions and words and thoughts—that I think of and am considerate of others? that I feel and manifest kindness toward them in word, in look, in act?

A Christian, above all others, should be kind, courteous, gentle, in his home, in his place of business, in the Church—everywhere. With the child of God this patience and kindness are not merely put on, as grapes may be tied to a thornbush, but, on the contrary, they are the **fruits** of the spirit—growths from or results of having come into fellowship with God, learned of Him, received of His spirit of holiness, spirit of love.

Have I the love that envieth not, so that I can see others prosper and rejoice in their prosperity, even if for the time my own affairs be not so prosperous? This is generosity, the very opposite of jealousy or envy. The root of envy is selfishness: envy will not grow upon the root of love. Love envies not, but rejoices in the prosperity of all that is good.

Have I the love that vaunteth not itself? the love that tends to humility, that is not boastful, nor puffed up? Someone has truly said that “love saves a man from making a fool of himself by consequential conduct, and by

thrusting himself into positions which betray his incompetence.” Boastful—over self-esteem—has led many a man not only into folly, but sometimes into gross sins, in his endeavour to make good his boasts. The spirit of the Lord is a spirit of a sound mind, which not only seeks generously to esteem others, but also soberly to esteem oneself, and not to be puffed up.

Have I the love which does not behave itself unseemly—discourteously, impolitely? Politeness has been defined as love in trifles. Courtesy is said to be love in little things. The secret of politeness is either a surface polishing or love in the heart. As Christians we are to have the heart-love, which will prompt us to acts of kindness and courtesy, not only in the household of faith, but in our homes and in our dealings with the world.

Have I the love that seeketh not her own merely? that might even be willing to let some of her own rights be sacrificed in the interests of others? or have I the selfishness which not only demands my own rights on every occasion, but which demands those rights regardless of the convenience, comfort and rights of others? To have love in this particular, means that we will be on guard against taking any unjust advantage of others, and to prefer rather to suffer a wrong than to do a wrong, to suffer an injustice than to do injustice.

Have I the love which is not easily provoked? Indeed, the original omits the word “easily”, and gives rather the thought that love does not become irritated, roused to anger. Love enables its possessor to see both sides of a question; it makes of him a veritable philosopher; it gives him the spirit of a sound mind. He perceives that exasperation and violent anger are unbecoming and worse than that, injurious, not only toward those against whom they may be directed, but injurious in their effects also upon his own heart and body.

There may be times when love will need to be firm, almost to sternness and inflexibility, where principles are involved, where valuable lessons are to be inculcated; and this might come under the heading of anger, using that word in a proper sense in regard to a righteous indignation, exercised **for a loving** purpose, for doing good—but then only for a time. If justly angry we should see to it that we sin not, even with our lips or in our hearts, in which at no time may we entertain any but loving and generous sentiments toward those who are our enemies, or toward those who are our friends whom we should assist or instruct or correct.

To be easily provoked is to have a bad temper, to get worked up into a passion, where evil looks and evil words and angry sentiments are involved. This is wholly contrary to the spirit of love, and whoever is on the Lord’s side and seeking to be pleasing to Him and to attain to an overcomer’s position should jealously guard against this general besetment of our day. Those begotten of the holy spirit should all be good tempered. In no way can we better show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light than by the exhibition of the spirit of love in the daily affairs of life.

Have I the spirit of love which thinketh no evil? which is guileless, not suspicious of evil or looking for faults in others, or attributing to them evil motives? It is an old adage that “faults are thick where love is thin.”

The Revised Version presents a slightly different thought here—”Taketh not account of evil”—does not charge up the wrong against the evil-doer, as if waiting for an apology or a restitution or an opportunity to “get even.”

But while love passes over offences and takes no account of them, holding no grudges, this would not mean that love would necessarily treat evil-doers in precisely the same manner that it would treat its friends. It might be proper or necessary, even, to take some notice of the offences to the extent of not manifesting the same cordiality as before, but no hatred, malice or strife should be manifested—nothing but kindness and gentleness, leaving the door of opportunity open for a full reconciliation as soon as possible; doing all that could be done to promote a reconciliation and evincing a willingness to forgive and forget the wrongs.

Have I the love which rejoices not in iniquity (inequity) but rejoices in the truth? Are the principles of right and wrong so firmly in my mind, and am I so thoroughly in accord with the right and so opposed to the wrong that I would not encourage the wrong, but must condemn it, even if it brought advantage to me? Am I so in accord with right, with truth, that I could not avoid rejoicing in the truth and in its prosperity, even to the upsetting of some of my preconceived opinions, or to the disadvantage of some of my earthly interests? The love of God which the

Apostle is here describing as the spirit of the Lord's people is a love which is far above all selfishness, and is based upon fixed principles which should, day by day, be more and more distinctly discerned, and always firmly adhered to at any cost.

Have I the love that beareth all things? that is impregnable against the assaults of evil? that resists evil, impurity, sin and everything contrary to love?

Have I the love that believeth all things? that is unwilling to impute evil to another unless forced to do so by indisputable evidences? that would rather believe good than evil about everybody? that would take no pleasure in hearing evil, but would be disposed to resent it? Have I the love that hopeth all things, that perseveres under unfavorable conditions and continues to hope for and to labour for those who need my assistance? Have I the love that endureth all things? that is, that continues to hope for the best, and that with perseverance—not easily discouraged?

As disciples or pupils of Christ, we are in His school, and the great lesson which He is teaching us day by day, and the lesson which we must learn thoroughly if we would attain the mark of the prize of our high calling in all its various features and ramifications, is the lesson of Love. It takes hold upon and relates to all the words and thoughts and doings of our daily lives. As the poet has said, "As every lovely hue is light—so every grace is love."

Next, the Apostle points out that as love is the most excellent thing, so it is the most enduring. The gift of prophecy would pass away; the value and necessity for speaking with other tongues would cease; and all knowledge of the present time, imperfect as it is, must surely cease to be valuable when the perfections of the new dispensation are fully ushered in. The very best informed now know only in part; but when perfection shall be attained in the kingdom, and under its ministrations, all the partial and imperfect conditions of the present time will have been superseded, and only faith, hope and Love will remain, and, says the Apostle, "the greatest of these is Love."

An illustration of the growth which we must expect as between the present knowledge and attainments and those of the future, is of the child and the growth to manhood. Another illustration is seeing obscurely in one of the old-time mirrors, which gave but imperfect reflections. With the perfections of the new condition we will see perfectly, know perfectly, understand perfectly. Just so the gifts which were in the early Church were very suitable to it, as fitted to its infantile condition; but as it would develop to maturity the value of those "gifts" would diminish, and they would be no more; but higher developments of divine favor were to be expected, faith, hope and love. All three of these the Church of God is to cultivate, and to esteem as **fruits** of the spirit, far above the gifts of the spirit, and the greatest of these three is Love.

Love also is the most enduring, for will not faith practically come to an end when we shall see and know thoroughly? And will not hope practically be at an end when we shall reach the fruition of all our hopes and be possessors of the fulness of our Heavenly Father's promises? Love, however, will never fail, even as it had no beginning. God is love, and since He was without beginning, so love was without beginning; because it is His character, His disposition, and as He endureth forever, so love will endure forever.

Whoever, therefore, learns thoroughly the lessons of this present time in the school of Christ, and thus becomes well stocked with this wonderful grace of love, lays up treasures which may be his to all eternity—a great blessing to himself and to all with whom he comes in contact now; and a blessing to the world to which he will be permitted to minister during the Millennium; a blessing everlasting, because it is a seal of divine approval.

PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM *Australia, 3101.*

# Convention News

THE Annual Christmas Convention, sponsored by the Melbourne Class, and held over that period, was a very helpful season of spiritual refreshing for all able to attend these gatherings in the Lord's name. We lift up our hearts in thankfulness to the Lord for His blessings bestowed throughout the assemblies over the four days. Visiting brethren were gladly welcomed from interstate and various Victorian centres, and their presence contributed greatly to the programme with their assistance at the Bible studies, addresses and fellowship generally.

Various sessions added profitable variety throughout the Convention. The two Bible studies on the passages 1 Thes. 5:1-8, and Phil. 4:4-9 were very helpful, as the thoughts were brought out relating to the days in which we are now living from the international standpoint, and also our relationship to such events as members of the Lord's family. It was realised how favoured are God's people in being informed from His Word respecting the present "distress of nations", and most important how we may exercise full faith and trust in God's overruling of every world event for the highest welfare of His people in these days. We were encouraged also to exercise such confidence in the Lord that we would gain and maintain His peace in our hearts through all experiences. We saw that this happy spiritual condition would be ours only by the indwelling of the Lord's spirit through prayer and established thinking upon all things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, of virtue and praise. By obeying these exhortations from the apostle we were assured that "the God of peace shall be with us.

A wide range of subjects were used by the brethren in their addresses which proved most interesting and helpful, the topics being—"Blessed Are Your Eyes"; "God's Omnipotence and Eternal Love"; "Noah and the Flood"; "Fear Not! Good Tidings, Great Joy, All People"; "God's Purpose in Trials"; "The Jewish Nation and Prophecy"; "Judge Nothing Before the Time"; "Moses, Put Off Thy Shoes on Holy Ground"; "Thy Kingdom Come"; "David Encouraged Himself in the Lord"; "God's Care for His Saints in the Latter Days"; "Bridge Over Troubled Waters"; "They . . . corruptible; We . . . an Incorruptible Crown"; "Sin, Sickness, Death, Versus Righteousness, Health, Life"; "All Joy in Believing"; and "The Sum of All

Graces is Love." It is expected that some of these addresses will be published in the "Peoples Paper" from time to time, and brief outlines of each address, as well as thoughts on the Bible studies, are contained in the Convention Notes, now also available and supplied free to all desiring these copies.

The messages with Christian love and greetings brought to the Convention personally by visiting brethren from other Classes and individual friends were all greatly appreciated, as were also those greetings received through the mail from overseas and distant parts of this continent. These messages of goodwill from other members of the Lord's family are reciprocated from the Convention with the passage of Scripture, Phil. 4:4-9, and warm Christian love from all assembled at Convention to the Lord's people everywhere.

Two Fellowship Meetings provided opportunity for praise and testimony to the Lord's providential care experienced by the brethren in times past, and also the expressions of thankfulness at being able to attend gatherings at this Convention, and enjoy the Lord's favour in company with the brethren. Appreciation was also expressed for the service rendered by the Sisters in the provision of refreshments throughout the gatherings, all of which was undertaken as a labour of love as unto the Lord. The session "Hymns We Love and Why" was very enjoyable as the personal selections of the friends were sung and the sentiments meditated upon in melody unto the Lord.

The attendance throughout the Convention was very good, and it was a pleasure again to have the company of a number of the Melbourne Polish Class, as well as appreciating addresses from some of these brethren who are now mastering our English language quite well. We feel sure that the refreshment gained at the Convention gatherings is of great assistance to us in our Christian way. As one Brother and Sister who came from Queensland expressed it on return—"The whole programme of the assemblies was much appreciated, and we felt the 3,000 miles by car well worth while." The closing Love Feast with the singing of the appropriate hymns "Blest be the tie that binds" and "God be with you till we meet again", and the prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord, asking His blessing and oversight to be upon His dear people everywhere, concluded the very helpful 1973 Melbourne Convention.

# The 144,000

(Contributed Article)

“And I heard the number of them which were sealed; and there were sealed an hundred and forty four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.” “And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred and forty four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.”—See Rev. 7:1-8; 14:1-5.

IT has been stated that studying a subject in the Bible is like a treasure hunt; you have to look for the clues. This is true indeed. What a treasure it is when we are able to discern a truth which we had not before clearly understood. We believe the 144,000 to be the chosen ones of the whole of the Gospel Age—the Elect, the Bride of Christ, sons of God, and the saints. These are some of the terms used to describe the same class.

The first clue is that the angels are holding back the four winds, that they should not hurt the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till the servants of God were sealed in their foreheads. These winds being held back symbolize the great tribulation coming on the world shortly, that Jesus referred to in Matt. 24:20, 21. We see then the “holding back of the winds” is the time in which we are now living, and the one class called during the period of the Gospel Age is the saints, called to be joint-heirs with Christ.

In Eph. 1:1 the Apostle is addressing the saints. In chapter 4:4 it says—”Ye are all called in the one hope of your calling.” *We* feel these are called to be saints, but there is another class coming out of the Gospel Age, described as a “great multitude that no man can number”, not just 144,000, so we see a clear distinction between these two classes.

As clue No. 2, we are told 144,000 were sealed, 12,000 of each of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. To some people this is a stumbling-block instead of a clue. They feel they must be natural-born Israelites, whereas these are the whole of the chosen ones throughout the Gospel Age, composed of some of the natural-born Israelites and the remainder from the Gentiles. It is not surprising they are all referred to as Israelites, as all of God's elect become spiritual Israelites. From Rom. 11:17, 19, 24 the Apostle Paul explains how some of the natural branches were broken off, the natural branches being the Israelites. He goes on to show how the Gentiles are grafted in. See Eph. 2:11, 12, and in verse 15 he says the two, Israelites and Gentiles, are to be one new man in Christ, the one new man meaning the Christ, head and body, Christ and the 144,000, the Gentile Christians being grafted in to the Commonwealth of Israel and are now spiritual Israelites.

Gen. 22:18 says, referring to Abraham's seed—”And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” The Apostle Paul tells us in Gal. 3:16 of that seed “which is Christ.” All the nations of the earth are to be blessed, not just some. This is to happen in the Millennial Age, which is shortly to start when Christ's kingdom is established, and the blessing will then go to all those nations which at present are heathen and do not know Christ.

In Gal. 4:28 we read—”We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise”; and they are, together with Christ as their Head, to be used to bring the world of mankind in general up to a state of perfection; all those who are willing to obey. The point is they are all Abraham's seed, and as such are all Israelites. There are many people who come to Australia from other lands, and many of them become naturalized and are then entitled to be called Australians. It is much the same with those whom the Lord is calling, those who accept the call and make a full consecration of their lives to the Lord are grafted into Israel and become naturalized Israelites. So we should not expect the 144,000 to be referred to by any other name than Israelites.

In Rev. 21:9, 10 the angel said to John—”Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife . . . and he showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem.” In verse 12 we are told the twelve gates of the city had the names written thereon of the twelve tribes of Israel. This symbolizes God's kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, composed of the elect. In Gal. 4:25, 26 the Apostle Paul indicates the earthly Jerusalem represented fleshly Israel and the Jerusalem above represents Christians. The point to notice is that the city has twelve gates, each with the name of one of the tribes of the children of Israel. The only way into the city would be through one or another of the gates.

Some seem to think there must be more than just 144,000 in this heavenly class. However, it is more reasonable to think they would be comparatively few in number, because this is a very special class who are to be made partakers of the divine nature, as stated in 1 Pet. 1:4. It says in 1 Car. 15:53 the Lord's faithful people are to be made immortal. To realise fully how special this is, we have to understand that only God the Father and Christ have immortality. Not even the angels in heaven have it. In 1 Tim. 6:16, speaking of Jesus, it says "who only hath immortality." This, of course, would mean except for the Father. We are also told—"Many are called, but few chosen", and "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom"—Matt. 22:14; Luke 12:32. In view of such statements, we should not expect them to be a great number.

For clue No. 3, in Rev. 14:1 it says "I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads." We realise the Lamb is symbolic of Christ. In John 1:29 John the Baptist said—"Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world", and it is mentioned in many other places. The earthly Mount Zion is in Jerusalem, the city of God's government in Old Testament times. King David's throne was there; so the Mount Zion mentioned in Rev. 14:1 is symbolic of God's heavenly, spiritual government. Christ and the 144,000 are at the seat of God's government, and that kingdom is to be composed of the chosen ones, the elect of the Gospel Age. See Obadiah 21—"Saviours shall come up on mount Zion."

Clue No. 4, says—"Having their Father's name written in their foreheads." This means they are sons of God. This is one of the terms which apply to the elect, and is mentioned in several Scriptures. In Rom. 8:14 we read—"For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God." In verse 19 of this same chapter of Romans we see that the "creation (all mankind) waiteth for the manifestation (revealing) of the sons of God", which will mean "deliverance from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God", for the whole world of mankind—verse 21.

Coming to clue No. 5, we read—"And they sang as it were a new song before the throne ... " This indicates they had entered into the "joys of the Lord" in the spiritual realm, and are able to praise God together with the "Lamb" as never before. The fact that "no man could learn that song but the hundred forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth", shows that 144,000 is the full number of this class. If there were to be any more they would also have learned the same song.

Clue No. 6 reads—"These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins." The Church is symbolized by a woman, so we would understand this as meaning not defiled with the wrong doctrines of the false churches—the many creeds of Christendom. All true Christians must be virgins in several ways. They must keep themselves pure for the Lord and not allow themselves to be defiled by the world, or by sin, or by anything else. The Lord must be the first love of the virgins. Nothing else must seem of the same importance. Nothing else must ever come first in their lives, as these are Christ's Bride and He is the Bridegroom. The term "virgin" here is quite a good clue that they are the elect, the Bride of Christ. In 2 Cor. 11:2 the apostle says—"I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." In Matt. 25 we have the parable of the ten virgins. These represent the called ones. Five did make their calling and election sure and became the Bride of Christ, but five did not. We see the term "virgin" is applied to this class.

As clue No. 7—"These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." This again shows them to be the chosen ones, because it proves they are fully consecrated to the Lord. We have to follow Jesus, the Lamb. We have to mould our lives after Him, and accept Him as our Head. We have to ask ourselves, before acting on any important subject, Would Jesus approve? We have to follow Him whithersoever He goeth. No matter how steep

the path or difficult the going, or how long the trials we have along the way, we must keep following Him until we reach the end of the journey.

Luke 9:23 says, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." We see the 144,000 in Revelation have done this. That brings us to clue 8. "These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb." This is a most important clue, because we are told they are the

first-fruits, and the Scriptures make it very clear that this term applies to those to be first resurrected from the dead. James 1:18 reads—"Of his own will begat he us, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." So there cannot be any who receive a resurrection before them. This same class is referred to in Rev. 20:

6—"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection ... they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." We know that those who are in the first resurrection are the elect; they will reign and rule over the world with Christ during the thousand-year Millennial reign. See also 2 Tim. 2:12.

The 9th and last clue reads—"And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault." In John 1:

47 we read—"Jesus saw Nathaniel coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" The 144,000 are Israelites indeed. Of our Lord the Apostle Peter wrote—"Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."

In Rom. 8:29 we are told we have to be conformed to the image of God's Son. The 144,000 with no guile in their mouths are those who have become copies of Christ. We are told they are "without fault." All those who wish to have part in God's heavenly kingdom must be without fault at heart, though they cannot expect to be perfect in this life owing to their inherited weaknesses, but their intentions must be right. We must all desire and long to be perfect, and strive to that end to the best of our ability.

## Frank and Ernest Broadcast God's Covenants. (Part 2.)

(Continued from Last Issue)

ERNEST: Frank, I'm pleased that we're able to continue our subject—"God's Covenants"—again today. At the close of our last broadcast you had quoted a very interesting text in Gal. 3:29, written by the Apostle Paul to all true followers of the Master. I'll read the verse again now, so we'll have it clearly in mind. It reads—"If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." I take it Paul means that Christ and His Church are the spiritual seed of Abraham to carry out God's promise to bless all the families of the earth when the Church is with Christ in the heavenly kingdom.

FRANK: Yes, Ernest, that's right. And following our lesson in Galatians 3 of last week in verses 15 and 16, verse 17 is most interesting and important. It reads—"And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God (that is, the Abrahamic Covenant), the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." We notice, Ernest, how the Apostle is impressing the importance of God's promise to Abraham in this verse, that while the Law Covenant was added 430 years after the Abrahamic Covenant, it did not interfere in the least with the promise God made to Abraham to bless all the families of the earth through Abraham's seed—through Christ and His Church. This is confirmed further in the next verse, verse 18—"For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise."

ERNEST: From that standpoint, Frank, it is understandable that the Apostle follows that reasoning of verse 18, in verse 19 of this 3rd chapter of Galatians, by asking—"Wherefore then serveth the law?" In other words, if the adding of the Law Covenant did not disannul the Abrahamic Covenant, then why bother about the Law Covenant at all. "Why serveth the law?" Then he answers his own question—"It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator." Perhaps you would like to express a thought on this verse, Frank?

FRANK: Well, Ernest, it's rather a comprehensive verse, showing the necessity of the Law Covenant being given to Israel because of their transgressions, for a limited time—"till the seed should come." Verse 24 of this same 3rd chapter of Galatians helps us here, as it reads—"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." In other words, the Law Covenant was given to Israel to demonstrate that they

came far short of gaining life by their own efforts, but by obeying the Law as well as possible they would be trained to receive Christ, by faith in His sacrifice, at His first advent.

ERNEST: Thank you, Frank, for those thoughts, and I like the way the connected verses read in this 3rd chapter of Galatians—"But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. And after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus"—verses 23, 25 and 26. Before we pass on from verse 19 in this 3rd chapter of Galatians, Frank, perhaps we could have a few thoughts on the reference to the Law Covenant being "ordained in the hand of a mediator."

FRANK: Well, Ernest, the Apostle is showing there that Moses was the mediator of the Law Covenant, to try and reconcile Israel to God's instructions given in that covenant. A mediator is a go-between to seek to reconcile opposing parties, and Israel needed God's law because of their transgressions, as we saw a while ago. If Israel had been obedient to God as a nation, the Law Covenant would not have been needed, God's Abrahamic Covenant would have been sufficient to reveal God's plan. And that's where we see a great difference between the Abrahamic and the Law Covenants. You'll remember, Ernest, that God's promise to Abraham was unconditional with no mediator, no go-between, because God could see that Abraham was really faithful no mediator was necessary, and this is also typical of Abraham's spiritual seed, the church, who need no mediator. Not so with Israel, they needed a mediator, Moses, to act as a go-between with God, on their behalf.

ERNEST: Following the verses we examined a while ago, Frank, with reference to the change available to the Galatians when they had faith in Christ's sacrifice, and were no longer under the schoolmaster of the Law Covenant, the Apostle continues in chapter 4 from verse 4—"When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." That must have been very wonderful for the Galatians in those days when they grasped the privilege of accepting Christ's sacrifice as a means of salvation, instead of striving under the Law Covenant to gain life, which was never possible.

FRANK: That's right, Ernest. It was wonderful for those who could exercise faith in the sacrifice of Christ, for the Apostle continues in Gal. 4, from verse 6—"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." Despite this happy condition of some of the Galatians, there were still some in that church who were clinging to the works of the law as shown by verses 8 to 11 in this 4th chapter of Galatians.

ERNEST: I'd like to review those verses, Frank, and they read—"When ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereby ye desire to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." Then in verses 19 and 20 of this same chapter, the Apostle very tenderly appeals to them—"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you. I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you." There's no doubt about the Apostle's concern for those who had previously accepted Christ as their Saviour and had been accepted into God's family, and were returning to the weak and beggarly elements of the Law Covenant.

FRANK: That's very true, Ernest. And the Apostle continues from verse 21 in this 4th chapter of Galatians—"Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the free-woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." These are explanatory verses, Ernest, showing the great advantage we have as Christians of being developed under the Abrahamic Covenant, and not being hindered by the bondage of the Law Covenant to gain salvation.

ERNEST: I can see that very clearly, Frank. And there's just two more verses in this 4th chapter of Galatians, verses 28 and 31, which seem to clinch Paul's presentation so helpfully, as follows—"Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise ... So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." In other words, we, as Christians, are developed under the Abrahamic Covenant, and not the Law Covenant. But what about the New Covenant, Frank, which is also mentioned in the Scriptures?

FRANK: Well, Ernest, as our time is up for today, we'll consider that next time we meet.

(To be continued)

## Correspondence

U.S.A.

Dear Brethren: Blessed be the tie that binds.

Received such a blessed surprise with your booklet of Brother Muir's thoughts and poems. I had the privilege to know Brother Muir in my young years in growing in the truth and had many a blessing through his ministry. I would love to have a dozen of his "Lights and Shadows in Christian Experience." Sending a \$5.00 cheque. Close in bonds of love we all share in Christ.

Passover Memorial 1974

The anniversary of the Memorial of Christ's death falls this year on the evening *of* Friday, 5th April. It is the privilege of the Lord's people to observe this memorial at this season "In remembrance of Christ."

Memorial Services

Melbourne-Sunday, 7th April, at 6.30 p.m., at Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond.

Adelaide-Sunday, 7th April, at 6.15 p.m., at the M.U. Hall (2nd Floor), 16 Franklin Street, Adelaide. Sydney-Friday 5th April, at 7 p.m., at 81 James Street, Leichhart.

## HEART PURITY

"Thou must be true thyself  
If thou the truth would'st teach  
Thy soul must overflow, if thou  
Another soul would'st reach;  
It needs the overflow of heart  
To give the lips full speech.  
"Think truly, and thy thoughts  
Shall the world's famine feed;  
Speak truly, and each word of thine  
Shall be a faithful seed;  
Live truly, and thy life shall be  
A great and noble creed."

## Broadcasts on 4GY Gympie

Following recent enquiries in the Nambour, Gym-pie, Maryborough areas of Queensland, we have been offered the opportunity of broadcasting the Frank and Ernest Dialogues on 4GY Gympie. While time on Sunday mornings would have been preferred for this witness of the Lord's messages, 7.15 on Sunday evenings seemed the best time offering, so this has been accepted for a trial period of six months on 4GY Gympie. This station broadcasts on 600 Kc., having recently changed to this wave length, and all friends within range of this station in Queensland are invited to make the broadcasts known in their areas. Supplies of the "Do You Know?" slips are available on which the 4GY broadcasts could be stamped, and all friends able to assist in making the broadcasts known are invited to co-operate in this work. All are also invited to ask the Lord's blessing on this witness of the truth, as He sees good.

### Adelaide Easter Convention

The brethren of the Adelaide Class extend a cordial invitation to all friends able to attend the Easter Convention to be held (D.V.) on April 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th in the Manchester Unity Hall (2nd Floor), 16 Franklin Street, Adelaide. Further information from the Class Secretary-Mr. F. M. Grinsted, 1 Wendy Avenue, Valley View, South Australia, 5093.

## **Books Available**

In view of increased postal charges, literature prices are now as follows:- **“God’s Promises Come True”**-\$2.00 (postage from 45c to \$1.00 according to distance).

**“The Divine Plan of the Ages”**, Cloth-75c (postage 30c. Paper bound-50c postage 30c).

**“The Creator’s Grand Design”**-\$1.00 (postage 30c). **“The Book of Books”**-\$1.00 (postage 30c).

**“Daily Heavenly Manna”**-\$1.00 (postage 30c).

**“Songs in the Night”**-\$1.00 (postage 20c).

**“Poems of Dawn”**-\$2.20 (postage 20c).

**“Emphatic Diaglott”**, N. Testament-\$2.00 (postage 30c). **“Tabernacle Shadows”**-50c (postage 20c).

**“God and Reason”**-10c (postage 7c).

**“God’s Plan”**-10c (postage 7c).

**“Hope Beyond the Grave”**-10c (postage 7c).

**“Israel in History and Prophecy”**-10c (postage 7c.) **“Our Lord’s Great Prophecy”**-10c (postage 7c). **“Manner of Christ’s Return”**-10c (postage 7c).

**“Christ’s Return”**-10c (postage 7c).

**“Some of the Parables”**-10c (postage 7c).

**“Where Are the Dead”**-10c (postage 7c).

**“Lights and Shadows in Christian Experience”**-10c (postage 7c). **“Our Bible Translated”**-10c (postage 7c). Numerous other smaller booklets.

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