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The New Covenant

(Convention Address)

The meaning of the word “covenant” is “a ratified, unalterable agreement.” God has made many covenants with man, such as we read in Gen. 6:18 and Jer. 33:20. But there are three, however, that stand out very prominently, as in them have been bound up all the best interests of mankind. First, the Abrahamic Covenant; second, the Law Covenant; and third, the New Covenant.

The conditions of the New Covenant on God’s part are, that man shall be brought to a condition in which he can obey the perfect law, and always keep it in his heart, as it is written.—”Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.... This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.... for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember /heir sin no more.” “In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children’s teeth are set on edge. But every one (who does die) shall die for his own iniquity.” (Jer. 31:31-34, 29, 30.)

In Hosea 2:18 we read, “And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field and with the creeping things of the ground; and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.” Read also Jer. 32:37-41, and Ezek. 37:26,—” . . . And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.” “Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.

. . . And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.” We see clearly that the New Covenant is future and also that a great change will be effected in the condition of Israel, who were unable to keep the Law. The trouble then was the fathers (Adam and his successors) had eaten the sour grape (of sin) and the children’s teeth were set on edge, so they could not keep the law of God. So the Day of Atonement is brought in (the Gospel Age) and during it Israel and all men are redeemed from sin and death through Jesus Christ, who, by the grace of God tasted death for every man. Consequently, it is after the Gospel Age, when they are pardoned freely for Christ’s sake, that the New Covenant comes into force.

With this thought agree the words of St. Paul in Rom. 11:27,—”This is my (new) covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.” Remember, we, the Gospel Church, do not come to Christ under the

New Covenant, neither under the Old or Law Covenant, but under a covenant older than either of these, namely, the Abrahamic Covenant, which the Law Covenant did not disannul. (Gal. 3:17.) The Gospel Church are part of the spiritual “seed”,—”If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (Gal. 3:29.)

As the typical or Law Covenant was ratified or sealed by Moses its mediator with the blood of animals, so the New Covenant is sealed with the blood of “better sacrifices”, Christ, Head and Body. Moses took a bunch of hyssop and scarlet wool and therewith sprinkled of the ratifying blood mixed with water, both the book (type of the Law) and all the people. (See Heb. 9:19.) So with the New Covenant, it must also be ratified with blood and the Mediator of the New gives His own blood (life), both Head and Body, during this Gospel Age of sacrifice. Soon, when the better sacrifices are complete, the people will be sprinkled with this cleansing blood and with the pure water of truth, and their teeth will no longer be set on edge. No longer will they when they would do good find evil present with them, for all shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest, and the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth. That prophet or teacher, The Christ, Head and Body is now being raised up (to power) and soon the work of sprinkling and cleansing humanity will begin, and the soul (person) who will not then obey and be cleansed shall be cut off from amongst the people. (Acts 3:23.)

The more closely we investigate the New Covenant, the more we must be convinced of this fact—that it belongs to Israel alone, including the two nations into which they divided at the death of Solomon, Israel and Judah. Note the statement of the prophet,—”Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant (the Law Covenant) which I made with them when I took them by the hand and led them out of the land of Egypt.” The Apostle, endeavouring to prove to the Jews that they could gain nothing under the Law Covenant, points out this prophecy and tells them that the fact that God speaks of a New Covenant implies that a preceding (Law) Covenant had become old, valueless, and was preparing to pass away. “In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” (Heb. 8:8, 13.)

As already shown, the New Covenant will not be sealed, ratified, until the sacrifices of the Christ shall have been finished, and the finishing of these sacrifices closes the work of this great day of sacrifice and atonement. With the second presentation of the blood atonement in the antitypical Most Holy at the end of this age, the New Covenant with Israel will be sealed and the blessings of the Lord will begin to Israel. “For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes.” (Rom. 11:27, 28.) There is no room to doubt that the Apostle here is referring to Israel’s Covenant. The Apostle says the covenant will be made when or at the time that the Lord will take away their sins. That time has not yet come; Israel is still under Divine condemnation. Not one of these references to the New Covenant makes the slightest suggestion that it is applicable to the Church. A reference to the original prophecy from which the Apostle quotes shows that it could not apply to the Church, for we there read that the Lord will take away their stony heart out of their flesh and give them an heart of flesh. This is exactly the restitution work which will begin with Israel and extend to all the families of the earth; it is not at all the work of this Gospel Age, which is far higher. The Lord does not give the “little flock” hearts of flesh, but, justified by faith, allows them to sacrifice the flesh and begets them to a new nature, to become the glorious seed of Abraham through which all the families of the earth shall be blessed by the inauguration of the New Covenant.

Why has the New Covenant been so long delayed? We reply, that although it was promised centuries before Christ, it did not become an assured fact until our Lord Jesus died. His death was sufficient to have sealed that New Covenant and at once to have brought in restitution blessings to Israel and through Israel to the world in general, if the Redeemer when ascended on high had so applied the merit of His sacrifice.

But it is evident that He did not thus apply it. First, by the fact that Israel's restitution did not begin there and has not begun yet, and will not begin until "after those days." Secondly, it is proven by the other fact that the merit of Christ's sacrifice, which was not given to sealing Israel's New (Law) Covenant, was given to another class, to a new nation, to spiritual Israel, and has—been applicable to and brought manifest blessings to her during all these centuries of the Gospel Age. So, then, in the Scriptural language, that which our Lord did in connection with the promised New Covenant between God and Israel at His first advent was that He became a "surety" and Guarantor for its later fulfilment. (Heb. 7:22.) From that time, therefore, the New Covenant may be assured or legislated or guaranteed, but not put into force, because as the Apostle declares, "Where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator." (Heb. 9:16, 17.)

In harmony with the Divine Plan the Redeemer applied the merit of His sacrifice to a special class, drawn and called of the Father during this Gospel Age to be Christ's members, to join with Him in His sacrifice. So, then, the reason that the New Covenant promised in Jeremiah's day and assured by our Lord's death has not yet gone into effect and become operative in restitution blessings to Israel and the world is, that the death of the Testator has not yet been fully accomplished. The Testator through whom Israel will get the great blessings of the New Covenant is not our Lord Jesus alone, but the Christ, Head and Body. To this agree the words of the Apostle again, namely, that natural Israel will obtain mercy through your (spiritual. Israel's) mercy. (Rom. 11:31.)

Reading Malachi 3:1, the question may arise, In what sense was our Lord Jesus the messenger of the covenant? Our Lord was the messenger of the New Covenant by a Divine promise. Israel was aware that their Law Covenant, under its mediator, Moses, had not brought to them the long expected blessings implied in the Abrahamic Covenant. God had promised that at a future time He would make a New Covenant with them—Jer. 31:31,—thus implying that they were right in not expecting much from the Law Covenant. Of course a New Covenant would imply a new mediator for that Covenant. This Moses had foretold, saying,—"A prophet (teacher, mediator) shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me." (Acts 3:22.) They understood that this great Prophet or Mediator would be Messiah and they consequently longed for and delighted in the prospect of His coming. This is the thought behind Malachi's prophecy,—"He shall come, even the messenger of the covenant." This was a prophecy respecting His future work. He became the messenger or servant of the New Covenant at Jordan when He consecrated His all unto death as the ransom-price for the world. He there began to serve the New Covenant by providing the price, the blood, which shall ultimately seal the New Covenant, or make it effective. The laying down of His life was not the sealing of the Covenant, however, but merely a preparatory work. He there became the "surety" or Guarantor that in due time the New Covenant would be sealed and made effective. In the sacrifice of Himself our Lord was serving a Covenant not yet sealed; similarly the Lord is now gathering His Church, a "little flock" to be members of the antitypical Prophet, Priest, King and Mediator between God and the world of mankind during the Millennium.

These called, chosen, spirit-begotten ones are "able ministers of the new covenant" (2 Cor. 3:5, 6), after the same manner as their Lord—walking in His steps. They minister or serve the New Covenant as an attorney serves in drawing up an agreement or covenant. It will not be a covenant until sealed, but while it is in process of preparation it is spoken of as a covenant, and in writing the agreement, the attorney is serving that agreement by putting it into shape, arranging for its sealing, etc. So Christ and His members are able ministers or servants of the New Covenant which God has promised and in which the hope of Israel and the world is centred. Firstly, in gathering the members of the body of the great Mediator. Secondly, in learning and teaching to others the lessons necessary to qualify for the position. Thirdly, in preparing the blood with which the New Covenant is to be sealed—His blood, Jesus' blood, appropriated first to the Church, and ultimately, after having served its purpose in the justification of the Church, to be passed on for the blessing of the world through the sealing of the New Covenant with Israel.

When our Lord said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:20), we should understand that primarily the cup is His, and secondly it is ours who are His body, sharing it and drinking it with Him. There will be none of it left for others to drink of afterwards, for His command is, "Drink ye all of it." It was our Lord's blood or death which was necessary for the sealing of the New Covenant, but by Divine arrangement the blood or death after His Church, made acceptable to God by the merit of Christ, is also counted in as Christ's sacrifice. (See Col- 1.124.-) Hence, the New Covenant cannot be sealed, finished, made operative, until all the members of the Body shall have died, when the "better sacrifices" shall be finished. It is, therefore, quite proper that our Lord's death or blood should be mentioned as the blood of the New Covenant even though it be not applied until all the members of His body shall have been sacrificed by Him. Then, He will apply all the blood, all the sacrifice, all the death merit as His own on behalf of the world and seal the Covenant with God on behalf of men. After having sealed the Covenant with the Father, Christ with His Church will at once enter upon the great work of reconciling the world, restoring the world to harmony with the Father.

Radio on 3 X Y

On Sunday, 15th January, the Frank and Ernest Broadcasts commenced on 3XY Melbourne at 8 p.m. While the expense on this station is quite considerable, it was thought wise to take advantage of this opportunity to give a wider witness to the message of the Kingdom.

We ask for the Lord's blessing on this further privilege of service in His name, and our readers are invited to make these broadcasts known wherever 3XY is heard, in addition to 3GL Geelong, which will still be heard on Sundays at 10 a.m. Circulars advertising these broadcasts are gladly supplied from this office.

Passover Memorial 1967

The anniversary of the Memorial of Christ's death falls this year on the evening of Sunday, 23rd April. It is the privilege of all appreciating our Lord's request—"This do in remembrance of me"—to keep the observance at the appropriate season of the year.

Memorial Services

Melbourne—Sunday, 23rd April, at 6 p.m., at Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond.

Adelaide—Sunday, 23rd April, at 6.15 p.m., at Manchester Unity Building, (2nd Floor), 16 Franklin Street, Adelaide.

Perth—Sunday, 23rd April, at 6.45 p.m., at 7 Harvest Terrace (opposite Parliament House).

Sydney—Sunday, 23rd April, at 7 p.m., at 53 Bennett Street, West Ryde.

Adelaide Easter Convention

This announcement is made to the effect that the Adelaide brethren are arranging to hold their Easter Convention this year from Good Friday to Easter Monday, in the Manchester Unity Building (2nd Floor), 16 Franklin Street, Adelaide. Further information from the secretary—Mr. J. Jordan, P.O. Box 47, Kingswood, South Australia.

CONVENTION NOTES

Notes covering the Melbourne Christmas Convention are available free upon application to this office.

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Convention News

IT is with loving gratitude and thanksgiving to the Lord for His blessings bestowed throughout the Annual Convention arranged by the Melbourne Class over the recent Christmas season that this brief review of the gatherings is presented at this time. The four days were fully taken up with the various sessions, and the attendance was very good throughout, it being a pleasure to welcome visiting brethren from other Australian States and New Zealand, as well as from Victorian centres.

The sessions consisted of three Bible Studies, eighteen addresses by visiting and local brethren, and three Fellowship Meetings. The passages taken for Bible Study were Acts 1:4-11; 1 Thes. 5:1-8; and Phil. 3:7-14.

The study in Acts proved very helpful in impressing the important messages which our Lord left with His disciples immediately preceding His ascension to heaven. They had their saddened hopes greatly revived during our Lord's appearances to them after His resurrection, and now forty days later they were anxious to know if He would there and then establish His promised Kingdom. Without discouraging them with a direct reply that the Kingdom would not be set up for about 2,000 years, He exhorted them to "wait for the promise of the Father" when they would be "baptized with the holy spirit not many days hence." This favor of being "endued with power from on high" prepared their hearts and minds, as the Lord said, "to be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." This commission they gladly accepted, as forerunners and representatives of the Lord's people covering the whole of the Gospel Age, esteeming it a great privilege to be thus entrusted with the glad tidings of the kingdom to be proclaimed to all who had ears to hear, as well as by their writings to instruct and encourage "as many as the Lord our God shall call." The manner in which our Lord ascended was also taken as a helpful guide in understanding the manner of His second presence. He was observed ascending only by His disciples, and so His quiet, second presence, as a thief, is known only by His disciples today, the same class who saw and knew of His ascension.

The passage in 1 Thes. 5:1-8 was seen as an important exhortation to us today, inasmuch as its fulfilment is taking place in the days in which we now live. The similarity of Paul's description of "the day of the Lord coming as a thief in the night" and Peter's words that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise . . . the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up," (2 Pet. 3:10), was seen to be most significant. The "sudden" destruction of verse 3 was seen to be more correctly translated "unexpected" destruction. This implies that the passing

of the present order will come as “a snare” upon the majority of mankind during this “day of the Lord”—at the end of the age now upon us. “But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief” together with verses 5-8 were taken as being a most necessary encouragement and exhortation to all the Lord’s people to be alert to the privileges of discipleship, that they be not overtaken by any of the world’s intoxications which cause the majority to slumber and sleep, even in these momentous days of the passing of the present order of things. Verse 8 was seen as being particularly important—”But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.” The breastplate covering the heart, and the helmet covering the head, the mind, were indicative of that which is essential in the Christian’s life,—”Keep thine heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.” (Prov. 4:23.)

From Phil. 3:7-14 we gained valuable information respecting the sacrificial life of the Apostle Paul, who so gladly counted so many things that were “gain” in his former life as “loss” now that his life was hid with Christ in God.

So fully devoted was his life to the service of Christ that he esteemed it a privilege “to suffer the loss of all things” that would in any sense come into competition with his sacrifice “to win Christ and be found in him.” It was seen that the Apostle’s desire was “to know Christ” in the most intimate and complete sense—to feel the “power of his resurrection,” to endure “the fellowship of his sufferings,” to be “planted together in the likeness of his death,” the great end in view being—”If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead”—the first, or chief resurrection with Christ. While he felt he had not at that stage attained his objective, yet “I follow after, that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus” was his supreme ambition. To this end, verses 13 and 14 were seen as expressing so beautifully his completely yielded life, as an example for us—”This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” We thank God for such a testimony from His devoted servant; may our readers accept it as an inspiration in their own lives for Christ.

The variety of subjects chosen by the brethren for their addresses proved very helpful, their topics being— ’Conflict’; “The New Covenant”; “The Great Iron Rule”; “As a Snare Shall it Come”; “Not Ignorant of His Devices”; “The Intents of the Heart”; “Election”; “Obedience”; “Ye See Your Calling, Brethren”; “The Gifts of Our Heavenly Father”; “Divine Intervention; the Kingdom Restored”; “For I Know Whom I Have Believed”; “The Temples of the Living God”; “Necessity of Faith”; “Thoughts on the Question of Rewards”; “Speaking Sound Doctrine”; “The Blessed Servants”; and “Some Thoughts on Romans 1:17.” Some of these addresses will appear in the “Peoples Paper” and brief notes on each will be found in the Convention Notes also available at this time.

Messages of greetings with Christian love were received at the first Fellowship Meeting from various Classes and individual brethren, some being brought personally, and others through the mail; two from overseas came from Brother and Sister Pollock of U.S.A., and Brother and Sister Mann of Germany. All these messages were warmly appreciated, and the Convention message to all our brethren near and far is contained in the words of Phil. 3:7-11, with the warm Christian love from all assembled at the gatherings. At two of the Fellowship Meetings there was opportunity of Praise and Testimony when a number of the brethren expressed their gratitude for all the Lord’s love and care over them, and the privilege of participating in the spiritual blessings around the Lord’s table at the Convention. As usual the Hymn Session was enjoyed by all present; despite the oppressive weather the time was fully taken up zealously with hymns of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord. On the evening of the third day of Convention, the screening of the “Dawn” TV film, “The King of Kings” was appreciated by all in attendance. While this film had been seen previously, the message it contains is ever fresh in our hearts and minds,—the explanation of the Plan of the Ages never grows old with the Lord’s people. It was also a pleasure to have

a number of our Polish brethren with us throughout the gatherings, while they are not able to follow our language very well, it was good to fellowship with them, and to know they rejoice in the same truths, being directed by the same spirit of the Lord.

The Convention was brought to conclusion with the Love Feast when each one present shook hands with all others in farewell and wishing each other God's blessing, while singing the beautiful words of "Blest be the tie that binds." "God be with you till we meet again" was the closing hymn, and the prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord with request for His guidance and blessing over His people in every place closed a happy season of refreshing at the Melbourne Convention 1966.

Behold—The Bridegroom

The Purpose and Manner of Our Lord's Return

All who studiously read their Bibles know that the second coming of Christ is important in the establishment of the promised Kingdom of God upon earth it is clear that two advents are referred to—the first advent of Christ was for the purpose of giving His life a ransom for all, to redeem mankind; the second is in order to bless and restore all the redeemed, to bring in the "times of restitution." (Acts 3:21.)

Every true Christian today is interested in the Lord's second coming, but too few are instructed how to expect Him. The Bible does not bear out the old expectations that Christ will suddenly appear in the literal clouds of heaven, in a moment as a flash of lightning, and that all will see Him thus arrive. There is no Scripture declaring that Jesus will ever again be seen in a body of flesh.

At Jesus' first advent the religious element queried John the Baptist's authority to preach as he did—that the kingdom was at hand. John, disclaiming any self-importance, declared that "there standeth one among you, whom ye know not." (John 1:26.) Strange as it may seem, the religious element never recognised Jesus at His first advent; only those who became His true and close personal disciples were apprised that He was the One, the promised Messiah. (See Matt. 16:13-16.)

So well concealed was the first advent from all eyes save the faithful few; and so intense had been the searching and watching necessary to discern that He was indeed the Christ, the Son of God come to earth as a perfect man, that the disciples hearing Jesus teach that He was going to leave them, and return again, were anxious that they should not miss out recognising Him at His second advent. "Tell us, what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?" (Matt. 24:3.) Any student can confirm that the correct translation of this passage is,—"Tell us, what shall be the sign of thy presence, and of the end of the age?"

There are no Scriptures, properly understood, declaring that anyone will know the actual moment when the Lord returns, but several showing that His watching people will know WHEN He has arrived. No literal human eye will see the Lord's second advent, but a few (all true Christians) will discern when He has come—signs will declare it to them. These signs are with us today, but discerned only by those who "watch." The majority of professing Christians "slumber and sleep" with no oil (holy spirit)—Matt. 25:3-5; and when the announcement is made "Behold, the Bridegroom!" they are not ready to welcome Him. The Revised Version and other translations point out that the word "cometh" has no rightful place in the above text in Matthew. The announcement is not made when the Lord is coming or on the way; it proclaims His "presence"—the Bridegroom has come for His bride.

Revelation 3:20 is portion of a message to the Laodicean church, the last period of the church on earth

prior to the establishment of Christ's Kingdom. *The* one represented as standing at the door knocking is the returned Lord with the "knock" of fulfilling prophecies—signs that tell of His presence. The ones who hear His voice and open the door are the true watchers, the bride class, with oil in their lamps—wonderful truths relative to our time does the Lord reveal to these as they "trim their lamps"; that is, as they examine the Scriptures and investigate the subject. To all others the Lord stands as "one among you whom ye know not."

No other understanding of our Lord's return fits all the Scriptures harmoniously. If every eye were to see Him come like lightning on the literal clouds, then how can 1 Thessalonians 5:2 be explained—a thief does not expose himself for all to see. Verses 4-6 of this same passage show that our Lord's second presence is discerned by "signs" understood by those who are spiritually alert or awake.

Two other Scriptures require brief mention. Any student with Bible Concordance can verify that the Greek word rendered "lightning" in Matt. 24:27, is more properly translated "bright shining." The only "bright shining" which consistently comes out of the east and shines to the west, is the sun. The discernment of the presence of the Son of Man will be after like manner. Only the awake watchers will discern His secret presence at the "sunrise"; but eventually it will be true as Revelation 1:7 expresses it, "every eye shall discern him" (scholars suggest that "discern" is the sense of "see" in this text).

No student believer in the Bible would disagree that Satan is the prince of this present evil world, but no human literal eye has seen him on his throne; rather, events reveal him to our mental vision; we "discern" his rulership. When Christ's kingdom is established and fully under way, Satan is to be bound that he deceives mankind no longer; then it will be that Christ will shine forth as the sun (at its zenith)—every eye will discern him, "all shall know him from the least unto the greatest" (Jer. 31:34).

But ere that happy phase of Christ's second advent is fact, His secret presence as a thief in the night foreshadows some trouble—He comes on trouble "clouds." When, as Daniel 12:1 shows, Michael (Christ) stands up to assume control and wrest Satan's kingdom from him, all Satan's deceived agents will oppose—there will be a time of trouble such as never was; men's hearts will fail them for, fear as they note events upon the earth.

But ye brethren (true Bible Christians) are not in darkness that these times should overtake you as a thief." When ye see these things come to pass know that the kingdom of God is near at hand, and beyond the trouble all things are going to be made new (Rev. 21:1-5). Even those in their graves shall hear the voice of Jesus awake them from the sleep of death, offering them opportunity to participate in the New Order—a resurrection to the wonderful judgment day of Christ. (John 5:25-29.)

“You See Your Calling, Brethren”

(1 Cor. 1:26.)

FROM the Revised Standard Version, 1 Cor. 1:26:29 reads,—“For consider your call, brethren, not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth; but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.” For **consider your call**, brethren.

The Revised Version states, “**Ye behold your calling**, brethren.” It is evident that the Apostle is seeking to impress upon all who are invited to walk in the heavenly calling of this Gospel Age that it is not on account of their natural ability that they have received the call. This is very necessary, that all the Lord’s people continually keep in mind, as they progress along the Christian way. And further, in “considering” or “beholding” the call of God to become His selected people for the heavenly kingdom, it is important to remember the **privilege** of being invited to such an high honour.

What a condescension is revealed in God calling from the poor human family those who shall be made heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ in the heavenly kingdom! No wonder the Apostle John declares in 1 John 3:1, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” “Behold, what **manner of love**” that God should pass over all the heavenly hosts, and even all the wonderful “worthies” of the four thousand years prior to the Gospel Age! The Apostle speaks in Hebrews 2:3 of “So great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.” From the creation of Adam to the first advent of Christ, not one member of the human family was invited to enter the heavenly calling. Many righteous men would have desired to hear these things that you hear; our- Lord said to His disciples, yet they could not, but, “Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear..”

The two thousand- years :since our Lord’s first advent-has been- set aside- for: the, selection of those whom God sees can be -rightly called to. Jesus, and by the response in their hearts are able to be developed as vessels of honour, out of such poor material at the beginning.

So, “beholding our calling,”—“considering our calling”—how important are the words of Heb. 3:1,—“Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.” Consider your calling, consider the High Priest of our profession. We have two important points—Consider your call, and consider Jesus Christ. What shall we consider especially about the Apostle and High Priest of our profession? The Apostle Paul tells us in Heb. 12:3,—“Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.” We well know the Lord’s endurance of the contradiction of sinners against Himself, the holy, harmless, undefiled One, as He was so brutally dealt with by those He came to save. They mocked Him and taunted Him on the cross—“If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.” The Apostle, then, is impressing upon us the importance of beholding, considering, our Lord’s wonderful conduct in our calling for the heavenly kingdom, “lest ye be weary and faint in your minds.” It is one thing to become weary in our bodies, but quite a different thing to become wearied in our minds. Our bodies can be refreshed with rest, but our minds only by letting the spirit of the Lord reinvigorate and refresh us, even from the Lord Himself. We have known people who have even become weary of the lovely truths of God’s Word for one reason or another.

From Mark 4, please read verses 14-20, the parable of the sower. Verse 15,—“These are they by the way side,” who, when they heard the word allowed Satan to come and take it away. Comparing 2 Cor. 4:3, 4,

we read,—”If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not.” Yes, they are lost to the High Calling, but only to this calling for the heavenly kingdom. Satan takes away the Word (the seed by the way side) before it has had an opportunity to take root.

Verses 16, 17 in Mark 4 have reference to the “stony ground.” These receive the Word with gladness for a start, but have no root in themselves. When affliction and persecution arise because of the Word, they are offended. Comparing 2 Tim. 1:8, we read,—”Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.” What a lovely example we have in the Apostle Paul,—”Be not ashamed of me, a prisoner of the Lord.” Be a partaker of the afflictions, because as we have it in verse 7, God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Verses 18, 19 in Mark 4 refer to the “thorny ground.” These are such as hear the Word, but the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches come in and choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful. Even the cares of this world, its responsibilities, can come in and choke out the Word, because they supplant the message which alone brings deliverance from this present evil world. In 1 John 2:15-17, it states,—”Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. . . . And the world passeth away; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” We are reminded also of Peter’s words, “All these things shall be dissolved,” and “what manner of persons ought we to be.” (2 Pet. 3:11.)

In verse 20 of Mark 4 we have those sown on the “good ground,” who receive the Word and bring forth fruit, some thirty, some sixty, some an hundredfold. Comparing Luke 22:28-30, we have the words of our Lord to His own disciples,—”Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.” A corresponding text for those on the good ground is found in Luke 8:15,—”But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.” “In your patience possess ye your souls.” “They that endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”

Could we have as a Motto for 1967,—”Ye see your calling, brethren.” “Behold, your calling.” “Consider your calling, brethren,” above all else in the coming year, to the praise of the Lord.

Do You Know ?

DO YOU KNOW that the Lord more than two thousand years ago gave through the Prophet Daniel, a clear description of the time in which we are now living?

DO YOU KNOW that the Bible, in referring to this present time as “the time of the end,” does not signify the destruction of the earth, but the end of the present dispensation, after which a new age will be introduced? “The earth abideth forever,”—Eccles. 1:4.

DO YOU KNOW or have you specially noticed, the several propositions in Daniel’s prophecy concerning “the time of the end”? They read thus: In the time of the end (1) many shall run to and fro; (2) and knowledge shall be increased; (3) and the wise (virgins) shall understand.—Daniel 12:9, 4, 10, 1.

DO YOU KNOW that Christ will introduce a better, a perfect, social arrangement during the Millennium; and that He taught us to expect, watch for, and pray for that Kingdom; saying, “Pray ye, —Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven”? If you have sincerely joined in that prayer, you will rejoice in the evidence that its fulfilment is at hand.

DO YOU KNOW that the driving of the Jews out of all nations and the resettlement of many of them in Israel, is another sign of the close of the Gospel Age and the near approach of the Millennium?—Jer. 16:15; Rom. 11:25-32.

DO YOU KNOW that the Millennial Age is for the very purpose of causing the knowledge of the Lord to fill the whole earth as the waters cover the sea, and to open the eyes of men’s understanding and to unstop their ears that they may hear God’s message of mercy, and see “the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world?”— Is. 11:9; 35:5; John 1:9.

If you are interested in any of the above questions, apply for Literature which is supplied Free on application to:—

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“A friend loveth at all times.” (Prov. 17:17.)

Well has the wise man said that a friend loveth at all times. He who merely loves at a time when he thinks it will be to his own advantage to love knows not love. He who loves and is a brother in prosperity merely, and whose love and friendship wither under the heat of persecution, and adversity, has never known love in its true sense, but merely a certain brand of selfishness—the love of the world. As God commended His love toward us and showed us that not through selfishness, but generosity, at a great cost to Himself, He provided us release from our prison, and gave us privileges of sonship, so true love will be willing to sacrifice. Let us judge, then, of our love for others, for the Lord, for the brethren, for our families, for our neighbors, for our enemies, even, by our willingness to sacrifice in their interest and for their highest welfare.—Z ‘08-249.

BIBLE STUDENTS MANUAL

Copies of these Manuals, otherwise known as Berean Comments, have been published recently by brethren in Chicago, and are now in stock for the benefit of our friends. With nice appearance, bound in strong cloth, with gold lettering, the price is \$4.00, plus 15 cents postage.

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Supplies of the Bible Students' Hymnal in words only and music books are now available. Both books are cloth bound, with nice appearance, and contain 489 hymns. Words only books are priced at 50c, and the music books at \$2.50.

A very good Oxford Bible, with References, India paper, thumb index, Brevier clear type, Persian Morocco binding, is now available at \$9.50. Same Bible with Concordance and Subject Index at \$10.50.

Pilgrim Way Ended

SISTER Will Hiam completed her earthly course on the 18th November 1966. Some thirty years previously, on coming to Melbourne from Geelong, she became interested in the truth through the study of the Scriptures as explained in "The Divine Plan of the Ages" introduced by a Sister with whom she worked. Attending the Bible Studies at the Melbourne Class for some years, it was here that our dear Sister consecrated her life to be "dead with Christ" that she would eventually live with Him. **(Rom. 6:8.)** A firm foundation on the "rock" Christ Jesus was thus established. From then **on she** served the Lord wholeheartedly in complete consecration, and rejoiced in her prospects and also for the eventual prospects of the ungodly who will have their opportunity in the great one thousand-year judgment day. (Acts 3:20, 21; 1 Pet. 2:12; Rev. 20:4.)

In 1942 Sister Hiam, as Sister Kenneady, came across to West Australia to be married to Brother Will Hiam. From then on they became "heirs together of the grace of life" (1 Pet. 3:7). Sister Hiam's fellowship continued with the Perth Class, and she was a good help in Bible Studies, being familiar with the Word of God, and manifesting a meek and helpful attitude.

While not blessed with robust health, our dear Sister put all she had into the Truth and the caring for her family, doing all commendably to the glory of God. Besides being a faithful wife and mother, she was active in letting her "light" shine in this dark world, and rejoiced in the fact that she had been called to be a joint-heir with Christ in His Kingdom, the blessings of which are soon to be manifested on earth.

While our dear Sister Hiam's departure is a great loss to the ones she has left behind, there is that quiet trust and confidence in God maintained, even through the sorrow. We now like to look upon her as a "more than overcomer," risen with her Lord in glory.

The sympathies of the many brethren throughout Australia are extended to Brother Will Hiam and family, and their prayers and thoughts go out for them, and to them, realising, however, that there are compensating joys in the knowledge that their beloved one has been "faithful unto death" and is now sharing the rewards promised of "glory, honor and immortality, eternal life." (Rom. 2:7.)

In abiding in Him you serve, it is better to be conscious of Himself than conscious of any success.

Anna Shipton.

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