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The Value of Present Truth.

Rev. 3:11 (Convention Address).

IT would seem that the words of this text have a very special meaning to the Lord's people of to-day. In the Christian world at the present time there is the tendency to lower the standard of truth. The Laodicean spirit is a compromising, luke-warm condition. It is this spirit—neither hot nor cold—which says, "Do not let us trouble very much about what we believe, only let us join together in one great confederacy." This spirit has wrought havoc in the churches, so that they have become altogether worldly and indifferent to the true spirit of the truth and consecration, as set before 'us by the Lord and His Apostles.

Writing to Timothy, the Apostle Paul said (2 Tim. 4:3), "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears." "And they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables." While recognising that there has indeed been a great falling away from the pure teachings of God's Word, we will do well to remember that the Adversary, who has already succeeded in blinding so many, will also seek by one means or another to "quench the spirit" among those who have become awake to "present truth." By "present truth" we mean those things which have been revealed by the opening up of the Scriptures "as meat in due season," or truths specially applicable to our day. No doubt it is those matters pertaining to our Lord's Second Presence, the Harvest work, the closing down of the present age, and the preparation of ourselves for the work of the coming Kingdom, that we are exhorted to "hold fast that no man may take thy crown."

The questions arise as to what does a true Christian really need to believe? What are the essentials of our faith?

What is it that we must "hold fast"? Does it mean only that we preserve a clear knowledge of the truth, or does it not imply "walking in the steps of Christ—walking in the light"?

What, then, constitutes a Christian? The Scriptures show how in due time "God will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth," and how under the New Covenant and its great Mediator all the willing and obedient will be assisted to work out their justification to life by works of obedience and righteousness. The New Testament also clearly shows that the Divine purpose for this Gospel Age is to select a spiritual class to be joint-heirs with Christ, to reign with Him in the coming Kingdom Age, when the wider opportunity will come to all mankind. That will be when the Church or Bride of Christ will be complete, and "the Spirit and the Bride will say come, and whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely."

This class of "Priests and Kings"—the Church—is dealt with quite differently in its selection, from that of the rest of mankind in the next age. The Millennial Age will be an age of works, justification by works. The Gospel Age is an age of faith, justification by faith, and that faith the Apostle tells us in Eph. 2:8, is "the gift of God." Our Lord declared, "No man cometh unto Me except it be given him of My Father." "No man cometh unto the Son except the Father draw him."

These Scriptures show that the first essential is that we be invited. How are we invited or drawn? It is through the Word, as the Lord intimated in His prayer, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word." (John 17:20.) So it is God who invites those who may be joint-heirs with His Son, by bringing His Word to their attention, and by His holy Spirit He grants the faculty of faith. There is the conviction of sin, and the longing to be at peace with God and to be righteous. Then, in true penitence, faith in Calvary's atoning sacrifice lifts the load of sin and we find peace and rest. What a great favour this is, first to be called of God, and then, instead of

being slowly justified by works under the New Covenant of the next age, to be at once “justified by faith and at peace with God.” This particular arrangement of grace is in order that we may be able, through the merit of our Redeemer, “to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.” This is the second step after being justified by faith through our Lord Jesus Christ; “By whom also we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and now rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.” (Rom. 5:1, 2.)

Following this step of consecration, we receive the begetting of the holy spirit—the spirit of adoption—and God calls us His sons. This holy spirit begets in us a new mind, a new heart, a new creature, so that though the human being is laid upon the altar of sacrifice to be done to death, for, “as many as have been baptised into Christ have been baptised into His death” (Rom. 6:3); yet a new life is begun, a spiritual life, and as new creatures we have become Christians in the full sense

As Christians, then, we have first the favour of having been called of God. Then we have the gift of faith; after that, justification through the exercise of that faith; then the holy spirit of adoption through the further step of faith—i.e., consecration. Following our consecration we receive the wonderful hope of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Having received these favours, are there no other essentials for the Christian? We reply that the new creature, like the old creature, needs nourishing. If we fail to feed upon the Lord’s Word, if we fail to drink of that water of life which is provided for us, we shall fail to develop, and would probably soon lose our faith and hope. We must go on from these first principles and learn to appreciate the deep things of the Word. We remember how the Apostle Paul felt that it was useless to try and explain the deeper things to the Hebrews because they had not exercised their minds along the lines of truth. They had stunted their growth and so were, still babes, feeding on milk, when they ought to have, been able to teach others.

How essential it is that we hold fast the present truth as it is revealed from God’s Word. The Word of God is the instrument not only for calling the saints, but also for supplying grace and strength and enabling them to meet the difficulties of the way. It unfolds its precious truths as “meat in due season” to supply the needs of the Christian in his own day. It is, then, very essential that we understand the present truth as it opens up, in order that our “shield” may be bright and strong, our “helmet” of hope firmly fixed, the “breastplate” of righteousness properly adjusted, that our feet be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, our loins be girt about with truth and that we may be able to wield the sword of the spirit, and be overcomers in the “good fight of faith.”

How important is the correct knowledge and application of the truth. The truth alone can sanctify and give us strength to run our course. Just as truth helps, so error hinders.

The question arises as to how far Christians may differ from one another in respect of the truth without interfering with our fellowship? The fact that we do at times differ on what may be called non-essentials, provides opportunities for the exercise of brotherly kindness in respecting the opinions of others though not endorsing them.

It would seem to be a different matter when we come to deal with the clear lines of faith and hope, or truths which are divinely revealed for the purpose of accomplishing some particular feature of work in connection with God’s great plan. It would be presumptuous to say that such truths are of so little importance that it does not matter whether or not we believe them. We would also find it impossible to enjoy the same helpful fellowship with those who denied or belittled these things, as we could with those who appreciated them, and who were seeking to faithfully sound forth the message and conform their lives to it.

It is quite understandable that those who do not know present truth, who do not recognise that we are living in “the days of the Son of Man,” and the harvest-time of the age, etc., should think such things are non-essentials. They cannot see the present truth to be essential if they do not recognise that the harvest work is in progress and that the separating of the “wheat” from the “tares” is taking place. They cannot value the truths now revealed as we do, who realise the presence of the Lord as “Reaper,” and that He is now reckoning with His people, respecting the use of their talents and their structure building of character — we who realise that the present truth is indeed the feast which He promised to the faithful watchers in Luke 12:37, and Rev. 3:20. What may seem non-essential to some, may be very essential to others, for it is the “present truth” which is doing the harvest work. On the one hand it sanctifies and prepares the Bride class for the great consummation of her hopes, and on the other it separates those who from some cause or other seem unable to understand it.

The “present truth,” or “meat in due season,” or the unfoldings of truths respecting the Divine Plan, the second presence of Christ, the harvest, the gathering of the saints and the consummation of the Age, etc., appear to be essential to those to whom they have been revealed if they would make their calling and election sure. Those who lightly esteem such things will surely fail in the use of their talents.

Similar conditions existed at the time of our Lord's first advent. The truth then due was sent forth; many were inclined to say such matters were all right and might be true, but they should not be carried too far; they were not essential, they could still hold on to the Law ceremonies and synagogue gatherings. The "present truth" at that time was, however, essential to such as the Lord was calling, and it did its work of separating the "wheat" from the "chaff."

Dear friends, let us not undervalue the things which God has revealed to us. Let us fully appreciate our privileges. God has opened our eyes to see the wideness of His purposes and shown us that we are at the end of the Age and living in "the days of the Son of Man," and that, "as in the days of Noah" preceding the deluge, so now a great calamity is pending, which will end this dispensation, after which the new Age will commence when Christ shall be King over all the earth.

These things we are exhorted to "hold fast" in the message to the Philadelphian Church (Rev. 3:10, 11), "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold I come quickly, hold fast that which thou hast that no man take thy crown."

We are living in a day of such a variety of confused teachings. We are forewarned of the many deceptions that were to come, so that even if it were possible the very elect would be deceived. The Apostle Peter says that there would be false teachers and that many would follow their pernicious ways, by reason of which the way of truth would be evil spoken of. Paul admonishes, "Be not carried about by strange doctrines for it is good that the heart be established with grace." The Church is called "the pillar and ground of the truth." It is her responsibility to preserve the truth in its purity, to guard it and to let it shine. Our Lord declared, "To this end came I into the world that I should bear witness to the truth," and it is for those who will follow Him, to do His work, and to be among those who are "beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God."

Many are the injunctions of the Apostles respecting this matter of "holding fast the form of sound words," and the truths, which God has revealed in His Word. See 2 Tim. 1:13; 3:13, 14; 4:3, 4; Tit. 1:9; 2 John 7-11; 1 Tim. 1:3-6; 4:16; 6:20, 21.

While seeing the necessity for holding fast to sound doctrine, we realise that that is not all we must "hold fast."

There is the possibility of holding fast the form of sound words, of having a correct understanding of the main features of the truth, even of being "virgins," and of understanding "present truth," to the extent of expecting the Lord soon to take His people home, and yet to fail to be prepared and so fail to enter the marriage chamber.

A clear head is a good thing to have, but if the knowledge does not go down to the understanding heart, it fails in its intended purpose of sanctification, and we shall prove to be but sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. The trials of our day will not only try the doctrines, but will test our faith, our hope, our love and our loyalty to God, and to one another as members in Christ.

Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid in Christ Jesus. There is no standing before God apart from His Son, our Saviour, but having this foundation we must build thereon. What must we build?

We must build our doctrine and see that all our teachings are in line with the foundation; we must also build character. We must hold fast our foundation; we must hold fast our faith in the great Ransom for all. We must hold fast our consecration, our love to God in operation; we must bind the sacrifice with cords to the altar. We must "hold fast the confidence of our hope firm to the end." We must keep on the whole armour of God and continue the good fight of faith. We must preserve our zeal for the Lord's cause.

There is much in these days that might discourage us. Some have trials and testings in one way, some in another. Sometimes the failure of brethren whom we had highly esteemed in the Lord is apt to discourage us. Sometimes in contact with the world we meet plausible arguments against the truth by unbelievers or scientists, and if we trusted to our own wisdom and strength to save us, we might fail, but let us hold fast the Word of God. There may be some things that we do not fully understand, but we do understand enough of God's wisdom, justice, love and power which we have exemplified in His dealings with Israel and explained in His Word and experienced in our own lives, so that we can reasonably trust where we cannot quite understand. Even our Lord Jesus was -tested in this way. He could not understand why the light of the Father's countenance should be withdrawn just at the moment when, more than any other, He needed the assurance of His favour and presence. We must nerve ourselves and seek to grow in grace that we too may reach that condition of heart that can say, "Yea, though He slay me yet will I trust Him."

Conditions in our home circles are sometimes such as would crush our religious life and quench the spirit. It puts us on our metal to so conduct ourselves as to bring honour to the cause we love, and preserve our faith, hope and spiritual life. We have, no doubt, been in many very trying circumstances, and have failed under the trial, at least to some extent, yet we may depend upon it that there are no circumstances into which we may come, but that we may by God's grace conduct ourselves to His glory, and come out the better for the experience. "No trial shall overtake you, but such as ye are able to bear," and God, who permits the trial, is faithful to provide a way of escape from anything too hard.

Probably all can look back upon trials and temptations and trace the kind hand that has overruled for our protection, guidance and provision, and thus tracing the way God has led us, shall we not hold fast the confidence of our faith firm to the end.

Sometimes there arise conditions in our circles of Christian fellowship which try us. We may be much misunderstood, or perhaps we misunderstand others, and so difficulties arise, and sometimes anything but the spirit of love and of a sound mind seems to prevail. Then things are said and done, which cause so much pain and heartaches, and the bond of Christian love is greatly strained. Nearly all these things come through misunderstandings, lack of patience, lack of waiting upon the Lord for grace to act, and speak aright, and to enquire of His Word for instruction. What a lot of sorrow has thus been caused, and sometimes a root of bitterness has been permitted to grow, and many have been defiled. Have we injured one of the Lord's children by a harsh or hasty word or act? Has it not been because we failed to hold fast our faith in God, in His Word, and our love to Him and His.

Let us hold fast our love to the Lord. If we love God we will also love those begotten of Him, and it will be painful indeed to us to even think evil of a fellow member. We would shun listening to reproaches against brethren, we would be loyal to God and defend His children, and all members in the Body of Christ would be loyal to one another.

That loyalty, however, will be secondary to our loyalty to God and His Word and the doctrine we have proved to be true. It may be necessary for us to withdraw even from those we love in Christ, if they teach things which we believe to be contrary to the truths with which we have been entrusted by God's grace to preserve and proclaim.

While we may find that separations are sometimes unavoidable, there is never any occasion to be unkind. We may have to speak plainly against wrong teachings or practices, but we are not to condemn nor cease to love those who think differently. As long as they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of mankind by His own blood, and

profess consecration to God, we may still think of them as brethren, though they may be erring brethren.

Let us hold fast our faith, our hope, our love, our doctrine, which includes "present truth." "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of knowing of whom thou hast learned them." How important it is that we hold fast that which we have proved to be an unfolding of God's Word—"Meat in due season." If we begin to let slip this or that truth, other truths will likely soon be lost and "if the light that is in thee become darkness how great is that darkness." "Hold fast that which thou hast that no man take thy crown."

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Christ's Resurrection.

FOR forty days after His resurrection our Lord was with His disciples before His ascension. Yet He revealed Himself to them, according to the Records, not more than eleven times in all—and some of these instances are probably duplications. His interviews with the disciples lasted only a few minutes each, except on the walk to Emmaus. These manifestations were attended by circumstances and conditions which spoke of a great change which had occurred to Him. Evidently He was no longer the same being, although He had the same loving interest in them as before. He was still their Lord and Master, the same Jesus, though no longer Jesus in the flesh. He was now “the Lord, that Spirit,” “a quickening Spirit.”

There is no Scriptural statement to the effect that Jesus arose in the flesh. We have noted the Scriptures very carefully, and find none of them to say that Jesus arose in the flesh. On the contrary, we find, as the Apostle declares, “Now the Lord is that Spirit.” (2 Cor. 3:17). St. Paul in telling us how he saw the Lord Jesus, says that he saw the Lord, not in the flesh, but shining “above the brightness of the sun” “at noon-day.” (Acts 26:13-15).

The Apostle tells us that the Church is to be spiritual: “It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.” (1 Cor. 15:42-44.) He tells us that our experiences in the resurrection must be similar to those of our Lord. In our Lord's case there was a sowing in dishonour and raising in glory; a sowing an animal body and a raising a spirit body. St. Peter calls attention to this fact when he says, “Christ . . . being put to death indeed in flesh, but made alive in spirit.” (1 Pet. 3:18). Rotherham.

The question then arises, “How could the Lord be raised a spirit body?” We can merely give you the Word of the Lord for it. He was raised so. The new life began when our Lord was begotten of the holy spirit at the time of His baptism, and was completed when He was perfected as a spirit being at His Resurrection.

The various Scriptures which are cited about Jesus' appearance in bodies of flesh do not prove that Jesus had a body of flesh; for angels have appeared among mankind in fleshly bodies. And when Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared, or materialised in the same way that He had appeared to Abraham in olden times. (Gen. 18:1, 2; 15:4, 5). One of His manifestations after His resurrection was when He took a walk with two of His disciples to Emmaus and sat down with them to supper. When He broke bread, He became known to them and vanished out of their sight! (Luke 24:30, 31).

A Materialised Body.

In the case when He appeared to His disciples, it is stated that He came into the room where they were, “when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews.” We read further along, that eight days later He again appeared in the same room, in the same manner, “the doors being shut.” (John 20:19, 26). These things were evidently to show the disciples that He was no longer a flesh being, but a spirit being. During the forty days after His resurrection He appeared, probably, not more than three hours in all. He remained with them to establish their faith, so that they might be able to receive the holy Spirit at the proper time.

In answer to a question about Philip's vanishing from the sight of the eunuch, and being found at Azotus, we reply that God was able to take him away. But there was nothing said about his being made a spirit being. Philip will, no doubt, in due time share with the Lord the change of nature in the First Resurrection—“in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye;” for “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.” (1 Cor. 15:52, 50).

When Jesus appeared in Jerusalem in the midst of His disciples and they were affrighted, He said, “Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have.” (Luke 24:39). He was there impressing upon them that they were not SEEING a spirit being, a spirit body. They saw a materialised body. The Lord was a Spirit all the time, however, and the flesh and bones were merely agents of appearance. So our Lord appeared in flesh and bones, and He also appeared in clothing.

Body and Clothing Created for the Occasion.

Where did the flesh and bones come from? The same place that the clothing came from. The human body of flesh and bones, etc., and its clothing, which appeared suddenly while the doors were shut, did not go out of the door, but simply disappeared, or dissolved, into the same elements from which He had created them a few moments before. “He vanished (Greek, ginomai aphantos, became non-manifest, i.e., invisible. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance.) out of their sight” (Luke 24:31), and was no longer seen of them when the flesh and bones and clothing in which He had manifested Himself were dissolved, though doubtless He was still with them—invisibly present; so also much of the

time during those forty days.

The power manifested by our Lord to create and dissolve the clothing in which He appeared, was just as superhuman as the creating and dissolving of His assumed human body; and the body was no more His glorious spirit body than were the clothes He wore. It will be remembered that the seamless robe and other clothing which our Redeemer wore before His crucifixion had been divided among the Roman soldiers, and that the grave clothes were left folded away in the sepulchre (John 19:23, 24, 40; 20:5-7), so that the clothing in which He appeared on the different occasions mentioned must have been specially created.

Our thought is that our Lord was perfect in the flesh when He was a man, and that He gave Himself an offering, as a Ransom-price for Adam. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." (Heb. 2:9). That earthly, human body of flesh suffered death; and God would not again make Him flesh, but He raised our Lord from the dead a New Creature of the Divine nature. After His resurrection our Lord said to His Apostles, "All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28:18).

All this indicates to us the great change that came to our Lord at the time of His resurrection. If He is now merely a man, He is still "lower than the angels." And to think of our Lord as a man and lower than the angels is contrary to the Lord's Word that He is exalted far above angels to the Divine nature. "And being found in fashion as a man,

He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2:8-11).

The Gospel of Hope.

Ye Have Need of Hope.

THE Apostle wrote, "Ye have need of patience." We are not contradicting his statement when we add that also, "Ye have need of hope." Without hope, patience would soon fritter away; and no length or breadth or depth of character could be expected. The very word Gospel is full of hope; for it means "Good Tidings." Whoever, therefore, would preach the Gospel should be sure that his message is one of Good Tidings, one of Hope. True, it may be necessary and appropriate at times to say something respecting the time of trouble that we see near. Yet even that subject is to be approached from the standpoint of Good Tidings. To tell about the time of trouble merely to alarm people, would not be to use it as a part of the Good Tidings. If necessary to refer to the time of trouble, we should mention it merely as that dark cloud which for a little season will obscure the dawn of the rapidly or coming Day of Christ—the Day of blessing and joy—the world's jubilee—the time of rolling away the curse and substituting God's blessing.

"The Whole Creation Groaneth."

The majority of the world and also of the Lord's consecrated people have plenty of trouble in the present time without being terrorised needlessly in respect of the great day of trouble. Let us remember that, additionally, the world has a latent fear respecting the future. They have been told by distinguished religious teachers and by musty creeds that nearly everybody was damned in advance to spend an eternity of torture. And although this is no longer outwardly preached to intelligent people, and no longer would be believed, nevertheless insinuations are often thrown out; and a secret fear lurks in the mind lest there should really be something terrible awaiting the masses after death—a Catholic Purgatory of awful severity, if not the endless torture of Protestantism. Much of the present day tendency toward intoxication with pleasures and travels, as well as with alcoholic intoxicants, is the result of an attempt to get away from fearful forebodings—to substitute more pleasant and happifying thoughts.

What the world specially needs is what the Bible alone can give. Bible students alone are qualified to introduce others to this comfort of the Scriptures. More and more, therefore, it should be our aim to bind up the brokenhearted and to say to the weary and heavy-laden, "Come to Christ, and find relief and rest. Come now, and see who is the great Burden-bearer for all who become His followers. Then look beyond the present and see how, in harmony with the Father's gracious arrangement, He will eventually scatter the blessings of Restitution far and wide. Behold the Love of God, which constraineth us! Cast away your fear of Him! Draw nigh unto Him through Christ, and He will draw nigh unto you."

As there may be proper times for telling something about the time of trouble coming, which will inaugurate Messiah's glorious reign, so there may be proper times for telling the wayward that those who sin shall suffer; that walking in the ways of sin they are walking away from God; that the end of that way is death; and that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." But these features of the Divine Word are not so necessary to be repeated every day; for mankind instinctively know that sin leads to suffering of some kind, and that righteousness sooner or later brings its reward.

What the world needs most is encouragement to turn away from sin, to realise the sympathy of God for the rebellious family of Adam, and to know of the arrangement which God has made whereby He will have mercy upon all, through Christ. We need to follow the Master's course when He declared, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear." We need to tell those who see and hear what a blessing they enjoy.

It is necessary at times to point to the narrow way of self-sacrifice, self-denial, suffering, which the followers of Jesus must take if they would share with Him in His Kingdom glories, honors and immortality. But they "will find the narrowness" of the way, even if we should not tell them. No one can walk in the narrow way, no one can follow Jesus, without knowing the truth of the statement, "Through much tribulation shall ye enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

What then shall we tell the people? Oh, give them also the .Message of hope, the Message of joy, the Message of peace! Let us draw the attention of the brethren to the blessed privileges that are ours, rather than frequently to point them to the trials and hardships of the way. But what are the privileges of the Christian, if through great tribulation he must enter the Kingdom? They are, oh, so grand! It is his to know the joy of sins forgiven; and many need to have this told them over and over again, that they may fully, appreciate it. It is his to know of the Heavenly Father's Love and care—matters so easily forgotten in the stress of life. These assurances of the Word need to be repeated over and over: "The Father Himself loveth you." "God is for us." "All things shall work together for good to them that love God."

As these promises of God's Word abound in our hearts, they promote the fruits of the Holy Spirit; joy and peace come

in, such as the world can neither give nor take away. The peace of God, which passeth all human understanding, thus gradually comes more and more to dwell in our hearts; and so thankfulness results. Thankfulness in turn leads to more joy and praise, and to more sympathy for our fellows—for our families and for the world. Thus the Christian finds himself growing in grace, knowledge and love.

“Think On These Things.”

All this is in full accord with St. Paul’s advice: “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, 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.” (Philippians 4:8.) Following this course then—of preaching the’ Gospel of Hope—we are following the Master and the Apostles. They had so much of this spirit of hope, trust, confidence, love, joy and peace, that they could rejoice in tribulation; and they did so. The Apostles even sang praise to God that they were accounted worthy to share in the sufferings of Christ, that they might also share in His coming glories.

Let us then, dear brethren, realise that the world has tears and sorrows enough, and fears aplenty. Let us more and more use our time, strength, talents, joys, etc., in relieving the poor world of its mental distress. Harken to the words of Jesus, “God shall wipe all tears from all eyes.” “Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.” As it will be God’s great work in the future, through Christ and the Church, to wipe away earth’s tears, let us chase away some of those fears at the present time. Thus we shall help to prepare the way for the world to come back into fellowship with God by and by, for the faithful of the present time to walk more carefully in the footsteps of Jesus and to encourage one another in the good way.

The Lost Coin.

A booklet of poems with the above title, and composed by the author of “The Ten Camels,” is now in stock. These poems are very well compiled on the parable given by the Lord in Luke 15:8, 9, the plan of salvation being presented in a most helpful manner.

Containing 34 pages, with heavy paper cover, it is priced at 8d. (15 cents) per copy, post paid.

Hitherto.

“Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. —1 Sam. 7:12.

We our Eben-ezer raise,
Lord, to Thee our thanks are due;
Thou has sheltered all our ways Hitherto.
Days of danger, nights of fear,
Thou halt brought us safely through,
In our need Thy help was near Hitherto.
Faint with conflict, from Thee still
Came our patience to pursue;

We endure by Thy good will Hitherto.
In the Cross we found the key,
Sin’s hard fetters to undo ;
Christ has made and keeps us free Hitherto.
By temptations oft assailed,
We have proved Thy promise true;
Thy compassions have not failed Hitherto.
Praise be Thine for all work done,

And for work we yet may do; Praise for all
Thy favours shown Hitherto.
When from Salem’s gate of gold
We life’s winding road review,
Then wilt Thou
Thy love unfold Hitherto.

The Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace.

“Great peace have they that love Thy law.

—Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed upon Thee; because he trusteth in Thee.- – Psa. 119:165; Isa 26:3.

LIKE every other Christian grace or fruit of the spirit, peace has its counterfeit. There is a self-satisfied disposition — things have gone prosperously in worldly matters, and sometimes in religious circles positions of honour or high esteem have been attained, comfort in life and social standing is enjoyed, and some thus seem to be at peace and rest in their own works, trusting in themselves. Some are born with a complacent, placid disposition; they can hardly get excited over anything in the ordinary affairs of life—nothing upsets their equilibrium. This is sometimes mistaken for the fruit of the spirit, but such need something like an earthquake to shake them out of their complacency before they may take steps to attain the real Christian grace.

The peace which Jesus bequeathed to His disciples is the result, the fruit, of God’s holy spirit in the heart—that was the peace which Jesus possessed and of which He spoke when He said, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid.” This peace is not dependent upon outward circumstances or conditions, for it rests not on any human strength but on the eternal love and power of God. All sorts of trouble may abound, turmoil, storms, strife, shipwreck, bombs, earthquakes, pestilence and persecution, but confident trust in God gives peace amidst the commotion. The peace of Jesus, as in the Apostles and others throughout the Gospel Age has been maintained under the severest tests, like the little seagull riding over the billows of the ocean in perfect confidence. “If God be for us, who can be against us?” “Fear not them that kill the body”—they cannot pluck us out of the Heavenly Father’s arms of love and power, and He will grant us the eternal spiritual life.

This is the peace that passeth understanding, from a human point of view, not a peace of sentiment but a peace of mind and heart, based upon the Divine promises to those who comply with the essential steps and conditions, and the possession of this “ peace of God “ would indicate the attainment of the perfection of Christian character.

At the same time that Jesus bequeathed His peace to the disciples He told them that their pathway would not be peaceable, but the reverse. “In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in Me ye shall have peace.”

The difference between that inherited complacent or self-satisfied peace and the peace of Jesus, the peace of God, is that the one trusts in self and worldly conditions, which ultimately fail; the other has confident trust in God and His promises, because they are trying to live in harmony with God and endeavouring like Jesus to “always do those things that please” the Heavenly Father. “The work of righteousness shall be peace and the effect (result) of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.” (Isa. 32:17.) “In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.” The peace and rest depends upon where the anchor is cast. “We have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.” (Heb. 6:18. 19.)

How is this peace attained? We are all weak and sinful by nature and could never succeed in doing quite right, as Jesus did, “always those things that are pleasing” in God’s sight. The first thing necessary is to realise this and, as has been said, some seem to require a sort of earthquake to break up their self-complacency and reveal themselves to themselves. As the prophet declares, “There is no peace to the wicked,” but God in His mercy directs those who are feeling after Him to the only way of salvation—the only means of justification, the precious blood of Christ, the Lamb slain, as the satisfaction for the sins of the world. (John 1:29; 1 John 2:2.)

The Apostle in Rom. 5:1 says that we are thus “justified and at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Is that the peace which is the fruit of the spirit? No, for at that step we had not even received the begetting of the holy spirit. That was simply the release from the condemnation, for the time being, until we might “count the cost” of taking up the cross and following Christ in making a full consecration of our lives and all we have to God, to follow in the footsteps of Christ—following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth; and like Jesus to be “counted” as sheep for the slaughter.” (Rom. 8:36.) It is then that we enter “into the grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” It is then that we receive the holy spirit, the spirit of sonship, and become “sons of God, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 7:17), and rejoice to do the Father’s will under all circumstances. We experience the love and care of our Father, His providence, His protection and guidance. We know of His ability to keep us in all our ways and His promise to make all things work together for good to them that love Him and are the called according to His purpose. We learn to trust Him and enter into that assured faith and hope expressed by the Apostle in Rom. 8:31-39, and thus come into the heritage of those in Christ, the peace that passeth understanding—the quiet, happy rest of a perfect trust.

Some teach that there is no difference between the justification of the ancient worthies and the justification of the Christian, but it is very clear that the purpose of justification of the two classes was quite different. There was no opportunity of those noble men of old, such as Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and others presenting themselves as living sacrifices to God, for they were not perfect by any means, and there was no merit of Christ available to be applied to them to make their sacrifice holy and acceptable to God, to whom nothing can be acceptable which is not perfect. The great majority of Christian believers never get any further than the first step of Rom. 5:1—justified from sin and at peace with God, and Abraham and others would reach that condition for we read that Abraham was called the “friend of God.” But those believers who do not take the necessary step of consecration, for which the justification by faith was provided, receive the grace (favour) of God in vain and never know the bliss of the peace of God ruling in their hearts. Only those who receive the holy spirit can realise the fruit of the spirit and rest in the everlasting arms of the Almighty.

“Stayed upon Jehovah hearts are fully blessed

Finding as He promised perfect peace and rest.-”

Fear and doubt are the giants that stand in the path. “Fear hath restraint”; there is no peace to the fearful and unbelieving, and a doubtful mind is ever uneasy. Faith gives the victory all along the Christian way, and only in a full assurance of faith and a heart in harmony with God can peace be enjoyed. He shall have perfect peace “whose mind is stayed on Thee; because he trusteth in Thee.”

God is always at peace, nothing can disturb His peace, because God knows that He has absolute power to control, not only the mighty universe of heavenly bodies, but also the minutest details of all creation and every living creature. He is never disturbed. Even when sin entered, He had already His purpose planned for man’s recovery and how He would use Satan’s wickedness to allow mankind an experience of evil that would be an everlasting lesson. He allows man to bring upon himself the result of sin, but in His own time He Will, through “the one mediator between God and man,” recover the world from sin and death and grant each and all who have ever lived an opportunity of learning righteousness and attaining peace. “The work of righteousness is peace and the effect of righteousness confidence and assurance for ever.” “Great peace have they that love Thy law.”

The Lord has perfect peace because “Just and right are Thy ways, O Thou King of saints,” and He has all power to preserve justice and truth which He enjoys. We may have the peace of God ruling in our hearts because we believe in Him who is able to keep us from falling and to preserve us unto His everlasting Kingdom.

Leaven is a figure of sin and corruption; where there is leaven working there is no rest, no peace. “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” “Now the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.”

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