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Waiting for Christ's Return.

“Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his SON from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.” (1 Thes. 1:9, 10.)

TO earnest students of God's Word it is very evident that our Lord continually pointed to His second advent,

His return from heaven, as being the time when they should enter into the Kingdom with Him and receive the promised blessings. At no time did the Master imply that His faithful followers, then living, would receive their reward immediately at death. On the contrary, there was to be an undefined period of time between our Lord's first and second advents, as He stated—“It is expedient for you that I go away,” and again, “I go to prepare a place for you, . . . and will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also.”

It is very noticeable that our Lord did not indicate the length of time that would elapse prior to His return from heaven; to have done so would have likely interfered with the progress of His followers. It was much better to leave the intervening time an open matter, and exhort them to faithfulness until He should return, or they finish their earthly course. By this means the interest in, the longing for, the expectation of their Lord's return was kept ever bright and clear in the hearts and minds of the Lord's people. We remember the Lord's answer to His disciples, when, on His last appearance after His death and just prior to His ascension, they asked, “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?” He said—“It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power.” In other words, the Lord desired His followers to have their hopes centred on the assurance of His return, rather than on the time when this would take place.

How faithfully the Apostles impressed this same lesson of expectancy respecting the return of the Lord—that only those who were found worthy “at His appearing” should enter into the heavenly Kingdom and be associated with Christ in His glory and also in the privileges of assisting mankind generally throughout the Millennial Age. In addition to the words of our text, St. Paul in writing to Titus, as also in his other epistles, gave this inspiring theme to encourage and exhort the brethren—“looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

What a comfort and consolation it has been to the dear saints throughout the Gospel Age when, often

enduring the most severe persecutions, they could feel assured—"The Lord shall descend from heaven," and bring about such a mighty deliverance that "the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed in us."

While, then, the Lord's people have had every cause to be confident respecting the return of their Master and that all their hopes would be abundantly fulfilled at that time, many, no doubt, during the Gospel Age, like the Apostle Paul, have desired "not to be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." In other words, they would rather not "sleep" in the death condition, but would prefer, if it were God's will, that the return of Christ might have been in their day--during their lifetime. That such a desire or longing to be with Christ was in harmony with Paul's life of sacrifice is shown by the correct translation of Phil. 1:23—"I have an earnest desire for the returning and being with Christ, since it is very much to be preferred." (See Diaglott footnote.) While Paul knew that the time was not then due for the return of Christ, yet the fact that he recorded his desire for that, had it been possible, is the point of our lesson.

It has been good for the Lord's people all down the Gospel Age to earnestly desire the return of their Master, and by being in such an attitude of heart, they would be the better prepared also to wait for Him. That is, to wait as becometh saints, to wait confidently, to wait cheerfully, to wait while zealous in His service, to wait patiently for Him.

This thought of how we are to wait for His Son from heaven is brought out in Rom. 8:23-25--We also, which have the firstfruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for sonship, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope, but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." Surely this has been so with the saints over the Gospel Age as a whole respecting the return of Christ; they have with patience waited for it, as expressed again by Paul in 2 Thes. 3:5—"The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ." (See also 1 Pet. 1-8.)

How true it is that the Lord's return is the crowning point of the Christian's life; it is the fulfilment of all his hopes, the consummation of all his desires, and the worthiness or otherwise of all the members called unto the fellowship of God's Son, to enter into the joys of their Lord, will depend upon how each one has waited for their Lord from heaven. Yes, the waiting period is all important; that is, the period of time following full consecration to God. We remember the Lord's words in the parable of Luke 19:13, when in giving the illustration of the ten pounds being committed to His servants, He said "Occupy till I come."

What depth of meaning is in these words—"Occupy till I come"—and which seems so well explained by Paul's words in 1 Cor. 4:2--"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." And the longing expectancy for the return of their Master, on the part of the Lord's people, has had the most invigorating and inspiring influence to faithful use of the "pounds" committed to their charge.

When we consider that, in committing the pounds to each servant, the Lord was evidently picturing that great gift of justification, which all His people alike receive, we may conclude that it is the use made of this justification by faith, that will determine whether or not one is truly "waiting for his Lord from heaven." Some may feel that they are justified and have peace with God, but this is not followed by consecration with all, and so the "pounds" are not used in the manner intended by the Master when He said, "Occupy till I come."

The full use of justification is of course only made when one presents his justified self to God a living sacrifice, which Paul says, is "holy, acceptable unto God and a reasonable service." Just how reasonable this is we do not at first realise and probably never can sufficiently approximate the privilege to be

permitted to offer our little all along with that full offering of our Master's, that we may, by God's grace, having suffered with Him, also reign with Him in the Kingdom to come.

How true it is, that "Occupying till He come" has a double significance—first, the faithful use of the "pounds," which in turn will focus the desire, the intention, upon the second part, i.e., "till He come." In other words, while faithfully using the "pounds" the child of God, in healthy condition, is in harmony with his Lord in the spirit very fully, from that time onward, and what could be more natural than a sincere desire for the return of his Master, that he may be with Him and see Him as He is, in the glory promised to the overcomers. While, then, joyfully content to use the gift of justification to enable the presenting of our bodies a living sacrifice, the great end is ever uppermost in our hearts; truly "till He come" no child of God can be satisfied—content now, satisfied then, is the correct viewpoint of all the Lord's people.

How different is the outlook of those who have never made use of the "pounds"—their justification—having never consecrated their lives fully to God. These surely could not have the full interest in the return of Christ — having never sacrificed with Him, they could have no intense longing for His return that they may also live with Him. While, perhaps, interested to some extent in Christ's return, and maybe speaking of it in word, that is very different from waiting for Christ as though one's very existence depends upon that; and truly that is really so, as respects the child of God. Except the Lord return, the very existence of the Lord's people would be lost, for it is only, "When Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Here we have the two thoughts—not only is it, "When Christ shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory," but also, "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." How can it be otherwise then, with those whose very life is in Christ, that they long for His return above everything else, while, meantime, endeavouring to work out their salvation by keeping their sacrifice on the altar.

Our theme is brought out again so well in Psa. 130:5, 6—"I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His Word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning." The lesson to be taken from these words of the Psalmist's is probably well known. In those early days the watchmen were out throughout the night of darkness, watching for the morning. We can well imagine how earnestly they would desire daybreak after the weary hours of night. The Psalmist would know very truly the position of these watchers for the morning, and for him to express his own "waiting for the Lord" as being more desirable, conveys very well his love and devotion to the Lord, and his assurance that "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength," and also be ready to receive at His hands the blessing promised to all who enter the Kingdom.

The Psalmist of course could not have the same hopes respecting the Kingdom as the Lord's people since Christ's first advent, but he no doubt represented the beloved class, who, during this Gospel Age, are so highly favoured in knowing of the wonderful outworking of God's Plan, both as respects the spiritual and earthly phases of the Kingdom. Surely it was just as true of the Psalmist then, as it is of the David class all down the Gospel Age, that only by the return of the Lord—God's great Agent for accomplishing every feature of His Plan—can the hope of salvation be realised. How necessary, then, that God's natural people of past times, as well as His spiritual people of this Gospel Age, should wait patiently for Him who is to bring salvation to all mankind. So the Psalmist concludes in this Psalm— "Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption." Psa. 130:7.

Having in mind the importance of God's people waiting on the Lord for the time of His return from heaven, concerning which Peter said: "He shall send Jesus Christ . . . whom the heavens must retain until the times of restitution of all things," it is surely appropriate to consider our position to-day in view of the fact that we, as earnest students of God's Word, feel assured by all the signs our Lord gave that we are living in the days of His presence— the days of the Son of Man. Seeing this is so, are we to still "wait

for His Son from heaven,” when His return is an accomplished fact? Yes, indeed, we are waiting not only for the period of preparation for the Kingdom, however cheering and inspiring this is, but above all for the time when we each one shall see Him as He is, when as members of the Bride we are joined unto our Head, to be associated with Him in all the joys of the heavenly Kingdom from which the blessings for all mankind shall flow throughout the Millennial Age.

We are waiting, then, not in the sense so many are waiting when they speak of the return of Christ, for the general idea is that our Lord will appear suddenly, sitting on a cloud and immediately all who are His will be caught away bodily and taken to heaven. This thought is the result of taking some Scriptures literally, which, so used, do violence to the Bible as a whole. How important it is that the Scriptures be harmonised as a whole, and especially is this so respecting the vital subject of our Lord’s return. Having in mind our Lord’s exhortation to watch, it would be impossible for one to watch intelligently if he did not know the manner of his Lord’s return.

From our Master’s own words, as well as from the Apostles, we learn that His return was to be “as a thief in the night”; that is, that it would be unknown to all except those definitely informed. This surely indicates that He is not to appear as a human being, so that it could be said, He is here or there—that He could be pointed out on earth. No, our Lord warned against this very thing and declared that His presence would be manifest as a great shining forth, pictured by the sun—from the east even unto the west. Again His reference to the “days of Noah” and the comparison He made of the general conditions amongst men surely would be meaningless, except they refer to a period of time when the Lord was actually present “in the days of the Son of Man,” just as Noah was present, before the Flood—”in the days of Noah.”

Some misunderstand our Lord’s words as He ascended from His disciples—”Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age”—to imply that, as He has ever been present with His people in an unseen form, the period of His parousia at the close of the Gospel Age is no different from that. Truly, our Lord has been present by His spirit with all His people throughout the Gospel Age, as pictured in Revelation, “walking amidst the candlesticks”; that is, amidst the churches; but let it be noted that “the days of the Son of Man” have no reference at all to the whole of the Gospel Age, but distinctly apply to a period of time at the end of this second dispensation—”this present evil world”—just as the “days of Noah” refer to a period of time when Noah was there in person at the close of the first dispensation, just prior to the Flood.

So, during the days of the harvest of the age our Lord has taken charge of the events connected with the harvest work in no uncertain way. This does not imply that He has yet taken charge of all earth’s events, for Satan is still “the god of this world” just as much during the harvest as throughout the age; he is permitted to continue his sway only for a further limited period during which Christ is preparing to take over the whole management of earth’s affairs. We sometimes see a notice in business premises—”Under new management”—and we know that a complete change in ownership has taken place. That will be the case when our Lord has completed the harvest work of gathering in all His spiritual people. Then, but not till then, will He take over the rulership of earth, having taken unto Himself His great power to reign.

We find this is definitely so when we consider the word “reign” in connection with earth’s new management. That our Lord has been reigning in the hearts of His people ever since He was on earth is surely true, but this is a very different thought from that implying a taking over of humanity for their blessing — the dispensing of those things to be made available on account of His sacrifice. While it may not be improper for the Lord’s people to think of Christ as their King, yet it is significant that this title is not used in the Scriptures to denote our relationship to Him. Rather, He is our great High Priest and we His under-priesthood, and He is chief amongst us as a class of brethren. How wonderful is the statement in Heb. 2:10, 11, respecting God’s purpose “to bring many sons unto glory, for both He that sanctifieth (Christ) and they who are sanctified (the Lord’s people) are all of one; for which cause He is not ashamed

to call them brethren.” What a relationship is this! Truly it could not be more wonderful.

So, we find in the Scriptures that our Lord’s Kingship has particular reference to Christ upon His throne during the Millennial Age, when His work as the High Priest after the order of Aaron, the sacrificing priest, is finished. Christ’s title as King also corresponds with that of High Priest after the order of Melchisedec—the reigning and blessing Priest, the King of Salem. From this we learn that the reign of Christ is to be over the world, not over His brethren, the members of His body; these are not reigned over now, for they are being selected and prepared to be His associates in the Kingdom which will have all mankind as its subjects in the grand age to come.

This also agrees with the thought previously mentioned—”As the bright-shining comes out of the east and shines even unto the west, so shall also the presence of the Son of Man be.” But as yet the bright-shining has not illuminated the world, though the presence of our Lord has greatly affected mankind in general, indirectly: as we perceive the “day of His preparation” continuing — making ready for His kingly reign when the right time comes.

So, we realise, that while Christ proved Himself worthy of all the titles mentioned in the Scriptures when He proved faithful and was raised from the dead to the Father’s right hand at His first advent, yet a number of these offices are for the exclusive purpose of administering the Kingdom on earth, during the Millennial Age. He will not only take on His kingly reigning office, but He will be Mediator of the New Covenant and these offices are to be shared with His Body. Isaiah also gives us a list of titles which apply to the same time—”He shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

To apply the above titles to the present time would be out of place. For the same reason we believe Isaiah’s further statement in chapter 52:7 would not be applicable to-day. The Apostle in Rom. 10:15 applies the main part of this verse to the Gospel Age—”How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things.” Yes, indeed, how beautiful, what a privilege to run with the Lord’s message during this Gospel Age, including the harvest; and will it not also be “How beautiful are the feet of them that bringeth good tidings, that published) peace” when the Kingdom is established? Surely it will, and this statement in Isa. 52:7 seems to refer to that very time, when the ancient prophets, as princes in all the earth, will proclaim the message of good tidings; they will indeed publish peace, and declare unto Zion, natural Israel, “Thy God reigneth” and eventually to whosoever will then own the Lord as their God. The following verses in Isa 52 are in agreement. Verse 10 reads—”The Lord hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.”

What a prospect awaits the whole world of mankind, and surely we can rejoice on this account, but what a greater prospect awaits the Lord’s people of the present time, those “waiting for His Son from heaven,” who, together with the same class all down the Gospel Age have given heed to the words of our Lord’s parable in Luke 12—”Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself and make them to sit down to meat and will come forth and serve them.”

Melbourne Christmas Convention.

The brethren in Melbourne wish to announce that their Annual Convention is to be held this year (D.V.) on December 23rd, 25th, 26th and 27th, with additional gatherings on the 29th and 30th. The assemblies are to be held in the Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond, and a hearty invitation is extended to all friends able to attend these gatherings in the Lord's name. The rich blessings of former years are again anticipated, by the Lord's grace, so those friends making sacrifices to attend should feel well repaid. Further information is obtainable from the secretary—Mr.

J. B. Hiam, 44 Heath Avenue, Oakleigh, S.E.12, Victoria.

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PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

The Resurrection Change.

THE manner in which the members in Christ are changed from the earthly to the heavenly condition is of much importance to those who desire to be fully informed respecting all that the Lord has been pleased to reveal to His children by His Word and spirit.

While many seem to see clearly that the Lord's people all down the Gospel Age, on finishing the earthly way in death, have fallen asleep to await the time when "the dead in Christ shall rise first," some have difficulty in understanding how the last members—those "who are alive and remain unto the presence of the Lord"—are dealt with in fulfilment of the Apostle's words; "we shall not all sleep."

It should be clearly noted that the Apostle in 1 Cor. 15:51, 52 does not imply that any of the "we" class—the Lord's people—shall not die. He had previously stated in this same chapter, verses 6 and 18, that some of the saints had already "fallen asleep" in death. But now, in regard to those of the same class who would be living on the earth "at the last trump," he would show them "a mystery." The procedure of their change to "the image of the heavenly," at the consummation of the human sacrifice, would be different in that they would not need to sleep in the unclothed condition, because at this time—the presence of Christ—the dead in Christ would have been raised already, so there would be no necessity for these last members to sleep, on their proving faithful unto death.

In thinking of the new creature, the new life, being transferred from the earthen vessel to the spiritual house (God giving to every seed its own body), that we may be like Christ, "for we shall see Him as He is," it may appear to some that the conscious existence would be unbroken, when the Apostle says it will come about "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." This, however, is not the Apostle's thought. The new creature could have no conscious existence apart from a body, and as the death of the earthly body is real and true in the case of all the saints right down the Gospel Age, so the unconsciousness before the union with the spirit body is just as real and true in every case, but the mystery is, that now in "the days of the Son of Man"—the presence of Christ—the union of the new creature, the new life, with the spirit body will come so quickly following the release from the earthen vessel that there will be no sleeping period, no remaining in the unconscious state, the transition period being so short. Hence he uses the words, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: (during the time of Christ's presence, the harvest time). Yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." (Rev. 14:13.)

Early Morning Devotion.

There is no time like the early morning hour for feeding on the flesh of Christ by communion with Him and pondering His words. Once lose that, and the charm is broken by the intrusion of many things, though it may be they are all useful and necessary. You cannot re-make the broken reflections of a lake swept by wind. How different is that day from all others, the early prime of which is surrendered to fellowship with Christ! Nor is it possible to live to-day on the gathered spoils of yesterday. Each man needs all that a new day can yield him of God's grace and comfort. It must be daily bread.

All true prayer has a transfiguring influence. It brings us into the immediate presence of God. The holy of holies in the ancient temple, where the Shekinah was, was no holier than where you bow every time you pray. You are looking up into the face of Christ, Himself. John was not nearer to Him, lying on his breast, than you are in your praying. One

cannot thus look up into the face of Christ and not have some measure of transfiguration wrought in him.

Then prayer is the reaching up of the soul toward God. It lifts the life for the time into the highest, holiest frame. A prayerful spirit is full of aspirations for God. Its longings are pressing up Godward. It is the transfiguring of the spirit which purifies these dull earthly lives of ours, and changes them, little by little, into the Divine image.

Rise earlier to be more alone with Christ in the morning. Let neither the pressure of business, nor the tendencies of the flesh, nor the drowsiness of spirit, keep thee from thy morning interview and converse with the King of kings.— Selected.

Concordances

Some copies of Strong's Exhaustive Concordance are now on hand with strong cloth binding. While the price is greatly increased, these Concordances contain such a wealth of information with the meanings of all Hebrew and Greek words used in the Bible, and are really essential for detailed study of the Scriptures. The present price is 16/12/6., plus freight

Learning Obedience.

(Hebrews 5:8.)

(Convention Address.)

NATURALLY speaking, as man has found himself constituted since Adam's fall, obedience has been the first and greatest lesson necessary to be taught and learned. In infancy it begins and in infancy it is resisted. Children are born disobedient under present conditions, and a wise parent seeks to train a child early to be obedient. If a child is not trained by its own parents to become obedient to them, there is nowhere else it can as properly receive the training, and the result must surely be an unhappy one. Everywhere in the Scriptures where the subject is mentioned, it is taken for granted that the parents are wise enough to train their children in the rudimentary lessons of obedience. If it were not so, God would not have so carefully exhorted children to honour their parents, it being as Eph. 6:2 expresses it—"the first commandment with promise."

Even when children are growing to years of discretion and may be happily feeling after God and reading His Word, they will find that Word counselling them still to be 'obedient to parents. (See Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20.)

It is interesting and helpful to note that the word rendered "obedience" in our text (as also in many other places in the Bible) means "to hearken submissively." (Young's Concordance.) This seems to be a good general meaning of the word, the dictionary giving it—"submissive to authority." Children trained to obey parents must hearken submissively, for they may not discern the wisdom of their parents' command; likewise the servant his master. It is not the prerogative of the servant to question his master's command, it is his duty to obey even if the command is not according to his own taste or desire—he must hearken submissively.

Now, going beyond the realm of the human family as between themselves, we look at this matter of obedience as God requires it of man. We see that it started right back in the beginning. When God created man perfect He required but one thing of him—obedience—and rightly so. He expected man to "hearken submissively" to Him and not to question His wisdom, His ability and readiness to supply every good thing in its time. But what happened? (Read Rom. 5:19.) Because one man failed to "hearken submissively" man lost the riches of God's bountiful goodness toward him. But because another perfect man was found who did fulfil God's injunctions, "hearkening submissively" unto them even unto death, there is the great hope that man will yet again enjoy his former, happy estate. This constitutes the gospel (the glad tidings) which for centuries has been preached unto men.

We enquire now as to how and why Jesus learned anything by obedience, and what bearing such has upon us as His followers. Though He was God's Son He was required to hearken submissively to His Father's voice, and obedience thereto incurred much suffering. Why? Was not Jesus perfect and ought not a perfect man rendering obedience to God find joy and not sorrow? Yes., but the results of Jesus' experiences were to extend beyond Himself and far down into the future of God's great plan for the salvation and blessing of men. Jesus was ordained of God to become a great high priest, and thus He became the source of eternal salvation unto all who would obey Him. (Heb. 5:9, 10.) Study of the Scriptures reveals that not only was He to become such to all the world, but that He was to act prior to that time as a high priest especially on behalf of believers in the Gospel Age — the called-out Church, those whom He calls His brethren. (Heb. 2:1 1 - 1 3 ; 3:1.)

From the study of the old Law arrangements, which were examples or shadows of the true (Heb. 8:5; 10:1), we learn that to fulfil his office acceptably a priest must be one who could deal with his people understandingly—never condoning wilful sin, but ever performing services that enabled compassion to be shown toward the ignorant and those continually out of the way through the natural blemishes of inborn

sin. (See Heb. 5:1, 2, with margin in v. 2.)

Now the priests taken from amongst the people in the Jewish law arrangement (the shadow of the true) were able to deal understandingly with those whom they served, because as fallen men they experienced the difficulties of their people. But it was not so with Jesus. True, He had witnessed the results of sin and was quick to concur in His Father's plan to come to earth to save men from its scourge. But to do so fully and effectively He must have experience of what it meant. Thus in His earthly ministry He went about healing the sick, restoring sight to the blind, etc., and came fully in touch with the infirmities and necessities of fallen humanity. It was, however, during the sacrifice of His own humanity in providing the great redemption price, at which time our Lord felt He may have come short, that His prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears ascended to His Father, and He was heard in that He feared.

We are able to discern also the priestly work of Jesus on behalf of His church. Not only did He face all the results accruing to man because of Adam's sin or disobedience, and overcome them, but He also endured special temptations such as none but the spirit begotten children of God are called upon to face. Immediately Jesus had been begotten by the holy spirit of God and was changed completely to spiritual desires and hopes the great Adversary came with his subtle temptations, seeking to entice Him to surrender His hold upon the same by satisfying an immediate fleshly need. (See Matt. 4:2-4.) Failing in that he sought to encourage Jesus to perform reckless acts to prove that He had God's favour. (Matt. 4:5-7.) Failing again, he extended to Jesus' mind all the glories of the kingdoms of the world, and endeavoured to frustrate God's own plan and wean Jesus from His part therein, by enticing Him not to choose the way of present suffering, but to "rule before the time." (Matt. 4:8-10.) In these experiences of our Lord's we see embodied every temptation that has befallen the Lord's people in "hearkening submissively" to the will of God. In this great battle they could never come off victorious except for the help received at the hand of their great High Priest who has endured it all and extends the needed help when sought. (Heb. 4:14-16; 6:19, 20.)

As the church passes through all her experiences, the individual members are learning what their Master and High Priest has learnt, and thus they are being fitted to become under priests in the great Melchisedec priesthood that is to judge and bless not only all the obedient of mankind but angels also. (1 Cor. 6:2:3.)

Jesus learned obedience experimentally and practically; He was fully disposed to obey God, but the Father tested Him by what He allowed to come upon Him as a result of that obedience. Though He were a son and had never crossed His Father's will, yet He was required to learn more about obedience through suffering; namely, that God requires obedience always, irrespective of circumstances and conditions. And we (the church) are sons of God too, and God is dealing with us as sons. The wonder of it! (See 1 John 3:1, 2.)

Then there is another element in our schooling, learning obedience, or "hearkening submissively" to God's voice which was not necessary for Jesus to learn; namely, the chastening element. (See Heb. 12:5-9.) Jesus did always those things which pleased His Father in heaven, but we do not, and often there is need of chastening, a suffering experience that tends to correct our error and help us to do better next time. (Heb. 12:11.) And in all this God is preparing us, sanctifying us, setting us apart for His work, present and future, if we hearken submissively to Him.

Through our present experiences, then, God is qualifying us for a great, future work. We often hear the quotation— experience is the best teacher. We cannot do anything confidently and well unless we have knowledge. To illustrate:

I might fiddle with electric gadgets in an elementary way and effect some temporary repairs, but to do a bigger job I would be helpless. I could listen to the electrician explain the manipulation of his wires and

gadgets but my understanding would be hazy, due to my lack of training and knowledge along that line, and I certainly could not help or instruct another for that reason. But suppose I go to the Mallee district of Victoria and I meet a person who wants to know about wheat growing in that area; which is the best soil over an average of years, what variety of wheats are best for a particular soil or season, what machinery is best for ploughing, sowing, harvesting, etc., I could assist him because I know about it through knowledge gained during long experience along that line.

Is it not thus that God is preparing us for His work—by experience. Our life now is a learning time rather than a teaching time, but we find that much of our learning is gained by experience in our efforts to teach. We think we have a good knowledge of God's plan and we meet a person who desires to know of it. We tell him something and he questions concerning a Scripture and places an interpretation upon it that we had not heard before; he may be able to quote other Scriptures that appear to support his viewpoint, and lo, we are somewhat lost. We had never seen it from that angle before. Perhaps our friend goes away thinking he knows more than we do after all, and we wonder ourselves if it is so. We go home, we think and study and receive help and we find satisfactory proof of the right interpretation of that particular Scripture. We may never see our friend again (he may not want to see us, anyway). We learn much through experiences like that.

It is the same in Class meetings. We might be considered to have had experience in the truth and one is called to take the chair at a meeting. We review the study at home, we consult every known help we can lay our hands upon and we come, we believe, reasonably well prepared. And what happens? Someone presents a thought on a verse that we had never seen that way before. If it is right and to be accepted, it knocks much of our previous preparation flat and we have to start thinking. We find ourselves in a spot of bother because it is not the place for much thinking; other brethren are pouring in their thoughts and you must try to keep up with them all. Perhaps some are agitated because of the new thought presented. The study may not end too happily because of apparent division of thought amongst the brethren on the matter. But those who truly wait upon the Lord will be rewarded with the right understanding of the verse eventually, even if it is some time later. When you do finally get straight on the point you have had quite an experience, and it impresses the truth of the verse upon you in a way that you will never forget. You are not likely to get tripped up there again; it will be another verse somewhere else next time. But what experience it all is. We think: what a capable chairman we may become some day, if only we live long enough.

So all of us are having our lessons, and when we have gained sufficient knowledge here below and have matriculated (as it were) through obedience to that knowledge, then we are ready for our change and the home above for our glorious work of the future—the privilege of imparting the blessings of life to all the willing and obedient of mankind. The glorious prospect before us should urge us on to learn obedience every day in the little things that serve to prepare us for the inheritance of the saints in light.

We would like to quote some apt words of a poem—

“What Have We Done To-day?”

We shall do so much in the years to come,
But what have we done to-day?
We shall give our gold in a princely sum,
But what did we give to-day?

We shall lift the heart and dry the tear,
We shall plant a hope in the place of fear,
We shall speak the words of love and cheer,
But what did we speak to-day?

We shall be so kind in the afterwhile,
But what have we been to-day?
We shall bring each lonely life a smile,
But what have we brought to-day?

We shall give to truth a grander birth
And to steadfast faith a deeper worth,
We shall feed the hungry souls of earth,
But whom have we fed to-day?

We shall reap such joys in the bye and bye,
But what have we sown to-day?
We shall build us mansions in the sky,
But what have we built to-day?

‘Tis sweet in the idle dreams to bask,
But here and now do we do our task?
Yes, this is the thing our soul must ask,
“What have we done to-day?”

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HELPFUL CONVERSATION.

Keep clear of personalities in conversation. Talk of things, objects, thoughts. The smallest minds occupy themselves with persons. Do not needlessly report ill of others. As far as possible, dwell on the good side of human beings. There are family boards where a constant process of depreciating, assigning motives, and cutting up character goes forward. They are not pleasant places. One who is healthy does not wish to dine at a dissecting table. There is evil enough in man, God knows. But it is not the mission of every man and woman to detail and report it all. Keep the atmosphere as pure as possible, and fragrant with gentleness and charity.—John Hall.

Question Box.

Question.—Is it right that our consecration should affect others so that to some extent their interests and wishes may be neglected or sacrificed?

Answer.—The question reminds one of the beautiful incident found in 2 Samuel 24:18-25. David came to Araunah to purchase his threshing floor and some oxen to sacrifice to the Lord. Araunah requested the King to help himself to anything he wished for such a purpose. “And the King said unto Araunah, Nay, but I will surely buy it of thee at a price, neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing.” We have the privilege of offering to the Lord all that we have and all that we are, but we must not offer the substance of others. We could not expect the Lord to accept anything we did in His service, if it were done in time which really belonged to others.. If we were to take of other people’s goods, it would be a theft. If we were to offer either goods or time thus taken to the Lord, it certainly could not be acceptable to Him. Duties must have first attention. How could we expect the Lord to accept any service rendered to His cause in time which should have been occupied toward the home, to wife, to husband, children, or to employer. Our sacrifices should not involve others in them. We must bring a clean sacrifice. Matt. 5:23-24.

On the other hand, there may be those who would presume on us by making claims for attention which are much more than is right or just. We need to seek for the wisdom from above, and try to reach a generously right conclusion as to our responsibilities towards our dependents, or homes, or wives, husbands, children, or parents, or towards our employers. Then seek also a correct understanding of our obligations to the Lord, and what His will is for us, then endeavour to carry out all that our full consecration to God implies; keeping each separate interest in its proper place, not in a stiff, hard spirit, but in a kind, generous spirit, so that all our sacrifice may be at our own expense, at our own inconvenience. Everyone’s circumstances are somewhat different, each is a steward to the Lord, to make the best of such circumstances. Sometimes we may be able to help one another, and offer suggestions, if such would be acceptable, but we must not judge one another. Our sacrifices then must not infringe upon the rights of others. Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.

FRANK & ERNEST TALKS

Geelong, 3GL, 222 M. Sundays 10 a.m.

Sydney, 2KY, 294 M. , 8.15 a.m.

Perth, 6KY, 227 M. , 4.45 p.m.