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Ambassadors for Christ.

(Convention Address.)

“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us.”—2 Cor. 5:20.

“He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.”—Luke 10:16.

THERE is no doubt that God takes His people along varied pathways in order to bring out in them that which is most precious in His sight. The older we grow in His service the more conscious we become of His goodness and mercy having followed us all the days of our lives. When “babes in Christ” we may have encountered experiences that at the time seemed hard to fit in as a blessing from the Lord, but when more matured we begin to realise that there were occasions, and there probably will be occasions in the future, too, when the greatest blessing that God could have bestowed upon us was to allow something which we in our ignorance at the time thought to be a great hardship.

Of all the written Word of God, what briefly is the sum concerning His true people? Is it not that we should each one become and remain worthy ambassadors for Christ? To take poor, fallen creatures such as we are and make us in any measure worthy of such a station, seems a stupendous task.

Even when we have come to see that it is not of ourselves, but by the power of God, that any worthiness is formed in us, it does not mean that that is the end of despairing moments; I think they present themselves all the way along, those doubts as to whether we will attain that which we desire and know God desires to see in us. But He who moulds and fashions can be depended upon to complete that which He has begun in us, and it remains for us to keep the clay plastic, as it were, in the hands of the Moulder by giving all diligence to His wise instruction. It seems that we would all need quite a deal of fashioning before we could at all be considered within the category of Christ’s ambassadors. We all need to pass through the stage of “babes in Christ” first, and whilst there is nothing highly commendable about such a station, in that we are exhorted not to remain in such a state but to press on to fulness of stature and partake of stronger food, yet through this stage God watches over us with His gentle nurture and admonition.

Having passed through the primary classes, as it were, of the School of Christ, we find that our curriculum is altered from class to class until all the fundamentals of the way have been revealed to us. Now we are sent forth as “ambassadors for Christ.” That which we have learned and been assured of must be attested to and proclaimed. This is not to say, of course, that our perfecting is complete at this stage. Far from it. We know that must continue right to the end of the way. I was thinking of it this way, that we at this stage might begin to think not so much of ourselves in the light of a pupil in the School of Christ, but of a pupil-teacher. We are still learners ourselves, it is true, and with wide fields for growth and improvement, but now we are able in some measure to impart the Word to others. We know that the ability to do so ought to increase as we continually strive to attain to the headmastership of our profession, even joint-heirship with Christ in the throne.

Whilst using that illustration, I think it is good perhaps to point out that in one respect a direct opposite is noticed,

because in the worldly teaching profession one comes as a pupil, simple and humble-minded, and as knowledge increases so even does pride and status and praise of men, worldly title. But we find that it is just the opposite with “the perfecting of the saints.” We begin as disciples in the School of Christ with very much acceptableness from those around us very often, but the further we progress we find that the world wishes less and less for our company, and it becomes more manifest to a Christian every day that he is indeed a stranger and a pilgrim on earth. His teachings and manner of living are not wanted by those around him. Probably this was never more apparent than in these closing days of the Gospel Age. For anyone now to uphold the pure teachings of Jesus, we know it is considered rash foolishness. The message “Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you” is not wanted now, but they clamour for a blow for a blow, an eye for an eye.

True, we know that in some measure it is being borne in on reasoning worldly minds where such a course is going to end, and it is very pathetic to hear people discussing these matters and the days in which we are living,—with the expression, What can we do? One thinks, What indeed can be done, when the teachings of the one Book that holds the solution are held in disrepute?

In one sense it is too late to reform when the judgments are falling. Indeed, we feel how blessed we are to have an understanding of these things. The saints of Christ first learn and exhibit the Truth in the love of it, knowing it to be God’s loving plan; they can see that the falling judgments will not mean an utter end to man and his happiness, but are only an utter end to everything that man has practised contrary to the teachings of Jesus, and thus to his own unhappiness. We know well that it would have been a great injustice on God’s part to have allowed the order now in a stage of transition to have continued.

So, as the saints were admonished long ago, we look up and lift up our heads and rejoice when we see all these things coming to pass, because we know it is the certain sign that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand. We realise that soon Christ will speak to the nations, raging in battle and anarchy; to the earth under the curse, ravaged by storm, drought and pest, and to the great mass of humanity rushing to and fro under tremendous strain for their daily bread, “Peace, be still.”

We have the prospect in vision of all the peoples of the earth returning to God with songs of everlasting praise upon their lips. Yes, indeed, this time of restitution spoken of by all God’s holy prophets is near at hand. The light of the long-desired Millennium, much thought of by thinking persons of all generations, will soon pierce the dark night that is now just preceding its dawn.

That will be the time of Satan’s binding, when he will no longer deceive, and the multitudes that have been laid in the grave since the world began will come forth to a new world order, of which they had scarcely ever dreamed. Ah yes, this is a goodly portion of the Gospel of glad tidings of great joy that shall be to all people. But who, as yet, has believed this report? And to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed? The answer is, the Lord’s saints alone. And who are they? Are they many? We know that they are very few, especially in the closing days of this Gospel Age. It seems there were never very many at any time in the world’s history, and they are very few indeed in “the days of the Son of Man,” in line with the warning in Luke 18:8—“When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”

So, then, this “little flock” are alive to their privileges of presenting their bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God with the hope that they might become joint-heirs with Christ in His kingdom. We look upon Him as the Head who has gone before, and ourselves as members of the body, soon to be united with Him. We have the records of His faithful witness knowing all that it meant to Him, and we have His invitation to follow after Him, to partake of His sufferings in this dark world of sin, and share in His glory in the heavenly kingdom. We know that a witness to the Truth must still be maintained, and the Head having gone from the earthly scenes long centuries ago, left the witnessing upon the shoulders of the Church which is His body. So that is just where we stand. We stand in Christ’s stead, as ambassadors for Him, explaining to men the way of reconciliation with their God.

What a privilege! Yea, and what a responsibility! One moment we are keyed up with its joys, and the next we are cast down with its sorrows, having this treasure in an earthen vessel, and realising from time to time our imperfect flesh, and how often we fall short, and how we fail to reflect the likeness of Christ. But if we are mindful of our heritage, and do not sell any of it for a mess of pottage, and continue in the way, pressing on for the prize, we know that our perfecting is worked out through it all, and so it shall continue, if we are faithful, until we “are like Him,” “whom having not seen we love.”

Luke 10:16.—"He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me." has quite a deal for reflection. It seems that there can be no doubt that the close relationship shown here between Jesus and His disciples ought to be accepted as the rule right down the age. So as we go about as ambassadors for Christ, we find this question presented to us all the time, How are we measuring up to that which is required of us? When we find someone who stops to listen to what we have to say, do they hear us because our utterance is such as to bear a faithful witness to the truth? I suppose there is not one of us who has not experienced those subtle temptations to water down the Truth at times, to hold it back rather than to speak it. "He that heareth you heareth me." In other words, when we speak to another we speak in Christ's stead. We should think, What would Jesus say if He were placed where I am? If our speech were always ordered by this rule we would be faithful ambassadors.

There is a Scripture which says, "When a man's ways please the Lord he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." I think there is a great deal of truth in this, but at the same time we could not expect that all men would always hear us acceptably; that is, if we were endeavouring to hold forth a faithful witness, like Him in whose stead we stand, some would despise us. Some reviled Jesus and spoke all manner of evil against him falsely because He

bore a witness to the truth. If it should be that reviling comes upon us because of a faithful witness to the truth, if what we have said and done is what we really believe Jesus would have said and done in similar circumstances, then happy are we. We have nothing of which to be ashamed, and much to rejoice over.

Nevertheless we realise full well that we need to keep a close check upon ourselves here. We must remember that He in whose stead we stand, reviled not again when He was reviled. There have often been times when we have been stung to retaliation, and a hasty word thus spoken can never be reclaimed. But apart from, that, it stirs up further unnecessary trouble, and I have no doubt that most of us, and probably all of us, have known times when we have brought upon our own heads revilings that could hardly be described as revilings for His sake. It may be that at the time we did look upon them in that light, and we may have even prided ourselves accordingly, that we should have suffered something for His sake, but afterwards we have seen that it was because of our poor ambassadorship. "He that despiseth you despiseth Me," but the onus is largely upon us, as ambassadors.

Continuing from the text in 2 Cor. 5, we read in the next chapter that we are to give no offence in anything, but to approve ourselves as the ministers of God. So then we will need to follow Jesus very closely, and remember how gentle and how kind He was, and if a rebuke had to be administered how gently it was done, and how tactfully. I often think of Him abandoning Jerusalem to her desolation—"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" With what anguish of soul He accepted Jerusalem's repudiation of His witness there. Happy are we as His ambassadors if we manifest a like attitude to-day to those who now spurn the witness that could help them. It is not always easy to have just that disposition. We need to follow Jesus very closely if we are going to keep our hearts from growing hard, and manifesting a spirit that nullifies any good that might have been done.

So, reading on in that chapter mentioned, we find that we are to commend ourselves as the ministers of God in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, and so on. We find it a very formidable list as we read on to the end of verse 10. We know that the early Church had much to go through; we do not know what is before us, but should not have a fearful mind—"sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," and that should always be our attitude. At the same time, we have a full realisation of the times in which we live, and so we just need to calmly reflect over all things. We have had many lessons at this Convention which we need ever to put into practice, and perhaps the greatest of them is "Watch and Pray."

I was thinking of the words of Jesus before Pilate. Pilate said, "Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, or to release thee?" It was a wonderful reply that Jesus gave—"Thou could'st have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above." If we could always remember this, it would be most helpful and uplifting, knowing that all is in the hand of God, and He has the rule over everything.

There is another similar thought in Luke 22:53. They came to take Jesus, and we remember Him saying, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." There was no resistance on His part; He knew what had to be. It is good to compare this with His words in Matt. 28:18, after His resurrection: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." As we

read, “Looking unto Jesus . . . who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

So then we should endeavour to maintain a good witness as Christ’s ambassadors right to the end of the way. Is not the arm of the Lord strong to save? Will He tempt us beyond that which we are able to bear? Nay—as long as a member of His Church remains this side of the veil, He will hear the cries of His people and assist them. Let us, then, fresh courage take, and be not faithless, but believing, ascribing all the praise to His glorious name forever.

Coming Conventions.

Adelaide.

The brethren in Adelaide desire to make known that their Annual Convention is to be held this year (D.V.) from Good Friday to Easter Monday, 11th to 14th April inclusive, and they extend a hearty invitation to all friends able to attend with them.

The gatherings will be held at R.A.O.B Hall, 48 Flinders-street (near Gawler-place) , Adelaide.

All visiting members expecting to be present at this Convention should send word as early as possible to the secretary, Mrs. H. H. Bartel, 10 Forest-avenue East, Clarence Gardens, Adelaide —from whom further information may also be procured.

Sydney

The Sydney friends advise that they have decided to hold a Convention (D.V.) commencing on Good Friday, 11th April, and continuing on the Saturday and Easter Sunday, and a cordial invitation is given to all Bible Students who should desire to attend.

The meeting place for this Convention is Child Study Rooms, 75 Liverpool-street, Sydney, and those brethren expecting to attend the gatherings are asked to communicate with the secretary, Mr. J. H. Thompson, 11 Macquarie-street, Hurstville, Sydney, at their earliest, so that all arrangements can be made.

Passover Memorial, 1941.

The Jewish Calendar for the 14th of Nisan gives Thursday evening, 10th April for this year, and this will be the anniversary of the institution of the Memorial of our Lord's death. No doubt, the brethren will desire to celebrate as near to this date as possible.

Melbourne Service.—The brethren in Melbourne will hold the Memorial on Wednesday evening, 9th April (D.V.) . This advance notice is for the benefit of any country friends being able to be present, time and place of the service will appear in April issue.

Sydney Service.—The brethren arranging the Sydney Convention state that they will hold the Memorial (D.V.) on Good Friday evening.

To Readers Overseas.

In view of the fact that mails are now uncertain and fail to arrive from time to time our oversea brethren are advised to keep a copy of all particular items mentioned in correspondence, and especially the numbers of Money Orders or Drafts forwarded. This information could then be sent later should acknowledgment of any previous communication not be received from this office within reasonable time.

PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

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While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord's Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression used, either in the correspondence or in the sermons reported.

A Cross (x) on the wrapper indicates that the Subscription to "Peoples Paper" is overdue.

Things Coming to Pass.

IN the October, 1940, issue of this paper, an article appeared under the title "Earth's Turmoil Ends in Morning of Joy," in which it was suggested that the events transpiring in Europe were probably fulfilling that portion of Scripture described under the sixth angel in Revelation 16:13-16.

Reference to this matter again is not made with any dogmatic views, but rather with the suggestion that events over the past six months seem to confirm the thought that the three great dictator powers of Europe are described in verses 13 and 14 of this chapter of Revelation.

It will be noticed in verse 14 that these "spirits of devils working miracles, go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world," which ' shows that this devilish influence, undoubtedly guided by the great adversary (with the Lord's permission) may be expected to permeate throughout all countries of the world. As an instance of this, during the last fortnight Australia's leading statesmen thought wise to warn the people of the grave turn of events, with apparent danger in the Pacific area. The average thinking person is aware that the influence at work does not originate in! the Far Eastern Power itself, but comes from the Axis Powers.

Likewise, in the Balkan sphere, one state after another is being brought stealthily under this evil influence and in the near future it would seem that a major conflict will be the outcome in that region. Bible Students have realised for many years that the land of Palestine in its restored condition, since the return of great numbers of Jews, will present an alluring prize to the aggressor, and in Ezekiel, chapters 38 and 39, a description is given of the invasion of the holy land. A similar account in symbolic language is given in Zechariah 14:1-9, and it is shown in verse 3 that the Lord will deliver Israel out of the hand of the invaders in such a way (similar to when He fought for them in ancient times) that it will demonstrate not only to Israel but to the nations near and far that the Lord has taken charge of earth's affairs for the setting up of His Kingdom of righteousness and peace. (See Ezek. 38:18- 23 .)

Just what time may elapse before the hordes of the "north parts" come up against Israel "as a cloud to cover the land," we may not know, but of the result there can be no doubt. However, before Christ's Kingdom can be established on earth, we read from the prophet Zephaniah that all the earth (earthly order of things) shall be devoured with the fire of God's jealousy, which agrees with the great "earthquake" in the later verses of Rev. 16. It would seem, however, that the great shaking of all nations need not necessarily occur at the exact time of Israel's last great trouble; just as Israel will be delivered from their terrible experiences and receive the Kingdom blessings first, they will be a wonderful example to all other nations of the world of what the Lord can and will do for all who look to Him for help in their extreme sufferings. (See Micah 4:1-3.)

From the words of our Lord we learn that in the great troubles ahead "men's hearts shall fail them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Evidently the Lord sees it will be in the best interests of mankind that their hearts should fail them when set upon those things which He could not approve. How different, however, is the condition of the Lord's people as they view "these things coming to pass." Having the assurance that this "present evil world" with Satan as its prince is to pass away in the world-wide upheavals, to be succeeded by Christ's Kingdom "wherein dwelleth righteousness," they surely are praying more fervently than ever "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as in heaven." And above all, to have the heavenly hope of joint-heirship with Christ as a reward for faithful service, the follower of Christ, with his affections set on things above will look forward with joy and expectancy, ever praising the Lord for all privileges and favours granted in the house of his pilgrimage.

It Matters to Him.

Though doubt and dismay should enfold you,
And hope of relief become dim ;
Remember that someone has told you
To “cast all your care upon Him.”

The world is unkind,
And friends may not mind;
But it matters to Him.
If sorrow and trouble o’ertake you,

And grief fill your cup to the brim ;
There is One who will never forsake you,
So “cast all your care upon Him.”
He will not pass on Or bid you begone,

For it matters to Him.
When mourning the loss of the dearest,
And tears make your couch seem to swim,
‘Tis then that the Promise is clearest,

So “cast all your care upon Him.”
The world may not grieve,
But you must believe,
That it matters to Him.

If worried and worn, you’ve neglected
The lamp that He gave you to trim,
Even then by His Word you’re directed
To “cast all your care upon Him.”

His coming is near,
Though some not care,
But it matters to Him.

—F.W.P.

Discipleship.

(Convention Address.)

THIS is a very big subject, and I can give only a few thoughts; but when we consider all the sin and sickness and death in the world, it is a wonder that there are not more who want to become disciples of Christ, so that they could get salvation through Him at the present time. As we look around, we see there is only just a few who genuinely look for God, and although it says in the Word that God is not far from any one of us, the majority do not find Him.

We experience a great joy when we come to know the Lord, and become disciples. We want to tell others. We remember Andrew, when he found Christ—"He first findeth his brother, Simon Peter, and saith unto him, We have found Messias, which is being interpreted, the Christ." The Kingdom of God was nigh unto them. Christ was looking for disciples, ones who would be willing to follow Him at that time, ones who were ready to accept the supreme offer of joint-heirship with Him. But some said they could not—one said he had bought a piece of land and had to go to that, another said he had bought a yoke of oxen and would have to prove them. Another had married a wife, and could not leave her. So many were not willing to become disciples. .

Then the message had to be sent to the highways, where the people would not have much to lose. . We read that for a time there were quite a few followers. His message, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," seemed very attractive to them, but it was only up to a certain point. When each one realised that "strait was the gate and narrow the way," so few were willing to carry on; they realised that it cost them something. So we read that from that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. It was too hard for most of them. They were like many people to-day. They are willing to have something for nothing, but are not prepared to sacrifice earthly things for rich heavenly blessings.

Then Jesus asked the twelve disciples, "Will ye also go away?" and they answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Jesus had explained previously how the manna in the wilderness was not the real life-giving bread from heaven, but said, "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." "Then they said unto Him, Lord, evermore give us this bread."

So it is with all of Christ's disciples to-day, we each pray, "Evermore give us this bread"—Jesus Christ. And as Paul said, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection." So even to-day the world offers nothing to a Christian, to a disciple, for we all know from experience that all earthly gain is delusive, shallow.

"Henceforth my chief concern shall be
To live and speak and toil for Thee;
Renouncing every worldly thing,
And safe beneath Thy shelt'ring wing,
My sweetest thought henceforth shall be
That all I want I find in Thee."

We find in life's experiences that without Christ all is valueless, and sown in vain. Christ taught this very early to His disciples. When the disciples were told to tarry, after the ascension, many of them could not be inactive indefinitely, so went back to their fishing profession. We remember the account of how they were fishing all night and caught nothing, but the risen Lord knew all about this, and being on the shore He called out to His disciples to cast the net on the other side of the boat. Of course they thought that was a silly thing to say, but just to show how foolish it was they did so; they thought if there were no fish on one side there would be none on the other. But they got their nets full, and overflowing. They knew it was the Lord then! So Jesus taught that their success was entirely dependent on whether they had Him with them or not. So it is with us to-day—"Without Me ye can do nothing," said Christ. "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me." John 15:4.

The incentive to enter the School of Christ as a disciple is, as we know, of the Heavenly Father's invitation—"As many as the Lord your God shall call." These are justified believers, who approach the Throne of Grace by a new and living way. To such God extends the High Calling, inviting them to become sons of God,— "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified

together.”

It is good to remember that when one becomes a disciple of Christ, until he is perfected at the resurrection he is a novice, and becomes a disciple for the reason that he wants schooling or instruction, that he may become morally and intellectually to the full stature of Jesus Christ. While novices, we are expected to grow,—”Grow in grace and knowledge,” and become absolutely qualified for the future service, “as able ministers of the New Covenant.”

The School of Christ may be considered, then, as a school of self-denial and self-sacrifice which would be promoted by love and maintained by devotion.

“Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.”

Even Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow in His steps. It is good to remember the example He left behind. His words were, “Follow Me.” We must remember that in our flesh we cannot do the things we would like to do, but it is the New Creature or new mind which is in the School of Christ, and which is being perfected, being brought into full accord with the Divine will in the likeness of our Lord. We cannot expect to get our flesh into absolute harmony with the Divine laws because of imperfections, inherited or otherwise. We all know only too well how the spirit is willing, even when the flesh is weak. That is why Paul could say, “Henceforth know we no man after the flesh, yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him (so) no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” 2 Cor. 5:16, 17.

A disciple, then, seeks first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, knowing that all necessities, temporal and spiritual, will be supplied. These disciples are considered as pilgrims, strangers, and have no earthly inheritance. We see this illustrated by a type in Israel. The tribe of Levi were cut off from the other eleven tribes and did not possess any land. This shows that the antitypical Levites, Christians or disciples, would not have any earthly inheritance, but would forfeit that, give it up, and have the spiritual inheritance.

So we read, “God hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.” This “translating” gives us a thought: we all represent plants on the earth, and have been uprooted, our earthly roots have been severed as it were, earthly hopes severed, and now we have been replanted, transplanted or translated. And so God “hath raised us up together, and made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Eph. 2:6.

We are in the “Holy” now, feasting on the shewbread, and receiving the light of the candlestick. So we must each realise that anything earthly we possess must become subservient to our higher interests. We read, “Here we have no abiding city, but seek one to come,” for our citizenship is in heaven. So we are just sojourning here on this earth.

“I’m a pilgrim, and I’m a stranger—
I can tarry, I can tarry but a night;
Do not detain me, for I am going
To where Life’s waters are ever flowing.”

So we are exhorted, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” Col. 3:1-3. So if we keep ourselves in the love of God, we must continually plant our affections on heavenly things, and continually be rooting out the weeds of earthly desires and attractions.

We each find that this walk as a disciple is not an easy one; it is always against natural tendencies, and the natural man does not understand the motive-power that impels the Christian to go forward and press on toward the goal, but we read how “the love of Christ constraineth us,” or impels us. Paul could say this very well. He could count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. He could also say, “Neither count I my life dear unto myself.”

We should be like Moses who despised earthly gain and Egyptian royalty—”By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in

Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.” Heb. 11:24-26.

So, to each of us belongs exceeding great and precious promises, which are, “If we suffer with Christ, we shall also reign with Him,” and “we shall be glorified together with Him.” We read how Peter left all things, and followed Jesus; no doubt each of us has done the same.

In the parable of the treasure hid in the field, we learn what our true position should be. According to Matt. 13:44, the finder of the treasure, realising its value, wanted it for himself, and had such faith that he dispensed with all of his property in order that he might have sufficient to buy the field which possessed the treasure. So it is with us. We have to get rid of what we have, so as to become possessors of rich heavenly promises. We have in one way, too, to rid ourselves of what we have in our earthen vessels. We have to empty ourselves, and be refilled with this treasure that was in the field, refilled from the heavenly storehouse.

It is only those who appreciate the Divine treasure that will ever possess it. Solomon said, “Buy the truth, and sell it not.” It is possible to sell it after we receive it. We need to ask ourselves then, What have we given up, or done away with, so that we can have this treasure? With many of us, perhaps, it has caused us the loss of brother or sister or mother or father or land or a good name, but it has been worth it, hasn't it? If we love the present life with its elusive hopes and prospects, we will certainly labour for the meat which perisheth. If we by faith receive the Gospel offer of this Age, with the promises of a share in the Kingdom with Christ, then in proportion to our faith -and conviction and appreciation will be our self-sacrificing zeal to attain the prize; as it is written in the Psalm, “The zeal of thine house hath consumed me.” “According to thy faith be it unto thee.” So we see the necessity to put Christ first in all things, and to maintain this attitude right throughout our lives.

See Matt. 10:37-39. This proposition of Christ's means the cutting off of every other love that would conflict with our love for Him and our obedience to His will. Our earthly loves should be accounted as nothing in comparison with our love for the Lord. We should be ready to sacrifice to the Lord's command every earthly hope, aim, object or anything, and lay down our lives willingly and gladly. “Our goal is Christ, and Christ alone.”

So we see the terms Jesus sets forth are very different from those made by many who profess to be God's mouthpieces. We can see the difficult terms of discipleship, and only those willing to comply with such terms and thus demonstrate their love and loyalty to God can be entrusted with such great power and glory and immortality which every saint will gain.

Devotion to the Lord now necessarily means the severing of earthly ties. It means that the followers of Jesus will be thought a peculiar people, many will think our course strange, radical, unnatural. Hence Paul could say, “We are fools for Christ's sake.” But it is only those who can stand these experiences who will win the crown.

Paul exhorts us in Heb. 13:13, “Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.” Viewed from the worldly standpoint, the sacrifice is extremely foolish, and the world will hide their face, as it were, from it, for it will be offensive to them. Just as they saw no beauty in Jesus Christ, neither will they appreciate any merit in the sacrifice of the Church. But in the next Age, by beholding the good works of the disciples of the present Age, they will be able to glorify God.

Adding to the severity of the terms, Jesus declared, “Whomsoever doth not bear his cross cannot be My disciple.” Cross-bearing, then, is a daily matter, and our crosses are the oppositions of the world, the flesh and the adversary which conflict with the Divine will as laid down for us in the Lord's Word. To some, the cross may appear more burdensome than to others, yet with us all it should be our “reasonable service,” as Paul said in Romans 12:1. All our trials and difficulties should be esteemed as light afflictions, which are working out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Our proper sentiment should always be, “Not my will, but Thine, be done, O Lord.” This is very heart-searching. Christ said to James and John, “Are ye able to drink of my cup, and be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with?” They said, “We are able.” The “cup” represents the shame and ignominy connected with His death. By the Lord's grace and strength these two disciples were able to share His ignominy and death, and it is the same with each of us. We are beheaded for the witness of Christ. Each has his portion to share in the great Atonement sacrifice, and each has a part in the filling up of the afflictions of Christ. Christ said, “Drink ye all of it,” We each have a share of it, and the cup must be drained to the dregs during this Age, because we know that the restitution blessings are absolutely dependent upon all this.

It is a great privilege to suffer with Christ. We need zeal for God's work, that we may be faithful witnesses, earnestly contending for the faith. We want to be like Jeremiah, saying, "His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." Jer. 20:9. We must all realise that it is impossible for God's true children to forbear from preaching His word. "Woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel." We should be like Jesus Christ who bare witness to the truth.

"I love to tell the story,
It did so much for me,
And that is just the reason I tell it now to thee."

In Australia we still have the wonderful opportunity of preaching the truth, but we know the night will come wherein no man can work, but we should keep on preaching the Word to those who have ears to hear. "Blessed is he that soweth beside all waters."

There is another point. If it is a joy and privilege to be stewards of earthly things, how much more blessed it is to be stewards of Divine truth, to be able to discern spiritual truths, the words of life and beauty, and thus be stewards of the manifold grace of God. We need to appreciate the fact that each disciple is a steward, some to a greater degree and others to a lesser degree, but nevertheless all stewards.

We read that to every man in Christ is given a measure of the spirit to profit withal, or of which to make use. So we need not say that we have nothing to use, because each has a measure of the spirit. Each has at least one talent, and we want to remember, too, that it was the person with only one talent who hid it, and this seems to show that those who have less talent are more inclined to bury it in earthly things. So we need to make sure that we each are using our talents.

All disciples should be living witnesses, being known and read of all men with whom they come in contact. No doubt many of us are slow in speech, like Moses, but we can each hand out a tract and be witnesses that way, even if we cannot speak. Before God will say, Have rule over five or two cities, He will ask us each to render up our account unto Him, render our stewardship account, and each will have to answer for himself. Each one will have to be faithful in the things committed unto him.

Each disciple must push forward in the Narrow Way, each must be determined to render their very all, and be like Christ, "How am I straitened till it be accomplished." Luke 12:50.

Earthly advantages and prospects may prevent some of us from placing all on the altar. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings." Mal. 3:8. We must realise that we can rob God, we can keep something back from the altar, like Annanias and Sapphira. We need to be faithful and ready at any time. The Gospel Age is certainly closing, and we cannot receive the crown if we delay. We do not know, it might be said, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee." A mess of pottage may rob any of us of our birthright. A little laxity of spirit and groping in forbidden paths might make us lose our crown. We see that God desires disciples who will serve Him in sincerity and truth.

Again, we are reminded to bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar. We get the thought there that if the cords are binding the sacrifice down we are rendering our all to the Lord. "God is the Lord, which hath showed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, eyed unto the horns of the altar." Psalm 118:27. Just as Aaron burned incense in the Holy, and it ascended to God, may the laying our all on the altar be acceptable to God in the beloved.

2 Cor. 2:15. "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life."

As disciples, one of the qualifications we should have is peace of mind, above all people on earth. We can confidently leave it all to God, lift up our heads and rejoice, knowing that our redemption draweth nigh and all things are working together for good. "My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

We need not worry about the outcome of present world ills, knowing it is in God's hands, for God is over-ruling as He has never done before. We just need to keep our eyes on Jesus. Peter tried to walk on the sea, but when he took his eyes off the Lord he began to sink. Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and he was saved. We each do not want to be overcome with the rough seas that are encircling the earth, but need to fix our eyes on Jesus, and keep hold of His hand. Christ said He would hold each disciple by His own right hand. We will be safe then.

There is a little story about a boy, which brings in this matter of peace. He was on a long journey, and the night was dark and the weather rough, and the people in the train thought he would be frightened. Someone in the carriage said, "Aren't you afraid, sonny?" He said, "No, I am not afraid. My father is driving this train." The lesson is there. We should not be afraid of the world's trouble. We know that God is driving the "train." We know that God has supreme command, and has determined the bounds of man's habitation.

So we know that although the night around us may be dark and stormy, the Father is always directing all things for our ultimate good. "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." Isa. 32:17, "The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." May we, then, with full assurance of faith press along the Narrow Way that leadeth unto life eternal.

How Hope is Strengthened.

(Contributed.)

HOPE has the thought of trust, confidence and expectation. Faith is the basis of hope; it is the substance of things hoped for. (Heb. 11:1.) The Psalmist prayed that the word of truth would not be taken out of his mouth, because it caused him to hope. He goes on to say, "They that fear Thee will be glad . . . because I have hoped in Thy word." Again, "My soul fainteth . . . but I hope in Thy word." (Psa. 119:43, 49, 81.)

Then we have the promise made to Abraham, confirmed to Isaac and again to Jacob, which is a promise of hope for all.

In Acts 26:6, 7, we find Paul before King Agrippa because of his hope in the resurrection, and he goes on to tell the king of his conversion and commission to preach, and the reason for his hope, in such language, that the king said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Surely these things, together with the promises of God would strengthen Paul's hope and ours also, and make him strong and confident that God would bring to pass all that He has promised. Encouragement always strengthens.

Hope stands between faith and love; we must have faith before we can have hope and hope maketh not ashamed.

We rejoice in hope of the glory of God and not only so but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulations worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope. And hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy spirit which is given unto us. We are saved by hope; we rejoice in hope. Whatsoever things were written afore-time were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. The promises of God found in the Bible are full of hope for us 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.

"Christ in you the hope of glory," is the great mystery made manifest to the saints. "Beloved now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, and see Him as He is. And everyone that hath this hope in him purifieth himself." "If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him," to uplift and bless all the families of the earth, in fulfilment of the promise made to Abraham, whose seed we are if we are Christ's. (Gal. 3:29.)

This hope set before us is like a beacon that lights our pathway and guides us through trials, difficulties, temptations and tribulations that beset us along the narrow way, the way that our dear Redeemer trod before us, and which we follow in His steps, looking for that blessed hope of joint-heirship with Him. This will be the consummation of our hopes. Therefore the experiences through which we pass strengthen our hope in the precious promises of God and add joy and peace to hope. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the holy spirit." (Rom. 15:13.)

New Booklets.

Our English brethren have two new booklets prepared which we are now able to supply from stock, as follows:

“The Golden Future — Our Hope for years to come.” This is a useful booklet to convey in a general way the wonderful plan of salvation, and is timely for the days in which we live. Containing 36 pages, price 4d. each, or 3 for 10d. post paid.

“The Promise of His Presence.” This is a helpful booklet on this subject for the brethren, containing articles which appeared for some months in the “Bible Students Monthly.” Of 92 pages, in paper covers, price 8d. each, or 3 for 1/9, post paid.

Look Away to Jesus.

Trials are bound to come to all. They may be of such a nature that, to your finite conception, it may mean utter defeat, but why not look away to Jesus who is most wonderfully able to cause you to surmount the seemingly unsurmountable difficulties. Faith in Jesus will do the work. He is all-sufficient and all-powerful. He has never yet failed. What, to you, may seem the hardest, the most trying or perplexing difficulty, will in God’s own good time bring most glorious victory if you trust Him.

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