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Do World Events Foreshadow Armageddon ?

THE subject of the Battle of Armageddon, we believe, is a most interesting and vital one in the minds of a great number of people, not only those who are really Bible students. This is understandable, because in the minds of most thinking people the term Armageddon has attached to it the idea of a great day of reckoning, in which God will be the Controller and Overseer.

This general idea of Armageddon on the part of thinking people, is very much in accord with the Scriptural record, for in the only place where the term Armageddon is used in the Bible—Revelation 16:16—it is stated in the context (verse 14), that "the kings of the earth and of the whole world are gathered to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

It is usually helpful when trying to fit any great event into the history of mankind, to take a broad view of God's Plan of the Ages and seek to determine at what time God's Word indicates that a change takes place in God's dealings with mankind. In other words, God has called a halt to man's disobedience at various times throughout past ages. In Noah's day, when mankind went on in their pleasures and wickedness, it is recorded—"They knew not till the Flood came and took them all away"—Matt. 24:39. Only Noah heeded God's advice and instruction, and was saved with his family from that terrible judgment of God.

In the days of Sodom, God's judgment was manifest against their wickedness as recorded in Ezek. 16:50—"They were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good."

Also, at our Lord's first advent, God sent a great judgment upon Israel because of their blindness and hardness of heart in rejecting their Messiah. Jesus prophesied of this severe experience for Israel a few days prior to His death on the cross, as expressed in Luke 19:41-44—"And when he was come near, he beheld the city (Jerusalem), and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they

are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground . . . because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." See also Matt. 23:37, 38—"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonians he also referred to this great judgment of God upon Israel, in 1 Thes. 2:15, 16—"They both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway; for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost." God had good reasons, no doubt, for permitting that severe judgment upon Israel at the close of the Jewish Age, and which will yet be to their advantage when the kingdom is established, and Israel and all mankind are raised from the dead to benefit, if they will, from past experiences and the blessings then to be available to all the obedient.

Now, in the end of this present Gospel Age, at the time of Christ's second advent, God is about to call the greatest halt to man's disobedience in the whole history of the human race. Various terms are used in the Bible to describe this outstanding time of God's reckoning with the human family, such as we have seen—"That great day of God Almighty." And again—"The great day of God's wrath", "The day of Jehovah", etc. In Revelation we have the symbol of a great earthquake describing this same upheaval and great levelling process which will humble the human family before their Creator. It reads in Rev. 6:12-17—"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earth-

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quake . . . And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth . . . And the heaven (ecclesiastical systems) departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain (kingdom) and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth . . . hid themselves in the dens (secret societies, etc.) and in the rocks (fortresses of society, civil and ecclesiastical) of the mountains (kingdoms); and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us (over or about, to cover and protect us); and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand."

From the faithful Apostle Paul we are given the true setting for the time when all men, great and small, shall be required to render their accounts to the Lord, so to speak. In 2 Cor. 10, Paul explains that the weapons in the Christian warfare are not carnal, but "mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds (of error and sin); casting down imaginations (human reasonings), and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." This is the important transforming work required in the lives of all true followers of Christ, through the power of God. Then the Apostle adds—"And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience (in the world at large), when your obedience (the Church's obedience) is fulfilled"—2 Cor. 10:4-6. This is a prophetic statement revealing that after all the followers of Christ have fulfilled their covenant of sacrifice, after their "obedience" unto death has been accomplished, joyfully, gladly, in the steps of the Master, the time will then be due for God to deal with all disobedience amongst the masses of mankind.

This judgment of mankind is described in various terms also by the prophets. The Lord, through the prophet Joel, gives some vivid descriptions of His "revenging of all disobedience" in chapter 3, as follows—"Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near . . . Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears; let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about . . . Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat (God's pleading judgment); for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision; for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision (trial, crisis)"—Joel 3:9-14.

Through the prophet Jeremiah we have the further record from the Lord—"Therefore thou shalt say unto them (the nations generally), Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Drink

ye, and be drunken, and spue, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you. And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Ye shall certainly drink. For, lo, I begin to bring evil on the city (Babylon, Christendom) which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished; for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the Lord of hosts. Therefore prophesy unto them, The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation . . . A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, said the Lord"—Jer. 25:27-31.

The statement—"The Lord hath a controversy with the nations"—is of special interest. The meaning of the word "controversy" is contest. The Lord hath a contest with the nations—the day of reckoning is indicated. And this is just the thought contained in the word "Armageddon" which means "mount of destruction."

The Mount of Megiddo was the location in olden times of great battles; so it is used in the Scriptures to describe God's decisive controversy or contest with the nations of the earth. Why is this controversy or contest with all the nations? For the same reason that in Revelation it says that "the kings of the earth and of the whole world are gathered together to the battle of that great day of God Almighty"—to Armageddon.

Could all nations be gathered to the literal Mount of Megiddo in Israel? Is that what the Scriptures imply? The answer is no! Just as Babylon of olden times was literal, and Babylon of the New Testament is symbolic; just as Egypt of olden times was literal, and Egypt of the New Testament is symbolic; so Megiddo (Armageddon) of olden times was literal, and Armageddon of Revelation is symbolic. When an army or even individuals are referred to today as meeting their "Waterloo", there is no thought of them going to the actual place of Waterloo in France, where the French army was defeated. So, in that sense, all nations, all mankind, will meet their "Waterloo" in the great Battle of Armageddon—the great Day of God Almighty.

That does not mean that events in the Middle East, in the vicinity of the Mount of Megiddo, are of small or no importance. Events in Israel and surrounding countries are most significant, and certainly do foreshadow Armageddon—that part of Armageddon pertaining to that area of the world. A prophecy in Ezekiel 38:14-23 is most informative, and with God's deliverance of Israel from the hordes of the "north parts", the prophet declares for the Lord—"Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord."

Further, from the prophet Jeremiah, we have a record with marked information concerning not only the Armageddon experience of Israel, but also revealing the deliverance which will follow the necessary corrections which the Lord sees fit to come upon the descendants of His ancient people gathered in the Holy Land in these last days of the Gospel Age. The prophecy reads—"For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord; and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it. (Since 1918 particularly, this prophecy has been in course of fulfilment.) And these are the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. For thus saith the Lord; we have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it . . . Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel; for lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee; though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished"—Jer. 30:3-11. Surely, that is a most wonderful promise of God's protecting care and final deliverance of Israel in their Armageddon strife, in preparation for their blessing and establishment as the earthly centre of the Lord's Kingdom, after which the ancient prophets will be resurrected to take their place as "princes in all the earth"—Psa. 45:16—to administer the New Order, as "the law shall go forth of Zion (the heavenly phase of the kingdom), and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem"—Micah 4:1, 2. See also Zech. 14:1-3, 6-9.

But what about other parts of the world? Do events in almost every country at the present time, with the increasing unrest and bloodshed foreshadow Armageddon? They surely do! The prophet Zephaniah was used of the Lord to express His "controversy" or "contest" with the nations, great and small—"Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the earth (order of society on earth), shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy"—Zeph. 3:8. Could there be anything clearer than this is the Lord's judgment upon all nations of the world? And who can doubt the outcome!

The prophet Haggai adds his testimony from the Lord, as follows—"For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens (ecclesiastical systems, rejected by the Lord), and the earth (organised law-abiding society), and the sea (restless masses of humanity), and the dry land (social aristocracy of wealth, etc.); and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come"—Haggai 2:6, 7. See also Heb. 12:26, 27.

It is truly evident that all nations must pass through Armageddon, including Australia. But Australians do not go to the Mount of Megiddo, in Israel, for the "Lord's controversy (contest) with the nations." No indeed! Armageddon experiences are coming to Australia; to every state in Australia, to every city and town in Australia; to every home in Australia; to every individual in Australia!

How do we view this situation; with grief and sadness? Or do we love God's will concerning each feature of His plan which He in His wisdom sees is necessary for the ultimate blessing of the whole human family? Armageddon strife will really humble all mankind, and the Lord declares, through the prophet—"Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent"—Zeph. 3:9. Thus, "the desire of all nations shall come"—Hag. 2:7. Just to think of that! No more contention and strife between the nations; no more wars or preparation for wars, because the lasting lessons will have been learned, and those who will not hear (obey) that Prophet—Christ and His Church in glory—shall be destroyed from among the people—Acts 3:23.

Who, that grasps the glorious outcome of the Divine purposes for mankind, including God's victory for the benefit of the human race in His "controversy with the nations", cannot truly say—"I love Thy will, O God! Thy blessed perfect will; in which this once rebellious heart lies satisfied and still?"

While this must surely be the happy condition of God's true people, what of the majority of mankind, many of whom are good people who love the Lord, but are not consecrated followers of the Master? It may be fitting to mention the view of a certain religious organisation, that the Lord will grant protection through Armageddon to all people of good will who join their "Theocratic Organisation." These adherents are practically promised a passport through the Armageddon strife because of their affiliation with this movement, which claims the exclusive right to represent Jehovah on the earth today. Does God's Word support such a theory? We know of no Scriptures which promise either heavenly or earthly blessings to any of earth's inhabitants because of their joining any organisation. The Lord promises the heavenly inheritance only to those "whose names

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The Babe born to be King

WHY were all men in expectation of Him at the time of His birth? What was to be peculiar about Him to lead Israel to expect His birth? The answer to this question is that God had made a certain promise centuries before and the promise had not been fulfilled. This promise contained the thought that a holy child would be born, and that in some way, not explained in the promise, this child would bring the blessing the world needed.

The promise behind the expectation was that which God made to Abraham, saying—"In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed"—Gen. 22:16-18. From that time onward, all the Israelites were waiting for the birth of the child that should bring the blessing.

But why was a Messiah necessary? Why wait at all for the birth of the child? The answer to this question is that sin had come into the world; that God had placed our first parents—holy, pure and free from sin—in the glorious conditions of the Garden of Eden with every favourable prospect and everlasting life at their command if they continued in harmony with Him. But by reason of their disobedience they came under Divine displeasure and sentence of death. This sentence of death has brought in its wake aches, pains, sorrows, tears, sighing, crying and death—all of these experiences as the result of sin.

Our Heavenly Father said to our first parents—and this was the first intimation that He gave them of a deliverance—that "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." The serpent in this expression means Satan—all the powers of evil, everything adverse to humanity, everything adverse to the blessings which God had given them, and which they had lost by disobedience. But the promise was vague and they understood little about the "seed of the woman" and "bruising the serpent's head." It merely meant in an allegorical way a great victory over sin and Satan, without explaining how it should come.

So mankind continued to die; they continued to have aches and pains and sorrows; they continued going down to the tomb. They realised that what they needed was some Saviour to come and deliver them from the power of sin, to deliver them from the death penalty of sin—

Saviour who would be, in other words, a Life-giver. In no other way could mankind be blessed. Hence the Scriptures tell us that God's sympathy was manifested; and we read that, "He looked down and beheld that there was no eye to pity and no arm to save" and with "His own arm he brought salvation." This is what was promised to Abraham—that one should come from his posterity who would be the Saviour of the world; and because this promise was made to Abraham and his seed, they were marked out as separate from all other nations and peoples. To the Jewish nation alone belonged this great honour—that through them should come this salvation. Hence, from that time onward the Jews spoke of themselves as God's people, the people whom God had promised to bless, and through whom He would bring a blessing to all others. Therefore, all other people were called heathen. Israel was thus separated because God's Covenant was with them, and not with the others. But God's Covenant with Israel was for the blessing of all others—"In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Now, we have the "Why" of this wonderful babe being born.

How could He be a Saviour? In what way could He be different from any other babe? Why not use some other babe as the one through whom salvation should come? The answer of the Bible is that salvation could not come to mankind unless there should be a satisfaction of justice on account of original sin. That must be the first consideration. The penalty, "Dying, thou shalt die", pronounced against the first man, must be met before the world could be blessed.

Why not let another man die? Because all were under the sentence of the original condemnation, and none could be a ransom-price or a substitute. Hence the necessity for a specially born babe, different from any other babe. In what way was this One differently born? The Bible explains to us very distinctly that He was not begotten of an earthly father. Although Joseph was espoused to Mary, yet this child was not the child of Joseph. The Bible explains that this child was specially begotten by Divine power, in the mother, though she was still a "virgin" when she brought forth the child.

This is the Scriptural proposition; and while it may not seem clear to some, yet the Word of God standeth sure. If the Redeemer was not perfect then He could not be the Saviour of the world. The promised redemption implied that Jesus would be perfect; it implied that He would be as the first man was before he sinned. "For since by man came death, by man shall come also the resurrection of the dead", "As in Adam all die, even so shall all in Christ be made alive." So this one must be, as the Apostle declares—"holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners"—Heb. 7:26.

It is written that before He became flesh Jesus had an existence; as He declared—"Before Abra-

ham was, I am." Again, in one of His prayers, He said—"Father, glorify thou me with the glory that I had with thee before the world was." The Revelator tells us that—"He was the beginning of the creation of God"—and Paul says that—"by him all things were made." And so our Lord Jesus was not only the beginning, but also the active Agent of the Father in all the creative work in the angelic world and in the creation of humanity, and in all things that were created.

The whole matter is summed up by the Apostle John. We will give a more literal translation of "In the beginning was the Word." This expression, Word, in the Greek is Logos. The thought behind the word Logos is that in olden times a king, instead of speaking his commands directly to his people, sat behind a lattice work, and his Logos, or messenger, or word, or representative, stood before the lattice work, and gave the message of the king to the people in a loud tone of voice. The king himself was not seen by the people—the Logos was the one seen. So this is the picture the Scripture gives us of how Jesus was the express representative of the Heavenly Father, the One through whom the Heavenly Father made Himself known. So we read in the first chapter of John—"In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with the God, and the Logos was a god. The same was in the beginning with God. By him were all things made, and without him was not anything made."

When the time came that our Heavenly Father made known His great purpose that He would bless the world, He gave opportunity to this First-begotten One—the One begotten of the Father—to be the servant in this great work He intended to accomplish for mankind. Consequently, the Scriptures state that "for the joy set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame." And now He has sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He has this great reward because of His obedience even unto death, the death of the cross.

The Apostle speaks of Him as having been rich, but for our sakes becoming poor that through His poverty we might be made rich. He tells us how He left the glory which He had with the Father and humbled Himself to the human nature. Why? Because, as already stated it was necessary that some one should become man's Redeemer; an angel could not redeem man, neither could an imperfect man. The Divine law is "an eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth; a man's life for a man's life." This was to teach us a great lesson that perfect human life having been condemned to death, it would require a perfect human life to redeem it. It was therefore necessary that Jesus should become the "Man Christ Jesus" in order "that he, by the grace of God, might taste death for every man."

The results that have followed have been that He Himself proved His own faithfulness. "Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself

and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"—the most ignominious form of death. It pleased the Father thus to prove Him, not only by death, but by the most ignominious form of death—dying as a culprit, being crucified between two thieves. What a terrible ignominy to die thus!

It would be ignominy enough for us in our imperfection, but for Him, perfect, "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners", it must have been a cause for deep and poignant sorrow. Having completed the laying down of His life, at the end of the three and a half years, He cried—"It is finished!" What? Not His work, for much of that lay before Him! He merely finished this part of the work, finished laying down His life a ransom-price.

What next? After His death came His resurrection, and we read that "God raised him from the dead on the third day." According to the Scriptures He was raised up from death a glorious being—"Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption; sown in dishonour, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power; sown a natural body, raised a spirit body." "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him and given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, those in heaven, and those on earth, and those under the earth; that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"—Phil. 2:10, 11.

But we see not yet all knees bowed to Him. Why not? The Scriptures tell us that before He begins His great work for the world of mankind, He first does a work for the elect, the Church, those who desire to walk in His footsteps, to gather out of the world a Bride, to be co-workers with Him in all the great work of the Father. This is the important work in process of accomplishment, and this has been going on now for over nineteen centuries.

We see how He gathered out the saintly ones from amongst the Jews—"Israelites, indeed, in whom is no guile." Not finding enough to make the desired number, He proceeded to gather them from all nations, kindreds, tongues and peoples.

The Apostle tells us that when this Bride class is united with Him they shall be part of the Seed of Abraham, as we read—"And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise"—Gal. 3:29. This statement relates to the promise made to Abraham, that through him and his seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Thus we see the work that Christ is accomplishing now.

The invitation to become the Bride of Christ is a very special invitation and those who would be His must walk in the "narrow way." If they will sit in His throne, they must suffer with Him. If they suffer with Him they shall also share His glory. So "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that shall follow", were not only to be accom-

plished in our Lord Jesus, personally, but He was an example for all the Church who are justified through faith in His blood. They have a share with Him in His sufferings, and will share in His glory; they have a share in the First Resurrection, as the Revelator declares—"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years"—Rev. 20:6.

The Apostle says—"I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord", "that I might know him and the power of his resurrection"—the special resurrection—to the divine nature. How? By being made conformable to His death, for "if we suffer with him we shall also reign with him."

All the families of the earth are to be blessed, as originally promised in Eden—"The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Also, as Paul states in the 16th chapter of Romans—"The very God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." So, then, the next thing in order in the outworking of God's Plan will be to bruise Satan and destroy sin.

When will Satan be bound or restrained? Just as soon as this Age shall end; because this Age is mainly for the development of the Bride Class. Then will come the promised Free Grace to all the families of the earth when Messiah's Kingdom shall come. He has promised that when He shall reign, all His faithful shall reign with Him—"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne." All the Church will be associated with Him in His great Messianic Kingdom! and "He shall reign from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth"; and "Unto him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, to the glory of God the Father"; "The knowledge of the glory of God shall fill the whole earth." The whole earth will become as the Garden of Eden. Paradise Lost will be Paradise Restored. The divine image lost in Adam will be restored to the obedient of mankind, for human nature will be brought to perfection in all who obey the laws of the Kingdom. But the glorious reward to the Church will be the divine nature, to be like her Lord, to sit at His right hand, and to bless the obedient in the world of mankind. Man will become not only perfect, having all that Adam had, but will have additional knowledge and character, and this shall be an eternal blessing.

In proportion as we believe in this Babe of Bethlehem shall we rejoice today. In proportion as we believe He was manifested on our behalf; in proportion as we believe He died for our sins; in proportion as we recognise Him as the glorified Saviour; in proportion as we have surrendered our hearts to Him and seek to do the things well pleasing to Him shall we have the peace of God in our hearts.

An Accuser Silenced

TWO fellow-travellers were seated together in a railway carriage engaged in earnest conversation. It was of a religious nature, and one of them, a skeptic, was evidently seeking to excuse his skepticism, by expatiating on the various evils which afflict Christendom. He was detailing, with manifest pleasure, the hypocrisy and the craft and the covetousness and the divisions found in the professing Church, and then he pointed to some of the leaders as the most markedly corrupt of the whole.

In front of them sat a Christian who was compelled to hear all this. Had he felt the accusations to be false, he might have suffered them, as a part of the hatred the world bears towards Christ, and been truly happy in so suffering; but he knew them to be true—too true to be concealed from the most charitable mind, so all he could do was to bow his head and bear the deserved reproach.

Soon, however, the accuser, anxious to extend the circle of his audience, addressed this fellow-passenger in front of him.

"I see you are quick to detect evil," answered the Christian, "and you read character pretty well. You have been uncovering here the abominable things which have turned Christendom into a wreck, and are fast ripening it for the judgment of God. You have spared none but given all a good measure. Now I am a Christian, and I love the Lord Jesus and His people. Not a word shall I offer in defence, but I here solemnly challenge you to speak the first word against the Lord Jesus Christ Himself."

The skeptic was surprised. He seemed almost frightened, and sheepishly replied, "Well, no; I couldn't find fault with Him. He was perfect."

"Just so," said the Christian, "and therefore was my heart attracted to Him; and the more I look at Him, the more I found I wasn't like Him at all, but only a poor, sinful, guilty man. But tell me yourself if I haven't a right to be happy and to love Him when I found out that He had died for me; that on the cross He had fully paid all my debt, and thus cleared me of all guilt? Ever since then I truly love Him, and all the evil which professed followers of His may do, cannot turn me away from Him. My salvation hangs on what He has done, and not on what they are doing."—Horatius Bonar.

Melbourne Christmas Convention

The brethren of the Melbourne Class extend a cordial invitation to all friends able to attend their Annual Convention to be held this year (D.V.) on December 25th, 26th, 27th and 28th, in the Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond. Further information from the Class secretary—Mr. J. B. Hiam, 13 Bunker Crescent, Glen Waverley, Victoria, 3150.

Visiting Brethren

AN encouraging time of spiritual fellowship was enjoyed by the brethren in Australia and New Zealand recently, during the visit of Brother and Sister Bruce of U.S.A., and we give thanks to the Lord for His blessings bestowed upon us here in these lands at this time.

Our Brother and Sister Bruce first visited New Zealand, calling at Auckland and had helpful meetings there with the brethren and throughout both Islands.

Coming to Auustralia they first visited Brisbane and Nambour areas, and refreshed the friends there, calling also at Toowoomba to see the isolated brethren. Sydney was next in order for some days of helpful fellowship, followed by Melbourne where meetings with both Australian and Polish (now Australian) brethren were very much enjoyed. Our Brother Bruce gave some stimulating addresses on various truth subjects, not sparing himself to impart the lovely spiritual truths of God's Word on each occasion.

Adelaide was next visited where the brethren were refreshed by the fellowship and a helpful meeting, and finally the Perth brethren were blessed with the messages of truth and fellowship of our dear Brother and Sister Bruce, whose visit to this part of the Lord's harvest field was so warmly appreciated. We give thanks to them for their loving efforts to serve us helpfully, and to the Lord for overruling and blessing their service to such a good account, by His grace.

In Thy Name

"There were only two or three of us
Who came to the place of prayer—
Came in the teeth of a driving storm;
But for that we did not care,
Since after our hymns of praise had risen,
And our earnest prayers were said,
The Master Himself was present there
And gave us the living bread.

"We noted His look in each other's face,
So loving, and glad, and free;
We felt His touch when our heads were bowed,
We heard His 'Come to Me!'
Nobody saw Him lift the latch,
And none unbarred the door;
But 'Peace' was His token in every heart,
And how could we ask for more?

"Each of us felt the relief from sin,
Christ's purchase for one and all;
Each of us dropped his load of care,
And heard the heavenly call;
And over our spirits a blessed calm
Swept in from the Jasper Sea,
And strength was ours for the toil of life
In the days that were yet to be.

"It was only a handful gathered in
To that little place of prayer.
Outside were struggle and strife and sin,
But the Lord Himself was there.
He came to redeem the pledge He gave—
Wherever His loved ones be,
To give His comfort and joy to them,
Though they count but two or three."

—Selected.

Extracts from Correspondence

Dear Brother—I am enclosing another donation to Frank and Ernest Broadcasts. I hope you are having a happy and profitable time together enjoying the visit of the folk from U.S.A. I have been with you in thought and hope to see more of the meetings during the summer season. I pray that God's blessing may be on your labour in His service, and may the unity of the faith keep us all near to Him. Your sister by His grace.

Dear Frank and Ernest—Just to say thank you for your Sunday morning talks from Geelong. I enjoy them very much, and I study my Bible more. Any literature will be read and handed on. Yours in the Faith.

U.S.A.

Dear Brother—Christian Greetings in the Name of our Redeemer! It is some time since I have sent you a payment for my subscription to the "Peoples Paper." I enjoy it very much, finding the articles stimulating to meditation on the Word of the Lord. I have appreciated that you sent it on even without current payment. A draft is now enclosed.

Since I last wrote to you I have had two heart attacks, so my activities are strictly limited to home since then. Our local Class has been so gracious as to bring the Thursday evening study in Vol. 6 to my home and I enjoy fellowship with the local brethren and those passing through who can take time off for a visit. The Lord does so richly provide. May our Father's richest blessings rest upon you and your associates. Your sister in Christ.

Berean Institute—I have so enjoyed your "Peoples Paper" for so long, and thank you so much for sending it to me, and hope you can continue. I have a friend staying with me at present; she has been reading your "Paper" and has expressed a wish to have it. She is one of God's people; does so much for the Lord's work, so if you could send it she would be delighted . . . I am enclosing \$5.00 for the Lord's work. Thanking you once again.

Bible Institute—Thank you for sending on copies of "Peoples Paper and Herald of Christ's Kingdom." I was staying with my friend who loaned me copies, and she was very kind to me . . . I especially enjoyed the address on "Discipleship" and "Why Do the Nations War?" I am enclosing \$2.00. Thanking you and God bless you in this work. Yours in Christ's service.

The following from the daughter of one of our oldest readers of "Peoples Paper", at 98 years

of age, who has received the "Paper" since 1924, states—I am enclosing a cheque for subscription for the "Peoples Paper". Thank you for your interest in my mother's welfare. She is keeping in good health and is still able to get about quite well. She enjoys her "Peoples Paper" and is at present reading the latest issue, which arrived today. Thank you for your kind wishes. Yours sincerely.

(Continued from page 3.)

are written in heaven"—not on any earthly membership roll. Also the only ones on earth who "may be hid in the day of the Lord's anger" are the meek, as expressed in Zeph. 2:3. Seeking righteousness and meekness is indeed beneficial, and the prophet's words imply that the lowly-minded will not be involved in the struggles and strife of Armageddon, and so may be measurably "hidden"—outside the influence of the chaos which will extend throughout all lands. However, there is no Scriptural authority for any system of religion to grant protection through Armageddon to any of their followers. False claims of this kind can be very deceptive, just as false claims of the Papacy to be the only true church on earth have deceived millions throughout the centuries. God does not favour people who are affiliated with a particular church or organisation on earth. God blesses individuals only whose hearts are lifted up to Him in spiritual communion now, who are walking in the steps of Christ's sacrifice; and to a lesser degree those who feel after Him, desiring righteousness with a meek disposition, though they are not called for the heavenly kingdom.

Viewing world events today, we can truly see the signs of Armageddon approaching, which brings to mind the words of Jesus, when His earthly life was almost completed, as recorded in John 9:4—"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." Applying these words to ourselves, we must use all opportunities for God's service also, "while it is day." When the trouble increases we may well appreciate the attitude of Moses, as he spoke to Israel at the Red Sea—"Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." The battle is not ours, but the Lord's. The time will also come, as expressed in the hymn—"Nothing left but time for prayer; waiting to be gathered there."

The Psalmist presents a message of comfort and assurance to the last members of the Lord's people in the end of this Gospel Age—"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." God's people may well commit their whole existence into the care of their Heavenly Father in full confidence,

come what may in this "present evil world." They will await the Lord's good time for their full deliverance into the kingdom of His dear Son, meanwhile being supplied with heavenly sustenance—"There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God (the Church, in which God dwells), the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her at the dawning of her morning"—when she has passed through her night time, in which "no man can work", and has been ushered into glory. Her morning is to precede the Millennial morning—Psa. 46:1-5.

Tracts Available

The article—"Why Do the Nations War?"—which appeared in the "Peoples Paper" is now available in tract form. Supplies of these tracts, also "Glad Tidings of Great Joy Shall be to All People", "The Glad Resurrection Day", "When Christ is King" and "Why Jesus Came Down from Heaven", are available for wise distribution, provided free through the Tract Fund.

Don't be afraid of opposition. Remember, a kite rises against, not with, the wind.

Books Available

In view of increased postal charges, literature prices are now as follows:—

- "God's Promises Come True"—\$2.00 (postage from 86c to \$2.15, according to distance in Australia).
- "The Divine Plan of the Ages", Cloth—75c (postage 60c. Paper bound—50c, postage 60c).
- "The Creator's Grand Design"—\$1.00 (postage 60c).
- "The Book of Books"—\$1.00 (postage 60c).
- "Daily Heavenly Manna"—\$1.00 (postage 60c).
- "Songs in the Night"—\$1.00 (postage 40c).
- "Poems of Dawn"—\$2.20 (postage 40c).
- "Emphatic Diaglott", N. Testament—\$2.00 (postage 60c).
- "Tabernacle Shadows"—50c (postage 40c).
- "God and Reason"—10c (postage 20c).
- "God's Plan"—10c (postage 20c).
- "Hope Beyond the Grave"—10c (postage 20c).
- "Israel in History and Prophecy"—10c (postage 20c).
- "Our Lord's Great Prophecy"—10c (postage 20c).
- "Manner of Christ's Return"—10c (postage 20c).
- "Christ's Return"—10c (postage 20c).
- "Some of the Parables"—10c (postage 20c).
- "Where Are the Dead"—10c (postage 20c).
- "Lights and Shadows in Christian Experience"—10c (postage 20c).
- "Our Bible Translated"—10c (postage 20c).

Numerous other smaller booklets.

BEREAN BIBLE INSTITUTE

19 Ermington Place, Kew, Victoria, Australia, 3101

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