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Streams of Living Waters

“A river the streams whereof make glad the city of God.”—Psa. 46:4.

“Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.”—Isa. 12:3.

NEXT to the breath of life we breathe, pure water ‘ is the chief essential of our existence.

Foods are also necessary to sustain our lives but we can live quite a while as human beings, if able to drink pure water.

Thirst is a terrible thing, which perhaps only those fully know, who have traversed the hot parched lands of blazing sunshine with water all gone and no shelter. Unless relief soon comes death quickly results and the poor body falls to the hot earth. Sometimes such tragedies have occurred even when the needed water was close at hand, but was unknown. Such persons died because they “knew not.”

The poor world to-day is perishing for lack of water of life—yet there is a mighty Rock in this weary land and there are wells of water; but they know not—“My people perish for lack of knowledge.” “There is a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.” (Amos. 8:11.) “Yet there is a river the streams whereof make glad the city of God.” “Light is sown for the righteous and gladness (the joy of the truth) for the upright in heart.” “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; Thou ledest me beside the still waters.” See also Isa. 55:1.

The streams that gladden the hearts of the people of God had their commencement even in the utterance of the curse on Satan by whom our first parents had been decoyed into sin with its consequence that “death passed upon all.” It was only the beginning of a stream, the small spring which ultimately gained such wideness and fulness, such soul reviving power. “The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.”

It gave hope to such as sought righteousness, and there was doubtless some good understanding as to what Justice required in order that reconciliation with God might be achieved. Abel evidently had the correct thought in bringing the sacrificed lamb—a type of the Lamb of God that should take away the sins of the world, “The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,” the promised Redeemer. Cain failed to perceive the principle of Justice involved in the sentence of death, as though God could be appeased by the pleasantness of the beautiful productions of the earth—his own works. He failed to drink of the stream of truth and promise, but Abel drank of it and so is reckoned among the justified—”Righteous Abel—says Jesus (Matt. 23:35.) See also Heb. 11:4.

Throughout that age the stream of hope was such as to sustain faith and out of that corrupt time a few names are recorded of those who “walked with God” and looked forward to a day when right would triumph over evil and when “the Lord would descend with ten thousand of His saints to execute judgment and to convince the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds.” (Jude 14, 15.)

The stream grew clearer and deeper when God dealt with Abraham and made a great covenant with him, promising that all the families of the earth would be blessed and that this should be through his seed. Abraham drank of that good promise against all odds, and was sustained by its refreshing draught and so proved, his faith in God and His promise that he ever stands out as “the father of the faithful.” So with Isaac and particularly with Jacob, who like Paul, “counted everything as dross” that he might inherit the promise, and God emphasised the promise to him.

That Abrahamic promise has sustained and refreshed God’s people ever since and is the “anchor to our souls” says Paul. As we read through the Bible we find all along the way this river the streams whereof make glad the city of God. Joseph drank of that stream and was strengthened, to maintain his faith and loyalty to God under the most trying circumstances of slavery, false accusation and unjust imprisonment.

The children of Israel were sustained by the same stream, in those two hundred years of oppression and slavery; they were still looking for the promised deliverer — Messiah. Moses had been taught of, his parents and drank deeply of the same stream and grew strong in faith so that he “chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ (Messiah) greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.” (Heb. 11:23-26.)

With the deliverance from Egypt by such miraculous means, the plagues of Egypt, the slaying of the first-born, the Passover of Israel’s first-born and crossing the Red Sea, the stream of hope seemed to run deeper and fresher. All through the days of the Law and the prophets it was that same refreshing stream that gave hope. How often is the fountain referred to. In times of trial or calamity, prayer is addressed to the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob and claim made upon that promise to them. Also when God would speak to them, as to Moses, it was “I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob.”

How the stream clarified and widened and deepened as new messages came through the prophets. While some messages were so deep as to be hidden, like “the mystery hid from ages” there was much that plainly spoke of happy days to come when the great covenant with Abraham would have fulfilment. For instance Isa. 61, and Jer. 31, and so many portions full of promise of Divine providence and blessing.

Time would fail to speak of the faithful in all ages who drank deeply of this stream. How David rejoiced in it and loved to dwell in the courts of the Lord’s house. The 110th Psalm is full of the hope of the fulfilment of the promise of Messiah—the Melchisedec King and Priest — “He shall drink of the brook in the way, therefore shall he lift up the head.” It is at the brook we get the refreshment and it is the place to find the pebbles for the sifting to slay the giants that oppose the people of God. How Psa. 119 abounds in appreciation of the stream of truth, the Lord’s words of promise, of the Law and of testimonies. “O how I love thy law, it is my meditation all the day, etc.”—verses 97-103. Also Psa. 42:1, 2—“As the hart panteth after the water brook so panteth my soul after thee, O God.”

So it was that David was sustained all through those days of trial, chased as an outcast by Saul seeking his life. So much did David drink of the stream of God’s good promises not only to Abraham, but also the personal promises — “the sure mercies of David” — that he would not lift up his hand against Saul. He simply used his diligence to keep safely out of Saul’s way, in beautiful confidence sparing Saul’s life when he could have slain him, although tempted by his faithful adherents who argued that surely it was the Lord who had put his enemy into his hands on two occasions. See 1 Sam. 26:8-10.

Drinking of the stream that makes glad the city of God gives confidence and trust in God and sustains faith in the hour of need. This stream of truth and Divine promises continued to flow, always fresh with truths appropriate for each day, present truth for every age, as also a fountain of living water for every one who like a “hart panting for the water brooks” longs for God and the knowledge of His way and will, and to understand His purposes. It was this stream that supported those of whom Paul speaks in Heb. 11 — “Of whom the world was not worthy.” See verses 36-38.

How good were the expressions of Psalmists and prophets declaring God’s good providence, protection and blessing upon Israel and those who put their trust in the Lord. While there is the deeper and wider meaning to many of these prophetic expressions, they undoubtedly were intended to be an encouragement to the Lord’s suffering people in the days of old. “The Word of the Lord endureth forever” and is ever fresh—present truth in every age.

How the songs of the Psalmists and words of the prophets would cheer and support the faithful in their days and yet those same songs and messages contain for us deeper truths and are “meat in due season” to the household of faith all along the way, even to us at the present time.

Paul tells us that Israel drank of the water of the rock which was a symbol of Christ. The faithful then drank of that spiritual rock, which rock was Messiah—that was their hope. We drink of that same spiritual rock in a deeper, fuller sense, for our hope is to be members in the Messianic company—members in Christ.

That privilege was reserved for Israel but as a nation they had failed to drink deep enough of that Messianic stream; they saw human glory, national exaltation and thought God was bound to protect them and give them such prominence and establish His Kingdom through them. There were others, however, who were better able to perceive the Divine promises and provisions and like old Simeon and Anna could rejoice in the Babe of Bethlehem who was “set for the falling and rising again of many in Israel.”

For some four hundred years or more from Malachi to John the Baptist, the stream of Divine light and truth and promise was not increased. There was however sufficient to sustain the faithful through those trying years of the Gentile oppression and to make strong the brave Maccabees who by their faith were able to overcome their enemies.

Then came John the Baptist preparing the way for Christ and many were refreshed and made ready for the further development of truth by Him who spoke as never man spake. That was the time of the harvest of the Jewish Age; the Lord of the harvest was present and the “present truth” was the sickle used to find the “Israelites indeed,” the true wheat that had to be separated from the chaff and garnered into the Kingdom of Heaven.

How the stream flowed in splendour as the Gospel sun began to shine in the place of the Law age moon. As the moon gives only reflected light from the sun, so the Law and its types and ceremonies were but shadows of better things. “The law came by Moses but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” “God who spoke in times past . . . by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.” (Heb. 1:1, 2.)

No wonder Mary loved to listen to the gracious words of Jesus; no wonder the common people heard Him gladly. The law was a yoke on them which they were unable to bear, but Jesus cried, “Come unto me all ye that are weary, and I will give you rest.” Yes, a new and living way was opening up. The stream began to flow into deep waters bringing refreshment, joy and peace to those who had ears to hear. How beautiful is the incident of Jesus and the woman of Samaria at the well. (John 4:10-14; also John 7:37, 38.)

Certainly there were trials and testings and many went back when they could not understand some of the deep truths which Jesus uttered, but the faithful were helped and strengthened and said, "To whom shall we go, for thou hast the words of eternal life." Then, after the great trial of the crucifixion, how their hearts burned within them when He talked with them by the way and opened to them the Scriptures—"Beginning at Moses and all the prophets He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." Then, later they began to see that just what they had deemed the great defeat of the Gospel movement was the greatest victory ever won and that Jesus

was crowned as conqueror over sin and death; and that the great Divine Plan was not hindered but progressed a most important step.

Then, after the ascension came the promise of the Father—the holy spirit—in fulfilment of the Lord's words, "When the spirit of truth is come it will guide you into all truth and teach you things to come,"—things which Jesus could not tell them, while He was with them, for they had only natural minds and could not comprehend heavenly truths. Now the purpose was revealed—the choosing of a "little flock" that should share the throne with Jesus and be the Abrahamic seed that would bless all the families of the earth. See Peter's words Acts 15:14-17.

How wonderful are the truths that opened up at that time and they are handed down to us in Paul's beautiful letters and the writings of Peter and John. The Church, as the flock of the good Shepherd has been led "beside the still waters"—deep and refreshing. Well did the Master say, "Whoso drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, out of him shall flow rivers of living water. This spake He of the spirit which they that believe on Him should receive: for the holy spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified." (John 7:37-39.)

But oh, how that stream of truth has been polluted. It was so foretold by the Lord in His parables that this would be the case, particularly the parable of the three measures of meal into which a woman placed the leaven. So the apostate church, the wicked shepherds, bishops and clergy introduced so much error and polluted the stream. What a severe indictment of these "shepherds" we find in Ezek. 34:2, 3, 18, 19. So in Revelation the Word of God is represented as being clothed in sackcloth, as lying in the street neglected. It has revived and the purifying of the stream of truth has been going on since the Reformation. Various movements under one reformer or another have been instrumental in removing the errors of the dark ages—pagan-papal doctrines that beclouded the truths of God's Word.

Then came the great movement of later years first under Miller, stirring the whole Christian Church to expectation of Christ's return and then nearly 100 years ago came the glad message revealing the Divine plan, not only of selecting "9 "little flock" but of using that little company—the completed Church—to assist our Lord as His joint-heirs of the Abrahamic promise, in blessing all the families of the earth. More than this, prophecies were understood and seen in fulfilment in events of our day, and all the signs of the presence of Christ were observed and then it was seen that we were actually living in "the days of the Son Of Man," the second presence of Christ.

Then we realise the fulfilment of Luke 12:37 "The feast is spread." The blessing promised at the end of 1335 days is realised. The invitation "If our present Lord (Rev. 3:20), is heard 'and accepted by those "whose lamps are trimmed and burning." Truths are revealed showing that we are at the end of the age, the harvest time is well advanced, soon all the wheat will be garnered and the tares are being bound in bundles. Soon the burning up in the great time of trouble will take place—"The sea and waves roaring; mountains are being cast into the sea," and this river "the streams whereof make glad the city of God," is refreshing, gladdening and strengthening the hearts of God's people, the City of God—the city of God's

people—the holy of the Tabernacle of the Most High; yes, “God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved: God shall help her right early.”

Surely the Lord has “descended from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God.” “Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound.” Soon now the City of God—this “New Jerusalem” will be complete and then will become the new government of earth—the great antitypical temple as figured in Ezek. 47:112, where the waters are seen to flow from under the threshold of the door, flowing deeper and deeper. Then verse 7—”Behold at the bank of the river were very many trees on one side and on the other. . . . These waters issue out towards the east country, go down into the desert and go into the sea which being brought forth into the sea, the waters (of the sea) shall be healed. And it shall come to pass that everything that liveth which moveth whithersoever the rivers shall come shall live, and there shall be a very great multitude of fish because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed and everything shall live whither the river cometh.”

During this Gospel Age it has only been few who have tasted of this living water. Only a net full of fish taken in the Gospel Age and then “some taken, and some cast again into the sea,”—the world. But then (in the next age) will be fulfilled Isa. 60:5—”The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee.”

It has been by the “wells of water” that the Bride class has been found and chosen; soon now that class will be complete and then “the spirit and the Bride shall say come, and let him that heareth say come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him come and take the water of life freely.” Rev. 22:17; see also Rev. 22:1-5.

Because you call Him Father, and profess yourselves His children, it becomes you, as obedient children, to stand in awe, and fear to offend Him, your Father, and a Father so full of goodness and tender love; but as He is the best Father, so consider that He is, withal, the gentlest and justest Judge. “He judges every man according to his work.”

—Leighton.

Harvest, Winter, Sabbath—“Peace on Earth”

AS we approach the close of the year, and the time generally observed in celebration of our Lord's birth on earth, the thoughts of His people are more particularly directed towards the wonderful message of hope announced by the angels when He came as the babe to be the Saviour of mankind—“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” (Luke 2:14.) While we cannot agree that 25th December was the time of the birth of Jesus, but rather that it took place about three months earlier, in harmony with His death at the Passover season 331 years later, yet this message may well be considered at this time, especially in view of its apparent failure after nearly two thousand years have elapsed.

This is surely a hopeful and inspiring message, but, as with all other portions of God's Word, it can be understood only by those who have come to know the Lord and have been blessed with a knowledge of His Plan of the Ages, and even then, much of its beauty and grandeur are beheld only after continual progress has been made and vital union with the Lord is an accomplished fact.

This proclamation of promised “peace on earth”, at once acknowledges the necessity for a great change from the present “wars and rumors of wars” with which the pages of history are stained; in fact, as the history of the past two thousand years is reviewed, the conflicts that have raged from time to time are appalling, and all this since the message was given “On earth peace, good will toward men.”

It would be sad indeed if this promise of peace should fail of fulfilment, but just as surely as it was announced by the Lord's direction, so it will also come to pass by His authority when the due time arrives. This earth, which is beautiful in itself, will become a peaceful haven, where mankind may dwell in safety and none shall make them afraid; and then, shall the Lord's prayer be answered—“Thy Kingdom come: Thy will be done on earth, as in heaven.”

However, the Lord's people, instructed by His Word, have realised all down the Gospel Age that the glad day of peace cannot come until the second advent of their Lord, and further, that at His return He does not immediately establish peace, but has another most important work to accomplish first; namely, the gathering of His elect, His Church, His Bride, unto Himself in a harvest work at the close of this Gospel Age.—Matt. 24:31.

This harvest work of which our Lord speaks so fully in Matt. 24 is the culmination of the selection of His “Little flock” of consecrated followers, which began at His first advent in the calling of His little band of disciples. All down the Gospel Age numbers have been added to this “people for God's name,” and in the time of harvest “the dead in Christ” are raised, and the remaining members on earth are gathered into the heavenly garner, in preparation for the reign of peace which is to follow.

It is important that the harvest work be clearly understood, and the Lord has given ample instruction for all who will prove their value as true “wheat” and be gathered into the garner within a certain period of time. As in the case of the Jewish harvest those who were in the religious systems of the day and failed to respond to the Lord's message were burned up as “chaff” (Matt. 3:12), so in the close of the Gospel harvest, those in the religious systems who do not respond to the harvest message must go through great tribulation, a fiery time of trouble with which this age will end, and be revealed as “tares.”—Matt. 13:30; 24:21.

It is to this wheat class—“My people”—that the Lord has been calling through His Word and by His spirit for many years now, to flee from the present systems of Christianity, which have become worldly institutions and have been cast off from favor.—Rev. 3:14-22; 18:1-5. This “flight” from Babylon

(mother and daughter systems) must be undertaken before the “four winds” are let loose (Rev. 7:1-3), by all worthy of the name “My people,”—“that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”

Flight is to be made not from one denomination to another, but the instruction is “flee into the mountain,” i.e., the kingdom of the Lord (Matt. 24:16), and being translated into the Kingdom of God’s dear Son, He has provided the harvest feast for all such—“For wheresoever the carcase (the food, meat in due season) is, there will the eagles be gathered together.”—Matt. 24:28. And so it is, God’s people are found gathered together in twos or threes or larger numbers rejoicing in the truths provided only for this class by their Lord who has returned unseen by human eyes, to conduct this harvest work before the great time of trouble and later the bringing of peace to the earth. (Rev. 14:14-16.)

The importance of making flight from the systems of Babylon during the harvest of the Gospel Age is impressed again by the Lord in His exhortation —“But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day.” (Matt. 24:20.) These terms “winter” and “sabbath day” are not to be taken literally, but rather our Lord was referring to periods of time which would be very unfavorable, yea, impossible for flight from the systems He has cast off.

The “winter” would refer to the great time of trouble, when the “four winds” of Rev. 7, are let loose, bringing about a great tempest amongst the restless masses of mankind—“the sea and the waves roaring” (Luke 21:25)— resulting in “the heavens” (ecclesiastical systems) passing away with a great noise ... the earth also (present order of society) and the works that are therein being burned up.” (2 Pet. 3:10.) No wonder the Lord exhorts His people to flee to Him, to His Kingdom before the “winter.” During a literal harvest time there is plenty of food obtainable as the grain is gathered into the barn, but how different it is when winter sets in. So in the harvest of this Gospel Age there is abundant provision of spiritual food for the sustenance of all the Lord’s people who are courageous and answer His call to leave the lukewarm Laodicean systems of to-day, but with the coming of the winter period the opportunity of feasting on the harvest truths will be past. “The harvest is past, the summer (time of favourable opportunity) is ended, and we are not saved (as members of the Church)” is recorded by the prophet Jeremiah 8:20, as representing the Great Company, who, though unworthy to be of the Bride of Christ, receive a lower spiritual inheritance following the washing of their robes through great tribulation. See Rev. 7:9-17.

The term “sabbath day” would not refer to a twenty-four-hour, seventh day of the week, but rather to a period of time, typified by the Jewish sabbath day. This period is generally understood by Bible students as referring to the seventh millennium during which Israel and mankind as a whole will be blessed with lasting rest and peace, which the term “sabbath” signifies; and it will be during this very time that the words of our text will be fulfilled —“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” How fitting, then, that our Lord should say—“Pray ye that your flight be . . . neither on the sabbath day,” implying that when this period is ushered in, flight from the Babylonian systems would be out of the question, inasmuch as Babylon will have been thrown down during the “winter” time, which precedes the “sabbath day.” —“Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.” (Rev. 18:21.)

If this be the correct understanding of our Lord’s words (our readers are exhorted to prove all things for themselves from the Scriptures) it will be seen that the harvest, winter and sabbath day refer to three distinct periods of time.

The harvest is for the complete gathering of the Gospel Church during the “days of the Son of Man,” corresponding to “the days of Noah” prior to the Flood. There would seem no doubt that we are at present very near the close of this period, and how important, therefore, that any of the Lord’s people still in Babylon, in any of its forms, should act quickly and flee from all such associations, ere the great

tribulation (Matt. 24:21) cut off all opportunity of being gathered into the Gospel garner, as “The plowman overtakes the reaper.” (Amos. 9:13.)

The winter time is for the purpose of ridding the world of everything out of accord with the Lord and His righteousness—the man-made systems, ecclesiastical, financial, political and social—the removing of those things that may be shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.” (Heb. 12:27.)

The sabbath day, following the severe winter time, is the period during which the elect Church shall be “priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years” (Rev. 20:6), bringing peace and happiness—the desire of all nations—to the chastened world of mankind, for their uplift and progress to perfect human life on the restored earth. Of this time the Apostle Peter says—“We, according to His promise, look for new heavens (Christ and His Church) and a new earth (new social order) wherein dwelleth righteousness.” — 2 Pet. 3:13. “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

Jehovah’s Witnesses : Who are they? Their Destiny?

(Convention Address Reprint)

(Isaiah 43:1-21.)

(Continued From Last Issue)

THE Jewish people, God’s witnesses, are one of the most outstanding proofs of the inspiration of the Bible; they witness to the existence of a Supreme Being, the Creator and Preserver of Israel. They witness and prophesy accurately to the work, office and glory of the Messiah; no false witness or prophet could do this. If others bear witness to Jehovah, it could be only a second-hand witness, for of necessity the witness would be a repetition of the words of Israel’s recorded witness, written in their thirty-nine inspired books. So, beware, Satan has his counterfeits in this matter too—false witnesses, and, therefore, a witness against Jehovah.

Verse 4 of Isaiah 43 states, “Thou art precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee.” God made them honorable because he chose them and made them the depository of the precious truths of true religion; therefore, they are precious in His sight. Because of His strange and miraculous dealings and providences with His ancient people, Israel, God and His Word will be glorified in the eyes of all nations. Remember, all this applies to a people whom the Lord chose hundreds of years before the Christian dispensation.

When the Book of Isaiah was written there were no Christians; we read of them only in the New Testament, and they followed Jesus Christ. They are not referred to particularly as Jehovah’s witnesses, but as the sons of God, as Christ’s brethren, and witnesses of Jesus. Rev. 20:4 states, “I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God.” Also in Rev. 2:13 we read of “Antipas, my faithful martyr (witness),” and so faithful Christians give their lives particularly for the witness of Jesus.

What is the present state of these witnesses of Jehovah? Verses 5 and 6 of this 43rd chapter of Isaiah tell us—“Fear not; for I am with thee; I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back; bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth.” This is being fulfilled today; the God of Israel is regathering His witnesses, His afflicted people to their home. Yes, it is now time for them to go home. We quote from the “Jews in

the News” as follows—it was the power of God which brought the new Jewish State into being, for how else could such victories have been won by a handful of untrained people in the face of such overwhelming odds, with the surrounding states as enemies, and greater enemies supporting them in the background. Many believed in God and the fulfilment of their promises, and when they saw this wonderful protection even the unbelieving were conscious of miracles working on the side of Israel.”

They became established in Palestine against the will of many people. Not one nation helped them; even as some of them approached their beloved land in unseaworthy ships they were turned back by the powers that be, to their great disappointment and anguish, but the promise still held good —”I (Jehovah) will work, and who shall hinder it” —turn it back. (Isa. 43:13.) The Jews in Israel have a saying, that he who does not believe in miracles is not a realist. They have witnessed the greatest Divinely inspired phenomenon of our day.

But someone may say, Did not God cast away natural Israel when they rejected and put their Messiah, Jesus Christ, to death? And did not Jesus say, “Your house is left unto you desolate?” Therefore, does not spiritual Israel inherit the promises? This is partly true, the chief place of favor and some of the most choice promises will be inherited by spiritual Israel—Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the election hath obtained it.” However, natural Israel has not been cast off forever. The 11th chapter of Romans refers to this temporary casting off, and shows how the followers of Jesus of both Jew and Gentile inherit the best of the promises. These are referred to as the priesthood, the holy nation, being all told, a little flock.

This is the day of the Lord’s preparation; the hour has struck in the Divine plan of the ages for the deliverance and regathering of His ancient people. The God of Israel is moving swiftly and mightily on behalf of Jacob’s posterity. Isaiah 11:11, 12 reads —”It shall come to pass that the Lord shall set his hand the second time to recover the remnant of his people. . . . And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”

In this pioneering effort, to reclaim their waste and barren land, there is of course much sacrifice, hardship and austerity among them. They do complain and grumble, and they have 65 languages in which to grumble, for they have come from about that number of countries. But beneath this surface there is a powerful, vigorous vitality, as if some invisible force is driving them on. During the first four years we have witnessed the most spectacular migration of the 20th century. One has figured it out, and says—”Imagine 150,000,000 homeless, penniless, sick and bitterly persecuted people swarming into the United States of America during this same period of four years, to seek a haven of refuge, and you will have some idea of how many destitute newcomers, proportionately speaking, the tiny State of Israel has taken in.” And these migrants are not hand picked, as is usually done by other countries, but the poor, the rich, the lame, the disabled, the sick and the old are all taken in, even the perishing. It is astounding, and the wandering Jew is still going home, and he is there to stay. I remind you of Amos 9:14, 15, “I will bring again the captivity of my people, Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and drink the wine thereof; and they shall also make gardens and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God.” Remember this was promised to a people who were given an inheritance in a special way, the bounds of which were marked out by Divine decree; they transgressed, they were plucked up out of their land and scattered among all nations and now are being regathered.

It does not make sense, nor harmonize the Scriptures to try and spiritualize these Scriptures, or force them to apply to a nation, or group which has not even the features of a Jew, not even the customs nor the unique experiences and promises which belong exclusively to the Jew, to Israel. Strange it is how many people and groups want to make the Jewish promises apply to themselves, their particular group, or to a

Gentile nation. All of this is, of course, a trick of the Adversary, to distract attention from the real people, and the purpose of the fulfilment. “How odd of God to choose the Jew, and still more odd of men to choose the Jewish God, yet spurn the Jew.”

What does all this mean? What relationship have these things to the nations in general? It means that the Gentile Times have ended. Jesus said, “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” (Luke 21:24). The word “until” marks a turning point in the times and seasons of Israel’s experiences and captivity. The time is up that was allotted to the powers that be to rule the world; the retribution and breaking down of the Gentile powers has begun; the saving and restoring of Israel is well under way, and we are witnessing these movements. It means, as stated in Isa. 43:21— “This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.” Jesus, the Witness of Jehovah, said, “Salvation is of the Jews.” (John 4:22.)—“The word of the Lord shall go forth from Jerusalem.”

This means that the blessing of all the families of the earth through Abraham’s seed will soon take place, for the millennial reign of Christ and His glorified saints, His joint heirs, will soon begin. The blindness of Israel concerning their Messiah will soon depart, as predicted by Jesus—“Ye shall not see me henceforth, until ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” The word “until” marks a turning point in the religious life of Israel. There will also be a great change in human society—a desire to learn the ways of the Lord, and the beating of swords into plowshares.—(See Mic. 4:1 -4.)

There are a number of Jews, some being rabbis, who are bearing testimony by word and pen that Jesus of Nazareth is their Messiah. One of them has said, “Can anyone today be such a Jew as Jesus was?” Decidedly no! In recent years thousands of New Testaments in Bulgarian, Hebrew, French, German, Yiddish, Polish and other languages have entered Israel duty free. When Benjamin Disraeli (Lord Beaconsfield) was asked if he was a converted Jew, he replied, “I am not a converted Jew, but a completed Jew.” Israel is being regathered and being made a completed Israel. Both the Old and New Testament are thoughtfully read by many in Israel, and it is reported that the New Testament is being read also in schools, not so much to believe its contents at the present time, but to become acquainted with its history.

The national blindness of Israel to the fact that Jesus is their Messiah continues only for a definite period. This hinges upon another part of God’s plan to be completed first, namely, the selection from among the Jews and Gentiles of the required number to make up God’s elect, the joint-heirs, joint-rulers with Christ; all these must first come into the church. This number will constitute the governing body with the King of the Jews to administer the Laws of the impending Millennial Kingdom, as stated in Rom. 11:25-27 “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.” Note the same names —Israel and Jacob—as given in Isa. 43.

In Rom. 11:11 we have the question — “Have they stumbled that they should fall (irrecoverably)? God forbid (by no means); for through their fall (temporarily) salvation is come unto the Gentiles.” Verses 12 and 15 continue—“Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness? . . . What shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead.”

The restoration and recovery of natural Israel will yet mean, in the age to come, the enrichment of life for the whole world of mankind. Zech. 8:23 states—“Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you.”

Verses 28, 29, 32, 33 of Rom. 11 continue—"As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes (the

Gentiles' sake); but as touching the election (the original selection, or choice of God), they are beloved for the fathers' (ancestors') sakes," to whom God made definite promises; "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance (without change)." . . . "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" The natural man cannot comprehend God's purposes, but He has revealed them unto us by His spirit.

The Lord will do these things not because the Jews are righteous, but because of His great name's sake. Three reasons why He will do this are thus shown from Rom. 11:28, 29, 32. (1) Because of the fathers' sake—Israel's ancestors. (2) Because of His unchangeableness; He will honor His promises. (3) Because of His love and great mercies' sake. Are we not glad that we have gotten free from the creeds and interpretations of men, of whom Paul warns as "wise in their own conceits," for these make verse 32 read quite differently, namely —"Concluded them all in unbelief that he might condemn all everlastingly." We are glad this is wrong, and the Apostle Paul has stated it right, and presents to us a God of wisdom, justice, love and power. Then, in due time, men shall say, "This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the Lord build the ruined places, and plant that which was desolate; I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it." (Ezek. 36:35, 36.)

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, 28th and 29th in the Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond. Further information from Mr. J. B. Hiam, 16 Kennedy Street, South Oakleigh, Victoria, 3167.

So adorn the doctrine, that those may be won by the life who will not be won by the word.

—F. R. Havergal.

Pilgrim Way Ended

ON 27th September last our dear elderly Sister Aird of Melbourne finished the pilgrim way after a life of devoted Christian service in appreciation of the truths of God's Word for well over fifty years' duration.

Living for years away from the Melbourne area our Sister Aird was not known to us until about twelve years ago, from which time she endeared herself to all members of the Melbourne class, enjoying the gatherings and fellowship in the truth with us at the meetings for some years until physically unable to leave her home. Her interest and love for the Lord and His truth was ever bright and sustained, and it was refreshing indeed for all who visited her to realise how the Lord's love and blessing were reflected from our dear Sister at all times.

Of a lovely mellowed Christian disposition, it was evident that our dear Sister Aird's long association with the Lord and His truth had brought forth the fruits of righteousness to a marked degree. While in some weariness in recent times, the earnest longing to go Home was always expressed in sweetest terms, and in the Lord's good time her wish was granted in passing very peacefully from earthly scenes to the glorious heavenly inheritance, the "abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" gained by His grace and strength.

Sincere sympathy is extended to the members of our dear Sister's family, who, while feeling keenly the loss of such a devoted and loving mother and grandmother are thankful to have had their dear one with them for so many years, and now have sacred and hallowed memories of what the Lord's spirit and truth accomplishes in the lives of those fully committed to Him. "They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels." (Mal. 3:17.)

When Christ comes

When Christ comes and takes up His abode in the heart, He reduces it to order and peace; and though it may move amid the excitements and confusions of life, yet it hath an inner stillness, which they cannot disturb or destroy; for the King of Peace is there, and peace is the purchase of His cross, and the last legacy of His love.

—Goulburn.

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

Oxford Teachers' Bible, with References, India paper, thumb index, Brevier clear type, Persian Morocco binding, with Oxford Helps, Subject Index and Concordance, \$11.50.

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