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The Temptations of Satan

(Matthew 4:1-11.)

IN Matthew 4:1, we read—"Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil."

It may be asked why Jesus, the perfect One, should be required to be tempted of Satan. We may wonder why God allowed or desired this great Son whom He sent down from heaven to be the Saviour of the world to be tempted by one who had rebelled in heaven and had been cast out from the presence of God and the holy angels. Probably it was to prove that Jesus would remain obedient to His Father against the greatest temptations or trials that could come to anyone. If our Lord had been sheltered from Satan's temptations, His fidelity and faithfulness to the Father would not have been so clearly proved.

We read in Heb. 5:8—"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." We like to think of this verse a little differently,—"**Yet proved** he obedient by the things which he suffered." He did not learn in the sense that we learn obedience, but He proved His obedience to God under this severe testing.

Another important reason why Jesus was tempted by the devil is revealed in Heb. 2:17-18, —'Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.'" And again we read—"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:15-16.) It would seem that the apostle is not referring in these texts to the temptations of the world at large, but that Jesus was tempted in all things as we are as new creatures. Our Lord was not tempted along the lines of weaknesses of humanity, but in respect of His new mind, the new creature. The Greek word translated "help" in the latter text is practically the same Greek word as is translated "succor" in the former passage. He is able to succor them that are tempted because He likewise was tempted.

Verses 2 and 3 of Matt. 4 tell us that the tempter came to Jesus after He had fasted forty days and nights, saying,

"If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." In other words, Satisfy your hunger; you have been devotedly praying to the Father, and you should now do the correct thing and sustain your strength in such a good and noble sacrifice of yourself. If you be the Son of God, **show that**

you are. That seemed to be the definite temptation. How did the devil say, or communicate these words to Jesus? Undoubtedly by mental suggestion, when Jesus would have been weak physically from the long fast. Our Lord knew it was not the Father's will to use Divine power to satisfy His hunger. To be tempted to do so was a test of His loyalty. Hence His immediate response, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Jesus here used the words of Deut. 8:3. What an example our Lord set for all His followers to give heed to every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God!

It is quite possible to get a wrong or twisted interpretation of some Bible texts if we do not harmonise them with other Scriptures. The whole Bible must harmonize for us to gain an understanding of the will of God, and it really does, for there is harmony from Genesis to Revelation when we rightly divide the Word of God.

From verses 5-7 of this 4th chapter of Matthew, we read—"Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple." This could not have happened literally, but by mental suggestion. How apparently real it must have been is indicated by the fact that the pinnacle of the temple is stated to have been about 600 feet above the bottom of the valley. What an exhibition it would have been if Jesus had adopted Satan's mental suggestion! This suggestion was that Jesus should make a great impression upon the people, by the words of verse 6,—"If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down." Then came Satan's deceptive temptation—"For it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee." Satan even used Scripture to try and influence Jesus to make a great demonstration before the people and prove He was the Son of God, by quoting Psa. 91:11, 12. Knowing that such a demonstration would be quite contrary to God's will, Jesus used another Scripture to prove Satan's application of Psa. 91 to be absolutely wrong and misleading to follow. How truly Jesus replied, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Here we see again how Scripture must be harmonized with Scripture. While those lovely verses in Psa. 91:11, 12, properly applied, are such a beautiful assurance of God's oversight and keeping power on behalf of His people, yet misapplied it could lead into gross disobedience to God. Jesus knew what was behind Satan's suggestion, for to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple would be directly contrary to the laws of nature which God had established, and would have necessitated miraculous intervention to save Him. To make Himself popular by accepting such a temptation would be tempting God.

Matt. 4:8-10 presents the third temptation from Satan to our Lord. "The devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain ..." This again would be by mental suggestion, and the impression must have been very real to picture all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. This was to try and induce Jesus to fall down and worship Satan, with the promise that Jesus would be the ruler of the world over which Satan reigned by usurpation. How prompt and firm again was Jesus' reply,—"Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

"Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him." (Verse 11.) It has been stated that the outcome of Jesus' positive resistance of temptation and definite standing up for His Father in heaven was the moment of great help and assistance from on high. No doubt the assurance would be in hearing from the Father, "This is my beloved Son."

That which is very evident from these three great temptations is that Satan communicated with Jesus by mental suggestions of the most subtle kind, which our Lord had to weigh and determine to resist. Having resisted successfully by obeying His Father's will, guided by His Word, we find the devil left Jesus, and there is no Scriptural record that he returned in anything like the same manner for the remainder of our Lord's ministry on earth. Apparently Satan could see that this strong, obedient Son of God could not be swayed by the methods he had used. He would employ other means to try and deceive this noble Son of God who had come to redeem humanity. Yes, Satan did use other methods and various agents, such as

Judas, and the Pharisees, to hinder our Lord's ministry, without success.

Now we have the question, How does Satan communicate with us—with Christians, and with all mankind? In 2 Cor. 4:3, 4 we have an interesting and helpful explanation from the Apostle in respect of mankind generally. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." Some people claim that in as much as the majority of mankind have not accepted the gospel in this life they are lost forever. But what does Paul mean here? He is saying, If the gospel is hid to the majority of mankind, they are lost to the heavenly calling; he certainly does not mean they are lost eternally.

It is written in numerous Scriptures that mankind is not lost forever, if the gospel is not accepted in this life, and this is another case of harmonising Scripture. But the point of special interest is in verse 4,—
"The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them." Why does God allow this blinding of the minds of the majority of humanity by this wicked angel, fallen from heaven? Does God hold mankind responsible when their eyes are blinded by this great evil one? This refers to mankind generally, and we see that Satan is **permitted** to blind their minds. Does that seem fair? It certainly would not be fair if they were lost eternally. But it does not mean that.

In Luke 8 our Lord gave a parable which helps us regarding the blinding of the minds of those who believe not. "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved." (Verses 11 and 12.) Here we find the seed sown by the way side, and Satan comes and snatches away the seed before it even has a chance to germinate. Does this seem right, for this to be permitted? Verses 9 and 10 of this same chapter are enlightening, —"And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand." Was our Lord also unfair, that He spoke in parables so that the multitude would hear and could not understand? How do we really come to an understanding of this matter? The Lord could apparently see that the hearts of the majority of His hearers were not right material to appreciate the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. His disciples were the ones who were worthy,—"To you it is given." He spoke to others in parables, that seeing they would not see, and hearing they could not understand. God allows Satan to deceive those who are unworthy of the truths of His Word; seeing they are hindered by Satan's ingenuity, are they material for the heavenly calling? Apparently not. However, they may make good subjects for the earthly kingdom of God later on.

So we see in this parable of the sower, the seed was sown on all kinds of ground. In the stony ground the Word gets a start, but when the roots reach the stones, that is a hard-hearted condition, that is the end of the growth. Some seed is sown among thorns, and they choke the Word. It is as well that they fall away early in their experiences, they are then not so responsible. The seed which fell amongst thorns represents those who are choked with cares or riches or pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." Here are the ones illustrated by the disciples themselves. "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God." You are the ones who are good ground, with good heart condition. These are the ones whom God draws to Jesus,—"No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." (John 6:44.) What a lovely Plan it is, when we see it is all under God's care and provision! We should be sympathetic with those people not drawn of God to Jesus now; though good people, they are not invited to be members of the Kingdom of Heaven class. So our gospel is hid to them that are lost to the heavenly calling, because Satan is permitted to blind them now. Satan thinks he is hindering God's purposes, but all the time the plan is being worked out by him, as his oppositions reveal those who have the love of God in their hearts, and who develop as members fit for the heavenly kingdom, by the Lord's grace.

To the Pharisees our Lord had to speak plainly and firmly, impressing that they allowed their minds to be taken over by Satan. Even Pilate could see that Jesus was innocent, and he was a heathen man. But the Pharisees, the religionists of the day, were so taken over by Satan that envy and malice and wickedness was so fully controlling their hearts that they desired to kill our Lord. They were present when He spoke parables concerning them, but the messages He gave were not received into honest hearts, so they were hardened against Him; they became stirred up in malice against our Lord, and so were used of Satan to bring about His death ultimately.

The Apostle Paul, whom our Lord chose for the ministry, was an outstanding example of the working of God's holy spirit. In Acts 26:16-18 we have a record of his wonderful conversion on the Damascus road. How diplomatic and helpful Paul was in trying to impress how the Lord had dealt with him, in speaking before King Agrippa! "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose . . . to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." This shows how the light of truth is able to overcome the power of Satan in the minds and hearts of those who co-operate in resisting the evil power in their lives. Thus they are able to become Christians and walk in the steps of Christ.

Now respecting those who have become Christians, What is their position—those really in the Lord's family?

Does Satan communicate with these? If so, how? In Luke 22:31, 32, we find our Lord's words to Peter,— "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Peter was very confident, of course, at that time that he would not fail. He was allowed to fail, to deny his Lord, and realise that Satan really desired to have him. There is no doubt it was Satan in his heart saying, "I know not the man." The Master was being judged in the Judgment Hall, and Peter was sure he would not deny Jesus, but would die for Him. But before the time of the bugle call, the "cock-crow", he denied his Master thrice. "I have prayed for thee." Our Lord could read the heart of Peter, and knew he was right-hearted deep down, but also that he would fail so that he could learn the lesson. Happy *are we*, if we learn our lessons! We learn our lessons out of Satan's evil suggestions. "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Peter was one of the most noble of the disciples, and zealous, after being recovered and inspired by the holy spirit. We know Peter was encouraged to resist the attacks of Satan in his mind and heart, and overcame by the Lord's grace and sustaining power.

How different it was with Judas, as shown in John 13:2. This was at the Passover Supper. It is rather a poor translation in our Authorized Bible, and should read—"And during supper, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray him." These thoughts had been working in the mind of Judas for some time, undoubtedly. Judas must have been a very lovable disciple to have been called by Jesus, but some kind of acceptance of Satan's suggestion must have worked in, little by little. Apparently Judas was the treasurer of the band of disciples and had the bag, and the love of money must have got the better of him at the instigation of Satan. It seems as though he worked out in his mind that he could accept the money from the priests, and Jesus, with His miraculous powers, would escape, for he had seen the Lord do so many miracles. Satan put it into his heart and mind to betray the Lord, and he had already arranged the meeting with the high priest at the time of the Passover Supper. In verse 27 of this same chapter we read, "And after the sop Satan entered into him." This would seem to be the complete taking over of Judas' mind and heart by Satan; Judas did not resist the evil suggestion to his mind at the first, and Satan knowing this, kept up the pressure till Judas was completely under his power or influence.

The deceptions of Satan are also very subtle, as shown by Paul in 2 Cor. 11:13-15. "For Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness." We might think that surely an angel of light should be all right, but Satan,

who brought about all the suffering, disease and death by deceiving our first parents into disobedience, is now healing temporarily those whose minds are captivated by these promises. This is a counterfeit of the gifts of the spirit to the church in the early days of this Gospel Age. Satan is really trying to captivate mankind by appearing as an angel of light, and many are deceived by these suggestions coming into their minds. The Apostle shows how necessary it is to be on guard against such methods of deceit, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices." (2 Cor. 2:11.)

The Apostles were fully informed of his devices; their experiences revealed the subtlety of the evil suggestions and inner workings of Satan himself.

While the Apostle knew the depths of Satan's devices, the majority of mankind do not, and this includes many in the various systems of religion. Paul explains that the Lord allows many to believe **a lie**, because they are not worthy of the truth, as expressed in 1 Thes. 2:10, 11,—"Because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; for this cause God shall send them (or permit) strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."

From 2 Cor. 10:3-5 we find the Apostle exhorting again respecting the great importance of keeping our hearts and minds under the control of the Lord's power. "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Surely this means submitting or submerging our will to the will of the Lord—being kept by His spirit that anything of a high desire would be absolutely repugnant to the Lord's dear people. "Casting down imaginations." We remember the imaginations of Satan, that he would be "like the Most High." He wanted to be a god, himself; but he will be brought down to the pit. Paul's instruction agrees with the words of our Lord—"I am the vine, ye are the branches." "Without me ye can do nothing." How we need to keep this thought always in mind!

Peter's advice to us is also very important. The Lord assured Peter that He had prayed for him, and we find the Apostle came out strong and victorious and was able to give the same helpful exhortation to other Christians that he had received from the Master. His message is found in 1 Pet. 5:6-9,—"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist stedfast in the faith." Peter had had some experience himself of this evil one going about as a roaring lion. A lion is very subtle, and the roar generally is to terrify the victim so that it can be caught. Fear is the weapon of the adversary, and very often it is the fear of man that bringeth a snare, but "perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath restraint." (See also James 4:6, 7.)

We see clearly that as with our Lord, so with us, Satan communicates through the mind, by evil suggestions, evil surmisings, which must be checked and rejected or they will result in evil words and actions of malice. Our minds must be kept, even as our hearts must be kept to receive the Lord's blessings and favors day by day, as we are exhorted by Jude,—"Building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the holy spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." (Jude 20, 21.) How important it is that we think upon the lovely things and repel the evil suggestions from the evil one, by the Lord's grace and strength. (See Phil. 4:8.)

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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 Christmas Meditation

“Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. . . Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, and good will toward men.” (Luke 2:8-14.)

THE account of the birth of Jesus is always most appealing to us in its simplicity and grandeur. We have in these few verses from Luke’s Gospel an outline of the ultimate blessing of all the families of the earth, when in the dispensation of the fulness of time God will gather together in Christ all things, In this meditation, however, we are to consider the birthday of our Lord from a different standpoint to that expressed in Luke’s Gospel. It does not take any great intelligence to determine that Christmas Day is not the real anniversary of the birthday of Christ. While this matter is not really important in one sense, yet when viewed from the standpoint of our Lord giving His life for the life of the world when exactly 331 years old, it will be seen to be very important indeed. Six months prior to the Passover season at the time of our Lord’s sacrifice on Calvary, dates back to about October 1st. Early in October would therefore be the correct date of the birth of Jesus, the Saviour of the world. And was not this date most important in the history of Israel? It surely was. It was at this time of the year, six months from the Passover season, that God arranged the great Day of Atonement for Israel.

On the typical Day of Atonement certain animals were sacrificed. The first was a bullock, slain by the High Priest and its blood taken within the Most Holy of the Tabernacle was sprinkled on the mercy seat. That was a most important event in the history of Israel, because God arranged that that sacrifice (and the sacrifice of the goat that followed) should typically cleanse the nation for twelve months ahead, and it had to be carried out carefully, in detail, every year.

Keeping that picture in mind, we know from Luke 3:23 that Jesus, when He began to be about 30 years of age (at the time of Israel’s Atonement Day), consecrated Himself to God, and presenting Himself to John the Baptist was immersed, symbolizing His complete submission to God, now to be sacrificed (as the antitypical bullock) for the salvation of the world. We have it recorded in Matt. 3:16 —”Jesus, when he was baptised, went up straightway out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

How clearly Paul explains the matter to us in the tenth chapter of Hebrews—’Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me; in burnt offerings and sacrifice for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me), to do thy will, O God. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.” (Heb. 10:5-7, 4, 3.)

In the continual offering of bullocks and goats year by year, the Israelites would see that these were not in any way a real sacrifice for sins, but pointed forward to the One who would come “once for all.” From our studies of Israel’s Atonement Day we learn that the sacrifice of the animals pictured not only the sacrifice of Christ and His new, spiritual life begun, but also the sacrifice of the Body of Christ and its new, spiritual life begun.

To most of us growing up from childhood, the anniversary of our birthday may have been very important in our minds, but when we become true followers of Christ, the beginning of our new, spiritual life is the all-important event. We believe that the Lord would have us assess our lives when really beginning at the

time of full consecration and the begetting of the holy spirit.

When the Lord was arranging for Israel to keep the Passover (Exod. 12), He said to them—"This shall be the beginning of months to you." There was a new life beginning for Israel according to the flesh. What more shall we say in respect of Spiritual Israel who receive the new, spiritual life, while laying down their earthly lives in the steps of the Master? The Apostle Paul places the same importance on this matter in his letter to the Hebrews. He was writing to the Jewish Christians who had many trials and difficulties; they had left the teachings of the old Jewish arrangement and were persecuted most bitterly by their own people. Paul sought to encourage and help them to see that the same God of the Hebrews was not unmindful of their experiences when they were laying down their lives in the service of the true Messiah, of whom their ancient Scriptures had much to say. In Heb. 10:32 we read,—“Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions.” “After ye were illuminated!” That is the turning point in the life of Christians, just as it was the turning point in the life of Christ. The first thirty years of Christ’s life are hardly reported at all. He would not have us look back to His boyhood days. No, He would have us look to the time when He was consecrated to the service of God. That was indeed His real spiritual birthday, if we may use the term. So, the followers of Christ remember the former days—“after ye were illuminated ye endured a great fight of afflictions.” It does us good to look back to the time when we gave ourselves to God unreservedly, completely.

How different is the outlook of those who view things from the human standpoint! As an illustration, a newspaper report is quoted, not with the thought of criticism, but rather by way of comparison. One of Melbourne’s leading ministers of religion was quoted as lamenting the fact that three times as much beer was now sold in Melbourne than in some years past. But he said there was an encouraging outlook in that there was three times as much ice cream sold. He concluded by saying: If we can convert those who drink beer to eating ice cream, he was hopeful that the kingdom of Christ was not so far away. What an idea of the requirements essential for bringing in Christ’s Kingdom! Does not such an outlook give us a feeling of pity, that titled men with ideas of that kind should be looked up to as leaders in Christianity. We know the reason for the unscriptural expressions in such cases—there has been no illumination of God’s holy spirit. With what humility and thankfulness, then, should we feel towards our Heavenly Father, that He has blessed us with the light of His heavenly truth, by the illuminating influence of His holy spirit.

We can be pleasing to our Heavenly Father only as we consider ourselves members of His heavenly family (when we have truly consecrated our all to Him), and not as human beings. At times, when we come in contact with the world, with the trials and weaknesses of all around us, including perhaps our own relatives, and feel somewhat perplexed in seeking to bear the troubles of others, some of the Lord’s people may be inclined to say: Well, we are only human, and we feel deeply the sorrows and difficulties of our loved ones. Yes, it is quite right to feel for others and sympathise with them, but it is not right for those who are fully consecrated followers of Christ to feel that they are still human. In 1 Cor. 1:21, 22 we read, “Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who also hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of the spirit in our hearts.” Thus, we are members in the Anointed.

Again the Apostle declares—“As many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of sonship, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” Have we received the spirit of sonship? “The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God.” “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (Rom. 8:14-16; 2 Cor. 5:17.) The Apostle does not say “will be” or “shall be,” but now, in the present time, those who are truly God’s people are new creatures in Christ. “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God,”—not only on the other side, in the resurrection, but now, by His grace. (1 John 3:1.)

How important it is, then, that our thoughts and desires, our words and actions, be guided from our new

standpoint of sons in God's spiritual family. When we meet a great crisis in our lives or the lives of others, how helpful it is to ask, How may I please my Heavenly Father in this matter? We should say, I am truly one of His children, and all that I do, must be done not from the human standpoint, but from His standpoint. How much worry and disappointment would be saved by viewing everything with our new mind, the mind which was perfectly exhibited by Christ Himself. It makes us sad to hear any brethren complaining or murmuring with their lot. It really proves that at that time at least they are not living in the spirit, and hence are really "grieving the holy spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption."

We are approaching the close of another year. It is a good time to remind ourselves of opportunities and privileges for the year to come. It is a blessed thing to tune our hearts to God on awakening each morning, and sing a song of praise to Him, thankfulness for the night passed, seeking His help to walk in His ways for the one day ahead. If the days are too much for us to handle, let us split them up into moments. "Moment by moment," surely, is the way to view our pilgrimage, appreciating our wonderful standing in Christ since we were illuminated, and thus living on higher ground. Instead of making us proud, doesn't it humble us to think that the mighty God of heaven, He who dwells in the high and holy place, condescends to think of us, and is really our own Heavenly Father, and in His goodness has invited us into His heavenly family! Surely we want to sing His song more as the days pass.

When we meditate upon the season of Christmas as relating to the birth of the baby Jesus, let us remember that His greater birthday was the time of His spiritual begetting. God in His wisdom saw that it was necessary for the Saviour to come as a babe. He could have sent Him a mature man, but He did not. Those first thirty years were a time of waiting and preparation for the all-important time of His presentation of Himself to God in full consecration at Jordan on the anniversary of His birthday. So with us, the all-important time is when we also, by God's grace, present ourselves at the altar of sacrifice and receive the illumination of His holy spirit. As we look back over the years, should we not praise God all the more for the favours we have had, and rejoice in the privileges that may yet be granted to us, to sing this "new song" to His praise and glory, for the assistance of His people, the making our own calling and election sure, and maybe for the encouragement of still others who may yet have ears to hear and be drawn to the Lord in this acceptable time.

"O Lord of heaven and earth and sea,
To Thee all praise and glory be;
How shall we show our love to Thee,
Who givest all?"

"Thou did'st not spare Thine only Son,
But gav'st Him for a world Undone;
And freely with that Blessed One,
Thou givest all.

"To Thee, from whom we all derive
Our life, our gifts, our power to give;
O may we ever with Thee live,
Who givest all."

Earthly Way Ended

ON the 19th of November, our elderly Sister Spear of Melbourne finished the earthly way following a period of physical disability. For over 50 years Sister Spear had known the truth respecting the two phases of the Kingdom, and loved the Lord very much in thus providing salvation for both the Bride of Christ and the world at large.

For many years our elderly Sister had been most regular at the Class meetings in Melbourne, and having a good memory was able to quote Scripture and join in the studies quite freely. In recent years her mind dwelt more particularly on the “restitution of all things” in the Kingdom Age, which of course will be a wonderful provision for the world of mankind in fulfilment of God’s promise to Abraham to bless “all the families of the earth.”

Sincere sympathy is extended to the large circle of relatives in the loss thus sustained, some of whom are rejoicing in the spiritual truths and hope of the heavenly kingdom, as well as appreciating the earthly inheritance for all the obedient of mankind in the age to come. We give thanks to God for the assurance of the resurrection hope for our elderly Sister, as one who loved to talk of the goodness and mercy of the Lord. One of Sister’s very true favorite sayings and assured hope was, that all things in this “present evil world” would be righted when Jesus is King.

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 secretary—Mr. J. B. Hiam, 16 Kennedy Street, South Oakleigh, S.E.13, Victoria

.”Divine Plan of the Ages”

Added costs in the publication of this important study overseas has increased the price for the cloth bound edition to 8/-, and the paper covered to 5/6, post paid in each case. Slightly less prices for more than one copy.

Visitors From America

AT the close of January last, word was received from the brethren of the “Dawn” in U.S.A., stating that Brother and Sister Pollock were planning to visit the brethren in India in September, and on their way back to California would like to visit the brethren in Australia and New Zealand.

This visit is now in the past, and it was a pleasure for us to welcome Brother and Sister Pollock in Australia, and enjoy fellowship with them during the short period of their stay with us in this land.

In the Lord’s providence their visit to India was not unduly hindered by the war in that land, only to the extent of their leaving a few days earlier than anticipated on advice of the authorities there. This meant a little extra time in Australia, which was appreciated, especially by the friends in Perth, W.A., their first call in this land.

In each of the three centres in Australia—Perth, Adelaide and Melbourne—in addition to gatherings at the Classes with addresses and public lectures delivered so zealously and ably by Brother Pollock, some time was spent visiting the isolated brethren who are shut-in by reason of age and other disabilities. These calls were very much appreciated by the brethren concerned.

The gatherings at the Classes were well attended and much enjoyed by the brethren, and the public lectures encouraged some outsiders also to hear the messages of the kingdom. The largest gathering was in Melbourne with an attendance of about 100 comprising the brethren and public, with very good interest and appreciation manifested in the subject—“God’s Purpose in Creation —What is Our Destiny?” Another helpful lecture for the public was—“The Kingdom of God.” At the Class gatherings the subject—“The Sign of Thy Presence”—was especially appreciated, as also was the review of our Brother and Sister Pollock’s visits to other lands amongst the brethren in England, Ireland, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Israel and India, prior to the visit to Australia. It is hoped to print the lectures and addresses given in Melbourne in booklet form in the near future, and all who desire copies will be gladly supplied.

We are thankful to the Lord and to Brother and Sister Pollock that their visit to Australia was made possible, and especially to find that their thoughts and appreciation of God’s Word were so fully in accord with our own understanding of the harvest truths in the Plan of the Ages which the Lord has made known to His people in this end of the Gospel Age, the “days of the Son of man.”

A LITTLE AT A TIME

“As thy days, so shall thy strength be.”— Deut. 33 :25.

A mother once said to her little girl who was sewing: “If you look the whole length of your seam you will get disheartened, for it seems so long: look only on the little bit between your thumb and finger.”

Our life is mercifully cut up into “littles.” God knows that if its “whole” were presented at once, it would crush us down. Let us live to-day and ask for grace to set about doing cheerfully the “littles” of to-morrow.

Adelaide Easter Convention

This early announcement is made to the effect that the Adelaide brethren expect to hold their Easter Convention next year (D.V.) from Good Friday to Easter Monday, April 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th, in the Manchester Unity Building, (2nd Floor), 16 Franklin Street, Adelaide. Further information from the secretary—Mr. J. Jordan, Box 47 P.O., Lower Mitcham, South Australia.

Building a Disposition

“Well, I do hope that when I reach the age when I have to be taken care of, I shall be willing to let other people have their way instead of insisting upon my own and making it hard for everybody else,” said a clear, decided voice as three women parted at the street corner.

They had been discussing the troubles of an acquaintance. As the speaker departed, the other two looked at each other with a significant smile. This friend of theirs was one who had great faith in her own wisdom.

“I am afraid that virtue does not develop suddenly,” remarked one. “I suspect that the person who is to be gentle and unselfishly considerate in old age has to begin to cultivate that spirit much further back.”

That is the story of so many of our failures to attain our ideals. We do not begin to practise their graces early enough. The strong, self-controlled, useful manhood or womanhood does not grow naturally from a careless, self-indulged youth, and the beautiful old age that is a benediction is not likely to spring from the hasty, domineering spirit that has been allowed to rule middle life.

Character is a garden whose gracious flowering calls for early planting.

Books Available.

“Most Holy Faith ”-22/- “God’s Promises Come True”-22/-

“Emphatic Diaglott,” New Testament-19/“Daily Heavenly Manna,” birthday pages-11/- “Tabernacle Shadows”-6/9. “The Book of Books,” Reviewing the Bible as a whole-**11/-**.

“The Divine Plan of the Ages,” Cloth bound-8/-; paper covers-5/6.

“Our Lord’s Great Prophecy”-1/6.

“Manner of Christ’s Return”-1/6.

“Christ’s Return”-1/6.

“Some of the Parables”-1/6.

“Hope Beyond the Grave”-1/6 **“God and Reason”-1/6** “Where Are the Dead “-1/-.

The above prices include postage on single copies; more than one copy less in proportion to postage rates.

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HOPE

“What though the blossom fall and die?
The flower is not the root;
The Sun of love may ripen yet
The Master’s pleasant fruit.”

“What though by many a wayward fall
Thy garment is defiled?
A Saviour’s blood can cleanse them all;
Fear not! thou art His child.”

“Arise! and leaning on His strength,
Thy weakness shall be strong;
And He will teach thy heart at length
A new perpetual song.”

“Arise! to follow in His track
Each holy footprint clear,
And on an upward course look back
With every brightening year.”

“Arise! and on thy future way
His blessing with thee be!

His presence be thy staff and stay
Till thou His glory see.”

—F. R. Havergal.

The brethren of the Pastoral Bible Institute in U.S.A., who publish the "Herald of Christ's Kingdom" have kindly sent us a supply of their booklets which are provided free to "Herald" subscribers who can use them to advantage. Single copies of these booklets will be gladly forwarded from this office as samples to "Herald" subscribers. Those so desiring may then order further supplies through us or direct to U.S.A. The booklets available are:

The Place of Israel in the Plan of God
The ABC of Bible Prophecy
After Death the Judgment
Parables of the Kingdom
What Say the Scriptures About Hell?
Is Israel Emerging from Hell?
Has Judgment Day Begun?
Are Wars to Cease
The Coming World Potentate
Beliefs that Matter Elias Shall First Come
If a Man Die, Shall He Live Again?
Our Lord's Return What is the Soul?
Why Does God Permit Evil?
Great World Changes Long Foretold
Sixteen Scripture Truths
God's Fulfilling Purpose

"Israel in History and Prophecy" is the title of a very interesting and informative 64-page booklet now in stock, priced at 1/- per copy, 1/2 post paid.

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