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## Faithful and Unfaithful Use of Talents.

“Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”—  
Matt. 25:30.

WE WHO delight to be known as Christians, followers of Jesus, have heretofore been very careless in our study of God's Word, and have thus been disrespectful to our Teacher, and have gotten ourselves into a world of trouble and confusion of thought which is driving many into unbelief. We must learn to be more critical in our reading of the Word of God. We must not assume so much, but must carefully note the Master's exact statements, that we may be able to distinguish between His literal utterances and His parables, dark sayings, figures of speech.

Take, for instance, our text. How few have ever sought to weigh it and to draw proper inferences from it! The usual custom is to conclude that it refers to an eternity of torture into which the majority of our race enter at death; whereas no such conclusion would be a reasonable deduction from the narrative from which the text is taken. It is part of a

parable, every element of which is figurative. Whoever reads the connection will perceive that the person or class mentioned as going into the outer darkness is not represented as going into death at all.

Furthermore, the phrase “outer darkness” could not refer to such a place as is generally pictured by evangelists as the future abode of the non-elect; for that place is invariably said to be the very reverse of dark, and its inmates to be shut in—not cast out!

It should be noted that the person or class referred to in our text as cast into outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, is a Christian—not a worldling, not a stranger, alien, foreigner to the Divine promises, but one of the Lord's recognised followers. The punishment comes upon him, not because of murder, theft or blasphemy, not through immoralities, but because of neglect of opportunities of service. Had he been guilty of gross sin, he would not have been recognised of God as a follower of Christ, regardless of any profession he might make to that effect. Having become a consecrated believer in the Lord, he had received a talent of privilege and opportunity in the Master's service, and this he had neglected to use.

From this viewpoint many Christian people should be startled and thoroughly awakened by our text; for undoubtedly many are in the very position described in the parable. An investigation of the matter, which comes close home to themselves, will assist them in the exercise of common sense in the interpretation of

this Scripture; whereas the general tendency seems to be to permit unreason to interpret such texts as these, which are always inferred to belong to the very grossest, immoral enemies of God and the principles of righteousness. The majority of people are much more merciful in thinking about matters which are applicable to themselves; for their love is not yet sufficiently developed to enable them to feel an equal interest in their neighbour—yea, in their enemies.

Let us examine the parable as a whole, in order that we may make no mistake in the application of any of its parts. (Matt. 25:14-30.) It represents the entire Gospel Age—from the time when our Lord ascended on High, going to the far country, even Heaven itself. He left His interests in the hands of His servants—the Apostles and believers in general; and in their hands these interests have remained ever since. The whole narrative shows that not merely nominal Christians are meant by the servants, but true Christians—fully consecrated believers. These alone have the talents belonging to the Lord in their charge for use in His service, “every man according to his several abilities.”

In olden times a talent represented a sum of money, but all will agree that the real thought in the parable is that these talents represent not only financial ability, but also social standing, education, mental equipments, etc.

Those who hear the Lord’s voice calling them as sinners to repentance are not as yet His servants, nor are they entrusted with any of His talents. They are still strangers, aliens and foreigners, without God and having no hope.

(Eph. 2:11-13.) But after they have learned of the grace of God in Christ and of the provision made in Him for the covering of the sins that are past and of the blemishes which are present, then if they rejoicingly accept Him as their Saviour they thereby take the first step toward God. Being thus justified by faith, they have peace with God as respects their former sins and the condemnation under which they realise that they have rested. (Rom. 5:1.) But still they have not yet become servants of God. However, they are in that attitude of mind where the Lord would be willing to accept them as His servants; and hence the Apostle invites such, saying, “I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, and your reasonable service.”—Rom. 12:1.

In his consecration the believer thus lays at the Lord’s feet his life, his time, his influence, together with whatever property or mental endowment he may possess—all for the Lord, “to be used in joyful service for the glory of our King.” It is at this juncture that the Scriptures represent that we are begotten again by the holy spirit to newness of life, newness of aim, newness of purpose. “Old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” (2 Cor. 5:17.) It is these New Creatures whom God recognises as His servants, consecrated in His service; and it is this class which is represented in the parable under discussion. To these servants He gives various talents to be used by them.

Someone may ask, “What are these talents?” We reply, The very talents which they possessed before consecration, and which in consecration they laid at the Lord’s feet. These He now gives over to them, gives into their custody, thus making them stewards of their own time, influence, means, education, mental ability, etc. From this viewpoint we can see how some have one talent, others two talents, and still others five talents; for no two of the Lord’s people are exactly alike in mentality, in influence, in opportunity or in wealth. Each, however, is responsible for exactly the amount thus entrusted to ‘his’ stewardship, plus whatever increase he may be able to effect; and his love for his Master and his loyalty as a servant are to be tested by the degree of activity he will exercise in the use of these talents, opportunities, etc., under his care.

Although the parable represents the faithfulness of the one having the five talents and of the other having the two talents, and the unfaithfulness of the one having but one talent, this we are to understand is merely

an illustration. It is possible for the person having the one talent to be faithful, and equally possible for those having two or more talents to be unfaithful. Indeed, our experience has been rather along the line that those possessing the most talents are as likely to be amongst the unfaithful as are those who have but the one talent. It is not unreasonable to suppose that by far the majority of those consecrated to the Lord have possessed only one talent.

Hence the Lord's statement of the parable is undoubtedly the most appropriate one, applicable to the larger proportion of His people who will prove derelict, unfaithful, in the use of their consecrated ability in His service.

As a matter of fact, the Lord tells us that not many of those who have money talents will accept His invitation at all. Not many of them will make consecration of themselves, so as to place their natural talents at His disposal or make it possible for them to become stewards of the same. The Scriptural statement, we remember, is that "not many great, not many wise, not many learned, not many rich, not many noble, according to the course of this world, but rather the poor, rich in faith, hath God chosen to be heirs of the Kingdom."—1 Cor. 1:26-28; James 2:5.

"After a long time the Lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them." The reference here is undoubtedly to our Lord's Second Advent, and indicates that then His first work will be with the Church, not with the world. To this agree the words of the Apostle Peter: "Judgment must begin at the house of God." (1 Pet. 4:17.) In this we have a most positive assurance that the servants of the parable are not worldly people at all, who have neither lot nor part in this matter, and who are not in any sense of the word stewards of the grace of God. True, the Lord causes His sun to shine upon the just and the unjust, and His rain to fall upon good and bad alike. But He recognises none as His servants except those who have come to Him in the appointed way—"No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."—John 14:6.

From the Scriptural outline of the "times and seasons" it is evident that we are now living in the very time of the Second Advent of Christ—the time during which He is reckoning with His servants, preparatory to assuming the Kingdom control of the world. This transfer of the world to Immanuel's Government will be accomplished through the overthrow of present institutions—financial, political, social and religious—in "a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation."—Dan. 12:1.

This reckoning of course must include the resurrection change of all the faithful in Christ Jesus, mentioned in the Apostle Paul's description of the First Resurrection. (1 Cor. 15:42-44.) Those who during this Gospel Age have been faithful to the Lord in the use of the talents committed to them are in line for the glory, honor and immortality of this First Resurrection, by which they will enter into the joy of their Lord. The Apostle's statement respecting these—that they will differ in the degree of glory received "as star differeth from star in glory"—is corroborated, if not directly by this parable under consideration, at least by the corresponding parable of the pounds. (Luke 19:12-27.) There the rewards are specified in parabolic form; Our Lord declared that one of the faithful should have authority over ten cities, another over five, etc., in His Kingdom.

But now comes the particular feature of the parable from which our text is taken. The servant who had but one talent entrusted to him hid it in the earth. In excusing himself for not having made better use of it, he intimates that his heart was filled with fear instead of with love for his Lord; for he thought of his Lord as unjust, hard, unmerciful, unloving, exacting. He had a bad theology. Alas, how many Christian people are in a similar plight! Having a wrong conception of the Lord's character and purposes, they are deterred from using in His service what talents they possess. Evidently this class is pictured most distinctly in this parable. The hiding of the talent in the earth is full of meaning. It implies that the opportunities and abilities consecrated to the Lord are being buried in earthly interests, earthly affairs — business or pleasure, family or society or what not—to the neglect of the stewardship, and hence to that extent in the

repudiation of the original consecration.

If you, my dear brother or sister, are not in the place of this unfaithful servant, you probably recognise the likeness of some of your fellow servants. They are not bad people; they are not wicked. They are moral, honest in their dealings with their fellow men—though not honest with the Lord in the use of their consecrated talents. Now that you see the person or the class represented by the unfaithful servant in the parable, doubtless your love and your sympathy begin to exercise themselves toward these dear neighbors, friends and relatives. You begin to hope that in God's mercy they are not to be sent to eternal torment because of their carelessness in respect of their consecration vow.

Although there is nothing in the parable to indicate eternal torment for this class of unfaithful servants, nevertheless the punishment outlined is certainly bad enough, severe enough. Our hope is that this article may prove helpful to some who are now in this attitude, to the intent that before their earthly accounts are called for they may take their talent out of its earthly investment, and with redoubled energy and zeal apply it according to their original covenant, hoping in the mercy of God for forgiveness of their previous laxity; and that by His grace they may yet hear His words: "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

The first part of the punishment meted to the unfaithful servant is the loss of the talent—the loss of the opportunity and privilege of service as a co-laborer with the Lord. This implies that the unfaithful one can have neither part nor lot in the Kingdom—cannot be accepted as a member of the glorified Body of Christ. His failure to use his consecrated talent signifies his failure to make his calling and election sure.

The second feature of the punishment is the being cast out from the light and from the privileges enjoyed by those who are the Lord's faithful followers. To be thrust into the outer darkness of the world is to lose what light, privilege and appreciation of spiritual matters had been previously enjoyed. The third feature of the punishment is that the unfaithful servants shall share in the great time of trouble with which this Gospel Age is to end—the time of anarchy and confusion which the faithful class of the Lord's people shall be accounted worthy to escape, as our Lord declared.—Luke 21:36.

The parable merely mentions the punishment of the unfaithful servant without showing what the result will be—how he will be exercised by the tribulations through which he will pass. But the great Teacher who spake the parable sent a message later on to His people in which He indicated just where all unfaithful servants may be found, and through their tribulations be enabled to some extent to recover their standing and obtain a share in the Divine blessing— although not in the Kingdom class. We refer to Revelation 7:9-17. There we see the unfaithful servants after they have passed with weeping and gnashing of teeth through great tribulation, which will have been the experience of this class all down the Gospel Age, and which finally marks the full end of the Age. We see that their severe experiences will work with many of them such a change that they will gladly acclaim their Lord, and rejoice to be serving in His Temple and before His Throne, though not in the Throne as members of the Bride of Christ.

Faithfulness in the use of their talents would have given this class a place with their Lord in His Throne, even as He promised. (Rev. 3:21.) But in His great mercy, while rejecting them from association in the Throne and while causing them to pass through merited tribulation for their unfaithfulness, He will nevertheless permit them to come up through that tribulation, washing their robes in the merit of His sacrifice. To those who are rightly exercised by these experiences He will give the palm of victory, but not the crown; for this is reserved for the faithful servants alone.

But it is not our thought, nor that of the Scriptures, to guarantee that all of the consecrated shall be either in the Throne or before the Throne, shall be -either crowned with our Lord as joint-heirs or else stand as servants with palms of victory in their hands. The Scriptures, bring to our attention still another class

amongst the truly consecrated, namely, such as are described in Heb. 6:4-8 and 10:26, 27. "There is a sin unto death,"—the Second Death. But this sin is some thing beyond the sin of hiding the talent in the earth—neglecting the covenant made with the Lord. From that wilful sin unto death there is no hope of recovery, either in this Age or in that to come.

Let us arouse ourselves, dear fellow servants of the King of Glory. Let us use every talent that we possess to "show forth His praises who bath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light." Let us develop in our hearts more and more the graces of the holy spirit—meekness, gentleness, patience, brotherly kindness, love. "For if these things be in you and abound, they will make you that ye shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the service of the Lord; . . . and so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."-2 Pet. 1 :8- 1 1 .

## Greeting Cards.

One of our brethren in the printing trade has kindly produced some Greetings Cards and sent them along with the request that the proceeds from the sale of them be donated to the General Tract Fund to assist in the work of the Institute. This is very much appreciated, in the service of the Lord.

There are five varieties of these cards as follows:—"Just for To-day," "One Here and There," "How Readest Thou?," "The New Leaf," and "The Best of Wishes—Faith—Hope—Love." It should be understood that these are not Christmas Cards, but are suitable for general greetings. The price is 3/- per dozen, post paid. Samples sent on request.

Friends desiring these cards are asked to order promptly, preferably by the first week in December; orders near the Christmas season may not be filled till early in the new year.

## Tracts.

Would you like copies of the article on Armageddon in October's "Peoples Paper" in tract form for distribution?

If so, please order promptly what you can use wisely. As printing costs are high it is suggested that tracts be placed personally or through the post where there are prospects of good being done.

Melbourne Christmas Convention.

See notice on this Convention in October "Peoples Paper."

PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

(Monthly) 4/6 (85 cents) per annum, post paid.

Published by the Berean Bible Institute,

## If Christ Is God —?

IS IT NOT reasonable that He would establish only ONE Church, and make sure that she did not depart from the Truths He taught?

You are invited to come each Wednesday at 8 p.m., to the meeting room at the rear of St. Mary's Church, to hear a series of talks explaining Catholic teaching. You will be under no obligation of any kind. Other non-Catholics will be present.

The above heading and statement appeared recently in one of Victoria's provincial newspapers, together with an advertisement covering the same information. This method of seeking to make known Roman Catholic teachings is apparently new, but it is certainly helpful to truth seekers to have as much of Roman Catholic teaching revealed in the few statements, which our Catholic friends apparently think is truth.

The heading—"If Christ is God"—can be clarified by any school child able to read the Bible. One of hundreds of texts in explanation reads--But to us (Christians, who have the light on God's Word) there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." (1 Cor. 8:6.) Again, "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved;" "And if the spirit of him (God) that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you." (John 3:17; Rom. 8:1 1.)

The claim that the Lord would establish only one church on earth, and make sure that she did not depart from the truth, is answered by the Apostle Paul—"Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day (the day of Christ,

His second advent) shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition," etc. (2 Thes. 2:3-8.) Also, see Rev. 3:14-17, respecting the Lord's rejection of the Laodicean church systems of today.

Any of our readers desiring further information on these matters are invited to procure literature on the subject— "Jehovah Our God is One."

Also copies of the poem "The True Church" will be supplied, quite free. The closing lines of this poem read

"O Christ, the Lord! end Thou my search,  
And lead me to the one true Church."  
He spake as never man may speak  
"The one true Church thou shalt not seek,  
Seek thou, forevermore, instead,  
To find the one true Christ, its Head."

## Question Box.

QUESTION:—Please harmonize your statement on page 80, “Peoples Paper,” October 1951 —”The Offerings for Sin,”—with our belief that the Lord’s second advent has already taken place some years back. What garments is He now wearing, seeing He cannot wear both at the same time?

ANSWER:—In considering this question it is important to keep in mind that our Lord’s second advent takes place some considerable time before the commencement of His 1,000 year reign. The first part of our Lord’s “presence” is devoted to a work among His church, called in the Scriptures “the harvest.” This truth is shown very clearly in Matthew, 25th chapter. This chapter contains three parables. In verses 1-13 we have the Virgins parable which illustrates the condition of the Lord’s true church from the commencement of His parousia” until the last members of His true church have been gathered “home.” It therefore covers the harvest period; the “end of the age.”

In verses 14-30 we have the parable of the talents. Verse 19 refers to the second presence of our Lord, and shows that His first work is to deal with His servants to whom He had entrusted various talents. So, then, verses 19-30 would cover the same period of time as verses 1-13. These two parables show clearly that the first work of our Lord at His Second Advent is not a work of ruling over mankind, but rather describe a work among His consecrated people during the “harvest” time—the closing period of the Gospel Age.

Looking now at verses 31-46 of our chapter a very different picture is presented, and we see in these three beautiful parables a sequence in the order of events which are due to take- place at the second presence of our Lord. While the “Virgins” and “Talents” parables undoubtedly have their application to the end of the Gospel Age, the “Sheep and Goats” parable applies to the Millennial Age—the period of Christ’s Reign. It is the time when the Son of Man shall have come in all His Glory. This time is still future. This will be the time when the garments of glory and beauty will adorn the High Priest. He will then fill the Melchisedec picture—the priest no -longer sacrificing and suffering with His body members, but reigning as Kings and Priests for the blessing of all mankind. All the holy angels are said to be with Him, when He sits upon the throne of His glory. “All” the holy angels would surely include the church, His “Body,” all complete and glorified and reigning with Him.

It is noted that in verses 34 and 40 our Lord is designated “the King.” This is significant. Christ will be King over all the earth in that day, the Millennial Day, and His Bride, His Queen, will be with Him and share His glory. While we may not improperly think of Christ as our King, as well as our Redeemer and Lord, and accord to Him our reverence and adoration, yet we find the illustrations used in the Scriptures to indicate the relationship between Christ and His body members during this Age are not those of a King ruling over subjects, but rather of an Advocate who assists us in our weakness, an Elder Brother who advises and sympathises with our inexperience, a High Priest who has been touched with the feeling of our infirmities and able therefore to render us help and grace for every time of need. (1 John 2:1; Heb 2:11, 3:1, 4:14-16.)

In answer to the question What garments is our Lord now wearing?, we believe that we are still living in the antitypical Day of Atonement, the time when the last of the members of Christ’s body are being “offered” by the High Priest in sacrifice; and therefore the type of the priest in the white linen robes—the robes of sacrifice is the one which is applicable to our Lord at the present time. Not until the whole church, including the last members of the body, have been completely offered in sacrifice, does the High Priest put on the garments of glory and beauty indicative of the change to the Divine nature of the entire Christ, Head and Body.

QUESTION:—How can we harmonize Heb. 1:13 with the belief that our Lord has been “present” for many years, seeing that apparently God has not yet made His enemies His footstool? I understand that we are now living in the Day of Preparation, or the Day of God Almighty. As it is quite obvious that the nations are now being smashed, who would we say is doing the smashing, the Father or the Son?

ANSWER:—The great work of subduing all the enemies of God and righteousness will require the entire 1000 years of Messiah’s reign. (See 1 Cor. 15:24-28) . Reading the divinely provided “Signs” in Matt, 24th chapter, we believe that our Lord has indeed been present for many years; but so far His main work has been that of supervising and directing the work of the “harvest” — the gathering of His elect in preparation for the coming 1000 year reign.

During this period of His “presence” as, Chief Reaper of the harvest, our Lord is also exercising a supervision of earth’s affairs, directing the course and outcome of the “time of trouble.” In Dan.12:1 Michael (i.e., one representing God) is said to “stand up.” That is, Christ, as God’s Commander-in-Chief begins to take a hand in earth’s affairs during this period of His “presence,” but not yet as the Prince of Peace blessing and uplifting mankind. Before that glorious day of blessing and restitution can come to mankind, the church, the elect, must all be gathered “Home,” and the great time of trouble must do its work of humbling the hearts of men, and making them ready to hear “the still small voice” of heavenly truth and peace and grace. We see that there is a great deal of preparatory work which our Lord must complete before His enemies are subdued. The church, the “little flock” must all be complete and glorified; and mankind must yet pass through the greatest time of trouble which this world has ever seen. This will be a lesson which will never be forgotten, and will stand for all time as a monument to the folly of men who regard their own plans and schemes as superior to God’s. Many Scriptures speak of this great time of trouble as the Day of Jehovah’s vengeance. See Isa. 34:8; Joel. 2:2-11; Zeph. 1:14-18, 3:8-9; Psa. 46:8- 10, etc.

The Scriptures make it clear that this Day of Jehovah is a day of God’s judgment upon mankind socially and nationally—a day of national recompenses. We need to bear in mind the difference between national judgment and individual judgment. The nations are undergoing a judgment period now, in this Day of Jehovah; but the day of individual judgment will be the Millennial Age. The day of vengeance stands naturally related to the benevolent object of its divine permission, which is the overthrow of the entire present order of things, preparatory to the permanent establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, under Christ, the Prince of Peace.

Heb. 1:13 is a quotation from the beautiful 110th Psalm. Christ will be sitting on the right hand of power (place of authority) when He comes in the clouds of heaven, Matt. 26:64, and He will remain on the right hand during the Millennial Age, “for He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”

## Forever with the Lord.

QUITE a number of the Australian brethren had known Brother and Sister Main of Adelaide, and the passing of our Brother and Sister within a few hours of each other, after devoted lives of service to the Lord and His truth for so many years, has left a deep impression in the hearts and minds of all who knew them. Our Brother Main had been in constant touch by correspondence with us in Melbourne, and ever sought to promote the welfare of the truth cause, and while our dear Brother and Sister Main will be greatly missed, we rejoice to think that they have received the fruition of their hopes in the joys of the Heavenly Kingdom, by the Lord's grace and strength.

It seems fitting that messages from our brethren who knew our Brother and Sister Main so well should be made available to all our friends. We feel sure that the following from Adelaide and Perth will be encouraging to all who are also seeking first the Kingdom of God; meditation upon the victorious lives of the followers of Christ is most stimulating, and to the Lord we render all praise. The message from Adelaide is as follows:

On October 15th Brother Main of Adelaide finished his earthly course, and about twelve hours later, his, beloved wife, Sister Main, also reached the end of the way. Our sympathies go out to the two sons of Brother and Sister Main, also to their sister and sister-in-law. Sister Main had been in ill health for a considerable time, but our Brother Main, although failing in health to a certain degree during the past few months, had been confined to his bed for only about fortnight before his death.

It was good to witness the steadfast faith and earnest zeal of our dear Brother and Sister during their long lifetime in the service of the Lord. They were always alert to pass on the message of "present truth" to any who had the ear to hear. It was about 42 years ago that the message of present truth came to Brother and Sister Main, and during all that long period they zealously and faithfully endeavoured to serve the cause of the truth in Australia, and more especially in Adelaide, S.A.

Brother Main for many years served as an Elder in the Adelaide Class; and did much to assist the brethren and the cause of truth generally from about 1910 to the present time. Our Brother and Sister used their means generously to assist in the work of spreading the knowledge of God's great Plan of Salvation. In recent years Brother Main had taken great interest in the "Frank and Ernest" radio broadcasts, and had assisted materially with financial support which makes this witness to the truth of God's Word available to those who are looking for a message of comfort in these dark days. Brother and Sister Main greatly rejoiced to see the message of the truth of God's Word going out to bless other hearts and heads. They had been very devoted to each other during their long lifetime, and it seemed a fitting termination to their long years of patient service and waiting upon God, that they should be taken "Home" with only a few hours separating their passings, and neither knowing that the other had gone.

We will greatly miss our dear Brother and Sister, but we are comforted with the thought that now that we believe we are living in the time of our Lord's -parousia"—presence,—the blessed assurance of the Revelator has its application, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, for their works follow with them.- Rev. 14:13. 1 Thes. 4:15-17.

It is good to realise the goodness of the Lord in caring for His "little ones" who are enabled to put their trust in Him so implicitly as our dear Brother and Sister Main had learned to do in the school of Christ.

It was very inspiring to our faith to see our dear brethren so full of faith and absolute assurance of the

goodness and faithfulness of God. The care of a sick wife for many years, together with his own failing health and strength did not daunt our dear Brother for a moment. His one thought was to be able to meet with the brethren, to assist them to get a clearer knowledge of God's Word, to encourage and exhort them to faithfulness in the narrow way. We thank God for such faithful servants, and we would seek for grace to help us to follow them in all ways in which we believe they followed our Lord.

From our Brother Nicholson in Perth the following has been received:

The news just received of the passing under the "veil" of our greatly loved and highly esteemed Brother and Sister Main of Adelaide gives evidence of our Heavenly Father's loving care and overruling in all the affairs of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose in Christ. Sometimes He permits very severe trials, but He knows just what pressure each of His jewels can endure, and He will not allow "more than we can bear" in the process of fitting and preparing each for the place in His Kingdom.

Like the patriarch Job our dear Brother and Sister had a long time of hard trial, in the prolonged illness of Sister and then Brother's health failing. Like the patriarch of old they have both been an example of patient, trustful faith in the Lord's wisdom and love and confidence in the glorious hope of "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

It is over forty years that I have known them and I think few lives have equalled theirs in high principles and noble purposes and conscientious dealings in all details of life, and so generous and full hearted devotion in service and sacrifice in the Lord's cause, the present truth and care of the brethren in Christ.

I have been thinking about the happy first meeting with Brother and Sister Main, following the occasion that brought them into contact with the present truth. It was that strict conscientiousness and high principle that have been so evident in all their lives that led Brother Main to write a letter to the daily paper regarding the observance of the Lord's Day—in connection with a controversy that was taking place on the subject. Brother Kaesehagen, seeing Brother Main's letter saw an opportunity of bringing the truth to one who was evidently so earnest and true. He got in touch with them and soon had them reading the "Divine Plan of the Ages." This led to their writing to me, and I was invited to call upon them when next visiting Adelaide. It was a very happy evening that we spent together. Sister Main's sister and her friend were also present. I think it was the 45th Psalm that we studied, seeing the "Queen in gold of Ophir" as the Bride of Messiah, and reference was made to the 24th of Genesis and how it prefigured the selection of the Bride of Christ during the Gospel Age. They all, like so many of us, just realised the beauty of the truth in contrast with the erroneous and gloomy teachings. They could see, like others who receive the "eyesalve," that our God is a God of love and mercy instead of a malignant being with a design of preserving alive in an eternity of woe the great bulk of mankind. The truth sank into good hearts and the feast which the Lord had promised the faithful watchers (Luke 12:37; Rev. 3:20), they rejoiced in, and it led to a great change in their outlook on their lives. Henceforth, they diligently endeavoured to spend and be spent in the service of the truth and the encouragement of those of like precious faith.

Sister Main had been so long looking forward to the great 'change' from mortality to immortality", realising that we are now living in the time (Rev. 14:13) when those passing away need not to sleep in the condition of death, which has 'been the case all down the Gospel Age, ever since Stephen "fell asleep"; but now that we are living in the presence of the Lord, those still remaining on earth (1 Thes. 4:17) are at once "caught away to be together with the Lord," "changed in a moment." How wonderful that "change" must bet—from pain, sickness and troublous conditions in this sin-cursed world, to be with the Lord in His glory; to see Him who loved us and gave Himself for us, that we might be with Him where He is, and be like Him. (1 John 3:1, 2.) We can feel sure that they have the wonderful welcome, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter into the joy of thy Lord."

Our Brother and Sister have left us a noble example, not only in their patience and confident faith during their long, hard trial at the end of their earthly journey, but in the many ways of sacrifice of the good things of earth, in order to support the service of holding forth the Word of life, the true Gospel, particularly in respect of the broadcasting of the Frank and Ernest Dialogues. The Lord has graciously allowed them to pass away just as they would have wished, within a few hours of each other. The words of David (2 Sam. 1:23) come to my mind—"They were lovely and pleasant in their lives and in their death were not divided."

## This is the Way.

"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, 'This is the way, walk ye in it when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.' " (Isaiah 30:21.)

HOW often in the midst of life's perplexities and trials have weary hearts felt the need of wise direction and counsel. The counsel sought, however, is not always wise; sometimes it is the counsel of the ungodly and sinners; and sometimes that of the immature and inexperienced, and the results of such counsel are unsatisfactory, and often disastrous; and the way pursued in consequence one of trouble and darkness. Such is the way of the world; for it is not in the power of man to direct his own steps. (Jer. 10:23.) But not so is the way of the child of God. He has learned where to seek counsel, and the counsel of wisdom is always ready to come to his aid.

The prophet describes it as a word, a voice, "behind thee." It is not a voice before thee, of some new theology, of Evolution, or Spiritism, or Christian Science, or other human philosophy—but it is the old theology with all its blessed doctrines of hope through Christ our Redeemer, our Lord, our Teacher, our Example, and our Leader. It is the voice of the Lord uttered through His inspired apostles and prophets from two to four thousand years ago. It is to this word of Divine Inspiration, then, that the prophet would direct the attention of all those desiring wise counsel; and in that Word we hear the voice of God, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." If we have come to the forks in the road—to some crisis in our experience—and know not whether to turn to the right or to the left, we should stop at once and listen to the voice. Or in other words, we should turn at once to the Word of the Lord; and by pondering its precepts and principles and its illustrations bearing on the perplexing subject, seek to learn the will of the Lord, asking also the leading of His spirit and endeavoring to bring the mind into a loving submissive and truthful attitude. "This is the way, walk ye in it," will be the plain answer to every inquiring heart.

These words of the Prophet were, however, addressed directly to fleshly Israel, though their application to spiritual Israel is none the less forcible. As applied to them, it foretells the return of divine favour to them when the long season of their chastisement and blindness shall be at an end. Then, under the Millennial reign of Christ, the blind eyes shall be opened and the deaf ears unstopped, and the voice of the whole inspired Word then made clear to their understanding, will direct them in the right ways of the Lord; for the books (the law and the prophets and the New Testament Scriptures) shall be opened, and they shall be judged according to their teaching.—Rev. 20:12.

The way then indicated to fleshly Israel and to all the world will be the grand highway of holiness; and the ransomed of the Lord shall go up thereon with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads (Isa. 35:10), and the end of that way will be life and peace—salvation to the uttermost, from sin and death; and complete restitution to human perfection.

While the way of life will be made very clear to Israel and the world in the Age to come, it is made none the less clear now to the children of God who walk by faith and not by sight. It is shown to be (1) a way

of faith; and those who now walk by faith are the true seed of Abraham (Rom. 4:12-16), to whom pertain the covenant and the exceeding great and precious promises in their largest fulfilment; (2) It is a way of entire consecration to God, even unto death, which implies the burial of one's own will into the will of God—the presenting of self a living sacrifice.

In harmony with these two principles—of faith and consecration—we are taught to walk, in newness of life, not after the flesh, but after the spirit; not as other Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind, but circumspectly, and not as fools; as wise, redeeming the time; and not by sight, but by faith.—Rom. 6:4; 8:1; Eph. 4:7, 18; 5:15, 16; 2 Cor. 5:7.

By faith and consecration we have come into a new life as spiritual sons of God, and yet we have this treasure in earthen vessels, and the new life is only in its embryo condition. Hence the necessity of walking after the spiritual instincts of the new nature and keeping down the stronger impulses of the old nature. This is what it is to walk in newness of life, after the spirit and not after the flesh. To walk after the flesh is to pursue its hopes, aims, and ambitions; and since the flesh and the spirit are at war one with the other, it is impossible to maintain the life of both. Therefore, it is written, “If ye (spirit-begotten ones) live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye, through the spirit do mortify (put to death) the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” (Rom. 8:13.)

While the Word of the Lord speaks thus on general principles as to the way in which we should walk, we are also bidden to come with all the minor affairs of life, to inquire of these divine oracles. If we know not whether to turn to the right or to the left, we come and find the promise, “Commit thy way unto the Lord, and, He will direct thy steps.” Or, if heavy laden, we find the promise, “Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” Thus the voice behind brings comfort, peace and rest in the midst of all life's cares and trials, if we walk in obedience to its principles and precepts. “And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.”

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