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“Blessed are the Merciful”

“Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you”—Eph. 4:32.

The climax of Joseph’s story is outlined in Genesis 45:1-15; 50:15-21, and truly no one can read this simple narrative in the Bible and not be blessed by it. This lesson dates twenty-two years after Joseph came into Egypt a slave. Seven years of bountiful harvests had passed, and the second year of the famine seven had come. If we are inclined to wonder why in all those twenty-two years Joseph had not communicated with his aged father, remembering especially that he had plenty of opportunity for so doing after he became governor of Egypt, let us remember also how particularly his affairs were guided of the Lord, and that quite possibly in this matter he was acting under divine direction. He evidently was expecting his brethren, knowing that the drought and consequently the famine extended to Palestine and over a wide range of country. Through trusted servants a watch was evidently kept for the Hebrews, anticipating that the famine would drive them to Egypt for supplies. Thus on the arrival of the ten sons of Jacob, Joseph was immediately told of the fact. They were arrested and brought before him, treated with suspicion and accused of being spies, and put into prison for three days.

Joseph, the governor, addressed them through an interpreter, that he might the more thoroughly conceal himself, and that they might be more frank in their utterances in his presence. He interviewed them after they had spent three days in prison, and heard their admissions the one to the other that their adversity in this matter was esteemed as a judgment from the Lord on account of their wrong course toward their brother twenty-two years previously. He noted that they still remembered his cries as they had put him into the pit to die; he perceived that the matter had made a deep impression upon their minds, and that they were now in a different attitude of

heart. He kept one of their number as a hostage and gave the others a small amount of food, bidding them return and, as a proof of their story, to bring with them the younger brother whom they had mentioned, assuring them that with this proof of their sincerity they would be privileged to trade without interruption.

The brethren properly enough associated their experiences in the dungeon with those of Joseph, and evidently took to heart the lesson of their wrong course. Although it is possible that these men with one exception were murderers in their hearts, we will see in the present lesson a marked change in their characters. This was brought about perhaps partly by their father’s grief over the loss of Joseph, and partly, no doubt, by their own remorse in respect of their wrong doing. Thus an evil deed does not always predict further evil, but sometimes becomes the turning point of character. What Christian has not had an experience along this line—that his point of failure, demonstrating his weakness in some particular line of character, has really been to him a valuable lesson, making him the stronger in that particular, the better able to stand future trials and temptations from the same quarter. Thus all of our experiences in life rightly received (even life’s stumbling-stones) may prove to be stepping-stones to better things.

Ten Very Changed Men

On arrival at home their experiences were related to their father, Jacob, who now also mourned the loss of Simeon, the hostage, but utterly refused to allow Benjamin to go from him. It was here that Reuben, noting his father’s sorrow, offered himself and his children as hostages for the safe return of Benjamin. It was not until the famine pressed them sorely and starvation stared them in the face that Jacob consented to allow Benjamin to go with his brethren to Egypt, upon the assurance of Judah that if anything happened to him he would bear the blame. How evidently these men had learned

sympathy from their father during those twenty-two years. Once so indifferent that they brought trouble upon him, they now were willing to pledge their own lives for his comfort. We are to remember that these men were the heads of the tribes of Israel, some of whose children were the most notable in history: for instance Levi was the father of the entire priestly tribe including Moses and Aaron; Judah was the progenitor of David and Solomon and Jesus our Lord. It was evidently a part of the divine purpose to give these men a great lesson in connection with their father, the famine, etc.—a lesson that not only would be beneficial to themselves but have an influence upon all future time.

Arriving back in Egypt from their father's house, the ten brethren were astonished when they were directed to enter the governor's palace. The money for their previous purchase they had found in their sacks when they emptied them, and this they explained to Joseph's steward, saying that they had brought it back with additional money for the purchase of more wheat. Their trepidation was lest it should be claimed that the money was stolen, the penalty for theft under the Egyptian law being slavery. Joseph's steward gave evidence of having to some extent his master's confidence and some knowledge of his religion, for he answered them kindly—"Peace be unto you: the money returned to you was from the God of your father." He further restored their confidence by bringing Simeon to them at liberty. They washed and prepared for dinner at the governor's house, as they were instructed. What could it all mean?

Farmers, they felt out of place in the palace, and queried why the governor, who had treated them previously as spies, should now treat them so generously. Their astonishment grew momentarily as they noted the peculiarities of the situation: the seats assigned them were in the order of their birth, and when portions were sent from Joseph's separate table they noted that five portions were sent to Benjamin, as indicative of the governor's favour especially upon him. They knew not that the governor, able to understand their tongue, was listening to know whether or not they still were envious, or how they would receive this manifestation of special favour to the younger brother. They stood the test. They showed that their envy was dead, that they rejoiced in their younger brother's favour.

Yet another step of testing was to be taken: the men were allowed to depart with their supplies, but into one of Benjamin's sacks of wheat upon his beast the steward by direction placed the governor's silver cup, and then, ere the men had gotten far from the city, they were overtaken by the palace guard and accused of dishonourable conduct, rendering evil for good in the theft of

the "divining cup" of the governor. They all professed their innocence, and declared that if the cup were to be found not only the one who had it should be a slave but the entire company. The search for the cup began with the eldest and concluded with the youngest, Benjamin, the cup being found in his sack. We can well imagine the dismay of the brethren; they all returned, although the steward said he wanted only the culprit for his slave. How could they face their father Jacob and tell him of this calamity? Returning to the palace the governor, Joseph, was still there. They prostrated before him, and knowing the futility of protestation as to innocence they spoke of the matter as a calamity and resigned themselves to their fate as bondsmen.

The governor replied—"Not so! we in Egypt are not unjust to take you all for bondsmen for one man's fault. Let the guilty one serve, the rest may go free. Return to your home and your families and take with you your wheat." Then it was that Judah, once hard hearted in respect of his brother Joseph and his father Jacob, addresses the governor with a most pathetic plea, which for its simplicity and directness and pathos stands out preeminently amongst all the records of history. He detailed to the governor the circumstances connected with the bringing of Benjamin, his father's grief in parting with him, his assurance that it would mean the hastening of his death if anything happened to him, the fact that he, Judah, had become surety for his brother, etc.; then he concludes—"Now, therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad as a bondsman to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brethren, for how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me, lest peradventure I shall see the evil that shall come to my father?"—Gen.44:18-34.

The Silver Lining of the Cloud

The final test put upon the brethren by the Lord and by Joseph was met successfully. It was demonstrated that they were changed men, that instead of coldness, indifference and gross brutality, they were tender hearted, sympathetic and willing to suffer one for the other. The time, therefore, had come for the clouds and shadows that had been over them for some time to break away. Joseph, the governor, could refrain himself no longer. He ordered the place cleared of the attendants that he might be alone with his brethren—the matter was too sacred for the eyes of others. The time had come for him to throw off his reserve and reveal himself to them. Alone with them he wept, and his voice shook with emotion as he told them who he was and how their designs against him of twenty-two years before had, under God's providence, been overruled for his good. What wonder that

the guilty men trembled now as much or more than ever. What resentment might their brother feel against them? how might he now requite them evil for evil, and send them to the house of bondage or to the dungeon?

But through his tears of joy Joseph spoke graciously to them; and, at first disposed to flee, they gathered to him as he said—"Be not grieved with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; God sent me before you to preserve life. . . . So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God, and he hath made me a life-giver to Pharaoh. . . . Haste ye and go up to my father and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt, come down unto me, tarry not." A more dramatic scene could scarcely be imagined, yet through it all runs the thread of simplicity and honesty, and above all the spirit of love and mercy, which could emanate only from the one great instructor, God, and could be exemplified only by those who have been near to Him and received His instructions.

"Tender Hearted, Forgiving One Another"

Had Joseph been a saint of this Gospel Age, begotten of the holy spirit and illuminated thereby through the manifold revelations of the divine purpose and character as we have been in the Bible, his conduct would still be worthy of the very highest type of Christian development. But when we think of the circumstances and conditions under which his character was developed, in a heathen land and with but a small revelation of the divine character and plan, we stand amazed. Do we not properly say to ourselves, while studying this lesson, What manner of persons ought we to be considering our great advantages every way? Would we have proven as noble and generous as Joseph under the same circumstances and conditions? If not, why not, except that we have not made the proper use of the lessons provided for us in the school of Christ? We know that unless we do learn these lessons and develop at heart such a character of mercy and generosity we will not be meet for the inheritance of the saints in light—not be acceptable to the Lord as members of the elect, the Bride Class.

When sending them home Joseph kissed his brother Benjamin and tarried with him quite a while, the two weeping upon each other's necks. Then came the turn of the other ten brothers. How would he deal with them? Surely he would not manifest the affection of kissing them after the custom of eastern lands, because surely he could not feel toward them a perfect love and goodwill. But he did kiss every one of them, and since the matter was neither of constraint nor for effect, it evidenced the fact that his heart was full of generosity and loving kindness. "Blessed are the merciful", they are the kind to whom

the heavenly Father will be pleased to extend His mercy and His favour. They are the only ones who will be in a proper attitude to receive the great blessing of the kingdom—others not having developed this character for mercy will be unfit for the exaltation whatever may be their portion.

"Am I in the Place of God?"

Our lesson skips over that part of the narrative which relates to the coming of Jacob and his household in wagons sent for them by the governor of Egypt, with the full knowledge and consent of Pharaoh the king, and how they were settled in the land of Goshen and prospered there. By and by the aged Jacob died in the land of Egypt, but was taken for burial back into Palestine. The funeral over, Joseph's brethren were in some trepidation. Joseph's course in rendering so much good in return for so much evil seemed so unnatural that they feared that it was only a temporary matter for their father's sake, and that now since his death they would be out of favour with the governor. They came to Joseph again and, apologizing for the past, asked assurance of his forgiveness, telling him they were the servants of God and that they were quite willing to be Joseph's servants also. Note the noble answer they got—"Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now, therefore, fear ye not; I will nourish you and your little ones"—and he comforted them, speaking kindly to them.

Generous Joseph! Not a complaint, not a bitter word, only excuses for their villainy. Since the matter had worked out good why should he think evil of the agencies or agents which God had permitted and used? His expression—"Am I in the place of God?"—signifies, Is it for me to judge you or attempt to punish you in any manner? Is it not God alone to whom you have responsibility in this matter? and if you can make the matter right with Him it already is right with me, for vengeance belongeth unto the Lord and not to His creatures, all of whom are imperfect in one way or another.

Let us apply this lesson each to himself and herself, not only as respects the brotherhood in the Church of God, but also in regard to the dealings with our brethren in the flesh and with our neighbours. What matter it to us whether they meant us evil or good, have we not God's assurance that all things are working together for good to them that love Him—to the called ones according to His purpose? And this being the case, why should we have the slightest anger or resentment against the persons or instrumentalities in any way used of the Lord in connection with our affairs? Those who thus trust

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Convention News

Many spiritual blessings were experienced by the small band of the Lord's people who attended the 13th Annual Nambour Convention. The opening thought was expressed that we all might maintain an open mind while partaking of the spiritual feast set before us, and like the Bereans of old we would prove all things from God's Word before assimilating them.

It was a joy to welcome brethren from Brisbane, Sydney area, Canberra, Melbourne and Adelaide. Also as in previous years it was a pleasure to receive many lovely messages and greetings from various Classes and individual brethren throughout Australia and overseas. Christian love is sent from the Convention to all these and the the Lord's people everywhere, together with the beautiful message in 1 Peter 5:6-11.

Helpful studies were conducted on the Scriptures—2 Thess.1:7-10; 1 Pet.5:6-11; Gal.6:1-8, and Heb. 13:8-14. Many interesting questions were also submitted for the Question Time section, and 10 addresses were given by the brethren with the topics—"To Seek and to Save that which was Lost"; "Lazarus and the Rich Man"; "Esau's Hate"; "The Bread and Water of Life"; "Daniel the Great Man of God"; "Fellowship"; "The Greatest Ransom Ever Paid"; "The Lord Knows His Own"; "The Trigger" and "The Nature of Spiritual Things" (Young Peoples' Address).

We would like to express our appreciation to all who served the Convention in any way, and in catering for our temporal needs. A Praise and Testimony Meeting was also held when thankfulness was freely expressed to our loving Heavenly Father for all His blessings and overruling providences of life.

Many lovely hymns were sung throughout the Convention, the closing feature as usual being the Love Feast. All thanks and praise we give to our gracious Heavenly Father and to His Son Jesus Christ for the many blessings, warm fellowship and the opportunities of service.

Seldom can the heart be lonely
If it seek a lonelier still,
Self-forgetting, seeking only
Emptier cups of love to fill.

"For Me and Thee"

"But lest we should offend them, go to the lake, throw a hook, and take the first fish coming up, and opening his mouth, thou wilt find a stater; take that, and give it to them, for me and thee"—Matt. 17:27; Diaglott.

In the earlier days of our Lord's ministry, following His rejection by His own townspeople of Nazareth, He seems to have resided for some considerable time in Capernaum. According to Matthew's order of events it would appear that shortly after His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus had made His way to Capernaum, and had there attracted much attention to Himself by healing the servant of the Centurion and also restoring Peter's mother-in-law to health. Days of popularity followed, until Jesus found it expedient to depart to a more quiet place. But this popularity which at first promised so much, had sadly waned when in after days our Lord again visited this greatly privileged city. The hatred of the religious leaders had grown in volume, and they had succeeded in influencing many of the people against Jesus and His work. The incident recorded in Matthew 17, and from which our text is chosen, was a very manifest evidence of this changed attitude on the part of the people of Capernaum.

Jesus had been absent with His disciples for some time, but now returns once more to this scene of many of His early activities. Shortly after their arrival, the tax collectors had encountered Peter with the challenge—"Doth not your Master pay tribute?" This tribute was a voluntary tax imposed only upon the Jews for the upkeep of the temple services, etc., having had its beginning in the days of Moses. By general consent it was understood that religious teachers were exempt from this tax, and in former days this courtesy seems to have been given to Jesus also. Now, however, He had lost caste, and was no longer thought worthy of this exemption. Hence the demand made upon Peter.

As the narrative shows, Peter entertained no doubt about Jesus being prepared to pay such a tax, and therefore in his usual impulsive way virtually promised it. By this promise he obligated both himself and his Master. We may judge therefore his surprise when he found himself being questioned by Jesus as to the propriety of His paying such tribute. Surely the hasty promise was scarcely consistent with the confession he had made but a few days before, when he confessed His Master—"the Son of the living God."

Jesus did not contest the payment of the tax, and recognizing that no principle was involved, He provided for the payment. Peter is sent down to the lake with the instructions contained in our

text, and of course returns with the coin the Master had promised. As to how the money came to be in the mouth of the fish, a reasonable suggestion is that the bright coin had been thrown or had dropped into the water from a passing boat and was quickly seized by this particular fish, lodging in its throat in such a way as to prevent its getting rid of it. Doubtless in some such way, in the unlimited, overruling power of God, the matter was properly timed; the special feature of the miracle being in our Lord's power to find it there at the appropriate time.

Jesus Pays the Debt of His Disciple

This is the historical narrative as it pertains to the little incident itself, but like so many other things in our Lord's intimate associations with His immediate disciples, this incident with Peter is replete with suggestive lessons possible of present and personal application—lessons that are surely calculated to draw us close to Him in a deeper appreciation of His love.

It should be observed that the fish did not provide two half shekels, but only one, a stater, which was in value equivalent to the one shekel needed—"For Me and thee." Thus Jesus linked Himself in the payment of this demand in the most intimate way with His disciple. That little word "and" should not be overlooked, for it is laden with significance, not only to the weak and impoverished Peter, but full of encouragement to us—to you and to me. Our blessed Master still pays the charges for all His penniless disciples, who like Peter have become indebted beyond their ability to pay, and who also in their extremities rejoice to hear Him say—"that take, and give for Me and thee."

"Let our debts be what they may,
 However great or small,
 So soon as we have naught to pay
 Our Lord forgives us all.
 "'Tis perfect poverty alone
 That sets the soul at large,
 While we can call one mite our own,
 We have no full discharge."

At the call of Jesus, Peter had left all to follow Him. His fishing business had been abandoned, at least in so far as giving attention to it might go. No income would therefore be forthcoming from that source. In common with his fellow disciples he had "forsaken all to follow" the Lord in His ministry, and apparently is now without funds. When, therefore, he finds himself face to face with this demand for the tax, he makes his appeal to Jesus. His extremity, however, becomes the Lord's opportunity to teach him how graciously "the Lord will provide" for every need. To us also the lesson is taught that when we too can truthfully say, "Lord I have left all to follow Thee", I am therefore,

"Not my own, my time, my talent,
 Freely all to Christ I bring,"

that He is ever ready to become our surety for demands made upon us for His name's sake, or because we have given up all for His cause.

Casting All Our Care Upon Him

As in the days of His earthly ministry, when three years of absence from home and business had passed over the heads of His disciples, He could turn to them with the inquiry—"When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything?" and they could promptly reply—"Nothing"—Luke 22:35—so it has been with all the long line of His faithful followers. With one voice all would say with Paul—"I have all and abound." All things needful and best have been supplied according to His riches in glory, for—"I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content", fully assured that—"He knows and loves and cares." If all has been given up for Him, He cannot fail to meet our needs, for His acceptance of our gift becomes His pledge that all our needs are now His special care. As a devoted life-long disciple has well expressed it—"Whenever you give yourself absolutely to Christ and His service, not at your whim, but by His direct invitation, you may reckon absolutely on His thoughtful provision, and even if your faith should give out, He will remain faithful, for He cannot deny Himself."

Let us note that when Peter found himself involved by his promise, he did not attempt to carry the burden alone. He took it to the Lord for His attention. By His summons to leave all, and Peter's acceptance of that call, Jesus had now become his burden bearer. As Peter might interpret it, this experience was traceable to the fact that he was so vitally associated with Jesus that their experiences were one. What a relief it must have been to him, when he found that the need had already been anticipated and provided for. And what a lasting impression must have been left on his mind to strengthen his faith in after days. He could always remember that no emergency could arise in the Lord's service that could not be met by Divine help. Jesus, by this act, had shown him, that even before he had any realization of his own need, ample provision had already been made for it, by One who makes the burden of His disciples first of all His own, before it touches those who have become the objects of His special love and care.

O that by some means our patient, loving Master might teach us this lesson also. What fully consecrated heart does not long for a deeper realization of "What a friend we have in Jesus"—One who really does "stick closer than a brother" to every sincere disciple, One who in every experience of burden or trial never fails to assure

and encourage by reminding us that this also is shared by Him. The trial is for our discipline and instruction in righteousness, and for Him, wherein He shows Himself gracious, sympathetic, and strong on behalf of those who flee to Him in every time of need. Like Peter, we may often be unmindful of the fact that before we found ourselves in the trial, He had already provided a way of escape; but oh, if we could only emulate Peter in our unquestioning confidence in His abundant provisions, and roll our burden on Him, then what a blessed afterward of joy would come into our experience. How wonderful it would be if we could only truthfully say—"I will neither murmur nor repine at what the Lord's providence may permit, because 'faith can firmly trust Him, come what may.'" His method of sharing our burden may not be in some miraculous way, as in Peter's case, yet, though heaven and earth pass away, His word of promise can never fail. He will meet the need of His weakest and most impoverished, devoted disciple. None that put their trust in Him can ever be forsaken, or overburdened with a trial too great to bear. The **tax gatherer** may be ever at our door in many forms, but if we take his demands to Jesus, and lay them at His feet, we will be able to face every demand with His "grace sufficient" in our possession, and inexpressible joy in our hearts, for to us He will have also said—"That take, and give for **Me** and **thee**."

Our Master Links Himself to Sinful Men

How often Peter must have recalled that memorable day, when Jesus first took him into partnership, and filled his boat to the brim, giving evidence of His power to assist those who obey Him. How often the same impulse that threw him at the Master's feet on that occasion, must have moved him again and again to acknowledge his unworthiness—"depart from me, for I am a sinful man." Beloved Peter, impetuous, yes, aggressive sometimes beyond discretion, yes, presumptuous, to the point of rebuking his Master, yes—but indeed, Peter with a heart of gold, and a power of affection sensitive to the slightest hint of its possible insincerity—"Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." Now once more his heart is thrilled, for again Jesus has linked him with Himself in words that must have been music to his soul—"For **Me** and **thee**." Again the lesson comes to us, for this also is our blessed privilege today. We too have enjoyed the privilege of turning our "boats" over to the Lord, and because we did so there are now hallowed memories deep down in our hearts, too sacred to parade before others who might not understand. Precious moments, when the very abundance of His blessings overwhelmed us with a sense of our utter unprofitableness, and, like

Peter, we too have realized at such times more deeply than ever the depth of that condescending love that bridged the gulf between ourselves and the Blessed One who had so graciously accepted us into fellowship.

God's Love Broader than the Measure of Man's Mind

Surely this is the greatest wonder of all the "wideness of God's mercy"—that we, unworthy mortals, should be called into such partnership. But even partnership was too cold a word for Jesus to convey His meaning to us, and to call us servants was unthinkable, for there were some confidences He sought that could not be enjoyed by servants, so He chose to call us friends. But He delights in even a more intimate term than that, for "He is not ashamed to call us **brethren**." And does He not like that term best, for the Prophet has Him saying—"I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee"—Heb.2:12. And not alone in the house of our pilgrimage will He rejoice with us, but He is yearning to have us drink with Him in deeper joys in the place He has gone to prepare. As His brethren He fervently desires to have us share with Him in His glory before the Father and all His holy angels. He invites our participation with Him in His triumphant reign of a thousand years. And He has not left us without the fullest assurance that "in the ages to come" we are to share with Him the unfolding glories of endless eternities. In all of this we may hear Him say, Though eye hath not seen, nor ear heard what My Father hath in reservation for those that love Him, yet in His love and wisdom it waits in reservation "for **Me** and **thee**." How incredible it seems! Yet it was all determined for us in the counsels of God before the foundation of the world.

How much of the Divine Plan the Father may have revealed to the Son in His pre-human existence, we may not be too sure, but that He was well informed that the redemption of mankind would involve the greatest test of His own devotion to God, and His love for man, is beyond doubt. He would surely know that His obedience would secure for Him the right to be the great Deliverer of the race. He must also have known that a class of called out ones, developed under similar tests of fidelity, would share with Him those exceptional privileges of Kingdom rulership. Therefore, as He endured the cross, despising the shame, and remembered that the future for Himself and His Bride was all bound up in the issues of His own sacrificial life, He could address us again and again from those crisis periods, in the words addressed to Peter—"This is for **Me** and **thee**."

He Gave Himself for Me

From His conflict with Satan, alone in the solitudes of the wilderness, He emerges triumphant, having gained for Himself a victory over that Prince of Darkness that meant everything to Him and us. How fierce that conflict was we do not know, but this we do know, that the great issues before His mind were obedience to God, and the salvation of fallen man. Therefore in His victory He is saying to us again—"This is for Me and thee."

Again we are with Him in the deep recesses of the Garden of His agony. We see the cup the Father has put into His hands, and how with an anguish of soul too deep for our comprehension, He falters in the extremity of His sorrow, and pleads its removal. But He overcame! His—"Nevertheless, not my will not thine be done", proclaims once more His triumph and He comes to us again to calm and rejoice our hearts with the same sweet message—"This is for Me and thee."

We see Him at last when "lifted up was He to die", as Moses had lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. The anguish of the Garden has been surpassed by the heart-breaking cry of the God-forsaken, Sin-bearer. The temple veil has been rent in twain and all seems over, and lost. But no, ere He utters His final words—"It is finished", He sees us, like the beloved John and the faithful women looking on with our tears of sympathy, and again we hear Him assure us that this bitterness also was necessary to fulfil His delight in the Father's will, necessary also to redeem unto Himself a Church out of every nation and kindred—therefore, this also is "for Me and thee."

Finally, we stand with Him as He emerges from the tomb, a conqueror over death and the grave. We listen to His words of hope and comfort—words that make our hearts burn within us while He opens to us the Scriptures: It must needs be that Christ should suffer before entering into His glory. Such is the testimony of all the Prophets, beginning with Moses. But My beloved disciples, as the Father has appointed unto Me a Kingdom, so I now appoint unto you that glorious Kingdom wherein I shall see the travail of My soul and be satisfied; that blessed day when the earth shall resound with glory to God, and good will to men; that delightful time when the glory of God shall cover the earth, and sin and death shall be no more; that Kingdom, I now go to receive for Myself, yes and for you. This also is "for Me and thee." Thus He links Himself to sinful men in redeeming love, and who shall separate us from this One who has loved us and bought us with His own precious blood, and made us sharers with Himself and all the Father has given to Him? (From—"The Herald of Christ's Kingdom.")

"Naught of merit or of price
Remains to justice due;
Jesus died and paid it all—
Yes, all that I did owe.

When He from His lofty throne
Stooped down to do and die,
Everything was fully done;
"Tis finished!" was His cry.

Jesus paid it all,
All the debt I owed;
Jesus died and paid it all,
Yes, all the debt I owned."

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in the Lord, and they only, are able to properly view and meet the affairs of life, and they alone are able to rejoice in tribulation, in persecution, in suffering for righteousness' sake, because they know, as the Apostle assures us, that all these things are working out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, and that present difficulties and trails are not worthy to be compared with the glories that shall be revealed in us by and by—when we with our dear Redeemer shall sit upon the throne on high for the blessing of all the families of the earth.

"The Spirit of Prayer and Supplication"

If the story of Joseph, his sufferings and exaltation to power as the governor of Egypt next to the king, represents the story of Jesus and all those who follow in His footsteps in the narrow way of self sacrifice and suffering, incidental to their exaltation to power in the kingdom of God under the whole heavens; and if the preparation and afterward the distribution of the wheat, the bread of Egypt, for the saving of the lives of that whole people represents well the blessings and glorious opportunities that are to come to the world of mankind during the Millennial Age through the glorified Redeemer, it does not seem amiss to suppose that Joseph's eleven brethren are somewhat typical also. We are to remember that it was His own that received Jesus, not those who cried—"Crucify him, his blood be upon us and upon our children."

We perceive that in the Lord's providence that nation has passed through severe experiences and ordeals since. We may hope that these are proving beneficial, and that ere long the famine for the Word of the Lord will reach them and cause them to come to the great Governor for the bread of life. The Scriptures intimate that this will be the time of "Jacob's trouble"—Jer.30:7—but he will be delivered out of it. The Apostle assures us of the same, saying that God's gifts and callings He will not repent of or alter, and that ultimately the natural Israelite shall obtain mercy through the favour of the spiritual Israelite—Rom.11:30,31. The Prophet—Zech.12:10—takes up the theme, and tells us of how they shall yet look upon Him whom they have pierced, and how they shall

mourn as these brethren mourned, and how then the Lord will pour upon them the spirit of prayer and supplication, and upon their manifestation of repentance His forgiveness, and how ultimately their sins and iniquities He will remember no more—that instead He will be very gracious to them and kiss them.

We close this lesson with the Apostle Paul's exhortation—"Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." The more we each realize our own indebtedness to the Lord for the forgiveness of our sins and for our adoption into His family and for the blessings that come to us as the sons of God, the more shall we seek to copy His glorious character and be copies of our dear Redeemer, the essence of whose character is nothing less than justice to every one—with as much additional of love and mercy as we can possibly attain to. The larger our attainments of this God-like quality the more pleasing we will be in the Father's sight and the better fitted for joint-heirship in the heavenly kingdom, in the dispensing of the bread of life to all the world of mankind.

He who sees not these things and follows not this course according to the Apostle's word is blind and cannot see afar off—cannot see and appreciate the blessings which the Lord has promised to those who faithfully copy Him. Those who do see, find the eyes of their understanding opening more widely day by day to the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the love of God which passeth understanding; and to make this progress in joyful appreciation of our benefactor, our Lord assures us means a corresponding growth in benevolence, kindness, gentleness and mercy to those with whom we have to do. While this rule must obtain, especially in the household of faith, it will also extend not only to our own immediate relationship in the flesh, but also to our neighbours and friends—yea to our enemies and to the brute creation. All of these will more and more realize the changing of our characters and dispositions, and it will be to their general blessing as well as to our joy.

Fellowship Weekend

The brethren of Wentworth Falls (in the Blue Mountains, N.S.W.) cordially invite all able to attend the Fellowship Weekend to be held (DV) November 9th and 10th at the Wentworth Falls Pre-School Hall, Corner Armstrong and Day Streets, Wentworth Falls. Further information and programs from Mr. D. Ostapovitch, 24 Tarewella Rd., Wentworth Falls, N.S.Wales, 2782. Phone (047) 571 656.

Our Lord's Resurrection

While there are a number of Scriptures which state that Jesus would be resurrected on the third day after His crucifixion, such as Matt.6:21; Mark 9:31, and Luke 18:33, and other Scriptures after the event state—"Him God raised up the third day"—Acts 10:40, one Scripture, Matt.12:40, seems contradictory. The following from the "Reprints" seems to clarify this matter helpfully.

"The waving of the barley sheaf of firstfruits on the 16th of Nisan ('the morrow after the Sabbath' or Passover of the 15th—Lev.23:5,6,10,11) typified the resurrection of Christ our Lord, as 'the firstfruits of them that slept'—1 Cor.15:20.

"Here is the strongest possible confirmation of the correctness that our Lord was not three full 24-hour days in the tomb, but only parts of the three days and nights; that He was crucified on the day corresponding to our Friday afternoon, and arose on what corresponded to our Sunday morning. The showing of this type that the Paschal lamb was to be killed sometime during the 14th of Nisan, and the wave offering of the sheaf of firstfruits was to occur on the 16th, should settle the matter for all. It agrees with the repeated statement—1 Cor. 15:4; Luke 24:46—that our Lord rose on 'the **third day**, according to the Scriptures.' This Scripture concerning the firstfruits is the only one which we recall as in any way pointing out the time of our Lord's resurrection.

"The only Scripture seeming to oppose this understanding is the declaration that our Lord would be three days and three nights in the earth—Mat.12:40—and the only explanation that can be offered to this is, that the expression is used in a general and not in a specific manner, the nights being mentioned to preclude the idea of any cessation of death until the third day. Thus understood, the expression would signify that during portions of three days-and-nights our Lord would be in the tomb. At all events the evidence is overwhelming that our Lord died on the 14th of Nisan and rose on the 16th—the third day after."

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 (DV) on December 26th, 27th, 28th and 29th, in the Masonic Hall, 12 Prospect Hill Rd., Camberwell. Further information from the Class Secretary—Mr. J.B. Hiam, 1056 Mountain Highway, Boronia, Victoria, 3155. Phone (03) 729 6207.