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Christian Experience.

(Convention Address)

“Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”—(Rom'. 12:2)

IN this text we have a practical exhortation in connection with Christian experience. While the English word “experience” occurs only three or four times in the Bible, yet the equivalent Greek word occurs very often, and is more generally translated trials, i.e., testing, proving, to determine the value of a person or the quality of his principles. Approved or prove is another translation of it, but for a person or anything to be approved, necessarily means that such have first gone through a test or series of tests or trials; hence we often speak of experience gained through this process.

But what is experience? It is knowledge and wisdom gained by trials and practice. Applying it to Christians, we might add to this definition, that it is a spiritual exercise of mind. Our text in Rom. 12:2, suggests that. We say we are making an experiment with this or that or the other thing. It means that we are applying certain tests in order to ascertain the value or strength of a thing. We are often in doubt as to the issue or result—we experiment.

But in regard to God, He is never in doubt as to the issue; He knows the end from the beginning. He tested Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jesus, and others by giving them certain experiences, i.e., arranging and surrounding them with certain conditions and persons, which would demonstrate to others in future ages or generations their reliability and integrity, and thus make them worthy examples to follow and obey. He is also giving us experiences, not so much for His own benefit, (although He surely finds pleasure in the person who is faithful under His dealings and instructions), but for our lasting good and to His honor.

Experience is not gained by merely sitting quietly and letting the spirit of God work in our hearts, nor by mere meditation or imagination. Christian experience is not merely the exaltation of feeling or excessive joy that finds expression only when inspired by devotional songs, prayers, smooth meetings and studies or exhortations of Christian fellowship, and he who is dependent merely upon such means of grace for his vitality is but an infant in experience.

More than this is necessary, as we well know, for the Bible uses such figures as soldiers, warfare,

running, fighting, pruning, building, sowing, reaping, etc., when describing Christian experience. All these and other figures plainly declare the different kinds of experiences in which we find ourselves at some time or other during our Christian pilgrimage. One who has read “Pilgrim’s Progress” cannot fail to notice the variety of experiences met with by “Christian” in his trials.

Experience, then, carries with it the thought of testings or trials, as Peter’s illustration of gold cast into the crucible for refining, so clearly indicates—1 Peter 1:7. The trying of our faith is Christian experience. We are told in Rev. 3:18, “to buy gold tried in the fire.” Truth and Christian experience must be purchased at the cost of faithful and constant submission to the disciplines of the Lord in fiery trials which are necessary to consume our dross and refine our gold. See 1 Peter 1:4-12; Heb. 12:5-8. According to these words, trials are inevitable. The nature of Christian principles account for oppositions from worldly and professing people. These are meant to renew our characters which call for corrective discipline; they increase our spirituality and give us good ground for comfortable assurance of divine love.

In Rom. 5:3, 4, it is truly written that “tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope.” Patience is necessary in experiences in order to get results. Tribulations are a necessary part in God’s dealings with us, to fit us for our future exalted position; they will develop us in patience. This again will lead to large and valuable experiences—experiences of God’s Love, wisdom and grace—and will brighten hope and strengthen our confidence in God.

Circumstances arise in which your principles are tested and call for patience. (James 1:3.) Afflictions make the beginning sad, patience will make the success glorious. Had the Israelites believed God’s promises of deliverance they would not have murmured at the Red Sea. God brought them to the Red Sea to deliver them from the Egyptians and made all their fears end in joy and triumph. In like manner, He brings us face to face with certain obstacles so that our attention may be directed to Him. The more we trust God, the more He is concerned for our welfare; the more we trust ourselves, the more He does to cross us.

God has always “an eye upon them that fear Him” --not to keep distress and afflictions from them, but to quicken them in it; and to give them, as it were, new life from the dead, new fruit from the rod. One has said, “He seems to be the unhappiest of mankind who has never been exercised with adversity, as he cannot have had an opportunity of trying the strength of his mind.”

James 1:12 says, “Happy the man who endures trials, (adversities) because having become an approved (i.e., character fixed, experienced with good and evil) person, he will receive the crown of life.” (Diag.) Merely to have trials is not enough; we must endure them. It is better that we endure •them than be lifted out of them.

You know there is a peculiar joy in working through a difficult problem—a joy in overcoming. It may be illustrated this way:—In our schooldays, perhaps we would have to work through a difficult problem in arithmetic, and would probably sit over it and scribble, frown, worry and fret—we could not get through successfully with the figures. The teacher would come and say, “What is the matter?” We would answer, “It will not come right.” Now the teacher does not scold you and say what a stupid thing you are, and then do the whole sum for you. That would discourage and crush any little hope. No, the teacher quietly points and says, “Is that figure right?” “Oh! I had overlooked that.” Now some more figuring. “That other figure should now be what?” A little more thought and now a happy expression steals over the troubled face; the problem has been solved. The teacher by a little assistance has given that joy and pleasure that come by getting through. So, brethren, there is a joy in getting through, in overcoming a trial and we are happy and also appreciate our Teacher more for the kindly assistance.

The farmer, too, by observation, study and experience knows just how and when and with what kind of

implement to prepare and cultivate, sow and reap his land. One, going on the land, who has had no previous experience with farming will for the first -year or two make a failure of things. -Before he is able to do the right thing at the right time, using- the right implement for certain work, ‘,or sowing various grains at the correct time, he will find the experience has cost him dearly; nevertheless is wiser. But the experienced farmer knows just what kind of implement to use to produce the desired result, and what season and conditions are best for sowing and reaping.

In like manner our Great Husbandman knows exactly (by His inherent wisdom) what kind of experiences to give to each one of His tender plants; what situation and what kind of implements to use to produce a certain kind of result, when conditions are best to apply stimulants upon the land in order to produce luxuriant fruitage, and how and when to reap the harvest. It is good our experiences are in the hand of One who knows.

In James 5:7, we read, “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.” You will see that the beginning of this chapter shows the human race advancing to maturity in their experience, and a bitter experience it is, and will be yet. Their harvest will be “a day of slaughter.” The life of each individual Christian is also advancing under the same law of sowing and reaping. ‘ The Apostle tells us, therefore, to be patient under our experiences, as well as patient with others—verse 9. Farmers have learned a lesson which many Christians need yet to ‘learn, namely, that when seed is sown,, grain must be looked for at the latter end Of the harvest and not at the beginning. There is not a harvest all the year round.

Let us sow to the spirit. in order to do this (which is not natural to our human nature) there’ must needs be much experience of various kinds. Even though we may have spiritual knowledge, theoretical knowledge is not enough.

As for instance if one wants to learn bricklaying; the first thing we might do is to read a book about this trade, but a mere theory is not sufficient. The next best thing is to observe a bricklayer at work, day by day. The movement of the hand and trowel seems simple enough but how awkward it is when a trowel is put into your hand. So. the best thing is experience. You will find that to take up and spread mortar is quite an art; possibly the first three or four times you can hardly get it on the trowel, and then before you have lifted it very far, you find that it has slipped off on your boot, instead of going on the wall. You feel embarrassed and others are watching; it throws one on his own responsibility, but practice makes perfect. You need experience, you need practice. How much more so with spiritual things— spiritual building. We are always building,-you know; that is’ our vocation. So, to handle skilfully the Word of God takes much experience and practice.

“Every, one that partaketh of milk is without experience of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe.” (Heb. 5:13, R.V.) “Without experience of the word of righteousness,”—unskilled. A skilled or experienced-tradesman is always in demand. The fault lamented in this text is unskilfulness in the Word and therefore not very useful themselves as builders. We are all more or less unskilful in finding, quoting and defending the Word, as well as in its use, due sometimes to weakness of earthen vessels. It needs practice and experience to be able to apply the principles of the Word to our daily, common routines of life, but by so doing it would save us many a regret, many a disappointment, many a doubt and fear. It would turn many an anxiety into a joy, peace and spiritual satisfaction.

This need was impressed very definitely one time, when reading a religious book. A certain Christian man asked some workmen to come to his home to have a stud:, on the Scriptures. Well, they came One night, but the good lady of the house was rather distressed about the spoiling of her nice carpets in the parlour, because of the coarse and muddy boots of these rough workmen. In order to calm herself she wondered if

there was anything in the Bible about carpets. Yes, sure enough she found something that fitted her case very well—”Take joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a more enduring substance.”—(Heb, 10:34)

We need thought, practice and wisdom, which of course includes commonsense, to apply the principles of the Scriptures in a workable way to our daily experiences. Perhaps some are so situated that they have very little spare time, but conditions do alter which change our circumstances and some time or other we will find more time to put into study and thought, but what we now have let us use faithfully. We usually have enough independence and opportunity to continue to practise those things we do know. We need to learn by experience to use the Word harmoniously, impartially, to rightly divide—practically, doers—not only to others but for ourselves also. Our natural powers of discernment between right and wrong need the aid of instructions, education, exercise and habit—wisdom from above.

Christian experience is growth — “To grow in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ;” to be rooted and grounded in love and grow up into Him in all things, like unto Him who is our Head. Christian experience is to build up a character, as Peter says, “adding to faith, virtue,” etc., (2 Peter 1:5-8) and to labour in the Lord’s vineyards—workers together with God, being soldiers of the cross, waging a good warfare, armed with- “the whole armour of God.” It is following our Captain, wielding the sword of the spirit, and “visiting the widows and fatherless in, their afflictions and keeping ourselves unspotted from the world.”

Many experiences of the faithful in the past can be given; we think of our Lord’s wonderful example and then Paul’s experience expressed in 2 Cor. 11:23-33. It is in such schools as this that the Christian gains true experience that worketh hope and knows no discouragement; “that maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.” It is eminently practical, and it is impossible to separate experimental from practical Christianity.

Christian experience is bearing fruit. “Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit.” What is this fruit which glorifies God? First, it is an inward growth of grace in our own hearts. Secondly, the fruitfulness of doing good to others. Both these growths come as a result of abiding in Christ—in the Vine. An ordinary vine is grown for the purpose of bearing fruit, not for the vine, but that others may pluck it for their use. So with the Christian, the growth in grace in the present life is in order that he may be qualified to be with Christ in the future Kingdom and with Him bless all nations.

Is not God calling 144,000 volunteers to pass through certain experiences in order to do away with sin in the future age? The Scriptures also speak of this as a sin-offering. One can see the need of experiences to exercise our faith and obedience. Perhaps the peace of God is not ruling our hearts fully, so experiences are permitted which not only call for greater exercise of faith, but more dependent leaning upon God’s strength. We need His providential overruling continually in our lives, and we need to take notice of them for our spiritual advancement.

We seem best able to call to mind and are especially happy of God’s providences and experiences that have come upon us suddenly — perhaps unawares we have been almost run over in the street. We don’t know how we escaped, or some other happening had almost overtaken us, but we got through remarkably well. We say that that was providential—a real evidence of God’s overruling and protection—as if it should be special cause for thankfulness and joy to God. Well, so it should be, but it seems that some Christians exalt such experiences far outside their proportion, and imagine that if others do not have such miraculous deliverances, they cannot be ‘experiencing God’s providence in a very great degree.

This brings to mind a little story that was read some years ago, regarding the experiences of a doctor and a traveller, who went continually over the same road on their errands. This road passed over a hill having

a very sharp downward grade. On this day, the traveller passed down the side of the hill with his horse and vehicle as usual when suddenly the breeching strap broke, the vehicle lurched forward on the horse which soon became startled—neither horse nor vehicle could be controlled, but careered madly down the side of the hill. It seemed as though there must be a smash, but fortunately, somehow, it was guided towards an upward grade at the foot of the hill, which soon brought the vehicle to a standstill. In speaking of this to the doctor, the traveller said, “Now, that’s a wonderful providence on my part.” “Well,” said the doctor, “I too passed over and down that hill yesterday, and my breeching strap did not break, so Divine providence did more for me than for you.”

So, friends, let us count our many blessings, great and small, and experience the blessedness of Psalm 91—“He that abideth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” And again in Isa. 26:20, 21, “Come my people enter thou into thy chambers, etc.”

Let us all remember that all of the Lord’s special dealings with His people during this Gospel Age are with a view to developing them in character, not only good characters but fixed characters. It is not sufficient that we accept Christ, nor sufficient that we should preach Him to others. To be fit for the heavenly Kingdom, we must develop characters in harmony with our Lord—gentle, yet firm; sweet, yet strong. This is signified in the terms of our discipleship; we are to copy our Teacher, who is also our Redeemer. We are to let His light shine; it is important that we see this fact. The difficulty apparently with the majority of people is that they do not see and do not understand the purpose of life, hence valuable opportunities and precious lessons are wasted upon them.

One person has recently said, “I know a man whose accomplishments have been the marvel of all who knew him; who in his boyhood made the resolution, “Let every occasion be the great occasion, for you cannot tell when fate may be taking your measure for a larger place.” If he went to school, he kept thinking, “I must not skip the hard problems, for they may arise up in my manhood and testify against my faithfulness as a boy, and may defeat me. I must see an opportunity in every lesson and- cultivate a habit of overcoming, a habit of faithfulness and accuracy.”

This is merely an elaboration of what the Good Book says—“Do with thy might what thy hand findeth to do, for there is neither wisdom, nor knowledge, nor device in the grave whither thou goest.” And again—“He that is faithful in that which is least will be faithful also in much.” Difficulties in the way would not prove that it is not the right way. Bunyan’s “Pilgrim” in travelling toward the heavenly city found the hill of difficulty in his way. And our Lord forewarned all who would walk in His steps that their pathway must of necessity be full of tribulations—testings. The reward is to them that overcome. There could be no overcoming unless there were difficulties.

Bible Class Assemblies.

Melbourne.—Clyde House, 182 Collins Street (near Town Hall), First Floor, Room 7 — Sundays, 3.30 p.m. and 6.45 p.m.; Thursdays, 7.45 p.m.

Adelaide.—Liverpool Buildings, Flinders Street—Sundays, 3 p.m. and 6.30 p.m.; Wednesdays, 7.30 p.m.

Perth.—The Basement, Druids’ Chambers 459 Hay Street East—Sundays, 3.45 p.m and 6.45 p.m.

Sydney.—Child Study Rooms, 75 Liverpool Street—Sundays, 3.30 p.m. and 6 p.m.

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Convention News.

The Annual Convention held by the Melbourne Class over the four days of the Christmas season, at the close of last year, proved a most profitable time again.

Looking back on such an occasion our hearts are continually raised in praise and thankfulness to the Lord for making these gatherings possible, and for the helpful encouragement received from the assemblies as a whole. The experience of all who attended these meetings in Melbourne seemed to be that of gaining much spiritual refreshment, which it is hoped may long remain with each one.

The local brethren very gladly welcomed some visiting members from other states and country parts, and it was a great joy to see their faces again and to note the continued love and zeal for the Lord and His truth.

After opening each day of the Convention with praise and prayer, a Bible Study followed, and the portions of Scripture selected, one for each day, are as follows:-2 Cor. 5:1-10; Luke 17:20-27; Luke 17:28-37; and Rom. 11:25-33.

In 2 Cor. 5, the assurance of a spiritual house being prepared for all who so labor in the tabernacle condition as to be accepted of the Lord, was very comforting. The main lesson impressed was that of the necessity of being willing to be pilgrims and strangers—not being “at home in ‘the body’”—walking by faith and not by sight, that we may be present with the Lord in the spirit of our fellowship, and eventually enter the heavenly home, the immortal state. “He that bath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also bath given unto us the earnest of the spirit.”

The passage in Luke 17:20-37, engaged the attention of the brethren for two afternoons and proved a most timely and instructive study from our Lord's own words. It was seen that the opening verses applied to the time of Christ's first advent, when He answered the Pharisees concerning the Kingdom He was proclaiming. Then followed the important message to His disciples respecting His second advent and the manner of His presence—unknown to all except His own people. The warning was particularly noted—”And they shall say to you, see here; or, see there; go not after them ;” thus definitely indicating that the Lord would not come in human form that He could be located in any one place or city, etc. The following verse, 24 explained so clearly the glorious appearing of “the Son of Man in His day” as “the bright shining cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the presence of the Son of Man be.” (Matt. 24:27)

Then the days of Noah and the days of Lot had their special lesson. Just as the ark in Noah's day and the mountain in Lot's day were the only places of safety, so in these days of the Son of Man our only refuge

is in Christ—fleeing to the mountain (kingdom) of the Lord. It was noted also that Noah and his family would represent the faithful in Christ, whereas Lot may possibly picture some who are fearful of obeying the Lord fully (the Great Company; see Gen. 19:17-22); and Lot's wife would symbolise those who look back wilfully, and suffer the second death.

The closing verses of this study impressed how the harvest work would progress — one here and there being taken from various walks of life to be gathered together as earnest and zealous Christians. “Wheresoever the body (food) is, thither will the eagles be gathered together”—feasting on the truths due throughout the time of harvest. “Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching: verily, I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself and make them to sit down to meat and will come forth and serve them.”

On the last day of the Convention, the Bible Study in Rom. 11:25-33, brought out many beautiful thoughts on the wonderful plan of redemption. It was clearly seen that “the fulness of the Gentiles,” along with the remnant of faithful Christian Jews would constitute the elect, or Bride of Christ, the spiritual seed, and when united with Christ; “all Israel shall be saved.” The New Covenant would then be made with Israel and eventually “all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.” “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.”

The addresses of the brethren added much to the helpfulness of the occasion, and the main thoughts from as many as possible will appear in this, and following issues of the “Peoples Paper.” The speakers' topics were:—“In the footsteps of Christ,” “Rebuilding,” “The Life of Abraham,” “The Life of Job,” “Christian Experience,” “The Life of Habakkuk,” “In the Last Days,” “Exhortation from Scripture,” “The Knowledge, Understanding and Wisdom of God,” “Faithful in Little,” and “The Witness of Jesus.”

The Fellowship Meetings—two on Praise and Testimony, the Question Meeting and the session, ‘A hymn I like and why,’ all provided further opportunities for the friends to converse respecting the Lord's loving kindness and their faith and confidence in all His rich promises through Christ. The messages of Christian love and Scripture texts received from the Classes and individual brethren, including one by telegram from Sydney, were very much appreciated and the Convention message chosen to be sent to all the friends, together with the warm Christian love from all assembled, is found in Phil. 1:2-6, 9, 10.

Then, with the parting Love Feast and Hymns, “Blest be the tie that binds,” and “God be with you till we meet again,” the Convention closed with a prayer of thankfulness and praise to the Giver of every good and perfect gift, and with the desire that the coming year may find all the Lord's people progressing in harmony with His will.

“The Lord be with you!” steals the benediction
With solemn splendor like a falling star;
In morns of joy and midnights of afflictions,
It breathes its echoed sweetness near and far.

“The Lord be with you!” when the shadows hold you;
And prove His loving power to soothe and bless;
When dangers darken and when fears enfold you,
“The Lord be with you in His tenderness!”

Passover Memorial, 1938.

The Memorial date for this year falls on Thursday evening, 14th April, this being the 14th of Nisan, according to the Jewish Calendar, and the anniversary of the institution of the Lord's Supper.

Swedish Brother Finished his Course.

WORD from Brother G. Sandblom, of Sweden, advises of the passing of Brother Wessman, with the request that this be made known to our brethren, some of whom have been corresponding with the departed Brother. The message states:—"Our dear Brother Charles E. Wessman died here at Goteborg, on 6th November. A dear Sister Pettersson took care of him the last days and nights with the most Christian love, and I gave him the help I could. The doctor said there was nothing to do, because the diabetes was so strong.

"Our dear Brother Wessman was a very good friend of mine for many years past, and he was a very good Christian, and followed in his Master's footsteps to the end, and I think he could say with Paul: 'I have, fought a good fight, I have finished my course,. I have kept the faith.'"

We have happy memories of very helpful correspondence with Brother Wessman for some years past. While it was

evident that he suffered much at times, there was no complaint, but always that ready zeal and love that prompted to service at every opportunity. It is good to think of his faithfulness to the Lord and His truth, even unto death.

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Re-Building.

(Convention Address).

“Except The Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it • except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.”—Psa. 127:1.

ANYONE engaged in the building trade will have had varied experiences, and especially in the case of rebuilding will know all the awkward corners to be remedied. In some buildings that are pulled down we find some very superior workmanship, while others are quite the opposite in their construction, being out of date and must be rebuilt according to the advancing conditions prevailing. But before any rebuilding can be done, the old must be demolished, and what a work it is sometimes. One is apt to be nearly choked with the dust of years gone by. So with the advance of light in religion the old building must be first pulled down, and we realise how much dust and rubbish must be removed before we can make a clean start.

In these renovations we pick out that which is serviceable, and fit to be used again. So, in the Christian work of rebuilding, there are portions of the former building that we may retain, but much needs to be cast out. To begin with, we may find faulty places in the foundation. A sound concrete foundation will give good results for the future stability of the structure. To the Christian, his best foundation is a rock, as we sing in the good old hymn, “On Christ the solid rock I stand; All other ground is sinking sand.” We also read in Isa. 28:16, “Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth on Him shall not make haste..” And the Apostle Paul informs us that “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

Now we know in building, man can build with all sorts of foundations and on various kinds of ground: A wise and experienced person will take care that the ground chosen for a building site is solid, not too low lying, nor too slanting. Low lying land is apt to become inundated with heavy rains, and then a building erected upon slanting ground often cracks and must be bolted together to save it from falling, even though large stones may be used for a foundation.

Having good ground and a good foundation, the Apostle exhorts, “But let every man take heed how he buiideth thereon.” The materials a man uses to build on the proper foundation may be of inferior quality. Some stone is soft and will gradually fritter away with wet weather; some bricks are of a brittle disposition and will crush with a certain amount of weight. These materials are fire-resisting, but laying weight upon them does much damage. So, with some Christians, they may have a good foundation, yet by not being- careful with the material they use become so weighted that they may be crushed altogether.

The Apostle Paul enumerates various materials when he says: “If any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.” Here we notice some inflammable materials that would not last long in a fire; we know that wood, hay and stubble would soon be burned up—a good illustration of unstable characters and erroneous teachings which would not stand up in fiery trials but would soon be consumed. Then, on the other hand the metals of gold, silver and precious stones are good fire resistants, corresponding to the stability of divine things and those who build upon these.

The Christian’s faith is like a building, and must have foundation and superstructure. Every principle of truth or error that we adopt becomes a part of our faith building. A building of wood and its various by-products looks very nice and may be a good protection for a time, but will not endure like the more costly structure. The building of our faith is largely left with ourselves; God furnishes a mine of truth and places

the tools within our reach that we may dig into the hidden treasures. The wise man says (Prov. 2:4): “If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou find.” This wisdom is defined by Webster, as true religion, a true system of faith and worship. In our building we must add faith to faith, virtue to virtue, and knowledge to greater knowledge. Thus the Lord would have us grow and build ourselves up in grace and knowledge and love.

The importance of the statement that Jesus is the foundation of all faith toward God is confirmed by the words: “There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.” No other basis of faith will do—“Other foundation can no man lay.” As written by another—“Those who are building on this foundation rock are Christians, though they build thereupon with a poor faith. Even though they build entirely with the wood, hay and stubble of men’s traditions, yet as builders upon the Rock, they are Christians; though in this clay of the Lord, into which we have now entered their works shall suffer loss, yet they themselves shall be saved, so as by fire. That is, God has arranged that a fierce trial of faith is coming upon all who

profess to be on the Rock, Christ Jesus, which will burn up and destroy every vestige of error; everything which is of man and not from God’s Word. However, all who truly recognise the Rock and are built on it shall be saved.”

Those who build on the Rock with gold, silver and precious stones of God’s revelation, are enabled to overcome the world and carry out their consecration acceptably to God through Jesus Christ, by reason of this good and proper faith building. Whereas those who build with wood, hay and stubble of human traditions are those who do not overcome the world, but who are ensnared and bound by its spirit and hindered from carrying out their consecration.

If all Christians valued truth properly, they would buy it and sell it not, though it cost time, inconvenience and self-denial to get it, and reputation and sacrifice to hold it. Thus by symbols of building material, we see a distinction represented between the two classes—those who are saved by fire, and the overcomers, the royal Bride who shall reign with Christ in His throne. Therefore, may we all keep before our minds and seek the prize of our high calling, taking heed how and with what material we build our faith structure, even though on the sure foundation.

Some may build their hope on right doing as a basis that God will grant them eternal life. These do not build on the’ Rock, Christ Jesus, but upon their own works. Of this class were the Jews who sought to justify themselves, but the Apostle Paul assures us that they had not a good foundation, for “by the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified.” Others build their hope of salvation on the love of God. Such feel sure that because God is very pitiful and of tender mercy, therefore He will ultimately save every one from death eternally. These would not be Christians if they build hope and faith on the love of God merely, and not on the only foundation, Christ Jesus. The love of God provided the foundation, but the love of God alone is not the foundation of Christian faith.

Others build on the justice of God and declare that He is hound by principles of justice to deliver all men out of Adamic death—that having placed man in his present condition of sin, misery and death, that in justice to His creatures God must restore them. Those who build their hopes of future life on this reasoning are building on a false foundation, because the Scriptures inform us that “by grace are ye saved.” None of these theories are Scriptural, hence none of them is a proper foundation for faith, and any building raised thereon is sure to end in destruction. This is the foundation which God has laid in Zion, “a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation”—Christ Jesus.

(To be continued.)

Correspondence.

N. S. Wales.

Dear Brother,

As we reach the end of the year again, it is time to renew my subscription to the "P.P." and "Dawn"
Please find a postal note for and anything over will go to the Tract Fund.

I was very pleased to see the first article in the December "P.P.," as we have been having some extreme views on time prophecy drawn to our notice lately. One that the Millennium started long ago and our Lord has been reigning for about 60 years, and hinting that if we do not accept their teaching we would have no hope of being in the Kingdom. I don't know where they get their authority to judge and condemn their brethren.

Now we have others at the other extreme saying that our Lord's second advent has not taken place yet. I don't know from where we could get the harvest messages if the Lord of the harvest was not present. I have no doubt our heavenly Father is pleased to see us interested in any of His plans, but I do not believe that any one will be shut out of the Kingdom for a want of knowledge of time prophecy.

Wishing you and all the dear ones with you the compliments of the season, with Christian love,

Your Brother by the Lord's favor.

Victoria. Dear Brother and Sister,

It is with grateful hearts to the Giver of every good thing that we pen these few lines, remembering the many, many kindnesses we received. during our recent stay. . . . I have been going over the studies, and still hope to, to recall and impress the many helpful lessons of the passages, and in the main I expect we will get the addresses later on in the "P.P." After such a season of fellowship, everything in the way of study and daily experiences seem more meaningful and the little "Manna" readings seem deeper and richer than ever. Especially has each one from "Green Pastures" appealed to me; here is a sample: "God many times answers our prayers not by bringing down His will to ours, but by lifting us up to Himself. We grow strong, so as to need no longer to cry for relief. We can bear the heavy load without asking to have it lightened. We can keep the sorrow now and endure it. We can go on in quiet peace without the new blessing we thought so necessary. We have not been saved from the battle we shrank so from entering, but we have fought it through and have gained the victory. Is not victoriousness in conflict better than being freed from the conflict! Is not peace in the midst of the storm and the strife better than being lifted altogether over the strife." And so, as we were reminded, "goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our life," we enter the year before us knowing that it will have its joys and sorrows, failures and successes, just as other years have and will have. so long as we remain in this tabernacle, but with calm trust knowing all is well so long as daily, hourly and every moment our heart condition is, "Thy will, not mine, be done."

With our sincere Christian love,

Yours in Christian fellowship.

“God and Reason.”

These little books in pocket size are now available, and will be found very useful' for general work in passing on the message. The price with postage is 5d. per copy; 9d. for two, and 4d. each per dozen.

“A Review of the Doctrines”

Those Classes or individual brethren who may desire copies of this book during the year ahead are asked to communicate with us. At present a quantity is to be bound, and it would be helpful to know how many may be required.

Question Box.

Question—There is one point in the article in December “P.P.,” that is not clear to me. It is the statement on page 90, second column—“These 70 sabbaths (2 Chron. 36:21) are the same period as Daniel’s 70 weeks, etc.” Do not the three score and ten years mean the same thing as the 70 years desolation which began 606 B.C. and ended 536 B.C.? Then how can this be the same period as Daniel’s 70 weeks, which began B.C.454?

Answer—The 70 years desolation began with the dethronement of Zedekiah about 587 B.C., not with the captivity of Jehoiakim in 606 B.C. That however does not affect the fulfilment of the prophecy which was to begin its counting of 70 sabbaths or 70 weeks “from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem.”

Each of those years of the 70 years of desolation was to represent a land sabbath. Israel was even then being punished under “the time of the Gentiles,” and though Divine favor would not be entirely withdrawn from the nation until 490 years after the command to restore Jerusalem, the nation would not be able to properly observe the laws of the land sabbaths and jubilees. (Lev. 25:3, 4.) So, it seems these 70 sabbath years were taken in advance as a prophecy, which Daniel’s prophecy makes clearer and supplies the date when the 490 years would begin to count, which was the 20th year of Artaxerxes, (Neh. 2:1), or B.C. 454,

Prayer Brings Peace.

BEING in an agony, He prayed,” is the record of our Saviour’s Gethsemane experience. The lesson stands for all time. Like a bright lamp, the little sentence shines amid the olive trees of the garden. It shows us the path to comfort in our time of sorrow. Never before or since was their’ such grief as the Redeemer’s that night, but in His prayer He found comfort. As we watch Him the hour through, we see the agony changing as He prayed, until at last its bitterness was all gone, and sweet, blessed peace took its place. The gate of prayer is always the gate to comfort.

There is no other place to go. We may learn also from our Lord’s Gethsemane how to pray in our Gethsemans. God will never blame us for asking to have the cup removed nor for the intensity of our supplication; but we must pray with submission. It is when we say in our deepest intensity. “Not my will, but Thine,” that comfort comes, that peace Comes.

Perfect loyalty to Christ brings perfect peace into the heart. The secret of Christ’s own peace was His absolute devotion to His Father’s will. We can find peace in no other way. Any resistance to God’s will, and disobedience of His law, any wrenching of our lives out of His hand must break the peace of our hearts. No lesson that He gives ever mars our peace, if we receive it with willing, teachable spirit, and strive to learn it just as He has written it out for us. If we take the lessons just as they are given to us, we shall make our life music and we shall find peace. —Selected

Thoughts for the New Year.

If clouds of trouble gather near,
Sometime throughout this coming year,
And things we prize should disappear,
We'll find no change in Jesus.

If foes surprise and lay us low,
And swell our hearts with pain and woe,
And friends, unheeding, onward go,
We'll find no change in Jesus.

If fortune turns from us away,
And poverty should come to stay,
And friends their shallow hearts betray,
We'll find no change in Jesus.

And so 'twill be until the end,
We'll always have a precious Friend,
Upon whose love we may depend:
We'll find no change in Jesus.

No change in Him, no change in Him:
All glory to His precious Name!
For us His love remains the same:
We'll find no change in Jesus.

—James Rowe.

Post Cards, etc.

A repeated order for post cards of various designs has been fulfilled and any friends not fully supplied over the Christmas season may procure some very fine cards with suitable texts and poems for use all the year round; some being especially suitable for the Memorial season.

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A Supply of these Convention Reports in the form of "Bible Students News" is now on hand, and copies are available free, while the supply lasts, to all enquirers.

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