



Volume XLIV. No. 9 MELBOURNE, SEPTEMBER, 1961 Price— Sixpence

Words That Burn.

(Contributed Article).

“WORDS that bum” need no fire on our part. Truth is sufficiently powerful in itself. It needs no emotional display, no thumping of tables, no fiery temper or dramatisation to capture real spiritual insight. Those methods the Apostle Paul says are “enticing words of man’s wisdom.” Faith rests not in the plausible persuasiveness of man, but in *die* power of God. This, of course, is the power of the spirit. If Truth, coming from this quarter or that quarter, from sage or donkey (Balaam had enough sense to recognise good counsel from a silly quarter), is not sufficiently powerful in itself to burn the understanding, anything one could do would add nothing to the power of Truth.

“I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ,” says the Apostle, “not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom; not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, to consider the testimony of God.” No, we could add nothing to excel “My grace is sufficient for thee, for MY strength is made perfect in (your) weakness.” However well-intentioned one may be, there is warning against bringing our strength into the battle to assist God.

You will recollect the experience of Uzzah (2 Sam. 6:37), how he paid the supreme penalty for attempting to assist God in a human fashion. The Ark of the Covenant would never fall if it depended on Uzzah. If Truth is to be carried forward God has given specific directions. How can we uphold Truth if we neglect the specific directions? Had the Ark been carried in the prescribed manner it would not have been, in the cart ; it would have been carried by Levites with the aid of poles balanced on their shoulders. Truth promulgated in error’s “cart” is sure to claim many victims, acting with the best of intentions, as no doubt was Uzzah.

The Apostle Paul also warns of the many subtleties in and around us anxious to “corrupt the simplicity that is in Christ.” Sincerity of motive, speaking the truth in love, coupled with pure devotion should be our aim, with grace to add its blessing. Not SMOOTH words — smooth words are soothe words, and become smothering words. While the Gospel is the most soothing message one could imagine, we aim to show that it is also a burning message.

In Psa. 55:21 David complained of an unfaithful friend, — “His speech was smoother than butter, yet war was in his heart ; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords.” And Isaiah 30:10 pictures the same deceitfulness of smooth words. Folk who prefer darkness to light will, for a time, be consoled with smooth words, preferring deceits and lies to truth and righteousness; preferring like the ostrich, to bury their heads in the blinding sand and refuse to see the issues of this awful day. In Psa. 39:3 and Jer. 20:9 is recorded a similar kind of experience felt by these two prophets. David says, “My heart was hot within me; while I was musing the fire burned,” and Jeremiah, also refusing to speak concerning the Lord, writes, “His word was in mine heart as a burning fire.”

Were they meditating on God’s goodness, which, like a flame, cannot be contained, or were they, like ordinary men, cursing grievances, sulking, stoking the embers of bitterness, fanning the flames of resentment, nearly consumed with self pity before finding relief in the secret place of the Most High?

Not *comforting* words. Here again, is there any more comfort than that of the Scriptures? If our idea of the Scriptures is such that we derive from study ONLY that which is pleasing, restful, comforting and consoling, etc., our Christian life will be stunted. The Scripture’s *comforting words* are also *burning words*, consuming

words. “The zeal of thine house hath consumed me.” “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by EVERY word out of the mouth of God” (out of God’s mouthpieces —Jesus and the Apostles).

Moses was introduced to God at the burning bush, on the mountain that burned with fire. Israel, very appropriately, adopted the symbol “consumed but not destroyed.” And God spake to Moses from out of the burning bush. Words from such a source could not fail to be burning words — words that burn, that command attention, obedience, respect and devotion. Moses was an apt pupil of such an Instructor.

The Law Covenant was inscribed in tablets of stone, graven, BURNT into rock. Burnt in, they are themselves burning words, sufficient to illuminate any dark world concerning the requirements of perfect manhood. Of the New Covenant God has said that He will write it in the hearts. We wonder how it will be written? If stony hearts received the Law of Condemnation, will fleshly hearts receive the Law of Love that will burn away all dross of sin?

Job, the prophet, had some burning words, and he knew it. His one aim was to preserve them for posterity; he did not want them to perish with him, and his prayer was that his words could be printed in a book—a different book to ours. He describes the type of book, that his words were “graven with an *iron pen* and lead in the rock forever.” (Job 19:23-25.) Yes, he wanted a red hot iron pen to scorch out in the rock certain words, and after the scorching the cavity to be filled with lead. Lead, you know, resists all weathers—not subject to rust or decay. With such equipment you could expect some very important announcement, some message for every generation. Here it is,—”I know that my Redeemer liveth.”

Of Jesus it is written, “They all wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth; that never man spake such as he; that he spake with authority—not as the scribes.” The scribes did little else but study. Study was their work, their life; study, study, study. What did they study? By no means least included in their studies were the Scriptures. You could say they knew the Scriptures backwards. When the Wise Men of the East sought to know the place where the Messiah would be born, they were able to correctly name Bethlehem. This would have been a very knotty question before that event. The difference between Jesus and the scribes was that the latter were adept at quoting FROM authority, while the Master spoke WITH authority. If you concede this and then make the excuse that what was possible with Jesus is not possible with ordinary folk, we point you to many, many holy men of old ; also to those who spoke at Pentecost.

For example, Daniel (9:2) said that, due to his study of books, he was convinced that the time of deliverance for dispersed Israel was close at hand. He also understood with greater clarity than ever before (as you will note from his recorded prayer) that the dispersion was merited, duo to sin and rebellion; but now that the time was fulfilled, would God once more cause His face to shine upon the sanctuary? Had Daniel been as the scribes, speaking FROM authority, he would have had much knowledge of the contents of the books; he would have been able to quote chapter and verse, every text. Yet his understanding would not have been enlightened; he never would have had that conviction of spirit that enables one to speak *with* authority.

Similarly at Pentecost, had Peter been no more than a scribe, he would have referred to Joel 2 as a promise; he even may have felt competent to say that he was sure the promise would be fulfilled. But to quote it as “being fulfilled this day” was a different matter—this was speaking with authority, not from authority, or rather, not merely from authority. The same idea is behind that memorable occasion when Jesus read the first few verses of Isaiah 61 in the synagogue, and then added,—”This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.” After declaring a few more truths with authority they threw Him out of the synagogue. Folk generally will entertain the FROM authority aspects of Truth; but dislike, oppose, and even hate the WITH authority presentation. The difference in presentation is quite easy to recognise. The mere scribes work to the pattern that “the Word was made into a Book” whereas the spiritually-minded confess that “the Word was made *flesh*”—*quite* a difference

At Pentecost the spirit was poured out in a symbolical manner — “there appeared unto them cloven tongues as of fire, and it sat on each of them.” The Apostles were then the accredited mouthpieces of the Lord and the *tongues of fire* suggest their words, too, will be *words that burn*. Immediately they met opposition, accused with drunkenness, and later charged that their words were “setting the world on fire.” The truth was upsetting social arrangements; it was biting into the malpractices of the rulers in the religious world, in industry and commerce. As it spread it burnt into not only the Jewish world, but also the heathen.

It is good to consider the social relationships between servants (slaves they were called) and their masters. All have responsibility one to the other, but more especially have ALL a responsibility to God. We too easily emphasise responsibilities of those who enjoy most of the comforts and privileges of living. “And the poor have the gospel preached unto them” is a choice portion that none would exchange for all earthly riches, but that does

not excuse us from pointing out the responsibility (or lack of it) where it should be foremost.

Moses (another to speak WITH authority) says of the rulers, or the king, that “he should not multiply horses unto himself, nor wives; neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.” Those few directions that cover in principle so much that he should NOT do are incomplete without the things that he SHOULD do. He is to have a copy for *himself* of the Law of God beside him, and it is for his daily meditation. All this is for his good. But the tail part has a nasty sting that bites right into the quick ; these directions are to ensure that “his heart be not lifted above his brethren.” (Deut. 17:16-20.)

The truth burns wherever it touches on the equality and brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God. Paul elaborated it so beautifully on Mars’ hill at Athens: “God made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and set the bounds of their habitation,” (Acts 17:26), concluding that all were the offspring of God.

You can burn most things: wood, hay, stubble: things on which you place value and affection ; houses, furniture, works of art, valuable books (in Acts 19:19 we read how they brought out their valuable books and burnt them after “Words that Burn” had penetrated their understanding). A man’s work can be burnt, too—in a few moments a lifetime of struggle and acquisition can come to nought. You have seen folk that all they can think about is their work, their job. Later, when, after fighting against leaving the job, the job now leaves them, the bottom drops out of their living ; nothing to live for, nothing to hope for ; no other field of activity to claim their attention. Yes, “the fire will try every man’s work.”

Now that we have atomic power capable of destroying every living thing, even the earth itself, we need equally as strong “burning words” to counter the tests of this time. “Heaven and earth may pass away, but My word shall never pass away.” And the “word that will not return unto God null” declares that “the earth was made for habitation; that God will make the place of His footstool glorious.” Man may try to, burn the earth, but he is powerless to burn words, especially the Lord’s words. But if we cannot burn words, words can burn us, for our hurt or for our good,—it depends on us.

This is shown under another simile, that of stinging, or cutting. Clothe the Spirit of Truth with words and it becomes sharper than any two-edged sword. Yes, Truth stings (or burns) us to repentance and forgiveness or to bitterness, wrath, anger and rebellion. On the day of Pentecost Peter’s words so affected his hearers that it says they “were pricked to the heart”—exceedingly sorrowful and repentant of their part in the crucifixion due to their ignorance. They then asked Peter for guidance as to what they could do to show their sincerity of repentance. On the other hand when Stephen preached his burning words, his hearers were “cut to the heart and gnashed on him,”—in great rage and anger to destroy such a preacher of righteousness. The words uttered in both these instances must have been very powerful, burning, to effect such reformation on one hand and such hatred on the other. The *effect* of burning words depends on the attitude of heart of those understanding them.

Jesus left no written words (He left that to others), yet He is described as “the Word of God.” No wonder He could declare, “The words that I speak unto you are spirit and life.” He did not multiply words without knowledge. “Words of life and beauty, teach me faith and duty.” On one occasion, the only occasion where the records say our Lord wrote anything, it was in sand. It was on the occasion when they brought to Him an unfortunate creature (sinner or sinned against(?)), and they with their charges thought to trap the Master. The record is in John 8. As the accusers were denouncing the victim of sin Jesus was quietly writing in the sand, as if He did not hear them. This galled the accusers and they persisted in denouncing the poor creature and asked Jesus for a verdict. Jesus left His writing in the sand, stood up, and said, “He that is without sin, let him cast the first stone.” He then stooped down and resumed His writing in the sand. What did He write? We do not know the exact words, but in view of His answer we can guess. The accusers were convicted of their conscience. All that He needed to write was one or two Commandments, which would suffice to smite any accuser. The words clearly visible in the sand seem to have burnt their way into the consciences of the accusers, and as they clearly saw themselves in the same condemnation as their victim, they were glad to be out of reach of such searching matters. They left, beginning at the eldest,—those with more experience and participation with sin — and including lastly, the youngest, — those whose senses were not so keen to discern between good and evil.

What a blessing that Jesus wrote His condemnation in SAND — erased with Heaven’s first breeze. Instead of writing Sin against us, He endured Heaven’s wrath in His own body to save us, not to condemn us. “With His stripes we are healed.” “The Son of Man came not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” Until Jesus intervenes we excuse and accuse one another, quick to see the mote in another’s eye. But when the Master steps in between us, “how are the mighty fallen.” As He shields the sinner and asks where are the accusers, He finds they have vanished. Then His soft, gentle, sympathetic, kind understanding, —“Neither

do I condemn thee; go and sin no more.” Another chance; another day to live; another life to live. “By grace are ye saved, through faith” — these words themselves will burn away the dross of the old nature.

There must be hard crusts that surround the understanding in some cases. Words that burn take a long time to penetrate, even when so much is at hand for our immediate advantage. Such a case was the poor creature at the “Pool of Bethesda,” mentioned in John 5. In the porches surrounding this renowned Pool was a great multitude of impotent folk; blind, halt, withered. It must have been a sorry spectacle to see such numbers of handicapped folk, all seeking relief from their distress. The Outpatients Dept. of our hospitals provide you with a similar picture, except that with the largest number of outpatients they would be a small company against the folk here at Bethesda. Our case is a certain man there who had an infirmity that immobilised him, and he had been there a mere 38 years. The more active you are, the quicker the years fly; the more inactive you are, the slower they pass. A few years would have seemed a lifetime under such circumstances. But 38 years . . . “And served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had for her.” . . . But 38 years under the conditions at Bethesda would seem as 76.

Let’s take a peep at the “happy” band of unfortunates. Distress brings together people from all shades of life, and under certain conditions a common sense bridges many differences. It is mostly the reverse, and personal distress breeds a callousness towards others. Each thinks his particular complaint peculiarly “different,” worse, harder to bear than brethren with their ills to nurse. In this motley company of unfortunates there was no spirit of comradeship; each was for himself. Here, among all places, another law than that of the jungle should have prevailed. There was no queue to safeguard the right of those coming first, being served first ; nor was there a queue for those worst hit being considered first. The struggle for existence in the town, in the markets, in the labour force, emerges in the INFIRMARY. It is taken for granted that the right of the strongest among the weak should prevail.

Jesus comes among this unhappy group, unannounced and unknown. He takes in the situation, and possibly after talking with some and noting others, He has no bother to single out the worst cases here. This poor, miserable creature, bedridden for 38 years, with no one to sympathise with him, or care for him, would be the worst of many miserable folk to come under His notice. True, He met lepers, raised the dead, etc., but their condition pales in comparison with this man, living an existence under conditions for so long that amounted surely to living death. Jesus selected the worst case among many to bestow His grace and mercy, and we have an example here of how long it sometimes takes for burning words to penetrate the understanding, in some cases.

Were you in this unfortunate’s position, would you have considered — “Wilt thou be made whole?” a burning question? That was the question proposed by Jesus to this certain man. Instead of the instant “Yes” that we think we would have been quick to utter, this poor chap did not grasp the meaning. To this remarkable question he began to tell Jesus his long history of handicap; the reason why they remained in this place; and the conditions of utter selfishness that prevailed; he told Him of the isolation and its consequent loneliness, and the impossibility of expecting relief.

His circle of complaint now full, the man arrived again at his complaint; it was so grievous. (Self pity excludes God’s benefits awaiting enjoyment.) Jesus interrupted the man’s ramblings with, — “Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.” These words burnt at last into his understanding, and *immediately* he rose up and carried the bed, the bed that for 38 long years had carried him. But another surprise was waiting just round the corner. An officer told him that it was not lawful to carry this bed on the Sabbath; this was a day: of rest; he must obey the law. The man remonstrated; rest for one more day, after 13,880 days of enforced rest? It didn’t make sense perhaps his mouth did not utter the burning words that must have been in his heart.

(To be continued.)

PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST’S KINGDOM. (Monthly) 6/- (60 cents) per annum, post paid.
Published by the Berean Bible Institute,
19 Ermington Place, Kew, E.4, Melbourne,
Victoria Australia

Kept in Perfect Peace.

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee.” (Isa. 26:3.)

THIS thought is very precious to us as New Creatures. “The peace of God, which passeth all understanding,” is to rule and keep our minds and hearts. (Phil. 4:7). We are to count the things of the present life as not worthy of comparison with the glories of eternity. And so the Apostle says, “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:17-18). When our minds are stayed on the Lord, and we take the proper view of our experiences, we can sing with the poet:

“No storm can shake my inmost calm,
While to this Refuge clinging.”

We have peace, no matter what the outward conditions may be. The trials and difficulties of life come to the Lord’s people commingled with joys the rain and storm, then the sunshine. They enjoy all righteous pleasures that are in harmony with their consecration. They learn to cultivate patience in trial, knowing that patience works out experience, and experience works out more and more that hope which maketh not ashamed. (Rom. 5:3-5.)

So, then, it is to the Christian that our text brings the assurance that when God gives quietness, none can make trouble. They “shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake,” said the Master, but then we are to “rejoice and **be exceeding** glad.” “Let not your heart be troubled” (Matt. 5:11; John 14:1.)

Our Heavenly Father designs that various kinds of trouble shall come upon us, that these may develop and prove our characters. It is part of the Divine Plan to permit us to have experiences of affliction. (Psalm 119:67, 71, 75; 34:1920.) So when we see God’s people in trouble or trial today we are not to say what God is against them. We are each to demonstrate our willingness to suffer according His will. We are to walk in His footsteps. We have the examples of the Apostles when trials and difficulties and persecutions came upon them; and the example of other saints all down the Age.

Trouble is not necessarily a sign of the disfavor of God. On the contrary, we know that many are the afflictions of the righteous,” and that “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” The truth will cost them something. Faithfulness to the Lord will cost them much. As the Apostle says, “If ye be without chastisement (discipline, training), then ye are bastards and not sons” (Heb. 12:8). If God gives peace of heart, who can upset the one who is thus in harmony with God, in whom this peace of heart is ruling? This, then, is the greatest blessing of all. And He grants this peace to those who are faithfully striving to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. We have a Refuge, which none but His own can know. No harm can reach us within this shelter ; no storm can shake us from our moorings, for we are securely anchored to the Rock of Ages. “And *we* know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to the called according to His purpose.” (Rom. 8:28).

“What though my joys and comforts die!
The Lord, my Saviour, liveth;

What though the darkness gather round!
Songs in the night He giveth.

No storm can shake my inmost calm,
While to that Refuge clinging;

Since Christ is Lord a Heaven and earth,
How can I keep from singing ?”

“Keep the Door of My Lips.

ONE great mark of character development is demonstrated by the control of the words of our mouths. How much trouble, discord and disintegration of companies of the Lord’s people has been brought about by word of mouth.

The Apostle Paul admonishes, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.” Viewing the Apostle’s statement, we see clearly this admonition is very applicable to many religious people today. How many there are who do injury to their fellow creatures with their words and use the same tongue in offering praise to God.

We know of no evil to which God’s people are more exposed, than to the wrongful use of the tongue. With many it is as natural to gossip as it is to breathe; they do it unconsciously, and many are the peculiar methods which the fallen nature will use in its attempt to stifle conscience, and yet maintain the of this channel, long after it has been driven from evil practices, which are less common, less popular, though more generally recognised as sinful. It will say, I do not mean any harm to anyone, but I must have something to talk about, and nothing is so interesting to friends and neighbours as something which has a gossipy flavour connected with it. Hence it is that the Scriptures instruct us, “Let your conversation be such as becometh saints.” “Let your speech be with grace seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”

Those of the gossiping disposition, however refined their methods and words, well know that, so far from the gossip ministering grace to the hearer, it ministers evil; that the hearer is impelled by the forces of his fallen nature to go quickly and tell it further. Fallen natures feast on just such things, feeling the more liberty to do so, because they delude themselves that thus they are preaching against sin, and that in discussing and denouncing the said matters as being transgressions of another, they are mentioning subjects abhorrent to their righteous souls. How defective are the reasonings of the weak human nature, when the counsels in righteousness of the Lord’s Word are ignored. There is a wide scope for conversation among Christian people on the subject of the riches of God’s grace in Christ Jesus expressed in His Word, and in these things we have that which not only ministers grace to the hearer, but which adds also to the speaker. Such conversations shower blessings on every hand, so far as the new creature is concerned, and assists in deadening the old nature with its evil desires, tastes and appetites.

That is what the Apostle no doubt had in mind when he said that the Lord’s people should “show forth the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.” And a heart filled with the spirit of love, the spirit of God, the spirit of the truth and overflowing at the mouth, will be sure to overflow that which is within, for “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” A mouth, therefore, which does injury to others, either to fellow-members of “the Body of Christ,” or to those that are without, indicates an evil heart, implies that the heart is not pure.

Another excuse for gossip about other men’s matters is offered by some who say they can talk about religious matters to those who are religiously inclined, but when they are with worldly people or professors of religion who take no interest in Christian themes, they must be agreeable and accommodating and must at least hear their gossip and news, and if they do not share in such conversation, they would be considered very peculiar, and their company would not be desired. But this is one of the peculiarities of the saints. They are not only to be different from the world, but different also from the nominal professors of religion. Their religion is not merely to be on the surface, and on one day of the week, and under a certain suit of clothes, but is to be of the heart, related to all the affairs of life, for every day and every moment.

To follow strictly the Divine injunction will indeed separate them from some who are now their friends, and who love things of the world, forbidden to those who have become sons of God, and who have received of His spirit. That the Lord intended us to know this, is evident from the fact that He foretold that the way of discipleship would be a “narrow way.” If, therefore, one’s failure to be an entertaining visitor, neighbour or friend is because of one’s fidelity as a new creature to the law of Christ — love which “worketh no ill to his neighbour,” either in word or deed, and friendships are lost on this account, then, indeed, such have cause for rejoicing because they are suffering a little for Christ and righteousness’ sake. The loss at first may seem heavy, but if it is endured for Christ’s sake in obedience to His righteous law of love, such will soon be able to say with the Apostle that such losses are “light afflictions” not worthy to be compared with the off-setting blessings.

It is in harmony with this that the Scriptures declare that the friendship of this world signifies enmity with God. (James 4:4.) God has purposely placed the matter in such a position that His people must take their choice, and lose either the Divine friendship and fellowship, or the worldly friendship, because those things the Lord loves

are distasteful to the worldly, and those things the worldly love, evil deeds, evil thoughts, and evil speaking, are an abomination in the sight of the Lord. “For, as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.” (1 Pet. 1:15.)

Saviour, I long to walk
Closer with Thee:
Led by Thy guiding hand
Ever to be;
Constantly near Thy side,
Quickened and purified,
Living for Him Who died
Freely for me.

—C. T. Robinson.

“Daily Heavenly Manna.”—A new supply of this helpful book is in stock. In good, strong binding, with birthday recording pages, this one dollar edition is priced at 10/

Greatest in the Kingdom.

“In Heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father.” — Matt. 18:10.

PERHAPS it was the fact that Peter, James and John had been favoured more than the others on several occasions that led to the query connected with our text: “Who, then, is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?” They knew, of course, as St. Paul declares, that the Heavenly Father is above all, and that next to Him is our Lord Jesus Christ.

“To us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him.” What the disciples wished to know was, which of them would be greatest, most influential, in Messiah’s Kingdom, next to Himself.

Jesus, calling to Him a little child, set him in the midst of them and said, “Verily I say unto you, except ye turn (from this spirit of self-seeking which your question implies) and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven”—you will have no part in it, you will not be fit. Whoever would be greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven should therefore become as humble as this little child.

A little child, unsophisticated, is ready to acknowledge its lack of wisdom. It asks questions, a thousand a day; it seeks instruction; it does not profess and boast wisdom or knowledge—it is candid, it is truthful. It is in later years that it learns from its parents and others, untruthfulness, pride, bombast and various qualities which it did not possess at first. It may have possessed the disposition to pride and arrogance and haughtiness, etc., by heredity, but at first it was guileless, and “as a little child.”

The Master’s lesson is that whoever would become a child of God and be taught of God, and be eventually developed as a child of God, for the glorious position in the Kingdom to which we were called, must become childlike—must turn away from all pride, from selfish ambitions and hypocrisies and pretensions. They must confess their littleness and ignorance, and go humbly to the Lord for the necessary instruction.

Any who refuse to adopt this proper, childlike spirit will thus be refused the opportunities of the Kingdom, for God will have none others—none others can be taught of God, they will not learn the lessons necessary, under the arrangements of this present time. Here then is the standard of simplicity and artlessness which the Lord’s people should adopt and should continue to allow to control them, regardless of their years and experiences. “Now we know in part”; we are dependent upon our Father and His instructions. We have entered the School of Christ, our Elder Brother; He is our Instructor; we must learn of Him, and to learn we must be in this proper, childlike attitude of mind. **“ONE SUCH LITTLE CHILD”**

We are not to understand that little children, however guileless, are members of Christ’s Kingdom class, nor that the dear little ones dying in infancy will be members thereof. The Lord is seeking for mature men and women, who have a childlikeness of mind, a readiness to receive the Heavenly Father’s Message and who in gladness and simplicity of heart accept it. “Whoso shall receive one such little child in My name, receiveth Me”; whoever are

My disciples are privileged to be God's little children, and thus to be My younger brothers; whoever will receive one such will be receiving Me. "Whosoever shall offend," or injure, "one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him if a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were sunk in the depths of the sea."

If some one were thus drowned in the sea, it would indeed terminate his present life, but it would not at all endanger or influence his future life. A future life, by a Restitution awakening, is assured to Adam and every member of his race. Neither drowning nor any other form of death could possibly interfere with it. But he who would injure one of the Lord's little ones would thereby come under such a measure of Divine displeasure that it would affect his future interests beyond the grave, beyond his awakening. He would be held responsible for his deeds, even in the next life, in proportion as he realised what he was doing when he injured the Lord's saints.

The Lord declares that His faithful ones are as precious to Him as the apple of His eye, and that all their interests are subject to Divine supervision. He will allow nothing to happen to these; troubles permitted to come upon them will be only such as the Lord has foreseen and is able to make work out some blessing in connection with their preparation for the Kingdom. But even this fact will not excuse wilfulness on the part of those who do evil to the members of the Body of Jesus.

We remember the persecution of the saints by Saul of Tarsus. We remember Jesus said to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" He answered, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And Jesus replied, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." In persecuting the saints Saul of Tarsus had been persecuting Jesus, but because he did it ignorantly, God had mercy upon him. Doubtless many saints from Jesus' day down have been persecuted ignorantly, and the

Lord will have mercy upon those persecutors; but some of the persecutors have had such light, such knowledge, as to make them responsible; and it is of this class that our lesson speaks. Our Lord added a warning: "Woe unto the world because of offences! It must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh." **CUT OFF HAND OR FOOT**

Here the Master brought in a saying which has perplexed many. "If thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee; it is better to enter life maimed, or halt, than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee; it is better to enter into life, with one eye, than that having two *eyes* thou be cast into Gehenna fire."

Those who fail to remember that Jesus spake to the people in parables, and never without a parable, will be liable to stumble over these words of His. His teaching is this: If you have anything in your make-up dear to you as a right hand or a foot or an eye, that is likely to cause you to stumble and fail to enter the Kingdom, you had better cut off that tendency, no matter what it costs, no matter how precious, no matter how great a hold it may have upon the very tendrils of your life. Would it not be better to enter into life than to go into Gehenna fire, that is, destruction, the Second Death? Surely this is true. Having put our hands to the plough, having become followers of Jesus, we must either go on and be accepted as conquerors, or must perish.

There will, of course, be none in the Kingdom with but one eye, but the illustration is the same. If it should cost us the cutting off of some of our members, it would surely pay us to gain the eternal life in glory, even thus maimed, rather than to take the consequences of the Second Death, utter extinction. The lesson is that having begun as followers of Christ, and entered upon the contract and received a part of the reward, the holy spirit, the Divine favour, we cannot back out of the contract; we must go on to everlasting life or to everlasting death.

How careful the Lord's people should be not to stumble one another, even one of the least of the little ones who has accepted Jesus and become His follower!—is the lesson. To illustrate it, Jesus suggested that any shepherd losing one of his sheep would leave all the others to go and seek that one; and he rejoices specially at its recovery. So we, the followers of Jesus, should be careful not to stumble each other, but rather to remember that we are all sheep under the great Shepherd, our Heavenly Father, and the great Under Shepherd, our

Heavenly Lord, and that He has the spirit of loving interest and care which would go after the straying sheep, and that we should have this same spirit; and possessing this spirit, we would be very careful not to stumble or hinder even the least of the Lord's followers.

All the Lord's true followers are God's "little ones," and are subject to special Divine supervision, represented in our text as angel care. The messengers who have guarded over the lives of God's saintly few always have access to the Heavenly Father's presence, to make known the necessities of those whom they represent, for Divine Power is ever on the alert for the protection of these. Oh, how blessed the privilege of being children of God. Oh,

how wise to continue so little, so humble, so childlike, as to abide in His love, and to be enabled to learn the necessary lessons, and be ultimately received with Messiah in His Kingdom, honour and glory!

Books Available.

“Most Holy Faith”—£1.

“Tabernacle Shadows”—6/-.

“Daily Heavenly Manna,” birthday pages-10/6.

“God’s Promises Come True”—£1.

“Emphatic Diaglott” — New Testament —18/-.

“The Book of Books”—Reviewing the Bible as a whole-10/-.

“The Divine Plan of the Ages”—Cloth bound 4/6; paper covers 2/9.

“Our Lord’s Great Prophecy”—1/-.

“Manner of Christ’s Return”—1/-.

“Christ’s Return”—1/-. “Some of the Parables”—1/-.

“Hope Beyond the Grave”—1/-.

“God and Reason”—1/-.

“Israel in History and Prophecy” is the title of a very interesting and informative 64-page booklet now in stock, priced at 1/- per copy, 1/3 post paid.

FRANK & ERNEST TALKS Geelong, 3GL, 222 M. Sundays 10 a.m.