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“Blessed are the Pure in Heart.”

(Convention Address)

(Col. 3 :1-4; 1 Pet. 1:13-16.)

IN 1 Thes. 4:3 the Apostle Paul says, “This is the will of God (concerning you), even your sanctification,” and again in 1 Thes. 5:23 — “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly.” Only by “abiding in Christ,” and yielding ourselves completely to be controlled by His spirit of full consecration to do the will of God, can this blessed transformation of heart and mind take place. We must of course “redeem the time,” and guard against the things around us in the world that would hinder our progress in grace and heavenly knowledge. (See Rom. 12:2.)

Our Lord gave us good advice when He said, — “Seek ye first (chiefly) the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” Again we are exhorted to “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” (Col. 3:16.) Also we must “put on Christ,” allowing His spirit, His disposition to actuate our hearts and thoughts. (See Col. 3:12-14.)

Many there are who have very erroneous views of what is signified by the expression “pure in heart.” One class considers this impossible of attainment in the present life ; another class, no less mistakenly, considers this to mean absolute perfection in every thought, word and deed ; and in believing that they fulfil these conditions, and in teaching others similarly, they are making a grave mistake.

It is possible for one to deceive himself respecting his own heart and his own condition, as for instance, apparently, the Pharisees of our Lord’s day ; claiming that they were perfect, and that they kept the whole law, they were merely deceiving themselves, but not the Lord ; by their self-deception, a form of hypocrisy, which blinding them to their own need of the robe of Christ’s righteousness, left them in the filthy rags of their own righteousness for the kingdom. And so with some today, who claim perfection of thought, word and deed. They have blinded themselves to their own weaknesses, imperfections and errors, and are in a far worse condition than he who, though outwardly less moral, is at heart better in the Lord’s sight, because honest in confessing his unworthiness, because for such the Lord has provided forgiveness of sins — covering with the robe of Christ’s righteousness.

Nevertheless, those who think that purity of heart is an impossibility in the present life are likewise mistaken. Their mistake arises from not seeing a wide distinction between a purity of heart and an absolute perfection of righteousness of all the words and deeds of life. The heart, as used in our text, refers to the mind, the will, the actuating intentions or motives of the individual. With this thought before the mind, it is easy to see that one might be pure of heart, that is of pure intentions, and yet confess himself unable to do and to be all that his good intentions desire and endeavour. He whose heart is pure toward the Lord in Christ is the same one whose eye is single, the same one who is not double-minded but single-minded, whose mind, will, heart, seeks first, last and always the will of God. Hence the exhortation of the Apostle James.— “Purify your hearts, ye double-minded.” (James 4:8.)

But how can this condition of purity of heart be attained? Is this to be our message to sinners — “purify your hearts”? No, the Gospel does not call sinners to purify their hearts; on the contrary it declares it to be an impossible thing for the sinner to purify his heart; a fuller’s soap, which the sinner does not possess, is needed to cleanse the heart and bring it into that attitude of relationship with God and His will which will be acceptable and pure in His sight. On the contrary, sinners are called to repentance — called upon to confess that not only their outward lives are imperfect, short of the glory of God, but that their hearts also are rebellious, impure and in sympathy with impurity. After the sinner is repentant for sin, desiring to come into harmony with the Lord and His righteousness, he is pointed to the great atonement for sin, and is drawn to the great Redeemer, through a desire to be made free from sin and to come into heart harmony with God. When this step has been taken—when the sinner having repented of his sins, and having made restitution so far as possible, accepts Christ and the pardon He offers, and seeks to walk in the way of righteousness,

then He is justified—justified freely from all things, from which the law could not justify him — “justified by faith through the blood of Christ”—brought nigh to God, into relationship with Him, and caused to know the joy and peace of His forgiving love.

When this is accomplished, when justification by faith has been established, when the sinner is reckoned and treated as no longer a sinner, but as reconciled to the Father, then his heart may be said to be pure, cleansed from “the sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” But now arises a new question with the reformed one; while past sins are graciously covered, weaknesses of the flesh are present, and temptations of the Adversary are on every hand. He starts to walk forward, but finds himself beset by the world, the flesh and the devil ; what shall he do? A heart searching probably begins here; finding himself incapable of guiding himself, or of keeping himself, his proper course is to accept another offer of divine grace, namely, the second step in our great salvation. He hears the voice of the Lord, through the Apostle, saying—“I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God (manifested in the covering of your sins), that ye present your bodies living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”

The reformed one, if rightly instructed, realises his inability to stand in his own strength, realises that his only hope of maintaining justification granted to him lies in getting the Lord to take charge of him. At first he may think to go into partnership with the Lord, and to say—“Some of self and some of Thee,”—some of my own will and some of the Lord’s will; but rightly instructed he finds that this will not be satisfactory to the Lord; that the Lord will accept him, and become responsible for him, and guarantee him glorious victory and eternal reward only upon one condition, namely, a full and absolute surrender, a full consecration of heart.

It is after the sinner has come through all this process and has made a full consecration of his heart to the Lord, that he is of the class described in our text, one of the pure in heart, under the law of love. But notwithstanding the purity of his heart, his motives, his intentions, his will, to fulfill the Lord’s great commandment, which is briefly comprehended in one word, love, — he will find that he has a battle to wage, that the law of his members, depraved through heredity in sin, is a strong law of selfishness, in opposition to the new law, to which he has pledged himself, the law of his pure heart or new heart or will—the law of love.

Hence, as the apostle suggests, (1 Tim. 1:5) we must learn that the ultimate end or object of the divine commandment or law, means LOVE—even though we do not find ourselves thoroughly able to live up to every minute particular and requirement of that law. Yet our inability to live up to the requirements of that law must be through no lack of the will, or intentions of the loyal and pure heart toward the law, and toward the Lord whose law it is. Whatever failure we make, however short we may come of the grand ultimate object before us, it must be solely because of weaknesses of the flesh, and besetments of the Adversary which our pure hearts or wills failed to resist.

And here the Lord’s promises are helpful, assuring us that He knows our weaknesses and frailties, and the wiles of our great Adversary, the devil, and the influence of the spirit of the world, which is contrary to the spirit of love. He tells us that we may go freely to the throne of the heavenly grace, and obtain mercy in respect of our failures to live up to the grand standard which our hearts acknowledge, and seek to conform to, and that we may also find grace to help us in every time of need. And, availing ourselves of these mercies and privileges provided through our great High Priest, we are enabled to fight a good fight against sin, to repulse its attacks upon our hearts and drive it off if it shall succeed in invading our flesh. Thus, and thus only, may the Christian *keep himself pure* in heart, preserving his stand as one of the fighters of the good fight, one of the overcomers of the world and its spirit.

There will be a tendency on the part of the flesh, and the mind of the flesh, to deceive us in respect of this commandment of love. The mind of the flesh will seek to go into partnership with the new mind, and will be very ready to recognise love as the rule and law of life, *under certain conditions*. The mind of the flesh would recognise love in words, in profession, in manners—a form of godliness, without its power. Gentle manners, such as love would demand, may be exercised by a selfish heart deceiving itself, and seeking to deceive others; on the lip may be the smile, the word of praise, of kindness, of gentleness, while in the heart may be feelings of grudge, of bitterness, of animosity, which under favorable conditions, may manifest themselves in more or less carefully worded slander, or backbiting or reproaches. Or these, continuing in the heart and rankling, may, under favorable conditions, bring forth anger, hatred, malice, strife and other wicked works of the flesh and the devil, wholly contrary to the proper course of a pure heart, and in utter variance with the commandment of the law of love. How earnestly must the sincere Christian pray the inspired prayer of the Psalmist—“Cleanse thou me, O Lord, from secret faults,” and “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.”

What course should be pursued by those who find themselves possessed of impure minds—minds inclined to surmise evil rather than good, envious minds, selfish minds, which love only those that love and flatter them? Is there any hope for these? Would God not utterly reject such?

God is very pitiful, and it was while all were thus “in the very gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity” that He provided for our redemption. There is hope for all such who see their defilement and who desire to be cleansed.

“His blood can make the foulest clean; His blood avails for me.”

But true repentance means both contrition and reformation; and for help in the latter we must go to the Great Physician who alone can cure such moral sickness, and of whom it is written—“Who healeth all thy diseases.” All of His sanctified ones, it is safe to say, were at one time more or less diseased thus, and proportionately unfit for His service. True, it is worse for those who were once cleansed, if they “like the sow return to the wallowing in the mire’s of sin,— but still there is hope, if the Good Physician’s medicine be taken persistently the same as at first. The *danger* is that the *conscience*, becoming defiled, will so pervert the judgment that bitterness is esteemed to be sweetness, and envy and malice to be justice and duty, and the “mire” of sin to be beauty of holiness. Then only is the case practically a hopeless one.

The Good Physician has pointed out antidotes for soul-poisoning — medicines which if properly taken according to directions will sweeten the bitter heart. Instead of envy it will produce love; instead of malice and hatred and strife, love and concord; instead of evil-speaking and backbiting and scandal-mongering it will produce the love which thinketh no evil and which worketh no ill to his neighbour ; which suffereth long and is kind, which vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, which never faileth and which is the spirit of the Lord and the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Let us all take these medicines, for they are good not only for the violently sick, but for the convalescing and also for the well. The following are some of the prescriptions:

(1) “He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he (the Lord) is pure.” (1 John 3:3.) The hope mentioned is that we have been adopted as sons of God, with the promise that if faithful we shall be like Him and see Him as He is and share His glory. As our minds and hearts expand with this hope and we begin to measure its lengths and breadths, its heights and depths, it surely does set before us the Heavenly Father’s love, and the Redeemer’s love in rainbow colors, and we more and more love the Father and the Son because they first loved us. The divine form of love becomes more and more our ideal; and as we seek to reciprocate it and to copy it, the cleansing and purifying of our hearts follows ; for looking into the perfect law of liberty—love—we become more and more ashamed of all the meanness and selfishness which the fall brought to us. And, once seen in their true light as works of the flesh and of the devil, all anger, malice, wrath, envy, strife, evil-speaking, evil-surmising, backbiting and slander become more and more repulsive to us. And finally when we see that those who to any degree sympathise with these evil qualities are unfit for the kingdom and to every good work worthless, we flee from these evils of the soul as from deadly contagion. Our hearts (wills, intentions) become pure at once, and we set a guard not only upon our lips, but also upon our thoughts—that the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts may be acceptable to the Lord.

(2) “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and *purify* unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.” (Tit. 2:14.) We might theorize much and very correctly how and when and by whom we were redeemed; but this all would avail little if we forget *why* we were redeemed. The redemption was not merely a redemption from the power of the grave—it was chiefly “*from all iniquity.*” And the Lord is not merely seeking a peculiar people, but specially a people peculiarly cleansed, purified. This medicine will surely serve to purge us from iniquity if we are anxious to make our calling and election sure.

(3) “Pursue righteousness, fidelity, love, peace, with all who call upon the Lord with a pure heart.” (2 Tim. 2:22.) We not only need to start right, but also to *pursue* a right course. We may not follow unrighteousness even for a moment; whatever it may cost, justice and righteousness must be followed. But here a difficulty arises with some; they do not know how to judge righteous judgment. They are too apt to judge according to rumor or appearances, or to accept the judgment of scribes and Pharisees, as did the multitude which cried, “Crucify Him! His blood be upon us and upon our children.” Had they followed righteousness they would have seen the Lord’s character in His good works as well as in His wonderful words of life; they would have seen that so far from being a blasphemer He was “holy, harmless, separate from sinners”; they would have seen that His accusers were moved by envy and hatred.

And it is just as necessary as ever to follow the Lord’s injunction, “Judge righteous judgment,” and whoever neglects it brings trouble upon himself and becomes a sharer in the penalty due to false accusers. For as the Lord was treated so will His “brethren” be treated. And the more pure our hearts the less will they be affected by slanders and backbitings and evil-speakings, and the more we will realise that those who have bitter hearts from which arise bitter words are impure fountains in which is the gall of bitterness and not the sweetness of love.

Next comes fidelity; that is, faithfulness. The Lord declares His own fidelity or faithfulness, and declares Himself a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. And even the worldly recognise fidelity as a grace; and by such it is often given first place; for many would commit perjury through fidelity to a friend. But notice that God’s Word puts

righteousness *first*. Fidelity, love and peace can only be exercised in harmony with righteousness. This valuable prescription will help to keep our hearts free from the poison and bitterness of roots of bitterness which the Adversary keeps busily planting.

Justice is purity of heart—freedom from injustice. Righteousness is purity of heart—freedom from unrighteousness. Love is purity of heart—freedom from selfishness.

(4) “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit (the spirit of the truth) unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart, fervently.” (1 Pet. 1:22.) This medicine is for those who have used the other prescriptions and gotten clean. It points out that purity came not merely through *hearing* the truth, nor through *believing* the truth, but through *obeying* it. And not merely a formal obedience in outward ceremony and custom and polished manner, but through obedience to the *spirit* of the truth—its real import. All this brought you to the point where the love of the “brethren” of Christ was *unfeigned*, genuine. At first you treated all with courtesy, or at least without impoliteness ; but many of them you did not *like*, much less did you love them. But obeying the *spirit* of the truth you recognised that all who trust in the precious blood and are consecrated to our dear Redeemer and seeking to follow His leadings are “brethren,” regardless of race or color or education or poverty or homeliness. You reached the point where your heart is so free from envy and pride and selfishness, and so full of the spirit of the Master, that you can honestly say, I love all the “brethren” with a love that is sincere and not at all feigned.

Now having gotten thus far along in the good way, the Lord through the Apostle tells us what next—that we may preserve our hearts pure —”See that ye love one another with a pure heart *fervently* (intensely).” Ah, yes, the pure heart must not be forgotten, else it might be but a step from pure love into a snare of the Adversary, carnal love. But the pure love is not to be cold and indifferent ; it is to be so warm and so strong that we would be willing to “lay down our lives for the brethren.” (1 John 3:16.)

With such a love as this burning as incense to God upon the altar of our hearts there will be no room there for any selfish, envious thoughts or words or deeds. Oh, how blessed would all the gatherings of the “brethren” be, if such a spirit pervaded all of them! Can we doubt that, if it held sway in one-half, it would speedily exercise a gracious influence upon all—for righteousness and fidelity and love and peace, and against envy, strife, malice, slanders and backbitings?

Let all the “brethren” more and more take these medicines which tend to sanctify and prepare us for the Master’s service, here and hereafter. “Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace ; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.” (2 Cor. 13:11.) “The Lord bless thee and keep thee : The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto, thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.” (Num. 6:24-26.)

“Oh, to be clean, to be pure, to be true!
Cost what it may, to be
Thine through and through;
Purged from the promptings of evil within,
Freed by Thy grace from the thralldom of sin!

“Oh, to be simple to that which is ill,
Wise with a wisdom alert to Thy will;
Earnest of purpose and single of eye,
Eager to live and unfearing to die!

“Oh, to be fair, to be just, to be kind,
Sober in spirit and humble in mind;
Patient, unselfish, regardful of all,
Thinking no evil, though evil befall!

“Oh, to be fervent, unceasing in prayer,
Watching thereunto Thy praise to declare;
Living or dying, this blessing be mine—
Always, in all things, to wholly be Thine!”

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While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord's Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression used, either in the correspondence or *in* the sermons reported.

A cross (X) on the wrapper indicates that the subscription to "Peoples Paper" is overdue.

Convention News.

THE Convention held at Adelaide during the Easter weekend was once again, by the Lord's grace, a season of helpful spiritual fellowship. Our hearts are filled with thankfulness to the Giver of every good and perfect gift for the many evidences of His loving-kindness toward His people.

In his words of welcome our brother was able to extend a very cordial welcome to about 14 brethren and sisters from Melbourne and Geelong. The presence of these dear friends was very much appreciated, and we trust and pray that many blessings may be theirs as they reflect upon the good things provided by the Lord's grace.

We feel that it is a very great privilege to meet together in the Lord's name and spirit, whether it be in our weekly gatherings, or in the annual Conventions; the promise is still the same, and earnest faith still lays hold upon it and finds it true—"Where two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst." (Matt. 18:20.) The body of Christ is built up by means of that which every joint supplies, (Eph. 4:16), and it will not do for any one member to say he, or she, has no need of the other body members. (1 Cor. 12:21.) As earnest students of our Father's Word we realise that we are nearing the end of the Gospel Age; soon the full number of God's elect will have been completed; the Bride will have made herself ready; and the dissolution of the present evil world — heavens and earth — will be accomplished. Peter asks, "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness"? We want to be "wise virgins," with our lamps trimmed, and vessels filled with the oil of God's grace—the spirit of full consecration. "I delight to do thy will, O my God."

We look forward with earnest longing for the "new heavens and the new earth," and our hearts are cheered with the signs which indicate the second "presence" of our Lord (see Matt. 24), and we know the full deliverance of His church is near at hand. (See Luke 21:25-28.) This makes us glad, because the time is near when Satan shall be bound, and all evil restrained, and the long night of sorrow and weeping will be ended with the dawning of the glad new day of joy and gladness—the Sun of Righteousness will arise with healing in His wings. (See Psa. 30:5; Mal. 4:2; Matt. 13:43.)

During the four days of Convention we had some helpful Bible studies on the following portions of Scripture—Jer. 31:27-34; Rev. 19:5-9; Luke 17 :22-30; and 2 Pet. 3:9-14. The perusal and discussions on these Scriptures brought us many blessings, refreshing our minds, and we do thank God for the encouragement which His precious Word imparts, bringing enlightenment and encouragement to the hearts and minds of the pilgrims who persevere in their journey Zionwards.

Various brethren offered words of help and encouragement in their addresses, the topics being as follows—"Acceptable to God"; "Rejoicing in Hope of our Glorious Home"; "Good and Evil"; "Which is God's True Church?" "Sorrow Turned to Joy," and "Blessed are the Pure in Heart."

Another pleasing feature was the showing of some "Dawn" TV films, kindly lent to us by our Brother Crouch. of Toowoomba, Queensland. Also it was good to hear a tape recording of a very helpful discourse by Brother N. Woodworth of the "Dawn" on the topic, "God's Great Gift."

It was a pleasure too to receive many letters and messages expressing Christian love and good will, and assurances of prayerful remembrances from many Classes and brethren in various States. These were much appreciated, and to all who so kindly thought of us, as well as to the brethren everywhere, the friends in Convention send their warmest Christian love and the words of the Apostle Peter in 2 Pet. 3:11-14.

The Praise and Testimony meetings and the "Hymns we Like and Why" session brought opportunity of expressing our praise and thankfulness to God for His blessings which so freely attend us along our pilgrim way.

The Convention closed with the usual Love Feast, as each shakes the hand of each, at the same time singing, "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love," and "God be with you till we meet again," and the closing prayer of thanksgiving to the Father of mercies, the God of all comfort for all His blessings; and beseeching His grace and guidance upon each one assembled, as also His blessing upon the Israel of God in every place. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow. "

Memorial Observances

Melbourne.

THE anniversary of the sacrifice of our dear Lord Jesus is always a solemn occasion for the followers of the Master, but because the outcome was such a victorious one, the feeling of rejoicing is prominent in our hearts also as we give thanks to our Heavenly Father for the gift of our dear Redeemer, and to the Saviour Himself for His willingness to give His life a ransom for all mankind.

The Melbourne brethren gladly gathered to observe the Memorial of our Lord's death again this year, in accord with His request to "This do in remembrance of me." The attendance was quite good and included some elderly brethren who are not able to attend the meetings regularly, but who were pleased to assemble on this occasion for the annual celebration.

Previous studies in Exodus 12 and 1 Cor. 11 had impressed again the importance and necessity for the sacrifice of the "Lamb of God" if the salvation of the human family from sin and death was to be attained, special emphasis being placed upon the passing over of Israel's firstborn on the night of the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage, picturing the "passing over" of the "firstborns" of this Gospel Age, for whom this Memorial was especially instituted by our Lord on the night in which He was betrayed.

After suitable hymns, Bible readings, prayers of thanksgiving, and an address covering the subject of the Memorial and the privilege of God's people being invited to associate in the experiences of sacrifice with the Master, that they may also live and reign with Him, we partook of the emblems with solemn and grateful hearts, and asking for the Lord's grace and strength to assist us to "keep the feast" in spirit and truth in all the days ahead.

Geelong, Vic.

A small company of the Lord's people availed themselves of the opportunity afforded to observe the Memorial of our Lord's death. The simple service of hymns, Bible readings, and an address, with prayers of thanksgiving and petition was blessed of the Lord again to remind us of our Saviour's great sacrifice. This loving sacrifice will ransom all mankind back from sin and death in due time, but now particularly provides all the means of grace for His footstep followers of this Gospel Age, justified and consecrated, to participate with Him in the sufferings of this present time, that they may later reign with Him in His Kingdom of glory.

Previous studies at our weekly Class meetings had impressed the importance of the old Jewish Passover until it was rendered obsolete by the fulfilling of that which it typed — "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" — "Christ OUR Passover (Lamb) slain for us." "This do in remembrance of ME." "As often as ye do this, ye do show forth the LORD's death till he come,"—no more was there necessity for the Jewish Passover observance.

As we partook of the bread and wine at the close of our service we sought to remember Him in the manner and spirit of His request, desiring that He will continue to lead us into ever deepening fellowship with Him until "that which is perfect is come."

Adelaide.

In harmony with our Lord's request — "Do this in remembrance of Me,"—the friends of the Adelaide Ecclesia met on the evening of March 30th to observe the Memorial of our Saviour's death. We realise that all our hopes of life and blessing depended upon our Lord's faithfulness, even unto death. What an example we have before us, and we do sincerely praise God for the love and devotion and self-sacrificing zeal of our blessed Lord and Redeemer. What a privilege is given to the church of this Gospel Age, not merely to "believe in Him," but also to be called "to sutler with Him," as members of His mystical Body.

After the singing of hymns, and the reading of appropriate portions of Scripture, a brother outlined in type and antitype the deep importance of the great transaction which was consummated at Calvary. With prayerful, humble hearts, we thankfully partook of the emblems which represent our Lord's body, broken for us ; and His life (blood) poured out as the satisfaction for our sins, and also for the sins of the whole world, (in due time).

We thank our Heavenly Father for this Memorial Service which not only reminds us that all our hopes of life and blessing are centered in the death of Christ, but also revives and renews in our own hearts our pledge of consecration to

be “dead with Christ,” so that in the everlasting future we may also, by His grace, “live with Him.” “Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift.”

Perth.

On the 30th March we solemnly remembered our dear Lord’s supreme sacrifice for sin on Calvary’s cross. A group of ten gathered to celebrate the Memorial of our Lord’s death, gladly accepting our Lord’s admonition of “This do ye in remembrance of me.”

Appropriate hymns and words were chosen for the Service which prepared our minds for the solemn occasion. The blood of Christ cleansing us from all sin enabled us to renew our purpose to follow in the footsteps of our Master and lay down our lives in His service.

By God’s grace we symbolized the eating of the Bread from heaven, and having participation in the one loaf, also the drinking of the cup, showing our continued desire to sacrifice our lives unto death, being dead to the world and its desires.

“Love so amazing, so Divine, Demands our life, our time, our all.”

Sydney.

On Thursday, the 30th of March, the Sydney observance of our Lord’s Memorial was one of solemnity. The elder presiding read a number of Scriptures suitable for the occasion, whilst another elder gave an address dealing with the type and antitype.

The attendance, though comparatively small, was not lacking in an atmosphere in keeping with the occasion. Fortunate indeed are those who are able to appreciate the true significance of the “Broken Bread” and the contents of the cup ; and happy those who are privileged to be co-partners with our Lord in the baptism into death, and ultimately in the rejoicing when “He shall see the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.”

Tasmania.

Three of us Sisters met to celebrate the Passover sacrificed for us and had a real spiritual feast. We meditated on the wonderful privilege beforehand, and read a good article on “Christ Our Passover Sacrificed for Us” from one of the periodicals, and then partook of the emblems.

Convention Notes.

Notes on Adelaide Easter Convention are now available free from this office.

“Our Most Holy Faith.”—This is a splendid volume of most helpful articles and sermons by the author of Studies in the Scriptures, published by the brethren of “The Dawn” in U.S.A. Containing 719 pages, including Index, and well bound, with silver lettering, it is priced at 20/ post paid.

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Some Better Thing.

IN the early days of our Christian life there is some difficulty in understanding how to “rightly divide the Word of Truth” (2 Tim. 2:15.) We do not comprehend all at once that God’s Plan provides, first, a heavenly salvation for the Church, and then an earthly salvation for mankind in general. The study of the Bible along Dispensational lines clears away all of our difficulties. It shows us that the promise that the redeemed “shall sit every man under his own vine and fig tree,” and “long enjoy the work of his hands”, (Mic. 4:4; Isa.. 65:22), is God’s provision for Israel restored to Divine favour, and for all the families of the earth, but not for the Church. Of the true Church, the Bride of Christ, it is

declared that her members shall, in the resurrection, be like unto the angels—heavenly or spirit beings.

St. Paul distinctly says of these, “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.” (1 Cor. 15:50.) Jesus tells these that He has gone to prepare a place in the Father’s house on high. (John 14:2, 3.) But the place for man, the earth, already provided from the foundation of the world (Matt. 25:34), is a very different one from ours, of which we read, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.”—1 Cor. 2 :9 ; Isa. 64 :4.

Now we understand why it is that from Genesis to Malachi there is not one suggestion of a heavenly or spiritual hope for any natural man. Every promise is earthly. In Abraham’s case, for instance, we read, “The Lord said unto Abram, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward, for all this land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.”—Gen. 13:14-17.

St. Paul refers to this difference between the hopes of the spirit-begotten Church, founded at Pentecost, and those of all others. Pointing to the faithful of the past, he declares that although they had God’s testimony to their faithfulness, nevertheless, they “received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they, without us, should not be made perfect.”—Heb. 11:38-40.

As soon as we get our “better thing,” our higher reward of “glory, honor, and immortality,” in joint-heirship with our Lord as figuratively His Bride—then the worthy ones of ancient times will get their reward of resurrection to human perfection. Under Messiah’s Kingdom those perfect men will be “princes in all the earth.” (Psa. 45:16.) Then from the spiritual to the perfected earthly ones the blessings and instruction will descend for the poor, ignorant, selfish and superstitious world to help them, to uplift the obedient to the perfection illustrated in the perfected Worthies.

We have heard of the Sunday School teacher who told her class about heaven, about its pianos, harps, organs, horses and carriages, fruits and flowers, etc. We see that she was merely thinking of the blessings God has provided for the faithful and obedient of the world—“in due time.” She had no conception of the “heaven of heavens” promised to the faithful followers of Jesus in the “narrow way.” The Great Teacher explains that it is impossible to describe heaven with its beauties and charms. He said to Nicodemus, “If I have told you of earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?”—John 3:12.

In line with this, the Bible makes no attempt to describe heaven itself, nor its inhabitants. We are merely told that “God is a Spirit,” “dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see”—personally. (John 4:24; 1 Tim. 6:16.) Men must discern God. in His works — the noblest of which is the perfect man—made in His moral likeness, on the earthly plane, “a little lower than the angels” on the spirit plane.

But while refusing to inform us of the heavenly condition, God gives us a soul-satisfying portion. Through the Apostle He declares (1 John 3:2), “It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He (the glorified Jesus) shall appear (at His second advent, in power and great glory) we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.” Others, not thus changed from human to spirit nature by the First Resurrection power, will not “see Him as He is,” but only as He shall be revealed in His providences and judgments, which every eye shall recognise.

How satisfactory! Beyond all that we could have asked or thought! “Like Him!”—what more could we ask? “Like Him whom God hath highly exalted “Far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named!” (Eph. 1:21.) We stand amazed at such grace! Moreover, we can realise that He who called us to become “partakers of the divine nature” and joint-heirs with the Redeemer in His Mediatorial Kingdom has provided for our every comfort and joy in that heavenly state, the details of which we may not now grasp. Prophetically of these it is written, “I shall be satisfied, when I awake with Thy likeness.”—Psa. 17:15.

It is the hope, the desire, the aim of every one of us to make our calling and election sure —to so run that we may obtain that great “prize” of participation in the First resurrection. Of that resurrection we read, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the First (chief) Resurrection; on such the Second Death hath no power, but they shall be Priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:6.) Let us have this in mind, that our participation with our Lord in the glories of the Kingdom is dependent upon our faithfulness here in following Him through evil report and through good report; through honour and through dishonour; in the bearing of the cross along the way of self-denial.

Instead of repining at the occasional inconveniences we may meet with in our passage through life, we are almost ashamed of the multiplied comforts and enjoyments of our condition, when we think of Him who, though the Lord of

Glory, had not where to lay His head.

William Wilberforce.

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