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Remembering Christ

AS we approach another anniversary of our Lord's great sacrifice all the Lord's dear people surely esteem it a privilege to keep the Memorial of His death in spirit and in truth, in response to His request that we do this,—”In remembrance of me”.

It is of note that the Scriptures contain no request by our Lord that His followers should observe His birthday each time an anniversary comes round, but He made a **special request** that all who would be His consecrated disciples should truly celebrate His death. As our Lord's sacrifice as “the Lamb of God” took the place of the annual Jewish Passover ceremony, it is most reasonable that the observance of the Memorial of Christ's death be celebrated once each year also, on the anniversary of the institution of this observance which Jesus gave to His little band of apostles “on the night in which He was betrayed.” This year the anniversary of the Memorial of Christ's death falls on the evening of Sunday, 23rd April.

The Apostle Peter presents the matter with reference to our Lord's sacrifice as our Redeemer so beautifully in 1 Pet. 1:18-20. “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conduct received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.” The perfection of Christ, as the Man Christ Jesus is clearly indicated here, and it is just as clear that the Passover lamb which the people of Israel were instructed to sacrifice each year was a type of Christ, our Passover Lamb.

Our readers generally are well acquainted with the fact that the sprinkled blood of the Passover lamb was the means of saving Israel's firstborns from death in Egypt, as well as being the means of delivering all Israel out of Egyptian bondage on that special Passover night so long ago. That was a wonderful deliverance! What shall we think and say, however, about the saving of the spiritual firstborns unto God of this Gospel Age, and the ultimate deliverance of all the human race from the bondage of sin and death, because of the sacrifice of the antitypical Lamb of God, even Jesus Christ? Truly this wonderful prospect fills us with joy and thankfulness beyond description!

At present our minds are particularly dwelling upon the privilege of the antitypical firstborns of this Gospel Age having been invited into God's family of sons, and being requested to observe the Memorial of our Lord's death. No doubt God realised that such a celebration would be most helpful for the spiritual wellbeing of all who would prove worthy to be associated with Christ in His heavenly kingdom, and then to assist in the deliverance of the “groaning creation from the bondage of corruption” in the wonderful Millennial reign in the age to come.

The Apostle John helps us to see the procedure required so that we may become members of God's house of sons, when he states in John 1:12,—”As many as received him (Jesus), to them gave he power (the right, or privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” We see in John 6:44 that we could not “receive” or believe on Jesus, “except the Father draw us.” What a great favor, then, God bestows upon those whom He draws to Jesus—that believing in Jesus as their personal Saviour, they then have the opportunity of consecrating their lives to God's service, and by so doing, become the sons of God, in hope of the heavenly inheritance. It will be seen that believing on Jesus does not automatically make one a son of God, but does give a justified standing before God, enabling all such to present their bodies a living sacrifice, to walk in the steps of Christ, thus becoming a son in God's heavenly family. This is explained by the Apostle Paul,—”For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake,” (Phil. 1:25.) And this is also the explanation of the meaning of the Memorial of our Lord's death.

In Matt. 26:26, we read,—”And as they were eating,—”finishing the Jewish Passover supper—”Jesus took bread,—”the unleavened bread of the Jewish supper, picturing His own perfect humanity, “and blessed it,—”gave thanks to God for this fitting symbol,—”and brake it,—”picturing the breaking of His own body,—”and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.” In other words, appropriate His perfect humanity, thus gaining justification by faith in the perfect sacrifice of Jesus. As expressed by Paul in Rom. 5:1,—”Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Verse 27 of Matt. 26 reads,—”And he took the cup, (the cup of the fruit of the vine), and gave thanks,—”thanked God for this symbol of His own blood—”and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it.” Again the meaning was, appropriate my blood, my life, my perfect humanity, thus also gaining justification by faith in the sight of God. And it is this justified human life that true believers in Christ have the privilege of laying down in the steps of their Master.

This secondary and deeper meaning of our Lord's Memorial the Apostle Paul explains so beautifully to us in 1 Cor. 10:16-17,—”The cup of blessing which we bless (for which we thank God), is it not the communion (common participation, or partnership) of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion (common participation, or partnership) of the body of Christ? -or we being many are one bread, and one body; or we are all partakers (sharers) of that one bread.” Here, dear friends, we see the oneness of Christ and His members beautifully revealed.

So, in observing our Lord's Memorial we not only do so “in remembrance of Christ”, but we also signify our own willingness to be broken with Him, and have our life poured out in sacrifice with Him.

The Apostle Paul has left us a wonderful example of devotion to Christ in his letter to the Philippians, as follows,— ”That I may know him, -id the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable into his death; if by any means I might attain .to the resurrection of the dead. Not as though ‘ had already attained, either were already perfect; ‘ I follow after, if that I may apprehend that which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. -bethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; this this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those .’)things which are before, I press toward the mark the prize of the high calling of God in Christ *..” (Phil. 3:10-14.)

As we meet again this year at the Memorial of our Lord's death, we realise that it is required that we do so with pure hearts, having sought forgiveness for all shortcomings through the merit of Christ, and thus be acceptable in the sight of God. As Paul admonished the Corinthians, we too can take the lesson from his words in 1 Cor. 5:7, 8,—”Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are

unleavened. For even Christ our passover (Lamb) is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

“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!”

Passover Memorial 1967

The anniversary of the Memorial of Christ’s death falls this year on the evening of Sunday, 23rd April. It is the privilege of all appreciating our Lord’s request—“This do in remembrance of me”—to keep the observance at the appropriate season of the year.

Memorial Services

Melbourne—Sunday, 23rd April, at 6 p.m., at Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond.

Adelaide—Sunday, 23rd April, at 6.15 p.m., at Manchester Unity Building, (2nd Floor), 16 Franklin Street,

Adelaide.

Perth—Sunday, 23rd April, at 6.45 p.m., at 7 Harvest Terrace (opposite Parliament House).

Sydney—Sunday, 23rd April, at 7 p.m., at 53 Bennett Street, West Ryde.

Books Available

“God’s Promises Come True”—\$2.20.

“The Divine Plan of the Ages,” Cloth bound-80c; paper covers-55c.

“Emphatic Diaglott,” New Testament—\$2.20.

“Daily Heavenly Manna,” birthday pages—\$1.10. “Tabernacle Shadows”—68c.

“The Book of Books,” Reviewing the Bible as a whole—\$1.10.

“Our Lord’s Great Prophecy”—15c.

“Manner of Christ’s Return”—15c.

“Christ’s Return”—15c.

“Some of the Parables”—15c.

“Hope Beyond the Grave”—15c.

“God and Reason”—15c.

“Where Are the Dead?”—10c.

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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:.

“The Lord is Risen”

THE story of our Lord's resurrection is one of exquisite pathos and beauty. The crucifixion had smitten the Shepherd and scattered the sheep. In grief and silence the faithful few had removed the body from the cross and laid it in the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

It was Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joses and Salome who brought the spices to anoint the body. In the dim dawn of the day following the Sabbath they stole to the tomb. The thought of the resurrection did not occur to them. They thought only that the grave had been rifled. One of them, Mary Magdalene, fled away, blind to everything but her own loss, saying, “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.” The angels in the tomb gave to the other two the glad truth, “He is not here, He is risen, as He said.” Before this truth was brought home to them they were in despair, their hopes were buried. They had entertained high hopes, but now since Jesus had died, their hopes were withered. How different when the fact of the resurrection was made known—what joy replaced their despondency! It became true to them, “We are begotten to a lively hope by His resurrection.” Because He lives, we have ground for hoping that we shall live, also. In His resurrection lies our assurance.

It is an interesting study to trace the harmony on this subject between the various writers of the Bible. Matthew, Mark and Luke, Peter, John and Paul, all make mention of His resurrection. Each account is different, depending on the point of view of the writer, but they are unanimous in affirming the fact that Jesus died and rose from the dead. Remarkably, it is not difficult to combine these various accounts and arrange them into one connected and complete picture. By so doing, we perceive that Lord's first work was of consoling and encouraging.

He first appeared to the women, turning their sorrow to joy. This was early in the morning, the same day He arose. Then He appeared, the same day in the afternoon, to the two disciples going to Emmaus. As a stranger He talked with them, and finally revealed Himself to them, by the familiar way in which He broke bread with them. Unable to contain themselves, they hastened back to Jerusalem to tell the good news. But the Lord was travelling faster than they knew. He had appeared to another. What passed between our Lord and the Apostle Peter we do not know; but we know something of His mercy and grace, and may well understand the peace and comfort which possessed Peter after that meeting. At all events, Peter had not been slow to tell the good news, for when the two came and told their story, the others said, “The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon.” Later on while recounting their own experiences, they remembered how Jesus had been known by His habit of breaking bread, and He appeared in their midst, saying, “Peace be unto you.” So on the very day of His resurrection, He appeared first to the women, next to Peter, then to the two disciples, and lastly to the eleven, each time bringing a sense of comfort, hope and joy. What a day, to be remembered for all time!

A week later He appeared to the disciples again, this time for the special benefit of Thomas, who had been absent on the previous occasion. Later on He appeared to more than 500 brethren. The next appearing was to James. This is mentioned by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians. Another occasion is recounted by John in the last chapter of his Gospel. Several of the disciples had gone fishing. They toiled all night and caught nothing. Jesus revealed Himself by telling them where to cast their net. Finally, He took His last leave of them, leading them out as far as Bethany.

They were witnesses not only of all the wonderful things He had done; they were witnesses not only of the fact that He was crucified and buried, but witnesses especially of His resurrection. We are thankful that these records have been preserved for the Church. It is strengthening indeed to faith to trace in the

Acts of the Apostles how they who were witnesses of His resurrection proceeded to carry out this commission, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

But first they were to receive power. "Tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." So they waited in prayer and supplication until they received the promise, and then began the work of witnessing. One cannot but be impressed by the prominence given in the Scriptures to the resurrection of Jesus.

I am the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25).

"That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection" (Phil. 3:10).

Oh, let me know
The power of Thy Resurrection;

Oh, let me show
Thy Risen life in calm and clear reflection;

Oh, let me soar
Where Thou, my Saviour

Christ, art gone before; In mind and heart
Let me dwell always, only, where Thou art.

F.R. Havergal.

Faith and Fact

(Convention Address)

THE Bible gives us assurances and reassurances concerning the guiding hand of the Lord. The fulfilment of prophecies, uttered so long ago, is very satisfactory proof of this to us. At the same time it gives one a comfortable feeling to see faith justified once in a while; for instance, when some archaeologist discovers an ancient city or a scroll, proving true parts of the Old or New Testament.

An elder Brother in Holland a while ago read what he called a very important document; since he is the editor of a small monthly paper, he decided to translate it into Dutch and print it. It was originally written by Pilate to Emperor Tiberias Caesar, and discovered by a German student in the big library of the Vatican in Rome. This rapport was translated into English by Rev. W. D. Mahan. Brother Alblas in Holland then translated it into Dutch, while we have brought it back into English again. The knowledge of this rapport may stimulate our faith.

To Tiberias Caesar, Emperor, Greetings, Honorable Sovereign.

The happenings over the last days in my province were of such serious character that I feel obliged to make these known to you in detail. As a result of these, I would not be surprised if, in the long run, the destination of our nation would change. It seems to me the Gods have ceased to favor us. I am also inclined to say: Damned be the day I succeeded Valerius Gratus as Governor of Judea.

When arriving at Jerusalem I took possession of the courthouse and organised a quiet celebration, whereto I invited the Tetrarch of Galilee, as well as the high priest and his fellow priests. Nobody arrived at the set time. This was an insult to my dignity. A few days afterwards the high priest deigned to pay me a visit. His attitude was dignified but deceptive. He claimed his religion forbade him to eat with a Roman. It seemed wise to accept his excuse, but from that moment on I was convinced that the conquered declared enmity to the conqueror. I believe that from all the conquered cities Jerusalem offers the most difficulties. The people are so rebellious that I live continuously in fear under the threat of uprising. To quell such, I rely only on one officer and a handful of men.

I have asked the Governor of Syria for military reinforcements but he himself had insufficient troops to defend his own province. All people, I'm afraid, are determined to gain a victory over our empire. Among the different rumours going around there is one in particular which attracted my attention. It concerned a person who interests me immensely. It was said he is a young man from Galilee who proclaimed a new exalted law in the name of His God. I thought it might be His idea to instigate the people against the Romans but this fear soon disappeared.

Jesus of Nazareth showed Himself more a friend than an enemy of *our* people. One day I passed Him in the town of Siloah where a great many people had gathered. In the midst of them I saw a young man leaning against a tree, addressing the gathering with a quiet voice. They told me this was Jesus. I had expected this, for I noticed a remarkable difference between Him and the audience. His gold colored hair and beard gave Him a heavenly appearance.

He looked about 30 years old. Such a sublime face as His I never saw before; what a contrast between Him and His listeners with their black beards and brown colored skin. It was not my intention to disturb Him by my presence; I continued my walk, but ordered my valet to mix with the crowd and listen to what was being said. The valet's name is Manlius, a native of Judea and conversant with the Hebrew language. He is devoted to me and has my complete confidence. When I met him later at the entrance of the courthouse he reported what he had heard from the mouth of Jesus.

Not one philosopher could match himself with this gifted speaker. A rebellious Jew, of whom there are many in Jerusalem, asked Him whether it was permitted to give tribute to Caesar. Jesus answered: Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's. Although I had the power to have Him arrested, I would not think of doing this, for it would have been contrary to justice. A Roman could never do such a thing. This man was no insurgent; on the contrary, I tried to protect Him as much as possible without Him realising this. He was entirely free to address the people and select His followers, without interference by me.

If it turns out, the gods forbid, but the signs have us suspect, that the teachings of Jesus will oust the conception of our forefathers, then it would be noble and tolerant if Rome did not judge hastily, because, I would have to be the instrument of an unfortunate measure against Jesus. The unlimited freedom Jesus had was a challenge to the Jews; not to the poor, but more so to the prominent and influential class. It is true, Jesus' attitude toward these was inexorable, but not for political reasons, and there was, in my opinion, no purpose in curbing His freedom. "You Pharisees and scribes are hypocrites," He said to them. "You are like whited sepulchres." Also He said, looking over them who paid tribute from a full purse,— "The meagre gift of a poor widow has more value before God."

Cheeky Jews complained about Him daily at the courthouse. I was told something dreadful would happen. It would not be the first time that anyone who dared to call himself a prophet was stoned at Jerusalem. If the Pretorium refused to do justice to the complainants they threatened to turn to Caesar.

However, my dealings were looked upon favorably by the Senate, and I was promised that a new investigation would begin as soon as the war against the Parthen had ended. As it was, I was too weak, considering the small number of soldiers available to me to suppress a revolt, so I decided to take other measures to keep the peace in the city, without the help of the Pretorium. I wrote Jesus I wanted to talk to Him in the courthouse and He came.

You know that I am from Spanish-Roman descent and therefore do not suffer fear or childlike emotions, but when Jesus arrived—I was walking in the inner courtyard—it seemed as though my feet were nailed to the ground. I felt shaky all over like I was a guilty criminal, while Jesus came quietly up to me calm and innocent. Again I felt astonished when I looked at this extraordinary man, a figure so sublime that the painters who gave figure and form to our heroes and gods could only try to approach. Jesus, I said to Him at last, and I almost could not speak, Jesus of Nazareth for three years I allowed you freedom of speech, for which I have no regrets. Your words were like a fairy tale, and perhaps you have read Socrates or Plato. Whatever it is, I know that your discussions have a majestic simplicity which elevates you far above these philosophers. I have notified Caesar, and I, his humble representative, feel happy to be in a position to permit you this freedom you so well deserve. However, I am obliged to warn you, because your conversations stir up anger in your many and powerful opponents. This is no surprise to me, for Socrates also had his enemies and he fell as a victim of his haters. On account of your conversation you run a double risk, and I also, for letting you have that freedom. I have been charged to be making common sense with you, for the purpose of robbing them of the little Rome has left them. My request—not my command—therefore, is; take the future into account and be moderate in your actions against your enemies, so they will not set the people against you, forcing me to intervene.

The Nazarene answered quietly: Ruler of this world, your words do not show real wisdom. Say to a seething stream running down from a mountain, stop, so the trees in the valley will not be uprooted? It would answer you, I owe obedience to the laws of my creator. God only arranged the running of the waters. I tell you, before the Rose of Sharon shall bloom, the blood of the righteous **shall flow**. Your blood will not flow, I declared, emotionally upset; because of your wisdom, you are more valuable than all those proud Pharisees who misuse the freedom they have, to conspire against Caesar. I will protect you

against them. My court building will give you refuge. Jesus shook His head, and said smiling: when the day comes, there will be no hiding place for the Son of Man. My refuge is there, and He pointed towards

Heaven. What the prophets have said must take place. Young man, I answered, you force me to change my request into a command. The safety of the Province demands it. You have to be careful in your actions. You know my order, now, do not disobey it. I bid you farewell with my best wishes. Ruler of this world, Jesus said, I did not come to cause war, but for peace, love and justice. I was born on the day Augustus Caesar gave peace to the Romans. I persecute nobody, but expect to be persecuted by others. I act only in obedience to my Father, who shows me the way. Refrain from your worldly efforts. It is not in your power to seize the sacrifice in front of the altar of atonement. Saying this He vanished like a shadow behind the curtain of the palace.

The enemies of Jesus went to Herod, who rules over Galilee, to persuade him to arrest Jesus, so as to satisfy their feelings of revenge. If Herod had to consider only his royal might, he would have killed Jesus immediately, but he was afraid to lose influence in the senate. He asked me for advice in the Pretorium and wanted to know what I thought of the Nazarene. I told him I considered Jesus to be one of the greatest philosophers our nation has known. His teachings were in my opinion not blasphemous, so Rome found no reason to deny Him His freedom of speech. Herod smiled treacherously and left me with an ironical gesture.

The big festival of the Jews was near and the religious leaders sought an opportunity to steal the limelight as the caretakers of the Passover. The city was full of rabble, who demanded that the Nazarene should be killed. I was informed that the money of the temple was being used to bribe the people. The danger increased. A Roman officer was insulted. I wrote to the prefect of Syria for 100 soldiers and some cavalry. My request was turned down, so I had to make do with a handful of veterans, in a rebellious city, too weak to quell a riot successfully. I had no choice but to give in. The rebellious rabble had got hold of Jesus, knowing they had nothing to fear from the Pretorium. They believed, as their leaders, that I would close my eyes for the mutiny. Continuously they called out, Crucify Him, crucify Him.

Three powerful parties had united against Jesus: the Herodians, the Sadducees and the Pharisees. The Sadducees had a double motive, hatred for the Nazarene as well as for the Roman yoke. They could not forget that their holy city was defiled by the banners bearing the image of Caesar. Innocently I had offended their holy cult, but to them it remained an annoyance. Another grievance was that I had tried to use part of the temple money for public buildings. The Pharisees also were enemies of Jesus. They were filled with bitterness because of all the reproach from Him. Not strong enough to act by themselves, they were anxious to join hands with the Herodians and the Sadducees. I also had to think of the reckless crowd, prepared to take advantage of the confusion.

Jesus was taken to the high priest who condemned Him to death. His name was Caiaphas. He sent Jesus to me to confirm His guilt. I answered he should approach Herod instead, because Jesus came from Galilee. So I gave order to take the prisoner there, but Herod declared he was a Tetrarch, and therefore unqualified to act, returning Jesus' case into my hands. My palace soon looked like a besieged fortress. The mutinous crowd increased. Masses of people had come to Jerusalem from the hills of Nazareth. Just about the whole of Judea was in the holy city. There was a woman who claimed to be a soothsayer. She cried and fell down before me and said: Take care and do not harm Him, for He is holy. He walked upon the water; I saw Him on the wings of the wind and the fishes were obedient to Him. See, brook of Kidron became filled with blood. The morning sun was covered with a veil. O, Pilate, a great harm will come over you if you do not take heed to my supplications.

At that moment the crowd surged on to the marble staircase. Followed by the guards I went to the courtroom and asked the mob what they wanted. The death of the Nazarene, they answered. For what

crime? For blasphemy, He predicted the doom of the temple, He calls Himself the Son of God, the Messiah, the King of the Jews. Roman justice, I said, does not punish such transgression with death. Crucify Him, yelled the rabble. The palace shook with the sound of their voices. There was only one who remained calm, the Nazarene. I saw one solution only to save His life.

I ordered to lash Him and washed my hands before their eyes, so showing I did not agree with them, but they wanted His blood.

It can truly be said that there were evil forces gathered at Jerusalem. I felt sad and sombre. I was alone with a broken heart, thinking that what happened now was more a matter of the gods than of people. Carried by the wind I heard a loud noise coming from Golgotha. Dark clouds gathered over the temple and darkened the city. In the first hour of the night I went through the city gates to Golgotha. The sacrifice was offered.

The people went back home, sombre and still. What they had seen had scared them. I heard the soldiers whisper. When I came back there was an old man, weeping. I asked him what he wanted. I am Joseph of Arimathea, he answered. I beg of you to permit me to bury the body of Jesus of Nazareth. I granted this and ordered some soldiers to go with him. A few days later the sepulchre was found empty. All over the country His disciples proclaimed that Jesus had risen as He said He would.

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“As a Snare Shall It Come.”

(Convention Address).

(Luke 21:34,36.)

IN this portion of the Scripture there are two words of which we shall take particular notice by way of introduction. First, in verse 34 the word “unawares.” The majority of translators in their renderings, seem to give this word the thought of “suddenness”—a sudden catching one off-guard. However, the concordance gives the meaning of the word as “unforeseen, unexpected”, and we will agree that there can be unforeseen and unexpected developments that take a **period of time** to work out—they do not necessarily have to be sudden. The Diaglott renders this portion—”and that day should come **unexpectedly** upon you.”

The second word is “snare” in verse 35. While the word “snare” occurs many times in the Bible, there are about a dozen different Hebrew and Greek words used in connection with it; no doubt there are various shades of meaning that a scholar would note, though to the layman there does not appear much difference. In our text the Greek word is “pagis”, which occurs only five times in the Bible, and the meaning is expressed as—” a fastening, net, snare.” “A fastening” is the thought for the purpose of this address.

How easy it is, and how many of humanity become the slaves of habit. We are not referring now merely to bad habits; all habits are not necessarily bad. Habits generally have small beginnings; they grow upon us until they become a very part of our make up—they **fasten** themselves upon us.

“As a snare shall it come”—as a “fastening” shall it come upon all that dwell upon the face of the whole earth. It will not be the same kind of “fastening” or snare that comes upon every person, but different “snare” will “fasten” different people or different groups of people. They will be “fastened” by a fascination for something—certain things will become an “obsession,” which will divert the attention from other things more important. The improper use of alcohol is one of the great curses upon the world today. The Scriptures use this evil practice as a symbol in warning against **all forms of intoxication**. Verse 34 of our text is one such instance. One can become intoxicated with pride, or the love of pleasure, or of riches, or music, or sport. The spirit of the world is intoxicating; whereas to be filled with the holy spirit gives the spirit of a sound mind, a mind that is able to evaluate the things that are really true and of lasting value. We are to take heed lest our hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, lest we allow the spirit of this pleasure-mad world to captivate us—to “fasten” itself upon us as a snare.

Read 2 Tim. 3:1-5, noting that this refers to the last days of the age—the same period that comes as a snare, fastening, upon men. The last 3 verses of the previous chapter in this portion of Timothy tells us how to combat the evil of our time. How sadly we note people taken captive by Satan at his will. They succumb to his every prompting—there is no resistance. “Resist the devil and he will flee from you,” otherwise he will “fasten” you and you will become more and more his tool.

The following is a quotation from another’s writing in part—”The central value of Christianity, the **value of the individual**, has been corrupted ... to demand a subordination of the individual to the state (or indeed to any organization or society of which he is a member) ... We are all witnesses to the enslavement of hundreds of millions under the tyranny of totalitarian powers. Never in human history has the **individual** counted for so little ... Men no longer able to accept many of the ancient beliefs and customs ... search for new aspects of truth more in harmony with their environment. They question, ... debate, quarrel and evolve any number of “isms” and philosophies... This is the day of the cynic ... and the pseudo-intellectual . a spirit that has destroyed in large measure the old simplicity and integrity based

upon the great Christian principles of the Word of God.”

Yes, it is true. In this day practically every person becomes “fastened” to something—their “obsessions” leave them no time or inclinations to seek after the better things—the things that could enlighten them as to where they are living

on the stream of time. Ability to think for themselves, or individual thinking based on solid foundation, is lacking; instead, mankind think in “packs.” Some are “fastened” to nominal church traditions, some to an influential secret society, some to political alliance, some to their money making business, some to sport and other entertainment pleasures.

Quoting from an article by Dr. H. S. Leiper of America, we read,—”Suppose that in our imagination we could compress the total population of the world, more than 21 billion people, into one town of 1,000 people. . . . In this imaginary town—the world reduced in exact proportion to a community of 1,000—there would be 60 Americans. The remainder of the world would be represented by 940 persons. The 60 Americans would receive half the income of the entire town, with the other 940 dividing the other half. About 330 in the town would be classified as Christians, and 670 would not be so classified. . . . White people would total 303, with 697 non-white. The 60 Americans would have an average life expectancy of 70 years; the other 940, less than 40 years average. The 60 Americans would have 13 times as many possessions per person as all the rest of the people. The Americans would produce 16% of the town’s total food supply. Although they eat 72% above the maximum food requirements, they would either eat most of what they grew, or store it for their own future use, at enormous cost. . . . Half the people would never have heard of Jesus Christ, or what He taught. On the other hand, more than half would be hearing about Karl Marx, Lenin, Stalin, and Khrushchev. The 60 Americans, and about 200 others representing Western Europe and a few favored classes in South America, South Africa, Australia, and a few wealthy Japanese would be relatively well off. But the majority of the 1,000 people would be ignorant, poor, hungry and sick. . . . The American families would be spending at least \$850 a year for military defense, but less than \$4 a year to share their Christian faith with the other people in the community.

. . . A good many of the town’s people would be building guns for defense, with which they could, if necessary, wipe out the whole American settlement. . . . It is, in fact, a very nervous community. But most of the 60 Americans would be too interested in eating and increasing their holdings to take much notice.” This serves to show how prosperity can be a “fastening” influence upon people.

The “snares”, the “fastening” influences shall come upon all that dwell upon the face of the whole earth, and the church, **the true church is not exempt**. Watch therefore, and pray that ye may **escape**, and not be snared, or “fastened” by these things. We must not allow things to fascinate us, to become “obsessions,” diverting our attention from “this one thing I do”—pressing toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. It is not a matter of closing our minds to the acute problems all about us in the world. We have to earn our livelihood; we need to look to the immediate future. It takes more money to live today than it ever did, and some bank balance seems desirable. But if the end of the present order came tomorrow we would not be perturbed.

To the world, it is a day of amalgamation, a binding together in groups, in effort to gain desired ends; for the Christian it is a day of individuality, of attaining and maintaining the “liberty wherewith Christ makes free,”—not snared or fastened by any of the cunning wiles of the evil one. It is the days when the “tares” are being **bound into bundles** for the burning, and the individual “grains” of wheat are being gathered into the garner of the Heavenly Kingdom. The claim that “unity is strength” needs to be qualified by the end in view. Anything of an evil nature never remains unified for long.

Mr. S. J. Harris in a recent book said, “Thieves fall out; thieves **must** fall out, for it is the essence of their character. What is antisocial in them in the beginning, turns into anti-one another in the end. . . . Tyrants are assassinated by their own lieutenants.... “

Godliness, true goodness, absolute righteousness are the only things that really unify—a unity that is solid and lasting. “Behold, how good it is for brethren (individual brethren) to dwell together in unity.” But these are days of extreme trial at the end of the age. Who shall stand? There will be false Christs and false prophets . . . who if it were possible, might deceive the very elect. The only thing that saves or preserves the very elect is their **watchfulness** and their **prayerfulness**.

The N.E. Bible renders verse 36 of our text,—”Be on the alert, praying at all times for strength to pass safely through all these imminent troubles and to stand in the presence of the Son of man.” While as Christians we need to be on constant guard against all the snares coming upon men, we have to be on special guard against the machinations of the evil powers in our own midst.

The snares of time-killing pleasures (TV for instance), intoxication with the spirit of the world respecting business, wealth, etc., have always to be guarded against, for the flesh lusteth against the spirit continually; but special snares in our own fellowship circles can “fasten” upon us and work havoc to our spiritual well being. It is no good being like the ostrich and burying our head in the sand; we need to be alert to the dangers and face them.

Discussing with another brother the problems and sadness of spoiled fellowship, the animosity erupting where Christian love once prevailed, this brother remarked,—”It seems to begin quite often over such little things, mountains are made out of mole hills.” The snares of disruption “fasten” themselves upon those who allow them; minor differences become an obsession, diverting from the things of true value. We are so **sure** we are right, and the other is in error.

We quote Mr. Harris again,—”I often wonder why people so much admire a man with ‘the courage of his convictions,’ while they totally ignore a much higher and rarer kind of courage—the courage to **examine** one’s own convictions, and to revise or abandon them in the light of such scrutiny. Convictions are dear to us; they are comfortable and reassuring, and it takes a genuinely courageous person to change them when they should be changed.”

Let our prayers be true and our alertness and watchfulness too, that we might escape all the “snares”; that we will not become fastened to any of them, but keep very close to the Lord, and free of all the entanglements. “Ye brethren are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief.” “Let us not sleep, but watch and be sober.”

BIBLE STUDENTS MANUAL

Copies of these Manuals, otherwise known as Berean Comments, have been published recently by brethren in Chicago, and are now in stock for the benefit of our friends. With nice appearance, bound in strong cloth, with gold lettering, the price is \$4.00, plus 15 cents postage.

Pilgrimage Ended

Sister Bartel of Adelaide, S.A., finished the pilgrim way recently, having been called Home suddenly on February 13th. For about 50 years our Sister had rejoiced in the knowledge of God's wonderful Plan of the Ages, which centres in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sister Bartel had faithfully served the Adelaide Class as secretary and treasurer for a number of years; and by the Lord's grace had been used in bringing help and comfort to many. We are reminded of the words of the apostle in Heb. 6:10, and its application to all who serve the Lord with sincerity of heart,—“God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints.”

How comforting it is to know that God sets the members in the Body as pleaseth Him. He doeth all things well. Our sincere sympathy is extended to our Brother Bartel, also to the members of our Sister's family, in the great loss of their loved one. Our prayer for them is that our Heavenly Father will support and sustain them as they seek day by day to do His will, “looking unto Jesus.” “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.”

DARKNESS OPPOSES THE LIGHT

Dr. Faustus having printed off a considerable number of copies of the Bible to imitate those which were commonly sold in manuscript, undertook the sale of them at Paris, where the art of printing was then unknown. As he sold his printed copies for sixty crowns, while the scribes demanded five hundred, this created universal astonishment; but when he produced copies as fast as they were wanted, and also lowered his price to thirty crowns, all Paris was agitated. The uniformity of the copies increased the wonder. Informations were given to the magistrates against him as a magician; his lodgings were searched, and a great number of copies being found, they were seized. The red ink with which they were embellished was said to be his blood. It was seriously adjudged that he was in league with the devil, but, on discovering his art, the Parliament of Paris passed an act to discharge him from all persecution in consideration of his useful invention.

A very good Oxford Bible, with References, India paper, thumb index, Brevier clear type, Persian Morocco binding, is now available at \$9.50. Same Bible with Concordance and Subject Index at \$10.50.

FRANK & ERNEST TALKS

Melbourne, 3 XY, 211 M. Sundays 8 p.m. Geelong, 3GL, 222 N. Sundays '10 a.m.

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