



Volume XXXVIII. No. 8 MELBOURNE, AUGUST, 1955 Price— Fourpence Halfpenny

Christ Crucified.

IN an age when human ingenuity taxed itself to the utmost limit to invent cruelties to torture the victims of public revenge or hate, crucifixion certainly had a bad pre-eminence. Among the Romans it was reserved, with few exceptions, for slaves and foreigners, being considered too horrible and disgraceful for a Roman citizen, no matter what might have been his crime. It was the greatest possible indignity that could be heaped upon any offender whether considered in the light of a public disgrace, or of physical anguish.

Crucifixion was a slow, lingering, horrible process of dying, lasting always many hours, and often for several days. The victim was usually bound to the cross as it lay upon the ground ; the hands and feet were then nailed to the wood, and the cross elevated and planted in the socket prepared to receive it. This gave the body a terrible wrench and great was the agony which followed. The hot sun beat upon the naked body and uncovered head, (which in our Lord's case was pierced with additional cruelty by the crown of thorns). The ragged, undressed wounds festered and inflamed, and shooting pains darted from them through the quivering flesh. Added to this was the agony of an increasing fever, a throbbing head and a raging thirst ; and even the slightest movement intensified the anguish. As death drew near, swarms of insects gathered about to increase the torment from which there could not be the slightest relief. As no vital organ was directly assailed, life lingered on until the power of endurance was completely exhausted.

Over the head of the sufferer was usually an inscription describing the crime for which he had been condemned.

This was generally borne before him as he wended his way on foot to the place of execution bearing his heavy cross.

In the case of our Lord, He bore His cross to the gates of the city where they met a man from Cyrene, Simon by name, whom they compelled to bear it the remainder of the way, doubtless because Jesus was too faint and exhausted.

It appears from certain rabbinical writings that a society of Jewish women was formed to alleviate the sufferings of those condemned to die. They accompanied the condemned to the place of execution and administered a prepared drink which acted as an anodyne to allay their pain. It was probably these who offered to our Lord the "vinegar and gall" (more properly, sour wine and myrrh) which He refused, preferring His mind to be clear and awake to the end. The drink offered Him on the cross by one of the Roman soldiers, and accepted, was not the anodyne proffered and refused before, but simply sour wine,

the common drink of the soldiers.

The ultimate physical cause of Christ's death is believed to have been literally a broken heart. Otherwise He would probably have lingered much longer. Crucifixion seldom produced death in less than twenty-four hours, and victims have lingered as long as five days. Pilate and the guard were surprised on learning of Jesus' death so soon. Instead of lingering long, He died suddenly, and before He was fully exhausted ; for He had conversed with the thief and had commended His mother to the care of John ; He had declared His great work finished and then with a loud (literally; a strong) voice which indicated considerable remaining strength both of body and mind He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?" and instantly died. In the agony of Gethsemane the heart and blood vessels were affected. The palpitation of the heart was so intense then as to cause bloody sweat, a phenomenon rare but not unknown, produced by intense mental excitement. Already weakened by such an experience, a repetition of the anguish probably ruptured the membrane of the heart causing instant death.

Such was the awful tragedy of Calvary which ended the human existence of our Lord, who thus gave Himself as a lamb to the slaughter. "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth" when falsely accused, condemned and crucified. Had He exerted Himself in self-defence, either in Pilate's judgment hall, or in Gethsemane's garden, to speak again to the people as before, again doubtless they would have said "Never man spake like this Man" and would have hailed Him their king as they did only five days before, saying "Hosanna to the son of David, blessed is he that cometh as Jehovah's king." Or had He prayed to the Father, He could immediately have had a life-guard of more than twelve legions of angels. —Matt. 26:53.

He could have escaped the awful experience, but He did not do so, but willingly gave Himself a ransom for sinners.

He knew that His hour had come, when according to His Father's plan the world's redemption price should be paid. Remember His words to a disciple who attempted His defence — "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father and He will presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"

Yes, the Scriptures must be fulfilled ; they expressed the Father's will which He had come to do, hence the fulfilling of what was written, was the all-absorbing interest with Him ; the plan of God must be carried out at any cost, and to the execution of the plan He submitted Himself in perfect obedience, even unto death, even the horrible, torturous, ignominious death of the cross.

Though our Lord submitted Himself to death at this time because He recognised this to be the hour foretold by the prophets, He did not seem to understand clearly why so much public disgrace and torture of mind and body should accompany it. Hence His prayer, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matt. 26:39) He well knew that baptism (immersion) into death, was His mission, and not for one moment could He think of avoiding it ; and He knew too that with it also must come a bitter cup of suffering and shame ; but not until His hour was almost come, did He seem to fully realise how bitter would be the dregs of that cup. Seeing that death was the penalty for our sins, and not shame and misrepresentation, left room for our Lord to question the Father's wisdom and love, in apparently asking Him to endure more than was needful to redeem mankind. But He bowed to the Father's wisdom and love in it all, saying— Thy will, not mine be done! In the light of the Apostle's words we can see that the perfect "man Christ Jesus" was not only redeeming men, but by His obedience even unto death — even the death of the cross — He was proving Himself worthy of high exaltation to the perfection of the divine nature, which because of this implicit and even blind obedience He has now attained. (Phil. 2:9.) So, too, in His last moments, in being treated exactly like the sinner whose ransom He was giving, when mental communion with the Father was interrupted and He

felt for the moment alone, separated from the Father, cut off and condemned as the sinner whom He represented, it was more than He could bear, He cried with a loud voice, My God ! my God ! Why hast thou forsaken me? This was more severe than all else, the very dregs of this cup of suffering. Not until afterward was the necessity and wisdom and love of this part of the Father's plan made manifest. Up to that hour He had communion with His God. — See John 16:32.

What a lesson on obedience was thus furnished to every creature of God, in every age, and on every plane of existence — an obedience which bowed in loving submission to the will of God even in blindness as to why it should be so, and even under the most heartrending trial. What a glorious character for our example and imitation! perfect submission to the will of God and perfect confidence, which implicitly trusted the Almighty Father where it could not trace Him.

Crucified with Christ

Having above examined briefly the actual crucifixion of our Lord, the actual death of the Lamb of God who put away our sins by the sacrifice of Himself, let us now glance briefly at a figurative use of the word “crucified”, not by way of setting aside the foregoing actual occurrence, but to learn the proper significance of the figures as used by our Lord and the Apostle Paul in the following passages :—

“Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” — Mark 8:43.

“They that are Christ's (members of the anointed body — the Bride') have crucified the flesh with its affections and desires.” — Gal.' 5:24 ; compare 3:29.

“I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not (the old) I (any longer) but Christ liveth in me.” — Gal. 2:20.

“Our old man (our former selves, justified by faith in Christ's sacrifice) is crucified with Christ (that we might be members of His body, spiritual new creatures), and that the body of sin (the entire sin system with all its members and branches) might, be destroyed.’ (Rom. 6:6.) We have seen that actual, literal crucifixion signifies to deliver up to a torturous, slow, but sure death. And the figurative closely resembles this, so that the same definition fits it perfectly. When we say, then, that anyone is taking up his cross to follow Christ, it signifies that such a one is consecrated and is taking the first step of self-denial in espousing the cause of Christ, though it be with fear and trembling ; submitting willingly to painful humbling and contempt in the sight of the world and of the chief priests and their blind followers, to share with the Master and all the members of His body the coldness and the scorn of the world and of many they seek to bless ; to be alone, and yet not alone as was our Head, for we have comfort and sympathy from Him as our High Priest, and from our fellow members of His body. With Him none could sympathise ; He was the fore-runner on this race-course, and of the people there was none with Him.

But where does our cross-bearing begin ? and where our crucifixion? — where does it end ? and how much does it involve? some may inquire. We answer, Circumstances alter cases to some extent, and each must apply the matter in his own case. To enable all to do this, let us notice two notable examples of such cross-bearing — our Lord, and Paul.

Our Lord, born under the conditions of the Jewish Law, could not begin His service (ministry) until He was thirty years old, though His earlier years were spent in studying prophetic utterances concerning God's plan and His share therein. This is made evident by the only record of His boyhood days. When twelve years old, He was seeking information concerning the Father's business and was found among the eminent teachers hearing their explanations of the prophecies and asking them questions.

When He was thirty, was His first opportunity to begin the work which He had come into the world to do. We might say then, using the figure, that He took up His cross when at thirty He came to John to be baptized of him in Jordan. This was a cross, a humiliation, because the masses of the people like John were ignorant of the deep meaning which our Lord attached to immersion as a symbol or figure of death. John and the people, used it only as a symbol of washing, cleansing or reformation from sin. Nor was it proper for our Lord then to explain to them a symbol which belonged to an age and work not proper to be known until Pentecost.

Nor would they have understood Him if He had explained. But it became Him to set the example, which as their leader He would afterwards expect all His disciples to follow, and hence as in His actual death He who knew no sin was counted among the transgressors, so in its symbol, the water immersion, He was “numbered with transgressors,” (Isa. 53:12.) who were there figuratively washing away a sinful past to start anew.

For the sinless Lamb of God to be thus misunderstood was no doubt a heavy cross, but it opened the way to a still clearer appreciation of the Father’s will which He had come to perform. Obedience in taking up the cross proved Him worthy of continuing in the Father’s service — even unto death. The holy power of God came there upon Him, enabling Him to see more and more clearly His future pathway, down to Calvary, but bringing also clearer and clearer apprehensions of the exceeding riches of divine favor and high exaltation in reservation for Him at the end of the “narrow way.”

Under the increased light of His fuller insight into the plan of God and where the narrow way would lead, His spirit of consecration led Him to turn aside into the wilderness, there to more fully consider in private the Father’s plan and His future course in obedience thereto. There the cross grew heavy as He more fully realised the shame, ignominy and self-abasement to which His consecration would lead. And the tempter bore his weight upon the already heavy cross by suggesting other ways of doing good more agreeable to the flesh than sacrifice. But after counting the cost our Lord refused any other methods, either Satan’s or His own, of doing good, and chose to have God’s will done in God’s way, saying, “I have come to do thy will, O my God.” And with His victory He was stronger, and His cross seemed to be lighter as He came out of the wilderness crucified, willingly delivered up to die — hands, feet and all and every talent and power restrained from self-service — all offered up a sacrifice to God in the carrying out of God’s plan, whatever that might involve, whether the dying should prove to be of longer or shorter duration, or of more or less pain. As a man, then, our Lord’s will was already dead to every human hope and ambition — dead to His own plans and control as a man. And yet He was not dead in the sense of being insensible to scoffs and pains and piercing words, but crucified, delivered up unto death. The pinioned, bleeding members (human talents, rights, etc.) quivered and twitched but always remained pinioned (crucified, delivered up to death) to the last, as when He prayed that the cup of ignominy might be omitted.

During all those three and a half years of our Lord’s ministry, He was crucified in this figurative sense; that is, He was delivered up to death — His will, His talents, His all bound and pinioned — in harmony with the Father’s plan. And every deed of His by which “virtue (vitality, life) went out of him” to bless and heal in mind or body the condemned sinners about Him was part of His dying and finally ended in death — even the literal death of the cross.

Brother Paul was not literally crucified but ended his course by being beheaded. Yet figuratively he tells us long before his literal death, “I am crucified with Christ.” That is to say : I am delivered up to death — my will and self-control, my talents and powers, my rights and lawful ambitions as a man, are all pinioned and stopped by my consecration, so that having no will or plan or way of my own, I may be fully able to let the holy spirit or mind (will) of the Master dwell in me and rule my every act to His service — not so dead that I will not occasionally feel a twinging of the flesh, and have a suggestion as to

another way and as to what would or would not be necessary, but I keep my body and its wishes under (1 Cor. 9:27), subject to the will of God ; saying as did the Master under similar circumstances, “Not my will but thine (Father) be done.”

Many get the idea that our Lord and the Apostle referred only to sinful desires being crucified. They read it as though the Apostle meant, My sinful ambitions and desires I keep under and crucify, and as though our Lord meant — Not my sinful will be done, O Father, but Thy holy will. This is a mistake ; our Lord was holy, harmless ; as such He could not have a sinful will or desire. His will was not to kill, steal, blaspheme, covet the things of others, nor to bear false witness of others, nor to backbite, nor to do any sinful thing toward God or man. His will on the contrary was to do good only, to honor God and to bless men. But as a man — a perfect man — He had a mind, a strong mind or judgment as to how good could best be accomplished, how God could be most honored and men most blessed.

Had our Lord followed His own judgment and will as to the best methods of honoring God and blessing men, it would probably have been in the line which naturally suggests itself to other good judgments and wills — in the line of political and social reforms, in establishing hospitals, asylums and colleges, and in cleansing the religious systems of His day. But such a good will, though it would doubtless have accomplished much temporary good, would never have worked out the grand deliverance for the race, which we now see God’s greater comprehensive “plan of the ages” is designed to work out. Such a plan did not occur to the mind of even the perfect man Jesus. It is beyond the scope of human thought and planning. But knowing that His Father was greater than He. He rightly reasoned that implicit submission to Jehovah’s will was the proper course whatever it might involve.

To be God’s messenger and accomplish His will, our Lord must crucify (deliver up to death) all of His own, good, holy, harmless, pure will, and must say fully, “Not my will (Father) but thine be done.” — Thy will in Thy way entirely.

The nearer a person is to perfection the stronger will be his will, and the more difficult to crucify it. The more confident one is that his will is good and for good and blessing to others, the more difficult it is to see good cause for surrendering it. Thus our dear Lord knew that it was needful for Him to DIE as the ransom price for the world and shrank not from it ; but knowing also that pain and public scorn and contempt as a criminal was not part of the penalty, He questioned its necessity, whether the Father was not asking of Him, as the Redeemer, more than the penalty of man’s sin, and therefore prayed, “Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me” -- nevertheless I claim no rights,

I attempt not to follow My own ideas, nor to exercise My own will; My will is fully surrendered ; I leave all to Thy wisdom — Thy will be done. Our Lord evidently saw not then, what for our advantage and strengthening He has since shown us who are following His footsteps, crucifying our own wills, etc. — that extreme trial of obedience, even unto death, even the death of the cross, was expedient and proper, because of the very high exaltation to the divine nature, for which

His implicit obedience to the Father’s will in giving our ransom, was to be the test of worthiness.

We as followers in our Lord’s footsteps have neither such strong wills to overcome and crucify nor the proportionate strength of character whereby to overcome them. But we have the advantage of knowing clearly why so extreme and exact obedience is necessary, in all who would be accounted worthy of a place in that select “body of Christ,” which is to be so highly honored with its Head, Lord and Redeemer, Jesus.

As with our Lord, so with the Apostle Paul, crucifying did not mean the crucifying of a sinful will, or sinful desires, plans, etc.; for he says “I am crucified with Christ,” and elsewhere he calls it being “dead

with Christ” and having “fellowship in his sufferings”. So, then, if Christ’s crucifixion was not the crucifixion of a sinful will, and desires, neither was Paul’s ; and neither are yours and mine as followers of the spotless Lamb of God, crucified with Him.

True, Paul and all other followers of Christ were by nature sinners and children of wrath even as others, and hence very much less •than perfect in will, compared with the undefiled One. But their first step of faith in Christ showed them that they had no right or privilege, to will or to do wrong, and in accepting of JUSTIFICATION through Christ’s death, they not only confessed sorrow for sins past, but repentance and change from sin for the future to the extent of their ability, realising also that the imputed merit of the ransom not only covered sins past, but also all unwilful weakness and errors of the future. And this justification through Christ and change of will from sin to righteousness preceded their “call” to follow Christ and to suffer with Him and to share His glory and high exaltation to the divine nature. Thus we see that with us as with our Lord, it is our good human wills, our good intentions and good plans, (not actually perfect as our Lord’s but reckonedly so through His imputed merit) that are to be crucified, delivered up to death with, and like Christ to share in His sacrifice.

As our Lord set aside and crucified His own will, and accepted of the Father’s will instead, so we set aside or crucify our wills or desires, no matter how good and wise they appear to us, to accept of the guidance and direction of our Lord Jesus who, now glorified, delights still to carry out the Father’s plan, and the grandeur of perfection which He can now fully appreciate.

All that we are is made tin -four thoughts ; it is founded on our thoughts: it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speak or act with a pure thought, happiness will follow him like a shadow that never leaves him.– Clipping.

PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST’S KINGDOM.

(Monthly) 4/6 (85 cents) per annum, post paid.

Published by the Berean Bible Institute, Ermington Place, Kew, E.4, Melbourne, Victoria Australia While it is our intention that these colums 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.

Boddington is Over its Crisis

UNDER the above heading, the following news item appeared in the Melbourne "Age" some few weeks ago :—

The small timber and farming town of Boddington, 76 miles from Perth, W.A. has been through a crisis, and 16- year-old Ronald Court is now a cheerful patient in the district hospital because of it. Ron was critically ill with tetanus; there was tenseness in the air and people's minds were not on their jobs. At the hospital, 100 yards off the main road, there was a state of emergency. On all roads leading past the hospital barricades and detour signs were up to keep traffic away; on the hospital gate, steps and verandah there were red-painted signs saying, 'Tetanus, silence, please.' Inside, the door bell was disconnected, the telephone was muffled, and the staff spoke in whispers.

"These precautions were the idea of Dr. Neil Same and Matron M. Browne, who wanted absolute quiet for the patient. There was not a murmur within earshot of the hospital. During the most critical period the doctor and matron maintained a 24-hour vigil beside the boy's bed. Whispered reports on his condition were passed to his parents from the back door of the hospital. On Saturday Ron was improving; by Sunday he was out of danger and able to speak to his parents. Boddington then returned to its normal routine."

The above account of the thoughtful consideration of so many people to assist the recovery of the one stricken with the dread disease is surely most refreshing indeed. How it warms our hearts when we learn of such loving measures being taken ; truly such actions demonstrate that the qualities of devoted consideration for fellow human beings, found in full measure in our first parents, are not lacking in considerable degree in a number of human beings today. How different the world would be at present, if the thoughts and actions of the people of Boddington in their crisis could be incorporated into the lives of all people. We are not implying that Boddington's people are always so thoughtful and kindly towards one another, but rather that the emergency revealed the best in them, and they rose to the occasion magnificently.

How thankful we are to know that the thoughtfulness revealed in that little town in Western Australia is but an example of what all mankind, worthy of attaining everlasting life, will develop for all time in the kingdom age, with the Lord's help. But how helpful and encouraging it is to find some people, even now, who have that loving consideration for fellow human beings, not only on special occasions, but at all times, that they willingly give time and means for the encouragement and blessing of others. These are, of course, the Lord's truly devoted followers, and their one object is to serve their Master through His people, especially, as well as doing good to all people as they have opportunity.

Tell Jesus.

Tell Jesus when life's burden seems too great for you to bear;
Go, lay it at the feet of Christ, and know that He will care;

And tell Him all the little things that come to cloud your way,
The puzzles and perplexities that trouble you to-day.

Tell Jesus all there is to tell — about your daily needs —
About the dim uncertainties through which your pathway leads —

About the cherished hopes that lie, crushed lifeless at your feet
The golden dreams left unfulfilled — the labour incomplete.

If you could know how tenderly He makes our cares His own,
You would not stand apart again and bear your pain alone;

You would not miss the joy and peace of walking at His side
Of finding tempest changed for calm and sorrow sanctified.

I tell Him all the story now; no other friend could be,
In morning light or evening shade, what Jesus is to me;

His loving heart is still the same, to-day as yesterday,
And in His love I find my rest and in His strength my stay.

Selected.

“The Divine Plan of the Ages”.—A new supply of this wonderful study on the Bible handy pocket size.

Price 4/6, post paid. is on hand. Blue cloth binding, supplied at 10d. per copy

“Christ's Return”.—This 38-page booklet explains this subject in some detail, and is three copies for 2/3, post paid.

“The Everlasting Gospel.”—A 64-page booklet dealing with the Sabbath question and other important connected subjects, highly recommended, heavy paper cover, price 1/6.

Revised Standard Version Bible,-1952. Copies of this Revised Bible are available, and will be found helpful for comparison in Bible study. Bound in strong cloth covers 50/- ; in 'red rexine 60/-.

A New Picture Bible.—A Cambridge Bible, containing 30 coloured illustrations, with marginal references, and strong, black, cloth cover. A very good child's Bible ; price 15/6.

Kind Master and Good Servant.

“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.” — Psalm 103:13.

MASTERS and servants in olden times occupied a much closer relationship to each other than they do today, a relationship which took on more of paternal sentiment. The change has been brought on gradually, and is not the result of great men of to-day having less heart than great men of the olden times, nor of employees being less faithful. Rather is it the result of changed times and conditions — the result of greater individuality and independence which leads the employee to prefer to sell his time and energy on a strictly commercial basis rather than on a paternal basis. Nevertheless, the general influence is unfavourable in many respects : first, because men of great mental power and influence are to some extent, under present arrangements, cut off from fellowship and sympathy with their employees, and although the class distinctions are not less marked than in the past, nor even as much so, yet class rivalry and animosity is possibly greater than ever.

The employer, under present conditions, feels no responsibility for the employee since he has made a bargain with him for so much money per day without other responsibilities, and the employee feels that, having obtained the wage bargained for, and having used it according to his will, he has no further claim upon his employer in case of sickness or other adversity. But the system has also its good features as well, for it should cultivate independence, self-reliance and prudence, but all must discern that this division between masters and servants stands closely related to the great time of trouble which now impends.

The lesson of the healing of the centurion’s servant at Capernaum strikingly illustrates the affectionate interest that prevailed between some good masters and good servants in the past. True, we do not have any record that the servant was a good one, but the inference is there because the centurion was an orderly man, and such men usually seek for, and obtain, orderly servants. Also in his conversation with our Lord he declares that he was accustomed for his servants to do as he bade them (Luke 7:1-10).

The centurion was, of course, a Roman -- not a Jew. He was therefore debarred in a general way from the Lord’s blessings, which he declared were for the children of the kingdom (Israelites) only and not for strangers. No doubt because he realised himself as outside Judaism, an alien and a stranger and foreigner from the covenants and blessings of God bestowed upon Israel (Eph. 2:12), that he obtained the co-operation of the leading Jews of the city, that they might favour his cause with the Lord and intercede that his petition might be granted.

We notice the good deeds of this centurion. He respected the religion of the Jews, and had used his wealth in building a synagogue, the ruins of which have been found about sixty years ago. Of these ruins, Edersheim says: “The remains now, after eighteen centuries, in their richness of elaborate carvings, of cornices and tablets of capitals and niches, show with what liberal hand he had dealt his votive offerings.”

Perhaps this miracle preceded the awakening of Jairus’ daughter, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that Jairus himself was one of the Jew’s elders, who came to Jesus in the interest of the centurion and this, to some extent, helps to account for his great faith in our Lord’s power to revive his daughter, even the dead.

Our Lord seems to have readily granted the centurion’s request, and because it was not presented personally is presumed not to signify any lack of respect, but the very reverse — a realisation on his part that Jews were averse to having any dealings with Gentiles except along strictly business lines. His further modesty and meekness were shown in the fact that before Jesus had reached his house he sent friends (not servants) to hinder Jesus from defiling Himself by coming into a Gentile’s house. For although he was a man of influence and power, he realised the barrier between himself and the Jews,

according to which the Pharisees would have considered that they defiled themselves by entering his house. He therefore suggested that our Lord would merely speak the word and that he had fullest confidence that the word could be spoken as well outside as inside the house — that one possessing such power as the Lord Jesus manifested had agencies at His command which would not require Him to personally see and touch the servant in order to heal him, even as the centurion himself was accustomed to perform various matters through the instrumentality of his servants.

This was a wonderful illustration both of meekness and of faith, and it was appreciated by our Lord accordingly. There is a lesson in it for all the Lord's people to the effect that the more we exercise faith in the Lord along reasonable lines, in harmony with the teachings of His Word, the more will He be pleased with us. The same with Thomas, who, being absent at the time of our Lord's first appearance to the eleven, declared that nothing would satisfy him respecting the Lord's resurrection except the putting of his fingers into the nail-prints of His hands. Our Lord, while granting him the demonstration, intimated that he would have a greater blessing if he could have exercised a greater faith, saying, "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed."

Let all the Lord's people remember this, and instead of doubting the Lord's willingness to perform what He has promised, and requiring signs and further assurances and evidence, let us rest content that He who has so graciously done for us in the past more than we could have asked or thought, is equally faithful today and will fulfil to us all the good promises of His Word.

The more heartily we shall accept His promises, the more fully we shall trust to His gracious providences, the more peace of heart we shall have ourselves, and the more the Lord will delight Himself in us as His servants and brethren, and the more He will be pleased to favour us and use us.

Our Lord's remark, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel," was a grand tribute of approval for the Gentile centurion. It distinctly indicates that the fact that the Lord's favour, which for over eighteen hundred years had been confined to Israel, was not merely because the Israelites were alone worthy, nor because in them alone was found such faith as that on account of which father Abraham was blessed and the blessing pronounced on his children. But, although the Lord found greater faith in the centurion than among others in Israel, nevertheless He could not, and did not, invite the centurion to become one of His disciples because "the gifts and callings of God are not things to be repented of," and the Divine favour to Israel must, and did, continue down to the full end of the "seventy weeks" of favour promised through Daniel the Prophet. However, the national favour ceased three and a half years sooner, in the midst of the seventieth week, five days before our Lord's crucifixion, when He said of that nation, "Your house is left desolate unto you. Ye shall see me no more until that day" (Matt. 23::28; Dan. 9:24).

It is certainly within the range of possibility that this centurion, whose good works and alms were so highly commended by the Jews, and whose faith, spoken so well of by our Lord, might have been removed by Roman authority from Capernaum to Caesarea, (another fortress) that he may have been the centurion named Cornelius, the first Gentile accepted to the privileges and favours of the Gospel Church at the expiration of the "seventy weeks" of favour confined to the Israelites (Acts 10:1-35).

The lesson, therefore, for the Lord's people who are masters or employers is the lesson of kindness to servants. If a Gentile would be so careful for the interests of his servants and so bestir and trouble himself to secure him from pain, much more should every true Christian not only feel a kindness for those who are of the household of faith, but also be ready to do good unto all men as they may have opportunity. We may be sure that all such evidences of the spirit of love and kindness are pleasing to the Lord, and not only so, but that every time we thus exercise ourselves along such lines we deepen them and strengthen, confirm and establish character along the lines of love and mercy. This is one of the ways in which we are to develop ourselves more and more as copies of God's dear Son — Rom. 8:29.

Question Box

MATTHIAS NOT AN APOSTLE.

Question.—What evidences are there that Matthias was not an Apostle ; did he not receive the holy spirit along with the Apostles at Pentecost?

Answer.—There would appear to be no mention of Matthias in the New Testament aside from this incident of his selection to fill the place of Judas. This appointment was made before the holy spirit had been given, and there is no evidence of the Lord's recognition of Matthias as an Apostle. On the contrary, the Lord made His own selection in the Apostle Paul to fill the vacancy. In Rev. 21:14 we read of twelve Apostles of the Lamb only and Paul was clearly the Lord's choice as stated to Ananias, "He is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name unto the Gentiles" (Acts 9:15; Gal. 2:7, 8 ; 1 Cor. 9:1, 2.)

"Apostle" means "sent." The Apostles of the Lamb would be those sent out by Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. Matthias was never so sent, but Paul was. While on his zealous mission of persecution, he was arrested by a light above the brightness of the sun, and he thus caught a glimpse of the glorified Christ which blinded him. He heard the words "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Being converted he was sent to preach the Gospel.

As we hear no more at all of Matthias, it may be that when the holy spirit came upon the Apostles at Pentecost in the form of a tongue of 'fire, that it did not rest upon Matthias, and in this case the Apostles would be convinced that their selection did not have the Lord's approval. Anyway there are but the twelve Apostles of the Lamb, and as Paul is undoubtedly one, Matthias cannot be. While the eleven Apostles meant rightly and thought they were acting scripturally it is quite evident that they went before the Lord, rather than waiting for His leading. They had been instructed to wait at Jerusalem until "endued with power from on high." (Luke 24:49.)

WHO ARE SAINTS?

Question.—Does the word "saint" apply only to the church of the Gospel Age, and can it properly, used for any other than those who have made their calling and election sure ?

Answer.—The word means both in the New Testament and the Old, set apart, separate, holy. and is used undoubtedly in respect of the faithful people of God of ancient days, as well of the Gospel Age. Psalm 16:3 speaks of "the saints that are in the earth"—see also Deut. 33:2, 3. The Apostle also in writing to the Colossians addresses them as saints and faithful brethren which are at Colosse—see also Ephes. 1:1, Phil. 1:1, and 4:21, 22. These are not addressed as saints, because they are perfect or absolutely holy, but because in their minds and hearts they have set themselves apart unto the Lord, and to seek as far as possible to bring every thought, word, and deed into the obedience of Christ; they are holy in purpose, in intention, and their unwilling blemishes are covered with the righteousness of our great Advocate and Redeemer.

“Jesus thy spotless righteousness, My raiment is, my glorious dress;

‘Midst heavenly hosts in these arrayed, With joy shall I lift up my head.’”

Bible Study Meetings.

Assemblies for undenominational Bible Study are to be found in the various States, and all earnest truth seekers will be very welcome.

Melbourne.—Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond (near Church Street)—Sundays, 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Geelong, Vic.—Sons of Temperance Hall, Ryrie Street—Sundays, 3 p.m.

Adelaide. Builders and Contractors Rooms, 17 Way-mouth Street.—Sundays, 3 p.m. and 6.15 p.m.

Perth.—The Literary Institute, 1st Floor, Corner Hay and Pier Streets—Sundays, 3 p.m. and 5.30 p.m.

Fear Not.

Isaiah 43:1-7.

“Listen, for the Lord hath spoken!

Fear thou not,’ saith He!

When thou passest through the waters,
I will be with thee.

“Fear not, for I have redeemed thee;

All my sheep I know;

When thou passest through the rivers,
They shall not overflow.

“Fear not; by thy name
I called thee

Mine thy heart hath learned;

When thou walkest through the fire,
Thou shalt not be burned.

“Thou art mine! oh, therefore, fear not;
Mine forever now;

And the flame shall never kindle

On thy sealed brow.

“Thou art precious, therefore fear not;
Precious unto Me!

I have made thee for My glory,
I have loved thee.

—F. R. Havergal.

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

Sydney, 2KY, 294 M. , 8.15 a.m.

Brisbane, 4KQ, 435 M. 9 a.m.

Perth, 6KY, 227 M. 4.45 p.m.

Printed by Hickling & Powell Pty. Ltd., Lygon St., East Brunswick for Berean Melbourne, E.4