



Volume XXII. No. 12 MELBOURNE, 1st DECEMBER, 1939 Price-Twopence Halfpenny

Streams of Living Waters.

“A river the streams whereof make glad the city of God.”—Psa. 46:4.

“Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.”—Isa. 12:3.

NEXT to the breath of life we breathe, pure water is the chief essential of our existence. Foods are also necessary to sustain our lives but we can live quite a while as human beings, if able to drink pure water.

Thirst is a terrible thing, which perhaps only those fully know, who have traversed the hot parched lands of blazing sunshine with water all gone and no shelter. Unless relief soon comes death quickly results and the poor body falls to the hot earth. Sometimes such tragedies have occurred even when the needed water was close at hand, was unknown. Such persons died because they “knew not.”

The poor world to-day is perishing for lack of water of life—yet there is a mighty Rock in this weary land and there are wells of water; but they know not—“My people perish for lack of knowledge.” “There is a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.” (Amos 8:11.) “Yet there is a river the streams whereof make glad the city of God.” “Light is sown for the righteous and gladness (the joy of the truth) for the upright in heart.” “Thou preparedst a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; Thou leafiest me beside the still waters.” See also Isa. 55:1.

The streams that gladden the hearts of the people of God had their commencement even in the utterance of the curse on Satan by whom our first parents had been decoyed into sin with its consequence that “death passed upon, all.” It was only the beginning of a stream, the small spring which ultimately gained such wideness and fulness, such soul reviving power. “The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.”

It gave hope to such as sought righteousness, and there was doubtless some good understanding as to what Justice required in order that reconciliation with God might be achieved. Abel evidently had the correct thought in bringing the sacrificed lamb—a type of the Lamb of God that should take away the sins of the world, “The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,” the promised Redeemer. Cain failed to perceive the, principle of Justice involved in the sentence of death, as though God could be appeased by the pleasantness of the beautiful productions of the earth—his own works. He failed to drink of the stream of truth and promise, but Abel drank of it and so is reckoned among the justified—“righteous Abel”—says Jesus (Matt. 23:35.) See also Heb. 11:4.

Throughout that age the stream of hope was such as to sustain faith and out of that corrupt time a few

names are recorded of those who “walked with God” and looked forward to a day when right would triumph over evil and when “the Lord would descend with ten thousand of His saints to execute judgment and to convince the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds.” (Jude 14, 15.)

The stream grew clearer and deeper when God dealt with Abraham and made a great covenant with him, promising that all the families of the earth would be blessed and that this should be through his seed. Abraham drank of that good promise against all odds, and was sustained by its refreshing draught and so proved his faith in God and His promise that he ever stands out as “the father of the faithful.” So with Isaac and particularly with Jacob, who like Paul, “counted everything as dross” that he might inherit the promise, and God emphasised the promise to him.

That Abrahamic promise has sustained and refreshed God’s people ever since and is the “anchor to our souls” says Paul. As we read through the Bible we find all along the way this river the streams whereof make glad the, city of God. Joseph drank of that stream and was strengthened to Maintain his faith and loyalty to God’ under the most trying circumstances of slavery, false accusation and unjust imprisonment.

The children of Israel were sustained. by the same stream, in those two hundred. years. ‘of _oppression and slavery; they were still looking for the promised deliverer-Messiah. Moses had been taught of his parents and drank deeply of the same stream and grew strong in faith so that he “chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God’ than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ (Messiah) greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.” (Heb. 23-26.)

With the deliverance from Egypt by such miraculous means, the plagues of Egypt, the slaying of the first-born, the Passover of Israel’s first-born and crossing the Red Sea, the stream of hope seemed to run deeper and fresher. All through the days of the Law and the prophets it was that same refreshing stream that gave hope. How often is the fountain referred to. In times of trial or calamity, prayer is addressed to the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob and claim made upon that promise to them. Also when God would speak to them, as to Moses, it was “I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob.”

How the stream clarified and widened and deepened as new messages came through the prophets. While some messages were so deep as to be hidden, like “the mystery hid from ages” there was much that plainly spoke of happy days to come when the great covenant with Abraham would have fulfilment. For instance Isa. (11, and Jet-. 31, and so many portions full of promise of Divine providence and blessing.

Time would fail to speak of the faithful in all ages who drank deeply of this stream. How David rejoiced in it and loved to dwell in the courts of the Lord’s house. The 110th Psalm is full of the hope of the fulfilment of the promise of Messiah-the Melchisedec King and Priest-”He shall drink of the brook in the way, therefore shall he lift up the head.” It is at the brook we get the refreshment and it is the place to find the pebbles for the sling to slay the giants that oppose the people of God. How Psa. 119 abounds in appreciation of the stream of truth, the Lord’s words of promise, of the Law’ and of testimonies. “O how I love thy law, it is my meditation all the day, etc.”-verses 97-103. Also Psa. 42:1, 2-”As the hart panteth after the water brook so panteth my soul after thee, O God.”

So it was that David was sustained all through those days of trial, chased as an outcast by Saul seeking his life. So much did David drink of the stream of God’s good promises not only to Abraham, but also the personal promises “the sure mercies of David”-that he would not lift up his hand against Saul. He simply used his diligence to keep safely out of -Saul’s way, in beautiful confidence sparing Saul’s life when he could have slain him, although tempted by his faithful adherents who argued that surely it was the Lord who had put his enemy into his hands on two occasions. See 1 Sam. 2’6:8-10.

Drinking of the stream that makes glad the city of God gives confidence and trust in God and sustains

faith in the hour of need. This stream of truth and Divine promises continued to flow, always fresh with truths appropriate for each day, present truth for every age, -as also a fountain of living water for every one who like a “hart pantiig for the water’ brooks” longs for God and the knowledge of His way and will, and to understand His purposes. It was this stream that supported those of whom Paul speaks in Heb. 11-”Of whom the world was not worthy.” See verses 36-38.

How good were the expressions of Psalmists and prophets declaring God’s good providence, protection and blessing upon Israel and those who put their trust in the Lord. While there is the deeper and wider meaning to many of these prophetic expressions, they undoubtedly were intended to be an encouragement to the Lord’s suffering people in the days of old. “The Word of the Lord endureth forever” and is ever fresh-present truth in every age.

How the songs of the Psalmists and words of the prophets would cheer and support the faithful in their days and yet those same songs and messages contain for us deeper truths and are “meat in due season” to the household of faith all along the way, even to us at the present time.

Paul tells us that Israel drank of the water of the rock which was a symbol of Christ. The faithful then drank of that spiritual rock, which rock was Messiah-that was their hope. We drink of that same spiritual rock in a deeper, fuller sense, for our hope is to be members in the Messianic. company members in Christ.

That privilege was reserved for Israel, hut as. a nation they had failed to drink deep enough of that Messianic stream; they saw human glory, national exaltation and thought God was bound to protect them and give them such prominence and establish His Kingdom through them. There were others, however, who were better able to perceive the Divine Promises and provisions and like old Simeon and Hannah could rejoice in the Babe of Bethlehem who was “set for the falling and rising again of many in Israel.”

For some four hundred years or more from Malachi to John the Baptist, the stream of Divine light and truth and promise was not increased. There was however sufficient to sustain the faithful through those trying years of the Gentile oppression and to make strong the brave Macabeans who by their faith were able to overcome their enemies.

Then came John the Baptist preparing the way for Christ and many were refreshed and made ready for the further development of truth by Him who spake as never man spake. That was the time of the harvest of the Jewish Age; the Lord of the harvest was present and the “present truth” was the sickle used to find the “Israelites indeed,” the true wheat that had to be separated from the chaff and garnered into the Kingdom of Heaven.

How the stream flowed in splendour as the Gospel sun began to shine in the place of the Law age moon. As the moon gives only reflected light from the sun, so the Law and its types and ceremonies were but shadows of better things. “The law came by Moses but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” “God who spake in times past . . . by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.” (Heb. 1:1, 2.)

No wonder Mary loved to listen to the gracious words of Jesus; no wonder the common people heard Him gladly. The Law was a yoke on them which they were unable to bear, but Jesus cried, “Come unto me all ye that are weary, and I will give you rest.” Yes, a new and living way was opening up. The stream began to flow into deep waters bringing refreshment, joy and peace to those who had ears to hear. How beautiful is the incident of Jesus and the woman of Samaria at the well. (John 4:10-14; also John 7:37, 38.)

Certainly there were trials and testing, and many went back when they could not understand some of the deep truths which Jesus uttered, but the faithful were helped and strengthened and said, “To whom shall

we go, for thou hast the words of eternal life.” Then, after the great trial of the crucifixion, how their hearts burned within them when

He talked with them by the way and opened to them the Scriptures “Beginning at Moses and all the prophets He expounded unto them in ,11 the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” Then, later they began to see that just what they had deemed the great defeat of the Gospel movement was the greatest victory ever won and that Jesus was crowned as conqueror over sin and death; end - that the great Divine Plan was not hindered but progressed a most important step.

Then, after the ascension came the promise of the Father.-the holy spirit-in fulfilment of the Lord’s words, “When the spirit of truth is come it will guide you into all truth and teach you things to come,”- things which Jesus could not tell them, while He was with them, for they had only natural minds and could not comprehend heavenly truths. Now the purpose was revealed-the choosing of a “little flock” that should share the throne with Jesus and be the Abrahamic seed that would bless all the families of the earth. See Peter’s words Acts 5:14-17.

How wonderful are the truths that opened up at that time and they are handed down to us in Paul’s beautiful letters and the writings of Peter and John. The Church, as the flock of the good Shepherd has been led “beside the still waters”--deep and refreshing. Well did the Master’ say, “Whoso drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.” “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, out of him shall flow rivers of living water. This spake He of the spirit which they that believe on Him should receive: for the holy spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified.” (John 7:37-39.)

But oh, how that stream of truth has been polluted. It was so foretold by the Lord in His parables that this would be the case, particularly the parable of the three measures of meal into which a woman placed the leaven. So the apostate church, the wicked shepherds, bishops and clergy introduced so much error and polluted the stream. What a severe indictment of these “shepherds” we find in Ezek. 34:2, 3, 18, 19. So in Revelation the Word of God is represented as being clothed in sackcloth, as lying in the street-neglected. It has revived and the purifying of the stream of truth has been going on since the Reformation. Various movements under one reformer or another have been instrumental in removing the errors of the dark ages - pagan-papal doctrines that beclouded the truths of God’s Word.

Then came the great movement of later years first under Miller, stirring the whole Christian Church to expectation of Christ’s return and then. under Brother Russell came the glad message revealing the Divine plan, not only of selecting a “little flock” but of using that little company -the completed Church-to assist our Lord as His joint-heirs of the Abrahamic promise, in blessing all the families of the earth. More than this, prophecies were understood and seen in fulfilment in events of our day, and all the signs of the presence of Christ were observed and then it was seen that we were actually living in “the days of the Son of Man,” the second presence of Christ.

Then we realise the fulfilment of Luke 12:37- “The feast is spread.” The blessing promised at the • end of 1335 days realised. The invitation of our present Lord (Rev. 3:20), is heard and accepted by those “whose lamps are trimmed and burning.” Truths are revealed showing that we are at the end of the age, the harvest time is well advanced, soon all the wheat will be garnered and the tares are being bound in bundles. Soon the burning up in the great time of trouble will take place - “The sea and waves roaring; mountains are being cast into the sea,” and this river “the streams whereof make glad the city of God,” is refreshing, gladdening and strengthening the hearts of God’s people, the City of God -the city of God’s people-the holy of the Tabernacle of the Most High ;. yes, God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved: God shall help her right early.”

Surely the Lord has “descended from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God.” “Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound.” Soon now the City of God this “New Jerusalem” will be complete and then will become the new government of earth-- the great antitypical temple as figured in Ezek.

47:1-12, where the waters are seen to flow from under, the threshold of the door, flowing deeper and deeper. Then verse 7--”Behold at the bank of the river were very many trees on one side and on the other . . . These waters issue out towards the east country, go down into the desert and go into the sea which being brought forth into the sea, the waters (of the sea) shall be healed. And it shall come to pass that everything that liveth which moveth whithersoever the rivers shall come shall live, and there shall be a very great multitude of fish because these waters shall come thither for they shall be healed and everything shall live whither the river cometh.”

During this Gospel Age it has only been few who have tasted of this living water. Only a net full of fish taken in the Gospel Age and then “some taken, and some cast again into the sea,”- the world. But then, (in the next age) will be fulfilled Isa. 60:5-”The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee.”

It has been by the “wells of water” that the Bride class has been found and chosen; soon now that class will be complete and then “the spirit and the Bride shall say come, and let him that heareth say come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him come and take the water of life freely.” Rev. 22:17; see also Rev. 22:1-5.

Outward and Inward Sight.

Yes, gone from me all earthly sight,
The forms and faces dear;
The eyes soft gleam or sparkle bright,
The answering smile or tear.
The rosy tints of opening day,
When soft lights come and go,
The wondrous ever changing clouds,
The sunsets golden glow.

The diamond flash of countless stars,
That gem the robe of night,
The moon's clear radiance covering all
With softened silvery light.
The glories of the ocean vast,
The dancing, dashing waves,
The feathery foam the tangled weed,
The rocks, and shells and caves.

Yes, gone from me all earthly sight,
The charm of mount and dell,
The varied beauties of the earth,
The flowers I love so well.
I know it all, I feel it all,
Yet I do, not rebel,
I'm resting in my Father's love,
Who doeth all things well.

And, Oh, how much is left to me,
It is not dark within;
The light of hope and peace and trust,
That suffering cannot dim.
The tender love and thoughtful care,
That dear ones give to me,
The loving touch of lips and hands I feel, but cannot see.
The power of memory and of thought,
The light and joy of prayer;
The love of Jesus, best of all
There is no darkness there.

The light of all the promises
To shine along the way;
The light of hope that points above
To everlasting day.

FANNY ROSE

(Written soon after losing sight.)

PEOPLES PAPER. AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

Published by the Berean Bible Institute,

19 Ermington Place, Kew, E4, Melbourne, , Victoria, Australia.

(Monthly) 2/6 (60 cents) per annum, post paid,

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, either in the correspondence or in the sermons.

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Harvest, Winter, Sabbath 'Peace on Earth'

AS we approach the close of another year, and the time generally observed in celebration of our Lord's birth, on earth, the thoughts of His people are not improperly directed towards the wonderful message of hope announced by the angels when He came as the babe to be the Saviour of mankind-"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:14.) While we cannot agree that 25th December was the time of, the birth of Jesus, but rather maintain that it took place about three months earlier, in harmony with His death at the Passover season 331 years later, yet this message may well be considered more particularly at this time, especially in view of its apparent failure after nearly two thousand years have elapsed.

This is surely a hopeful and inspiring message, but, as with all other portions of God's Word, it can be understood only by those who have come to know the Lord and have been blessed with a knowledge of His Plan, of the Ages, and even then, much of its beauty and grandeur are beheld only after continual progress has been made and vital union with. the Lord is an accomplished fact.

This proclamation of promised "peace on earth," at once acknowledges the necessity for a great change from the present "wars and rumors of wars" with which the pages of history are stained; in fact, as the history of the past two thousand years is reviewed, the conflicts that have raged from time to time are appalling, and all this since the message was given "On earth peace, good will toward men." It would be sad indeed if this promise of peace should fail of fulfilment, but just as surely as it was announced by the Lord's direction, so it will also come to pass by His authority when the due time arrives. This earth, which is beautiful in itself, will become a peaceful haven, where mankind may dwell in safety and none shall make them afraid; and, then, shall the Lord's prayer be answered -"Thy Kingdom come: Thy will be done on earth, as in heaven."

However, the Lord's people, instructed by His Word, have realised all down the Gospel Age that the glad day of peace cannot come until the second advent of their Lord, and further, that at His return He does not immediately establish peace, but has another most important work to accomplish first; namely, the gathering of His elect, His Church, His Bride, unto Himself in a harvest work at the close of this Gospel Age.-Matt 24:31.

.This harvest work of which our Lord speaks so fully in Matt. 24 is the culmination of the selection of His "Little flock" of consecrated followers, which began at His first advent in the calling of His little band of disciples. All down the Gospel Age numbers have been added to this "people for God's name," and in the time of harvest "the dead in Christ" are raised, and the remaining members on earth are gathered into the heavenly garner, in preparation for the reign of peace which is to follow.

It is important that the harvest work be clearly understood, and the Lord has given ample instruction for all who will prove their value as true “wheat” and be gathered into the garner within a certain period of time. As in the case of the Jewish harvest those who were in the religious systems of the day and failed to respond to the Lord’s message were burned up as “chaff” (Matt., 3:12), so in the close of the Gospel harvest, those in the religious systems who do not respond to the harvest message must go through “great tribulation,” a fiery time of trouble with which this age will end, and be revealed as “tares.”—Matt. 13:30; 24:21.

It is to this wheat class—“My people”—that the Lord has been calling through His Word and by His spirit for many years now, to flee from the present systems of Christianity, which have become worldly institutions and have been cast off from favor.—Rev. 3:14-22; 18:1-5. This “flight” from Babylon (mother and daughter systems) must be undertaken before the “four winds” are let loose (Rev. 7:1-3), by all worthy of the name “My people,”—“that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”

Flight is to be made not from one denomination to another, but the instruction is “flee into the mountain,” i.e., the kingdom of the Lord (Matt. 24:16), and being translated into the Kingdom of God’s dear Son, He has provided the harvest feast for all such—“For wheresoever the carcase (the food, meat in due season) is, there will the eagles be gathered together.” — Matt. 24:28. And so it is, God’s people are found gathered together in twos or threes or larger numbers rejoicing in the truths provided only for this class by their Lord who has returned unseen by human eyes, to conduct this harvest work before the great time of trouble and later the bringing of peace to the earth. (Rev. 14:14-16.)

The importance of making flight from the systems of Babylon during the harvest of the Gospel Age is impressed again by the Lord in His exhortation—“But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day.” (Matt 24:20.) These terms “winter” and “sabbath day” are not to be taken (literally, but rather our Lord was referring to periods of time • which would be very unfavorable, yea, impossible for flight from the systems He has cast off.

The “winter” would refer to the great time of trouble, when the “four winds” of Rev. 7, are let loose, bringing about a great tempest amongst the restless masses of mankind--“the sea and the waves roaring” (Luke 21:25)- resulting in “the heavens” (ecclesiastical systems) passing away with a great noise . . . the earth also (present order of society) and the works that are therein being burned up.” (2 Pet. 3:10.) No wonder the Lord exhorts His people to flee to Him, to His Kingdom before the “winter.” During a literal harvest time there is plenty of food obtainable as the grain is gathered into the barn; but how different it is when winter sets in. So in the harvest of this Gospel Age there is abundant provision of spiritual food for the sustenance of all the Lord’s people who are courageous and answer His call to leave the lukewarm Laodicean systems of to-day, but with the coming of the winter period the opportunity of feasting on the harvest truths will be past. “The harvest is past, the summer (time of favourable opportunity) is ended, and we are not saved (as members of the Church)” is recorded by the prophet Jeremiah 8:20, as representing the Great Company, who, though unworthy to be of the Bride of Christ, receive a lower spiritual inheritance following the washing of their robes through great tribulation. See Rev. 7:9-17.

The term “sabbath day” would not refer to a twenty-four-hour, seventh day of the week, but rather to a period of time, typified by the Jewish sabbath day. This period is generally understood by Bible students as referring to the seventh millennium during which Israel and mankind as a whole will be blessed with lasting rest and peace, which the term “sabbath” signifies; and it will be during this very time that the words of our text will be fulfilled —“Glory to God, in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” How fitting, then, that our Lord should say—“Pray ye that your flight be . . . neither on the sabbath day,” implying that when this period is ushered in, flight from the

Babylonian systems would be out of the question, inasmuch as Babylon will have been thrown down during the “winter” time, which precedes the “sabbath day.”—”Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.” (Rev. 18:21.)

If this be the correct understanding of our Lord’s words (our readers are exhorted to prove all things fold themselves from the Scriptures) it will be seen that the harvest, winter and sabbath day refer to three distinct periods of time.

The harvest is for the complete gathering of the Gospel Church during the “days of the Son of Man,” corresponding to “the days of Noah” prior to the Flood. There would seem no doubt that we are at present very near the close of this period, and how important, therefore, that any of the Lord’s people still in Babylon, in any of its forms, should act quickly and flee from all such, associations, ere the great tribulation (Matt. 24:21) cut off all opportunity of being gathered into the Gospel garner, as “The plowman overtakes the reaper.” (Amos. 9:13.)

The winter’, time is for the purpose of ridding the world of everything out of accord with the Lord and His righteousness—the man-made systems, ecclesiastical, financial, political and social—”the removing of those things that may be shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.” (Heb. 1 2:2 7.)

The sabbath day, following the severe winter time, is the period during which the elect Church shall be “priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years” (Rev. 20:6), bringing peace and happiness—”the desire of all nations”—to the chastened world of mankind, for their uplift and progress to perfect human life on the restored earth. Of this time the Apostle Peter says—”We, according to His promise, look for new heavens (Christ and His Church) and a new earth (new social order) wherein dwelleth righteousness.”-2 Pet. 3:13. “Glory to God in the highest, ,and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

The End of the Way.

EARLY last month another of our dear brethren, Brother W. E. Goldsack, finished his earthly course in Melbourne after many years of faithful service and devotion to the Lord.

Our dear Brother, who was in his 82nd year, had been a Christian for the greater part of his life, and for over 30 years had rejoiced in the harvest truths revealed to God's called out people during the close of this age. Of a nice kindly and lovable disposition he was ever earnest and zealous for the Lord's cause of truth. We rejoice that our dear Brother's trials and sufferings are over, and that he has entered into his reward, promised of the Lord to all who love Him supremely.

In recent years our elderly Brother had experienced failing health and removed from the country to Melbourne, and it was a great pleasure foie any of the brethren to visit him and have fellowship, conversing on those things dearest to his heart. There was no complaint or murmuring of any kind against what the Lord in His providence had permitted, but always a humble submission with cheerfulness to all the Lord's will for him.

Our sympathy is extended to the bereaved members in the home circle; a large number are left to mourn the passing of a devoted and loving husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather amongst whom he will no doubt be greatly missed. All undoubtedly will have lasting memories of a living witness to the faith once delivered to the saints, and which will prove of benefit as well as comfort in days to come.

"Blessed are the dead which die in, the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."

" 'Forever with the Lord!'

Amen, so let it be!

Life from the dead is in that word,

'Tis immortality."

Joy Cometh in the Morning

'Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness; for His anger is momentary; in His favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.' --Psa. 30:4, 5.

THE watchman said, "The morning cometh." (Isa. 21:12.) Through making this answer, he forewarns us of night, but assures us of the morning. There is a morning, says he, therefore do not give way to faintness of spirit, but there is a night between; therefore, take warning that you may not be surprised nor dismayed, as if the promise were broken, or some strange thing allowed to befall you.

There may be delay, he intimates, before the morning—a dark delay, for which we should be prepared. During this he calls for watchfulness, for the length of the night is hidden, the time of daybreak is uncertain. We must be on the outlook, with our eyes fixed on the eastern hills. We have nothing wherewith to measure the hours, save the sorrows of the Church and the failing of hearts.

During this delay the watchman encourages us to "inquire," to "return," to "come." He expects us to ask "how long?" and say, "when will the night be done?" He takes for granted that such will be the proceeding of men who really long for the morning. To the hills of Seir they will again and again return, to learn of the watchman what is the promise of the day; for no familiarity with the night can ever reconcile them to darkness, or make morning less desirable.

It is right for us to desire the morning, to hope for it, to inquire as to the signs of it hour after hour. God' has set this joy before us, and it were strange indeed if, when compassed about with so many sorrows, we should' forget it, or be heedless as to its arrival, for the coming of the morning is the coming of Him whom we long to see. It is the coming of Him "who turneth the shadow of death into the morning." (Amos 5:8.) It is the return of Him whose absence has been night, and whose presence will be day. It is the return of Him who is the resurrection and the life, and who brings resurrection with Him, the return of Him who is creation's Lord; and who brings with Him deliverance to creation, the return of Him who is the Church's Head, and who brings with Him triumph and gladness to His Church.

All the joy, the calm, the revivifying freshness of the morning, are wrapt up in Him. When He appears day appears, life appears, fruitfulness appears. The curse departs. The "bondage of corruption" is no more. Clouds, storms, troubles, sorrows vanish. The 'face of nature reassumes the smile of unfallen times. It is earth's festival, the world's jubilee.

"The heavens rejoice, the earth is glad, the sea roars and the fulness thereof, the fields are joyful and all that is therein; the trees of the wood rejoice, the floods clap their hands, and the hills are joyful together before the Lord, for He has come, for He has come to judge the earth, with righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with His truth."—Psa. 96:11-13; 98:7-9.

This morning has been long anticipated. Age after age has attracted the Church's eye, and fixed her hope. On the promise of it her faith has been resting, and towards the hastening of it her prayers have gone forth. Though afar off, it has been described and rejoiced in as the sure consummation towards which all things are moving forward according to the Father's purpose. "There is a morning," has been the word of consolation brought home to the burdened heart of many a saint when ready to say with David, "I am desolate," or with Jeremiah, "He has set me in dark places as they that be dead of old."

Let us dwell for a little time on some of these Old Testament allusions to the morning, beginning with the Psalm from which our text is taken.

David had been in sorrow, and in coming out of it, he -makes known to the saints his consolations: "Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness. For there is but a moment in His anger; in His favour is life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."-Psa. 30:4, 5.

The earnest of that morning he hath tasted, but the morning itself he anticipates. Then joy has come. Then he can say (verse 11), "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; Thou has put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness." But it is the voice of a greater than David that is heard in this Psalm. It is, like the 16th and 18th, one of Christ's resurrection Psalms. He was "lifted up," so that His foes were not made to rejoice over Him. He cried and was "healed." His "soul was brought up from the grave." There was anger against Him "for a moment," when He bore the sinner's curse. But in Jehovah's favor there was "life." He had a night of weeping, a night of "strong crying and tears," when His soul was sorrowful "even unto death," and when beneath the waves of that sorrow He sunk, commending His spirit into the Father's hands. But it was a night no more. Morning came, and with morning, joy. Coming forth from the tomb, He left all His sorrow behind; His sackcloth was put off, and He arose "girded with gladness."

He found morning and joy; and He is "the first fruits of them that slept." There was a morning for Him, therefore there shall be one for us-a morning bright with resurrection glory.

Let us next take Psalm forty-nine. These are Christ's words, as is proved in Matt. 13:35, from the quotation of verse 4. He summons the whole world to listen. He "speaks of wisdom," for He is Wisdom. He points to the vanity of riches, and their insufficiency to redeem a soul; and who knew so well as He what a ransom was needed? He sees men going on in their wickedness, self-confidence and vain glory. He contrasts the wicked and the righteous. "Over the wicked the righteous shall give dominion in the morning." The morning then brings dominion to the righteous- redemption from the power of the grave. In this Jesus rejoiced, in this let us rejoice. This joy of the morning was set before Him: it is the same joy that is set before us. Dominion in the morning is that to which we look forward-a share in the first resurrection of which those who partake live and reign with Christ.

Look again at the forty-sixth Psalm. It is the utterance of the faith of Israel's faithful ones. The earth is shaken (verse 2, compare with Haggai 2:6 and Heb. 12:26, 27), the sea and the waves roar (verse 3, compare with Luke 21:25), but there is a river whose streams gladden them. God is in the midst of her. Nay, "God helps her when the morning appeareth" (verse 5, margin), just as in the morning watch He looked out from the fiery cloud and troubled the Egyptians. Then the heathen are scattered at His voice- He sweeps off every enemy, He makes wars to cease, and sits Himself on high over the nations, as King of kings, "exalted in the earth." From which we gather that the morning brings with it deliverance from danger-victory over enemies, the renewal of the earth, peace to the nations, the establishment of Messiah's glorious throne. What a morning of joy that must be, for the Church, for Israel, for the whole earth-resurrection for the Church, restoration for Israel, restitution for the earth!

Look at the 110th Psalm. We see Jesus at Jehovah's right hand, waiting till His enemies be made His footstool; and then He who said unto Him "Sit," shall say, "Arise" (Psa. 82:8.) He is yet to have dominion on earth, and to sit upon the throne of his father David. Willingness, beauty, holiness, brightness shall mark His people in that morning of joy which His coming shall produce.

Read also "the last words of David" (II. Sam. 23:1-4), in which, as in the 72nd Psalm, "the prayers of David are ended," or summed up. "There shall be a just one ruling in the fear of God; as the light of the morning shall He arise, the Sun of an unclouded morning, shining after a rain upon the tender grass of the earth." Not till that Just One comes is that morning to dawn, for He is its light, and from His countenance

is to break forth that light in which all earth is to rejoice. Then the darkness of the long night shall disappear, and the tribulation tasted in the time of absence be forgotten in the abounding blessedness of His everlasting presence.

Let us hear how in “the Song,” the bride refers to this same morning. She rejoices in the bridegroom’s assured love, and her desires and longings are not questionings as to the relationship in which she stands to him. This is with her a settled thing, for she has tasted that the Lord is gracious. “I am my beloved’s and my beloved, is mine.” What directions do her longings take? Her “eyes are toward the hills,” over which she expects to behold him coming like a roe. Thus she pleads with him not to tarry, “Make haste, my beloved; and be thou like a roe, or to a young hart on the mountain of spices” (8:14). Thus she also anticipates the morning of fuller joy, even while enjoying present fellowship. “He feedeth among the lilies until the day breaks and the shadows flee away”

(2:16, 17). And thus the bridegroom himself, feeling if one may so speak, the loneliness of the night, and that it is “Not good to be alone,” longs like herself for the day, and resolves to climb the hills, where he may not only be regaled with freshest odors, but may catch the earliest gleams of dawn. “Until the day break and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense” (4:6). On that hill let us, meet Him in faith, and watch with Him in hope, yet ever remembering that though His joy which faith gives here, is unspeakably comforting, it is not the gladness of the marriage supper—it is not the blessedness of the bridal day. For He Himself, while telling His disciples, “Lo, I am with you always,” says also this, “I will not henceforth drink of this fruit of the vine until the day that I drink it new with you in My Father’s Kingdom” (Matt. 26:29).

There is the joy of deliverance from overwhelming danger. This was the joy of the Jews when their adversary perished and Mordecai was exalted:—“The Jews had light, and gladness and joy, and honor . . . the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast, and a good day” (Esther 8:16, 17). Such shall be the Church’s joy in the morning of her great deliverance. ;There is. the joy of escape from captivity and return from exile, such as made Israel feel as men that dream.

Such shall be the Church’s joy when her long captivity is done. Then shall her mouth be filled with laughter, and her tongue with singing; having sowed in tears she reaps in joy (Psa. 126:2, 5). There is the joy of harvest (Isa. 9:3), and such shall be the Church’s joy. There is the mother’s joy when her pangs are over, and the child is born into the world (John 16:21). With such joy shall we rejoice, and our joy no man taketh from us. The joy in reserve for us is manifold and large; it will abide and satisfy; it is the joy of the morning—a long glad day before us; no evening with its lengthening shadows, no night with its chills and darkness. “There shall be no night there, and they need no candles, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever.” (Rev. 22:5.)

.The prospect of this morning—this “morning of joy”—nerves and cheers us under all our tribulation. Were this morning an uncertainty, how dark would the night seem! How difficult for us to fight against faintness and despair!

But the thought of morning invigorates and braces us. We can set our faces to the storm, for behind it lies the calm. We can bear the parting, for the meeting is not distant. We can afford to weep, for the tears shall soon be wiped away. We can watch the tedious sick bed, for soon “the inhabitants shall not say, I am sick.” We can look quietly into the:7.7_72 of buried love and cherished hope, for resurrection shines behind it. Things may be against us here, but they are for us hereafter. The here is but an hour; the hereafter is a whole eternity.

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The Melbourne 'brethren have their arrangements well advanced for the forthcoming Convention which is to be held (D.V.) over the four days, commencing Saturday afternoon, 23rd December, and concluding Tuesday evening, 26th December.

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Published by Berean Bible Institute, 19 Ermington Place, Kew, E4,

Printed by Hickling & Powell Pty. Ltd., Brunswick, Vic