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## Will We Know Our Loved Ones in the Resurrection Day?

(This article is published by request).

THE subject of the resurrection and the conditions which will exist at that time are surely so wonderful for us to contemplate. Here on earth we are surrounded with death, and the dying process, in even the healthiest of the human race. Is it any wonder, then, that the thought of the resurrection—an awakening from the condition of unconsciousness in death—should appeal so strongly to us, not only for our own benefit, but also for the benefit of all mankind?

We call to mind one of our friends, who, when anyone died, used to tell her little boy that the departed one would be brought back to life in the resurrection day, and the child was continually asking when they would be restored to life. Truly, the awakening from the dead has a strong appeal to all right-thinking people, and how wonderful this resurrection experience will be for the majority of mankind who were not aware of such a provision when living on earth, or at least had such a vague understanding of it. The majority of business men and women are thinking mainly of their financial state right up to the time of death. Some, possibly a good number, make provision for their death—to see that all death dues and funeral arrangements are covered—but have we heard of many making arrangements for their resurrection?

Our Lord gave His own disciples instructions how they may make provision for their resurrection to life with Himself, when He declared —"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matt. 6:19-21.)

How truly, then, did the Apostle Paul express the feelings of our hearts, also, when he stated—"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." But Paul, so fully assured that Christ had been raised from the dead and "become the first-fruits of them that slept" in his day, could declare with confidence — "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the firstfruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his presence." (1 Cor. 15:19-23.)

Let us now briefly examine the position of those whom Paul calls "Christ the firstfruits" in this wonderful 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians. These are the "anoined firstfruits" of whom James declared—"Of his own will (God's will) begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." (James 1:18.) In Revelation 14:4 we also read—"These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb."

What shall we say of this class of "firstfruits unto God" in the resurrection day? Shall they see and know their loved ones? Throughout the Scriptures there is one prominent fact made manifest, and which is, that first of all, the blessed hope and expectation of seeing the Lord Himself seems to have been uppermost in the minds of the Apostles. As an example, we read in Tit. 2:13—"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." And again—"So shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thes. 4:17.)

From the Apostle John we also read respecting our Lord's return—"When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2.) What a wonderful prospect is this for all the worthy overcomers of this Gospel Age ! However, while John was so enraptured with the thought of seeing the Lord, and being like Him in the resurrection day, he at the same time answers our question as to whether the overcomers will see and know their loved

ones in that resurrection time. For, notice that John clearly states—“We shall be like Him for We shall see Him as He is.” Thus in being like the Lord, and seeing Him *as He is*, all of this “We” class will be like each other, and will certainly know each other, as never before.

When our Lord commended those who had faithfully used the “five talents” and the “two talents” in Matt. 25:21,

23, His words were—“Well done, good and faithful servant ... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” And while we are not informed of the details of the “joys of the Lord” in the heavenly kingdom, we know they will include the joys of association with all other loved ones in the Lord’s heavenly family, in addition to being confessed before the Father, and before His angels. (Rev. 3:5.)

Later we shall consider if the faithful followers of the Lord may also know other loved ones in the resurrection day who have not been of the “anointed firstfruits” class, but just now we wish to examine some Scriptures which deal with those who will be in the earthly kingdom and which reveal their relationship to their loved ones in the same kingdom on earth.

On one occasion the words of our Lord showed the condition of heart of many Israelites at His first advent, and Jesus’ prophecy concerning their attitude when the Kingdom is established and they are raised from the dead is helpful in revealing that these Jews will certainly remember their former life, and their former associates. Thus, they will know those they loved, who were of the same mind as themselves. We refer to Luke 13:28, 29—“There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.” Undoubtedly Jesus referred here to the time of Christ’s kingdom on earth, when the prominent Jews who rejected Him at His first advent will be “thrust out” of the kingdom administration, when they are resurrected, until they acknowledge Christ and fall into line with the laws of the kingdom then in force. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets will be in the places of authority to guide and direct affairs; and the reason that the Apostles are not mentioned is, of course, because our Lord was describing the procedure for the earthly phase of the kingdom only. (See also Matt. 11:20-24.) The fact that it will be “more tolerable” for Tyre, Sidon and Sodom in the day of judgment than for the Israelites who rejected Christ at His first advent, shows that all these nations will be resurrected, and, knowing of their former lives, will have opportunity to repent and come into the favor of the Lord, through His representatives, the Ancient Worthies.

Read Ezek. 16:48-55, 60-63. “Then (thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger ... That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame.” In these verses from Ezekiel we find unmistakable evidence of the fact that Israel, as well as all other people, will remember very clearly their former life when raised from the dead in the resurrection. And if the former life is clearly remembered, so will be the former associates, especially the loved ones, and by obedience to the laws of the kingdom and rendering assistance to others, will progress be gauged under the administration of Christ’s kingdom on earth.

Using Israel as an illustration again, we read in Zech. 12:9, 10—“They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.” Here we see that in the resurrection day, those who sanctioned our Lord’s death will clearly remember their part in His crucifixion, and will mourn as they look back on the sad event. However, the Lord will restore them to favor as they indicate a repentant heart condition. As shown by this prophecy, they will be in genuine mourning and bitterness because of their conduct. They will also remember their associates at the time of our Lord’s death, and will need to assist each other into harmony with the Lord and His spirit of compassion manifest towards them. Thus, the remembrance of the former conduct will be a great incentive to progress in accord with the requirements of the kingdom then in operation.

Another point regarding the world of mankind—They will also know some in the resurrection who were not their loved ones; they will know some who may have been their enemies ! How will they react toward these? Their reaction towards past enemies will determine their worthiness, or otherwise, to receive the blessings of Christ’s kingdom. (See Matt. 25:31-40, 45.)

The attitude of the Lord’s people, of course, will be quite different to that of the world of mankind in the kingdom. They will meet many in the heavenly kingdom who were not their loved ones on earth, but they will rejoice to associate with all in God’s heavenly family, and will love them just as much as those saints they knew on earth.

Then, there will be some in the earthly kingdom over whom the saints shall reign, and from whom they likely received persecution during the earthly life. How will the over-corners feel towards these? They will certainly have no ill

feelings, but will be sympathetic, and desire to lift up and bless, that those who were persecutors may be gained for the Lord's kingdom on earth. Where required, the Lord will rule with a rod of iron; He will certainly require obedience, but His justice will be tempered with mercy wherever there are responsive hearts. (See Rev. 3:9.) And this disposition to bless even their persecutors, on the part of the Lord's people, must be developed in this present life, or we may be sure that no heavenly inheritance will be gained. So, we realise that the followers of Christ must be truly overcomers of all wrong feelings, thoughts and actions, in this present life, by the Lord's grace, while the world of mankind will eradicate these imperfections during the Kingdom, to be worthy of everlasting life on earth.

We think of the great example of Christ, as shown in Rom. 5:6-10,—”God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us . . . For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” So, as Christ had no enemies in His heart—because He died for them—we also must have no enemies; none that we would not seek to bless and encourage in the ways of the Lord, as we have opportunity. We must not allow the Adversary to stir up our minds or hearts against anyone, whether they be our brethren, or the world at large. We call to mind Paul's words in this connection—”For as ye (Gentiles) in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief. Even so have these (Jews) also now not believed, that through your mercy (when the opportunity comes in the kingdom) they also may obtain mercy.” (Rom. 11:30,31.)

What shall we say, however, about the relatives of the Lord's people who have no interest in spiritual things and who will be raised from the dead to inherit the earthly kingdom in the general resurrection? We know that there are close ties between the Lord's people and some of their earthly relatives, but because those gaining the heavenly kingdom will be spirit beings, we do not think of the two phases of God's kingdom as being greatly divided. We remember Paul's words—”In the dispensation of the fulness of times he (God) might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.” (Eph. 1:10.) Also in Gen. 28:10-15, where the “Jacob's ladder” dream is recorded, we have an illustration of the co-operation which will exist between heavenly and earthly beings when Christ's kingdom is operative, and especially so when mankind are fully restored to perfection.

We remember when Adam and Eve were perfect in the Garden of Eden, before the fall into disobedience, that God talked with them, and so, when mankind have gained human perfection, no doubt there will be definite communication between the overcoming saints of the Gospel Age and the perfect human family.

We realise, also, that there will be no thought in the minds of the Lord's people in the spiritual kingdom of showing preference to those who were their earthly relatives in this life; the saints will esteem all mankind equally in God's earthly family, with every member of it being appreciated according to their obedience to the laws of the kingdom. This principle was clearly demonstrated by our Lord when He was on earth. (See Matt. 12:46-50.)

We see, then, why our Lord could speak to His true followers as He did, when He declared—”Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Matt. 19:28.) These will be worthy and qualified then to judge Israel and the world, in righteousness. The installation of Christ's true followers in their places of administration in the kingdom is shown also in the Parable of the Pounds, where the “good servants” were rewarded—”Have thou authority over ten cities,” and “Be thou also over five cities.” (Luke 19:11-19.)

What a wonderful prospect lies ahead for poor, fallen humanity during the time when “all shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest,” when “The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” (Jer. 31:34; Hab. 2:14.) What a gracious prospect and privilege also lies ahead for the faithful overcomers of this Gospel Age, who shall be favored to participate in the work of the kingdom—”Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father,” (Matt. 13:43),—to bless and uplift all who then respond throughout the earthly domain of Christ's Kingdom, that they may gain everlasting life, to God's praise.

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## The Institute's Work

IT is with thankfulness to the Lord for His blessings and favors bestowed upon the work of the Berean Bible Institute, throughout another year, that this brief annual report is presented at this time.

The co-operation of our brethren in the work of the Institute has continued as in past years, and sincere appreciation is extended to all who have assisted so freely, as unto the Lord, in the efforts from the centre here in Melbourne.

Each year the efforts continue mainly with the object of encouraging our brethren in Christ, wherever situated, in the Christian way to which they have been graciously drawn and called of the Lord through His word of truth. At the same time the presentation of the message of the kingdom is a general witness to others who have ears to hear and long for the glorious hope for the future, found only in the true Gospel of Christ. Our monthly "Peoples Paper and Herald of Christ's Kingdom" is the main means of contact with the brethren and interested friends throughout Australia and overseas, and many messages of appreciation of our periodical have been received throughout the past year.

As in former years, the contributions to the columns of the "Peoples Paper" are greatly appreciated, and this enables a number of brethren to have a part in this ministry, in the service of the Lord and His truth. Other friends who have helpful articles suitable for publication in the "Peoples Paper" are invited to forward them along.

The number of subscribers to our monthly "Paper" has been maintained, but the price of 5/- per year does not nearly cover the cost of production, so the deficiency is made up from the General Tract Fund. However, as a considerable number of the "Paper" is distributed free to interested enquirers the expense is certainly well used in the service of the truth. All readers are welcome to extra copies of the "Paper" for distribution where good may be done, and some friends who forward subscriptions for others are helping very well in the work. The assistance in checking the proofs of the "Peoples Paper" by some friends is greatly appreciated, as is also the help in folding and wrapping of the periodical for despatch to our readers.

The distribution of tracts has been continued where opportunities offered, and supplies of various subjects are on hand for all who can use them to advantage in the days ahead. These tracts are supplied free from the Tract Fund. Consolation Cards are also mailed to the bereaved by some of our brethren, and a number of these have been returned and suitable literature supplied; other friends willing to co-operate in this work are invited to do so.

Throughout the past year, public lectures have been continued at regular intervals, and the brethren have shown good appreciation and co-operation by encouraging their friends to attend, and a number from the public have also shown good interest in the messages presented on these occasions. It was from the lectures that some of our regular brethren were first encouraged to appreciate the truth, by the Lord's grace.

The financial position for the general work is shown from the General Tract Fund below. and all the good assistance has been provided by the voluntary contributions of our friends, in the Lord's providence. This loving cooperation and assistance in the work is warmly appreciated, as unto the Lord. While looking back with gratitude and praise to the Lord, it is our privilege to look forward also with confidence and trust in the God of our salvation. The international situation continues to be of great interest to the Lord's people, and often trouble spots could produce another spasm of world-wide destruction, but for one thing — the time is not yet due in the Lord's timetable. While the Lord's time for "sudden destruction" may not be long delayed now, it is the privilege of His people to continue their service, with devotion to Him and His cause -- encouraging the brethren, and sounding forth the message of the kingdom, "glad tidings of great joy to all people" in His due time. The prayers of the brethren. are requested that God's guidance and blessing may be over His work in the hearts of His people, by His grace. "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of 'love, which ye have showed towards His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.'" (Heb. 6:10.).

## GENERAL TRACT FUND.

To Credit Balance, 1/5/57	£25 10 3
„, Donations ..	.. 666 16 7
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By Free Tracts and Deficiency “Peoples 1 5 Hall Rents, Advertising Circulars, Consolation Cards, etc. ..	.. 40 1 8
General Expenses (Office, etc.) .. ..	49 15 0
Towards Personal and House Expenses	350 14 0 47 2 9
Pilgrim Work ..	.. 50 15 0
Free Books and Booklets ..	.. 5 5 6
Travel and Sundries ..	12 15 0
Credit Balance, 1/5/58 ..	35 16 6
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## Radio Work

ANOTHER year’s witness by means of the radio has been completed, and it is with gratitude to the Lord for His blessings on this feature of the work that this brief review is also presented. A number of our brethren have gladly cooperated in this witness work, and their good help is gratefully acknowledged, in the service of the Lord.

Throughout the year past, a considerable number of enquiries have been received, and many listeners state that they look forward with pleasure to each Sunday’s broadcast and receive help and encouragement in their Christian life. The same radio stations have been engaged, namely — 3GL, 2KY, 4KQ and 6KY/NA — and at the conclusion of each discussion printed copies of all that Frank and Ernest say are offered to all interested listeners as well as other Free Literature.

All enquirers to the radio sessions receive the “Peoples Paper” free for at least six months, and are thus introduced to other literature on the wonderful Plan of the Ages in which we all rejoice. A number of friends have been brought to a full knowledge and appreciation of the truth by this means, by the Lord’s overruling. All friends within range of any of the radio stations are invited to encourage people to listen, especially those who are feeling after the glad message of the kingdom.

No doubt others of our friends would welcome the broadcasts on other radio stations nearer their homes, and there have been offers of further financial assistance if this were possible; however, at the present time, it seems almost impossible to obtain time, even on some of the country stations, so completely are their programmes filled on Sundays. However, it is a privilege to be able to sound a+ witness to the glorious truths of God’s Word over four of the large cities of Australia and extending out many miles into the country in each of five states. The Lord is adding His blessing in the hearts of those who are truly seeking His truth in all sincerity. We are glad to acknowledge continued assistance from our brethren in U.S.A., in the supply of many of the subjects for broadcast, while others are prepared here in Melbourne. It is surely a great joy and privilege to be engaged in the service of the Lord in any capacity, by His grace.

The Radio Fund reveals the financial position of this feature of the work, and the very good assistance, by the voluntary contributions of our friends generally, is gratefully appreciated, as unto the Lord in His service. All expenses have been covered, by the Lord’s providence, the brethren in Western Australia still taking care of the cost of the broadcasts over 6KY/NA. Would our brethren join in prayer for the Lord’s blessing upon the witness over the air, that the results may be accomplished in accord with His good will.

RADIO FUND.

To Credit Balance, 1/5/57	£65 10 1
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4KQ and 6KY .....	60 17 6
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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.**—**No. 7** Harvest Terrace (opposite Parliament House).—Sundays, 3 p.m. and 5.30 p.m.

HELD OVER.

Some messages from interested friends were intended for this issue of “Peoples Paper” but are unavoidably held over till next issue for lack of space.

It is my duty to distrust my own ability, that I may have reliance on Him that is stronger than all.—J.B.

## Consider Him—Lest Ye Be Weary.

“Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds.”—(Heb. 12:3.)

THERE is a natural tendency amongst people to tire of a thing when the novelty wears off. Even the hearing of the truth, strange as it may seem, causes weariness to some after a time. It is the same way with the soldier. It is easy for him to enlist and march forward when the drums are beating and the bands are playing, and enthusiasm runs high; but when the damp, cold weather comes, when ice forms in the trenches, and there is no martial music, he is liable to grow weary, and army life does not seem to be nearly so attractive as it appeared at first. This is true in our spiritual warfare—in fighting the good fight of faith. There are times when all around seem joyous, when the Christian soldiers are marching, and all are stimulated and encouraged; whereas there are times when the clouds hang low and are dark, chilliness surrounds us, ardour abates, and we are liable to get discouraged. It is partly for this reason that the Lord has directed us to “consider Him,” that thereby we might be stimulated and encouraged to press on and to inspire others. He knew just what we would need.

“Lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.”

The Apostle Paul exhorts us not to forget the assembling of ourselves together, and so much the more as we see the day approaching. Why so? Because “this day” has its peculiar trials, its difficulties, its attractions in various directions, and the story of the Cross will likely seem old, not as new as some things, and consequently we shall need to bear each other up. Because there is danger of becoming luke-warm spiritually, it is generally recommended that the Lord’s people meet together, for to do so is stimulating. In proportion as we seek to stir up others in the way of putting them in remembrance, we are thereby reviving our own minds. We can, therefore, see a wisdom in all of God’s arrangements with respect to the truth. In every congregation there is danger of growing weary in well-doing. Well-doing costs something. It means sacrificing. If you are serving the Lord’s cause you are denying yourself in some way. Unless we have some special love for the Lord and for the truth we might say, “This is a very tedious work; I am pressed in many directions.” So many things come to you and to us all, that we might consequently be retarded, and slacken our efforts. The world, the flesh, and the adversary are pressing hard to draw us, not exactly from the prize, but from the narrow way that leads to the prize. They would slacken our zeal and beat our courage down; they would make us faint, and cause us to say, “O, I am so tired; I cannot do any more !” Doubtless we all have had such experiences. If we get faint in body we can rest ourselves, but if we get faint in mind it is more difficult to become refreshed.

What then shall we do in case we get weary and faint in our minds ? The Apostle tells, “Consider Him.” Whom?

We all know that he is referring to our Lord Jesus, the one great “Him” in all the whole world. We are to consider how much He endured without getting faint or weary, without giving up the work which He undertook to do. He undertook to do, a certain work, and so have we ! In some respects we have undertaken to do the same work that Jesus did. Let us consider Him, lest we get weary and faint in following in His footsteps.

Of course, the world is not exhorted in this. text, but merely those who have come into, the Lord’s family, and have taken up their cross to follow Him; those who have consecrated themselves to Him, those who have made a covenant with the Lord by sacrifice, declaring that they will give all to Him and His service—that they will follow Him at any cost. These are to consider what He endured without fainting in carrying out the Father’s will—what He. endured in the way of contradiction of sinners against Himself. This is the very kind of difficulty which we have in our endeavour to carry out the Father’s will. If there were no devil, no sinners, and no trials, this would be a very pleasant world to go through. It is because we have to swim upstream, against the current, when almost everything is going in the opposite direction, that we have such a difficult work. Watch the swimmer ! He must battle upstream against the down flowing current; a moment’s relaxation and the current carries him downward. With us there is a natural tendency, as well as in the currents of thought. and activity about us in the world, to pull us back in the opposite direction to which •we are trying to go.

Let us consider His example, His words, or else we’ may become faint. There are many reasons why we might become so. One of them is that we might consider that the opposition against us is too great. Jesus had the opposition of all those of national influence in His day. He was continually misrepresented, until finally the slanders culminated in His being called a profane person, one who had spoken blasphemies against God, who had said that He was like God, and was as great as God. This was a part of the charge against Him. Although the accusation was not true, nevertheless He endured it, even though He had power to stop it. If He could cast out demons and open the eyes of the blind, then surely He could have done something to change things in His own case. Why, then, did He not do it? Because He was doing the Father’s will, and it was the Father’s will that He should bear witness to the truth, and demonstrate His loyalty in connection with it. Is it not the same with us? But why does the Father care about our loyalty ? Because He is seeking a

certain class for a certain purpose. In Jesus' case, He was seeking one to be the Head of the Church. In our case, He is selecting those who will be members of the Body. He has a great plan which contemplates the overthrow of sin and the blessing of all the families of the earth; and He is now looking for those who are in sympathy with all His plans and arrangements. He is seeking for those who would rather suffer death than violate His word or shrink from doing His will.

This is our glorious position, and we are considering One who never made a mistake in carrying out the Father's will. Yet He suffered as though He had made a great many serious mistakes. He suffered as a disloyal person, although He had always been most loyal. The Jews declared that He had no patriotism at all, yet He was loyal to His own nation in every respect. As Jesus said, "They hated Me without a cause,"

Turn these things over in your mind ! Consider Him ! This kind of suffering is necessary, for the Father would not be wise in exalting to such a high position anyone who was not thoroughly loyal. He could not give even His own Son the divine nature without a thorough testing. Our Lord, as a new creature, was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. He was not tempted as a fallen man. The temptations which come to the new creature are different from those which come to the sinner.

Jesus was tempted to grow weary and faint in His mind. This was one of the ways through which special temptations from Satan were placed before Him. Satan told our Lord that He would get rid of these difficulties if He would cooperate with him, and would avoid those things which would necessarily come to Him if He should continue in the way marked out by Jehovah. Our Lord's answer was, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" Another temptation was to show what great power He had received as a spirit-begotten son, to use this power either to gratify His own natural appetite or to make a display before the people. So it is with those of us who may wish to do things in a showy way, instead of in the humble way marked out for us. We may expect to have the same temptations that our Lord had. Therefore we should be on guard that we may prove loyal to the Father.

"If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him." The reason why the Father is so careful in making the selection of the Church Class is that they are to reign. He could not take hypocrites or any disloyal ones, or even careless ones, to be rulers and teachers of the people in the coming kingdom. He would not select those who had not resisted sin. He must select those who had first learned humility before He could use them to teach humility to others. God desires such a company of priests and judges to be associated with His Son for a thousand years, in ruling and blessing the world, as will prove faithful under all circumstances—those in whom He can place absolute confidence, who have been tested and found faithful. This is the reason that He tests and proves, during this Gospel Age, everyone whom He will receive for that future work.

The call of this Gospel Age is therefore one to sacrifice. God does not hide this fact from us. He does not call us to simply stand up and say that we wish to be followers of Jesus. No ! Our Lord says, "If any man will be My disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." There is no deception about the matter. If we have been deceived it is our own fault. The Old Testament says the same thing: "Gather My saints together unto Me; those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." Whoever would follow Jesus must prove his faithfulness by his willingness to sacrifice.

In the past, false doctrines confused us, but now "we see Jesus," we see what He accomplished, and how He endured without growing weary or giving up. It makes our course plain when we consider Him. We sometimes say that we have not been careful enough in this or that matter, and have consequently made some mistakes. We can often find some fault in ourselves, thus demonstrating that we are partly to blame for our suffering. In our Lord's case it was different. He received the slanders, the misrepresentations, and everything else that came against Him, without having any fault in Him at all. "He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners"; still, He endured. We, though following in His footsteps, have not as much to endure as had the Master.

We are also to consider the outcome. While the Father let Jesus die on the cross as a malefactor, yet He did not let our Lord go permanently, but kept His promise to raise Him from the dead. We have the promise that, as the Father raised up Jesus from the dead, so also will He raise those up who are found worthy by being found faithful unto death. In raising up Jesus, the Father has given us a testimony to His faithfulness. In the case of Jesus, no one had set Him an example. It was all by faith with Him; none had gone before. With us it is different. Besides, we have not so much to lose as had our Lord. However, if we trust God He is faithful to keep us and to do what He has promised—to raise us up with our Head. Consider what great things God has done for His Son. Consider also that He has promised us a share in our Lord's glory if we be found faithful. It is amazing, almost beyond conception ! Unless God had made it plain we would not have been able to receive it. It has, however, been stated over and over again in so many different ways, that there is no room for doubt. How wonderful it all is!

Consider Him! Consider that God has highly exalted Him! Consider what a great privilege has been afforded us of walking in His footsteps, especially as our lives are so imperfect, so unsatisfactory, even to ourselves, and as life is all that we have to give. What a thought that God will count our little sacrifice as a part of that which Jesus gave! We are to be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, “to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed at the last time.” Then to think that we are in the last time now! We are right at the close of the Age. The evidences of our day denote this, although the world in general does not understand these signs of changing dispensation. “None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand” (Dan. 12:10).

How carefully the people of God, therefore, should weigh their thoughts and deeds. “Seeing that these things are to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God?”

According to His promise we look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless in His sight. Ye, therefore, beloved, knowing these things beforehand, beware lest being carried away by the error of the wicked ye fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and for ever. Amen.” (2 Pet. 3:11-18.)

In view of what we see ahead of us as sharers with Jesus of His glory, honour and immortality, we should be leading holy lives. We should be living in the future rather than in the past. Do not think too much of the past. Let us not live in the past and dwell upon our mistakes and shortcomings, and thus be cast down, but let us believe that “if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). And we should have such an appreciation of these mercies and blessings of forgiveness as to show it forth in our conduct.

Let us give heed more and more to the suggestion of our text, and consider Him whom the Father has so highly exalted. Let us remember that He has called us with the same high and heavenly calling and has promised to help us all the way through. If we remember this we shall cease to be weary and faint, and shall become strong in the Lord and the power of His might; we shall go on from grace to grace, from glory to glory; we shall be transformed by the renewing of our minds, more and more proving what is ‘that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Then, finally, we shall attain unto the glorious things which He has in reservation for those who love Him more than parents, or children, or self, or any other person or thing.

“Hold on thy way with hope unchilled,  
By faith and not by sight;  
And thou shalt own His word fulfilled—  
At eve it shall be light.”

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