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Lessons in the School of Christ.

(Convention Address.)

“Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore leaving the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection.”— Heb. 5:4; 6:1.

LET us call to mind the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, which are repentance from dead works and faith toward God—that is, faith in God’s provision for our redemption from dead works and faith in the cleansing power of the blood of Christ, releasing us from the condemnation that is on the world, thus bringing us to the condition of heart whereby God can accept us as sons in His great family, being no longer castaways, but redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

Having attained this standing before God and presented ourselves unreservedly to Him, we have been baptised into Christ, and as we progress in His school and seek to cast off all the works of sin, we have much assistance from the Word of God. That Blessed Word, it is our meditation, as the Psalmist says: “O how I love Thy law it is my meditation all the day. Thou through Thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies. . . . I understand more than the ancients because I keep Thy precepts. . . . I have not departed from Thy judgments: for Thou hast taught me. How sweet are Thy Words unto my taste! . . . Through Thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.” (Psa. 119:97-104.)

Let us think upon the precepts of the Lord. In Matt. 22:36-40 we read that one of the Pharisees asked the Master, “Which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all Thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

These commandments are very comprehensive; they embrace the very thoughts and intents of the heart and represent the very essence of justice to the Lord God and to our fellow man. They are elaborated also by the other commandments given at Mount Sinai. Let us consider them and the extent to which they apply to us, for they are guides to our conduct while in the school of Christ.

Exodus 20:1-17. We read verses 2 and 3, “I am the Lord thy God which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” Egypt to us would represent the world in its present condition of bondage to sin under the leadership of the great adversary, Satan. We are called out of this condition to serve the Lord our God in much the same way that Israel was called out of Egypt. Thus we read in 2 Cor. 6:15-18, “And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? . . . For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them. . . . Wherefore come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

Yes! As St. Paul says in Rom. 6:17, 18, “God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine that was delivered to you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.” And so we are brought out of Egypt to serve the Lord our God and it is only reasonable that He should require our obedience from the heart, or that we should have no other idols in our hearts, as our Lord says in Luke 14:26, 27, 33, “If any man come to me and hate (love not less) his father and mother and wife and children and

brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple, and whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

So we see there is absolutely no room in our hearts and mind for any idol, for any other service, but to serve the Lord our God as a disciple of our beloved Master.

The second commandment says we should not make for ourselves any graven image. Such things may be intended in the first place to lift our thoughts to higher things but the effect of them is to gradually deaden our spiritual senses and so we lose sight of the grandeur of our Heavenly Father’s character, and the beauty of His Word. In Col. 3:1-3 we read: “If ye then be risen with Christ seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above and not on things on the earth. For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

The third commandment says, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. . .” There is much blasphemy in the world to-day, in which the name of God and of Christ Jesus is taken in vain. We could not reverence our God and at the same time indulge in this loose conversation. James 3:10, 11, 13 says, “Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren these things ought not to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Who. is a wise man and endured with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.” But there is also another sense in which we should not take the name of the Lord our God in vain. We are espoused to His dear Son, as St. Paul says, in 2 Cor. 11:2, “I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” And so while in this school of Christ let us learn to reverence His name and thus honour the Father as well as the Son.

In the fourth commandment God says, “Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy.” Many people take this to mean that we should respect the Jewish Sabbath, but to the Christian it is a rest of seven days a week from serving self; he rests from his own works as God did from His. We read in Heb. 4:1, 3, 10, 11: “Let us fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For we which have believed do enter into rest. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works as God did from His. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest.” The marginal reading of the ninth verse of this chapter states: “There remaineth therefore a keeping of a sabbath to the people of God”; which we see is a complete rest from our own works.

The fifth commandment is to honour thy father and mother. In Matt. 12:48-50 our Lord said, “Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?”

And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.” So we should not only respect or honour our earthly parents but those who supply life and sustenance for us in the spiritual realm.

The sixth commandment is not to kill. To kill is to cut off from life and there are many ways in which this can be done. Speaking to the elders, Peter says, 1 Peter:2, 3, “Feed the flock of God which is among you, not by constraint but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. Neither as being lords over God’s heritage but being ensamples to the flock.” Should the flock not be fed they would starve and this would be one way of killing them. Then Jesus had some very explicit words to say about this command in Matt. 5:21, 22.

Jesus also expounds the seventh commandment in Matt. 5:27, 28. “Ye have heard it said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” So we see the necessity of keeping our hearts and minds pure and free from sin’s alloy.

The eighth commandment is “Thou shalt not steal.” Stealing is an outcrop of selfishness and desire to appropriate to ourselves what belongs to another. Thus we see that we might be tempted to steal spiritual favours and blessings and not to pass them along to others, and this attitude would soon debar us from receiving favours from the Lord.

The ninth commandment forbids bearing false witness. It is taking a person’s good name and dragging it in the mire of gossip, thus leaving him poor indeed, while not enriching the one who does the damage. How much better is the advice of St. Paul in Eph. 4:31, 32, “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

The tenth commandment tells us not to covet. Jesus gives us a parable on this subject in Luke 12:15-21. “And He said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.” Read to verse 21.

So, there are rich lessons for the New Creation to draw from the Commandments that were given to Israel. These all deal with justice in our relation to God and man. That being a very necessary element in our characters, it is the very foundation of all our dealings with one and all. Love itself can never displace justice but must be built upon it as a superstructure.

This brings us to the New Commandment that Jesus gave unto us in John 13:34, 35. "A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all know that ye are My disciples." This commandment goes much further than any of the ten, because if we love one another as Christ loved us we will willingly lay down our lives on their behalf; we will be used up in the service of the brethren. Whatever talents we possess they are at the disposal of the followers of the Lamb, to help them in their journey along the narrow way. Read 1 John 3.

It is most important that we learn well this lesson in the school of Christ. Therefore let us take greater heed to the directions of the Word of God that we may receive His well done at the end of our course.

He Goes Before the Sheep.

Dark is the sky! and veiled the unknown morrow!
Dark is life's way, for night is not yet o'er;
The longed-for glimpse I may not meanwhile borrow;
But this I know
He goeth on before.

Dangers are nigh! and fears my mind are shaking;
Hearts seem to dread what life may hold in store;
But I am His—He knows the way I'm taking,
More blessed still
He goeth on before.

Doubts cast their weird, unwelcome shadows o'er me,
Doubts that life's best—life's choicest things are o'er;
What but His Word can strengthen, can restore me
And this blest fact: that still,
He goeth on before.

He goes before! Be this my consolation!
He goes before! On this my heart would dwell!
He goes before! This guarantees salvation!
He goes before! And therefore all is well
He goeth on before.

"The Oriental shepherd was always ahead of his sheep. He was down in front. Any attack upon them had to take him into account. Now God is down in front. He is in the to-morrow. It is the to-morrows that fills men with dread. God is already there. All the to-morrows of our life have to pass Him—before they can get to us. Be of good cheer."

Poems of Dawn.

As mentioned in last month's issue, an edition of the above hook of poems is being prepared. A start has been made with the work, and a sample of the type and setting was forwarded to all readers with January number.

The book will comprise about 200 pages, containing all the poems of the original book, and is to be well bound in stiff cloth covers of good quality with title embossed in gold. It is thought it will be appreciated in this binding, and the price for single copies, post, paid, will be 2/9 (65 cents), with reduction for three or more.

Convention News.

It is with much gratitude and praise to the Lord that another annual Convention arranged by the Melbourne Class over the Christmas holiday period is reported at this time.

These gatherings have been appreciated for many years by the brethren able to attend, and it was freely heard amongst the recent assembly that this last Convention of four days was one of the best ever experienced. The Lord truly blessed the assemblies collectively and each member individually who sought to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

The presence of the visiting brethren once again added greatly to the encouragement received and it was a pleasure for the local friends to welcome more from distant parts than for years past. The zeal and sacrifice on the part of those coming long distances and their love and loyalty to the truth were all contributing factors in making the Convention such a profitable time.

Each day, following the opening praise and prayer and a short address, a Bible Study engaged the attention of the assembly with much benefit to all present. The passages selected for these studies were:—Psa. 23; 1 Thes. 4:13-18; Psa. 45:9-17, and Eph. (i):10-18. Space does not allow a detailed description of the thoughts from these very helpful

Scriptures, but our readers will understand what helpful lessons, encouragement and exhortation would be gained by a careful consideration of these selections from God's Word.

Psalm 23, so well known as the Shepherd Psalm, and expressive of that devotion and confidence which all the Lord's people should have in the "Great Shepherd of the sheep" as they traverse "the valley of the shadow of death" brought much blessing and encouragement to the brethren.

1 Thes. 4:13-18, brought out many important truths connected with the harvest of this age—the "present truth" concerning the first or chief resurrection which takes place over a period of time at the close of the Gospel Age. "The dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together (at the same time—during the time of the harvest, as each member finishes the earthly course) with them . . . So shall we ever be with the Lord." "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth,"—from the time of harvest, the presence of the Lord.

In Psa. 45:9-17, the plan of God for taking out the Bride of Christ was especially brought out, and the expressions used showed the beauty of character which must be developed by each one who will make up this jewel class. Other classes—the Great Company and Ancient Worthies--were also clearly seen as being represented in this passage, and it -will be through these that the Bride with our Lord and King will dispense the blessings to all generations on the restored earth. "Therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever."

The passage in Eph. 6:10-18, was a timely exhortation, showing how the Lord has made provision for all His people to be fully armed against all the conflicts of the Christian way, Each portion of the "armor of God" had an important lesson, and it was impressed that only as each member takes "the whole armour of God" shall he be able to "withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

The addresses were of a high standard; the varied topics covered so many features of Christian truth and all were very helpful. A number of the addresses will appear in this and later issues of "Peoples Paper" so the topics only are mentioned here--"Meditation," "Self-Examination," "Children of Light," "The Power of the Spirit," "Christ Lifted Up," "Songs in the Night," "Effectual and Ineffectual Prayer," "Unity of the Spirit," "Right and Wrong Ways of Service," "The Life of Stephen," "Lessons in the School of Christ," and "If God be for us."

On the morning of the third day of Convention a Baptism Service was held at which a Brother and two Sisters symbolised their consecration to the Lord. We rejoice with these clear members in the privilege of walking in the footsteps of the Master, in fulfilment of their vows of consecration. This service impressed again how solemn and yet how blessed is the narrow- way of sacrifice, made possible by faith in the death of Christ and obedience to God's call during this Gospel' Age. Psa. 116:1215.

The Fellowship Meetings, comprising Praise and Testimony and on the subject "The Joys of the Truth and our privileges in connection therewith," gave opportunity for personal testimonies. etc., and were very profitable, as also was the Question Meeting.

Messages were received from a number of Classes and individual brethren, brought by the visiting friends as well as

received by post, all of which were gratefully appreciated by the assembly. The passage in Eph. 6:10-13, was chosen as a Convention message to be sent to the brethren in every place, together with warm Christian love and greetings from all gathered together in the Lord's name.

The parting hymns and Love Feast with concluding- prayer for God's blessing upon the members everywhere, brought to a close a most helpful time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

Earthly Course Finished.

THE earthly course of another of our dear friends was reached early in the new year with the passing of Sister Fry, of Legerwood, Tasmania. The following words from a Sister closely attached, expresses so fully the sentiments of all who had come to know the departed member.

"Dear Sister Fry finished her earthly course on the 2nd January. Her gentle presence will be very much missed by those who knew and loved her, and they must be many, for love begets love and she loved everybody. Kind, generous, sympathetic and humble, her face even in death bore the impress of her sweetness and leaves with us a fragrant memory. She surely has her wish, expressed some time ago, 'I do wish to see Jesus,' and so we rejoice in the midst of our keenly felt loss and look forward to a joyful reunion, through the merits of our dear Redeemer.

"When she felt some time ago that her voice was failing she remarked to a Sister that perhaps her witnessing was done however, at her burial a good witness was given through a paper written by her father, Brother Kidd, and read by an old friend of his who kindly conducted the service at the parlours and graveside. She was buried at Carr Villa Cemetery and we were surprised at the number of friends who gathered so far from her home and with such short notice.

"We are decreasing but He is increasing on the other side of the veil. 'Praise ye the Lord,' who doeth all things well. We sorrow not as those with no hope, and our sorrow will be turned into joy."

Passover Memorial, 1939.

The date for the Memorial falls this year on Sunday evening, 2nd April. This is the 14th of Nisan, Jewish Calendar, and the anniversary of the institution of the Lord's Supper. This early announcement is made for the benefit of brethren arranging to assemble with others for the Memorial Service.

Bible Class Assemblies.

Melbourne.—Clyde House, 182 Collins Street (near Town Hall), First Floor, Room 7—Sundays, 3.30 p.m. and 6.45 p.m.; Thursdays, 7.45 p.m.

Adelaide.—O. B. I. Hall, Wakefield Street, Sundays 3 p.m. and 6.30 p.m.;

Perth — Druid's Chambers, (The Basement), 459 Hay Street, East,—Sundays, 3.45 p.m. and 6.45 p.m.

Sydney.—Child Study Rooms, 75 Liverpool Street—Sundays, 3.30 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Right and Wrong Ways of Service.

(Convention Address.)

“Seek the Lord and His strength, seek His face continually.”-1 Chron. 16:11.

IN the first book of Chronicles, 16:7-36, we have recorded a psalm of praise and thanksgiving to God rendered by King David at that time, and which was so fitting for the occasion that after the rendering of it, “all the people said Amen, and praised the Lord.”

To come to some understanding of the cause of all the rejoicing in that psalm of praise, it is necessary to trace back certain happenings that had to do with the Ark of God. We find that it was constructed by Moses according to the measurements and instructions of the Lord; that it was a part of the ritual of the Law Covenant. God had given very minute instructions as to the care of the Ark, having commissioned specially the Levites to be the only ones who were to remove it from place to place. We find that so long as God’s instructions were obeyed, the Ark was designed to bring blessing upon His people, and if we follow history down we find, I think, that whilst the Ark of God was in its rightful place and fulfilling its God-decreed mission, it brought the promised blessing; but if, as happened on some occasions, it was taken by strangers, often forcibly in battle, and set up in their midst, it had the opposite result or effect, and that God’s wrath came down upon the people. On some occasions we find that such dire distress prevailed that those who had forcibly taken the Ark hastened to return it again to its rightful place.

Previous to the rendering of this psalm of praise we find that for many years the Ark of God had been absent from amongst the people of Israel. It had been captured by Philistines in battle, but it had brought such trouble and distress, the wrath of God, upon them that they hastened to get rid of it, and we read of it coming to rest in KijathJearim in the house of Abinadab, and there it lay. No attempt was made to remove it for a very long time, until David became King of Israel. One of the first things that he thought upon was restoring the Ark of God to its rightful place. So he assembled together such people as he needed, and he went forward to return the Ark of God. But we find that his attempt was frustrated, and by God Himself. He was not allowed to restore the Ark, because he went about the matter in other ways than what God had specially instructed.

We find the story recorded in 1 Chron. 13, and also 2 Sam. 6, where instead of calling for the Levites, David made a new cart, and set the Ark upon it, and put two oxen to the cart, and the two sons of Abinadab drove the cart. It came to pass as they journeyed that the oxen stumbled in the way, and one of the drivers put his hand to the Ark to steady it upon the cart. In the seventh verse of 2 Sam. 6 we read: “And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the Ark of God.” The special instructions of the Lord had been disobeyed, and punishment followed. So fear fell upon David and upon all the people at these happenings, and they did not continue the restoration of the Ark, it remaining in the house of Obed-edom for three months.

At the end of that time David made a second attempt to restore the Ark of God, and this time he did not go about it in his own way, but studied the Lord’s will in the matter, and we find in 1 Chron. 15 recorded the second attempt to restore the Ark of God. In the second verse we read: “Then David said, None ought to carry the Ark of God but the Levites; for them bath the Lord chosen to carry the Ark of God, and to minister unto Him for ever.” And so we find he went about the work of gathering the Levites. And when he had gathered them, we read, verse 12: “And said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the Ark of the Lord God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it.” The Levites carried the Ark of God upon their shoulders, according to the commandment of Moses and the Word of God, and not upon a new cart drawn by oxen and driven by strangers. And in this, the right way, after such a long time, the Ark of God was restored amongst the people of Israel, and this called forth from King David and all the people that wonderful psalm of praise and thanksgiving.

Now, if we turn to 2 Kings 5, we read the story of a young Israelitish girl who was captured in battle and made a help to Naaman’s wife. She happened to mention to Naaman’s wife how she wished that Naaman might meet the prophet of her people, because she said that if he (lid he would surely cure him of his leprosy. So it came to Naaman’s ears eventually, and he went to find the prophet of the Lord. So he came with great pomp and show, with many chariots and servants, to the house of Elisha. But lo and behold, when he arrived, the prophet of the Lord did not even come out to interview Naaman, but sent out a messenger, telling him to go and wash seven times in the Jordan and he would be cured of leprosy. Naaman was angry. He expected a great show and a great fuss. He said, “Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his band over the, place, and recover the leper.”

Naaman thought that he should not be told to go and wash seven times in the River Jordan. He said, “Are not Aban and

Pharpar finer rivers, in my own land? If it is necessary for me to wash, why not of these waters?" And he was turning away in a rage. But his servants pleaded with him and they said, "If the prophet of the Lord had asked thee to do some great thing, then thou wouldst have done it. So why not do this simple thing, and go and wash in the River Jordan?" So he listened to them at last, and went and did as he was instructed, and we know that washing the seventh time he was completely cured, and his flesh became as pure as that of a child. It was the full obedience to the instructions of the Lord that came through the prophet that brought about his healing; we know that obedience in part would have been insufficient. He could have chosen his own river, but it would have been without the healing. The full obedience to the instructions cured him.

Perhaps we might draw a lesson from these stories—we should be very careful not to be impatient of the Lord's way for us. It is very easy to follow readily where the Lord's will runs parallel with ours. But when we find the Lord's will crossing our own, it is often another matter. We must watch that we do not become angry like Naaman, or we must not, like David, forget to study out what is the Lord's will, and be wise in our own conceits and think that we can guide our life better than God. It is most important that we should be willing to say, "Thy will be done." -We must not only see that we are not openly rebelling against the Lord, but that we are not, like David, trying to do the right thing in a wrong way.

There is no question in my mind whatever of David's sincerity. He was jealous of the welfare of the people of Israel when he began to return the Ark of God to its proper place. But he made a new cart and set the Ark thereupon, and David was upset when his plans could not be carried out; we even read that he was angry. The Lord taught David his lesson, and the next time in following out the Lord's will, great blessing came upon him.

Possibly there is a further lesson too. In Psalm 33:10, one translation reads: "The Lord bringeth the counsel of the nations to nought, He maketh the devices of the people of none effect." We know that the reasonings of the nations of the world are the reasonings of man. We do not say that God has been wholly forgotten at all times by all nations, but it does seem that when men obtain positions of honour in the affairs of the nations that their thoughts are returned to the reasoning of man more and more, and even if they did have thoughts of God, it seems they grow less and less. We must not, of course, belittle the efforts of men who have given all their time and energy in an earnest attempt to better the conditions of their fellows, both nationally and individually. The majority have been sincere, but it is just that point that we might stress, that sincerity in itself is not sufficient, for man works according to his own standard, and not according- to God's righteous laws. So we see that all the well-laid plans of man go aside, not because they are not sound from a business point of view; not because the men involved in them are insincere, but just because God is left out. His way, His plan, is not studied. So we find that it is not in the power of man to so order things that men would benefit in one class or section without bringing suffering and exploitation to another; and we know, too, as we can see it even now, that the forces are gathering together in the world for the day of reckoning.

"The Lord bringeth the counsel of the nations to nought" because they are so busy working things out their own way and not studying the Lord's Word in the matter. We know that before the righteous kingdom of God is set up on earth there must come the great Time of Trouble. Man's arrogance, pride and self-sufficiency, his selfishness, are all factors in bringing about that time when at last he shall have lost all confidence in his own way. He will see all his plans and devices, so well-made, come to nought. Truly, "except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." (Psa. 127:1.) Except the Lord make up the plan, the best schemes never can succeed.

We surely can take no delight in the great Time of Trouble. It may be that we wish it were not necessary, but we come to see that it is the only way in which man can be brought to understand the will of the Lord. So, we can rejoice, not in the Time of Trouble, but in' those things which we can see coming afterwards and out of it. Man will be completely convinced of his inability to rule and govern in righteousness, and will turn to the Lord and study His way. Then it shall come to pass, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain"; when war shall be no more, when the good tidings of great joy that began to be spoken by our Lord so long ago, will go on to completion. Then all people everywhere will sing psalms of praise and thanksgiving to God, just as did King David.

Booklets for Witness Work.

“Where are the Dead?”

“A New Dictator—the Only Hope for Humanity.” “Times of Refreshing and Christ’s Return.”

The above three booklets are now supplied at the rate of 1/6 per dozen, post paid.

“Some of the Parables”—6d. per copy; 2/9 per half dozen; 5/3 per dozen, posted.

“The Plan of God—in Brief”—6d. per copy post paid. “Christ’s Return.”

“Hell, Death, Spiritism”—4d. per copy; 2/6 per dozen, posted.

“God and Reason.”

“The Day of Jehovah.”

“Hope Beyond the Grave”—5d. per copy; 9d. for two; 4/- per dozen, post paid.

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Songs in the Night.

(Convention Address.)

“Yet the Lord will command His loving kindness in the day time, and in the night His song shall be with me, and prayer unto the God of my life.”—Psa. 42:8.

AS David is a type of the whole Church militant, the embodiment of the whole Psalms is expressive of the experiences of the whole Church from our Lord’s clay right down to the end. There are Psalms speaking of their joys and sorrows, their yearnings for better things, their hopes, their confidence, their trust, and their praise and thanksgiving. .

Does God give songs in the night to His people? It would seem so. Great songs are bom of deep feeling. We read: “And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.” They sang an hymn; not the disciples only, but the Lord Jesus with them. Oh, the solace of that hymn; how it must have shown to them the heart of the Lord! It was His most tender and effectual way of parting with them. It was as though a mother soothed her child with singing. What a heavenly glow it would leave in their hearts that night; and in after years! What an example the Lord has set us. You and I should go forth to life’s conflicts in song.

What lovely sweet singers were John and Charles Wesley. I would’ just like to read a few lines of what John Wesley said on singing. “Above all things, sing spiritually. Sing any time. Have an eye to God in everything you sing. Aim at placing Him before yourself or any other creature. In order to do this in the strictest sense, see that your heart is not carried away with the song, but offered to God continually. So shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve of here, and reward when He cometh in the clouds of heaven.”

That lovely hymn we have been singing—“Jesus, refuge of my soul”—was written after a spiritual conflict. It was based on Galatians 2:20—“The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me”; and has caused much comment as to what the author meant. Of course, these hymns are getting mellow with age—it was in the ‘sixties that Charles Wesley wrote this hymn. Those who know him best think that the words should not have been changed. The verse that has caused so much comment—“While the nearer billows roll”—was written for those who arc tempest-tossed with trials, the difficulties within, while others have peace and calm.

Two other great hymns, perhaps the best known in the English language, “Rock of Ages” and “Abide with me,” were written by men of sterling character—deep, spiritually-minded men. They were ministers—A. M. Toplady,

“Rock of Ages,”and H. F. Lyte, “Abide with me.” Henry Lyte was quite a young curate when he endeared himself to his congregation. He had a great struggle against consumption, and it was not long before he died that he gave the world this lovely hymn, “Abide with me.” We know some of the words, especially “The darkness deepens, Lord, with me abide.” Surely this is one of the Lord’s ways of comforting His people! How much more dreary the world would be without these lovely songs, given to us by those who had the love of God in their hearts. Sometimes just a line will appeal to us, and what conviction it brings to our hearts, what a heightened picture of mind, what invigoration of hope. Have we not all found sometimes that we have great sorrows, the toils that come to us sometimes seem never to end; disappointments come so unexpectedly. Oh, if we can go forth with a song, how much more easily these things will be endured!

Music is said to be the speech of angels. It came to pass that when an evil spirit came upon Saul, David took a harp and played, soothing the mind of the king as by the psalm of an angel.

Another sweet singer was a blind lady, Fanny Crosby, who wrote “Safe in the arms of Jesus.”

“Jesus, my heart’s dear refuge,
Jesus has died for me;
Firm on the Rock of Ages
Ever my trust shall be.”

Of this hymn in particular Frances Ridley Havergal, another sweet singer, wrote:

“Sweet blind singer, over the sea,
Tuneful and jubilant, how can it be
That the songs of gladness, which float so far,
As if they fall from an evening star,

Are the notes of one who may never see Visible music of flower and tree?"

What a treasure in the earthen vessel, the love and the light! What a song in the night !

I read a little instance of how a young deaf and dumb girl had the love of Christ in her heart. She became very devoted to the Master, and when dining alone always put a chair for the unseen guest. She testified that if she had the power of speech for only five minutes, she would keep on saying she loved Him.

The other day, when we were down at the express meeting the friends, some of the deaf and dumb were there; they were speaking so rapidly on their fingers and I could not help thinking, What a song in the night? Perhaps not very long hence they may have their speech, and God's wondrous love in bringing it to them.

Many wearisome days were appointed to Job and also to the Church class of which we are members. Now, in the case of physical and mental weakness, the physician orders complete rest, perfect quietness. If this be so with the body, how much more should it apply to our spiritual life. There is quite a ministry in silence. Quietness before God-, that is when He speaks to us. I could not help thinking during those two lovely addresses, "Meditation" and "Self-Examination," what a time for these.

I was reading not long ago a high authority on Frances Ridley Havergal's little hymn, "Take my life and let it be." I told you once before how the words came to her as a rest in the Lord from intense suffering and weakness.

The night this little hymn came to her she did not sleep all night with joy, and really one cannot help thinking how the truth sanctifies. This shows that if we have nights sometimes when we cannot sleep, it may be very profitable to our spiritual life. No hymn has spread through the world like this one—"Take my life and let it be,"—and the author wrote the following words not long before she passed away: "The sense of His lovingkindness to me is simply overwhelming. Several times lately I have felt literally overwhelmed with the realisation of God's kindness to me. I say it deliberately and with thankfulness . . . Every day brings some quite new cause for thankfulness. Only to-day He has given me such a victory as I never had before in a very strong temptation. He lifted me above it in a way I never experienced yet." Oh, I think that is such a beautiful testimony; all her life she was humble to admit her faults.

How often and how much did David write of the lovingkindness of the Lord! There are two little texts which I have selected: "He leadeth beside the still waters," and "He restoreth my soul." It was given to David to know the joy of knowledge of the Lord's protection over him from his enemies. He could write: "I laid me down and slept; I awaked, and the Lord sustained me"; yet he also wrote: "When I think in the night watches." Now, the night watches give the thought of silence, the joys of fellowship and memories of our past victories.

What would we say gives our life's dearest impulse? Well, we would say the love and joys of the Truth, the light of God, but we would need perhaps something else; something to give us greater character-development—more loyalty to the Lord'. There are times when His lovingkindness has filled our hearts with the consuming assurance that His wisdom has provided for our every need; that His power has been equal to every emergency; that our names are engraven on the palms of His hands and we have the assurance of His constant protection—He being for us is mightier than all that be against us.

I was thinking of a portion in the 94th Psalm. In the American Version it reads: "When I said, My foot slippeth, thy lovingkindness, O God', held me up." In the same chapter he mentions the throne of iniquity. This poor man cried and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear -Him, and delivereth them." (Psa. 34:7.)

Do we think of His lovingkindness to us? Was that what David meant? Are not we all sure of his loving compassion? I cannot help thinking of the words of Brother Barton: "I hate my sins and failures, and I fight them every day; but from sin and all its weakness I can never get away." Oh, how wonderfully the great God of love is teaching us that we should remember and rely on Him. Not only in the night watches but you and I in the loveliness of the morning, the glory of the noontide, with quietness, comfort and peace, do we go about our tasks in that manner? Have we rested beside the still waters? Do we pass that refreshment to others as they journey along? How wonderful it is to some, who find themselves craving the things of this world, if they just find a helping hand—someone who can explain to them the deep spiritual things of God. We can give a Word to him who is weary; just a word to strengthen and cheer, a cup of cold water, or a ray of light. My prayer unto the God of Life is to be filled with the holy spirit. "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid." (Psa. 27:1.)

One of the chief characteristics of the unbelief of the Israelites was fear—fear to trust themselves and their own hopes

amid the ever-changing and unlooked-for experiences of the way. They would not trust Moses, their appointed leader. You and I are in the same journey, and thus We have those same experiences, sometimes those disappointments, unexpectedly. Well, if we do not bring the reinforcements of the spirit to bear upon it we will lose our own steadfastness. Let us meet them with such promises as are given to us in God's Word: "As thy days, so shall thy strength be"; "The Lord redeemeth the soul of His servants"; "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it"; "Trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass."

The greatest of all feelings is an utter forgetfulness of self. —Ruskin.

Cannot we, in looking at our neighbour's behaviour towards us, look at the better part of it, rather than the worse.?

—Hare.

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