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Does the Bible Teach Divine Healing for Today?

THIS subject has been brought before the minds of thinking people, particularly in recent times, because of the prevalence of claims that it is a mark of Christian growth and favour from the Lord to receive what is declared to be the outpouring of the holy spirit of God in the last days, in fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel which was quoted by the Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost.

In reviewing Peter's quotation in Acts 2:16-18, it is evident to careful students of God's Word that verse 18—"And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my spirit, and they shall prophesy"-- commenced to have its fulfilment on the day of Pentecost, whereas verse 17 will be fulfilled in the Kingdom Age, when God's spirit will be truly "poured out upon all flesh," but not before. There are various passages in the Bible where verses are out of sequence in order of fulfilment, and if this matter is overlooked in this passage Acts 2, it is very misleading.

The period when God's spirit has been poured out upon His servants and handmaidens only, is this Gospel Age, beginning on the day of Pentecost. It is recorded in John 7:39, while Jesus was still carrying on His ministry, that "the holy spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." When our Lord ascended to the Father, however, the acceptance of His sacrifice was shown by the outpouring of the spirit on the waiting disciples at Pentecost upon God's servants and handmaidens, who were worthy of His blessing. This was the second great outpouring from the Heavenly Father, the first being upon our Lord at the time of His baptism, 3% years prior to His death at Calvary. (See Matt. 3:16, 17.)

Having received the spirit in its fulness from the Father (without measure, John 3:34), Jesus engaged in certain miracles at particular times, as wisdom indicated, to demonstrate the power of, God for the benefit of those who would be His true disciples. Being natural people they needed outward signs to convince them that Jesus was truly the Messiah, the Christ of God; at least, God graciously arranged the matter that way, in accord with His good pleasure.

It is evident that our Lord Jesus performed at least 36 miracles during His ministry; maybe He performed more which are not recorded, but even one hundred or more miracles would not be a great number for one having the power of God at His disposal for 3?, years. Of the miracles Jesus did perform, about 22 were healings, at least three were miracles of raising the dead, and the remainder were of various kinds. It is evident, then, that our Lord's mission was not directed toward relieving the physically sick of Israel in particular; only a comparatively few, really, were healed by Him, as examples of His power, to show that He was the sent One of God, and also to manifest forth, beforehand, His coming power in the Kingdom Age. This is indicated by the statement in John 2:11, when Jesus turned the water into wine. It reads—"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him."

The fact that outward demonstrations by miracles were not to be taken as chief indications of God's favour, even at Jesus' First Advent, is evident by our Lord's words to the seventy disciples, recorded in Luke 10:17, 20, as follows:—"And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them . . . Notwithstanding in this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you: but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

Passing on to the time when the disciples of Jesus received the gifts of the spirit, as well as the begetting of the holy spirit, on the day of Pentecost, the account of that wonderful outpouring "on God's servants and handmaidens" is given in Acts 2. The record states—"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place, and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing, mighty wind. . . And they were all filled with the

holy spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? . . . We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.” (Acts 2:1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11.)

We can well understand the reasonableness and necessity for the “tongues” at that time, as numerous people of different languages were present (Acts 2:9-11), and the result of the proclaiming of the message of the truth in the various languages is shown in verse 41 of this same chapter—”And the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” Then, those with the varied languages would return to their own countries and proclaim the same message of glad tidings to their own people who had ears to hear: this was God’s means of spreading the gospel message that it may, throughout the Gospel Age, be a witness to all nations; to take out of all nations a people for His name.

Thus was the Church established in its infancy by the outpouring of God’s holy spirit, by outward signs for those who were then “babes”, and also by the begetting of the holy spirit for the development of these young in the faith; that they may grow up into Christ and become mature in character.

As time progressed with the establishment of the various churches in the Apostles’ day, does it seem strange that in all the spiritual epistles of the Apostles we find no reference to the outward signs or gifts of the holy spirit? Surely, if the gifts of healing or speaking with tongues were to be an evidence of God’s favour and blessing, we should expect the Apostles to make this very plain in all their epistles. But what do we find? Take the richly spiritual letters to the Ephesians, to the Philippians, to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus, to the Hebrews, and we find no reference is made by Paul to the “gifts” of the spirit. Why the omission? And why did Peter in his two epistles, and John in his three epistles never mention the “gifts” of healing? And why did not Jesus mention the “gifts” of the spirit in His wonderful Revelation to John?

The answer is given in Paul’s epistle to the Corinthians, the letter in which the Apostle especially mentions both the gifts and fruits of the holy spirit. In 1 Cor. 3 we read—”And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal . . . and walk as men.” (Verses 1-3.) Again, in chapter 4, Paul states—”For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us, and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you . . . We are fools for Christ’s sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised, etc. I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.” (Verses 7, 8, 10-14.)

The above quotations reveal the mind of a considerable portion of the church at Corinth; they desired outward show, “reigning as kings”, making a fair show in the flesh, etc. Then, in chapter 12 of this epistle, Paul shows the diversities of gifts from the same spirit of God, and while rightly used in the early church the “gifts” could be a blessing and lead on to the higher spiritual development, this was not the case with the Corinthian church as a whole. They were more interested in making an outward show with the tongues, healings, etc. In the closing verses of chapter 12 Paul shows the various gifts, and concludes—”Covet earnestly the best gifts; and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.”—More excellent, more to be desired, than even the best gifts. (Verse 31.)

The more excellent way is presented in chapter 13 of 1 Corinthians—”Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels . . . Though I have the gift of prophecy, etc., and have not love (the fruit of the spirit within), I am nothing.” Then, in verse 8, Paul declares—”Love never faileth: but whether there be (gifts of) prophecies, they shall fail: whether there be (gifts of) tongues, they shall cease; whether there be (gifts of) knowledge, they shall vanish away.”

A helpful indication as to the manner in which these various gifts of the spirit did fail, cease and vanish away, in the early period of the Gospel Age, is furnished by a Scriptural passage in Acts 8, where it is recorded—”Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. Then Simon himself believed also; and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the holy spirit; (for as yet it was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the holy spirit. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the holy

spirit (gifts) were given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the holy spirit. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.” (Acts 8:5, 6, 13-20.)

The important lesson from the above account is the fact that while Philip was engaged in a valuable ministry of preaching the gospel, and performing miracles to impress the truths of God, he was unable to convey the “gifts of the spirit” to others, even though he had the gifts himself. It required the sending of two apostles (Peter and John) to Samaria, and they were used of God to pass on the “gifts” to others. Thus, as Philip could not convey these gifts (this power being invested only in the twelve apostles), it necessarily follows that when the apostles fell asleep in death, the gifts did fail, cease and vanish away, as Paul declared. However, God’s work by means of the gifts had been accomplished, and they were no longer required for His work of the ministry.

Again, when referring to the gifts of the spirit, Paul declared—“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man (in Christ), I put away childish things.” (1 Cor. 13:11.)

Thus did the Apostle seek to lift the minds of the Corinthian brethren above the condition of babes, that they may develop the fruits of the spirit, and become mature followers of Christ. And of course the epistles of the Apostles were becoming available for the churches when Paul wrote those words, as also the Gospels, in addition to the Old Testament Scriptures, so that the Apostle could say, “All scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Tim. 3:16, 17.)

Of course there are claims that there are apostles of the Lord alive to-day, just as there were false declarations of the same nature towards the close of the first century of the church’s history. In the message in Revelation 2:2, to the church of Ephesus, we read—“And thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.” Likewise, to-day, any claims to being apostles would be equally false, as there have been no more than the twelve apostles appointed by the Lord, Paul taking the place of Judas, as God never at any time recognised the appointment of Matthias which was made by the apostles themselves without any instructions from the Lord. Indeed, the apostles were told “to wait for the promise of the Father,” to be “endued with power from on high” (Acts 1:4; Luke 24:49), but instead they got busy electing another apostle as they thought, which was absolutely ignored by the Lord. So to-day, some religious systems take upon themselves the task of appointing “apostles”, so it is little wonder that they are misled by all manner of deceptions from the Adversary.

The Apostle revealed the deceptions of the evil one, when he declared there were “false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.” (2 Cor. 11:13-15.) It may be asked how Satan could be transformed into an angel of light. Our Lord stated in John 8:44 that the devil “was a murderer from the beginning”—from the time he brought the death sentence upon mankind. Now, however, Satan would adopt the opposite procedure; he would be as an angel of light; he would heal, he would do many wonderful works—he would start a counterfeit of the gifts of Pentecost—to captivate the desires of those who like show, outward signs. instead of the indwelling of God’s holy spirit. And Paul declares that to all who are captivated by the so-called “ministers of righteousness”, to satisfy their own desires, “God shall send a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” (2 Thes. 2:10-11.)

It may be asked: What about the statement by James, in chapter 5:14-16? There we read—“Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” The careful student of the Scriptures, examining these verses, also the context of this chapter of James, will readily determine that the Apostle is referring to sin-sickness and not to physical sickness at all. He is explaining the condition of one who has departed from the spirit of the Lord, being overcome to a considerable extent by the spirit of the Adversary, and felt unable to approach the Lord effectively. Hence, the advice—“Call for the elders”—to pray with and for him, to encourage such an one back into harmony with the Lord, by gaining full forgiveness of sins. The Lord grants forgiveness, but graciously permits other members in Christ to assist the erring one back into harmony with Himself; thus it is—“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

Paul, himself, when suffering “a thorn in the flesh” did not receive healing from the Lord, and surely if any one of Christ’s followers should receive healing by a miracle it would have been Paul. However, the reply to Paul was—“My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” • And the Apostle’s response —“Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me”—is the true example for all followers of the Master. (2 Cor. 12:7-9.) Again, Paul’s advice to Timothy, in 1 Tim. 5:23—“Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine’ often infirmities”—shows that the Apostle did not heal any of the Lord’s followers, just as Jesus did not heal any of His spiritual followers.

Instead of, expecting to be healed miraculously of bodily ills, the Lord’s people realise that the bearing of fleshly weaknesses in all patience and meekness is a means of great blessing in promoting the growth of the fruits of the spirit.

And of course these true followers of the Master have “presented their bodies a living sacrifice” (Rom. 12:1)

, and would never expect the Lord to use miraculous power to keep them healthy; rather, they are on the altar of sacrifice, and after using reasonable, natural means to keep their bodies well, commit their whole course into the

Lord’s hands, while active in His service. Just as Jesus would not use the heavenly-given powers to satisfy His hunger by “commanding the stones to be bread” (Matt. 4:1-4) , so all the followers of Christ must resolutely resist any suggestions by the same deceiver that they can have their bodily ills cured by power from on high.

It may be very appealing to the natural mind to receive promises of bodily healings, but our Lord declared—”If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?” (Matt. 12:26.) The fact is, that Satan’s kingdom is about to be fully overthrown, and he is divided against himself now by appearing “as an angel of light”, to cure the very evils he brought about by deceiving our first parents and bringing the death sentence and all the dying processes upon the human race. Our Lord warned about the deceptions of our very day when He declared— ”There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, inasmuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.’ (Matt. 24:24.)

The time when bodily weaknesses and imperfections are to be removed by the Lord is not yet; but during the Kingdom Age this will be the great work on behalf of mankind in general. Then, the overcoming saints will be associated with Christ in delivering mankind from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. (Rom. 8:21.) To prove over-comers the Lord’s people must continue “to walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7), and this will mean constant vigilance against the wiles of the evil one, especially those suggestions which promise present, fleshly advantages, which, if accepted, would mean a violation of the consecration vows to be dead with Christ, if so be that we may live with Him.

“A Cup of Cold Water.”

“The Lord of the Harvest walked forth one day,
Where the fields were white with the ripening wheat,
Where those He had sent in the early morn
Were reaping the grain in the noonday heat.

He had chosen a place for every one,
And bidden them work till the day was done.
“Apart from the others, with troubled voice,
Spake one who had gathered no golden grain :

‘The Master hath given no work to me,
And my coming hither hath been in vain ;
The reapers with gladness and song will come,
But no sheaves will be mine in the harvest home.’

“He heard the complaint, and He called her name:
‘Dear child, why standest thou idle here?
Go fill the cup from the hillside stream,
And bring it to those who are toiling near;

I will bless thy labour, and it shall be
Kept in remembrance as done for Me.’
“ ‘Twas a little service, but grateful hearts
Thanked God for the water so cold and clear:

And some who were fainting with thirst and heat,
Went forth with new strength to the work so dear;
And many a weary soul looked up,
Revived and cheered by the little cup.’

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While it is our intention that these column be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord’s Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression used, either in the correspondence or in the sermons reported.

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The Great Multitude of Rev. 7:9-17.

A THOUGHT has been expressed that these are human beings restored to perfection, but this view would not harmonise with the setting of this passage, nor with the Scriptures as a whole.

It would seem that the Revelation which John received was particularly in regard to matters concerning the history of the Church—the events of the Gospel Age leading to the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ on earth.

The Lord had indicated in His parables, that the great system of error—the Roman Catholic Church—would develop; that truth would be so polluted and that tares (imitation Christians) would become more plentiful than the wheat (true Christians). In this Revelation given to John symbols are given, which the developments of the age would lead the earnest student to comprehend as the fulfilment of these signs.

Until Christ came, and, by His death and Resurrection, became “worthy to open the Book” (which, until then, the Father had “kept in His own power,”) no one but the Heavenly Father knew what was to take place during the Gospel Age. The mystery was represented as a Book sealed with sewn seals.

As these seals were one by one opened, John saw the visions recorded, and these symbolised certain features of the Gospel Age. The first six seals deal only with features between Pentecost and the second coming of Christ; but the seventh seal gives a full view from the first advent and the death of Our Lord, “as the Lamb slain,” to the time when all the willing and obedient will have been brought up the highway of holiness and presented perfect to God.

It will be noticed that the matters contained in Rev. 7, including the seeing of this great multitude, are observed by John after the breaking of the sixth seal, and therefore as there is no earthly promise held out for any during this Gospel Age—the calling of the present time being to a heavenly inheritance—this “great multitude,” before the heavenly throne, must be heavenly, i.e., spirit beings. The Apostle definitely says, “we are called in one hope of our calling.”

No one is called to be of this Great Multitude; all who come into Christ are called to be “joint-heirs with Him.” “If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” If we have received of His spirit, then “the spirit beareth witness that we are children of God, and if children then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.” (Rom, 8:9, 16, 17.)

However, whilst many are called, few are chosen (for the elect) ; many fail to make their calling and election sure. They allow the things of earth to attract and hold them back, and so they receive tribulation, hard experiences, to help them to give themselves entirely to the accomplishing of the Divine will. Paul says, regarding such an one, that he was handed over to Satan (to get experiences) , so that the fleshly mind might be destroyed, “that the spirit (life) might be saved so as by fire.” These would, while losing the great reward, yet be saved and ultimately gain the victory; but, instead of being on the throne as “joint-heirs with Christ,” would be servants before the throne, probably of similar nature to the angels.

As no one is called to be of the Great Company there is no very definitely plain Scripture statement concerning the class. There are, however, several Scriptures that seem to show that there would be those to serve before the throne. For instance, in the beautiful picture of the selection of the Bride of Christ in Genesis 24, Rebecca, who signified the Bride, had her nurse, who was also brought across the same desert to the same place as her mistress and served her in the new home. In Psalm 45, too, the Bride or Queen in gold of Ophir had “the virgins her companions that followed her.”

There are no hopes of an earthly nature held out to believers of the Gospel Age—the promises are all spiritual. The justified human nature has been presented as a living sacrifice. (Rom. 12:1.) The human nature having been placed on the altar must be consumed and cannot be reclaimed; and it would indeed be a sad thing if there was no provision for all those, who, though at heart loyal to God and loving righteousness, had been overtaken by the good things of earth and hindered by the adversaries — the world, the flesh, and the devil—from being counted overcomers to sit with Christ in His throne.

Paul speaks of such a class in 1 Cor. 3:12-15. They continued faithfully on the foundation, Jesus Christ—trusting in His shed blood for their peace with God and hope of heaven; but their works have been faulty. They have not embroidered their garments (Psalm 45), or in other words, have not zealously prepared themselves by attaining the predestined character (Rom. 8:29) —’conformed to the image of God’s dear Son.” Though their works are unacceptable, and they fail to gain the prize of the “high calling of God in Christ Jesus,” they are saved so as by fire,— fiery trials, great tribulations are permitted so as to assist them to let go the things of earth and overcome those things that hinder. They have “palms” of victory, though are not “crowned”; they serve before the rainbow circled throne instead of “sitting with Christ in His throne, even as He overcame and is set down with His Father in His throne.” (Rev. 3:21.)

The Lord is My Shepherd.

The Prophet David wrote the 23rd Psalm concerning himself; but in his words there is still deeper signification, namely, that Jehovah is the Shepherd of the anti-typical David—The Christ, of which Jesus is the Head and the Church His Body.

In proportion as any are in an attitude of mind in harmony with the Lord they are out of harmony with their present environment, in which the great Adversary is seeking their destruction, under conditions unfavourable for their spiritual development as the Lord’s “sheep.” Foxes, wolves, lions and even cattle have means of defence and offence; but the sheep has practically none. It seems to have no judgment: therefore the sheep is dependent on the shepherd. In other words, it is out of its environment if away from the shepherd. God provided for man’s protection, but by reason of sin the race got into the wilds and became exposed to various difficulties which otherwise would not have been man’s lot.

Those who are the “sheep” will come back into harmony with the Lord. As represented in our text, the Church class comes back in the present time. We all recognise, as the days go by, how necessary is the Divine care. As we come to see the Divine Plan, we see that “all who are of this fold,” all those who will come into harmony with God, will have this care; and that eventually there shall be one Shepherd and one flock.

Our Lord Jesus is the representative of the Father. Humanity, as the Lord’s sheep, went astray. All of Adam’s posterity are now astray. The Great Shepherd sent His Son for the lost sheep. He is seeking them and will ultimately find all who belong to this true flock. He is, therefore, in the highest sense of the word, the Bishop, or Shepherd of our souls, the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep.

To be His sons and daughters is a dignity and blessedness before which all earthly honours and all worldly good disappear.—Charles Hodge.

Brotherly Love.

LOVE of the brethren does not mean merely love for a faction, or clique, or for some of the brethren who have natural qualities which we admire. It means love for all who have consecrated themselves to the Lord, and are seeking to walk in His steps.

It means that if some have peculiarities of natural development and disposition, which are discordant to our ideas and sentiments, nevertheless, we will love and cherish them, and cheerfully serve them, because they are trusting in the Lord, and have been accepted of Him.

We henceforth know them, not after the flesh, with its peculiarities and knots and twists, but after the new nature, as “new creatures.” It means, also, that each of us in proportion, as we discover our own natural crooks and twists, which are contrary to the law of love, will seek to get rid of these imperfections of the flesh as rapidly as possible, and to make them as little obtrusive and offensive to others as possible.

From this standpoint, love will not be forever noting the defects of the various members of the body of Christ, nor holding them up to ridicule of others; but each will be, so far as possible, fully as anxious to cover the defects of others as to cover his own defects; and to sympathise with others in their conflicts with their besetments; as he sympathises with himself, and desires that the Lord shall sympathise with him in his own conflict with his own imperfections. “If any man have not the spirit of Christ (the disposition of Christ, love), he is none of His.” (Rom. 8:9.)

The object of the present call of the Church is to select not those who are perfect, but those who desire and will seek to become copies of God’s dear Son, “conformed to the image of His Son.” That image is love itself, for as God is love, so Christ’s character is love, the express image of the Father. This is the mould into which we are to be fashioned. But God will not impress us into this mould; He will not force upon us these lines of character; rather, the only influences which He exerts to this end are the “exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might’ become partakers of the Divine nature,’ and impress upon ourselves the Divine character of love, and thus escape the corruption that is in the world through selfishness. We are to keep ourselves in the love of God while He causes the pressure of all things to deeply engrave it upon us. (Jude 21.)

The matter is left open to us. We can either avail ourselves of these promises, and permit them to mould and fashion us according to the copy, little by little, daily and hourly, in thought, in word and deed, or we can resist their proper influence, and we can hold the truth in unrighteousness. Those who take the latter course are purchasing for themselves thereby bitter disappointment; for such are not of the kind to whom the Lord will say, “Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things.” The degree of our devotion to the Lord, therefore, will be indicated in the degree of our love for Him and His; and the degree of our love and devotion will be manifested by our activity in conquering self and selfishness in all its ramifications throughout the affairs of life, and bringing all our thoughts and talents, great or small, into active service, prompted by love to God and to His people. Such will appreciate the statements of the Apostle when he said, “We (who have received the begetting of the holy spirit of our Master, the spirit of love, and who have grown to some extent in the knowledge of Him) ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

Cheerful Obedience

“I wish I could obey God as well as my little dog obeys me,” said a young lad, looking affectionately at his shaggy friend. “He always looks so pleased to obey, and I don’t.”

Implicit obedience is our first duty to God, and one for which nothing else will compensate. The farmer must obey God’s natural laws of the season if he would win a harvest; and we must all obey God’s spiritual laws if we would reap happiness here and hereafter.

A Swarm of Bees Without Stings.

B hopeful, B cheerful, B happy, B kind,
B busy of body, B honest of mind;
B earnest, B truthful, B firm and B fair,
Of all miss B haviour B sure to B ware.
B think ere you stumble, of what may B fall,
B true to yourself, and B faithful to all:
B brave to B ware of the sins that B set,
B sure that one sin will another B get.
B just and B generous, B honest, B wise,
B mindful of time and B sure that it flies;
B prudent, B liberal, of order B fond,
Buy less than you need B fore buying B yond.
B careful, but yet B the first to B stow,
B temperate, B steadfast, to anger B slow:
B thoughtful, B thankful whatever B tide,
B just and B joyful and B cleanly B side.
B pleasant, B patient, B gentle to all,
B best if you can, but B humble with all;
B prompt and B dutiful and still B polite,
B reverent, B quiet, B sure and B right.
B calm, B retiring, B ne'er led astray,
B grateful, B cautious of those who B tray:
B tender, B loving, B good and B nign,
B loved thou shalt B, and all else shalt B thine. —Selected,

“ALL THE BUILDING FITLY FRAMED TOGETHER.”

I have been immensely struck with the words, “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God.” Now a pillar stands on the foundation and on nothing else; it has no other support, it does not even lean against another pillar; but because it stands thus straight and upright, it is the means of support to other parts of the building. I have long been praying that God would fulfil this promise to me.—F. R. Havergal.

Correspondence.

Dear Brother—It was a pleasure to have yours of last month, also the “P.P.” and reports of the Convention. It is nice to see that the Church in Melbourne is gathering up so well and the Convention is getting more like to the times gone by in numbers, and the addresses are splendid. I read the one “The Epistle of Christ” and think it is beautiful: others I have still to read.

It is also so good to hear something of those I have not met and of their earnestness and good fellowship . . . With Christian regards to you and to all. Yours in Christian fellowship.

Dear Brother—Warm Christian greetings in the precious name of Jesus.

I am enclosing cheque for to pay my subscription for the “Peoples Paper” and the balance, dear brother, please use to help on the precious truth. The Convention address, “The Epistle of Christ” in the February number is very good; truly we receive the message through Christ as it is passed on from one to another of His faithful followers.

If it will be convenient we would like you to forward, in due time for the Memorial, unleavened bread and wine for six to partake of.

The Frank and Ernest talks come over 2KY very good on Sunday mornings; I have been able to get ever so many to listen-in to them. Do you ever hear from Brother —; if so, please give him my Christian love and accept same yourself. I remain, your Brother in Christ.

Secretary, B.B. Institute, Dear Brother--I came into the Truth in 1914, and was very happy with the dear consecrated friends at -- where we lived. Then we lived in until Judge Rutherford changed the teachings, and which were by no means according to the Scriptures. He became an absolute dictator, and worse, until he died; I could not continue with the Society, so left completely and have never gone back. There were many more of those who knew the Truth and left when I did, and since; you know about where they have got to now, and going further away from the Truth.

We came to — and settled down here. My wife, Sister — passed to her glorious reward since then—faithful to the end. We had a few loyal ones to the Truth here, but most have been changed. There were very few left: I am very isolated, but the Lord is more precious to me now than ever . . .

It gave me great joy to receive from Sister here, three of the “Peoples Papers”, June, September, and December, 1952, also to hear Frank and Ernest Talks; it all rings beautiful and clear to me, as I have been studying Brother Russell’s books all along. I have them all, as well as the Reprints, Convention Reports, Question Book and numerous others. I can see you are carrying on much where he left off, so will be delighted when I receive the list ordered on the attached sheet. You will find enclosed Money Order; I don’t know how it will work out for freight and all, but if not enough, please let me know. Could you include in the year’s subscription for “Peoples Paper” the February issue, if not too late . . . When your next Convention in Melbourne? I may (D.V.) be down there at the end of this year.

Will be anxiously waiting on arrival of books, etc. I have prayed to the Lord for years and can see He is answering my prayers. Frank and Ernest Talks are doing wonders; hope same will continue. May the Master bless ,you abundantly, and all the dear friends. Yours in His service.

Dear Brother—Just a note; I feel that I must write and tell you just how much I am appreciating your Talks on Sunday mornings. It is grand to hear the glorious Truth broadcast, and surely it must bring comfort and help to some who will glorify God in the day of their visitation, when they remember such good works. (I Pet. 2:1 2.)

When one does not get much fellowship it is lovely to hear the Truth, spoken so beautifully clear and convincing. I do indeed enjoy reading, but how great has been the comfort and help to me to hear your little Dialogue each Sunday. With Christian love; Your Sister, by His grace.

Dear Frank and Ernest—I have quite enjoyed the reading of the literature you have sent me; it is really inspiring and it does help one to understand the Scriptures more fully. The Bible is a different book to me. I am trying to serve God, but it is very hard when your family is not with you and they doubt the truth of the Bible.

That little book you sent me, “God and Reason”, is wonderful and has been very inspiring to me. I wonder if you could send me any more of them, I would like the book on the meaning of the parables, if possible, and any literature that will be interesting concerning the Scriptures. Thanking you in anticipation. Your Sister in Christ.

Dear Frank and Ernest—Just a few lines to thank you for the literature you forwarded on to me; it is a wonderful way to explain the Bible—everything is made clear. You see, although I go to our church here, we never hear anything explained to us, and we really come away empty; that is the feeling I always have . . . It just seems as if people are waiting for someone to satisfy their longing, and nearly every one you speak to will tell you they are waiting for something. We cannot get it in our churches and I know I am going to learn a lot by having and hearing your Dialogues. Thank you for sending them to me, and if you have any to spare at any time, I would be happy to have them.

Could you forward me one copy of “Our Lords Great Prophecy”; “The Plan of God—in Brief”; “The Lord is My Shepherd”; and “Peace Desired—War Continues”. These will give me a feast of reading. Enclosed 10/-; anything over, use as you like. Thanking you once again. Yours sincerely.

P.S.—Will you have a paper on “Should All Christians Observe the Lord’s Supper—How Often Should It Be Celebrated?” I would much like to have it, as it is a subject I’ve often thought about.

(A paper on the celebration of the Lord’s Supper is gladly supplied free to all, upon request. —B.B. Institute.)

To Frank and Ernest, Dear Sirs—Will you please send me a copy of the discussion last Sunday, also a copy of the booklet “Hope Beyond the Grave.- Thank you for your very interesting talks and the spiritual knowledge which they impart. May God richly bless your work. Yours in the Lord.

Frank and Ernest, Dear Friends—I listen to your Sunday morning broadcasts with much interest and am greatly helped by your discussions and answers to questions concerning God’s Word of truth.

I would be pleased to receive your booklet “Hope Beyond the Grave”, also a copy of the last Sunday morning’s broadcast I thank you and trust that the Lord will give you strength in your work for Him.

FRANK & ERNEST TALKS

Geelong, 3GL, 222 M. Sundays 10 a.m.

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

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

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