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## Humility.

(Convention Address)

“Doing nothing from party-spirit or vainglory, but in humility esteeming others as excelling ourselves.” (Phil. 2:3, Diaglott.)

LOWLINESS of mind, humility, is a mental quality which enables its possessor to look up with appreciation, not only to God, but also to earthly beings, recognizing their good qualities. The Apostle urges that this lowliness of mind should be in all of God’s people ; this fact proves it to be a quality that demands careful cultivation. (See Rom. 12:3.)

Not all of the Lord’s people are lowly of mind. Some of them think more highly of themselves than they ought to think. Some of them may be proud of having the truth, or of their ability to serve the truth. Any such pride is very objectionable in the sight of the Lord, and indicates that its possessor has a very small mind; for, with a proper estimate of matters, the best of can see that we have nothing of which to be proud, nothing of which to boast. If we have received anything of the Lord, we should be very thankful indeed for the favors bestowed upon us, instead of glorying in something as if we had attained it of ourselves. (1 Cor. 4:7.)

So the Lord’s people should spend earnest effort to cultivate and encourage humility. Some have this quality naturally; but the larger number have to contend against the reverse tendency — self-esteem, self-exaltation, pride—a feeling that they are superior to others.

The lesson before us respecting Christian humility does not intimate that this grace was lacking among the Philippians, but that the Apostle recognized it as being one of the most important of all the graces, and one which required *continual* cultivation, in order to a continual growth in the likeness of Christ. The opening words of this lesson are an exhortation to brotherly love and affection amongst themselves. He says, If there be any consolation in Christ, if there be any comfort of love to those who are in Him, if they have any heart, if they have any mercies—as though he would put them to the test whether or not any would deny that these graces appertain to all who have come into Christ as new creatures. Then, as though they had assented to his proposition, conceding that there is comfort, love, fellowship, sympathy and consolation in Christ for one another, he adds: You can fill my joy full by being thus minded toward each other, and having the mind or purpose or will as a church, the Lord’s will. How grand an expression this is; his joy would be filled by knowing of their sympathy and love for him, not by knowing of their professions of love for the Lord, but by knowing that they loved, sympathized with and consoled *one another*, in the proper fellowship of the members of the body of Christ! This would fill the joy more full than anything else that he could know respecting them. Likewise, we may be sure the same conditions would be most pleasing and most acceptable in the sight of our Lord and Saviour.

The Apostle John had the same thought respecting brotherly love in the church as an indication of its godliness, when he says, “He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen.” (1 John 4:20.)

To this end—that such a spirit of perfect unity and fellowship might obtain amongst the believers at Philippi — Paul exhorts that all shall cultivate the grace of humility, and that in every affair each shall take heed that “nothing be done through strife or vain glory,” that self-laudation and strivings for pre-eminence be thoroughly put away as the greatest enemies to the spirit of the Lord and the blessing of the church. On the contrary each should have that lowliness of mind that can see the good qualities of fellow-members and appreciate some of these qualities at least as superior to his

own. Lowliness of mind does not necessarily signify an ignorance of any talents or graces which we ourselves may possess; but so long as the church is in the present imperfect or tabernacle condition, the perfection of all the graces, and all the talents, and all the abilities, need never be expected in any one person in any congregation. So, then, each one may, if he be of lowly mind, see in others certain good qualities or graces superior to his own and should delight to recognize these and to esteem their possessor accordingly.

For each one to look merely upon his own things, interests, welfare or talents and to ignore those in others would manifest a general selfishness, and consequently a dearth of the spirit of Christ, which is a spirit of love and generosity. In proportion as we are filled more and more with the holy spirit, we will find ourselves interested in the welfare of others. This was the mind, disposition or spirit which was in our dear Redeemer—which He so wonderfully manifested, which we must copy and develop in our characters if we would ultimately be of the “overcomers” who shall be joint-heirs with Christ in His glory; concerning whom God has predestinated that to be accepted with Him to this position they must be “copies of His Son.” (Rom. 8:29.)

One of the holy angels, seeing the prospect of an empire on a tiny globe in a vast universe of suns, with only a little garden and its two occupants as a nucleus on which to start a world, a kingdom, developed the unholy ambition to be its ruler. Since one with angelic powers could develop such a devastating, traitorous ambition, we poor, weak humans will need divine protection to save us from a similar course, and to keep us in that. “lowliness of mind” which was in Him who “made himself of no reputation,” but “humbled himself,” and was obedient unto death.

Pride was raising its ugly head when the discussion arose among the disciples as to which would be greatest in the kingdom. (Matt. 18:1.) In Luke 9:47 we read, “When Jesus saw the reasoning of *their hearts*, he took a little child,”— a child not yet old enough to have been contaminated much by the pride of the elders—and taught them the lesson of humility, a lesson necessary for every Christian of the entire age. “Whosoever shall *humble* himself as this little child (thus taking an active part himself in cultivating this virtue, not leaving it entirely to the Lord or circumstances), the same is the greatest in the kingdom.”

Jesus’ lesson on humility which we are considering seems to have been imparted soon after Peter, James and John had been with Him in the Mount of Transfiguration. This and other similar favors shown them could easily have caused the three to fall under the temptation to, be proud. Heeding Micah. 6:8 would have spared them, and us, that danger. “He hath showed thee, O man, *what is good*; and what cloth the Lord *require* of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to *walk humbly* with thy God?”

The margin of the King James Version has a reading just as essential for our instruction, — “Humble thyself *to walk* with thy God.” For the privilege of entering into His presence, it is necessary to be humble; not, “thankful that I am not as other men are,” but thankful that He is willing to receive me though I am a sinner just as other men are— making me acceptable in His Beloved.

The one who is humble is dead to pomp, foolish show, safe from the danger of pride because of honors the world can impart, which are but fading laurels. That humble one .is without malice, without rivals and competitors—so far as his own mind is concerned; and so he is a Christian that can say, “None of these things move me.”

One of the very greatest of our assistances to humility is the consciousness that “God knows our works and our thoughts” (Isa. 6:18), doubtless even including those thoughts that receive no welcome from us, but flit through our minds to be banished instantly upon arrival; but even so, always an occasion to petition mercy, and confess our undone condition, thankful that He who knows our thoughts also knows “our frame, that we are dust.” This consciousness humbles us and also helps us to be more merciful toward our brethren, our companions in affliction. Pride takes pleasure in beholding the weaknesses of another; humility rejoices in covering “all sins” with the mantle of love — an absolutely essential method for each of us to use as regards others if profitable fellowship with them is to be our privilege; even as essential as it is to have our heavenly Father use it for us if we are to be received into His fellowship.

Closely related in greatness and in kind is the assurance of Mark 9:37, “Whosoever shall receive one of such children. (disciples are evidently meant) in my *name* (regardless of his imperfections or the imperfections of the one who receives him) *receiveth me*.” How out of all proportion is this regard for humility on the part of the one who has not one thing in himself to be proud of, but abundant reason for shame and humility!

As though receiving Himself were not honor enough, Jesus, demonstrating His own humility, adds to the reward for the humility that accepts to fellowship those whom He receives, the assurance that the one who receives Him receives the Father. To us the privilege of receiving Him would be reward enough, but not so to His humble mind. He knows that the greatest of all His blessings is to receive the Heavenly Father into our lives. But that, too, like the receiving of Jesus into our hearts, is dependent upon our being humble enough to receive as fellow-members of the Body those whom

God has invited into sonship. “If we walk in the light (if we are truth brethren, living the truth) *we have* fellowship one with another.”

“If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship (partnership gives the thought more accurately) one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” Evidently if we do not practise such a partnership, the cleansing blood ceases to be ours. Perhaps this is the key to the reason we cannot have our heavenly Father and Bridegroom in our lives if we do not take our brethren into our fellowship, into our partnership. We, without that blood, are still condemned sinners, and such cannot be partners of the Father and His Son. The standing that acceptance of the cleansing blood gives us, must be maintained. There is no entrance into the heavenly presence for lawbreakers, but “love is the fulfilling of the law.” Love never fails to *desire* the fellowship of the ones loved. Therefore, “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another.” (1 John 1:7; Rom. 12:10.)

In this last text we have an excellent means of testing ourselves on two points — humility and love for the brethren. Can we honestly say, and can we prove, that it gives us greater pleasure to see another brother taking a higher place than ourselves in the Lord’s service? If so, we are near the end of the way in Christian development.

Those who fail to learn the lesson of childlikeness will fail to be of those who enter the kingdom. This is Jesus’ teaching. “Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted (think of His saying this to a disciple!), and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 18:3.)

Jesus, “being fashioned as a man, humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross. *Wherefore* God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name.” “He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”—Phil. 2:8; Matt. 23:12.)

In Psalm 113:5, 6, we read,—“Who is like unto Jehovah our God that hath his seat on high, that *humbleth himself* to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth?” Our Lord Jesus Christ is the answer to this question. Yes, Jesus is the One who humbled Himself. So we cannot go to a better one for advice as to how to attain this most difficult virtue. He advises, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart.” (Matt. 11:29.)

Love means service. If our heads are to wear crowns in heaven, our necks must become used to the yoke here. Only the humble will accept the yoke, for that means servitude. “By love serve one another” is the Apostle’s advice. (Gal. 5:13.) The cross was Jesus’ and the Father’s greatest service to mankind.; so it is into service with them that we are invited when Jesus’ voice reaches us, — “If any man will come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” (Matt. 16:24.) The brethren to whom He first said that, thought they were already following Him ; but the lesson of the *full denying* of self, uncomplainingly, yea, rejoicingly bearing their crosses, they had not yet learned.

Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, *with him* also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.” (Isa. 57:15.) Since there is “none that is righteous, no not one,” what else can we be but contrite and humble? And blessed is that attitude, for it will get for us the attention and assistance of the One who can perfect us in holiness. Peter’s advice would never have been, “As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy,” if he had not known of God’s promise of “grace sufficient,” forgiving and assisting grace. (1 Pet. 1:15.) “Though Jehovah is high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly.” And so this very quality of humility will draw from Him His assistance.

Humility is a quality usually found in the truly great, whether they be of earth or of heaven. Pride, the opposite quality, demonstrates an appalling smallness of the soul that harbors it, colossal ignorance of self.

Isaiah 65 describes the glories of the new earth. But the next chapter opens with the assurance that, even that will not be glorious enough to be a dwelling-place for Jehovah. “Thus saith Jehovah, heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what manner of house will ye build for me, and what place shall be my rest?” Assuredly the most ingenious, the most skilful of men could not build a temple here suitable for His dwelling. The truth regarding the temple actually planned for Him is so astounding that Jehovah Himself must be quoted as the authority for its description. “Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God and they shall be my people!” (2 Cor. 6:16.) The glory of God fills these living temples when they have humbled themselves to walk with their God.

The temples built for the Jewish nation made them think they were essential to God’s purpose. Like the Jewish nation, organisations and teachers have a habit of thinking they are necessary in God’s plan. As soon as that thought is harbored, they become unnecessary. “To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at my word.” (Isa. 66:2.) “He forgetteth not the cry of the meek.” (Margin, Psa. 9:12.) “God heareth not

sinner,” but He “has heard the *desire* of the meek.” (Psa. 10:17.) The desire of a humble heart is in line with God’s will.

Some very helpful and beautiful examples of meekness have come to us from the past. Abraham,—“I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes” —a good description of any human being. (Gen. 18:27.) Jacob,—“I am not worthy of all thy lovingkindnesses, and of all the truth which thou hast showed unto thy servant.” (Gen. 32:10.) Gideon,—“Behold my family is the poorest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.” (Judges 6:15.) Our list cannot here be made complete, but Moses and Joshua must not be passed by without mention. And the herald of the new age, John the Baptist, ushered it in with proper humility ; “He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear.” (Matt. 3 :11.) This way of expressing humility has lost much of its force for us who live in, a different day. In his time the vilest of the slaves, the historians tell us, were given charge of the sandals. Jesus’ testimony regarding the Baptist was different, “Verily I say unto you ; Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist.” The Baptist had the humility that God rewards. Paul, classing himself as “the chiefest of sinners,” “less than the least of all saints,” with all his talents and faithful service, set us an example we will need much educating to be able to follow. *Put on*, therefore, as God’s elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, *lowliness*, *meekness*, longsuffering, forbearing one another, even as the Lord forgave you, so do ye.” (Col. 3:12, 13.) We notice how frequently the Apostle in exhorting the consecrated saints to humility and lowliness, couples with it also his exhortation to the exercise and cultivation of Christ-like love; so in Col. 3:14 he says, “And above all these things *put on love* which is the bond of perfectness.”

In 2 Cor. 12:9, 10 we read, and we quote Weymouth’s translation,—“But his reply has been, My grace suffices for you, for *power matures in weakness*. Most gladly therefore will I boast of my infirmities rather than complain of them—in order that Christ’s power may overshadow me. In fact I take pleasure in infirmities, in the bearing of insults, in distress, in persecutions, in grievous difficulties—for Christ’s sake ; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Lest Paul should exalt himself, by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was sent him to keep him humble. Paul’s first desire was to have it removed, and he besought the Lord thrice that it might depart. The answer came that the trial was a blessing; that, in the weakness and humiliation it brought, the grace and strength of the Lord could be the better manifested. Paul at once entered upon a new stage in his relation to the trial ; instead of simply enduring it, *he most gladly gloried* in it; instead of asking for deliverance, *he took pleasure* in it. He had learned that the place of humiliation is the place of blessing, of power, of joy. The danger of exalting himself was coming very near to Paul. Christ would teach what it means to die to self, that Christ alone might live in him; to take pleasure in all that brought him low. Let us try and learn the lessons the story of Paul teaches us.

Let us look at our lives in the light of this experience, and see whether we gladly glory in weakness, whether we take pleasure as Paul did in injuries, in necessities, in distresses. Yes, let us ask whether we have learnt to regard a reproof, just or unjust, a reproach from friend or enemy, an injury, or trouble, or difficulty into which others bring us, as above all an opportunity of proving how Jesus is all to us, how our own pleasure or honor are of small value, and how humiliation is in very truth what we take pleasure in. It is indeed blessed, as one has said, “It is the deep happiness of heaven to be so free from self that whatever is said of us or done to us is lost and swallowed up in the thought that Jesus Christ is all to us.” “Most gladly will I glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me; wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses.” The humble man has learnt the secret of abiding gladness. The weaker he feels, the lower he sinks, the greater his humiliations appear, the more the power and presence of Christ are his portion, until, as he says, “I am nothing.” The word of his Lord brings- ever deeper joy, —“My grace is sufficient for thee.”

Let us choose to be weak in ourselves, to be lowly, to be of no account. Let humility be to us joy and gladness. Let us gladly glory and take pleasure in weakness, in all that can humble us and keep us low; the power of Christ will rest upon us. Christ humbled Himself, therefore God exalted Him. Christ will humble us, and keep us humble; let us heartily consent, let us trustfully and joyfully accept all that humbles; the power of Christ will rest upon us. We shall find that the deepest humility is the secret of the truest happiness, of a joy that nothing can destroy.

In John 13:3-17, our Lord gave us a practical lesson in humble service, by stooping to wash the feet of His disciples. (See especially verses. 12-17.) This is helpful to us, showing how our Lord left us the example of lowly, humble service. How meaningful are His words—“If ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them.” (See Rom. 15:5-7.)

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## Convention News.

IT is a pleasure to report a very profitable Convention season on the occasion of the Annual gatherings arranged by the Melbourne Class over the recent Christmas period. We are very grateful to the Lord for His blessings and favours bestowed throughout the four days of the assemblies, and it was a great pleasure to welcome our visiting brethren from Adelaide, Sydney, Canberra, Tasmania and nearer parts of Victoria, such as Geelong. The assistance given by these visiting friends contributed much to the success of the gatherings, by the Lord's overruling providence.

The Convention comprised three Bible Studies, sixteen addresses by the brethren, and three Fellowship Meetings. The Scriptural passages for the studies were, — Matt. 5:3-11; Isa. 61:1-3; and Luke 12:32-38.

The study in Matt. 5:3-11 helped to impress the favourable position of those during this Gospel Age who were represented by the disciples, who, when our Lord had gone up into a mountain, "came unto him, and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit; for their's is the kingdom of heaven." "The poor in spirit" carries the thought of the oppressed, as a beggar, a pauper, and the distressed. Those in this condition who yield their lives fully to the Lord may feel encouraged by the promise, — "their's is the kingdom of heaven." This will be their reward in due time, as they prove faithful unto death.

"Blessed are they that mourn," — that grieve (the feeling or the act), as in Matt. 9:15; Luke 6:25 James 4:9. "For they shall be comforted." This promise is to those who mourn and grieve on account of sin, and turning fully to the Lord become His disciples indeed. The comfort begins now, by the message of truth and the spirit of the Lord in their hearts, and will be fully realised in the kingdom above.

"Blessed are the meek," — the mild, the humble. See Matt. 21:5; 1 Pet. 3:4. Meekness is the patient reception of injuries with a belief that God will vindicate us. See Rom. 12:19. Meekness produces peace. "They shall inherit the earth." This might have been translated "the land." The Jews were in the constant habit of using the Old Testament, where this promise perpetually occurs, and they used it to denote any great blessing, perhaps as the sum of all blessings. (See Psa. 37:22; Isa. 60:21.) Our Saviour used it in this sense. They also considered the Land of Canaan as a type of heaven, and of the blessings under the Messiah. To inherit "the land" became, therefore, an expression denoting those blessings. When our Saviour promises it here, He means that the meek who prove faithful shall be received into His kingdom, and partake of the heavenly Canaan hereafter. (See I Tim. 4:8; Rev. 2:7.)

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness," — to crave, to yearn, to long for the righteousness which is in Christ Jesus. (See John 6:35; 7:37; Psa. 63:1-3.) "They shall be filled," — satisfied with the green pastures and still waters of truth, — "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." (Jer. 15:16.) The complete filling is stated prophetically of our Lord and all who shall be worthy to be associated with Him in the heavenly kingdom — "In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

"Blessed are the merciful," — the compassionate, as in Heb. 2:17. "For they shall obtain mercy," — those who are so affected by the sufferings of others, as to be disposed to alleviate them. This is given as an evidence of piety, and those who show mercy to others shall obtain it. "Forgive us our shortcomings, as we also have forgiven those who have failed in their duty towards us." (Matt. 6:12, Weymouth.)

"Blessed are the pure in heart," — the clean, without guile. Those whose minds and principles are pure; those who seek not only to have their actions correct, but who desire to be holy in heart, and who are so. Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart. "They shall see God," — to gaze, as at something remarkable. To be His heirs, and joint-heirs with Christ, — "He that overcometh . . . I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." (Rev. 3:5) "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness." (Psa. 17:15.) Time did not allow verses 9-11 to be discussed at this study.

The passage in Isa. 61:1-3 also provided a very helpful study, revealing how fully the prophet was inspired to record the ministry of our Lord Jesus and His church throughout this Gospel Age. The spirit of God anointed our Lord without measure as He commenced His ministry, and the same anointing, according to the ability of each to receive, is the privileged bestowment upon all true followers of the Master, even to our own day. It was well noted that it is the "meek," the "brokenhearted," the "bound," and "all that mourn," to whom the anointed ones are especially commissioned to "preach good tidings," for their blessing and encouragement, — "to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." What a privilege to receive this anointing, and to be commissioned to serve in this way during this "acceptable year of the Lord" — this Gospel Age of

opportunity for the heavenly calling.

Another profitable study was provided by the examination of Luke 12:32-38, so far as time permitted. Verses 32-35 contain so much of encouragement as well as exhortation to "Set our affections on things above." The "little flock" of verse 32 referred to the Bride of Christ. As though the inheritance in the heavenly kingdom could seem too great an honour to some disciples, the Lord's assurance that "it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," places the matter beyond any doubt at all.

Verses 33, 34 taught us that full consecration is required of those who would aspire to this "treasure in the heavens," — "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." How reasonable, how understandable that to be worthy of association with Christ in His heavenly kingdom all thought of lasting possessions or treasures on earth would be so completely out of place.

Verse 35 was seen to be a good guide for devoted service for the Lord. The "girded loins" pictured the readiness of heart and mind for duties of any and every kind as opportunities are grasped, and the "lights burning" indicated the privilege of "shining as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life." (Phil. 2:15,16.)

This readiness and alertness essential for the Lord's servants was well indicated further in verses 36-38. Here the Lord gives us a parable or picture of a nobleman just married and about to return to his home with his bride. How often did Jesus use parables to teach the lessons He desired to impart to all His disciples of this Gospel Age. What would be the attitude of this nobleman's servants "when he will return from the wedding"? Obviously, this was not referring to our Lord's returning from the marriage to His Bride. No; the servants of the lord or nobleman in the parable would be most attentive, "that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately." Yes, indeed; "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching" — prepared and ready to do their master's bidding to the full. However, what a surprise for the servants! Instead of being called on to serve at that time, "verily I say unto you, that he (the lord) shall gird himself and make them (the servants) to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them."

The teaching of this parable is undoubtedly expressing the blessing and favor of receiving the feast of truth which our Lord has been and is still serving to His watchful servants during these "days of the Son of man," — to train them to serve the same truths to others during this harvest of the age. How impossible it is to fit this important teaching into any other view of our Lord's return than that He is present during this end of the Gospel Age, serving His servants with the meat in due season, as revealed again in Luke 17:37, — "Wheresoever the body (food) is, thither will the eagles (alert, sharp-eyed Christians) be gathered together." (Note also Dan. 12:12.) The Lord summed up the meaning of His parable in verse 40 of this 12th chapter of Luke, — "Be ye therefore ready also; (as illustrated in the parable), for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not."

The addresses by the brethren were instructive and helpful generally, the subjects being: "Address of Welcome"; "The King's Daughter All Glorious Within"; "Why We Believe in the Resurrection"; "The Lord's Choice"; "Established According to the Gospel"; "The Trademark of the Lord"; "When a Man Dies"; "Consider"; "Into His Image"; "Jesus of Nazareth Who Went About Doing Good"; "God's Wisdom in Creation"; "And Glory Shone Around"; "The Constraining Love of Christ"; "The Hidden Life"; "Seeing We Have This Ministry"; and "Humility."

Enjoyment was gained also from the Fellowship Meetings. At the first of these, messages were gladly received from Classes and brethren located in various parts of Australia and overseas, conveying greetings and Christian love to all assembled at Convention, and these were all greatly appreciated. Praise and Testimony to the Lord's loving care and favors throughout the past year was also expressed during these sessions, and it was encouraging to hear at first hand the personal experience of God's blessing and keeping along the Christian way. The session of "Hymns We Love" was also refreshing as a considerable number of lovely hymns were sung and the rich sentiments had a hallowed effect upon us all; the children also entered in happily during this session. At the last fellowship meeting the Convention message to all our brethren and friends everywhere was selected, being the words of Luke 12:32-38, and is sent with warm Christian love and greetings in our Lord's name.

On the last evening the closing session was the Love Feast, at which all the brethren, including a number of our Polish friends, joined in the lovely hymn, "Blest Be the Tie That Binds," while filing past each other to shake hands and partaking of the symbol of cake. The hymn "God Be With You" and the closing prayer of praise and thanksgiving to our Heavenly Father, and asking His guidance and blessing upon all His dear children brought our 1962 Christmas Convention to a fitting conclusion.

## Convention Notes.

Notes covering the Melbourne Christmas Convention have been prepared by one of our brethren, and are available free upon application to this office.

## Adelaide Easter Convention.

The brethren of the Adelaide Class extend a cordial invitation to all friends able to attend their Easter Convention to be held this year (D.V.) on 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th of April, in Alfred Masonic Hall, 68 Waymouth Street, Adelaide. Further information from the secretary — Mrs. H. Bartel, 10 Winston Avenue, Clarence Gardens, Edwardstown, South Australia.

## Passover Memorial, 1963

The anniversary of the Memorial of Christ's death falls this year on the evening of Sunday, 7th April. This date will therefore be the appropriate time to observe the celebration in accord with our Lord's request — "This do in remembrance of me."

Friends desiring the unleavened bread and wine may procure these free from this office; early application should be made, stating the number of persons to be served.

## Memorial Services.

MELBOURNE. — Sunday, 7th April, at 6.30 p.m., at Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond (near Church Street.)

ADELAIDE. — Sunday, 7th April, at 6.30 p.m., at Eagle Chambers (First Floor, Room 8) 7 Pirie Street.

PERTH. — Sunday, 7th April, at 6 p.m., at 7 Harvest Terrace (opposite Parliament House).

Sydney.—Sunday, 7th April, 7 p.m., at 87 The Boulevarde, South Strathfield. (Visitors should leave Strathfield Station on the left side coming from the city, and 87 is on the right of Boulevarde, only 10 minutes walk, or the 4th bus stop from the station).

A very good Oxford Bible, with References, India paper, thumb index, Brevier clear type, Persian Morocca binding, is now available at 60/-. Same Bible with Concordance and Subject Index at 70/-.

"Israel in History and Prophecy" is the title of a very interesting and informative 64-page booklet now in stock, priced at 1/- per copy, 1/3 post paid.

## Prayer - Vain Repetition.

Question — In Matt. 6:7, our Lord tells us, “When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.” The Apostle Paul, writing to the Church (Col. 4:2), exhorts that they “continue in prayer.” Again we read of the widow who was heard for her importunity. (Luke 18:2-5.) Is this a suggestion that we should importune? How could we importune without repetition?

Answer — We are to recognise a distinct difference between the “vain repetitions” of the heathen, which our Lord condemned, and the “continuing instant in prayer,” “in everything giving thanks,” in “praying and not fainting,” acts which our Lord and the Apostles enjoined. (Rom. 12:12; Luke 18:1, etc.) This difference the Lord illustrated in the case of the woman who came to a judge repeatedly, asking that he avenge her of her enemy. Although the judge was not a man who would act justly, yet he did her justice on account of her persistence. In commenting upon her course, our Lord said that if an unjust judge be moved on account of importunity to do justice, how much more a just judge!

The thought illustrated in the parable is that of a person who cried to the Lord that injustice is being done — as with the Church at the present time. We all realise that we are suffering injustice. We cry, “O Lord, deliver us! deliver us from the Adversary!” Will God never deliver the Church? For nineteen hundred years the Church has been praying thus; and God has not answered this prayer. Will He never answer? Our Lord intimates that we should not lose faith. We are to have full confidence in His promises. Injustice will not forever obtain. The time will come, we are told, when Satan shall be bound and deceive the people no more. — Rev. 20:2,3.

Therefore we do right to pray, “Thy Kingdom come,” week after week, year after year, century after century. To grow faint or grow weary in prayer would not be right. The proper course is to believe that God will fulfil what He has promised; and that all will come out in harmony with His will. The same lesson is taught in Luke 11:5-8.

This is all very different, however, from the “vain repetitions” which our Lord condemned. But we do not think that our Lord desires us to use repetition in our prayers. Some people use the words, “Our Father,” or “Our God,” or “Heavenly Father” more frequently than would seem to be good form — even using them in every fourth or fifth sentence. Their prayer would sound better on earth if they did not use these repetitions; though, no doubt, the repetitions would be understood in Heaven; for these people seem to be as earnest as others.

But the repetition which our Lord had in mind and which are specially reprehensible in the Lord’s sight are formal prayers merely. To illustrate: the Chinese are said to have a praying wheel, which enables them to make many “vain repetitions” without the trouble of speaking a word.

It would seem that our Catholic friends also are given to a great deal of repetition in prayer. They repeat, “Hail Mary!” and believe that God will save them from suffering in purgatory for their repetitions. Some of the poor creatures say, “Hail Mary!” as often and as fast as they can.

So with the Mohammedans. They say, “Great is Allah! Mohammed is His Prophet! Great is Allah! Mohammed is His Prophet!” again and again. We do not know what good they are doing, for they are surely wasting a great deal of valuable time to no purpose. We do not wish to make light of these people nor of their conduct. But we are bound to think that with those who are intelligent such prayers are only form. With those who are not intelligent it is different. We believe that they are sincere; and so our course is to think sympathetically of them, but not to do as they do, not to pray as they pray. Prayer in private, in our own room, may be as long as we please; but prayer in public should be short and to the point. (Reprinted from Question Book.)

The advice given above that prayer in public should be short and to the point would seem most appropriate. This could well be observed at our Conventions and regular Class gatherings, and indeed, in our homes where perhaps only two or three may pray together as the Lord’s people. When public prayer is lengthy an amount of repetition seems unavoidable, and this our Lord would encourage us to avoid.

It would seem that long prayers in some classes have developed over the years, perhaps because an elderly member had set this example, and younger members coming in have felt that the same long prayers at the meetings were expected of them. There can be no doubt that our Lord’s model prayer sets an excellent pattern, not only in its composition, but in its length, as a guide to our prayers in public. While we are to seek the guidance of the Lord’s spirit in our prayers, we are to avoid being carried away in our earnestness, and so lose all sense of time, remembering that prayers in public are on behalf of an assembly, or the one or two with whom we pray, and not our own private prayers to the Lord.

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## MOTTO FOR EACH DAY “THREE GATES OF GOLD”

“Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.”

“Let, the words of my mouth be acceptable in thy sight.”

Let every thought thy lips would utter pass  
three gates of gold

But, if through these it fails to pass, then  
let it not be told;

And o’er each gate in silver letters written.  
thou wilt find,

Above the first one, “Is it true?” the second, “Is it kind?”

And “is it necessary ?” o’er the third one  
and the last.

Then guard thy thoughts, let none escape, save those these gates have passed!

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