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Why is the World Being Ushered Into “A Time of Trouble, Such as Was Not Since There Was a Nation.”?

“And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come.— Rev. 11:18. Isa. 34:1-6; Jer. 25:15, 16, 27-38; Isa. 66:15, 16; Luke 21:24, 26; Rev. 6:9-11; 2 Thes. 1:3-10.

THESE Scriptures refer to the present time, mistranslated the end of the world; properly interpreted, the end of this Age, prior to and inaugurating the New Age—“the world to come.”

Only Jews, Gentiles, and ‘ Saints.

The whole world are Gentiles, according to the Scriptural presentation, except the true followers of Christ and 4 t the loyal-hearted Jews, who are still God’s people. In classing the great mass of Jews and of professed Christians as part of the world, no unkindness is meant; but in order to understand God’s dealing in the present time, nominal Christians, or mere professors, must not be confounded with the “little flock” who have responded to the Gospel Cal!. “Gather My saints together unto Me saith the Lord; those who have made a Covenant with Me by sacrifice”—self- sacrifice. (Psa. 50:5; Rom. 12:1.) If we shall recognise these saintly Christians of every nation and denomination as being the one true Church, “whose names are written in heaven,” and if we shall recognise all others as Gentiles, we shall be getting the eyes of our understanding into true alignment with the mind of God as expressed in the Bible.

It is worthy of note that throughout the Scriptures the great masses of India, China, etc., are comparatively ignored. Because they have not come into particular contact with God’s Messages they are not so particularly included in the judgments, chastisements, troubles, foretold to be coming upon the earth at the close of this Age. In other words, unintentional ignorance of God is not a crime to be punished, but a defect to be corrected in due time by the blessings of Messiah’s Kingdom.

Wrong Thoughts of God’s Wrath.

When thinking of the wrath of God coming upon the world, we are not to think of the Almighty as having exercised great patience for centuries and finally losing His temper and wrecking vengeance upon His creatures. Such a thought might be gathered from some of the expressions of the Scriptures, because of adaptation of language to human comprehension, and more or less loss of the true sentiment in translating and through the mental gloss of the translators.

In any event let us remember that this wrath of God and the judgments coming upon the world are wholly different from the legends—namely, eternal torture at the hands of demons, taught us by our creeds. Instinctively, a part of the dread we have of death in every form—by war, famine, and sickness—is the fear of that eternal torture nightmare thrust upon us from childhood, inculcated by all the creeds of Christendom, but without Bible foundation when the latter is properly translated and rightly understood.

Furthermore, we should remember that while God has foretold the troubles of the Day of Wrath for centuries and indicates that He will have to do with their precipitation upon the world, nevertheless elsewhere He also shows us that these troubles really come from ourselves, that they are the outgrowth of human wrongdoing, and that these dire penalties of sin would have wrecked our social and religious fabric long, long ago, had not Divine Providence defended us—holding back the storm of human passion and avarice, and permitting it to come only now, in the end of the Age,

at the time when Divine Providence has Messiah's Kingdom in full readiness to take control. Just so soon as the storm of human passion shall have taught humanity its needed lesson and shall have liquidated the long standing accounts, Messiah's Kingdom, with a clean slate, will be inaugurated.

Accounts Yet to be Squared.

In Jesus and in His saintly followers throughout this Gospel Age, the world has had God's Cause, the cause of righteousness and truth, more or less clearly manifested. Every persecution against these members of the Body of Christ is a crime against God and against righteousness. Of such sufferings the Apostle says, "If any suffer as a Christian, let him glorify God on this behalf; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth on such."

As a blessing rested upon all the Lord's faithful people who have suffered unjustly, so correspondingly a Divine curse, or penalty, has rested upon all persecutors of these, their responsibility being gauged by the degree of their knowledge, and their punishment proportionate. On the books of Justice, however, God represents that the lives of all His faithful ones cry out for vengeance; and that while mercy comes to all mankind through the sacrificial death of the Saviour, this does not alter the fact that Justice calls for punishments for crimes more or less wilful and therefore not included in the Saviour's atonement.

Thus it was in the end of the Jewish Age, which may serve us as a pattern, or illustration of the ending of this Age. St. Paul, writing of that time, says, "Wrath is come upon this people to the uttermost, that all things written in the Law and the Prophets concerning them should be fulfilled." Notice, however, the vast difference between these Bible judgments and the eternal torment judgments falsely declared by our creeds, which indirectly tell us that every Jew at death goes to eternal torment because he is not a Christian.

But the Scriptures declare that the punishments upon the Jews which culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 were, some of them, for sins committed long before. Notice Jesus' words, "The blood of all the Prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, shall be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, who perished between the altar and the temple."—Luke 11:50, 51.

Wherein was the justice in exacting all that of the people living in the close of that Age? We reply that those people had far more responsibility than all who preceded them. They had a great Light amongst them, shining from Jesus and the early saints. In their treatment of these light-bearers, crucifying them and variously injuring them, upon that last generation of the Jewish Age "wrath came to the uttermost."

"The Recompenses of Zion."

The Bible intimates that similar aggregations of punishment are to be expected in the end of this Gospel Age. The great Time of Trouble, or Day of Wrath, is the "recompense of the controversy of Zion"—the saints, the true Church. For eighteen hundred years has Jesus prophetically declared that the Kingdom class would suffer violence; and the violent have usurped the place of the true by force.

All the while, the violent have outwardly been posing as the True Church of Christ, while the saints of God in every epoch and in every century have suffered—"as deceivers and yet true; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things." (2 Cor. 6:8-10.) "Heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17) they have been counted "the filth and offscouring of the earth," "of whom the world was not worthy."

But the sin of their persecutors must be liquidated, even though the persecutors themselves will all eventually be forgiven. From this viewpoint, the "Time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation," and which is now beginning to be consummated, will be the squaring of God's accounts with the world, preparatory to handing the Kingdom over to Messiah for the blessing of all.

As illustrative of this principle, note the lesson of Rev. 6:9-11. The cry is,—"How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" The message for all these martyrs of Jesus was: Wait a little season, the vengeance will come, but not until all of this class shall have experienced their share of "the sufferings of Christ."

To these martyrs the suffering brought polishings of character, testings of faith, Divine approval, and an increased glory on the spirit plane as members of the Bride of Christ—the blessings to be given to them in the First Resurrection—the chief Resurrection, referred to by our Lord in Rev. 20:6. Then will be accomplished the binding of Satan; and then Messiah's Kingdom, with all its blessed and uplifting influences, will bless the whole world with the long-promised "Restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy Prophets since the world

began.”—Acts 3:20-23.

Modern Persecutions Differ.

We do not say that the persecutions of the last members of the Body of Christ will be by literally cutting their tongues out, by literally burning them at the stake, by literally crucifying them or beheading them, as was done with some of the other members of the Body in the past. In our day there is a more refined process often used. Some are gibbeted by the pulpit, some are “roasted” in the public press, some have their tongues cut out in the sense that their words are misrepresented, and that they are denied a hearing. And yet there are things in the Scriptures which seem to imply that there may be a literal destruction of God’s faithful people in the end of this Age, as well as a figurative one. But the Lord’s grace will be sufficient for them; and the more they shall suffer for His sake, for the Truth’s sake, the greater will be their glory and station in the Kingdom.

Who shall be punished for these crimes against the Saints of God? We answer, Babylon; and Babylon signifies what is to-day known as “the Christian world”—a very anomalous term; for the world has no identification with Christianity nor Christianity with the world. The so-called “Christendom” of our day corresponds exactly to the Jewry of Jesus’ day. Then Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, were banded together with the Sadducees and the Herodians, the worldly and infidel politicians. Their object was the perpetuation of their own institution, regardless of God’s arrangement. So here, the civilised world, misnaming itself “Christ’s Kingdom,” is intent upon the preservation of the great Babylon which it has constructed, and willing to do anything to avoid its foretold destruction.

Hypocrisy the Greatest of All Sins.

Taking into account the persecutions endured by God’s saints throughout this Gospel Age, there must be a heavy account on the book of Justice to be settled. Sainly people in and out of all denominations have suffered; and Jesus’ words still stand true—namely, that whosoever would give to the least of His followers even a cup of cold water would not fail of reward, and that injury to even the least of these would be punished.

Are we asked what are the special sins of our day? We reply that here, as in Jesus’ day, hypocrisy is the greatest of all sins. There were thefts, murders, adulteries, and injustices of various kinds in Jesus’ day; yet while denouncing all these in spirit, He practically ignored them all in His denunciations of the hypocrisy of the religious rulers of His time. We believe that His judgment of so-called “Christendom” to-day is the same.

There was a time when the world ignorantly thought that the kings of earth were ruling as part of Christ’s Kingdoms. There was a time when men really believed that their everlasting destiny was in the hands of the clergy, Protestant and Catholic, and that unless they had the good offices of these in baptism, marriage, funerals, etc., they would be eternally tormented; but that day has passed—a more enlightened day has come.

Our Bible is better understood; the clergy are no longer deceived. They know that the word “Sheol” of the Old Testament and the word “Hades” of the New Testament represent the state or condition of death, into which the whole world goes—good and bad. They know that these words could not represent torture or fire in any sense of the word. They see God’s character more clearly; they perceive that the kingdoms of this world are merely political institutions permitted for a time, waiting for the glorious epoch of Messiah’s Kingdom to bring in the New Order of things.

These false doctrines of the “dark ages” are bearing a terrible fruitage in the present day. Similarly the teachings of evolution and higher criticism, misrepresenting and blaspheming God’s character, are bearing an evil fruitage. Millions of people have been turned away from faith in a God of Love and from faith in the Bible as His Message, by the monstrous blasphemies of the “dark ages,” as also by those of modern times which the Adversary is ever alert to supply to the more enlightened minds of the people.

What shall we do, do you ask? We answer: Be honest! Be true! Come out of Babylon. Stand free from all such slandering of the Almighty God and His gracious provisions. Stand for the Bible, the Truth, the God of Love and Wisdom, Justice and Power. “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.”

“The Lost Coin.”

A collection of poems entitled as above and composed by the author of “The Ten Camels” is now ready for distribution.

It is a very nicely compiled series of poems on the parable ‘given by the Lord in Luke 15:8, 9, and presents the truth in a very helpful manner.

In booklet form, containing 34 pages and with paper covers, this work is priced at 8d. per copy, post paid; reduction for quantities.

The Passing Hour

Practical wisdom lies in the proper use of time. Such wisdom will be given to him only who realises the awful fugitiveness of the hours of the day. We must think of each hour as of a treasured friend.

What is there in life more awful than when such a one has left us? Regrets, remorse, self-reproaches that we did not use him better, all are in vain. Use, then, each hour as though you loved it, and knowing that never will it meet you again.

Not a moment of this precious companionship will you waste in mere idleness. When you are not actually doing something, at least you will be thinking worthily. Nor are those hours wasted in which recreation refreshes and stimulates the energies which at other times you give to your work.

In play, in work, and in thought let the precious hour have the best, that you can give to it. Thus will its passage leave you poorer indeed for the time that has gone but richer for what it gave you in passing.—”Daily Express.”

A Little Light.

'Twas but a little light she bore,
While standing at the open door;
A little light, a feeble spark,

And yet it shone out through the dark
With cheerful ray, and gleamed afar
As brightly as the polar star.

A little light, a gentle hint,
That falls upon the page of print,
May clear the vision, and reveal

The precious treasures doubts conceal,
And guide men to an open door,
Where they new regions may explore.

A little light dispels the gloom
That gathers in the shadowed room,
Where want and sickness find their prey,

And night seems longer than the day,
And hearts with many troubles cope
And feebler grows the spark of hope.

O, sore the need that some must know
While journeying through this vale of woe!
Dismayed, disheartened, gone astray,

Caught in the thickets by the way,
For lack of just a little light
To guide their wandering steps aright.

It may be little we can do
To help another, it is true;
But better is a little spark

Of kindness, when the way is dark,
Than one should walk in paths forbidden
For lack of light we might have given.

To Readers Overseas.

In view of the fact that mails are now uncertain and fail to arrive from time to time our oversea brethren are advised to keep a copy of all particular items mentioned in correspondence, and especially the numbers of Money Orders or Drafts forwarded. This information could then be sent later should acknowledgment of any previous communication not be received from this office within reasonable time.

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While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord's Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression used, either in the correspondence or in the sermons reported, A Cross (x) on the wrapper indicates that the Subscription to "Peoples Paper" is overdue.

This Generation . . . These Things Begin to Happen.

“This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.” (Matt. 24:34.)

THE above words of our Lord, contained in His most wonderful prophecy which covers the whole of chapter 24, are of great importance to God’s people living at the present time inasmuch as it is clearly realised by earnest Bible students that we are living at the very close of this dispensation which also means that the culmination of the harvest period is at hand.

The following quotation from Vol. 4, on the words “This generation” gives the true meaning:—’Although the words ‘generation’ and ‘race’ may be said to come from a common root or starting point, yet they are not the same; and in Scriptural usage the two words are quite distinct.

“Notice that in the New Testament when the word generation is used in the sense of race or posterity, it is always the Greek *gennema* (as in Matt. 3:7; 12:34; 23:33; Luke 3:7) or from *genos* (as in 1 Pet. 2:9). But in the three different records of this prophecy our Lord is credited with using a wholly different Greek word (*genea*) which does not mean race, but has the same significance as our English word generation. Other uses of this Greek word (*genea*) prove that it is not used with the significance of race, but in reference to people living contemporaneously. We cite in proof—Matt. 1:17; 11:16; 12:41; 23:36; Luke 11:50, 51; 16:8; Acts 13:36; Col. 1:26; Heb. 3:10.”

A further important consideration in regard to our text is the correct understanding of the words, “till all these things be fulfilled.” The following statement on this point from “Bible Students Monthly” is enlightening:—“It is generally understood that the word ‘fulfilled’ should have the same meaning as the words ‘accomplished’ or ‘completed.’ But the word used by our Lord does not mean ‘come to pass’ in the sense of being ended; but ‘come to pass’ in the sense of beginning to happen, or beginning to take place.

“One Greek scholar and writer says on this word that the Lord concludes this special prophecy of the tribulation by adding, ‘Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things begin to take place.’ He then explains that the Greek word *genetai* used by our Lord here is a derivative of the Greek *ginomai*, which has a wide variety of meanings, few of which are so definite as the thought in our word ‘fulfilled.’ He further says, The word is *genetai* from *ginomai* and means, to begin to be, to come to be; and is quite different from *pleroo* which does mean, to fulfil.’ In Luke 21:32, which is the parallel passage, we have the former word ‘begin to be,’ while in verse 24, we have the latter word ‘fulfilled’ (referring to the Times of the Gentiles). Professors Young and Strong, in their concordances verify this suggestion regarding *ginomai*. Young shows it to be translated ‘be’—(the verb ‘to be’) 249 times; ‘come to pass’ 82 times, and many other forms which show a present and not a past fulfilment. Strong says *ginomai* (to cause to be; ‘to become’) is used with great latitude. He then gives a list of words which include ‘arise’ ‘be assembled; ‘be’ ‘brought to pass,’ ‘continue’ and many more indicative of a present happening. As an instance we may note a form of *genetai* in John 13:2, which in our Authorised Version is translated ‘and supper being ended.’ It is quite clear from verses 26-28 that supper was not ended but was only just beginning. The Revised Version renders it ‘and during supper.’ The Diaglott translates it ‘as supper was preparing . . .’ What our Lord really meant was, ‘This generation shall not pass till all these things begin to happen.’ “

With the above thoughts in mind we are the better able to determine the true meaning of our Lord’s words in our text. It seems very clear that from verse 15 onward in this 24th chapter of Matthew, the reference is to the harvest period of this Gospel Age. As though to impress the true meaning of verse 15, as a guiding point in this great prophecy, our Lord added the words: “Whoso readeth, let him understand.” It was following the Reformation period that “the abomination of desolation, standing in the holy place,” was discerned, and the exhortation of verse 16 was understood—“Then, let them that be in Judea (the systems of Christendom generally) flee into the mountains” (to the Kingdom of the Lord). In other words, the harvest work of dividing the wheat from the tares was to proceed (Matt. 13:30), and the various signs given in the following verses (so that the Lord’s true people may clearly discern the presence of Christ as the Chief Reaper) would constitute “all these things” which would “begin to come to pass” within a generation epoch in the close of the age. Just as Matt. 23:36 refers to the generation living at our Lord’s first advent, in the close of the Jewish Age, so our text applies to the generation living at our Lord’s second presence, in the close of the Gospel Age.

It is suggested that a “generation” might be reckoned as equivalent to a century (practically the present limit) or one hundred and twenty years, Moses’ lifetime and the Scripture limit. (Gen. 6:3.)

The work of harvest undoubtedly had a beginning in the early part of last century; there was a trimming of lamps and going out to meet the Bridegroom, but not understanding the manner of His return many were disappointed when Christ was not manifest to their natural sight. However, it seems clear that “the days of the Son of Man” had commenced at that early time, but it was not till about 1874, with the completion of the 1335 days of Daniel (Dan.

12:12) that Christ revealed His presence to the watchers. This truth has been made known to the earnest, watching saints ever since, by the helps provided by the Lord to make clear the signs indicated, and has constituted the basis for what is termed “present truth,” dispensational truth. This trumpet sound of truth has surely been gathering together the Lord’s elect from the one end of the ecclesiastical heavens to the other, in readiness for the great Kingdom work to follow their exaltation to be with their Lord. (Matt. 24:31.)

It can be truly said that the generation observing the progress of the harvest work through some considerable part of the last century have also seen “all these things begin to happen,” namely, the great falling away in the systems of religion (the sun and the moon darkened, and the stars falling), the false Christs and false teachings abroad in the world, the budding of the fig tree (the great progress made by the return of the Jews to Palestine) and the intense clouds of trouble that have encircled the world since 1914, and especially in the last few years.

The implication is that “this generation” need not necessarily see “all these things” accomplished or completed, but having seen them “begin to come to pass,” then their fulfilment is sure within a further reasonable period of time, though it will be observed that verse 30 of Matt. 24 when “all the tribes of the earth shall mourn, and they shall see (discern) the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” indicates an advanced stage in the great time of trouble (verse 21) and just prior to the deliverance which will follow for the whole groaning creation. (See Rom. 8:22, 19.)

The words of Luke 21:28 agree with the above understanding of our text, as well as being one of the most encouraging and comforting messages from our Lord for His people living in the harvest of the age. “And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.” “God shall help her in the dawning of her morning.” (Psa. 46:5, Leeser.)

Walking in the Spirit.

(Gal. 5:16, 17.)

(Contributed.)

THE Apostle here sets forth a great and vital principle, and one which, if faithfully followed, will enable us to overcome our natural, fallen propensities, and become truly Christlike.

What is it to “walk in the spirit”? It is to act always in accordance with the spirit of God, the spirit of Christ, as revealed to us in His Word; to be guided in all that we do, in all our thoughts, by that Word, not merely the letter of it, but by the spirit of it, realising that in His Word we have a revelation of the true character and will of God. It is to seek continually to know, more and more, what is the mind of the Lord—the mind or disposition of Christ—and to live accordingly, striving to keep the Word of God always before us, and by the aid of the holy spirit, to develop more and more in ourselves the fruits of the spirit—the spirit of righteousness, of truth, of peace, of love, of trust in the Lord.

It means living and acting in harmony with our heavenly hopes and aspirations, keeping these always before our minds, bright and clear, and not allowing earthborn clouds to hide them from us or make them grow dim. This is the thought of the Apostle when he says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,” and “Be ye filled with the spirit.”

In the latter part of our text the Apostle gives the reason why walking in the spirit will exclude the fulfilling of the lusts or desires of the flesh, viz., their mutual contrariety, or opposition to each other. “For the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other.” In proportion as our thoughts are occupied with the heavenly things—our heavenly hopes and aspirations, the things of the spirit—we will be mortifying, or putting to death, the fleshly desires and overcoming their influence.

In Eph. 5:8, the Apostle speaks of those who are under the guidance of the holy spirit, as being “light in the Lord.” The significance of this expression seems to be, that it is only those who are “in the Lord,” who have come into Christ by a full consecration and have enlightenment of His holy spirit, who can see the fleshly evils in their true light, and from the right standpoint.

Selfishness, self-indulgence, and a disregard for the interests of others, is at the root of the fleshly evils. We can only keep their true character clearly before us, however, and be safe from their influence, by continually maintaining and living up to the spirit of our consecration. As soon as that begins to slacken, the safeguards by which the Lord surrounds His faithful ones begin to disappear, and we are left proportionately in danger of being overcome by the fleshly tendencies.

“Ye are light in the Lord,” the Apostle says, “walk therefore as children of light.” By “light” here, the Apostle means truth. The Lord’s people are all begotten by the Word of Truth or light. They were brought into their present relationship with the Lord, as a result of the knowledge of the truth they received from Him—the truth concerning sin, its true character and results, of their own fallen condition, of the Lord Himself and His true character, His holiness, His love, and His provision for redeeming and restoring them from their fallen, sinful condition; and their relationship with Him is maintained by the same means.

They are thus children of the light, the truth. They have the true standard of right and wrong set clearly before them, which they are enabled to understand and appreciate by the aid of the holy spirit. Having this, therefore, clearly before them, the Apostle urges them to conduct themselves in everything in accordance with the knowledge they have received. By so doing, they will not only be growing in holiness themselves, but they will assist others to appreciate and follow after righteousness and true holiness. They will, in this way, become “lights” in the world.

The very purity of their lives will make manifest the surrounding darkness, and be a continual reproof to it. In Rom. 8:14, the Apostle tells us that “as many as are led by the spirit of God, these are the sons of God.” Only those who are begotten of the spirit are led by the spirit, and only those who are led by the spirit are sons of God, and, as sons of God, members of the New Creation. In the tenth verse of the same chapter he says, “If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.” “If Christ be in you (that is, dwelling in you by His spirit) the body is dead, because of sin,” i.e., the body—the human nature—is regarded and treated as dead from the Divine standpoint. God is no longer regarding us and judging us according to the flesh, but according to the spirit, the mind, the will. Each one coming into Christ, accepting Him as his substitute, is regarded as having suffered the penalty of sin—death. As a human being he is reckoned dead, but alive as a New Creature, begotten of the spirit of God.

“But the spirit is life, because of righteousness.” That is, because the spirit, or mind, or will is in harmony with God,

from the Divine standpoint it is regarded as alive, and the individual is judged according to that, and not according to the flesh. One has said, In the case of these New Creatures in Christ, from the Divine standpoint the body is treated as dead, but the spirit, or mind, is treated as alive. It is the New Creature which God recognises, to which He purposes to give a new spirit body in due time, in the first resurrection.

“It is necessary that this thought be clearly fixed in our minds, in order that we may continually realise our place toward God, and His favour and sympathy toward us in Christ. If we lose sight of the fact that God regards us from the standpoint of the will, if we get to thinking of ourselves and God’s estimate of us as according to the flesh, we are sure to get proportionately into darkness and discouragement. But let us not forget, on the other hand, that the spirit or will is counted alive because of its righteousness, because it is in harmony with God. Let us, therefore, never be slack in respect of the will, or intention governing the conduct of our lives, but remember that any laxity will mean the proportionate loss of spiritual life. To will right is always possible to us, and nothing less than an absolutely loyal will could be acceptable to God in Christ.”

It is only as we come into Christ by a full consecration, that we have His merit imputed to us, and that the body is reckoned dead. The consecration must be a real one, too. In other words, the spirit of Christ must dwell in us; it must have become our spirit, a spirit of absolute loyalty to God and His will. If the worldly spirit, or a spirit of selfwill, or selfishness, is dwelling in us, we are not in Christ, and the body is not reckoned dead because of sin; in other words, the merit of Christ is not imputed to us, and we are regarded as still in the flesh, from the Divine standpoint. “But if the spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also make alive your mortal bodies by His spirit that dwelleth in you.”

The spirit of God, and the spirit of Christ, are here regarded as one, as we see from verse 9, where the Apostle says, “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you, but if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” It is the holy spirit of God (which is also the spirit of Christ) actively operating in us who have come into Christ, that the Apostle speaks of here. If the holy spirit of God, which we have received, is not hindered by our “minding” or following, or desiring earthly things—the gratification of our natural, fleshly desires—that holy spirit will so work in us, so influence us, as to lead us, urge us indeed to use our mortal bodies, and all their powers, in the service of God.

The Apostle shows here that it is the power of God working in us, and not our own mere strength of purpose and desire, that makes us active in His service. Without the aid of His holy spirit we could neither desire nor will’ strongly enough to overcome the flesh and its desires, so, that our only aim will be to serve the heavenly Father—to walk in the narrow way of self-sacrifice continually even till death.

The power which God exerted in raising the Lord Jesus out of death is compared by the Apostle with the power which He will exert on our behalf, if we maintain our attitude of full consecration to Him, to enable us to serve Him faithfully, and, as New Creatures, to overcome and keep the flesh under, and make us active and energetic in the service of righteousness.

When the Apostle says, “The flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would,” he is speaking to those who have become New Creatures in Christ, to whom old things have passed away, and all things have become new.

These are represented as being begotten of the spirit, and therefore, to be in reality spirit beings who will be changed in the resurrection; spirit beings who have, so to speak, not yet been completed. But the New Creature has only the flesh in which to operate at the present time. But God expects him to manifest his loyalty to Him, and to demonstrate his worthiness of being raised to perfection of the spirit in the first resurrection.

The Apostle says that these New Creatures must expect to find a conflict going on—the spirit lusting or earnestly desiring against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit, the new spirit, the mind of Christ begotten in them. The New Creature strongly desires to be loyal to God, and to do His will, the flesh strongly desires against all this. These two spirits are in opposition—in antagonism to each other. The flesh desires to serve itself, earthly objects, earthly aims. The New Creature desires to set its affections on the heavenly things, and to sacrifice the earthly interests, and aims, and prospects, to live as a spirit being sojourning only in the flesh, to live no longer as a human being with earthly interests. Whatever serves the one interest, is in conflict with the other interest. If we, as New Creatures, live after, or in accordance with the desires of the flesh, if we renounce, or fail to fulfil, our covenant of sacrifice, we will die, but if we mortify or kill the deeds of the flesh and give them up wholly in order to fulfil those of the spirit, we shall live, we shall have everlasting life.

In the case of our Lord Jesus, although He was holy, harmless and undefiled, there was such a conflict, the earthly

interests drawing one way, and the heavenly interests another. These were all pure and perfect desires, yet as a New Creature, begotten of the holy spirit, He was obliged to overcome them. We recall our Lord's words very near the conclusion of His ministry: "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished."

The conflict was going on, but the Lord's spirit was firm, and He was obedient to the terms of His sacrifice. Being perfect, He could do the things that He would—He did them and won the great victory. In our case the matter is different. We are by nature fallen. Our earthly appetites and tastes are depraved. All of us are more or less imperfect, some more depraved than others.

Our flesh is depraved; we cannot do fully the things that we desire to do as New Creatures. We therefore need the merit of Christ to assist us; hence the Apostle tells us that every time we have done wrong, we should acknowledge the error, and go to the throne of heavenly grace to obtain 'mercy and find help for future needs. Thus we show to God the loyalty of our hearts. All those having Christ's mind or disposition are hampered by the weaknesses of the flesh, the fallen flesh; but they have an Advocate to whom they may go and have these weaknesses of the fallen flesh compensated for.

Under the inspiring influences of God's promises and the message of the Gospel, we have been received by our great Advocate as members of His Body—as New Creatures in Christ, begotten of the holy spirit. As New Creatures, we are expected to go forward step by step, continually fighting against the snares of Satan, and the earthly tendencies of our fleshly nature. This is the Christian's life—the battle the Apostle speaks of. The two influences—the flesh and the spirit—are contrary, hence the conflict. There is no need to go outside and battle with others; there is plenty to do within. In due time by the power of the first resurrection, we will lose the old body altogether, and will be clothed upon with immortality. If we are "faithful unto death," we shall be like our Lord and Head; we shall see Him as He is and share His glory. Then, and only then, will the conflict cease.

Numerous incentives to faithfulness in submitting ourselves to the leading of the spirit have been provided by our heavenly Father. Great and precious promises with reference to the present life—assurances of His care, of His loving interest in, and concern for all that affects our interests as New Creatures. He assures us that "like as a father pities his children, (and cares for them) so the Lord pities and cares for those that fear Him." That "He will never leave or forsake them." That they are continually being guarded by the power of God through faith, from the evils which surround them, so that they may ultimately receive the salvation—the great salvation to the glory and perfection of the Divine nature which He has provided for them.

To this end He has opened up to us a wonderful knowledge of Himself and of His purposes. In 2 Pet. 1:2, the Apostle refers to this and to the rich blessings which come to those who receive this knowledge into honest and obedient hearts. He says, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord." This is an expression of the Apostle's desire that through the intimate knowledge of God, gained through a study of His Word (backed up by obedience to it, without which the mere knowledge would be useless) the Lord's people might receive the favour of God more and more, and the peace of God which passes all mere human understanding and can only be possessed by those who trust in Him fully, and have committed themselves and all of their concerns—spiritual and temporal—fully to His keeping. These will grow or be "multiplied" in proportion as their practical knowledge of Him increases, as our Lord Himself said, "This is eternal life that they might know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (and has revealed the Father fully to them).

Our strength, our ability to become overcomers is derived from a knowledge of God's character and plans, and of the conditions upon which we may share in them. Further on the Apostle refers to the bountiful provision God has made of all things that are needful to our attainment of the spiritual life, and Godlikeness of character to which we have been called and which it is His desire that we should possess.

The Apostle reminds us of the exceeding great and precious promises God has given us, and declares that it is by means of these that we are to escape the corruption that is prevalent throughout the world and become partakers of the Divine nature. These promises which relate to the high-calling of God in Christ Jesus include the promise of forgiveness through the merit of Christ; the opportunity to attain to immortality, the Divine nature and joint-heirship with Christ and the provision of the necessary aid to enable us to attain to it; the promise of strength, comfort and support in trial; of a glorious resurrection; and of unending fellowship with Himself, and the Lord Jesus, and the perfected saints.

In view of the greatness and glory of the objects promised, they are in fact exceedingly precious. Or if we look at their influence upon us now, in supporting and strengthening, and encouraging us, and assisting us to overcome our present weaknesses, and the hope with which they inspire us, they are exceedingly precious. The things which God has promised to His faithful children, in connection with their "high calling" are such that they attract their minds away

from the trifles and delusions which captivate and often frenzy the minds of mankind in general. Theirs are higher joys, higher ambitions, far greater riches, and a heavenly and eternal kingdom. The ambitions inspired by these heavenly promises are holy ambitions, full of mercy and good fruits, and operate along the lines of love, while the operations of the earthly ambitions are along the lines of selfishness. Faith in God's promises to the Church, is the great incentive to the call and its requirements as the Apostle says (Rom. 8:24, 25): "We are saved by hope" (hope based on faith in these great and precious promises of God). They are encouraged to faithfulness to the conditions of their covenant with the Lord, and thus receive the reward, becoming partakers of the Divine nature in the resurrection.

The great and precious promises of God, relating to the high calling to joint-heirship with Christ and participation in the Divine nature, are conditional, and it is faith in these promises which makes obedience to the conditions attached to them possible.

There are other precious promises also—promises of all-needed grace to help us in our journey heavenward, and faith in these promises also, enables us to take advantage of the proffered help, and by this means to attain to the goal—the blessed condition of character-likeness to Christ, towards which we are running.

God's design in calling His people out of the world, and giving them His great promises, is that they might become free from the prevailing selfishness and sin—that they might "walk in newness of life"; that they should develop the spirit of love; that they should learn to do to others as they would that others should do to them; that they should no longer bring forth fruit (leading) unto death, but unto God.

By having their minds, their hopes, centred in the promises of God, and making these their sole aim, they are lifted above the selfish desires and ambitions which are at the root of the evil—the corruption that is in the world.

"If we were raised with Christ, seek the things which are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth, for ye died (to these things) and your life (begun now, as New Creatures, and to be completed in the resurrection) is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." "We all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord." "For which cause we faint not, for though our outward man is perishing, our inward man is being renewed day by day . . . while we look not at the things that are seen but at things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Bible Study Meetings.

Melbourne.—Excelsior House (3rd Floor), 17 Elizabeth Street.—Sundays, 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. Wednesdays, 7.45 p.m., as arranged, usually at 19 Ermington Place, Kew.

Adelaide.—R.A.O.B. Hall, 48 Flinders Street, (near Gawler place), Sundays, 3 p.m. and 6.30 p.m.; Wednesdays, 7.30 p.m.

Perth.—Druid's Chambers, 459 Hay Street East.—Sundays, 3.30 p.m. and 6.15 p.m.

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

Consecration.

"Consecration is not a religiously selfish thing. If it sinks into that it ceases to be consecration. We want our lives 'kept' not that we may feel happy and be saved the distress consequent on wandering and get the power with God and man and other privileges linked with it. We shall have all this because the lower is included in the higher; but our true aim, if the love of Christ constraineth us, will be far beyond this. Not for 'me' at all, but 'for Jesus'; not for my safety, but for His glory; not for my comfort, but for His joy; not that I may find rest, but that 'He may see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.' Yes, for Him I want to be kept; kept for His sake; kept for His use; kept to be His witness; kept for His joy; kept for Him that in me He might show forth some tiny sparkle of His light and beauty; kept to do His will and His work in His own way; kept, it may be, to suffer for His sake; kept for Him that He may do just what seemeth Him good with me; kept so that no other lord shall have any more dominion over me, but that Jesus shall have all there is to have; little enough, indeed, but not divided nor diminished by any other claim. Is not this, to you who love the Lord, is not this worth living for, worth trusting for?"—F. R. Havergal.

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