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How Readest Thou?

(Convention Address)

FROM Acts 8:26-35, our text is taken for a short discourse on "How readest thou The man of "great authority, who had charge of all the treasures of the Queen of Ethiopia" was no mean citizen to occupy such a position. He no doubt had a keen intellect, had as good a sense of discernment as anybody his equal or otherwise. Yet he puzzles over the Scriptures and confesses his -inability to read aright: "How can I, except some man should guide me?" Would that there were more of his disposition. We all have our own opinions, tainted with the superstitions and traditions of the ages; excited with our own uncontrolled imaginations which sometimes conjure up for us fanciful pictures of what we call "Prophecy."

The wisest among the sons of men, all and sundry, need help, guidance, to understand aright the Word of God. God has appointed His own administrators in this respect, just as in our text He appointed Philip to unravel the. mystery.

Let no one deceive you. His appointed agents are the Apostles and Prophets; their words are with us to assist us in this greatest of all quests: the understanding of mysteries kept secret since the world began, but now made manifest to His saints. (Col. 1:26.)

To read partially is comparatively easy: we take that which merely appeals to us; we concentrate upon some particular phase to the exclusion of other portions of the Word. We err in not considering the whole. The whole armour of God is necessary. We are vulnerable to attack when we leave off parts of the armour. When all parts of the Word are in harmony, in conjunction with that which is fulfilling, we shall have no difficulty in interpreting aright.

Can you see how easy it would be for a misconception to arise in our understanding if we merely took a part (most do) ? This fault is not confined to the wayfarers, but honest, true, righteous men have made the common mistake. Let us take a few examples:

Moses, you know, read God's will aright; he was to be the instrument to effect the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt. Things for them were well nigh unendurable; Moses knew his own strength; skilled in all the wisdom of the Egyptians . . . the sons of Israel groaning under the heel of Egypt. Why not unite and go forth ? He would forcibly reconcile brethren. The time was too early; he had

read incorrectly, prematurely, and needed to wait a further term of forty years before the actual time of deliverance. When he is referred to as the meekest man in the earth it must mean his great teachability, for he is keen to know God's will and continually sought to read it aright.

Another prominent character, who no doubt was asked this same question when things were going amiss after correctly interpreting the Word up to a certain point, was that prince among men, John the Baptist. He was a keen student of the Word if ever there was one, and faithful in his part that needed person-1 application. "Of men born of women there had been none greater" than this stalwart. But glance at the circumstances that no doubt brought forth this question from his disciple, of "How readest thou?" or "what do you make of this?"

He introduced the Messiah to his followers and recognised Jesus as One of whom he was not worthy to unloose His shoe latchet. From John's standpoint everything was going to plan, all his parts of the Word seemed harmonious up to this point. He had fulfilled the Voice in the Wilderness part, introduced Jesus, baptized Him, declared the "Lamb of God" to his followers, and as the friend of the bridegroom was glad to hear His voice. Nothing was amiss even when his followers left him for Jesus; this was Scriptural—"He must increase; I must decrease." And so from now on Jesus went about His work and John continued with his. He would no doubt be more alert to the indication of the Scriptures now than ever before, although previous to this his was a full-time occupation. So much was written of the Messiah, the Word was full of Him and His works . . . was it reasonable to look for the fulfilment? Yet something seemed amiss. Israel was travailing under the heel of the scum of the earth, and if it was not in John's power to convert Israel it was his Lo admonish and reprove unrighteousness. This he did so well and without respect of persons that very soon he was cast into prison. Enforced leisure drove him closer to the Word, the few remaining disciples who frequently visited him in his prison would read together concerning Messiah, and while no doubt marvellous things were happening . . . some things continued as ever before. Something had gone amiss . . . or had it? After reading such prophecies like Mal. 3:1, 2, 3, 5 ; 4:1, 5, 6, can you wonder why they asked one another, "How readest thou?" "What do you make of this?" They would rightly meditate on these portions, and we would again point out the inadvisability of concentrating on a portion rather than meditating on the whole. Doubts are liable to creep in, as in John's case (and others'), and one's peace and serenity are disturbed.

According to their understanding, when Messiah came He would deliver Israel, and as they were suffering so wrongfully and shamefully under Herod, John in particular, they appear to be confused because of their inability to apply the whole rather than a portion of the Word to that which was fulfilling. Some think John sent his disciples to Jesus with the question, "Art thou he that should come or do we look for another?", because John's work had been curtailed. But it appears rather that when they read these Scriptures that were so definite as to the work of Christ, they concluded they must have read amiss, and the position needed clarifying. To them (viewing these Scriptures in Malachi) nothing was happening. So much was expected. Granted so much had been and was being fulfilled, but interpretation in many things had gone amiss.

Doesn't it remind you forcefully of the anti-typical John's experiences during the last 40 years or so? So much correctly viewed, yet in some respects nothing is happening. The old continues as did John's, just as grotesque and unrighteous as ever. Its roots seem as deep and undisturbed as ever. John and his followers would see things just the same as this. Let us take a lesson from the numerous examples recorded for us, and ask ourselves about the Word as a whole rather than a portion,— "How readest thou?" It would prepare the way for meekness and teachableness to grow unabated.

The Pharisees and Sadducees of our Lord's day could read the face of the sky correctly and forecast the weather of the morrow, but He upbraided them for not being able to discern the "signs of the times." (Matt. 16:2, 3.) He well could have referred them to all that was happening in Jerusalem and Palestine and

asked the question: “How readest thou ?” But because their vision was partial it was distorted.

Also do you remember how the Apostles interpreted incorrectly some of the last words Jesus uttered on earth ? He told Peter how he would end his days while serving the truth, and Peter, ever curious concerning others, too, asked Jesus concerning John. Jesus politely told him to mind his own business and get on with his own work; what did it matter to Peter if John remained till His second coming? “How readest thou ?” . . . it soon became common belief that

John would not die.

We could go on showing the inability alone to correctly interpret the Word, and the importance of the whole perspective rather than a portion. So what is the lesson for today, for us ? Jesus supplies the answer in the oft-repeated exhortation: “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches.” We are sure to err if we merely concentrate on what the spirit says concerning one or two churches, and those because of relationship towards the end of the age, the Philadelphian Church or the Laodicean Church. All are worthy of consideration, so that should any ask us concerning the last church-period in history, “How readest thou?” we could give them the correct relationship of all the churches down through the ages, beginning with that most important one, Ephesus. (Rev. 1:11.)

To what could we liken our position today in view of all that we have said? The most potent is a similarity with John the Baptist’s experiences. Many will say, after long years of endeavour to serve and please Him, “nothing is happening.” Some may even begin to wonder if “the harvest is past and we are not saved.” But ponder the whole, and who will contradict that the great time of trouble is yet future?

It is a common mistake of practically every expositor who has essayed to interpret prophecy, to contract the fulfilling of the main events into his own life-span.

Friends, have you ever been out walking, maybe on some rising ground and then glanced at the lowering clouds that have somehow made their unexpected appearance on the horizon. They become blacker and blacker, and you begin to make plans; you either hasten to get home before the fury breaks, or alternatively, make preparation to escape its violence by taking the necessary precaution to offset or nullify its effect upon you. In the great scheme of things do we not see the big storm of life on the horizon? Have another look at Matthew 24, and ponder on verse 33. “When ye see all these things (coming to pass or being fulfilled), know that it (the Kingdom) is near, even at the doors,”—close at hand to those who read aright. To those who doubt, they are sure to err in reading aright. So near . . . so far away. To the wise virgins the Bridegroom is welcomed; to the foolish virgins, they will have to retrace some ground and enter into joys later.

In conclusion, since all Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for instruction in righteousness, let us acknowledge, as did the man of great authority in our text, “How can I understand except some one help me?” We know from experience that “no prophecy of the Scripture is of private interpretation.”

What, then, is the answer? Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together. It is the influence of corporate study that will yield an understanding that must be experienced to be appreciated.

HOW READEST THOU? Acts 8:30, 31.

'Tis one thing now to read the Bible through,
Another thing to read, to learn to do;

'Tis one thing now to read it with delight,
And quite another thing to read it right.

Some read it with design to learn to read,
But to the subject pay but little, heed;

Some read it as their duty once a week,
But no instruction from the Bible seek;

Whilst others read it without common care,
With no regard to how they read or where.

Some read it as a history, to know
How people lived three thousand years ago.

Some read to bring themselves into repute,
By showing others how they can dispute;

Whilst others read because their neighbours do,
To see how long 'twill take to read it through. '

Some read it for the wonders that are there,
How David killed a lion and a bear;

Whilst others read—or rather have a look—
Because, perhaps, they have no other book.

Some read the Blessed Book—they don't know why,
It somehow happens in the way to lie;

Whilst others read it with uncommon care,
But all to find some contradictions there.

One reads with father's specs upon his head,
And sees the thing just as his father did;

Another reads through Campbell or through Scott,
And thinks it means exactly what they thought.

Some read to prove a pre-adopted creed,
Thus understand but little what they read;

And every passage in the Book they bend
To make it suit that all-important end.

Some people read, as I have often thought,
To teach the Book, instead of to be taught.

Convention News.

THERE is no doubt that the friends who were I privileged to attend the Easter Convention in Adelaide, S.A., received a rich blessing from the Lord. The Psalmist says, "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." The Lord's spirit was surely bestowed upon His people and upon our gatherings in His name in copious measure, and our hearts were warmed and made glad with the many evidences of His love and favour as the successive days, with their various sessions, each contributed their portion, making the store of blessing very rich indeed. Surely "the Lord hearkened and heard" as those who feared His name spake to one another, and a blessing beyond our capacity to retain was bestowed by His gracious hand.

There seems to be a special blessing upon these Annual Convention gatherings, and we have come to regard the Christmas Convention at Melbourne, and the Easter Convention at Adelaide, as landmarks, or perhaps more suitably, as little oases, where thirsty pilgrims may meet and rest awhile and receive from their blessed Lord, and from each other, those consolations and ministries of love which only the spirit of the Lord can supply.

There was a goodly number of visitors from the eastern States, two dear elderly brethren coming from far away Queensland, one sister from Tasmania, and one brother from New Zealand, and quite a large number of dear brethren and sisters from the Melbourne and Geelong Classes. The presence of these dear friends was much appreciated, and we trust that each and every one received a very rich blessing from the Lord, and that the precious truths from God's Word may be a real refreshment of mind and heart, and enable each one to press with vigour along in the narrow way that leads to life.

Portion of each day was taken up with a Bible study, and some good help was gained from the portions of Scripture chosen, which were as follows:—John 17:15-24; Phil. 2:1-11; Rom. 11:11-21 and 2 Pet. 3:10-14. Each of these studies brought its helpful lessons, and we trust much benefit was gained from our meditations upon these portions of God's Word. We do desire that the Word of the Lord may dwell in us in ever richer and fuller measure, and that the spirit of the truth—the spirit of love and Christ-like zeal and humility—may be developed in each heart as the days go by.

Various brethren also gave us some helpful addresses which added to the interest and encouragement generally. The topics for the addresses were as follows: "Some Kingdom Thoughts"; "Resurrection Meditations"; "The Grace of Humility"; "My Peace"; "One Hindrance to Immortality"; "Events in Israel—Past, Present and Future"; "Unstopped Wells"; and "The Tabernacle which the Lord Pitched". Also a Brother who had recently been to Palestine gave us an account of his travels through that land, and it was good to hear his description of conditions, places and happenings in the Holy Land.

Various other interesting features of the Convention were the Praise and Testimony meetings, and many brethren and sisters spoke of their appreciation of the Lord's goodness and grace in their daily experiences. The ever popular "Hymns we love and why" was again fully appreciated and entered into heartily, and a Question and Discussion session also proved helpful and instructive.

A number of Classes and brethren sent messages of greetings to the Convention, and these were much appreciated. The message chosen by the Convention and sent to the brethren and classes everywhere is found in Phil. 2:1-5.

The Convention came to a close after four days of really helpful Christian fellowship, and as usual we sang the hymn "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love," as we each shook hands bidding each other goodbye, and then singing "God be with you till we meet again," and closing with prayer of

thanks and praise to God for all His blessings, and requesting His grace and guidance upon each one present and upon His dear people everywhere. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

"Our Most Holy Faith."—This is a splendid volume of most helpful articles and sermons by the author of Studies in the Scriptures, published by the brethren of "The Dawn" in U.S.A. Containing 719 pages, including Index, and well bound, with silver lettering, it is priced at 20/- post paid.

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Memorial Observances

Melbourne.

THE brethren in Melbourne gladly gathered on the anniversary of the institution of the Memorial of Christ's death, 25th March, to observe the Lord's Supper with much thankfulness to God and our Lord Jesus Christ for the loving sacrifice of our dear Redeemer, whereby we, at the end of the Gospel Age, may also participate in the benefits of His atoning death in equal measure as did those dear disciples who beheld Him put to death at Calvary.

The attendance was very good, many dear friends coming quite a distance to be present with other members in the Lord's household, including two visitors from Tasmania and New Zealand. The one desire of all in attendance was to honour the Lord's request to keep the Memorial in remembrance of Him, and also to demonstrate their continued willingness to walk in His steps, as they seek to fulfil their vows of consecration faithfully unto death.

Previous studies on the 53rd chapter of Isaiah were very helpful and impressed how much it cost our Lord to pay the sacrifice for the sins of the world, while enduring the contradiction of sinners against Himself.

Suitable hymns were sung; prayers were offered up in thankfulness and praise to the Heavenly Father for the Gift of our Saviour, and on behalf of the brethren everywhere; passages of Scripture were read; and an address was given with reference to the type and anti-type of the Passover, with special emphasis on the value of the atoning merit of Christ's sacrifice for His people during this Gospel Age, and ultimately in the kingdom age for all mankind.

Following the prayer of blessing upon the bread and wine each one solemnly partook of the emblems representing our Lord's body and blood given in sacrifice, and we praise God in the victory that Christ thus attained, by which He was highly exalted, and to which the faithful overcomers may also look with confidence as they seek to walk in His steps day by day.

Geelong, Vic.

In the evening of 25th March a number of friends gathered in the home of one of the brethren to observe the Memorial of our Lord's great sacrifice. In recent times some brethren from other parts have come to reside in Geelong, thus the number of those meeting here was greater this year.

Each seemed to appreciate the privilege of joining in this solemn observance, and blessing undoubtedly accrued to every sincere heart.

There have been many difficulties for some time since we last met in this observance, but it is good to note the quiet confidence and trust still exercised in the Giver of every good thing, and particularly did all appear to appreciate the greatest gift of all vouchsafed to man — Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Prior studies in Isaiah 53 had helped all who could attend them to come to the Supper Table of our Lord in loving devotion and in the spirit of consecration.

The simple service comprised the singing of three hymns — 280, 166 and 414 from the “Bible Students Hymnal,” — prayer, the reading by four brethren of the following passages Exod. 12:1-14, 21-33, 40-42; Luke 22:7-16; Matt. 27:27-50 ;—and an address by a brother, at the close of which the emblems were partaken of with thankful hearts.

As we took leave of each other we seemed very conscious of the implications of discipleship in these closing days of the Gospel Age, but in quiet faith and hope each seemed resolved to lean upon our Lord so that our weakness may be changed to the strength that will enable us to be amongst the “overcomers”— the strong ones with whom our Lord will delight to divide the spoil in all the glory of the kingdom. (Isa. 53:12.)

Adelaide.

The Adelaide Class met on Sunday evening, 25th March, to keep the Memorial of our Saviour’s death. It is a privilege each year at the anniversary of His death to thus remember Him, and the great sacrifice which He made for His church and for all mankind.

We had studied the prophecy of Isaiah 53, and what a remarkable prophecy that is, giving in such detail the circumstances and conditions which surrounded our Lord during the time of His earthly sojourn amongst the people of Israel. Truly, “He came unto His own, but His own received Him not.”

What grand example our Lord has left us of meek submission to indignity and cruel suffering; what patience, and faith, and humility, and love He exhibited. How it helps us to carefully “consider Him,” and the manner in which He received and “endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest we be wearied and faint in our minds.”

After appropriate Scripture readings and hymns in keeping with the occasion, and a brief review of the Passover in type and anti-type, and prayer for the Lord’s blessing upon all His dear people everywhere, we partook of the emblems with grateful hearts, appreciating the great favour given to us not only to believe on Jesus Christ as our Saviour, but also to have a share in His sufferings in the present time, in order that we may, by His grace, share also in His grand future work of assisting and uplifting the whole world of mankind in the Kingdom Age. “Thanks be to God, for His unspeakable gift.”

Perth.

We remembered our dear Saviour’s death on the 14th of Nisan-25th March. A small gathering of 18 adults in an upper room looked back to the time when our Lord with great desire partook for the last time of the Jewish Passover, then instituted a Memorial of a greater Passover which was to be accomplished the same day. The emblems of the bread and wine well represented our Lord’s broken body and shed blood, as He explained.

The sacrifice of our Lord’s life terminating at Calvary, and of our Lord’s desire that His followers would

follow Him into sacrificial death, made it possible for Him to not only offer the unleavened bread, but to offer His “cup” to the disciples, so that it could represent them not only having the merit of His blood, but additionally to share or participate in the same sacrifice.

Gladly have Christ’s followers heeded our Lord’s admonition—”Do this in remembrance of me,”—and gladly have they renewed their consecration vows by showing in symbol that they are fulfilling their “covenant of sacrifice.” Psa. 50:5.

Sydney.

In similar fashion to previous years twelve brethren assembled together to partake of the Lord’s Memorial on the evening of 25th March. The number was smaller than usual; one dear Sister who usually attended had passed away during the year, and several were absent due to sickness.

The hymn — “In memory of the Saviour’s love”—was sung in opening, and was perhaps the theme of the Memorial in which love was the keynote; this was emphasized in the following addresses, together with our participation and communion (common-union) in both the loaf and the cup with our Lord.

All the absent ones and all everywhere partaking were remembered in prayer, and Divine blessing upon the assembly was entreated. In the chairman’s address passages read from the Scriptures included—Matt. 26:17-30; 1 Cor. 11:27-29; 5:7, 8; 10:16, 17; Exod. 12:1-11. A Brother then gave an address in which he passed from the type to the antitype, from the shadow to the substance, stressing the need to humble ourselves and to forgive one another in its ultimate sense before partaking.

The emblems were partaken of in silence after a Brother had prayed for Divine blessing on both the bread and the cup. The hymn “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” concluded the service, the brethren dispersing with perhaps mingled feelings of sadness and rejoicing; sadness at their past failures to be like Him, and yet rejoicing in the added strength to walk in the narrow way.

Canberra.

Having spent a profitable time in the previous weeks studying the Passover, type and antitype, it was our privilege to observe the Memorial of our Passover Lamb. Although few in number we believe the occasion paid rich dividends spiritually.

We tried to sense the deplorable conditions of Israel in bondage to Egypt, also the solemnity of the occasion prompting the sacrifice of a Passover lamb. From thence, our next vista was that staged at our Lord’s first advent when surrounding conditions seemed ripe for another deliverance, but to the dismay of those awaiting the “Consolation of Israel,” their hopes were premature, but the antitype, the Passover Lamb, was slain. Finally, we took a survey of world conditions at the close of the age, as the brethren gathered together to celebrate the Memorial, joyfully awaiting the deliverance.

Tasmania.

Once again we received a blessing as we partook of the Memorial on the evening of the 25th March. Three were present and we realised how grandly comprehensive is the meaning of this divinely instituted celebration, and what a blessing comes to us with the observance of this Memorial. Loving thoughts concerned fellow pilgrims and sincere prayers ascended on their behalf.

Changed to the same Image.

(2 Cor. 3:18.)

(Convention Address)

MOST of us will recall in our youth hearing the expression, “You are a copy cat”—meaning that the one referred to was endeavouring in manner or speech to “copy” another. The hero - worship observed when youth endeavours to imitate their favourite film stars and prominent sportsmen is similar; we often hear the expression, “He’s apeing so and so.” We may recall further the amusing episode of eavesdropping on young children playing “school,” especially observing the one adopting the role of teacher. The desire to imitate those who appeal to them is especially noticeable in the young, and in the main it is much to the credit of the teachers who so wisely control their pupils as to create this desire to imitate them. There must be something that appeals or attracts, or else this desire would not be there. If one disliked a person there would be no desire to copy him.

While in the Scriptures we do not find the actual term “school of Christ,” it is one that is often used in reference to Christians. It means that we are Christ’s disciples—that He is our Teacher. In this school there is no compulsory enrolment. In secular schools pupils have no choice of a teacher, but none is compelled to enter the school of Christ until he knows the Teacher and elects to become subservient to Him. Indeed the desire in entering this school is that one might become exactly like Him,—”be changed into the same image.”

The schooling process in effecting this change has some correspondencies to our secular schooling, which we might profitably consider. In secular schools a teacher may not always have the right temperament—the model teacher is one who can keep proper control, and hold the full confidence of his or her pupils. He must have sympathetic understanding of all, and especially backward pupils, for some are slower to learn than others.

In the school of Christ we have in Jesus the perfect Teacher—one who is never difficult of approach and whom we can be assured is always sympathetic to our needs, and who never unnecessarily chides or rebukes. He is never guilty of favouritism with His pupils, but is always impartial; nor do moods cause inconsistency: in reprimands or punishments meted out—every reproof is just.

Human fathers often send their sons to specially selected schools in the hope that one day they will become successful assistants to them in their business. Our Heavenly Father has need of assistants too in His business and Christians are His sons. (Read 1 John 3:1, 2.) The school He sends us to is the school of Christ, and we are required to become like Him; for when He shall appear (to do a particular, great work for the Father) we shall be like Him—we shall have been changed into the same image.

In secular schools we start in the baby grades with simple things—the alphabet and how to use it, etc.; then we progress to deeper understanding through harder lessons and more intricate subjects. No teacher would be pleased with pupils whom he had to keep teaching the A.B.C.

In the school of Christ we master the easier subjects first, the milk doctrines. If good pupils we go on to understand the deeper subjects—the deep things of God, the strong meat. The Apostle Paul ministered to some whom he felt spent far too long in the baby grades. (Read 1 Cor. 3:1, 2; Heb. 5:12, 13.) Such are always reciting the alphabet over and over, and seem never able to get down to solid Bible study. In secular schools we are set examinations from time to time, which, if we pass successfully will promote us into a higher grade. Some examination lessons are easier than others, and we generally apply ourselves to the easier ones first, before dealing with the harder ones. These term examinations do not require a 100

per cent. pass; a certain percentage is sufficient to pass us into a higher grade, and it is not always detrimental to fail in a subject. The teacher will then often render special assistance so that we are able to do better next time. It needed the examination to reveal the weakness.

In the examinations we are set in the school of Christ some are more exacting than others, too. We might have an affinity for some subjects and get through with flying colours; but in others it is evident that we have to learn the lesson over again. The Christian will find some of the lessons hinted at in Gal. 5:22, 23. We are getting along fine until across our path comes one of those grumpy, unjust, unbearable persons, all ruffled up—and oh, how our subjects tumble, long suffering, gentleness, meekness, self control; our marks that day make us blush for very shame. Drifting down as it were from heaven we hear a gentle voice like a line of one of the poems we know, “you must learn the lesson again, my child.”

Our secular teachers are interested in our conduct at all times, out of school as well as in. Generally, while under the direct influence of the teacher, conscious that he is watching us, we at least try to conduct ourselves properly. But let him leave the room, what happens then, or if we are out at play? Somehow, teachers always seem to learn about unseemly conduct, and of course punishment follows.

In the school of Christ there are times when we are more conscious than others of the direct influence of the Head— while in the company of fellow members of the Christ body, at class meetings and the like; but how do we conduct ourselves out in the world in the daily round and common task. Are we like schoolboys out at play, apt to forget the standard of conduct our Teacher desires to be maintained at all times?

Many a schoolboy is led into mischief through listening to the enticements of others. Left to himself he would have been alright, but his companions whispered suggestions to him, and he listened and entered into them.

Do we allow the whisperings of ‘the world and its spirit, and the enticement of the flesh to lead us into evil practices displeasing to our Teacher who has our eternal interests in mind in all our schooling? In this connection please read the poem in “Poems of Dawn” entitled “The Nominal Church.” How true ‘this has been of God’s professing people down through the age. And what punishment to befall the apostate church. Let us who are in the school of Christ see to it that we are not involved in it, but heed our faithful Teacher’s voice—’Come out of her, My people.’”

Sometimes in our secular education we cannot discern the value of the lesson we have to master, but long years after we see more clearly the wisdom of the curriculum our teacher followed; we wish then that we had been more attentive and mastered the subject better. In the school of Christ too, our Teacher makes no mistakes—there is good reason for all the experiences and lessons set. The subject of suffering for righteousness’ sake seems a difficult and mysterious one to many. Why must we suffer so? Our text Book is plain enough, “If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him.” No cross, no crown. But why ?

In our secular schooling, algebra, for instance, is a very complicated subject, and we are not expected to master it in the lower grades; but later on if we can understand it, it is very useful knowledge. Likewise, in ‘the school of Christ, if at first we do not understand why we suffer so for doing good, let us keep on and not be discouraged; and as we progress into the “higher” grades of the deep things of God’s Word we will be shown why we suffer now, and how we “fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ” (Col. 1:24).

If in our secular education we decide to matriculate, we have to attain a very exact knowledge of all subjects. A very exact knowledge must be acquired in the school of Christ too, if we are going to matriculate for a place in the Kingdom—be among the little flock of overcomers, and ‘not finish up

amongst the great multitude who take second place. A translation of Col. 1:9, 10 reads: “. . . that ye might be filled with an exact or accurate knowledge of the Lord’s will, that thus you might lead a life worthy of our Lord and be fully pleasing to him,”—nothing less than being changed into the same image.

In the secular life some of the cleverest and best educated men have continued in their youthful days against great odds of adversity, poverty, etc. Those in the school of Christ are often poor too—not many noble, wise and mighty, but the weak, base and despised of this world ‘path God chosen for His sons, (1 Cor. 1:26-28); and we must not allow ourselves to become discouraged on this score, for He who has begun the good work in us, will finish, perfect it. (Phil. 1:6.) By close attention to our Teacher we will be kept from falling (failing) and finally we will receive our “degrees”—”be presented faultless before the throne of his glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 24)—changed into the same image.

This is the will of God, even your sanctification (1 Thes. 4:3)), and this is a progressive work. The adding of a word in Heb. 10:10 gives the proper thought, “. . . by the which will we are (being) sanctified through the offering up of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” That is why we are in the school of Christ.

Briefly summing up: How is it all accomplished? We progress best in secular schools by submitting fully to the teacher, learning by his methods. We cannot take short cuts, our lessons are set for each day, and are well calculated how to instruct us in the most impressive and lasting manner. In the school of Christ there are no short cuts either; we cannot run before the Lord. Our text reads, “. . . we are changed into the same image (likeness) . . . even as by the spirit of the Lord.” We read elsewhere, “As many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” We ourselves cannot do any changing. Vain is all effort of salvation by works; but by believing into Jesus and following His leadings we will attain unto good works—be changed into His likeness.

One has used photography to illustrate the matter. To obtain a good likeness, great care in the preparation of the plate that is to take the impression is needed; and precision is required to get the relative position of the object to be portrayed. Then, carefully adjusted, face to face with the object, the photographer leaves the light to do its wonderful work. The light must enter only at the right place or it will mar the photo, spoil the likeness.

So in the school of Christ, to have His likeness impressed, we must come face to face with our Teacher, listen to and obey Him implicitly, and carefully peruse the text book, the Holy Word of God. All this corresponds to the preparation of the plate that is to take the likeness. Then we leave the light, the holy spirit of God, to do the rest, and when fully developed and printed it will be a perfect likeness of our great exemplar, our Teacher. But we must guard well that the light gets in only at the right place—from the Word of God, for even Satan’s messengers can appear as angels of light (2 Cor. 11:13, 14). We must shun all vain babblings, philosophies, and oppositions of the spirit of this world; for to the extent we allow such in, it will be sure to mar the likeness and we will not reflect the glory of the Lord as we should. To conclude, a free translation of our text reads—”So we all, with unveiled faces (our Christianity is not hidden) are reflecting as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, as we are changed little by little, more and more to his likeness, by the spirit of the Lord.”

Christian Way Ended.

AS one by one the Lord calls His people “Home” we are reminded of John the Baptist’s words—“He must increase, but I must decrease.” The number of the Christ in glory becomes greater as the true members of the Body of Christ on earth become fewer in number.

Our elderly Sister Annie Kirkwood of Adelaide, S.A., answered the “Home call” on the 17th of April. Our dear

Sister had been rejoicing in the light of “present truth” for over forty years, and her kindness and gentleness of disposition was much appreciated by her fellow members of the Adelaide Class.

Much sympathy is felt for our Sister’s relatives, and especially towards her sister, Sister Lucy Kirkwood, who also is a member of the Class at Adelaide. “We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

It is good to remember that the “Lord knoweth them that are His,” and that the great Head of the Church is supervising in respect of all the interests of His body members. Soon the number of His elect will be complete, and the church glorified with her glorious Head will be privileged to participate in the grand work of restoration of all things.

“To take away of sin. each trace, To make of earth a perfect place; With glory everywhere.”

“**Hymns of Dawn Music Book.**”—Containing the original 333 hymns, 27 additional in an Appendix, well bound in strong cloth, with silver lettering, this new edition is priced at 10/- post paid.

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