



Volume LI No. 3 MELBOURNE, JUNE—JULY, 1968 Price—10 Cents

## “The Hour is Come!”

(John 12:20-30)

OUR Lord continued His teachings in the Temple daily after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on the ass,—going to Bethany at night, and returning to the Temple each morning during the few days that intervened prior to His arrest and crucifixion. It was at this time that certain Greeks sought an interview with Jesus, and made known their desires through Andrew and Philip, who were probably the only two of the disciples who spoke the Greek language, they coming from a city (Bethsaida) in which the Greek language was considerably used, and their names are of Greek origin. It was most natural, therefore, that these two should be the mouthpieces of the visitors, to communicate their wishes to our Lord. The reason for the request doubtless was that our Lord at this time was in a part of the Temple inaccessible to any except Jews by birth, and these Greeks were Jewish proselytes, hence were not permitted to approach nearer the holy places than the Court of the Gentiles. Their request therefore meant that Jesus should come out to where they were for an interview.

What may have been the object of their visit we are not told; nor do we presume that our Lord's words recorded in the succeeding verses were addressed to the Greeks, but rather that a break in the narrative occurs. Our Lord doubtless responded to their request for an interview, but the substance of their converse has not been considered necessary for the church, and hence has not been recorded. It may not be amiss, however, to mention that Eusebius, a church historian of early days, relates that an emissary was sent to Jesus by the king of Edessa, Syria, inviting Him to take up His abode with him, and promising Him a royal welcome. It would not be surprising if there were truth in this statement, but we know well that our Lord would refuse any such overtures, for He Himself had plainly declared to the disciples when He sent them forth, “I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

God had blessings in store for all the families of the earth; but not yet, and not in this way. All things must be done in a divine order and according to the divine plan, which provided for the selection of the seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16, 29) before the general blessings could come upon the world; and the offer of membership in this seed of Abraham must, according to divine arrangement, be to the Jew first.

It was probably after the interview with the Greeks had ended, and while the hearts of the apostles were beating fast with anticipation that finally the world was waking up to recognise their Master in His true light, and would shortly exalt Him to the high position foretold for the Messiah, and while their hopes on their own behalf were also running high that they should be joint-heirs with Him in the kingdom, that Jesus uttered the words constituting the remainder of the lesson. It was a good opportunity for Him to show them how His sufferings of the immediate future were the foundation upon which all the future

glory must rest. He well knew what bitter disappointments and heart-aches would come to His faithful few when they would realise the literalness of what He had already told them respecting His death. He would give them some suggestions which would be helpful to them subsequently, and enable them to look through the sufferings to the glories in reservation, unseeable except with the eye of faith.

It was, we believe, with this thought in mind that our Lord declared, “The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified.” The disciples at first would take this as intimating His earthly exaltation, but He speedily drew their attention to the fact that while the beginning of His glorification was near, it must be preceded by the suffering of death. His glorification began in His resurrection from the dead, when He was raised in incorruption, in power, a glorious spiritual body — “a quickening spirit,” as the Apostle explains. (1 Cor. 15:42-45.) This glorification was enhanced when He was received up into glory in the Father’s presence, there to appear on our behalf, and at the right hand of divine power to wait for the appointed time when He should take unto Himself His great power and reign as King over all the earth, which He had redeemed with His own precious blood.

The expression, “The hour is come,” is not necessarily to be understood as signifying sixty minutes; just as the word “day” does not always signify twenty-four hours, but a comparatively short period or epoch, as for instance, “Noah’s day,” “Moses’ day,” “Jesus’ day,” etc. As compared with “Jesus’ day” the experiences referred to were properly enough said to be occurring in that “hour,” or short time.

Having thus assured them that the beginning of His glorification was not far distant, our Lord makes very impressive

the necessity of His death, by saying, “Verily, verily,”—that is Truly, truly, most positively, emphatically, I give you the illustration that my glorification according to the divine arrangement, must come through my death, even as a grain of wheat would remain but one grain unless it were planted, and through the dying of one grain life and being were given to a number. Had our Lord chosen to do so, He at one time had the privilege of remaining alone,—of not dying on our behalf. Had He followed this course we would still have been unredeemed and He could have brought forth no fruitage. But He had consecrated His life; He had voluntarily engaged to sacrifice Himself on behalf of Adam and his race, in compliance with the Father’s will, and hence He declares that if **now** He would love His life He would lose it; that on the contrary, instead of seeking to save Himself He must indeed hate or **despise** the present life in comparison with the future and eternal one which the Father had promised Him as a reward for obedience unto death.

It will be noticed that in this understanding of it, this 25th verse is applicable to our Lord alone, and not to His followers, for they had no life to lose; they and the whole world were dead, under condemnation of death, because of father Adam’s transgression. Our Lord alone had life, which He had a right to lay down or exchange in order to keep it unto eternal life. Such privileges could not come to His followers until first Jesus had given His life “a **ransom** for all.” Then as soon as the ransom was given and had been accepted of the Father, the redeemed ones (believers justified by their faith) could be reckoned as having life-rights which they would be privileged to consecrate upon the Lord’s altar, and to exchange for the heavenly life, following in the footsteps of Jesus.

And in full accord with this interpretation is the next verse, which distinctly speaks of Jesus’ followers, saying that all who desire to serve Him, and to be with Him, must follow Him—follow Him in this experience, which He, as the forerunner in this way, was already passing through; namely, the consecration and then the despising of His earthly existence, as compared with the spirit life and heavenly glory promised.

It is to their great disadvantage that Christian people so generally fail to discern that there are to be several different classes of saved ones—the over-corners, the great company and the restitution class. The benevolently disposed of those seeking to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, in earthly selfdenials and sacrifices, and in despising the present life in comparison with the future one promised, are robbed of much of their joy and peace and consolation by the thought that only such footstep-followers can ever be with the Lord and honored by the Father; for they realise that such servants constitute a “little flock” indeed. The effect of their ignorance of the divine plan is, with many, a hardening of heart in an attempt to be more like what they understand God to be, as expressed in what they believe to be His plan of eternal torment for all except the little flock. Others, on the other hand, cultivating their benevolence, refuse to believe that the way to this association with Jesus and the divine glorification is so narrow—they widen it more and more to take in their friends, their families, their neighbors, and as many as possible of the heathen; and thus, unconsciously perhaps, gradually but surely they lower the standard of true discipleship, not only for others but also for themselves; they become more and more satisfied with outward forms and ceremonies and platitudes and moralities, and come more and more to consider that their former views were incorrect—when they supposed, in harmony with our Lord’s words, that all who would be with Him and be honored of the Father, must take up their cross and follow in His footsteps.

The light of this harvest-time now shining upon the divine Word and plan makes clear to us, not only the height of the calling of the “elect” church to joint-heirship with her Lord in His glory, but also the reality of the fact that all who would share that glory in the future, must suffer with Him in the present life—must be crucified to sin and to self and to the world; must rise to newness of life in Christ Jesus reckonedly now, actually, if faithful, in the first resurrection. But this harvest light makes clear to us also that the class now called, now intended of the Father to be joint-sacrificers with His Son and joint-heirs with Him of His glory, is altogether but a small fraction of the human family, and that the others who receive not this high calling are to be otherwise blessed in due time under the Millennial Kingdom, by the glorified Jesus and His glorified church and bride.

Those who have this light and appreciate it are saved from the discouragements common to others. They can see the reasonableness of making the way to so high a station as that to which they are called a very narrow one, which will admit at its opening only those who are justified through faith in Christ and who are desirous of pleasing and serving God, and which, at its furthest end, will admit to glory only those who have passed faithfully through the experiences of this time, and are found in heart and character copies of God’s dear Son.—Rom. 8:29.

“Now is my soul troubled”—my feelings are turbulent; I am in a commotion. Shall I pray, Father, deliver me from this hour? Shall I not, on the contrary, remember that for this very cause I am come to this hour, that I might endure, and that willingly, rather than ask to be delivered? I might ask the Father for a certain kind of deliverance which would not invalidate the engagement which I made, that I would give My life in obedience to His will. I might ask Him to permit some calamity to befall Me which would result in My death and thus save Me from the peculiarly trying and ignominious conditions incident to my apprehension and execution as a criminal—as the worst kind of a criminal, a blasphemer against My Heavenly Father. Such a deviation would seem to Me not an unreasonable concession for one who has shown His faithfulness to the Father’s will in all things. And yet I will not ask even this concession. Rather, I will submit My will to the Father’s will most absolutely, and carry out to the very jot and tittle the spirit as well as the letter of My covenant. Let the Father’s will be done in every particular; it must be the wisest and best, else it would not be His plan. It is for this very purpose that I came to this hour, that I might manifest, demonstrate, to the Father My devotion, My most implicit obedience to His will. Proceed, Father! Glorify Thine own name and in Thine own way, at whatever the cost to Me!

Then a voice was heard, a voice which some understood and which others misunderstood, as is always the case with the voice of God. The world heareth no message; believers hear the message partially; but the

begotten sons, in perfect accord with the Father, hear and understand fully. No doubt our Lord received a blessing through this message from the Father, and yet He assures us that it was not specially sent for Him, but rather as a demonstration for the benefit of the disciples—that they might note that God attested His teachings. God does not today speak to His people by such an audible voice; but He speaks none the less forcibly to us—through His Word and through His providences. Yet now, as then, some hear and appreciate more than others. Some, who have the Word of God in their hands appreciate it only as another book, and likewise discern not God's providences in the affairs of His people. Others see in the Lord's Word a message, a good message, and reverence the Book and see in His providences something of the divine care and provision in connection with the body of Christ. But only the spirit-begotten sons, members of the body of Christ, today, like the Head nineteen hundred years ago, hear the Father's Word with distinctness and clearness and understanding. These also note divine providences, and are enabled to rejoice in them, and to realise that all things are working together for good to them because they love God, and have been called according to His purpose, and are in the way of responding to that call, seeking to make their calling and their election sure.

PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM (Bi-Monthly) 60 cents per annum, post paid.

Published by the Berean Bible Institute,  
19 Ermington Place, Kew, Melbourne,  
Victoria, Australia, 3101.

## The Institute's Work

ANOTHER year's work for the Berean Bible Institute has been completed at the end of April, and it is with thankfulness to the Lord for the privileges of service that this brief review of the work is presented from our centre here in Melbourne. With the willing co-operation of our brethren throughout Australia and in other lands the work has continued steadily as in former years, and thanks are expressed to all who have assisted in the efforts undertaken, as unto the Lord.

A regular contact with our brethren and friends throughout this land and overseas has been continued through our bi-monthly "Peoples Paper", the contents of which has been appreciated generally. Our thanks are due to all who have contributed to the columns of the "Paper" and whose assistance in this way has added to the helpfulness of our little journal. As printing costs have increased again during the year, and the subscriptions to the "Peoples Paper" do not cover the cost of production, the deficiency is made up from the General Tract Fund. This expense, however, provides for the "Paper" being supplied free to quite a number of new friends who are showing interest in the message of truth, and thus the interest is encouraged. To our Melbourne friends who have continued to give good assistance with the proof reading and other work towards the "Paper" sincere appreciation is expressed. Readers who can use extra copies of the "Peoples Paper" for passing out where good may be done are gladly supplied; some subscribers receive additional copies regularly, and others are invited to order whatever can be used to advantage.

Tracts are also supplied free from the General Tract Fund to all able and willing to assist in witnessing to the message of the kingdom. Subjects available at the present time are—"Israel and the Holy Land in God's Plan"; "Can the Living Talk with the Dead?"; "When Christ is King"; "Behold, the Bridegroom", and the small leaflets, "Do You Know?" Numerous booklets on various subjects have also been supplied free throughout the year to new cases of interest, and this encourages the desire of earnest truth seekers for such studies as "The Divine Plan of the Ages" and other volumes in this series.

The radio witness has continued throughout the year through 3GL Geelong on Sunday mornings at 10 o'clock, and the response has been encouraging generally. A wide circle of listeners are known to hear the Frank and Ernest Dialogues regularly, and quite a few new listeners respond from week to week to the invitations for printed copies of the broadcasts and suitable booklets offered free. In conjunction with the radio witness a number of lectures were given throughout the year in cooperation with the Melbourne Class. All who respond to the radio witness are supplied with at least six months' copies of the "Peoples Paper" free, in addition to the particular literature at the time of the broadcasts. The broadcasts on 3XY Melbourne on Sunday evenings which were continued to September last year were not fruitful of results considering the extra expense. Sunday morning seems a much better time for listeners to the radio, and we are glad of the opportunity and privilege of having used this means of witness since 1943, in the Lord's providence.

The financial side of our work is revealed in the balance sheets of both the General Tract Fund and the Radio Fund. In the Lord's providence the voluntary contributions of our friends have provided the necessary assistance to the furtherance of the work in hand. The sacrifices made on the part of many of our brethren and friends to help in the efforts undertaken are warmly appreciated, in the Lord's service. The prayers of our dear friends are again requested at this time, that all efforts may continue in all humility and faithfulness, in accord with the Lord's will and to His praise.

Much has taken place in world affairs in the twelve months past, and while the Lord's people are sad at so much distress in most countries today, we can be thankful that events add emphasis not only to the great need of Christ's Kingdom, but also that it will shortly be established to bring order and peace out of man's undone condition all brought about by disobedience to a loving Creator. As the Lord's people we may well take courage as we put all confidence and trust in our Heavenly Father in seeking to fulfil our own consecration to Him and His truth, to the brethren and all with whom we have to do in these last days of the Gospel Age. "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." (Heb. 6:10.)

"God's Promises Come True"—\$2.20.

"The Divine Plan of the Ages," Cloth bound-80c; paper covers-55c.

"Emphatic Diaglott," New Testament—\$2.20.

"Daily Heavenly Manna," birthday pages—\$1.10.

A very good Oxford Bible, with References, India paper, thumb index, Brevier clear type, Persian Morocco binding, is now available at \$9.50. Same Bible with Concordance and Subject Index at \$10.50.

## GENERAL TRACT FUND.

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| To Credit Balance, 1-5-67                            | \$117.62   |
| „ Donations  | 1,401.88   |
| By <i>Free</i> Tracts & Deficiency “Peoples Paper” . | \$228.80   |
| „ Hall Rents, Circulars, etc.                        | 75.60      |
| „ General Expenses (Office, etc.)                    | 214.96     |
| „ Towards Personal & House Expenses                  | 600.00     |
| „ Postage  | 190.99     |
| „ Travel & Sundries .                                | 83.65      |
|  | 125.50     |
| „ Credit Balance, 1-5-68 RADIO FUND.                 | \$1,519.50 |
| To Credit Balance, 1-5-67                            | \$80.50    |
| „ Donations  | 1,201.35   |
| By Radio Station 3GL.                                | \$533.60   |
| „ Radio Station 3XY (To September, 1967).....        | 639.00     |
| „ Printing Dialogues                                 | 15.50      |
| „ Bank Charges                                       | 5.00       |
| „ Credit Balance, 1-568                              | 88.75      |

## Convention News

THE Easter Convention at Adelaide was indeed a very blessed and helpful season of spiritual refreshment and fellowship provided by the Lord’s grace. Our hearts are filled with praise and thankfulness to our Heavenly Father for the many blessings bestowed upon us during the four days of Convention. The presence of a number of visiting brethren added greatly to the success of the gatherings, and we do thank the Lord for putting it into the hearts of so many of His dear people to make the long journey which enabled them to be in our midst, and to share with us the rich blessings provided by the Lord’s grace.

We are grateful also to those dear brethren who assisted us with their talks, and whose loving co-operation contributed to the blessing of this very helpful season of fellowship. The services of our Sisters who provided for our temporal needs were also much appreciated. We greatly missed our dear Brother Jordan who reached the end of the pilgrim way about three weeks before Easter. We rejoice in the thought of our brother’s faithfulness to the Lord, and we pray that our Sister Jordan and family may realise the Lord’s sustaining grace and support in the great loss that has come to them.

The topics of the addresses given by the various brethren were as follows:—”The Ministry of Reconciliation”; “The Life Hid with Christ in God”; “Seeking the Kingdom”; “Down to the Potter’s House”; “The New Creation”; “The Church of the Living God”; “The Way the Lord has Led Us”; “Speaking the Truth in Love”; “The Great Pyramid”; “A New Life”; “Overseas Impressions”; and “Perilous Times.” There were three Bible Studies,—John 12:24-33; Matt.

24:20-28; and Isa. 35:3-10, and these provided interesting and helpful discussion. Also there were two Praise and Testimony Meetings, and the “Hymns We Like and Why” session, and these were helpful and profitable to us all.

Many messages and Scriptural Greetings were received from various Ecclesias, and individual brethren, and these were also much appreciated. The message sent by the Convention to the brethren is found in Heb. 10:19-25.

The usual Love Feast at which we all shake hands bidding each other goodbye and singing “Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love”, and “God be with you till we meet again”, followed by the closing prayer of thanksgiving to God for all His blessings bestowed brought to a close a very helpful and profitable Convention.

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow.”

## Memorial Observances

### MELBOURNE

THE brethren in Melbourne gladly gathered to observe the Memorial of our Lord’s death, and realised God’s blessing in keeping this sacred service in accord with our Saviour’s special request to keep this simple remembrance of His loving sacrifice for His people, and all mankind.

Previous studies in Matthew’s Gospel and 1 Cor. 11:23-26 impressed the important details when our Lord instituted this Memorial which took the place of the annual Jewish Passover for all His devoted followers. So the annual observance was indicated by Jesus to be kept as a sacred anniversary of His sacrifice as the Lamb of God, He being the antitype of the Passover lamb which brought about deliverance for Israel from Egyptian bondage.

After the singing of appropriate hymns, and prayers on behalf of God’s people generally, and an address covering the subject in some detail in a helpful manner, the emblems were partaken of with grateful hearts. This privilege to remember Christ’s sacrifice also testified to our willingness to walk in His steps, to be dead with Christ, if so be that we may live with Him.

### Geelong

As the Passover season approached, our thoughts again turned in a very special way to the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf, and we were pleased to remember Him as He requested we should do in simple manner, and after the example He set after partaking of the Jewish Passover for the last time with His disciples. Two prior studies in Matthew 26:17-19, 26-30 helped us to deeper appreciation in remembering Jesus. A slightly larger little company than usual gathered together on the evening of remembrance, and each doubtless was able to appreciate, in varying degrees of understanding, the sacrifice of our Lord, and the privilege of association with Him which that sacrifice made possible.

## Adelaide

We are thankful to the Heavenly Father for the gift of His only begotten Son to be our Redeemer from the curse of sin and death. And we are thankful also that our Lord Jesus has left us the simple Memorial of His sacrifice, which serves each year, at the appropriate season, to remind us that all our hopes of life, and all the joys and blessings which His grace has bestowed upon us so abundantly, have come to us because Christ laid down His life for us. Truly indeed, as the Prophet has said, “the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.”

The Memorial not only serves to remind us of the great debt of gratitude which we owe to our Saviour, but also enables us to renew our consecration vow to be dead with Christ as members of His body, for it is given to us by God’s grace “not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.” (Phil. 1:29.)

We sang hymns appropriate to the occasion, and we read some Scriptures concerning our Saviour’s last hours on earth. We looked at the meaning of the type and antitype, and with prayers for God’s blessing upon all His consecrated people in every place, we partook of the emblems of our Lord’s broken body and shed blood, asking for the Lord’s grace to help us to be faithful to our vows of consecration, knowing that it is only if we “be dead with Christ” that we can hope “to live with him”; only if “we suffer with him” can we hope to “reign with him.” (2 Tim. 2:11, 12.)

## Perth

Our Lord’s death was remembered again in the Memorial Service held on April 11th. The officiating brother reviewed our Lord’s sacrificial life, terminating at Calvary, and given as a ransom for all. The blessing of life, through the merit of His death appropriated to us by faith was again before our minds. Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us, therefore we kept the feast with solemnity and purpose. The symbols again showed us that Christ was that living Bread sent down from heaven and broken on our behalf; the Cup testifying to Christ’s shed blood cleansing us from all sin and will seal the New Covenant in due time.

Gladly we accepted the Lord’s invitation to eat and drink of the symbols, denoting our wholehearted acceptance of Christ our Saviour. We were indeed thankful to renew our pledge of dying with Christ, and endeavouring to follow in His footsteps, that in due time we may live and reign with Him in the coming Kingdom of righteousness and peace. May we then pursue that purpose by keeping ourselves unspotted from the world, and fighting the good fight of faith with our all on the altar.

## Sydney

With Christianity confronted with change, confusion and disarray, and many sincere believers sorely perplexed and tested, it was nice that a number delivered from bondage could assemble to commemorate the Lord’s death in our Memorial Service again this year.

The chairman gave a lucid discourse reminding those present of the type and antitype, and we were exhorted to be faithful in our covenant of sacrifice. Partaking of the emblems picturing our Lord’s broken body and shed blood, we anticipated the drinking of the cup anew in the kingdom of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ. (Matt. 26:29.)

## Queensland

A small group of us had the privilege of partaking of the emblems on Thursday, April 11th. As well as the usual Scriptures we had a discourse on the Memorial, on tape, by a brother in America which was enjoyed

by all.

## Down to the Potter's House

(Convention Address)

(Jeremiah 18:3, 4)

JEREMIAH was bidden of the Lord to go down to the potter's house. "There will I cause thee to hear my words," God had said to him. And there, as the prophet watched the potter at work, a very revealing object lesson was given him. He saw him begin to shape, or mould a vessel, and then because of a flaw that developed, the potter made the same piece of clay into a different shaped vessel. After Jeremiah had seen this action by the potter, the Lord then asked him if it were not right for Him to do the same, in the words,—"Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hands, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel."

An important point to be noticed in this lesson is that the Lord does not deal with individuals and nations arbitrarily. While the lesson clearly shows that the Lord reserves the right to withhold blessings and to administer punishments, yet what He decides to do is based on the obedience or disobedience of those involved. This is clearly shown in verses 7-10 of this chapter of Jeremiah.

This throws interesting light upon the Apostle's words in Rom. 9:21, where, in describing God's dealings with the Jews, he says,—"Hath not the potter power over the clay; of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?" It is most important that we keep the background of this lesson in mind, or we might get the erroneous idea, as some have, that human beings are under the control of a divine law which arbitrarily governs all that they do. This, of course, if true would mean that man is not a free moral agent.

However, when we study the entire lesson of Jeremiah 18, we find the Lord making it very plain that it is the attitude of individuals involved that determines whether or not they turn out to be vessels of honor or dishonor. Potter's vessels are used a number of times in the Scriptures to represent certain characteristics in connection with the professed people of God. It is said that to this day, there is a certain type of potter's vessel which is called a "vessel of honor." Such a vessel is one of beautiful shape, symmetrical, and holds about five gallons of water, or fluid, and has two handles. Whether in the peasant's home or while being carried to and from the fountain of water the chief characteristic of the vessel of honor is the fact that from it is dispensed pure water, to quench the thirst of the stranger and the weary traveller. If a stranger sees one carrying a vessel of honor, filled with clean, pure water, he feels free to ask for a drink.

The chief mission, then, of a vessel of honor is dispensing free water to passers by. It is of itself nothing but an earthen vessel, but nevertheless, it is a vessel of honor, so named because of its giving out of nature the very essentials of life. And so whether being carried, or in the peasant's home, the vessel of honor occupies a position of favor. Travellers explain that as one enters the home of a peasant, behind the entrance door is found a bench, about four feet high, with three holes in it. This is the stand for the waterjars and is called the "holder of jars." Here will be found two large, or five gallon jars and one small drinking vessel. As one enters the house the peasant offers the small vessel with the invitation to fill it from the first jar, which is the "vessel of honor."

The second large jar on the stand is in appearance very similar to the "vessel of honor," but is looked upon by the owner as being of quite a different nature. This vessel remains at home; it is the "vessel of dishonour." It is used as a receptacle of stale water, and after a time the inside becomes slimy and ill-smelling, and there is no pleasure in it, either to the potter or the owner. It is finally placed in the back yard as a receptacle for waste matter and when this occurs it is called an "abominable vessel."

The interesting thing about these two vessels is that when they are made by the potter there is very little difference in them. What actually determines that one is a vessel of honor and the other a vessel of dishonor is the use that is made of them. There is here a most important lesson for each follower of the Master. Are we striving to be vessels of honor? If so we will endeavor to exercise that giving-out quality which so characterised the vessel of honor. Surely there is no higher honor that can be bestowed upon any one than the privilege of being a dispenser of divine blessings.

In Rom. 9:23 the apostle speaks of “vessels of mercy.” Travellers in Eastern countries will say that in villages where there is no public water supply the villagers supply small vessels of water for travellers. These are mainly for washing purposes, the object being, helpfulness or comfort to others. These are called “vessels of mercy.”

From Rom. 9:22 we read, “What if God, willing to show his wrath and make his power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.” It is very interesting to note the circumstances associated with what the potter finally decides is to become the vessel of wrath fit only to be destroyed. After the potter shapes his vessels from the soft clay, they are placed in a kiln or furnace to be baked. Some, after removal from the furnace, are seen to have cracks, which have resulted from the baking process. However, the potter does not at once decide that these vessels cannot be used; on the contrary he takes a very special cement preparation and mixes it with some of the clay, which is used in the making of his vessels. With this he carefully seals up the cracks in the vessels and then puts them into the furnace again. The second time they may come out of the furnace treatment all right, or they may be again faulty, showing further cracks. But the patient potter may go through this cementing and rebaking process several times, before he is finally obliged to lay a vessel aside as being of no value. These are the ones, impossible of salvage, and are designated “vessels of wrath.”

How well do these vessels represent those whom the Lord, after much patience and long suffering, judges as being worthy only of destruction. We are reminded that there will be some, who, after having had every opportunity to show their appreciation of God’s favors and blessings, will be of this class. However, while this is generally true, Rom. 9:

22 would seem to refer more particularly to the Jewish nation, which, except for the “Israelites indeed,” rejected God’s mercy and favor, and lost not only their position in respect of the high calling, but their national polity as well in the great destruction which came upon them about A.D. 70.

When Ananias was reluctant to visit Saul of Tarsus after his conversion, the Lord said to him,—“Go thy way for he is **a chosen vessel** unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.” (Acts 9:15.) Here, again, we find the Lord using expressions which would be familiar to those of the time in which they were spoken.

It is still the custom of the East, it is said, when a buyer desires a vessel of special value and dependability, to allow the potter to make the choice. From his personal knowledge of the various vessels he has made, he may choose one out of a number and say perhaps, “This one I have chosen, it is special; I would not be ashamed to send this anywhere in the world. It may look to you the same as other vessels and may not seem to have any special attraction, yet it will stand the test. It is a chosen vessel.”

So we are able to see that the Lord’s designation of Paul as being “a chosen vessel” was based upon the sterling qualities which He knew the Apostle possessed. It was not, then, an arbitrary choice irrespective of the qualifications necessary for the great service of God he was called to perform. This same principle of divine choice holds good with respect of God’s dealings with all of His people. He sets the members in the body as it pleaseth Him. His selections are made upon the basis of merit and qualifications. It is also

true that no one will be chosen for membership in the Body except as the Divine Potter is able to see in him the necessary qualifications of faithfulness and loyalty.

An inexperienced purchaser of vessels may look over many different ones and be unable to note the difference, if any, in their quality. But the potter who is acquainted with the materials and workmanship is able to select those which are of really fine and enduring quality. So it is in the selection of all the various vessels which the Lord is now preparing for future use in the kingdom. Human wisdom may not be able to see the difference between the qualified and unqualified, but the Divine Potter who is able to read the heart is able to base His judgment not upon external appearances but upon the genuine inward qualifications of each one. Hence, He makes the selection and sets each member in the position in His arrangement for which he is best qualified.

Another reference to the pictorial significance of the potter's vessel is found in 2 Tim. 2:20, 21. Here again, we are reminded that some of these vessels are used as vessels of honor and some as vessels of dishonor or less honor. Paul applies this to the experience of the Lord's people and indicates that the factor which determines whether we are vessels of honor or dishonor is our attitude toward the Lord and His truth. Evidently the Lord does not wish us to get the lesson (as some do) from the potter's use of the clay that there is nothing for us to do but yield to the divine moulding process. Read 2 Tim. 2:21. Yes, there is something for us to do, and in the doing of which we will help to determine whether or not we turn out to be vessels of honor or dishonor.

Read 2 Tim. 2:15. In this admonition to Timothy, Paul shows the important responsibility that is ours of not only studying that we may show ourselves approved unto God, but that we may in our work for Him show an effort that will redound to His glory. So then, if we as vessels of honor are to be prepared unto every good work, it means that we will endeavor to rightly divide the Word of Truth so that when we speak for the Lord our message will be such as will not eat like a canker and destroy the faith of some. Not only are we, as vessels of honor, to purge ourselves from those things which are out of harmony with God's Word of truth, but we must follow as the Apostle shows, — "Righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart." We must not be like the vessels of dishonor which are filled with stale, impure water, but are to be clean vessels, filled with the pure, clean water of God's precious truth, and ever ready to give out this truth for the blessing and refreshment of others. (See John 4:14; 7:38.)

The more we study the subject of the potter and the clay, the more it becomes apparent that the lesson is not the lack of responsibility on the part of the clay, but rather, God's right to deal with individuals based upon their degree of faithfulness to Him. It is true, of course, that we as Christians should yield ourselves to the influences of God's holy spirit. (Rom. 12:2.) We should humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and not rebel against His providences. Nevertheless, the Christian life is much more than merely that of a passive acquiescence in the divine will. It includes aggressive efforts on our part to do that which the Lord outlines as His will for us. It means that we are not only to yield ourselves in obedience, but to actively engage in the work of purging ourselves and of setting ourselves apart to be used of the Lord as vessels of honor.

Yes, we are indeed clay in the Potter's hand. The matter of being vessels of honor or chosen vessels depends upon our own faithfulness, our obedience, our yielding to and fulfilling the Word of God, so far as we can in our every thought, word and deed. And our success in these things depends upon the degree of determination, we may add, aggressive determination, with which we tackle the every day task of yielding to the moulding influence of the Master Potter's hand.

## Pilgrim Ways Ended

OUR elderly Brother Almond of Melbourne finished the pilgrim way on March 19th after about 50 years of devoted service amongst the Lord's people. It has been our pleasure and privilege to enjoy fellowship with our dear Brother at the Melbourne Class for about 25 years, previous to which he had associated with the Truth cause in England.

Ever zealous for the Lord and His truth and with a stirring disposition to proclaim the message of the kingdom at all opportunities our Brother Almond was a good example of the believers. In recent years failing health and strength kept him restricted to his home, but his love and devotion to the Lord was always bright and sustained.

To our Sister Almond and family members sincere sympathy is extended in the loss sustained, and we are thankful that the end of our Brother Almond's long Christian life came so peacefully, and that the words of the Revelator are fulfilled with our dear Brother, by the Lord's grace,— "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

From Adelaide the following is received respecting the passing of three of our dear friends there in recent times.

On March 25th our Brother J. Jordan of Adelaide reached the end of the pilgrim way. For about 36 years our brother had been associated with the Adelaide Class, and by the Lord's grace had rendered valuable service to the brethren in the interests of the truth. Our brother's willingness to serve the brethren in any capacity was much appreciated, and his loving services for the Lord and His brethren will be much missed by the Adelaide friends.

We rejoice in our brother's faithfulness to the Lord, and we believe that he has now entered into the reward of the faithful. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Our sincere sympathy is extended to our Sister Jordan and family, and pray that they may be strengthened and supported by the Lord's sustaining grace, for He has said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." (Isa. 41:10.)

On April 9th our elderly Sister Richardson was called Home after a long life of loving service for the Lord. Our Sister was in her 104th year. About 50 years ago when Sister Richardson first received the message of "present truth," she gave much help, by the Lord's grace, to the members of the Class at Gawler, S.A. Our sympathy is extended to the members of our Sister's family. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." "They shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels."

Also on May 9th our Sister Pearl Barrie came to the end of her earthly way. For a number of years Sister Barrie had been associated with the friends in Adelaide. Our Sister had a simple faith in the great love of God, and in His saving grace and mercy in Christ. She had a kind and happy disposition, and did what she could to serve the Lord and His people. How good it is to realise that "the Lord knows those who are His," and we can commit our loved ones to His unerring wisdom and loving care. Our sympathies are extended to the members of our Sister's family in the loss they have sustained.

ARNALL & JACKSON-PRINT