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The Gifts of Whitsuntide.

(1 Cor., 12).

WHITSUNTIDE, or Pentecost, marks a very special period in God's great Program respecting mankind. It stands next in importance to the great events connected with our Lord Jesus ; viz., His baptism at Jordan and the anointing of the holy spirit there, His finishing of His vow of consecration at Calvary, His resurrection from the dead on the third day—His glorious spirit-birth, as partaker of the Divine nature.

All that Jesus did necessarily preceded the acceptance of any members of the human family to joint-heirship with Him, or to any recognition of God as His children. God acknowledged Adam as His son on the human plane, "a little lower than the angels," so long as he remained obedient and loyal ; but when he disobeyed and came under the Divine sentence of death, he broke the covenant between God and himself. (Hosea 6:7, margin). From that time onward, God had no sons amongst men until Jesus' time, because all were imperfect, sharing in father Adam's imperfection by laws of heredity.

Then God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, with a life uncontaminated, a life that was not derived from father Adam and was therefore not involved in his sentence. This One, "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners," God recognised as His Son. When He made consecration of His life at Jordan and symbolised it in His water baptism, God accepted the sacrifice and bestowed upon Him the holy spirit in begetting power.

Thenceforth He was the Son of God in two senses —first, according to the flesh ; and second, according to the spirit. But in God's, order the spirit-begotten One was to triumph by fully offering up the fleshly one. This work of Jesus was accomplished at Calvary, where He laid down His life on behalf of the sins of the whole world.

But still God could not recognise the world. They were all sinners, and continued so to be until Jesus ascended on High, appeared in the Father's presence, and made satisfaction for sins. Be it noted, however, that He did not make satisfaction for all sins then, but merely for the sins of the Church—for the sins of those who would be called of the Father, and who would accept the call and walk in the footsteps of Jesus. As for the world, their sins are still on them.

The only way to obtain forgiveness of sins during this Age, therefore, is to become a disciple of Jesus.

Thus, as the Apostle says, we, Jesus' followers, have escaped the condemnation that is still on the world. The Scriptures show us that God has a different way for dealing with the world, and a different time. He will deal with the world through Christ's Millennial Kingdom, for a thousand years, to scatter their darkness, to forgive their sins and lift them, up, to human perfection. Meantime, God deals with the Church only; and it is the Church class that the Apostle discusses in respect of the gifts.

This Church class began its existence at Pentecost—Whitsuntide. Hence, we say that this marks a most important era in the affairs of the Church. It is true that Jesus called His disciples and told them various things during His ministry ; but when He left them, He instructed them to tarry and not to begin their work at all until they should be duly authorised by the Father, duly anointed with the holy spirit. This anointing which they would receive would be their authority, and would give them necessary qualifications to be the mouthpieces and ambassadors of the Father and of the Son.

The Father could not recognise them sooner than Pentecost, for until Christ's presentation of His merit on their behalf, they were like the remainder of the world—still sinners, still condemned. When the Pentecostal blessing came, it manifested the fact that Jesus had ascended to the Father's presence, and that the Father had graciously received Him, had appreciated His great work of sacrifice, and had accepted it as satisfactory for the sins of the Church—the Household of Faith. It was on the basis of this forgiveness of sins, as well as on the basis of the consecration of the disciples to God and His service, that the spirit-begetting of Pentecost came upon them.

The Gifts of the Spirit.

We 'are to distinguish between the gifts of the spirit and the fruits of the spirit. The fruits of the holy spirit are developments of the heart and character, which come more or less slowly, according to the personality and the environment of each of the spirit-begotten ones. These fruits of the spirit, the Apostle tells us, can be seen; they are manifest -- "Meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness, love."

These fruits must be developed in our hearts ; and this will mean more or less of a manifestation of them in our words and deeds, as well as in our thoughts. The riper the Christian, the riper these fruits; and if no fruits, then no Christian; for as the Apostle says, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His." But this spirit of Christ, these fruits of the spirit, may be more or less overshadowed by weaknesses of the flesh ; and all may not be able to see to what extent the brother who is weak in the flesh is really fighting a good fight against the spirit of the world, the spirit of the Adversary, and the mind of his own flesh.

God alone knoweth the heart ; therefore, we are to judge nothing as respects the degree of faithfulness. We may, however, and should judge, as to whether or not we see good fruits or bad fruits in ourselves, or in others who profess to be followers of Jesus. The Master said, "By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" Surely not! The thorns and the thistles are bad fruits, belonging to the evil nature, and not fruits of the spirit, of the Lord, appertaining to the New Creature,

But when Pentecost came, those disciples who had already accepted Jesus were not prepared to manifest immediately rich, ripe fruitage of the holy spirit. It requires days, weeks, months, years, for such development. Up to this time they were natural men. Only a few days before Jesus had said to them, "Except ye become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom." He perceived that there was strife amongst themselves as to which should be greatest; and that this was entirely contrary to the proper spirit which they must have if they would finally be accounted worthy of participation in His Kingdom. We see then why the brethren waiting at Pentecost in the upper room could not have a manifestation of the fruits of the spirit at that time. But it was very necessary to them and to us that they should have some manifestation of God's favour; that there should be some way in which God would

show that Jesus had accomplished the Father's work, and that His sacrifice had been acceptable to the Father on our behalf. God manifested this acceptance by the bestowment of certain gifts, which were not fruits of the spirit, in any sense of the word.

Those gifts were widely distributed in the early Church, and were miraculous. Some who had received the gift of the spirit spoke one language and some another, of which they had previously no knowledge; some had the gift of interpreting the foreign languages which the others spoke; some received the gift of healing; and some had power to work other miracles.

These gifts served a three-fold purpose: (1) They proved God's favour, and that it had come through Christ, and therefore proved that He had ascended, and that His entire work of redemption had been satisfactory to the Father. (2) They were proofs to the public that God was with these people. This would lead lovers of God to investigate the Message they bore. (3) They were an assurance to the disciples themselves that they were following in the right way, and that God was blessing them and leading them.

All these experiences, indispensable for the establishment of the early Church, came at a time when such manifestation was most necessary. The early Church could not walk by faith as we do. They needed the assistance of sight, to the extent that was there granted, for they had no Bibles. They had no instruction from God except such as came through these channels.

St. Paul explains the matter to us. When they,, came together, one would speak in an unknown tongue. Another would arise in another part of the audience, and with a power not his own give an interpretation of the foreign language used by the speaker with "tongues." This drew the brethren together every day, especially on the first day of the week. They wanted to have fellowship and instruction ; and in this way they obtained it, God guiding in respect of the messages delivered in unknown tongues and to the interpretations.

Thus God taught them in almost the only way they could have received instruction at that time, but very differently from the way in which He now instructs His people, or has ever instructed them since the Apostles' day. Such instruction is no longer necessary, and is therefore no longer given. Instead, we have something much better. We have the Gospels, recording our Lord's words, parables, dark sayings, etc., we have the Epistles of the New Testament, comments of the inspired Apostles on the Old Testament writings; and we have the prophecies of the Old Testament, to which St. Peter declares, "We do well to take heed, as unto a light which shineth in a dark place, until the Day dawn." —2 Peter I :19.

Ours a Better Experience.

With these Divinely provided helps, the man of God, as St. Paul declares, "may be thoroughly furnished unto every good work." Through these channels the holy spirit is instructing the Church. But the gifts of the spirit were necessary at Pentecost. Instead of those gifts, we now have the fruits of the spirit, as testifying God's favour, and our own progress in the good way. With our further enlightenment the Lord requires of us more than was required of the early Church—that we walk by faith and not by sight.

St. Paul points out that all these variations in the manifestations of the spirit meant, not different spirits, but the one Spirit, working in the entire Church, with the one purpose of building them all up as various members in the one Body of Christ. He says, "There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God that worketh all in all. To one is given by the spirit the word of wisdom ; to another, the word of knowledge; to another, faith; to another, gifts of healing; to another, miracles; to another, prophecy ; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, diversity of tongues and interpretations."

"Ye Are All One Body."

The oneness of the Church with each other and with their Lord, the Head, St. Paul repeatedly sets forth. He shows that the different gifts enable the different members of the Body to co-operate for their mutual welfare, edification and upbuilding, in preparation for the glories of service in the coming Kingdom. He says that as the human body is one, but has many members, all under the control of the head, so also is the Body of Christ. The Church is one Body, but composed of many members, all under the control of the Head, Jesus, operating through the spirit of truth, by the Word of truth and by Divine providences.

The object of the organisation of the Church is not the conversion of the world, but it is the up-building of herself and preparation for a future service. That future service is to be the blessing of the world. But before that service for the world can be properly begun, the Church herself must be developed, proven, approved of God, and glorified by a share in the First Resurrection.

A More Excellent Way.

St. Paul, further on in the chapter, tells how the various members of the Body should co-operate with each other, offsetting each other's imperfections, compensating for each other's shortcomings and weaknesses, and seeking only the welfare of the Body as a whole. There should be no schisms, no division, no sectarianism in the Body of Christ, the Church, and all the members should have the same love one for another. Sectarian love and sectarian pride should be unknown. Likewise, if any of the members suffer, all should feel a sympathy. He points out that God set the different members in this Body ; first, the Apostles; and secondarily, prophets, or orators; and thirdly, teachers ; after that, miracles, gifts, helps, diversities of tongues. All have not the same office given them of the Lord, but each should seek faithfully to use the talents which he possesses; and while using these gifts they should seek the best they are- capable of exercising.

Then the Apostle adds, "Yet shew I unto you a more excellent way," still better than any of these gifts. Following along (chapter 13), he declares that one might have these gifts, and yet make shipwreck entirely ; and that it was necessary, even with the gifts, to cultivate the fruits of the spirit. For though we should have the gift of prophecy, understanding all mysteries and knowledge, ...and have all faith, but have not love—the great fruit of the spirit—we would be nothing. Moreover., he declares that the gifts would vanish away, but that the fruits would last eternally.

It is important, then, in our 'consideration of Whitsuntide blessings, that we remember that without the fruits of the spirit we would be nothing, and would have no share in the glorious Messianic Kingdom, for which we are waiting and praying, "Thy Kingdom come ; Thy will be done on earth as in Heaven."
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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.

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“This Do in Remembrance of Me.”

JESUS was a Jew, and was, therefore, obligated to every feature of the Mosaic Law. He came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it. This study points us to the fulfilment of one feature of the Law—the Passover—not that it is already entirely fulfilled, but that the antitype has been in process of fulfilment for nineteen centuries, during which time the Church of the First-born remains covered by the blood.

To appreciate this study, we must have clearly in mind the type :—Approximately 3500 years ago God delivered the people of Israel from the despotic power of Pharaoh, King of Egypt. Time after time Pharaoh had refused to let the people go, preferring to hold them as chattels, slaves. Time after time God had sent plagues upon Egypt as chastisements. Under the influence of each plague Pharaoh repented, and through Moses entreated God for mercy for himself and the people for relief from the plague. Nevertheless, every manifestation of Divine mercy tended only to harden his heart, until finally the tenth plague, the severest of all, was necessary. That plague consisted in the execution of the death sentence against all the first-born of Egypt. But the Israelites in Egypt were exempt from its provisions under certain conditions. Each family was required to have its own lamb, not a bone of which was to be broken. Its blood was sprinkled on the door-posts of the house, and the family, assembled within, partook of its flesh, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, pilgrim-like, with staff in hand, ready for departure out of Egypt in the morning.

Israel's First-borns Passed Over.

When that night the Divine sentence slew all of Egypt's first-borns, the first-borns of Israel were passed over or spared ; hence the name Passover. And this ceremony, as a reminder of the great blessing of the Lord upon Israel, was commended to be observed yearly as a memorial of God's goodness, and because it typed, or illustrated, a still greater mercy and blessing yet to come.

A little later on those spared first-borns were exchanged for one of the tribes—Levi. Thereafter the Levites were the passed-over first-borns, and were specially devoted to God and His service.

The Antitypical Fulfilment.

Those experiences of the Israelites and their firstborn ones were very real, and properly very interesting to them; but they are still more interesting to Christians, who themselves are antitypes now being passed over. By Christians we do not mean all who merely make profession, nor all who attend Church, however regularly. We mean merely the saintly few who are now being called and being tested as to faithfulness to the Lord, and by faith being passed over—from death unto life. These are Scripturally styled “The Church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven” (Heb. 12:23). As the deliverance of the nation of Israel from Egypt took place after the sparing or passing over of the firstborn, so, correspondingly, the Divine blessing will come upon the world of mankind directly after the completion of “the Church of the first-born”—directly after their passing from death unto life, by the power of the First Resurrection. If there is a first-born class, it implies that there will be an after-born class. Thus the Scriptures everywhere distinctly teach that the present call, trial, testing, proving and final rewarding of the Church will not be the end of Divine mercy toward humanity, but, on the contrary, will be only its beginning; for since the saintly are spoken of as the “Church of the firstborn,” or, as the Apostle declares, “the first-fruits unto God of His creatures” we are assured thereby that afterfruits are equally part of the Divine Programme.

Amongst the Levites were several divisions, representing different ranks and grades of the Church of Christ. But the principal division or section of the Levites was the priestly family of Aaron, just as there is

a special class amongst the antitypical Levites, the faithful few, known in the Scriptures as the Royal Priesthood.

The Antitypical Lamb And His Blood.

In Jesus' day the time had come for the fulfilment of the antitype of the Passover. Jesus Himself was to be the Passover Lamb. By faith the merit of His sacrifice, His blood, was to be sprinkled upon the door-posts of His people's hearts, and His flesh, the merit of His earthly perfection, was to be eaten or appropriated by them in their minds. With it they were to eat the unleavened bread of the Divine promises, and bitter herbs of trials and adversities, and withal they were to drink wine, the blood of the grape, symbolically implying their participation with the Lamb in ignominy and sufferings.

The Lamb of God, Jesus, the antitypical Passover Lamb, was slain nearly nineteen centuries ago on the exact anniversary of the killing of the typical lamb. The sacrifice of Jesus needs not to be repeated, for by faith we all sprinkle this same blood to-day, and in our hearts feed upon the merit of the same earthly sacrifice, and have plenty of bitter herbs of persecution, and drink of the blood—share the Master's spirit and its reward of suffering for righteousness' sake.

Not many have appreciated these privileges during all these nineteen centuries—in all hilt a “little flock.” Nor are there many who envy them their present experiences ; nor are there many who appreciate how great will be their reward and blessings in the life to come. Then, instead of suffering with Christ, they shall reign with Him in glory, honor, and immortality.

“This Do in Remembrance of Me.”

Jesus, about to begin the fulfilment of this type by dying as the antitypical Passover Lamb (Christ our Passover is slain for us.-1 Cor. 5:7), instituted for His followers an annual remembrance, which, in their minds, would take the place of the type, and continually remind them of the great Antitype. Instead of the literal flesh of the Lamb, our Master used bread, and instead of the blood, the fruit of the vine, and instead of a further commemoration of the type, He directed that this be done in remembrance of the antitype--”the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world,” and the passover coming to the Church of the first-born, as precedent to the great blessings for Israel and all the families of the earth.

Our Lord, as a Jew, was obligated to keep the typical Passover, eating of the literal lamb, etc., first ; but subsequently, after that Passover supper, He instituted with the bread and fruit of the vine His substitutionary memorial of Himself, saying, “Take eat, this is my body. And He took the cup ; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them ; and they all drank of it. And he said, . . . Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the Kingdom of God”—until His second coming in power and great glory to receive the Church as His elect Bride and Joint-Heir in His kingdom, and to shower blessings richly upon Israel, and through Israel upon the whole world of mankind.

Judas, the, Selfish Betrayer.

The hour for the betrayal was drawing near. The Master knew by some power unknown to us who would betray Him, etc. Breaking the matter to the twelve, He said, “One of you will betray me.” Each said, “Is it I?” Even Judas brazenly challenged the Master's knowledge of his deceitful course and said, “Is it I?” The answer was, “It is as you have said--you are the betrayer.” The Divine programme was carried out by the traitor, and the Scriptures were fulfilled, which declare that Jesus should be sold for thirty pieces of silver ; but the coincidence marks the Divine fore-knowledge with-. our implying that God in any manner instigated the traitorous conduct, hence the statement, “Woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is

betrayed.” From this standpoint we are to understand that there is no hope for Judas in a future life. His sorrow and anguish before his death were such as found no compensation in any happiness he had enjoyed in previous days.

In My Father’s Kingdom.

In giving the disciples the bread which represented His flesh, and the cup which represented His blood, the Master pictorially offered them justification and sanctification, and, as St. Paul explained, He did more than this—He offered them a participation with Himself in the sufferings of the present and in the glories of the future (1 Cor. 10:10, 17; Matt. 26:29). The antitype of the cup in its higher sense will be the new joys of the kingdom which all the faithful in Christ will share with the great King of Glory, when he shall take unto Himself His great power and reign.

“Lord, I would keep Thy Holy feast,
Like Israel when His bondage ceased;
And safe beneath the sprinkled mark,
His every home became an ark.

Only the Lamb which Israel slew
I need not to make bleed anew:
Because the blood which stained the Cross
Is mark of which there ne’er is loss.

I’d keep the feast with bread from heaven,
Free from all taint of earthly leaven:
Yet find some sad resemblance glide,
Which sets the bitter herbs beside.

I seek the feast with upgirt mind,
As for immediate work assigned;
And eat like one on passing stay,
Impatient to resume the way.

That sprinkled blood hath had the power
To hold me safe in judgment’s hour;
But still for me a task remains,
To haste and flee from Egypt’s plains.

With Thy refreshing viands fed,
I shrink not, Lord, wherever led;
And still with pilgrim’s staff in hand,
Plod firmly tow’rds the promised land.”

—Selected.

Memorial Service in Melbourne.

The Memorial of our Lord's death will be observed (D.V) by the Melbourne Class on Sunday evening, 5th April, at 7 p.m., in the regular meeting rooms at "Tower House," 18 Queen Street, Melbourne.

All consecrated followers of Christ are invited to attend this Service in remembrance of our Lord's atoning sacrifice.

Adelaide Easter Convention and Memorial.

The brethren of the Adelaide Class extend a cordial invitation to all friends able to attend their Easter Convention again this year.

The gatherings will be held (D.V.) from Good Friday, 10th April, to Easter Monday, 13th April, in Liverpool Buildings, Flinders Street, Adelaide (Easter Monday to be spent at Gawler).

The celebration of the Memorial of our Lord's death will be held by the Adelaide Class on 5th April, the Sunday evening prior to the Convention.

Programmes and further information may be received from Mrs. H. H. Bartel, 10 Forest Avenue East, Clarence Gardens, Adelaide.

The Lord's Sanctuary.

Psa. 73:2-17.

(Convention Address).

THE Psalmist was in great discouragement as he looked out on the world and beheld its injustices, its inequalities and its evils. It was all so out of harmony with his conception of God's love, justice, wisdom and power. As a consequence, his "feet were almost gone, his steps had well nigh slipped"; in short, his faith had almost failed, he was in doubt and perplexity. The age old question of why evil is permitted was troubling him, as it has thoughtful minds from the beginning, for, as the prophet says, man's ways and thoughts are not God's ways and thoughts, and the answer to it ail can be seen only from God's standpoint.

And so the Psalmist continued, "until he went into the Sanctuary of God." What a change was then wrought; there he got God's viewpoint—the mind of the Lord, the wonderful soul-satisfying, peace-bringing, elevating vision of God's ways- - to be found only in His Sanctuary. Psa, 65:4; 84:10.

So it is with us. Although formerly in similar perplexity, the same wonderful privilege is open to us also, by God's love and mercy and grace. We, too, may come into His Sanctuary; we, too, may thus obtain the wonderful vision of God's ways and Plan.

How, then, may we gain admission to God's Sanctuary ? It is only, if, like the Psalmist, we realise our need, that we can gain admittance. We need that humility of heart and mind that divests us of our own wisdom that we may seek only God's ways, for "God resisteth the proud but showeth favour to the humble." And again, "He knoweth the proud afar off." God thus knows the proud, but He knows them afar off ; they are not close to Elim in His Sanctuary—the secret place of fellowship and communion. How sweetly the Master's words have rung clown through the age to His humble ones with the hearing ear—"Come unto Me all ye that labour . . . and I will give you rest." The Psalmist (Psa. 91) tells us that it is the secret place of the Most High, and the Apostle, speaking of the spirit-begotten ones of this age, says, "We are seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." it is the antitype of the Holy Place of the Tabernacle to which the priests alone had access.

As the Psalmist's feet were almost gone until he went into the sanctuary—so with us. Without, all is dark, slippery and uncertain, and we need to make the sanctuary our continual abode. Here alone is the true wisdom obtained that wisdom from above, of which the Apostle speaks (Jas. 3:17 ; Col. :9; 2:3), and that knowledge of the truth that alone can sanctify us (John 17:17). Like David, this one desire should fill our hearts—"To dwell in the house of the Lord, to behold His beauty, and to enquire in His temple."

The Psalmist says, "Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary" (Psa. 96:6). Here, then, is our source of strength, and which is in harmony with the Apostle's exhortation to be "strong in the Lord." Isa. 40:31, tells us "Those that wait on the 'cud shall renew their strength ; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary ; they shall walk and not faint." Thus is our strength restored and renewed continually. Like our physical strength, our spiritual strength needs to be continually. replenished. The Lord does not give us strength for a long period ahead, but He continually renews us, if we wait on Him. Like the manna in the wilderness, it needs to be gathered day by day,

The Prophet tells us that this strength will enable us to mount up with wings as eagles. How high the eagles mount up ; we see them sometimes like mere specks in the sky. How does the eagle get so high? His great strength enables him to. mount up on the invisible air, and so with us. In the Lord's strength, renewed day by day, we, too, can mount up on the things invisible to the natural eye, the things seen only

by the eye of faith and spiritual understanding. And what a wonderful view this gives us, our scope of vision is enlarged, our horizon stretches out until we can behold the land that is very far off (Isa. 33:17).

In addition to strength, the Psalmist tells us that beauty, also, is in the Lord's sanctuary. The word "beauty," here, has also the thought of comeliness, fairness, honour and majesty. This was the one great desire of David, to dwell in the House of the Lord, and to behold His beauty (Psa. 27:4). Again, in Isa. 33:17, we have this promise—"Thine eyes shall see the king, in His beauty"—the perfection of beauty and holiness. "Who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness?" (Exod. 15:11).

So, the Lord desires us to attain this beauty of holiness also, and to this end He has brought us into His sanctuary. There He covers our uncouthness with His beautiful garments—the garments of salvation, the robe of righteousness and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. "Awake, awake ; put on thy strength, O Zion ; put on thy beautiful garments." (Isa. 52:1).

Not only does the Lord desire us to be thus outwardly adorned, but He desires us to be beautiful within. The Psalmist says, "The King's daughter is all glorious within," and so David prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O Lord, and renew a right spirit within me."

The Lord looks on the heart and the Apostle tells us how we may be changed and made glorious within when he says, "We behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18).

Let us, then, seek to dwell in the Lord's sanctuary, to make it the place of our continual inquiry and source of strength, joy, peace and fellowship with the Lord. "Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house and the place where Thine honour dwelleth" (Psa. 26:8).

River of Water of Life.

IN Ezekiel we find that the Lord gives us a picture of the Messianic Age, .very similar to the one given us in the Book of Revelation, seven hundred years after.

Ezekiel's picture shows Jerusalem and the Temple of God as the starting point for the River of the Water of Life ; so in the Revelation account. Ezekiel shows the river deepening and broadening from a rivulet to a mighty river. He pictures it as flowing down to the Dead Sea, and carrying life whithersoever it goes.

He pictures the Dead Sea as being revived, recovered from its deadness, and full of fish. No such river has ever yet sprung forth from Jerusalem, nor can we imagine how the river would ever have its start in the mountain top and reach such proportions in the short distance.

This description, picturing a great spiritual truth, is in full accord with the picture in Revelation. It represents beautifully, forcefully, the blessings of refreshment and restitution which will issue forth from the New Jerusalem, the Kingdom of Messiah, when it shall be established amongst men. Gradually the mighty influences of the reign of Messiah will extend blessings to all mankind, even to the submerged class, steeped in ignorance and superstition and degradation, fitly represented by the Dead Sea.

Revelation pictures this river as flowing from under the Throne, the New Jerusalem, clear as crystal, and having trees of life on either side of its banks, good for food. Ezekiel has the same picture in mind; he tells of the same trees, whose leaves shall not fade and whose fruit shall not fall, but which will bring forth good fruit every month, because the water which refreshes them comes from the Sanctuary. "The fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaves thereof for healing." Similarly, in Revelation, we are told, "The leaves will be for the healing of the people; and the fruit for the sustenance of everlasting life; and the Water itself will be for their refreshment." Then, we are told, "the Spirit and the Bride" shall give the invitation—a world-wide invitation; "Whosoever will" then may come, and he who hears the invitation may say to others, "Come, and drink of the Water of Life, freely"!

No "River of Water of Life" Now.

We are certain in our application of these symbolic pictures, that they belong to the future and not to the present time. There is the Water of Life of Revelation now? Where have we anything corresponding- to the life-sustaining trees and their healing leaves? On the contrary, we have the Lord's Word for it that "No man can come unto Me except the Father which sent Me draw him." (John 6:44). In other words, there is a measure of selection or election as respects the class invited to constitute "the Bride, the Lamb's Wife." "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called."

But with the end of this Age will come the end of the elective process; then the Divine Message will be Free Grace, an offering and opportunity to every creature of Adam's race. All blind eyes will be opened that all may see; all (leaf ears will be unstopped that all may hear; and the knowledge of the glory of God shall fill the whole earth; none will need to say to his neighbour, "Know the Lord, for all shall know Him from the least unto the greatest of them."--Jer. 31:34.

No Bride to say "Come."

The Revelation picture tells us that the Bride of Christ, as well as the holy spirit, will give the invitation to every creature to come and partake of the Water of Life, freely. But how could the Bride give this invitation before she exists? That there is no Bride at the present time is manifest. Now is the time for

calling the Bride class. Now is the time for those invited to make their “calling and their election sure”; but there will be no Bride until the Incoming Age. The name “Bride” implies a marriage; the Church is already espoused . to Christ, but the marriage is promised to take place at His second coming. Then there will be a Bride, and shortly after, the Bride, in association with her Lord, will be in Kingdom power, in the New Jerusalem—the heavenly. From that city, that new Seat of earth’s Empire, will go forth God’s Message, gradually deepening and broadening until every member of the race shall have had an opportunity to share in its blessing of life everlasting.

In thinking of these glorious favours coming to mankind, let us remember that they will all be earthly — a restitution to that which was lost. Earthly, splendour and human perfection are God’s provision for the willing and obedient of mankind in general. The invitation to become members of the Bride of Christ is a limited one, having a limited time;; and if our understanding of the Scriptures is correct, the end of this special opportunity is nigh —the time for the change to the condition of glory is at the door—the time for the blessing of all the families of the earth is at hand.

Correspondence.

March, 1936. Dear Brother,

You recently published a very helpful article from the “Old Paths,” and until recently I had enjoyed the reading in these pamphlets, although perhaps not endorsing all they taught; but in the last few issues, instead of keeping to the “Old Paths” they have wandered into “By Paths.” One recently declared, “The end is not yet,” and another states,

“The Millennium is here.” How can the era of Christ’s reign of 1000 years have begun if the end of the present evil world has not yet been reached? Surely there was no doubt when the “Old World” of Noah’s day ended and the New Era—the “Present Evil World”—began. While there were 120 years of warning, yet the ending of one world and the beginning of another world or age only occupied a short time—seven days to end, and in fifteen months the New Age had begun.

It seems absurd to say “the Millennium is here.” In the pamphlet the writer acknowledges that “man’s troubles have increased a hundred-fold” in the last sixty years, during which, he says, Christ has been ruling. He bases his claim on a chronological chain which is faulty. The period allotted to the Judges, 450 years, is not warranted; in fact, is contradicted by 1 Kings 6:1. The period of 450 years mentioned in Acts 13:20 refers to the time from Isaac to the division of the land. See Tichendorf’s New Testament rendering from the Sinaitic MSS. The period of the Kings is also incorrect, as may be seen from a careful scrutiny of dates of reigns, comparing the Kings of Israel and the Kings of Judah.

There does not appear to be sufficient Scriptural and other evidence that 1874 was the time of our Lord’s return, let alone that ‘He set up His Kingdom from that date, or 1878. There is strong evidence that our Lord would be present for some time prior to the establishing of His Throne and the opening of the New Age.

Quite possibly “the days of the Son of Man,” at the end of this “present evil world” prior to the “great time of trouble,” would be about the same length of time as were “the days of Noah which were before the flood.”

There are several points in the pamphlet I do not agree with. I will just mention one or two:—(1) Regarding the Parable of the Ten Virgins: Although claiming “the Millennium is here,” the writer expects earth’s trouble to go on increasing and that it will be in these troubles that “the virgins will awaken from their slumber.” But Bro. Russell has shown that the virgins were awakened in 1829-44 by the Millerite movement. Besides, when the Millennium begins, the Bride of Christ will be with Him complete as “the queen in gold of Ophir.” She must reign with Him 1000 years (not 900 odd). Just so Satan’s kingdom must first be overthrown and Satan bound for 1000 years (not In view of these coming blessings foretold by the Prophet and by the Lord Himself, can we not join with the poet in singing:—

“Rejoice! rejoice! the promised time is coming!
Rejoice! rejoice! the wilderness shall bloom!
And Zion’s children soon shall sing,
‘The deserts all are blossoming!’
Rejoice! rejoice! the promised time is coming!
Rejoice! rejoice! the wilderness shall bloom!
The Gospel banner wide unfurled,
Shall wave in triumph o’er the world,
And every creature, bond or free, hail hail the glorious Jubilee!”

900 odd). Satan and Christ cannot both rule concurrently, See Matthew 12:29 and Luke 11:21.

(2) The writer uses the figure of deliverance of Israel from Egypt as though to illustrate that the Kingdom is set up before the time of trouble. It would seem rather to prefigure the opposite—Moses had been quite a long time negotiating the deliverance and preparing Israel, but it was not until Pharoah’s hosts were drowned that the Law Covenant was established; and just so, not until Satan is overcome will Christ establish His throne, inaugurate the New Age, establish the New Covenant with Israel and open up the Highway. Much more could be said.

I regret having to take such exceptions to this publication, but loyalty to the truth appears to require it.

Yours in Christian love and service,
Scotland.

Berean Biblical Institute.
Dear Brethren,

Christian greetings. Once again it is our privilege to send you our annual subscription for the “People’s Paper,” and, as usual, half the amount enclosed is forwarded by our Bro. and Sis.

We sincerely trust that the interests of present truth are progressing favourably with you in Australia, and that the brethren are continuing to recognise the advantage of a centre for getting in touch with one another.

We are glad to say that the Associated Bible Students’ Class here is continuing to hold well together, and progressing in the spirit of brotherly love. The number in the class is about the same; a few new brethren have joined us, but some of the older ones have passed away, or are unable to meet regularly with us through ill-health. We have three regular meetings each week—Sunday morning, a study in Daniel, with Bro. Streeter’s book as a text-book; Sunday evening, a study in the Parables; Thursday evening, Hebrews. Each type gives plenty of strong food if we like to dig for it, and often the ability to agree to disagree is a good test of Christian character. We find the study of the parables is often the most difficult, although always interesting. We are endeavouring to adopt the Question and Answer method of Berean Study so well advocated by Bro. Russell; but, as usual, it is easier to ask the question than find the correct answer. One of our recent questionnaires is enclosed, just to show how one verse of Scripture may provide an hour’s study for at least three Sun-clays. We also have an address by one of the elders once a month, and a Praise and Testimony meeting every quarter.

With Christian love from us all,
Sincerely in the one Hope of our Calling,

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