PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM
UNDENOMINATIONAL • A RELIGIOUS NEWSPAPER

Volume XXXI. No. 11 MELBOURNE, 1st NOVEMBER, 1948 Price— Fourpence

The Sealed Ones and the Great Multitude.

"I heard the number of them that were sealed; and there were sealed an hundred and forty four thousand, of all the tribes of the children of Israel." (Rev. 7:4.)

OUR Lord Jesus, before He came into the world, was the Son of God on the Heavenly plane, the Only Begotten of the Father—Jehovah's only direct creation. (Col. 1:15 ; Rev. 3:14.) When in the flesh, He was still God's well-loved Son. This is the One who when on earth as a man gave Himself in consecration to do the Father's will, even at the cost of His own life, that He might purchase back from death the fallen human race. For this, the Father highly rewarded Him, by raising Him from the dead a Divine Being. Our Lord has had three natures, being now a partaker of the nature of Jehovah—the Divine. "Him bath God supremely exalted, and given Him a name above every name."—Phil. 2:9-11.

This perfect obedience on the part of our Lord Jesus was the basis, then, on which God raised Him to His present high position. God might have let Him take at once His power as King of kings and Lord of lords, and begin His great work of blessing mankind. But God's plan was different. In His purpose the Father not only foreknew the Lord Jesus for this work, but foreknew also that certain ones chosen from the human family would gladly become fellow- sufferers with Jesus that they might be fellow-sharers in His glory to follow. How could God arrange this? The answer is that they may have a part in this arrangement by marriage, by becoming united to Christ Jesus as His bride, His body, which is to be composed of 144,000 members.

How These Are Of The Tribes Of Israel.

St. John the Revelator tells about this 144,00012,000 from each tribe of Israel. How does the Church, the Body of Christ, come to be of the twelve tribes of Israel? In this way: God laid out the entire programme of the Gospel Age on the Jewish basis. Provision was made for choosing the total number of the Bride class out of natural Israel —12,000 out of each of the twelve tribes. God foreknew, however, that fleshly Israel as a nation would not receive Jesus as Messiah, and that those who would receive Him would be only a small remnant from all the tribes. But the elect

Church was to number 144,000-12,000 from each tribe.

Of those of Fleshly Israel who came into the Gospel Church we do not know the proportion from each of the tribes. All twelve tribes were represented in Palestine when our Lord Jesus came, though chiefly Judah and Benjamin. During the Jewish Age harvest there were probably no more than about 25,000 gathered to the Lord from Palestine and adjacent countries—an average of a little over 2,000 from each tribe. So there was not nearly the required number. Therefore, after the close of the 70 symbolic weeks of favour (Dan. 9 :24) promised to the Jews, God turned to the Gentiles, to fill up the number lacking from the various tribes. (Acts 13:46 ; see also Rom. 11:17-23, Gal. 3:29.) When we were received into Christ, the question was, Where would we be put? We do not know, however, where the Lord has put us; some will be in one tribe, and some in another, as God wills. But His decision will satisfy us.

Another Company—"A Great Multitude."

After we are told about these 144,000 from the twelve tribes, who are to be of the Very Elect, who are to stand with Christ on Mount Zion (Rev. 7:1-8; 14 :1-5) , and who only will be able to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, mention is made of a much larger company. This Great Company say that they will never deny God's name or His cause. But they have not been living in harmony with their vows. Therefore they will not receive the reward coming to those who are ready to meet the Lord at any moment, those whose lamps are trimmed and burning.

This unfaithful class are the ones mentioned in the Revelation as having soiled their garments—those who have failed to keep "unspotted from the world." He says, "I looked, and behold a great multitude, whose number no man knows, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues; and they stood before the Throne and 'before the Lamb." (Rev. 7:9-14.) These are the Spiritual Israelites who are not of the priestly family. As in Natural Israel the Levites were far more numerous than the priests, so in Spiritual Israel.

The angel said to St. John, "Who are these, and whence came they?" He replied, "Sir, thou knowest." So the angel said, "These are they who have come up out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Nothing but the blood of Jesus will ever take away these sins. They must all be cleansed in "a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation". This class will have their portion with the hypocrites, because they have failed to live up to their covenant with God. They hesitate to step forward boldly and say, "I am striving to be a footstep follower of the Lord Jesus Christ."

But here is our opportunity to take a stand before the world and to lift up the banner of the Lord. Let the people know where you stand! If you say, "Of course I am religious, but I do • not wish to be extreme," then your worldly acquaintances will say, "That is right. Don't be extreme; come in and have a game of 'cards!" Such Christians get themselves into trouble at once.

Some of this class become so besmirched that they plunge into wilful, deliberate sin. This course would merit the Second Death, as far as we understand the Word of God. But others say, "I will never go deliberately into sin. I am no saint, I know; but I will never deny the Lord; I will never deny the principles of righteousness." There is considerable good character manifested here, even though that person is not living up to the covenant made with God. Such are still loyal at heart. Some of them have been weak through fear of loss of worldly favour, or have been hindered by the cares of this life. This is the class that will be in the second company, the Great Company.

How They Lost Their Crowns.

You ask, "How do they get into such a condition?" We answer, There are various ways. The following illustrates one of these: Suppose you as a child of God should get angry, should speak a bitter word. Afterwards you felt that this was something against you. You hastened to the Throne of Grace, and said, "0, Lord, forgive! Cleanse me from my iniquity, and I will never do this again!" Perhaps a day or two afterward you made the same mistake; and you felt, oh, so abashed! It was more difficult to go to the Mercy Seat the second time; but you went and said, "Lord. I am so ashamed, so sorry! I will try not to do this again!" But perhaps in a week, or perhaps in an hour or two, you had repeated the transgression. You were almost discouraged. You feared to go to the Lord. When you were preparing to retire at night, and the time had come for reviewing the events of the day, you said to yourself, "I cannot go to the Lord to-night, and own that I have failed again!"

You succeed in putting the matter off, but you are anxious. You try to get it out of your mind. The next morning you go about your duties, but you have not made the matter right with God. During the day something happens that causes you again to transgress. In distress you say, "I will not think about it. Everybody commits sins. There may be some who can overcome, but I cannot. There is no use to try." So it goes on, the trespasses accumulating. From time to time you offer prayer; but it is largely a formality. If this condition of things is not rectified by the proper steps, you will certainly lose your Crown and go into great tribulation.

All down the Gospel Age there have been some of this class; but the Revelator pictures those now living. "Judgment must begin at the House of God" (1 Pet. 4:17) and those slothful ones must answer for their unfaithfulness. But after their sore chastisement in the coming great trouble, they will realise that it has worked good to them, and will say, "Let us be glad and rejoice. Let us glorify God that we were finally delivered. We have not been faithful; we have allowed things to hold us back. But now the Marriage of the Lamb has taken place. Our robes have been cleansed, and we are invited to the Marriage Supper, even though we have missed being of the Bride class. What a pity that we did not yield ourselves up wholly to the Lord." See Rev. 19:6-9.

Not Many Wealthy, Great Or Wise Called.

God's faithful ones love to meet together and encourage one another in the good way. The association of the Lord's true people is like a bed of coals. One coal will not keep warm alone; but when many coals are brought together each warms the others. Therefore, the Apostle exhorts, "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together . . . and so much the more as ye see the Day approaching."— Heb. 10:25.

It is not money that draws us together. There is not a millionaire amongst the saints, so far as we know. Whoever wishes to get into a club of millionaires will not find it in the Church of Christ. The true Church are not as a rule wealthy, nor are they as a class the most learned, the most talented, the most refined, to be found. If these things are what you are seeking in the Church of Christ then you are looking in the wrong place. On the other hand, whoever is ashamed of the brethren of Christ is accounted as ashamed of Him.

We are not to be ashamed of the brethren of Christ or of His Truth. Our Lord says, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My Word, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory and His Father's." (Luke 9:26.) In other words, He will not have him in the Bride class. That Great Company is represented as eventually getting the palms of victory and as serving God in His Temple. But so far as you and I are concerned, we are looking for something better—the Crown of Glory—immortality. The class that will receive this great exaltation with Christ is the class that "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."

"He Cometh Now To Reign."

In Psalm 45:3, 4, the Psalmist tells us of the majesty of our Lord Jesus when He comes to reign on earth. "Gird Thy Sword upon Thy Thigh, 0 most Mighty." Our Lord here girds on His sword, that with it He should smite the nations. During all these eighteen hundred years He has not until now girded on this sword. But now the time has arrived. The Great War was the beginning of the work of disintegration. In two World Wars we saw a general spirit of partisanship, even amongst professed Christian people. We who are members of the Bride of Christ are to forget that we are British or German or French, etc. We are to be rid of all bias and false expectations, and thus be better able to see God's view of the whole matter.

The Lord wishes to have a judicial class. We are preparing to be the judges of the world. "Know ye not that the saints are to judge the world?" (1 Cor. 6:2.) But we are not to attempt to be judges now.

Let us, then, as true disciples of Christ, help each other. Let us all be peacemakers and point others to the Kingdom of God's dear Son, which is soon to be inaugurated upon the ruins of the present evil order, and which will prove to be "the desire of all nations." Then wars and all other calamities will be made to cease forever; for nothing will be permitted to hurt or destroy in all God's holy kingdom :—Isa. 11:9.

Brethren Finish Pilgrim Way.

Early last month word was received of the passirig of our dear elderly Brother H. Collis Brown of Tasmania, who had for many years walked in the steps of the Master in full appreciation of the truth. Sincere sympathy is extended to the relatives and. members of the Lord's people in Tasmania who will miss such a faithful Christian very much. However, we rejoice that our dear Brother has entered into the heavenly Home after a life of devoted service to the Lord's cause.

The following expressions are from those who associated in fellowship with our dear Brother over many years past

"We are going to miss him very much, but by God's grace we shall go forth and worship God, leaning upon the staff which we made in yesteryears. We had a nice little service at the graveside which the dear Brother had previously arranged, and even though we sorrow not as do others, we could not but feel that it would have been nice if we could have all gone Home with him."

"We have lost our dear Brother and will miss him very much. To be changed in the twinkling of an eye; how lovely for him. He worked up to the last and died while having a bath on the Sunday morning. The rest of the journey will be lonely without him; he has been a dear Brother and has not spared himself at any time. What lovely memories he has left us; we love to think of the lovely times we have had together."

We have just recently learned of the passing beyond the veil of Brother D. Murray of Dundee, Scotland, who had been in constant touch and appreciated greatly the truth literature received over many years, and extend our sympathy to Sister Murray and to all the brethren of the Ecclesia at Dundee. One of our brethren knew Brother Murray personally and writes as follows:

"It was a privilege to stay in the home of Brother and Sister Murray while Sister Murray senior was still there some twenty years ago and that visit is still one of the sweet memories of that time.

"Brother will be greatly missed; he seemed to fill a large place, not on account of any public service such as speaking, but rather because of what is also important, a happy, helpful and encouraging influence to fellow pilgrims in the narrow way, and by letting his light shine that others seeing his good works might glorify God.

"In this time of 'distress of nations'—earth's dark night that is to precede the morning of a better day —one thinks of the words of Jesus prior to the trouble coming on Jerusalem, 'Weep not for me but for yourselves.' Those now passing away are no doubt saved from much trouble, and we do not sorrow as those without hope. We rejoice in the assured hope of the morning of joy. 'I shall be satisfied when I awake in His likeness.' 1 John 3:1, 2."

"Peace Desired—War Continues."

The booklets of the above title are now ready. Containing 24 pages, the present world outlook is reviewed, and the only hope for peace set forth in the light of God's Word. The price is 4d. per copy or 3 / 6 per dozen, post paid.

God's Promises Come True.

The above is the title of a very good book of Bible Stories for children published by the brethren in U.S.A. Containing 376 pages, comprising 49 stories, it covers the whole of the Bible in a most interesting and instructive manner. There are six full-page pictures and numerous smaller illustrations; also two very good maps and a list of questions for teachers. Well bound in cloth and with gold title this book is supplied at 14/- post paid.

PEOPLES PAPER

AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

(Monthly) 4J- (80 cents) per annum, post paid,

Published by the Berean Bible Institute, 19 Ermington Place, Kew, E4, Melbourne,Victoria, Australia.

Convention Items from U.S A.

Bible Students of Australia, C/o Berean Bible Institute, Melbourne, Australia.

Dear Brethren. As the Committee of Arrangements for the 1948 General Convention of Bible Students, which was held in Chautauqua, Ohio, August 1-8, it affords us great pleasure to forward to you the following resolution which was unanimously adopted by the brethren assembled:

"To our dear brethren in Christ, our co-workers in Great Britain, France, Switzerland, Germany, Poland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Roumania, Hungary, Greece, India, Italy, Newfoundland and Australia:

"Greetings! We, your brethren assembled in General Convention at Chautauqua, Ohio, August 1-8, send you our Christian love in abundant measure. Though separated by the great span of the sea, we assure you that we share with you in like joy, in like trial; we share the same hope, we have the same truth; and as you show forth the praises of our Lord and King there, we do also here. May we therefore assure you of our constant prayers on your behalf, and may the God of all grace, who hath called you and us unto His eternal glory, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you in Christ."

Yours in the one hope,

The 1948 General Convention Committee.

The following brief extracts from addresses given at the above Convention, quoted from "The Dawn", will no doubt be appreciated by our readers:

"There are four Scriptural rules of conduct which, if used as a guide in our Christian lives, will help us to walk circumspectly. Rule 1: Let us resolve to mind our own business—we are not to be busybodies in other people's affairs. Rule 2:We should exercise great patience with others—especially the brethren. Rule 3: We should endeavour not to be 'touchy' and easily offended. Rule 4: God's people should beware of pride and avoid it as a deadly plague."

"Patience smoothes the way for every other grace. (Gal. 5:22.) If we are disturbed by all the 'little noises' of life we can have very little joy or peace."

"The underlying principles of consecration are (1) enlightenment of the mind which leads to (2) control of the heart's affections, leading (3) to the making of a covenant by sacrifice with the Lord which is of a permanent character."

"The consecrated life is concerned not only with the mastery of self, but also with service for others.-

"Just claiming that what we are doing is in His name is not enough—we must be sure that we are doing God's will. Avoid the spectacular. Do not lose your humility."

"Speaking of Jesus' visit in the home of Mary of Bethany, every home of consecrated people not only needs the visits of Jesus, but should see to it that He constantly abides there."

"The successful Christian life is not one that is allowed to drift haphazardly along. We should not take the attitude that we will witness for the Lord if an opportunity happens to come our way, but should rather seek opportunities and make plans for laying down our lives in the service of the Lord and His truth and the brethren. 'We should plan our work, and then work our plan.' The faithful discharge of the obligations imposed by our consecration vows should be the constant and studied objective of life—'My earliest thought I desire shall be, What shall I render unto the Lord?' "

Peoples Paper Subscription 4/6 per annum.

Costs of producing the "Peoples Paper" have continued to increase since early in the year when the subscription was raised to 4/-, so it is found necessary to increase the subscription rate to 4/6 per annum. It is felt that all subscribers will understand that the further increase is unavoidable, especially as the General Tract Fund already makes up some deficiency in the publication of the monthly "Paper." The new rate will apply from the 1st of this month.

Jesus' Blood and the Blood of the New Covenant.

THE Scriptures repeatedly mention the fact that we are justified by faith in His blood—in the blood of Jesus. They also speak of "the blood of the covenant wherewith we were sanctified." (Heb. 10:29.) And again in Heb. 13:20, 21 we read, "Through the blood of the everlasting covenant make you perfect." How shall we understand this? Do these Scriptures all refer to the same thing?

No, these Scriptures do not refer to the same thing. The first one relates to us as natural men, sinners, before we made our consecration to the Lord and became New Creatures. We, as members of the fallen race, were first justified by faith through the merit of Christ's blood. This justification lifted us from the plane of sin and death condemnation, to a standing of harmony with God. From this standpoint we were invited to become joint-sacrificers with Jesus Christ our Lord—sharers with Him in His great work for mankind, namely, the sealing of the New Covenant with His blood, and ultimately the blessing of the world during the Millennium under the conditions of that New Covenant. So, then, it was after we had been justified by faith in the blood of Jesus that we were sanctified, set apart, consecrated through or in connection With "the blood of the New Covenant" by our consecration to be dead with Christ, to be buried with Him by baptism into His sacrificial death—to drink of His cup of suffering, ignominy, shame, death—to partake of or share His blood—set apart or devoted to the serving of the New Covenant for Israel and the world. It was on account of our entering into this great engagement that the Heavenly Father sanctified us or set apart, separated us from the world by begetting us to a new nature through His holy spirit. "Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."—John 17;16.

The last text cited, "The blood of the everlasting Covenant make you perfect,- refers not to a perfecting of the flesh—not to anything which refers to us as natural men. It refers to us as new creatures who have been begotten of the holy spirit; because, after we were justified through faith in the blood of Jesus, we presented our bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, and, under the Headship of Christ, to be associated with Him in His sacrifice for the sealing of the New Covenant and by and by to be associated with Him in the glorious work of establishing that New Covenant, after it shall have been sealed for the blessing of Israel and the world. It is through our obedience to our Sacrificial Vow to "be dead with Christ" as joint-sacrificers in connection with the sealing of the New Covenant that we may become members of His body. It is this sacrificing with Him which will make us perfect as new creatures and give us a share with our Lord in His glory, honour and immortality. Thus we see that justification by faith in the blood of Jesus is the first step, by which believers separate themselves from the world according to the will of God; and that participation with our Lord in His sacrifice is the second step of sanctification. There could be no such step of sanctification, no perfecting as new creatures of the "divine nature" had it not been that God granted us the privilege of sharing with our Lord in His sacrificial death, in His work of sealing the New Covenant with His blood.

The majority of Christians, of course, have gone no further than the first step of justification through faith in the blood of Jesus. Failing to go on, to "present their bodies living sacrifices" and to thus share with Christ in His sacrificial death, they are not privileged to understand "the mystery of God" (Rev. 10:7) , which is "Christ in you the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27)—your membership in the body of Christ, your share with Him in present sufferings and future glory.

When the disciples James and John said to the Master, "Lord, grant that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy kingdom," they were already consecrated, in the sense of agreeing to take up the cross to follow after Jesus in the narrow way. But the Father had not yet accepted their consecration, and set them apart, and did not do so until Pentecost. Our Lord Jesus, therefore, •addressed them not as New Creatures, but as justified men, when He answered their request. saying, "Ye know not what ye ask! Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of and be baptized with the baptism (into sacrificial death) that I am baptized with?"

Here we see that drinking of the cup—drinking and partaking of the blood of the New Covenant shed for us and for all for the remission of sins and being baptized with Christ's baptism into a sacrificial death — was a wholly different matter from justification by faith. They were already justified by faith, but could not sit on the throne unless they would be sanctified by participation in Christ's death.

Able Ministers Of The New Covenant.

In what sense was our Lord Jesus "the Messenger of the Covenant" and in what sense are we the "able ministers (or messengers) of the New Covenant" ?—Mal. 3:1; 2 Cor. 3:6.

Our Lord was the Messenger of the New Covenant by a divine promise. Israel was aware that their Law Covenant under its mediator Moses had not brought to them the long-expected blessings implied in the Abrahamic Covenant. God had promised that at a future time He would make a New Covenant with them (Jer. 31:31) , thus implying that they were right in not expecting much from the Law Covenant. Of course, a New Covenant would imply a new Mediator for that covenant.

This Moses himself had foretold, saying, “A prophet (teacher, mediator) shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me” (but greater) . (Acts 3:23 :) They understood that this great Prophet or Mediator would be Messiah, and they consequently longed for and delighted in the prospect of His coming.

This is the thought behind Malachi’s prophecy, “He shall come, even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in.” Of course at that time our Lord had not yet become the messenger or servant of the Covenant, hence this was merely a prophecy respecting His future work. He became the Messenger or Servant of the New Covenant at Jordan, when He consecrated His all unto death as the ransom-price for the world (its application in due time).

He there began to serve the New Covenant by providing the price, the blood, which should ultimately seal the New Covenant or make it effective. The laying down of His life was not the sealing of the covenant, however, but merely a preparatory work. He there became the “surety” or guarantor that in due time the New Covenant would be sealed and made effective. In His sacrifice of Himself our Lord was serving a Covenant not yet sealed, but merely promised or guaranteed.

Similarly the Lord is now gathering His church, a “little flock,” to be members of the antitypical Prophet, Priest, King, Judge, Mediator between God and the world of mankind during the Millennium. These called, chosen, spirit- begotten ones, are “able ministers of the New Covenant,” after the same manner as their Lord—walking in His steps. They minister or serve the New Covenant as an attorney serves in drawing up an agreement or covenant. It will not be a covenant until sealed, but, while it is in process of preparation it is spoken of as a covenant, and, in writing the agreement, the attorney is serving that agreement by putting it into shape, arranging for its sealing, etc. So Christ and His members are able or qualified ministers or servants of the New Covenant which God has promised and in which the hope of Israel and the world is centered.

Therefore, Christ and the church now minister for or serve that New Covenant in various ways:

1 In gathering the members of the body of the great Mediator.

2 In learning and teaching to others the lessons necessary to qualify for the position.

3 In preparing the blood with which it is to be sealed—”His blood,” “Jesus’ blood,” appropriated first to the church and ultimately, after having served its purpose in the justification of the church, to be passed on for the blessing of the world through the sealing of the New Covenant with Israel.

Evening.

Another closing day,
Another setting sun:

What progress have I made?
What duty have I done?

Behold the record, Lord, and see
If I have tried to live for Thee,

And where I fail, O pardon me.
Have I in simple faith,

Before Thy gracious throne,
Lived only in Thy strength,

Or trusted in my own?
Behold the record, Lord, and see

If I have tried to live for Thee,
And where I fail, O pardon me.

—Anon.

Bible Study Meetings.

Melbourne.—Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond (near Church Street)—Sundays, 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. Geelong, Vic.—Sons of Temperance Hall, Ryrie Street, Sundays, 3 p.m.

Adelaide.—Builders and Contractors Rooms, 17 Waymouth Street.--Sundays 3 p.m. and 6.15 p.m.

Sydney.-75 Liverpool Street (few doors from George Street) —Sunday, 3 p.m. and 5.15 p.m.

Perth.—The Women's Service Guild, Lesser Hall, Cecil Buildings, Sherwood Court, Sundays, 3.30 p.m. and 6.15 p.m.

FRANK & ERNEST BIBLE TALKS Geelong, 3GL, 222 Metres - 10 a.m.

Sydney, 2KY, 294 Metres - 8.15 a.m.

Perth, 6KY, 227 Metres - 5.10 p.m.

SUBJECTS FOR NOVEMBER

7th November—"When There is No Peace." 14th November—''Christian Sacrifice."

21st November—"The Way Out."

28th November—''Sinners in Heaven."

5th December—''God's Kingdom Conquers."

SUBJECTS FOR NOVEMBER 2KY 7th November—"Armageddon."

14th November—"God's Plan."

21st November—"God's Promises."

28th November—"O. Testament Prophets Not in Heaven." 5th December—"A People for God's Name."

Our Lord’s Great Prophecy.

(Continued from October issue.)

“ Come Out Of Her, My People!”

“Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house: neither let him that is in the field return back to take his clothes.”—Matt. 24.17, 18.

THESE statements indicate the propriety of haste in flight out of “Babylon”, as soon as each sees the abomination of desolation. The Lord’s word is, that all temporizing or parleying or human reasoning will be dangerous: no time must be lost in obeying as soon as He causes us to see the abomination of Babylon, and its relationship to all who have named His name. Alas! how many, failing to heed the Master’s word, have suffered themselves to be bound hand and foot, so. that now flight is almost impossible. But the Master says, “My sheep hear my voice and they follow me.”

There is another lesson in these verses: they show that some of the Lord’s people are in one place or condition, and some in another. Some are in the “field”; that is, in the world outside all human organizations: these should not think it proper first to join the nominal churches; but using their liberty should flee from their position in the world, to become one with the Lord as members of His Kingdom —mountain.

Some of the Lord’s people are in the houses or church systems of Babylon--but, as here intimated, they are generally house-top saints, who have a higher life and experience and faith than merely nominal church members. These in their flight are not to go down into the house (nominal church systems) to seek to carry with them their “stuff’; —their valuables in human estimation, such as titles, dignities, respect, commendations of good and regular standing, etc., but are to forsake all for Christ, and flee to the true Kingdom.

Difficulties Of The Flight.

“And woe unto them that are with child, and them that give suck in those days!”—Matt. 24:19.

There are spiritual “babes,” as well as fleshly babes, and bastards as well as sons. The Apostle Paul describes his interest in gospel work as that of a mother travailing with child. He says,--”O my little children, [because] of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you.” (Gal. 4:19.) Similarly all faithful servants of Christ, all earnest labourers for souls, are such as are described in this text as being “with child”. Spiritual childbearing after the apostolic example is most honourable service, and engages the attention of some of God’s most devoted children. But alas! as the desire of Abraham and Sarah to help fulfil God’s promises led to an unauthorized method, and produced an Ishmael class, which, born after the flesh, persecuted the seed born legitimately, so is it with many of these who now are “with child” ;—they are helping to produce illegitimate “children of God”. It should be remembered by all, however, that only legitimate means should be employed; all the children of God are begotten by the word and spirit of the truth, and not by human theory and spirit of the world.

False views of the divine plan (the supposition that all except the elect Church will be everlastingly tormented) have in some so stimulated their desires to bring forth “children” that they have resorted to various human devices for begetting them--overlooking the fact that all not “begotten of God”, all not begotten “by the word of truth”-- (not merely the letter of the Word, but “begotten of the spirit” of the truth), are spurious, and not reckoned as of God nor treated as sons. (Heb. 12:8.) As a consequence the Church nominal of to-day makes “a fair show in the flesh”— numerically, financially, intellectually—and has much of “the form of godliness” without its real spirit and power to control the heart. It is full of “babes”, some indeed babes in Christ, but many, many bastards, not sons of God; begotten of error instead of truth,—tares.” And the constant effort is to bring forth more even of the spurious progeny ;—hoping thus to save them from eternal torment, the unjust sentence of a supposed merciless God.

Alas! how difficult it is for these dear children of God who are thus figuratively, in our Saviour’s words, “with child”, to flee from the nominal church system with its multitudinous machinery for false and rapid begetting, which they have learned to glory in and to boast of. Yes, it will be difficult for these to leave all and flee to the Lord and His mountain (Kingdom). It will be difficult for them to believe that the Lord is really good and just and merciful, and that He has a gracious plan which makes full provision for every member of Adam’s race—all redeemed by the great “ransom for all”.

The class which gives “suck” in these days also contains many noble, good, well-meaning children of God. It includes many ministers and Sunday School teachers,—whose religious work consists in giving out “milk”; not always the “pure milk of the Word”, however, for they generally dilute and adulterate it with tradition, philosophy and worldly-wisdom opiates, which keep their “babes” docile, sleepy, “good”; and hinder their growth in knowledge and grace, which they have come to consider dangerous.

Some few of these teachers do indeed endeavour to give the “pure milk of the Word” that their “babes” may grow thereby and learn to eat and assimilate the strong meat and come to manhood in Christ, but repeated experiments they declare prove to them that even the “pure milk of the Word” will not agree with the majority of their “babes”; and hence they consider it their duty to adulterate the milk lest their “babes” sicken and die. and they do not recognize that the majority of their “babes”, not being begotten of the spirit of the truth, never will be able to assimilate spiritual “milk”; because “the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, neither can he appreciate them, because they are of spiritual appreciation.” (1 Con 2:14, 12.) Neither do they see that this failure to discriminate is starving, stunting and poisoning the true spiritual “babes” under their care ;--who “for the time ought to be teachers”.—Heb. 5:12.

So many of this class as are true children of God will hear the call, “Come out of her my people”, and will also have great difficulty in this day. As they come to see present truth they will not only fear to give it to those under their care. but they will also fear to act upon it themselves, lest it separate them from their charges. They will fear to flee in this day; realizing that but few of their “babes” would be able or willing to join in the flight;—and indeed only the spiritual will be able to endure the ordeal. Some will pass the crisis in safety as “overcomers”; while others, fearful, will be left come through the great tribulation.

Flee Before The Winter Time.

“But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter (neither on the Sabbath day) ,—because then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except, those days be cut short there should no flesh be saved; but through]by] the elect those days shall be cut short.”—Matt. 24:20-22.

This gathering of the Church occurs in what is called a “harvest” time, at the close of a summer time of favour.

Our Lord explained (Matt. 13:30, 37-43) that in this harvest He would garner His wheat and burn the tares in a great time of trouble following. It is still the custom in country places to leave the burning off of refuse until the winter. We understand our Lord to mean, then, that we are to seek help and strength to escape from Babylon before the wintertime of her trouble comes upon her.

We are to remember that there are to be two classes of wheat saved in this harvest—contrary to nature though it be. (1) The “overcomers”, the faithful and promptly obedient who get out before “winter” and are “accounted worthy to escape all those things that shall come to pass”. (Luke 21:36.) (2) Those loyal, but not promptly obedient children of God, overcharged, with zeal not according to knowledge, and more or less contaminated with the spirit of the world. These will be helped out of Babylon when she is falling, and will flee in the winter-time, saying in the words of the Prophet, “The harvest is past, the Summer is ended [Winter has come], and we are not saved.” (Jer.8:20.) The Lord very graciously indicates, that all the truly loyal of these shall ultimately “come up out of great tribulation” and be before the throne (not in the throne with the “little flock” who inherit the Kingdom as joint-heirs with Christ) , having washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev. 7:14, 15.) Let us pray, and labour accordingly, that we be through our flight before the “winter” of trouble comes.

We are to pray that our flight be not on the Sabbath day. What Sabbath day? Not the Seventh day of the week, nor the First day; for “new moons and Sabbaths” surely would prove no hindrance to Christians in any physical flight. (Col. 2:16.) The Sabbath meant is the great antitypical Sabbath --The Millennium, the Seventh-thousand-year Sabbath. This is the thousand years when the over-corners are to reign with Christ (Rev. 20:6) , hence, it would be too late to make flight on this Sabbath day, as it follows the “winter” time during which Babylon must fall as God has declared. No power can sustain her: and no one who realizes how imperfect is her work, and how good and gracious will be the work of the Lord after she is removed and the true Church glorified, could wish to hinder the Lord’s work for one moment.

The great tribulation of this “winter” time is to be unprecedented; and our Lord’s assurance is, that nothing to compare with it has or shall ever come upon the world. This positively identifies His language with the trouble at the close of this Gospel age of which the prophet says, “At that time shall Michael [Christ] stand up [assume control] . . . and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation.” (Dan. 12:1.) It identifies it also with the period mentioned in Revelation (11:17, 18) when “the nations were angry and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged”. So great will this trouble be that without some intervening power to cut it short the entire race would eventually be exterminated. But God has prepared the intervening power—His Kingdom, Christ and His Church—”the elect”. The elect will intervene at the proper time and bring order out of earth’s confusion.

(To be continued.)