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Neglect Not So Great Salvation.

(Heb. 2:1-3.) (Convention Address.)

HERE we have a warning given to a very favored people. The very fact of being favored of God seems at times to give to our unbalanced and imperfect condition a false impression of spiritual security and holiness.

It was so with natural Israel. "What advantage hath a Jew"? the apostle Paul asked, and answered his own question "Much every way, chiefly because unto them were committed the oracles of God." Nevertheless, Jesus warned them not to think that because they were Abraham's children their position before God was secure.

The Apostle reminds us consecrated Christians that the word spoken under the Law Covenant was steadfast and firm, every transgression and disobedient act received a just recompense of reward. Penalties and rewards were attached and enforced. But these experiences and schooling which Israel passed through under the Law Covenant were not final; it did not mean eternal life or eternal death in their case, for they were already condemned in Adam, and the blood of bulls and goats could never take away original sin. These things, says St. Paul, happened unto them for types and are written for our learning. (1 Cor. 10:11.) "Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." (Heb. 2:1.)

Nevertheless, God showed in no uncertain way His disapproval against those in the past who neglected His favors and the advantages that go along with them. In this comparison, the Apostle gives a warning to Christians—"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation."? How shall we—who have entered into the realities which the Law foreshadowed—escape retribution, for the blood which makes actual atonement for sin has been applied to us who believe?

We have delivered to us a great salvation. It is great indeed when compared to the Law Covenant. The Law, although just, holy and good, was nevertheless weak; because of human imperfections it could not bring salvation, but directed its devotees to Christ. This salvation which consecrated believers have already experienced is also great when compared to the salvation offered during the Millennial Age, which will be a salvation to restitution, limited to human beings of flesh and blood on this planet. However, the salvation offered to the Church, those called out of the world is greater, because it is spiritual.

The word "great" here means, "Such as this," "vast,"—a salvation such as this, so vast. Its magnitude reaches into endless space, it explores eternity; its vitality is immortal—deathless; its nature is divine; its spirit eternal love; its power is omnipotent.

When Jesus was made flesh He healed all manner of disease, cripples, blind, deaf and dumb; pierced dark and confused minds with beams of light and truth, and cast out devils and raised the dead. And Jesus promised to you, "greater things than these shall ye do." This is indeed the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Ah, yes, a great salvation is ours; it has already begun in us; the call has gone out and we have responded. When did it begin? Did it begin under the Law dispensation? No! Did natural Israel or their prophets know anything about it?

No! The text is very emphatic—"It began to be spoken of first by the Lord Jesus."

When John the Baptist was imprisoned Jesus began to announce this great salvation by preaching good news—"Repent, the time is fulfilled; the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Mark 1:14, 15.) The call to such a great salvation began there. "Of which

salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto us . . . Unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the holy spirit sent down from heaven, which things the angels desire to look into.” (1 Pet. 1:

10-12.) Astounding statement — angels desire to look into our salvation. Angels, spirit beings, are not invited to qualify for the prize of the high calling. Truly this is a great salvation, beyond the power and nature of angels; they are not invited to be “heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ,” but you are. That there is intense interest and attention given to this phase of the Creator’s plan by the angels, concerning the suffering and glory of the Christ, Head and Body, is evident. The words “look into” in this text mean to “bend beside, to lean over as to peer within.” This suggests that the outline of this part of God’s Plan is not clearly seen by angels; it requires leaning forward as with fixed attention, in order to observe it more distinctly.

The prophets too were eager to know the time indicated, or the character of those times of which they prophesied. Why does the Apostle Peter refer to the angels and prophets in regard to this matter? Answer, that we should give the more earnest heed, valuing our privileges, and comprehend by faith its greatness and magnitude.

Think of it! Heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ — partakers of the divine nature. Who is worthy? “We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.” That such a position with all its associated privileges, vast powers and magnificent glory should be offered to us, poor, weak, frail and halting creatures, seems unbelievable were it not for the repeated statements in the Scriptures. “The words spoken by Jesus were confirmed (or made sure) unto us by them that heard Him.” The Lord has assured us that He will complete the good work begun in us by His truth. Therefore, let us lay aside every encumbrance and run with patience the race set before us.

We are on trial for this great salvation. We have yielded ourselves to God—to take up the cross, to deny ourselves—and the Lord has accepted us. He has begotten us by His spirit, a vital agreement is entered into, there is no uncertainty, there is only one hope of our calling. It will mean either the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, or if we neglect, there is the danger of losing all. The exhortation is “Look to yourselves . . . that ye receive a full reward.” (2 John 8.)

How shall we escape (condemnation) if we neglect to fulfil our part of the agreement? This word “neglect” is loaded with great and grave possibilities. It means, “to be careless of,” “to make light of,” and is so used in the Parable of the Great King and the marriage supper unto His Son. (Matt. 22:5.) Those who were invited made light of the favour and excused themselves by attending to business affairs.

-Also in Heb. 8:9—”The Lord regarded not”—neglected Israel when they disobeyed His laws, and of course this exposed them to their enemies who overwhelmed them in disaster. The same consequences will overtake us if we neglect our great salvation. If we do not give earnest heed, the Lord will neglect us, and at once we are exposed to the flood of false doctrines surging around us on every side.

Why has “Babylon the great fallen, and become the cage of every unclean and hateful bird”? (Rev. 18:1, 2.) Why is she so thoroughly permeated with the plagues of error and delusion? Why is she and her partner, the world, groping in darkness, doubt and fear? Because of neglect of the Word of the Lord,—”Ye have taken away the keys of knowledge.” How shall they escape the dread calamities of this present world crisis? “If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear”? (1 Pet. 4:17, 18.)

Israel of old is another example. Unto (hem were committed the oracles of God. This made them more responsible than other people; hence, neglect of their privileges and responsibilities brought heavier punishment. Neglect of the Word of the Lord caused their fall from God’s favour as respects the heavenly

calling. "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for." Will we attain the position to which we are called?

Neglect of the truth and its service opens the way to all kinds of false doctrines and conduct, as well as strife over non-essential things, which are pushed forward as absolutely essential. We have seen this repeated often among those who claim to be in present truth. We may be very attentive to many important things in the spiritual life, and yet neglect of one or two things, even small things, can bring us into a crisis and bitter disappointment.

There is a parable which gives us this warning, and it applies to this present time. (See Matt. 25:1-12.) The disappointment was this—"The door was shut." A voice said, "I know you not." The neglect was "No oil in their vessels." There were ten virgins; all trimmed their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five took their lamps and oil in their vessels; five were foolish, having lamps, but no oil in their vessels. The result—too little, too late! Yet, they were so near to the one great and important union with the bridegroom; but "the door was shut." Neglect not so great salvation.

Neglect will soon reduce our spiritual vitality; or carelessness will dwarf the new creature. There is an abundant supply of wholesome, spiritual food of the Lord's providing--meat in due season, things new and old from His storehouse. No, the Lord has not neglected to meet the needs of His people to suit the times in which they live. (Luke 12:37.)

Other neglect may be along the line of opportunity in fellowship with others, to speak out the Word which ministers to the needs of others. We may say to ourselves--"The brethren know all about this portion of the Scripture under discussion; I need not remind them of anything." But are you sure? Some one may have forgotten; it is quite possible!

The Apostle Peter felt his responsibility along this line, and endeavoured to discharge it faithfully. —"I will not be negligent (not neglect) to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them and are established in present truth." (2 Pet. 1:12.)

Each member in the body of Christ knows something which can be imparted to others. Slow of speech, did you say? Not eloquent? That's what Moses said, but he did not neglect to use what he had, and the Lord gave the increase, and he indeed became eloquent.

The Apostle Paul urged a young Christian, "neglect not the gift that is in thee." (1 Tim.4:14.) Talents increase with the using. Cultivated fields become fruitful; neglect them and they soon produce thorns and briars. Fruit-bearing trees will soon produce poor quality fruit and will be attacked by disease if neglected. This is so in nature, and this law applies in the experience of the Christian who neglects so great a salvation offered us.

Another cause of spiritual decline is neglect to assemble with other consecrated brethren when opportunity affords. The Apostle Paul urged the brethren to forget not the assembling together, and this should increase as we enter farther into these last days. (Heb. 10:24, 25.) The difficulty sometimes is the overestimation of their own spirituality and underestimation of it in their brethren. A fear not proceeding from the truth has been injected into the spiritual mind by the fleshly mind; attention becomes focused on a supposed danger of being overtaken in bondage by associating with one or another group of Bible Students. But the real danger of isolationism is neglected, namely, the subtle reasonings of the natural mind has been overlooked; instead of attention being focused on its deceptions, it is turned suspiciously on others. Neglect not the assembling of yourselves; our great salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

Angels are sent to minister to the heirs of salvation so great. (Heb. 1:14.) Prophets wrote and spoke of the favour which was to come to you. The Son of the Almighty God was sent to announce it, and was raised from the dead to prepare a place for you. Our gracious Father has engraven thee upon the palms of His hands,—”They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my special treasure.” (Mal. 3:14.) “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.”

Radio Witness on 6KY, Perth.

Our friends in Perth, W.A., are pleased to announce that they have commenced the broadcasts of the Frank and Ernest Dialogues again in those parts over station 6KY Perth at 5 p.m. on Sunday evenings. We trust and pray that this witness may be blessed of the Lord. Reports on the radio witness and general work of the Institute will appear in next month’s “Peoples Paper.”

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A Cross (x) on the wrapper indicates that the Subscription to “Peoples Paper” is overdue.

Assembling in Spirit and Truth.

FOR the thoughts contained in the following six paragraphs we are indebted to Brother T. Holmes of England, these remarks being extracts from his articles in the periodical "Herald of Christ's Kingdom" in recent months. Our friends no doubt will appreciate these words of helpful and kindly exhortation on the subject of assemblies of the Lord's people.

Perhaps the little gathering may be convened in some drab little room down some out-of-the-way back street—no matter, "He" will be there! Or perhaps it may be called in some humble home, where, till the appointed hour, the whole varied round of domestic life would be in full swing; never mind, "He" will be "in the midst." Be the meeting large or small, 'neath lofty dome or humble roof, His promise can be trusted to stand good, and "there I am in the midst" is a certainty.

The coming of the hour appointed changes the significance of meeting-room or auditorium. From that moment it becomes the "House of God" a heavenly Bethel, for He, as well as we, will be in attendance there. Happy indeed are they who, going to that gathering, expect to find Him there! For these there will be no disappointing absences.

Now if it be thus true that our Unseen Lord punctually presents Himself "there," could any child of God consider it an act complimentary to the Majesty of His dear Name to be late (needlessly late) at that meeting place? Surely our early arrival "there" is at least, a first and primary element in that respectful reverence due to that great Name! A mere trifle, do you say, even if we are a little late? Unpunctuality is no trifle in an audience with a King!

Now supposing we have arrived in good and ample time, what shall our demeanour be, and with what expectations have we come? Supposing at such a gathering some old friend, unseen for years, is there, enhancing thus our joys, would we sit and chatter with our friend in all the "small talk" and "tittle-tattle" concerning all those years? Does the pleasure of meeting friends outweigh our expectancy of meeting with our Lord, Naturally our cup of joy is full, and there is much we want to say, but—shall we not remember the other more distinguished Visitor, who has promised to be there, What then is the purpose that brings us together in His Name, Is it first and foremost to ponder and probe some problem of our intellectual faith, to study and discuss the theme or subject for the afternoon or night;

Have we come to listen to some gifted tongue explain the heavenly verities? Well and good is this, for "hearing" and "discussion" have their place, but is there not one further reason for our presence "there"? Have we not come for an audience with our Lord and King? Have we not come to give thanks and praise to His blessed Name for all His shepherd care and tender faithfulness? Have we not come to thank our God and Father for all His excellent Greatness and wonderful Love?

It is here that the value of some dear "man of God" in "addressing" or "presiding" at the gathering is of worth untold. If, out of the academic discussion of an abstract truth, he can bring it (or its application) down and home to the hearts and circumstances of that congregation, how true it is that he can cause every heart to rise up in gratitude to

God, and thus send up before His face that odour of worship and reverence which is, to Him, an incense sweet . . .

On the walls of our homes we sometimes see the motto: "Christ is the Head of this house, the unseen Guest at every meal, the silent Listener to every conversation." Perhaps if we could register a variation of

this motto upon our minds (and hearts) even if not upon the walls of our assembly halls, to read as below, it might help to bring us up more sharply to a sense of our privileges in Christ in spirit and in truth. Here is the variation: “Christ is the Head of this Ecclesia; the Unseen Guest in all our fellowship; the Silent Listener to every conversation.”

To the above, from the pen of Brother Holmes, may be added some further considerations which are found helpful in the conduct of our gatherings in the Lord’s name. Upon arrival in good and ample time at the appointed place of worship, and following the greetings amongst the friends in a cordial and joyful manner, it is found almost essential for the greatest blessing to be derived from our assemblies that at least about ten minutes silence and meditation be observed by all prior to the opening of each service. A lead in this direction can be given by each chairman for the various gatherings, and the friends should cooperate by taking their places and in silent communion with the Lord centre their minds upon Him and the object of their assembling in His presence. It is really not helpful to other brethren for friends even to take their places in good time and continue a whispering conversation with others until the service commences, as sometimes happens in gatherings of the Lord’s people. No, consideration for other members is an important indication that the truth and the spirit of the truth is really having the effect upon our hearts and minds that the Lord intended.

It is possible also for Class leaders to overlook the importance of example in the conduct of our gatherings. Thoughtfulness for the organist by seeing that the hymns are all in order well before the period of silence prior to each service, adds greatly to the smooth running and helpfulness of our assemblies.

Let it not be supposed that “the form of godliness” so prevalent in the nominal churches is being advocated in our gatherings. It is well known that apart from the ceremony and ritual in many church services little else is in evidence. However, as the Lord has blessed us with His truth, it is surely fitting that our gatherings should reflect the spirit, reverence and order worthy of the truth and of the One into whose presence we enter each time we gather in His name.

Another indication of Christian growth on the part of brethren who are parents is their consideration and love for the Lord and His people by making quite sure that their children do not interfere with the quietness essential for helpful Bible Studies or other gatherings. To illustrate: One Christian parent was asked recently about her child and whether she could bring it to the meetings sometimes. The answer was, “Oh, no! My child is not a Class baby,” meaning, that the child’s natural disposition was such that it would be improper to impose its presence on the gathering, and at the same time it would be improper to suppress the child (if that were possible) to enable it to attend.

Keeping the important purpose in mind in our assembling together, that it must be in spirit and in truth, and with the Lord Himself “in our midst,” truly we should feel that such gatherings are really hallowed of God, and we should be able to say with Jacob of old—“Surely the Lord is in this place . . . This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

Memorial Observances.

Melbourne.

THE brethren in Melbourne gladly assembled on the night of March 31st to keep the Memorial of our Lord's death. Some studies during the preceding weeks on the various features of this observance, from Mark 14:12-25 and 1 Cor. 11:23-28, refreshed the minds of the friends and gave renewed joy and thankfulness of heart to God for the great sacrifice of His dear Son, our Lord and Redeemer.

During the service appropriate hymns (437, 42, 2 and 180 from B.S. Hymnal) were sung; Bible readings included Isa. 53; Matt. 26:17-50 and Luke 23:1-46, and prayers of gratitude were offered to our Heavenly Father with supplication for His blessing upon all dear members the world over.

Thoughts outlining the Memorial in general were also presented, showing that this institution given by our Lord on the night in which He was betrayed was based on the annual Jewish Passover. It was clearly seen that Christ wished His followers to keep this remembrance of Him on its anniversary—He was at that Passover, once and for all time, taking the place of the literal lamb which was slain each year as a picture of Himself. So Christ left us this Memorial Supper to be observed on the anniversary of His sacrifice “until He come”—until all the members of the Christ company have finished their sacrifice in the steps of their Lord and Head.

From the Apostle Paul in particular the deeper significance of the observance was also brought to mind—that those partaking of the emblems were thus showing their willingness to sacrifice, even unto death, as Christ set us the example.

Following the blessing of the emblems the friends solemnly, yet gladly, partook of them with hearts full of gratitude to God and our dear Saviour, and with the concluding hymn the friends quietly withdrew to their homes in solemn meditation, fortified by the Lord's grace for their own Gethsemanes, and final victory through Him who loved us and bought us with His precious blood.

Geelong, Vic.

On Friday evening, March 31st, at 8 p.m., the brethren in this city met again in the same room to remember “the passover Lamb, slain for us.”

It was done quietly and thankfully, all present being appreciative of the Lord's sacrifice on their behalf, and the privilege extended through that shed blood of becoming members of the “Body of Christ,” to share His sufferings now, and His glory in the Kingdom.

Hymns (148, 437), prayer, Scripture readings (2 Cor. 5:14-21; Eph. 4:1-6, 17-24), and a short address, preceded the partaking of the emblems, after which the hymn (166) brought the little gathering of remembrance to a close.

Adelaide.

The Memorial of our Saviour's death was observed by the Adelaide Class on the evening of March 31st. It was a very helpful and impressive service.

After reading the portions of the Scripture dealing with our Lord's last hours on earth, also the Scriptures in Exodus 12, etc., and a brief review of the significance of Christ's death as our ransom-price, we partook of the emblems with hearts full of gratitude to God for His goodness in providing such a Saviour to take away our sins, and thanking Him for all He has done for us in granting us the privilege of sharing with Christ in His sufferings at the present time, so that, if faithful unto death, we may also be permitted to share in the great work of uplift for the whole world of mankind in the Kingdom age. "Thanks be unto God, for His unspeakable gift."

Gawler, S.A.

On the anniversary of our Lord's death a small company of consecrated Christians met together at Gawler to celebrate the dying request of our Redeemer—the Memorial of His death.

We each considered again the recorded prophecy of His experiences, sufferings and death written hundreds of years in advance of the event, and we saw it fulfilled in the Lord Jesus. We reviewed also His experience and sufferings as written in the Gospels, all so submissively and voluntarily undertaken in order to successfully bring lasting blessings to us who now believe, and in due time to all mankind.

The Memorial also brought fresh to our minds the privilege which is still ours to demonstrate our willingness to suffer and sacrifice, in order to share in His glory by and by, to which He has graciously invited us. "If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him."

We noted that this honour is only for those who faithfully fulfil the conditions placed before us by the Lord and the Apostles.

Perth.

Our Lord's Memorial was celebrated by 18 brethren on March 31st, corresponding to the 14th of Nisan. Our minds were brought back to the Jewish slaying of spotless lambs on that night, so that the firstborns might be passed over during the night and the rest of Israel liberated the next morning. As this prefigured our Lord Jesus as the undefiled One who was introduced as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," our thoughts were on our Saviour who offered up His life at Jordan, and at Calvary could say, "It is finished." The agony and the ignominy that He endured for us all, that He should bear the sin of man and redeem us by His ransom sacrifice, is beyond what we deserve. However, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

In an upper room we remembered our Lord's sacrifice, keeping the Memorial which He instituted that night, that all Christians throughout the age could follow on with it yearly and "do this" in memory of Him. His broken body and shed blood shown in such simple emblems were partaken of by the brethren, each realising the tremendous import it is to us all, and what a favour it is to be able to share with Christ these things, so as to have that communion or participation with Him in His death and in His life, for we know that "if we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him." Halleluyah! What a Saviour!

At the close of the service we sang a hymn and quietly dispersed, remembering how diligent we each

need to be to fulfil our “covenant by sacrifice.”

Tasmania.

On March 31st three sisters assembled to celebrate the Memorial of Christ our Passover, sacrificed for us. At the afternoon study an article was read under the heading “Our Gathering at the Paschal Supper.” Also the 9th and 10th chapters of Hebrews were read and meditated upon.

In the evening we had some thoughts on Luke 22 and 1 Cor. 11:23-34. Finally, in giving thanks for so great a privilege, our hearts went out to all those assembled in obedience to our Lord’s request, “This do in remembrance of me.” ‘

Sydney.

The brethren gathered on Friday evening, March 31st, in our usual room in Sydney, included in the 19 present being a few visiting friends. A brother gave the address of welcome, then the hymn, “When I survey the wondrous cross,” was sung, followed by prayer and the address.

After referring to Exodus 12:1-14 the significance of the main types was explained, the antitypical connection as set out in Matt. 26:17-30 was then brought forward and considered, and crowned by the invitation to keep the feast in purity contained in 1 Cor. 5:7, 8. Then the breaking of the bread was mentioned as symbolising how we must be broken with Him in the body, to live in the spirit. Also the cup picturing the poured out blood of Christ was mentioned, the blood of the New Covenant, by which the Church has the promise of life now, and mankind in the Millennium. Then the features of atonement and reconciliation were brought forward by which the Church has fellowship with God now, and mankind has fellowship with Him when restored to perfection. Lastly, the friends were exhorted to strive earnestly in the narrow way and to cast out of their hearts all impure elements of anger and malice, drawing near to God and to the brethren in the bonds of love, with a pure heart, so that they might partake of the emblems worthily.

Then the emblems were administered after a blessing by the chairman, and with the hymn “Man of Sorrows, What a Name!” we quietly dispersed.

Canberra.

This year the Ecclesia met at the home of a brother in Deakin to hold in remembrance the death of our Redeemer. There does not seem to be any event in history that is as outstanding as this one, because of the hope that it brings of release from the grip of death for all who come unto God by Christ.

So gratefully we took this opportunity to show our love for our Lord and remember Him. Also the privilege of becoming associated with our Lord was emphasised at this time. It may not appear to some to be a privilege to suffer with Him, bearing His reproach, but friends in adversity make friends in prosperity, and the reward of faithfulness is not given to the faithless.

The singing of appropriate hymns and reading of the Scriptures gave an atmosphere of devotion and consecration among those present. We look with joy to the end of the journey, for it seems now nigh at hand—the vale of tears giving place to the hills of delight and mountains of joy. Our prayer is that we may soon drink the new wine in the Kingdom with our Lord.

Glenbrook, N.S. W.

At our home in Glenbrook four partook of the emblems at this solemn feast and although only a small company we were reminded of our dear Master’s words that where two or three were gathered together in His name, there He would be in their midst, and truly that was our blessed experience. As we remembered all dear brethren in prayer we had the blessed assurance in