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“Able Ministers of the New Covenant”

“Our sufficiency is of God: who also hath made us able ministers (servants) of the new testament (New Covenant); not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” — 2 Cor. 3:5,6.

How could the Apostle Paul and the other apostles be servants of a New Covenant, if no such New Covenant is yet in existence? A similar question might be raised respecting our Lord’s statement that His memorial cup represented the blood of the New Testament, the New Covenant. The answer to these queries is: There will be no blood of or from the New Covenant after it has been completed. The blood of the New Covenant is the blood prepared in advance of the covenant, wherewith to seal it and make it obligatory — make it a covenant. Our Lord’s words respecting the cup were uttered before He died. The cup was symbolical and pointed forward to His own death. It was offered only to His followers, and not to the world. It was shed for them, and was the basis for their reconciliation to the Father; but it was to be in due time the blood of the New Covenant — the blood with which the New Covenant would be sprinkled, sealed, made efficacious. It was offered to the Church more than nineteen centuries before the time for the sealing of the New Covenant, to grant the Church, the overcomers, the privilege of participating with Christ in His sacrifice, not only in the sense of justification, but also in the sense of sanctification, or death with Him.

This the apostle most distinctly asserts in 1 Cor. 10:16, saying — “The cup of blessing, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?” The drinking of that cup symbolizes our fellowship in the sufferings of Christ, our common union in all of the afflictions that came upon Him — our death with Him. By the time all of the members of the body of Christ shall have taken part in this cup, the time will have come for the application of the merit of that communion cup, that united sacrifice of the body, with and under the Head to seal the New

(Law) Covenant with Israel, and, through Israel, for the benefit of mankind. When the disciples asked if they might not sit in His throne, the one on the right hand and the other on His left, He asked — “Are ye able to drink of the cup that I drink of?” — Mark 10:38. All who would sit in the throne must drink of the cup. All who will faithfully drink of the cup shall sit in the throne as members of the body of Christ — “the bride, the Lamb’s wife.”

Take an illustration: Suppose the Declaration of Independence or some important document were about to be signed and sealed. The document itself might be printed and while in the process of being signed might be spoken of as the covenant, agreement or declaration, although it would not be such a document, even after being printed until duly signed and sealed. Similarly the ink might by law be specified to be of a certain kind, and the person having charge of it might speak of it as the ink used, in the sense that it was the ink designed to be used in the signing of that covenant, when the proper time should come. Similarly the person designated to be the mediator of that covenant might be so spoken of in advance of the signing. Similarly those of his suite, who would accompany him as assistants and who would need certain preparation before they would engage in this service, might be spoken of as the ministers or servants of that covenant, even though it had not yet been signed and really made a covenant.

Thus the Apostle speaks of himself and others as able servants of the New Covenant. He does not mean that the New Covenant is in effect, in operation, but that in view of this New Covenant which God has promised shall ultimately be signed and sealed and made effective, he and others, the entire royal priesthood, are servants of that covenant, ministering, or serving its interests and fully qualified of the Lord to do so. Of ourselves we have no righteousness, no merit, that could be made effective for the

sealing of that New Covenant with Israel. But, being justified by faith in the blood of Christ, we are made able or competent to serve the interests of the New Covenant. We serve it by laying down our lives as Joint-heirs with our Redeemer for its sealing, and subsequently putting it into operation.

Our position is that of ambassadors for God, explaining to men His mercy and His provision of the New Covenant, through which all may be blessed and recovered if they will. So many as receive our message with joy and turn from sin to follow our Lord may be invited to become members of the body of Christ, the body of Messiah, the body of the Mediator, the body of the great Prophet, the body of the great Priest, the body of the great King of the Millennial Age. So, then, we are ministers of the New Covenant in that we are laying down our lives in its service, in its interest, although it is not yet a covenant, but merely a promise. We are not only laying down our lives, but seeking out fellow-members of the body of the Anointed One and assisting them in the laying down of their lives, under the assurance that these better sacrifices will soon be finished and their application be made by our glorious Head, and we with Him in glory.

Not of the Letter, but of the Spirit

Even with our dealing with the world we can serve them to some extent, as servants of the New Covenant, for we can make known to them something of its terms, which some of them may grasp by faith and others may not. We can explain to them that this New Covenant which will go into effect evidences divine mercy and sympathy for mankind. We cannot minister to them the letter of the New Covenant, because it has not been sealed. We can merely tell them of its spirit and endeavour to show to them the import, as respects the future, that justice and mercy will be tempered together for all. If the New Covenant were sealed now, the conditions are not such as would make it a blessing, for Satan is still the Prince of this world, sin abounds, and the kingdom which is to bring deliverance has not yet been set up. The New Covenant is a covenant of law and of works made possible — the same exactly as the Law Covenant, except with a better Mediator. If, therefore, the letter of the New (Law) Covenant could be enforced now, it would be a great disadvantage to all coming under it, and, as the Apostle states, it would be unto death. Hence it is much better for the world that it is not sealed and operative and that we who are connected with it as prospective members of its Mediator merely explain to the opposing world the spirit of that covenant, which can profit and enlighten and encourage only those who are feeling after God, and who have no heart rebellion against Him.

Thus a believer in the Lord Jesus would have the right to look forward to the Millennial Age

and the blessed privileges of the New Covenant then to be inaugurated. And to the extent that he would live in accord with the conditions of that New Covenant, he would be the better prepared for the blessed privileges which will then be brought to the world. But he could not come under the letter of the New Covenant if he chose, for it has not yet been sealed. He could merely by faith come under its spirit.

But the special work of these ministers or servants of the New (Law) Covenant is to make known to such as are interested in a looking forward to the New Covenant and its blessing by faith, that God has some better thing for us — for the called and chosen and faithful, namely, that by consecration unto death, by drinking of His "cup", we may be counted in as members of the Mediator, under the higher, the Abrahamic Covenant. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" — Gal. 3:29.

Wrap Thy Face in Thy Mantle

(Contributed Address)

I would like to refer to portion of the story of Elijah, one of the faithful servants of God in the days of the kings of Israel and Judah. Many of the kings did evil in the sight of the Lord, instituting the worship of Baal and causing the people to sin grievously. At the Lord's direction Elijah informed King Ahab that there would be a drought in the land because of this situation, and Elijah was instructed to hide by the brook Cherith, and the Lord caused the ravens to feed him there.

A little later the Lord instructed Elijah to contact a certain widow, and the prophet and the family were miraculously kept alive by the barrel of meal and the cruse of oil which did not need replenishing by human hands. During this period the widow's son died, and Elijah raised him from the dead.

Three years passed without rain, and the whole country was in sore straits. Elijah arranged a sign to make the people realize who was the true God, worthy of their adoration and service. He told prophets of Baal to arrange a sacrifice to their god, but not to kindle a fire. He himself prepared a sacrifice to Jehovah. The prophets of Baal called on their god all day to send fire to consume the sacrifice, but received no answer. Eventually Elijah, at the time when the evening sacrifice should have been presented, besought the Lord to vindicate His name. We read in 1 Kings 18:38,39 — "Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God."

Perhaps Elijah should have been greatly strengthened by all these experiences. However,

when wicked Queen Jezebel threatened his life, he fled. The Lord still continued to provide for his temporal needs, and eventually he lodged in a cave on Horeb, the mount of God. Just here I would like to read from 1 Kings 19:9-13 — “And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave.”

Elijah was looking for big things. It was only when he realized that God works in quiet ways as well that he hid his face in his mantle. He realized that he had no righteousness of his own to give him a standing before the Lord.

The Lord chose this way to rebuke Elijah for his lack of faith, even although he had previously stood valiantly on the Lord's side. Then he gave Elijah encouragement by revealing that, unknown to Elijah, there were seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal. And He gave Elijah a further commission to fulfil.

Moffat translates the “still small voice” as “the breath of a light whisper”. This reminds us of the creation of Adam, and the fact that the Lord breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul. The “breath of a light whisper” also reminds us of our own begetting to a new nature, and the working of God's holy spirit in each Christian — “the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you”. It is not easy to accept this promise in its entirety, and always. But “He is faithful who promised”, and will guide us into all truth. We read in Titus 3:5 — “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy spirit.”

In this “breath of a light whisper” Elijah at once recognized the presence of the Lord, and in deep humility he wrapped his face in his mantle before putting himself in a position to hear what the Lord had to say to him at that time. He learned that his faith need not have wavered; although the forces of evil were seemingly very great, the Lord was in complete control of the situation. Elijah immediately set

out to fulfil the further commission which the Lord gave to him, assured that the presence of his God would continually be with him. The mantle in which he wrapped his face became an instrument of power, and after his work was done he used it, under the Lord's hand, to smite the waters of Jordan, that he and Elisha might pass over dry-shod.

We read in Isaiah 61:10 — “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.” We Christians have a mantle — the robe of Christ's righteousness, covering our imperfections and allowing us to be dealt with by the Lord. We also do well to wrap our face in our mantle; to listen to the Lord in deep humility when He would make known His plans for us. At times, like Elijah, we become disheartened, disappointed and dejected, imagining that we are forsaken, that we alone have tried to uphold the ways of righteousness but the forces of evil have been too much for us and we feel the pangs of defeat. With the Psalmist in Psalm 42:11 we ask — “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me?” The Psalmist had the answer — “Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.”

It may be that the Lord will kindly rebuke us for our lack of faith; but we may be sure this will always be done in love. “My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God”, we may say; “when shall I come and appear before God?” and we find the answer in this same Psalm — “Yet the Lord will command His loving kindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.”

We sometimes feel dismayed at our small numbers, and feel so weak in ourselves that there is nothing we can achieve. But only the Lord knows the actual numbers of His true people at any time. He is well able to give us the encouragement we need to perform whatever service He requires of us. Our difficulties often stem from a lack of understanding of the way in which the Lord operates. He does not send storm, earthquake and fire to persuade us of His power, but the breath of a light whisper to assure us of His tender love for us. “Hereby know we that we dwell in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his spirit”. — 1 John 4:13.

What a wondrous gift this is — His “free gift” — bringing with it all that we need for our enlightenment and our spiritual progress; help and support, strength in times of weakness, upholding power when we would fall, protection from the clamouring voices without which would distract us from our pathway. It includes encouragement when we seem so alone, comfort

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Priestcraft Opposed to Liberty

The recent visit of the Pope to England, and the apparent favorable reception given to him by the Anglican leaders there, impresses the fulfilling of the prophetic words of Rev. 6:14, which read — "And the heaven (ecclesiastical systems) departed as a scroll when it is rolled together." How appropriate the expression — "rolled together as a scroll" — showing that the Mother and Daughter systems will combine, making up Great Babylon, which is shortly to be overthrown "like a great millstone, and cast into the sea" — Rev. 18:21.

In view of the world-wide interest shown in the Pope's visit, the following article, written many years ago, is presented at this time.

Some of the friends write us that their friends, ministers, etc., upon learning that it is the custom amongst us to celebrate the Memorial of our Lord's death in little groups, or even alone when there are no others who appreciate and desire to commemorate it, have expressed astonishment, and pronounced such doings as sacrilegious — declaring that only the "clergy" have the right to administer to themselves and others the emblems of our Lord's broken body and shed blood.

We reply that the entire expression of our Master's will, and the only authority upon the subject, is found in the New Testament; and there we find no restriction, no limitation, except such as every true Christian can answer to — **faith** in the precious blood of Christ, and **consecration** to the Redeemer's will and work.

The entire theory and arrangement marked by the terms "clergy" and "laity" is of Papal origin, and was arranged with the special object of binding and blinding God's children by taking from them the very liberty wherewith Christ made them free. Our Lord made no restriction as to who should serve it or give thanks for it, but intimated that all were to be ready to serve and in honour to prefer one another. His simple expressions were "eat **ye all** of it", and "drink **ye all** of it." Neither did the Apostles place any restrictions on the matter, nor say that when the **clergy** may please to prepare and bless and distribute, the laity may eat of the Lord's Supper. What restrictions did they place, if any? Like the Lord, they placed none, but advised that "a man **examine HIMSELF**"

as to his worthiness to partake of the emblems — 1 Cor. 11:28. It was not the "clergy" that were to examine and determine who might partake, but each one whom the Son had made free was to use his own freedom and examine himself before God and in the light of God's Word.

The Apostles knew nothing about "clergy" and "laity", and those words do not occur in the holy Scriptures: they were a part of Papacy's invention for keeping the people subject to the priests. The Apostle Peter, whom they falsely style the first Pope, contradicts all such popish ideas by declaring that the entire church, including the very humblest one united by faith to Christ the Head, constitute together God's royal priesthood, God's holy nation, God's peculiar people — 1 Pet. 2:9.

As part of the scheme of the Papal priesthood for their own exaltation as a special or "clerical" class, it was assumed, without the slightest warrant of Scripture, (1) that there was a special or "clerical" class; (2) that only such are authorized to teach, preach, baptize, bury the dead, read the Scriptures, or arrange for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The evident design was to fasten with the cords of priesthood and superstition the infant of a few days old (for the baptism of **believers** was changed to sprinkling of infants), and to keep those tightly drawn until the last spark of consciousness expired; and then the theory of masses and prayers for the dead was not only to get money but also to teach that the priestly cords extended beyond the present life, beyond the grave, and that the eternal blessedness or misery of every being was at their disposal. Can we wonder that our ignorant priestridden fathers of the dark ages feared the priests and regarded them as beings of a different nature from themselves?

One of the strongest of these superstitious cords was the one associated with the Lord's Supper. This cord was doubled and twisted several times and made very strong and sacred, under the claim that literal bread and wine had to have a miracle performed upon them so as to change them into the actual body and blood of the Lord Jesus; for it was and is yet claimed by Papacy that in their Mass Christ is recreated by the priest, and then killed or sacrificed afresh each time the Mass is celebrated for those special persons or sins for whom the Mass is performed.

The doctrine of the trinity added to the homage paid to the priesthood; for it was said, and with reason, that if the priest can **create** Christ out of bread and wine (by merely pronouncing a few Latin words over them), he must, if Christ be God the Father, be considered able to create the great Creator of the universe by virtue of special power and authority of office conferred upon him. No wonder the

people, the "laity", worshipped the "clergy", and revered and obeyed them as though they were God. But the people were not thereby lifted up and blessed; for nothing but the truth sanctifies, and the truth makes free and is in opposition to bondage.

The great Reformation of the sixteenth century made a wonderful and blessed change in many respects, not only with those who became Protestants against these enslavements of priestcraft, but also in that those still fully enslaved were thereafter less tightly bounden.

But even those who thought that they had been freed had been only partially released. Some of the cords were snapped asunder at once, but others were replaced by smaller and less noticeable cords, which nevertheless are very strong upon Protestants. They still retained the words "clergy" and "laity"; and, although robbed of much of their power, those words still imply a wide gulf between two classes of sheep in the Great Shepherd's fold.

Hindrance to Bible study was a cord that was snapped promptly, but some Protestants still seek to restrain that liberty by implying that only the clergy are competent to explain the meaning of the Bible. The Protestant clergy still seek to give the inference that none but the "clergy" are commissioned to preach, but they rarely express themselves plainly upon the subject, knowing that the Bible recognized no such special "rights" as they would wish the common people to infer. So, too, generally by inference and custom, they give the impression that baptism and burying of the dead belong to them. And while Protestants wholly reject the Papal doctrine of the Mass, and with it the thoughts that Christ is recreated by the officiating minister or priest, so as to be sacrificed afresh, yet they carry with them a portion of the shadow of the error. They have a feeling that in some way which they cannot explain, and for some reason not given in the Bible, it would be sacrilege for any one not of the "clergy" class to pass the emblems of the Redeemer's body and blood. Well, priestcraft is surely in danger wherever the Word of God is clearly understood; and the truth literature is published for no other purpose than to help God's benighted children out of the blindness and bondage put upon them by Satan, and to assist them into the light and liberty wherewith the Son makes free.

When the above article was written years ago, the statement — "While Protestants wholly reject the Papal doctrine of the Mass" — was largely true, especially amongst those who understood just what the Mass signified. However, today, the majority of Protestants are not true to name, for they know and care little about the meaning of the Mass, which our Lord declared was an "abomination" to Him — Matt. 24:15.

Armageddon, How Does it Affect the Christian Today? — Rev. 16:16

(Contributed Address)

There are few people in the world, probably none, who have not heard of Armageddon, and yet it is a word that appears only once in the whole Bible. Even then it is not a proper name in the English language, but is a word so called in the Hebrew tongue.

When writing the Apocalypse, the book of Revelation, John expressed ideas by Hebrew terms. A notable example is the word "Jew"; it is used unquestionably in a spiritual sense. Natural Jews were people of God in Old Testament times — "You only have I known of all the peoples of the earth"; they were the nation that confessed and praised and sought to worship the true God.

So when John in Revelation 3:9 writing of the Christian church in his message to Philadelphia said, "I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie," he was using a Hebrew term of O.T. times in a spiritual sense to refer to hypocritical Christians during the Gospel Age.

Another interesting verse is Revelation 9:11 (please read). According to scholars the meaning of the Hebrew word Abaddon is "perdition", and the meaning of the Greek word Apollyon is "destroyer". In our English language we can feel sure it is Satan who is referred to.

These examples serve to suggest that in our text those gathered into a place called in the Hebrew tongue "Armageddon" might in our language also refer to something further. A certain Anglican minister writing in 1848 (before the separating time — Rev. 3:14-16) as well as some other writers, believe that it does.

Armageddon in fact seems to be referred to in several places in the Bible in different terms. The word Armageddon is formed of two Hebrew words, one signifying a mountain, the other a cutting to pieces, therefore it stands for a mountain of slaughter against God's enemies.

In O.T. times there was a city or area in Israel called Megiddo, mentioned 12 times we find by aid of Concordance. However, we do not know a great deal about this city, but one significant feature stands out. The city or area was noted as a place where enemies or opposers of God were destroyed; and though it is somewhat veiled it would seem that what happened at Megiddo pictured what happens at Armageddon.

Zechariah chapter 12 has certainly to do with the day when natural Israel is finally and forever delivered from her enemies. Verse 9

reads in the Amplified Version — “And it shall be in that day, that I will make it my aim to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem”, and verse 11 that the mourning in Jerusalem will be like that in ancient time in the valley of Megiddo.

It would seem that considerable weight might be given here to a paragraph in the writing of the Anglican minister referred to — “It must be observed that King Josiah was defeated and mortally wounded at Megiddo; and though Josiah was a pious king, yet it must be remembered that, when at Megiddo, he was disobeying a divine command, given him by the prophet Jeremiah. Josiah was endeavouring to repel the Pharaoh (Necho) who was marching to besiege Babylon, and so Josiah was actually acting as an ally of the king of Babylon.”

This suggests to my mind that perhaps we should be careful that we do not get in the Lord's way when He sends emissaries out to destroy modern Babylon. We should be very desirous of knowing what the will of the Lord is in any situation and not be misguided like the good king Josiah.

I further quote this writer — “Thus Megiddo was a name made ready to denote the scene of a sudden and mysterious defeat and slaughter of God's foes and the allies of Babylon.” Reflection upon these things suggest to mind that Armageddon and Megiddo could refer to synonymous or the same happenings.

Looking at the third chapter of Joel we find some further interesting points to reflect upon — all nations are brought down to the valley of Jehoshaphat — verse 2. In verses 9 and 10 war cries are heard, ploughshares beaten into swords and scythes (margin) into spears and the “heathen” (opposers of God) are “wakened” (stirred up) to participate in a great battle in this “valley”. Verse 14 describes the scene as “multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision” (determination — Young) and that it is the day when the Lord is near, and that He will roar out of Zion and speak from Jerusalem; and shake heaven and earth by darkening the sun, moon and stars etc. (verses 14-16). It develops into a battle of decision — here will be determined for all time righteousness and wrong doing. What Joel has to say about this battle seems to be based upon an ancient battle recorded in 2 Chronicles chapter 20.

A powerful army descended upon king Jehoshaphat and he sought the Lord about it. The Lord heard and sent His messenger to Jehoshaphat telling him he had no need to fight — the battle was His. They were simply to go forth exercising faith and praising the Lord. The Lord caused things to happen that confused the enemy and instead of destroying Jehoshaphat's army they began fighting amongst themselves and were completely routed.

It certainly seems probable that Joel's mention of this great battle in a valley of decision is a further reference to the same battle referred to in other places as the battle of Armageddon and the destruction of Megiddo. As to the locality of the “Valley of Jehoshaphat” a commentator states “There is not, and never has been, any such valley in reality. The valley so marked on some maps near Jerusalem has no authority. The valley where the battle was fought was near Engedi near Zig in the wilderness of Jeruel. Israel watched the battle from the heights of Tekoa. This valley was christened the ‘valley of Jehoshaphat’ because of the great thing that happened there in his time.”

The best conclusion to these observations is to quote a paragraph from the writer of 1848. “In the word ‘Jehoshaphat’ there is an historical reference to a signal and miraculous slaughter of God's enemies in king Jehoshaphat's time, just as in the word ‘Megiddo’ there is an historical reference of the same kind. All nations cannot be gathered together in one valley, or to one mountain, on earth. Hence it is rightly concluded that the valley of Jehoshaphat here mentioned, is a general term for a signal execution of God's judgment on all His enemies throughout the world. In a word, the gathering together of the nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat is the same as the gathering together to Armageddon . . . I will gather all nations and bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat . . . Let the heathen be weakened (bestir themselves R.S.V.) and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.”

Briefly now, let us look at Rev. 14:14-20. Here we have portrayed the second Advent of Christ and His wielding of the sickle of truth to destroy the wickedness of the nations of earth “for the time is ripe.”

No longer does God forbear with the forces of evil, but gathers them together as “the vine of the earth” (they had no “heavenly” connection of any kind, despite the oft repeated claims that they ruled under divine decree) and cast them into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

Who can dispute that the casting of the “vine of the earth” into the winepress of God's wrath is the same as the nations being gathered to the “valley of Jehoshaphat” and to the “mount of Megiddo”, and to the “battle of Armageddon.”

Thus again do the words of the writer in 1848 bear reflection — “These prophecies should not be understood literally. The valley of Jehoshaphat, the mount of Megiddo and Armageddon, are not to be regarded as any one place on earth; nor do they represent any one event; but a general uprising of the enemies of God; a marshalling together of rulers and nations against the Lord and His anointed . . . an unholy union of Christian psalms with shouts

of blasphemy, a profane junction of the cross of Christ with the symbols of Anti-Christ.... This gathering is said to be a mountain; for they who thus associate themselves are swollen with pride and elated with confidence.... but this their mountain will sink into a valley, an abyss of shame, even a Gehenna, a valley of Hinnom, a gathering of Armageddon, multitudes in the valley of decision" (or determination, or judgment).

"We are thus brought to the conclusion, that the Apocalyptic Armageddon is not any spot in Judea (as some have thought) or in Italy (as others have imagined) but it is the world at large; wherever men associate themselves in a league of ungodly polity and corrupt religion...."

Reflection upon this man's comments cause one to wonder if the battle of Armageddon has not been in progress for many years — possibly maybe even from about the time of the first world war. Great wars consist of intermediate battles until at last a decisive battle ends the conflict. It could well be that the first world war and the second world war and the smaller wars and revolutions in between and since, are all part of the battle of Armageddon still proceeding in a figurative valley of Jehoshaphat and Mount Megiddo. For a long time God has been gathering the nations into the winepress of His wrath.

I would like to quote another man, a Chinese Christian by the name of Nee-To-Sheng — "We tend to think of some nations as good and some bad, but Scripture tells us the 'prince of this world' is behind them all. World governments are at heart united in one thing: they are against the reign of Christ. However violent the hostility between them, none of them want the sanctions imposed by the law of Christ — love, humility and truth. Let us break their bands asunder, they cry, and cast away their cords from us."

Maybe our connecting up of events in and near the Holy Land as the scene of the battle of Armageddon has been too restrictive. What might well happen there in the future will be only the final phase of Armageddon — the last decisive battle that will end the conflict forever, and clearly reveal the victor and the vanquished.

The writer of 1848, several times already referred to, had further helpful remarks about the fallacy of attaching literal significance to the symbols of Revelation. He pointed out how futile must be the hopes of some, that the River Euphrates will some day miraculously dry up and allow deliverers, "kings of the east" to enter and deliver God's people in the Holy Land. From this writer's remarks on this issue, I take up a series of quotations from his writings to end this address and I trust that you will appreciate them as I did when I read them. I concluded they were worth communicating,

passing on, to others of the Lord's people living now some 133 years later than when they were written.

"Those who interpret literally will deny that the river Euphrates is even now (1848) being dried up for the 'kings of the east' to pass over. The literal river flows and will forever flow on.... By the great river Euphrates we must understand the mighty flood of the mystical Babylon — the supremacy of Rome. We ask, Is there not a strange movement on its waters.... Are they not parting asunder like the waves of Jordan smitten before Joshua.... Do we not, even now, behold some traces of a 'way for the kings of the east' over them? The high road is appearing.... for the army of the true Joshua — the Everlasting King...."

"What then is the lesson for us? Christ is the light of the world, we must therefore be children of light. We must be 'kings of the east'.... The weakening of the Papal power and its alliance with new elements, will prove an occasion for the wider spread of the true Gospel, and also, in other cases, for the greater growth of infidelity. Some who are freed from the thralldom of Rome will embrace the Truth, but many, on the other hand will be in great danger of falling from superstition (which Rome really is) into total unbelief. (How indeed have we seen this happen since 1848).

"You, my brethren in Christ, are solemnly charged to prepare the way of the Lord by sound learning, pure doctrine and holiness of life.... you are eminently privileged to be kings of the east.... Let us show by example, that the truth, as taught by Christ and His Apostles, still exists in the world.... We must promote the religion of Christ.... who declared that All kings should bow before Him, and All nations do Him service.... Instead the nations' principles of national law of which they vaunt and glory are that all religions are equal.... Christendom appears ready, almost eager, to erase the cross of Christ, and to make itself a Pantheon, i.e. a temple dedicated to all deities...."

"Finally, why were these awful truths revealed? Not to indulge a vain and prying curiosity. Not to raise in us any proud conceits of Pharisaic self-righteousness. Not to provoke in us a spirit of wrath or hatred against those whose errors we ought to deplore with tears, and whose union with ourselves, in Christian truth and holiness, we ought to desire with prayers of devout affection. No. But to teach us our duty. To make us more thankful for our blessings, to communicate them.... to make us fear lest more zealous to preserve them, more desirous we lose them. To instruct us all that our only safety, both public and private, consists in following Christ.... We are entering a time when our Christian faith and fortitude will be severely tried.... a time of peril awaits us.... we must therefore arm ourselves with the whole armour of God...."

"Let us take with us the divine book of the Apocalypse given us through the beloved apostle John. It will teach us not to be seduced by the alluring arts or led captive by corrupt doctrines, or deceived by the lying wonders of false Christs, and false prophets . . . He will teach us not to follow a multitude to do evil, but to promote God's glory at any sacrifice, by reverence of His name, by belief in His Word and by obedience to His Will . . . The King of kings and Lord of lords will fight for us. He will lead us with His victorious army to the glorious mansions of the heavenly Jerusalem, and will give us a crown of glory which fadeth not away."

(Continued from page 3.)

and cheer when we are cast down by our faults and failures. Like Elijah when he cast himself under the juniper tree, we feel inclined to say "Lord, it is enough, I can go no further; I have failed utterly, I cannot go on." It is then that we may hear the breath of a light whisper, the voice of the holy spirit bringing us refreshment and strength, and food for the journey, until, as Elijah did, we can go in the strength of that food to Horeb, the Mount of God.

All this, and much more, is ours in the gift of the holy spirit, until we come to rejoice continually in the unspeakable blessings we have received, and say, morning, noon and night — "Praise be to thee for thine unspeakable gift."

It may be that the Lord will give us a special commission, some service for the glory of His name, after a period of disappointment and despair. But as it was in Elijah's case, the Lord gives us such a commission only while our face is wrapped in our mantle; only when we realize that of ourselves we are nothing, that all we have and all we may be able to do is only by His grace because of the robe of Christ's righteousness, so graciously provided for us. Whenever we trust in our own strength we are useless to the Lord. But when we are in an attitude of deep humility, as was Elijah, the Lord may well use us to perform some service for Him or His people. It behoves us to keep our hearts with all diligence, remembering that we have nothing which we did not receive from the Lord, and that every moment of every day we are dependent on Him for this covering robe.

The story of Elijah was written for our admonition. Let us take to heart the lessons we may find there. Maybe in our own experiences we will also recognize the "breath of a light whisper", the quiet presence of the Lord. Maybe we will hear His kindly rebuke, His words of encouragement and His commission. "Wrap thy face in thy mantle."

Pilgrimage Ended

On the 18th June, our dear Brother Marshall of Melbourne finished the pilgrim way after over 50 years as a devoted follower of the Master. Being a Tasmanian and a local preacher there, in 1931 he responded to one of our advertisements for free literature, from which time he greatly rejoiced in God's Plan for the salvation of humanity.

After a few years Brother Marshall came to Victoria, later settling in Melbourne, and attended the Melbourne Class from that time to the close of his earthly course, being much loved by all the brethren here and others throughout Australia whom he met at Conventions etc. Our dear Brother's help at the Melbourne Class, where he served as an Elder for over 40 years, was greatly appreciated. Also when the Frank and Ernest Broadcasts commenced in Australia he served as "Ernest" for 29 years, rejoicing in the privilege of extending God's truths to many people throughout this land.

In recent years our Brother's health was failing, though this was unknown to most of the brethren, as he was always uncomplaining, with his faith and confidence in the Lord always evident, and as a shining light he sought to serve the Lord and the brethren at every opportunity. Our warmest sympathy is extended to Sister Marshall and children in their loss of a devoted Christian husband and father whom we feel sure has received the Lord's commendation — "Well done, thou good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" — Matt. 25:21.

"God Has a Plan — You Are In It"

A booklet bearing the above title has been printed, and a copy is being supplied to all friends receiving this issue of "Peoples Paper." Extra copies are available, supplied through the General Tract Fund to all who can use them to advantage.

Morning Prayer

Lord, in the quiet of this morning hour
I come to Thee for peace, for wisdom, power
To view the world today through love-filled eyes;
Be patient, understanding, gentle, wise;
To see beyond what seems to be, and know
Thy children as Thou knowest them, and so
Naught but the good in anyone behold;
Make deaf my ears to slander that is told;
Silence my tongue to aught that is unkind,
Let only thoughts that bless dwell in my mind;
Let me so kindly be, so full of cheer,
That all I meet may feel Thy presence near,
O clothe me in Thy beauty, this I pray,
Let me reveal Thee, Lord, through all the day.

Ella S. Schenck.

"Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees" — 1sa. 35:3.

If there be but a thorn in the foot, the back boweth, the head stoops down, the eyes look, the hands reach to it, and endeavour its help and ease. The members are useful and serviceable one to another.