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Beheaded for the Witness of Jesus

“And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God . . . And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years” — Rev. 20:4.

REVELATION is a beautiful, symbolic book picturing truth. The chapter from which this text is taken contains in itself several pictures in a few words covering the entire Messianic Age. Satan's binding at the beginning of the Age is first shown; then the judgment of those who are sitting upon the thrones of the earth; then the exaltation of the true Church to reign with Christ. The governments of the world, while capable, perhaps, of giving some blessing, are not satisfactory, and must soon give place to the new Government under God's dear Son, which will bring blessing to all the families of the earth.

A brief mention is made respecting what shall occur at the close of the thousand years of Christ's Reign. After men have been made perfect, they must be tested, while Satan shall be “loosed for a little season”, prior to his destruction. Then the Revelator depicts the Great White Throne, before which all the world, the living and the dead, are to be brought for judgment, for trial, having received the wonderful opportunities of the glorious Kingdom of Christ.

How These Souls are “Beheaded”

Our subject relates to a part of verse 4. The word “soul” signifies person. Through erroneous doctrines this word has come to have attached to it a wrong meaning, as being something that people possess rather than something that they are. St. John the Revelator was given a vision of the persons who would be beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God. He was given a preview of what would be their portion — first of suffering, then of glory and reward. Their reward would be to live and reign with Christ. These were a special class, who had been behead-

ed for a certain reason. The word “beheaded” here is symbolic. All the true Church were to be beheaded. We know that Christ and the majority of the Apostles were not literally beheaded, but few of Jesus' followers have been beheaded literally.

The Bible shows that God has appointed that those who come into Christ shall renounce their own headship, their own will, and receive instead the Will of Him whom God has chosen to be their Head — Jesus Christ. They are to be members of Christ's Body. “God hath given Him (Jesus) to be the Head over the Church, which is His body.” — Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22, 23; 1 Cor. 12:27. During this Gospel Age, God has been preparing a Church class, who are to be the members of His Body, and to be associated with Him in His great future work for mankind. The first members of this Body were the Apostles. These freely gave up their lives in the cause of Christ. They gave up their wills, submitting themselves to the will of God — they were beheaded.

Down through this present Age, members have been added to Christ, first from the Jews, then from the Gentiles — from every nation, kindred, and tongue. The only way that anyone can become a member of this anointed Body of Christ is to present himself a sacrifice to God, first trusting in the sacrificial merit of Jesus. He is our great Substitute, who has redeemed us from the death penalty resting upon Adam's race. Accepting Him thus, and presenting ourselves to God through Christ, His merit is imputed to us, and we are accepted as joint sacrificers with Jesus, who then becomes our Head. We are thus beheaded. Our own will is dead. So during the Age there has been a little company of people who have taken a course different from that of the remainder of the world, different from that of the apostate systems. These become sons of God.

They are dead with Jesus as human beings, and are begotten to a new, a spiritual nature. — Col. 3:3.

What This Beheading Signifies

It is important that all those who make a consecration of themselves to God understand clearly that they are thus renouncing all the hopes and ambitions of the world for the far grander and heavenly hopes now held out to those who become disciples of Christ, who deny themselves to take up their cross and follow Him. The question for each one who has made this choice is: Am I faithfully following in the footsteps of Jesus? Jesus gave up His will wholly to the Father. He said, "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." We are to follow His example, to walk in His steps. We are to lay down our lives for the brethren, as He laid down His life.

The losing of our heads, our wills, does not mean that we actually have no will, but that our wills are fully submitted to God's will. Whatever we see to be contrary to His will for us is to be wholly relinquished. We may be sure that our Saviour, when on earth, being a perfect man, had a will, a strong will; but that will was entirely submitted to the will of His Heavenly Father. "Not my will, but thine, be done," was His expression. "The cup which my Father hath poured for me, shall I not drink it?" He said.

Because our Lord Jesus fully gave up His will to God, and was obedient even unto the ignominious death of the cross, the Father highly exalted Him, giving Him a name "far above angels, principalities and powers, and every name that is named" — Eph.1:20-23. And we, His Church, if faithful to our heavenly calling, are to be exalted with Him and under Him, as our Head. The Bible presents a beautiful picture: God, the Father of all; our Lord Jesus Christ next to the Father; the Church, the Body, or Bride of Christ next; then the lower spiritual orders of being; lastly, will be the restored world, when God's great Plan is complete. How wonderful it seems! How much more wonderful than anything we could possibly conceive of ourselves! What a great and good God we have!

How great have been the misconceptions of God's character which have for so many centuries beclouded men's minds. These nations calling themselves Christian have made God out as worse even than heathen nations represent their gods. While we declared, "God is Love," we pictured Him in our creeds as the vilest Demon — taking pleasure in carrying out a programme which would mean an eternity of torture to thousands of millions of our race. But while we were long blinded by the Adversary to thus think of our

gracious God, we have great cause for thankfulness that our eyes are now open more and more widely, and we can see something of the lengths, and breadths, and heights, and depths of God's love.

When we see how the Father has exalted our Saviour for His faithfulness, we who are following in Jesus' footsteps have sure grounds for faith that God will also exalt us with Him. Otherwise we might be inclined to say, "Oh, it is too wonderful! The thought that we have been invited to be sons of God and to share the Divine Nature with Jesus seems too marvellous for belief." But when we see how the Father fulfilled His promises to our Lord and Head, and realize that we have been called to share His glory and throne as His bride, surely we can believe. Jesus verifies the Father's promise to us, saying — "To him that overcometh I will grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne." — Rev. 3:21.

There is still opportunity for some to gain this "High Calling." The "door" to this great favour is not yet closed. There is a little time remaining. If any could gain the whole world and yet lose this great prize, they would be losing much — oh, so much! Nothing that earth can offer can compare with it. All the wealth of a multi-millionaire would be as nothing.

When we give up our wills to the Lord this is not all. We are then to take up our cross and follow Jesus. We are to carry out our consecration vows. Our time, our influence, our money, our property, our all, now belong to God. The Lord does not mislead us into thinking that fulfilling our consecration is something easy. It does not mean merely going to church. It means living as Christ lived. It means walking the way of the cross even unto death. The world will consider such a course very foolish. They will say, "Don't do it! Have some pleasure in life. Don't give up your will to anybody!" This would be sound advice if our will were to be given up to any other than God Himself. The Adversary would like to make us think that giving our will to God is a most foolish thing, and then he will endeavour to entrap us so that we are completely in bondage to his will, which is a wholly evil will.

Satan also seeks to ensnare and destroy the individual will through hypnotism, mesmerism, etc. These are dangerous things. Were it not that God has implanted a strong will in mankind, we cannot doubt that Satan and his evil angels would long ago have led the entire world into complete captivity to sin. He puts light for darkness and darkness for light. We are to be on guard against the machinations of these evil spirits through spiritism. All these are methods by which the

Adversary seeks to seize and capture the will. When our will is given to the Lord, however, it means the turning of it in a direction that will bring our own highest blessing and welfare. Our will is not captured, but guided and strengthened in the right way. We have found by experience how unsatisfactory has been the result of trying to guide ourselves, of following our own will, without the leading of the Lord. Our very best endeavours, unaided by Divine Grace, are very defective, and the results disappointing. How glad we are, then, to have the Lord take charge of us, and guide our wills and our efforts. We know that thus we are safe.

If anyone is afraid to trust the Lord for fear that He will require something that would be harmful, he must wait until he comes to see how fully he can trust the Almighty. If He were the God we once supposed Him to be we might well be afraid to place ourselves in His hands. But since we have learned of His love for us; of His wonderful provision for us notwithstanding our fallen condition; of His provision of Restitution for the world, and of the High Calling for the Church, we can well acclaim "Oh this is the very personification of Justice and Love!" We rejoice in this great loving God, and are so glad to give ourselves to Him and call Him our Father.

That is a very beautiful hymn of consecration by Frances Ridley Havergal: "Take my life and let it be, Lord, acceptable to Thee." Yes, we are acceptable to God through Christ. Thus only can we come. We give Him our whole life. "Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of Thy love." Yes, but our hands are imperfect, and it is only through Jesus that our work is acceptable to God, that our hands may glorify Him. "Take my feet, and let them be swift on errands, Lord, for Thee." Yes, we wish Him to use our feet in His dear service. Gladly will we hasten on errands of love for Him. "Take my voice, and let it bring honour always to my King." Yes, we wish Him to take our voice. But our words are very imperfect. Our brain and our tongue are faulty. But the Father says, "I will cover you with the merit of Jesus. He was perfect, and I will credit His perfection to you. Your voice may have sometimes been used to slander another; the tongue has great power for evil as well as good. But now you have submitted that voice, that tongue, to Me, I will make it a power for good."

"Take my lips, and let them be moved with messages from Thee." Yes, that is the thought. Let the blessed message of salvation and grace overflow our lips to God's praise, and to the blessing of others. "Take my silver and my gold; nothing, Lord, would I withhold." The Lord answers, "Yes, dear child, I will take this which

you give to Me. I do not need your gold and silver; for 'all the silver and gold are Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.' But I will receive it as a mark of your love, as an indication of your devotion to Me."

"Take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless praise." We often fear that our moments may not always praise the Lord as they ought, and our days are not always just what we would like them to be. But our Lord lovingly answers our troubled hearts and says, "I know even better than you do how imperfect you are in word and deed. But through Christ I receive you, and accept your imperfect works and endeavours. He will make up for your unavoidable deficiencies." So we take courage and strive that our days and hours and moments may indeed bring glory to our King who so loves us and whom we so love. His arrangement for us in Christ is so wonderful.

"Take my will and make it Thine." Ah, yes! That is the very first thing to be done. "It shall be no longer mine." We wish our will to be the Lord's and His alone. If we have any self-will God cannot use us. "Take my heart, it is Thine own." Yes, we have consecrated our heart with all its impulses and affections to the Lord. "Thus in me Thyself enthrone." Our heart shall be His royal throne for evermore.

**"Take my love, my God, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure-store;
Take myself — I wish to be
Ever, only, all for Thee!"**

This is indeed our sentiment. The doing of all this is a life-work. While our consecration was the work of a moment, yet the fulfilling of it is the work of our entire lives. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." So while in one sense our beheading, our decapitation, is an instantaneous matter, yet we must continue to keep ourselves beheaded even unto death. Then we shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years, and be His associates in all His glory and honour for evermore. Glory, honour, immortality! Wonderful, wonderful! If such a prize does not appeal to our hearts, what would? When we see the loyalty and courage manifested by the soldiers of the nations, how they are willing to go down to death for their nations, often not knowing even for what they are fighting, how loyal should we be to our heavenly King — we who have hopes so glorious held out to us, who have a King so infinitely worthy of our zeal and loyalty? Our King does not say, "Go," He says, "Come." Gladly will we be beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God.

Beware of a half truth; you may have got hold of the wrong half.

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Encouragement for Hebrews

WHEN studying the Epistle to the Hebrews the earnest student is greatly impressed by the Apostle's kindly consideration for the natural feelings of those to whom he was writing, who had become followers of Christ, by his repeated assurances that God had not forgotten their forefathers when formulating His plan for the salvation of His human creation.

Most Hebrew Christians would be well informed regarding the deliverance of their forefathers from Egyptian bondage, and of God having chosen to establish a covenant with Israel, called the Law Covenant, with Moses as mediator. They would also know that while the keeping of that Law Covenant would have meant lasting life for Israel, it was not possible for anyone, not even Moses, to attain unto the Law's requirements.

After learning that "the law was their schoolmaster to bring them unto Christ, that they might be justified by faith" — Gal. 3:24 — the Hebrews had accepted Christ as their Saviour and consecrated their lives to God by faith in His sacrifice. They were further greatly encouraged throughout this Epistle by being informed that God had arranged in His Plan to establish a New Covenant with their departed forefathers, which would accomplish for them when raised in the resurrection day, what the previous Law Covenant failed to do — provide lasting life — at that time on the restored earth. These Hebrew Christians would realize that the promised New Covenant would not directly benefit themselves. They had already received much higher spiritual blessings anyway; they were then spiritual sons of God, prospective members for the heavenly kingdom, but to know that their departed forefathers would be blessed under the promised New Covenant, when raised from the dead, would prompt and inspire them to be faithful in their Christian calling.

How clearly and helpfully does the Apostle explain in Hebrews 8:8-12 God's Plan for establishing the New Covenant, as he quotes from the prophet Jeremiah. He writes — "For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with

the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord." After what days? After the days of Israel's rejection, after the days when the Lord "regarded them not" — verse 9, just quoted. The days of Israel's disfavor extend over the long period of Gentile Times, 2520 years. If the New Covenant is to go into effect "after those days", that means it is to be established with Israel after the Gospel Age has ended, that is, with the commencement of the Millennial Age.

Continuing the same explanation in chapter 9 of Hebrews, the Apostle impresses in verses 12 to 14 how the sacrifice of Christ purges the conscience of all truly consecrated Christians "from dead works to serve the living God." Also, in addition to providing the heavenly salvation for His true followers of this Gospel Age, Christ qualified by His sacrifice at Calvary to be the mediator of the New Covenant. This is well expressed in verse 15 of this chapter in the Revised Standard Version, as follows — "Therefore (or "on this account" — Diaglott) he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred which redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant." Earnest students are well aware that those who transgressed under the first (or Law) covenant, were the Israelites under Moses, so the New Covenant is God's gracious provision of salvation for them in the Kingdom Age, with Christ as mediator. It is well to remember in this connection that the nation of Israel was called to be God's special people under the first or Law Covenant. By so doing, there is no confusing of them with the called of God during the Gospel Age.

The same Apostle Paul who wrote so helpfully to the Hebrews, also instructed the Galatians when he explained the Abrahamic and Law Covenants in chapter 3, verse 17 — "And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God (the Abrahamic), the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." In verse 19 of this same chapter, the Apostle explains that "the law was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." Thus it is evident that the "seed" is developed under the Abrahamic Covenant throughout the Gospel Age — "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" — Gal. 3:29.

The Ministry of Comfort

“The Lord hath anointed . . . to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified” — Isaiah 61:1-3.

OUR text is surely good tidings in a very broad and a very deep sense. Its message is one of “comfort”, not only to Zion, the consecrated Church, but to all that mourn; and as mentally we cast our eyes over the world we are deeply impressed with the thought that the vast majority of mankind are in mourning. As the Apostle expresses it: “The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together.” There are undoubtedly a few who are full, satisfied, and who mourn for nothing, and who, therefore, under these conditions, are excluded from any share in this promised blessing; but they are exceptions to the rule. Some of them are wealthy in this world’s goods, and feel they have need of nothing and are kept busy with their efforts to enjoy themselves. There are others of the same full class who, though not wealthy, have a very self-satisfied feeling as respects their moral status; they do not realize themselves as sinners; they do not realize their daily imperfections nor their need of a Saviour, and are not mourning for anything, and not, therefore, in the way to be comforted with any of the comforting assurances and promises and provisions, which the Lord has made for those who mourn.

So far as the world is concerned, our Lord’s ministry of comfort to them is chiefly a future work. We rejoice, however, that the time is sure to come when all that mourn, all the “groaning creation,” shall be brought under the blessed influences and provisions of the Messianic Kingdom, and shall there come to know the consolations which God has provided in Christ — the balm for every trouble, every wound, the cure for every blight, every sin, and every imperfection, and their privilege of profiting by these to the fullest measure by giving themselves unreservedly into the care of the Good Physician. But the poor world, blinded and deceived by the god of this world as respects the character and plan of Jehovah, can neither see, hear, nor appreciate now the wonderful provisions made for them, and hence they cannot receive the blessing, the consolation, the comfort now, but must wait for it until the establishment of the Lord’s Kingdom, the binding of Satan, and the opening of their understanding with the eye salve of truth.

But as respects Zion, the consecrated Church, this comfort is now her privilege, and all the

children of Zion need to be comforted. First of all they need the comforting knowledge that their sins are forgiven, and that they are no longer strangers and aliens and foreigners, but children of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord, if so be that they suffer with Him. They need to be comforted, too, with the assurance of the Lord’s Word, that our God is very sympathetic, “very pitiful,” and that if anyone be overtaken in a fault, that he may be restored, and “not be utterly cast down.” If the children of Zion had no such consolations as these, they surely would be utterly discouraged, disheartened, and faint by the way; hence the Lord has provided these comforting assurances, pointing out to them that, having begun a good work in them, He is desirous of completing it, if they will permit Him to do so, and that to this end they must abide in Christ by faith, coupled with obedience to the extent of their ability. What Christian is there who has not shared these consolations, these comforts, and what Christian has not needed them, and realized without them he would long since have been undone?

The Scriptures point out to us that our comfort comes through fellowship with the Heavenly Father, and with our Lord Jesus; we are comforted not by believing that they are ignorant of our weaknesses and short comings, nor that they have a low standard of righteousness and a sinful basis of friendship, but quite to the contrary of all this they comfort us with the assurance that although our every imperfection is known to the Lord, He is yet very sympathetic, very merciful; and that, having provided in the great sacrifice at Calvary a full propitiation (satisfaction) for all sins, the Lord is very pleased to apply on behalf of each of His true children, in full measure, the riches of grace necessary to the covering and offsetting of every unintentional, unapproved error and failure. What comfort is here! What consolation! What privileges of fellowship with the Father and the Son!

And this comfort, the Scriptures assure us, comes to us through the holy spirit — it is the channel, and hence indeed called the comforter — John 14:26. Those who have it may have the comfort, and those who do not have it may not have this comfort, this consolation. It is only as we receive the spirit and the mind of the Lord, His disposition, that we are able to understand and appreciate the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of His love and compassion and provision for us, and to be comforted thereby.

Nevertheless, this comfort of the holy spirit (the channel of divine favour) reaches us through the Scriptures as the medium or sub-channel

through which the knowledge of God's grace and the comfort of all knowledge reaches us; in the Apostle's language, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" — Rom. 15:4.

Yet while this comfort is of the Father, through the Son, by the holy spirit, communicated through the Scriptures, we are informed that in great measure it is communicated by the members of the body of Christ one to another, as the Apostle, for instance, after relating certain features of the divine plan respecting the deliverance of the Church says, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words" — 1 Thess. 4:18. Similarly the Apostle declares that he sent Timothy to the Church at Colosse, that he might comfort their hearts. This, of course, signifies that he was to draw their attention to the exceeding great and precious promises of the Lord's Word, and that thus they might drink in the holy spirit of all the promises, and that thus they might be comforted, and not only with respect to the things promised, but with respect to the loving compassion and sympathy of Him who promises them.

Writing to the Thessalonians, the Apostle says that he sent Timothy "to establish you and to comfort you concerning your faith, that no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto, for verily, when we were with you we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know. For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith lest by some means the tempter had tempted you" — 1 Thess. 3:2-5. Here again it is evident that the comforting signifies and implies establishment in the faith once delivered to the saints, that all the terms and conditions of our covenant should be clearly held in mind, and that the promises of reward at the end of the journey might serve to comfort, strengthen and establish the children of Zion in their endurance of the tribulations as good soldiers. This comfort again was of the Lord, through the holy spirit, through the agency of Paul, and Timothy. Again, the same Apostle, speaking in the same strain, says, "Wherefore, comfort yourselves together and edify one another, even as also ye do" — 1 Thess. 5:11.

All of the Lord's people need to remember that in proportion as they are ambassadors of the Lord, and His representatives, it will be their privilege not only by and by in the Kingdom to "comfort all that mourn," and to be trees of righteousness, whose leaves will be for the healing of the nations — Rev. 22:2. But they should remember that in the present life they have a

ministry of comfort to perform also towards all who mourn in Zion, towards all of the Lord's people who are in any tribulation, physical or mental disquiet, dis-"ease". And they should remember, too, that just in proportion as they are filled with this spirit now, it is their privilege to bind up the broken-hearted and comfort the mourning ones. No one can have this spirit of helpfulness, this disposition to comfort and to strengthen, and to edify and to upbuild the household of faith, except he have in considerable measure the spirit of love, of truth, and the spirit of the Lord; and in proportion as each one seeks to cultivate this privilege of brotherly helpfulness in comforting and upbuilding and strengthening, in that same proportion he will find the spirit of love developing and abounding in his own heart, and that his likeness to the Lord Jesus, the Head of the body, is becoming more pronounced from day to day, and from year to year.

Finally, in view of what we have seen respecting the Lord's goodness towards His people, and the method by which He comforts them through the holy spirit, the Scriptures, and the brethren, let us note one of the Apostle's expressions respecting the great comfort and consolation which God has provided for His consecrated, faithful people, saying:

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" — 2 Cor. 1:3, 4.

So then, all of our lessons and experiences in life in connection with trials and difficulties if we are rightly exercised by them, should bring us larger experiences in the Lord's comfort, through the gracious promises of His Word, and the spirit of the same; and should make us the more capable and efficient agents and representatives of the Lord, His Word, and His spirit in communicating comfort to others in their trials and difficulties.

"Our Bible Translated"

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.

Melbourne Christmas Convention

The brethren of the Melbourne Class extend a cordial invitation to all friends able to attend their Annual Convention to be held this year (D.V.) on December 24th, 25th, 26th and 27th, in the Auxiliary Room, Kew City Buildings, Charles Street, Kew. Further information from the Class secretary — Mr. J. B. Hiam, 27 Redhill Avenue, Burwood East, Victoria, 3151.

Prayer — Vain Repetition

Question — In Matt. 6:7, our Lord tells us, "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking." The Apostle Paul, writing to the Church — Col. 4:2 — exhorts that they "continue in prayer." Again we read of the widow who was heard for her importunity — Luke 18:2-5. Is this a suggestion that we should importune? How could we importune without repetition?

Answer — We are to recognize a distinct difference between the "vain repetitions" of the heathen, which our Lord condemned, and the "continuing instant in prayer," "in everything giving thanks," in "praying and not fainting," acts which our Lord and the Apostles enjoined — Rom. 12:12; Luke 18:1, etc. This difference the Lord illustrated in the case of the woman who came to a judge repeatedly, asking that he avenge her of her enemy. Although the judge was not a man who would act justly, yet he did her justice on account of her persistence. In commenting upon her course, our Lord said that if an unjust judge be moved on account of importunity to do justice, how much more a just judge!

The thought illustrated in the parable is that of a person who cried to the Lord that injustice is being done — as with the Church at the present time. We all realize that we are suffering injustice. We cry, "O Lord, deliver us! deliver us from the Adversary!" Will God never deliver the Church? For nineteen hundred years the Church has been praying thus; and God has not answered this prayer. Will He never answer? Our Lord intimates that we should not lose faith. We are to have full confidence in His promises. Injustice will not forever obtain. The time will come, we are told, when Satan shall be bound and deceive the people no more. — Rev. 20:2, 3.

Therefore we do right to pray, "Thy Kingdom come," week after week, year after year, century after century. To grow faint or grow weary in prayer would not be right. The proper course is to believe that God will fulfil what He has promised; and that all will come out in harmony with His will. The same lesson is taught in Luke 11:5-8.

This is all very different, however, from the "vain repetitions" which our Lord condemned. We do not think that our Lord desires us to use repetition in our prayers. Some people use the words, "Our Father," or "Our God," or "Heavenly Father" more frequently than would seem to be good form — even using them in every fourth or fifth sentence. Their prayer would sound better **on earth** if they did not use these

repetitions; though, no doubt, the repetitions would be understood in Heaven; for these people seem to be as earnest as others.

But the repetitions which our Lord had in mind and which are specially reprehensible in the Lord's sight are formal prayers merely. To illustrate: the Chinese are said to have a praying wheel, which enables them to make many "vain repetitions" without the trouble of speaking a word.

It would seem that our Catholic friends also are given to a great deal of repetition in prayer. They repeat, "Hail Mary!" and believe that God will save them from suffering in purgatory for their repetitions. Some of the poor creatures say, "Hail Mary!" as often and as fast as they can.

So with the Mohammedans. They say, "Great is Allah! Mohammed is His Prophet! Great is Allah! Mohammed is His Prophet!" again and again. We do not know what good they are doing, for they are surely wasting a great deal of valuable time to no purpose. We do not wish to make light of these people nor of their conduct, but we are bound to think that with those who are intelligent such prayers are only form. With those who are not intelligent it is different. We believe that they are sincere; and so our course is to think sympathetically of them, but not to do as they do, nor to pray as they pray. Prayer in private, in our own room, may be as long as we please; but prayer in public should be short and **to the point**. (Reprinted from Question Book.)

The advice given above that prayer in public should be short and to the point would seem most appropriate. This could well be observed at our Conventions and regular Class gatherings, and indeed, in our homes where perhaps only two or three may pray together as the Lord's people. When public prayer is lengthy an amount of repetition seems unavoidable, and this our Lord would encourage us to avoid.

It would seem that long prayers in some classes have developed over the years, perhaps because an elderly member had set this example, and younger members coming in have felt that the same long prayers at the meetings were expected of them. There can be no doubt that our Lord's model prayer sets an excellent pattern, not only in its composition, but in its length, as a guide to our prayers in public. While we are to seek the guidance of the Lord's spirit in our prayers, we are to avoid being carried away in our earnestness, and so lose all sense of time, remembering that prayers in public are on behalf of an assembly, or the one or two with whom we pray, and not our own private prayers to the Lord.

Convention News

WE are very thankful to our Heavenly Father that a most blessed time was again experienced at the Nambour Convention held on the 30th and 31st July. This year was a milestone in the progress of our Conventions, as it was the tenth anniversary, the first Convention gathering being held in July 1973.

The attendance was very good this year. It was such a pleasure to welcome brethren from as far afield as Sydney, Melbourne and Perth. A larger than usual contingent was present this year from the Melbourne Class who contributed in no small measure to the success of the gatherings. Three Sisters from one family attended whose combined ages amounted to 281 years, the youngest being 90, the eldest 99. We wish to express our sincere appreciation to all who attended, those from near by and those who travelled such long distances to be with us on our very special two days in the year.

Two Bible Studies were enjoyed in Hebrews 10:19-25 and 1 Peter 2:7-12. Question Time was held as usual, and a number of very interesting questions submitted by the brethren were considered.

There were ten addresses delivered by the brethren on the following subjects:— "I have Graven Thee upon the Palms of My Hands"; "The Law of Life and the Law of Sin and Death"; "Battle for Man's Mind"; "The Church's Last Hour"; "Much More"; "Atonement and Reconciliation"; "Lessons from 2 Timothy 4:6-13"; "God's Purpose in Trials"; "The Place of God's Feet Glorious"; and "The Final Forty Years."

A Praise and Testimony session gave an opportunity to the brethren to express their gratitude for the presence of our dear Master, and the everlasting arms of a loving Heavenly Father in every time of need. Appreciation was expressed for the many blessings along the pilgrim way, and also for the more sombre moments that do not seem so joyous at the time, for we know that all things work together for our good. Both the joys and the chastenings help to bring us nearer to the pattern set before us, portrayed by the life of Jesus.

Many messages were received from Classes and brethren throughout Australia, assuring us of their presence in spirit and their prayers on our behalf; these were all very much appreciated. Christian love and greetings from the Convention to all who remembered us, and to all brethren everywhere is sent, together with the Scripture — Hebrews 10:22-24.

We wish to thank all the Brethren for their labour in preparing addresses, studies and comments, and also the Sisters for their work in preparation and serving the temporal food. We know that all services are rendered as unto the Lord, to whom we give all the praise, honour and glory.

Witnesses for Jesus

"He that receiveth you receiveth me." — Matt. 10:40.

THE following thoughts are from an article written many years ago, and which are as timely and important for us today, as in the past.

"What in fact, should we do if Jesus appeared in our society with any claim to anything but the right to console us, to heal our personal ills, and to make us all comfortable again? I wonder. As a revealer of the art of actual living, as the Master of the craft of life — for that is what He is and was — should we recognize Him, or would Church and State combine against Him as a dangerous fellow, one to be dealt with in the old Judean way, to be bullied, to be betrayed, to be crucified? I wonder.

"I suggest that for many of us who are here, there is, after all, one thing above others that actually makes known the Gospel, and that is the goodness of the individual. If only when we got home tonight they knew at home, because we were rather different, that we had been trying to draw near to our Lord; if only they could see that we were a little more thoughtful, courteous, kindly and understanding, then, 'Oh, my!' they would say, 'there is something in this more than we thought there was.'

"I think it might well be the ambition of all our lives that one day, possibly, most lovely of all, wife, or brother, or sister, or mother, or grannie, might say after we had left, 'It seems as if Jesus of Nazareth had passed by.' So when we talk, as we often do, about the Bible and its Plan of the Ages, let us please remember that this message will count in an amazing way if we can take Jesus Christ back to our homes or to our places of business."

**"Darkest night will always come before the morning,
Silver linings shine on God's side of the cloud;
All your journey He has promised to be with you,
Nought has come to you but what His love allowed.**

**"Have faith in God. The sun will shine,
Though dark the clouds may be to-day;
His heart has planned your path and mine;
Have faith in God, have faith always."**