



Volume XLIX No. 1 MELBOURNE, FEBRUARY—MARCH 1966 Price— ten cents

## Continuing Instant in Prayer

(Rom. 12:12)

(Convention Address)

PRAYER is considered of great importance in all religions. Thousands, in fact millions of people, pray to stone, the sun, the moon, to all kinds of images, and we think, how foolish, what a waste of time and energy. However, unbelievers view the prayers of Christians likewise. Prayer is a big subject. The results gained from prayer to the true God of the Bible are governed largely by the manner and spirit in which it is offered. There is enough reference in the Bible to prayer to convince one that it should play an important part in a Christian's life, and Christians often enquire how they might learn more about prayer, apparently feeling that they have not tapped this source of energy and comfort as they would like.

There is nothing derogatory in admitting a feeling of need for a more satisfactory prayer life, for the disciples themselves desired it,—"Lord, teach us to pray." The request was uttered after hearing our Lord pray to His Father in heaven. Just what an experience that must have been we must leave it to each individual to conjecture for himself. How earnest such a prayer would be; what desire to learn the Father's will, and what evident readiness to obey would be manifest. What complete rest of faith in the Father's wisdom must the disciples have noted; and they realised how poor by comparison was their own communion.

Sometimes our Saviour continued all night in prayer to God—we might wonder what He would pray about all that time, but it is not unlikely that there was some repetition. His faith was tested to an extreme degree—with strong crying and tears He prayed to be delivered out of death. In the garden of Gethsemane He prayed in an agony, then a little later, "he prayed again, uttering the same words". Words often fail in times of extreme trial. Reflection upon our Lord's prayer life might well be a profitable exercise for our spiritual well being.

In the sixth chapter of Matthew we find some instruction given by our Lord in respect of our prayers. In verse 5 we are told, when we pray, not to do as the hypocrites who like to make a show of their prayers. The synagogue is mentioned as well as the street corner—apparently our Lord had heard some hypocritical prayers in both places. If our Lord were about today in our modern synagogues, or if He were to pass by some of the street corner meetings held in His name, would He find the same kind of prayer that he warned against—pretense and show?

The sixth verse tells us how to pray if we would receive blessing—to pray in secret. The word translated "closet" here, is elsewhere translated "secret chamber", and "storehouse". The meaning undoubtedly is,

that in our private prayers to God we should seek a place secluded from others; Christians of experience will testify that such seems to be necessary. Our Lord, of whom it is written that “he had not where to lay his head”, having no room often where He could pray unmolested in His darkest hours, sometimes chose the high mountain slopes for His seclusion.

Verse seven tells us not to use vain repetition when we pray like the heathen do. It is not repetition in itself that our Lord warns against, for as stated earlier, He repeated Himself in prayer. Earnest agonizing prayer sometimes knows but the fewest of words, oft repeated. The self-righteous Pharisee prayed fluently enough, thanking God he was not as other men, but all the poor publican could utter was—“Lord be merciful to me a sinner.” Our Lord told us which was the most efficacious prayer. The point to observe in this verse is that our Lord said, “Use not vain repetition.” The phrase occurs only this once in the Bible, and Young’s Concordance gives the meaning “to speak emptily”. Weymouth renders this,— “When praying, do not use needless repetition as the heathen do, for they expect to be listened to because of their multitude of words.” From this we could conclude that we have not to spend a certain time in prayer. How long we pray, or how much we say, is not the essential thing. We should be sincere, earnest in rendering our praise and thanksgiving, and in making our petitions; then going our way leaving all with the Lord, watching for His leading in answer to our requests.

One wonders regarding prayer book prayers used in church services. Are they often but “vain repetition”? Where erroneous doctrine does not invade, some of these prayers are exceedingly nice in their expression; but where prayers

are recited again and again, they seem to have little power and surely tend towards “vain repetition”. The prayer that comes from the heart requires no embellishment of language to wing its way to Him who regards not words alone, but looketh upon the heart.

From verse nine we have recorded what we have come to know as, The Lord’s Prayer. It is much to be regretted, but seems true, that this prayer is often uttered in a manner described as “vain repetition”; thus we find how this finest of prayers, merely recited again and again, tends to lose its real value. The Lord’s prayer is just what He intended it should be—a guide in framing our prayers. First, a due and proper reverence for our Father in heaven. Next, a complete readiness and desire to have His will done in all things upon earth, a patient looking forward to, and waiting for His Kingdom. Next, a request for our daily provisions, both temporal and spiritual.

How many of us really consider verse twelve, and realize the limitation of forgiveness we can expect unless we enter into the full spirit of the prayer. How freely do we forgive those whom we believe trespass against us? It is a searching question which we should always ponder when we ask our Heavenly Father’s forgiveness for our own erring ways. Verses fourteen and fifteen are definite, showing that this injunction cannot be explained away. Till seventy times seven it is to be complied with; read also the simple but powerful parable in Matthew 18:23-33.

The closing request of the prayer in verse thirteen is well explained by another. For the sake of space we quote in part only,—“The one who is responsible for the temptations referred to, is Satan . . . In the petition which immediately preceded this one, the Christian has just finished asking the Father to forgive him his trespasses . . . , now he looks forward, and in his mind realises how weak he is and the danger of further stumblings . . . so he petitions for guidance and protection so as to avoid sins in the future . . . and is equivalent to asking Him not to abandon us, and thus leave us to resist the snares of the Evil One in our own unaided strength. . . . As the Apostle Peter said, ‘The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation’, and He will do so if we ask him . . .”

EVERY experience in a Christian’s life calls for ‘prayer. Every time we are in trouble or faced with

perplexity, it seems natural to go to God in prayer, and there is no better place to go. But what about the times when all is well, when we are “sitting on top of the world”—a Christian is not always in dire trouble. This is the time when we are in real danger of becoming heady, high minded and puffed up; this is the time for earnest prayer for the Lord’s sustaining power to keep us in the proper spirit of humility, and to be reminded that of ourselves we are nothing.

If we have been tested and tried, and have failed to gain the victory, it is an occasion for prayer for forgiveness, and also that the Lord might bless the experience by impressing upon us our weakness along that line, so that in future we might lay hold more quickly upon the promised grace in time of need. If we should have won the victory in the test, our prayer should be of thankfulness, and that we may be watchful for the next attack of the Adversary, perhaps along some other line—to catch us off guard. He presses along lines where the natural being has least resistance; we once heard a phrase used in a prayer that we can all voice—Lord give us grace to control our tempers when we are tired.

It is the deep realization of our constant need of divine help wherein lies our safety—every day, every hour, every moment. In our text in Romans we find three other translations of “continuing instant”; and all three might well be used together —Let us be constant, persistent, persevering in prayer.

Is your prayer life your spare wheel or your steering wheel in the Christian way? The only time the spare wheel invites attention is when we are in trouble; the prayers of many are just like that. Let us not fail to continue in prayer in every circumstance. “Draw nigh to Me, saith the Lord.” The first step is ours; the Lord never fails to keep His part of the promise, ...” and I will draw nigh to thee.”

## Passover Memorial, 1966

The anniversary of the Memorial of Christ’s death falls this year on the evening of Sunday, 3rd April. It is the privilege of all appreciating our Lord’s request—”This do in remembrance of me”—to keep the observance at the appropriate season of the year.

### Memorial Services

Melbourne—Sunday, 3rd April, at 6.30 p.m., at Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond (near Church Street).

Adelaide—Sunday, 3rd April, at 6.30 p.m., at Manchester Unity Building, (2nd Floor), 16 Franklin Street, Adelaide.

Perth—Sunday, 3rd April, at 7 p.m., at 7 Harvest Terrace (opposite Parliament House).

Sydney—Sunday, 3rd April, at 7 p.m., at 53 Bennett Street, West Ryde.

If thou desire to reap profit, read with humility, simplicity and faithfulness. Thomas A. Kempis.

### PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST’S KINGDOM.

(Bi-Monthly) 60 cents per annum, post paid.

Published by the Berean Bible Institute,

19 Ermington Place, Kew, E.4, Melbourne,

Victoria Australia

While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord’s Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression used, either in the correspondence or in the sermons reported.

## Another Year of Opportunity

THE main work of the Christian is certainly the work of transformation of character, of disposition, to attain the conformation to Christ our Lord. It may be likened to the painting of a picture. How carefully every colour must be applied, how important every tint or shading; how wonderfully these features affect the whole. We have a copy which we must ever keep in view in order that we may be brought into the likeness of God's dear Son. The Apostle expresses a similar thought, saying, "We with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord."

As each tinting or shading of a picture may change the whole view or likeness, so each act, each word, each thought, each impulse or the way in which we are affected by the day by day trials, joys or sorrows, affects our characters. It is the small things of every day concerns that really mould our lives. It is how we are affected by the incidents of life as we come in contact with others, in the home circle, in the Church or in the world. The Lord does not protect us from very severe trials, indeed it is because we are Christians that we must have the "fiery trials which shall try you." The object is to develop character. It is because "God is working in us to will and to do His good pleasure;" it is because we desire to be made like Christ, that we must be tempted in all points as He was. We must like Him prove our loyalty and faithfulness to God so that we may be "overcomers" and strong to resist every foe, every temptation, and stand any trial.

We can never complete the picture by our own unaided ability. The great Artist must guide our hands in all the coloring, tinting or shading; and the opening of another year is an appropriate time to review the past work and resolve that in the days ahead, whatever the circumstances and conditions may be, we shall strive even more earnestly than ever before to work with God to will and to do of His good pleasure. By His grace, in due time, the likeness will be complete, "for He is able to complete that which He hath begun in us." Only let us day by day seek to be guided by His hand, gladly co-operating with Him in this wonderful work. Then when we may be with our Lord where He is,

"We know that we shall be like Him and see Him as He is." -1 John 3:1, 2.

Another year is dawning,  
Dear Master, let it be,  
In working or in waiting,  
Another year with Thee.

Another year of leaning  
Upon Thy loving breast,  
Of ever-deepening trustfulness,  
Of quiet, happy rest.

Another year of mercies,  
Of faithfulness and grace,  
Another year of gladness  
In the shining of Thy face.

Another year of progress,  
Another year of praise;  
Another year of proving  
Thy presence "all the days."

Another year of service,  
Of witness for Thy love;  
Another year of training  
For holier work above.

Another year is dawning  
Dear Master, let it be,  
Just as Thyself would have it,  
Another year for Thee!

## Convention News

THE Annual Convention arranged by the Melbourne Class and held over the Christmas period was a very helpful season of spiritual refreshing, enjoyed, we feel sure, by all able to attend the gatherings. Our gratitude is rendered to the Lord for His blessings and benefits bestowed throughout the four days of the assembly. It was a pleasure to welcome visiting brethren from other states as well as from Victorian centres, and their contributions to the good things provided from God's Word added much to the enjoyment and encouragement received by the Lord's overruling providence.

Three very helpful Bible studies were conducted during the Convention days, the selected passages of Scripture being—Phil. 4:4-9; 1 Cor. 15:48-54; and Psalm 46. Eighteen brethren addressed the gatherings with helpful and encouraging messages, and three Fellowship Meetings and a Baptism Service added much to the full programme enjoyed by all present. The attendance was also very good on each day of the Convention.

The study in Phil. 4:4-9 provided very good instruction for our present time of world distress and perplexity. The main lesson from the passage was to learn complete dependence upon the Lord, realising that His Plan of the Ages was going majestically on, and so the Christian's mind and heart should be at rest in Him, rejoicing in his privileges, and manifesting moderation, (reasonableness), while free from all anxiety, assured of the Lord's ability to answer all prayers in accord with His will and in the highest interest of each of His children. Thus would the gracious "peace of God" which is unknown to all but the Lord's true people "stand guard over your hearts and thoughts, through your union with Christ Jesus." The directing and keeping of the thoughts on the things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of virtue and praise was seen to be of the most vital importance, even as the Apostle was a splendid example of this, "and then God, the giver of peace, will be with you."

Thoughts on the study in 1 Cor. 15:48-54, compiled by the chairman of this study, appear elsewhere in this issue of "Peoples Paper" as well as in the Notes on the Convention generally, as the value of the meaning of this passage seemed to warrant this double printing, for the benefit of all readers.

The study of Psalm 46 was most timely, being a message of comfort and assurance to all the Lord's people, especially in the last days of the age, and revealing God's Plan of the Ages to inaugurate His Kingdom following the disintegration of all earthly kingdoms, in the highest interest of His whole human family. The Lord's people truly find God to be their "refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Knowing that His Plan calls for the removal of all earthly kingdoms (mountains) they are encouraged not to fear during whatever part of this process may be accomplished prior to their deliverance from the earthly scenes "at the dawning of her morning." In the meantime there is much comfort derived from "a river (of truth) the streams whereof make glad the city of God"—the Church, in whom God dwells as an habitation through the spirit. (Eph. 2:22.)

The wording of verses 6 and 8 were seen to be most dramatic—"The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved; he uttered his voice, the earth melted. Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth." His will decrees that this must be, to make a clean foundation for the establishment of Christ's Kingdom. Hence,

"He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth. . . . Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth."

The addresses by the brethren were very helpful on the variety of subjects as follows:— "What is

Truth?"; "Remember Lot's Wife"; "The Power of Little Things"; "Continuing Instant in Prayer"; "By Searching"; "The Parables"; "Keep Yourselves in the Love of God"; "The Lord's Message to the Seven Churches"; "As a Man Thinketh in His Heart"; "God is Faithful"; "I Found Jesus"; "Preaching the Gospel"; "Let Your light So Shine"; "Take Heed Lest No Man Deceive You"; "The Church of the Living God"; "The Soul"; "The Unity of the Spirit"; and "In the Strength of God." A brief outline of all these addresses appears in the Convention

Notes expected to be available for distribution with this issue of "Peoples Paper."

On the morning of the third day of Convention, a Baptism Service was conducted at which a Polish brother from Brisbane symbolized his consecration to the Lord. This proved a very inspiring service, and we rejoice with our dear Brother who has been in Australia for some years, that he has experienced the Lord's drawing power to yield his life in glad and full sacrifice to be dead with Christ, that by His grace he may live and reign with Him in the heavenly kingdom. The service was conducted in both English and Polish, the addresses and prayers being in both languages and the hymns in English. The good talent of one Brother who speaks fluently in both languages enabled the addresses in English and Polish to be interpreted beautifully and which added much to the blessing of the occasion for our Australian and Polish friends. This was the first occasion a service of this kind has been conducted in Australia, and it was evident that the Lord's spirit was present in a marked degree.

At the first Fellowship Meeting, messages of greeting were gladly received from various Classes and individual brethren throughout Australia, from a Brother and Sister in Germany and also a cable from Brother and Sister Pollock of U.S.A., who visited Australia in October last. All these messages were warmly appreciated. The Convention message with our warm Christian love to all our dear brethren who had remembered the gatherings and to all who love the Lord is the Scripture passage studied on the first day of Convention—Phil. 4:4-9. There was opportunity for Praise and Testimony also at two of the fellowship sessions, and a goodly number expressed their sincere thankfulness to the Lord for all His favors and mercies enjoyed throughout the past year in particular. The Hymn Session also proved beneficial as a number of hymns were sung in grateful praise to the Giver of every good thing.

The closing feature was the usual Love Feast when all present shook hands with each other in farewell to the strains of the lovely hymn—"Blest be the tie that binds." The closing hymn—"God be with you till we meet again"—and the prayer of thankfulness to the Lord, and asking His continued blessing and guidance over all His children in the days ahead was a fitting conclusion to this refreshing season at the Melbourne Convention 1965.

## CONVENTION NOTES

Notes covering the Melbourne Christmas Convention are now available free upon application to this office. **Adelaide Easter Convention**

This announcement is made to the effect that the Adelaide brethren are arranging to hold their Easter Convention this year from Good Friday to Easter Monday, April 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th, in the Manchester Unity Building, (2nd

Floor), 16 Franklin Street, Adelaide. Further information from the secretary—Mr. J. Jordan, Box 47 P.O., Lower Mitcham, South Australia.

## Convention Study 1 Cor. 15:48-54.

IN verse 48 the Apostle shows the difference between the resurrection reward of the Church and that of the world of mankind. The willing and obedient of mankind will be rewarded with the perfection of human nature, while the overcoming Church of the Gospel Age will be rewarded with the heavenly nature. (1 John 3:2.)

The Apostle says in verse 49, “we” (the Church) in the present life have borne the image of the earthly (the first Adam), but in the resurrection the overcomers will bear the image of the heavenly. (Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 5:2; Rev. 3:21.)

In verse 50 the Apostle further explains the great change of nature which takes place in regard to the Church. He explains that “flesh and blood” (human nature) “cannot inherit the kingdom of God,” (John 3:4-8), “neither doth corruption inherit in corruption.” The word “corruption” means “that which may perish or decay,” while the word “in corruption” means “that which is incapable of decay—that which is imperishable.” The inheritance to which the Church is called is an incorruptible inheritance. (1 Pet. 1:4.)

The Apostle tells of a mystery (secret) in verses 51, 52 concerning the change of the last members of the Body of Christ. He says, “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment . . . at the last trump.” It will not be necessary that the Lord’s people who remain over until His second presence shall sleep in unconscious death; the moment of dying will be the moment of “change,” or “clothing upon with the house from heaven,”—the spiritual body. (2 Cor. 5:1, 2. See also S.S. Volume 6, page 724.)

The Apostle declares that the “change” of the last members of the Body of Christ takes place at “the last trump.” The last trump mentioned here would seem to refer to the seventh trump of Rev. 11:15. It is the last of a series of seven symbolic trumpets. In 1 Thes. 4:15-17 the Apostle refers to this same trump calling it “the trump of God.” Its sounding heralds the second presence of our Lord, and marks the time for the resurrection of the sleeping saints—“the dead in Christ shall rise first” (1 Thes. 4:16). As stated in verse 52 of our study “the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed.” As the members of Christ’s body still in the flesh (the “we” class) finish their course in death, there is no longer the necessity for their remaining in the sleep of death. They pass immediately to their reward to be with the Lord and the risen saints. This is also the teaching of Rev. 14:13,—“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth (from the time of Christ’s second presence) that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.”

Verse 53. “This corruptible” (frail earthly organism) “must put on incorruption,” (a character and organism that is permanent and cannot decay) “and this mortal” (dying nature) “must put on immortality” (the death-proof divine nature). The word rendered “incorruption” means incapable of decay, and is used to describe the character or organism of intelligent beings. It is also used to describe the Christian’s crown (see 1 Cor. 9:25) and his inheritance (1 Pet. 1:4; also 1 Pet. 3:4; Eph. 6:24; Rom. 2:7.)

The word rendered “immortality” signifies “deathlessness”; and is applied only to intelligent beings, and refers to the quality of the principle of life which animates them rather than to their organism.

Immortality, or inherent life is possessed only by Jehovah and Christ, and is to be the reward of the overcoming Church, so that they will be both immortal in nature, and incorruptible in character and organism. All who attain a character in harmony with God whether on the angelic or human plane of life may be said to have obtained a condition of incorruption; namely, an incorruptible character, but not of immortality which refers only to the Heavenly Father, and to Christ, and to the joint-heirs of Christ—His

Church.

Verse 54. “When this corruptible” (this human organism compassed with infirmity) “shall have put on incorruption” (an organism holy, perfect, pure and incapable of decay) “and this mortal” (this life principle which is one sustained by food, water, air, etc..) “shall have put on immortality” (a life principle that has inherent life—the divine nature) “then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory.” (Quoted Isa. 25:8.) When the full deliverance and glorification of the Church takes place, then the complete destruction of sin and death will quickly follow during the thousand years of Christ’s Kingdom. Christ and His glorified Church will be the Heavenly Father’s instruments in wiping away all the effects of the curse of sin and death. (Rom. 8:19, 21; Rev. 21:4.)

## “As a Man Thinketh in his Heart”

“Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainties; for as he reckoneth within himself, so is he.” (Prov. 23:6, 7, Revised Version.)

It may well be asked, How is it possible for any- one to think in his heart, to think within himself? Is it not with our heads that all our thinking is done? The answer is yes, in the first instance—all our thinking is done in our heads, in our minds. But when our thinking on any subject becomes established, or consolidated in the mind, when retained so that any conclusions become part of our being, then it can be truly said, “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he,” because the heart is the centre of the affections, the very person himself. Does this not, then, impress upon us the great importance which the Scriptures place upon our established thinking—thinking that has become part of us—thinking which has reached to the heart, and determines what kind of a person one may be?

This matter is clearly and helpfully explained by our Lord in speaking to the Pharisees after they had accused Him of casting out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils, in Matt. 12:31-37. The Lord was revealing the heart condition of the Pharisees, but we can see a very important lesson here also for ourselves. From verse 31 our Lord says, “All manner of sin and blasphemy (that is, every sin and slander which has not reached to the heart and become established there) shall be forgiven men; but the blasphemy (slander) against the holy spirit shall not be forgiven unto men,” because such blasphemy against the light of God’s spirit would imply wilful intention. Verse 32 explains the matter fully,— ‘Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him.’ This implies loose words spoken in ignorance against the Lord, and not reflecting the heart condition; very often a person does not realise what is being said against the Lord’s name. “But whosoever speaketh against the holy spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world (age) neither in the world (age) to come.” These words indicate that what is said had become part of the person. In this Gospel Age, when the Lord’s people are really on trial after the begetting of the holy spirit, how important it is that their hearts be in tune with Him; if they speak against the holy spirit, full light, it will not be forgiven them. This would mean second death. Likewise in the age to come, when God pours out His spirit upon all flesh, those then fully enlightened by the holy spirit will not be forgiven if they speak against that spirit. So we have it in the Scriptures that “all the wicked will God destroy.”

Verse 33 of Matthew 12 from the Twentieth Century translation reads — “You must assume either that both tree and fruit are good, or that both tree and fruit are worthless; since it is by its fruit that a tree is known.” As previously noted, this passage in Matthew 12 was spoken to the Pharisees, the Lord’s accusers, but the Master had also warned His disciples along this same line in Matt. 7:15-20. By those fruits that come out of the heart, from the very being of one, is a person known—surely “By their fruits ye shall know them.”

Then, in Matt. 12:34, knowing the heart condition of the Pharisees, our Lord had to reprove their conduct,—”How can ye, being evil, (thinking such evil of the very Son of God), speak good things?” Then a message for all of us as well,—”For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” The Twentieth Century translates this,—”For what fills the heart will rise to the lips.” When evil words rise from within, it is a very serious condition for any of us.

Of our Lord it is recorded in Luke 4:22,—”And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.” How lovely it must have been to listen to the Lord’s words of grace as He went about doing good, giving the message of blessing, favor and peace to those in right heart condition. “Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.” (John 1:16, 17.) We do well to ask ourselves how much of his fulness have we received; have we received it gladly and joyfully; has it touched our hearts as it did to the few in our Lord’s day? It is surely a challenge to us, as to how much of His fulness has flowed into our hearts and is overflowing, being reflected in our lives to others.

It is the privilege of God’s people to pass on to others this fulness of grace. In Rom. 10:15 Paul speaks of those who go forth with the lovely message of the gospel,—”How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things.” These are the “feet” that run with the message of peace, gladness and joy to refresh hearts with the same message as the gracious words that proceeded out of the mouth of the Lord—good tidings of great joy. This is the message of Christmas time—good tidings of great joy to all people. How beautiful! We are to carry this message out of the abundance or fulness of our hearts. Our thinking must always be of the right kind and influence the heart accordingly; then, what a privilege for the mouth to speak forth gracious words, from the fulness of the heart, words which the Lord has given to us!

From Matt. 12:35 we see how the Lord follows on, teaching us that by the infilling of His spirit in our hearts we are able to reflect some of His gracious words, His teachings, to those with whom we come in contact. “A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things.” How lovely it is to dwell in the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, bringing forth the good things. Then, our Lord had reason to impress those of His day, and also ourselves, that “an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth *evil* things.”

Verses 36 and 37 are important to us also,—”I say unto you that every idle (pernicious, injurious) word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment.” Not that the Lord will bring to mind the actual words spoken, but the character developed by the use of malicious words will be required to be corrected. If the world of mankind are building up wrong characters, true repentance and correction will be necessary before lasting life is obtained in the Millennial Kingdom. How much more important is it for the Lord’s people now, when they are being judged in this Gospel Age, to have their hearts pure and fully devoted to the Lord and His spirit. Thus they will be enabled to speak forth words in tune with the purity of heart, reflecting the lovely graciousness which the Lord implants in all worthy of such,—”Of his fulness have we received, and grace for grace.”

Verse 37 reads—”For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” The Lord here indicates that the very inner being is declared by the words constantly spoken. So one can be justified by their words. So also is the contrary position revealed,—”By thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

May it be dear friends that we shall seek to speak forth the praises of the Lord at all times. The checking of wrong thoughts is an absolute requirement of every disciple of Christ. Such thoughts do not belong to the Lord’s people, but are from outside. The Adversary supplies the ammunition, so to speak, and if we use it we are building up a wrong disposition, filling the heart with that which will bring about the

undoing of the whole Christian life. As the Apostle exhorts us—"Grieve not the holy spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of deliverance."

Prov. 4:23 is most important,—"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." We build up in our hearts what we continually think upon. If *we reject* all wrong thoughts they will not gain entrance and remain in our hearts. Whatever thoughts are consolidated in the heart build up our character accordingly,—"Out of the overflowing of the heart the mouth speaketh." "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." May it be that the lovely lesson Paul gave to the Philippians abides with us, enabling the retaining in our minds of whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report. "If there be any virtue and if there be any praise think on these things." (Phil. 4:8.) Let us adopt this essential advice of the Apostle's, by the Lord's grace, throughout the new year before us, to build up ourselves and all with whom we come in contact, to the praise of God.

## He Cometh with Clouds

THE Scripture in Rev. 1:7 is generally quoted as a proof that our Lord Jesus at His Second Coming will be visible to the whole human family; that they will all have great mourning when they see Him; that it will be a sad day for them—especially for the Jews. Our thought respecting the passage, in the light of other Scriptures is different from this. In the first place, the Lord Himself said, "Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more, but ye shall see Me." Only the Lord's faithful followers were to see Him. The Apostle Paul explains that Jesus' followers will see Him because they are to be changed in the First Resurrection, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." The Scriptures clearly indicate that our Lord's present condition is the Heavenly, the spirit condition, not only as high a condition as before He came into the world, but still higher.

The Lord prayed to the Father that He would glorify Him with the glory that He had with Him before He came into the world—"before the world was." The Father assured Him that He had glorified Him and would glorify Him again. (John 17:5; 12:28. Vatican MS.) The Scriptures also assure us that our Lord in His glorified condition is far above angels, principalities and powers. (Phil. 2:9, 10). When He was a man, He was "a little lower than the angels." (Heb. 2:6-9). The Scriptures declare that the Lord is now the express image of the Father's person (Heb. 1:3), and also declare of Him, "Whom no man hath seen nor can see."

Another Scripture tells us that the coming of Christ will be for the blessing of the world. The very object of His coming will be for the lifting up of the poor and fallen race. St. Peter tells us that there will be "times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of ALL his holy prophets since the world began."—Acts 3:20, 21

How shall we harmonise this last statement with that of our text, which says that He shall come with clouds; that every eye shall see Him; and that all mankind "shall wail because of Him"? The answer is that in harmony with other Scriptures the coming with clouds would signify the coming in a period of trouble—the word "clouds" being used to signify trouble—in the dark Day. He is coming in clouds, in that the time in which He will first manifest Himself to the world will be a very dark Day to the world—"a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation," and, we are told, never shall be again. (Matt. 24:21). That will be a dark, cloudy Day.

In that Day, ultimately all eyes shall be opened; and all mankind shall see Him with the eyes of their understanding—see Him in the sense that we see Him now, and have knowledge of Him and of the Father. A blind man sees in the same sense. He says, “I see now”—meaning that he sees with his intellectual sight. It is far better to see with the intellect than with the natural sight.

Darkness now covers the earth. “The god of this world hath blinded the minds of all those who believe not.” (2 Cor. 4:4). There are a great many blinded minds at the present time. They do not know the object of Christ’s coming. They do not have the Scriptural teaching as to why He comes. But their blinded eyes shall be opened. Every human being shall come to an understanding of the fact that the Lord’s Kingdom is for the blessing of “all the families of the earth” according to God’s promise made to Abraham and all the prophets after his day.

The Jews will come to recognise Him. The Apostle Paul says, “Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved” (Rom. 11:25, 26) from their blindness, from their ignorance, from their misunderstanding at His presentation of Himself at His First Advent. Another Scripture says that when they see Him, recognise the “sign of the Son of Man in the heavens, then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” (Matt. 24:30). The prophet says that those that “pierced Him” shall mourn for Him as a man mourns for his only son. (Zech. 12:10). Thus they will appreciate Christ, and their eyes will be the first that will be opened. But at that same time, when their eyes begin to see out of obscurity, there will not be anything that they can see with the natural sight.

There is first of all to be a parousia, or presence, of Christ, which is known only to His Church, His Bride class. The culmination of His work in the parousia will be the gathering of the Church to Himself in the First Resurrection. The Scriptures go on to say that He shall be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance.

The “clouds of heaven” well represent the confusion in general. The world for a time will be in ignorance of His presence. But gradually they will come to know that they are in the time of trouble, the Day of wrath, in which this Age is to close. Then they will mourn. The whole world will be in mourning. If the world has mourned in the past, much more shall we expect it to do so when the trouble will be general. In the midst of that trouble, they will gradually learn of the grace of God. Human selfishness, they will find, has been so overruled as to lead up to the glorious Kingdom of Messiah, through which are to come all the blessings which God has promised.

# Jesus and the Resurrection

Acts 17:18

“Concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.”—Paul, Acts 23:6; 24:21.

AND when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; and others said, we will hear thee again of this matter.—Acts 17:32.

If our wayward loved ones who died out of Christ are already in “the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone,” and the righteous dead are already in bliss, why do the Scriptures say, “The Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished,” and “If there be no resurrection of the dead, then they which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished”?—Rev. 20:15; 2 Pet. 2:9; 1 Cor. 15:13-18.

If those who have “fallen asleep” have already “gone to their reward,” why did the Master Himself say that they should be “recompensed at the resurrection of the just,” when the Son of Man shall come in His glory, when every man shall be rewarded according to his works?—Luke 14:14; Matt. 16:27; Rev. 11:18.

If God’s faithful are to be crowned at death, why did the apostles say that their own crowns were “laid up” for them until “the Chief Shepherd shall appear”?—2 Tim. 4:1, 8; 1 Pet. 5:4.

If they are already in the presence of God and singing His praises, why does “The Sweet Singer of Israel” say that “In death there is no remembrance” of God, and “The dead praise not the Lord”?—Psa. 6:4, 5; 115:17.

If the prophets and other ancient worthies were taken to heaven at death, why did Jesus say during His ministry, “No man hath ascended up to heaven,” and Peter at a still later date declare, “David is not ascended into the heavens”?—John 3:13; Acts 2:34.

If the apostles were to go to heaven immediately at death, why did Jesus say to them before His ascension, “Whither I go ye cannot come,” but “If I go I will come again and (then) receive you unto Myself”?—John 13:33; 14:3.

Our message like that of the apostles is Jesus the only Redeemer, and the resurrection the blessed hope, to be obtained through faith and obedience.

Is there not danger of getting mixed up by taking the “say so” of men? and is it not our duty to demand and seek a “Thus saith the Lord” for all that we accept as truth on religious subjects? And will not the reader resolve to do this hereafter?

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