



Volume XIV. No. 8 Melbourne, 1st AUGUST, 1931 Price —Twopence Halfpenny

THE HARVEST HOME.

“And I heard a voice from, heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them” (Rev. 14:13).

“We, the living, who are left over to the coming (Greek—parousia—presence) of the Lord, will by no means precede those who fell asleep. Because the Lord, Himself will come down from Heaven with a shout, with an Archangel’s voice, and with God’s Trumpet and the dead in Christ will be raised first; then the living who are ‘left over,’ shall at the same time (during His parousia) with them, be caught away in clouds, for a meeting of the Lord in the air; and so we shall be always with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:1 5-1 7 Diaglott).

THE climax of the natural harvest is reached only when all the fruitage of the season’s labours having been safely gathered, both Husbandman and reapers, unite in celebrating the “harvest home.” It is the happiest and most joyful moment of the entire season, not only for the Master, but also for the servants, or reapers, as well. Strenuous labours and anxious care having come to an end, with the bringing home of the last sheaf, place is now given to unalloyed pleasure with sounds of merriment and joy.

All this is a very fitting figure of the Great Home-gathering beyond the veil, when, the last member of the overcoming Christ class having passed safely within, the “mystery of God” will be finished, in so far as the work of this Age is concerned (Rev. 10:7). Then, will be heard the great Hallelujah chorus, which will resound throughout the universe and myriads of Angelic beings will acclaim honour, glory and praise to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever (Rev. 5:13).

OUR GATHERING UNTO HIM.

Reference has been made, repeatedly, to the fact that the gathering-time of the Church is during the Harvest period, and that this work of gathering beyond the veil began with the return of our Lord, or what is generally termed His “parousia.” Attention has also been called to the Scriptural signs of His presence, both in the world and amongst the Lord’s followers, which would be recognised by those who would be watching; further, that these signs are clearly evident to-day and have been so, for a considerable number of years. In this connection, it is much more important, we believe, for the Child of God to be able to recognise these signs and thus to know that He has come, rather than to attempt to discover, or define, the

exact day and hour of the Master's arrival.

Since the Scriptures point out that the first work of our Lord, at His second presence, would be the raising out of death and gathering unto Himself of the sleeping saints, we must, therefore, conclude that this is an accomplished fact, since the beginning of the Harvest period—a matter now some years in the past (1 /less. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:52). Nor need the fact that none of the risen Saints is visible to human sight, be any hindrance to faith, any more than that the Lord Himself, now a spirit being, cannot be seen by the natural eye. Some, through lack of spiritual understanding, do not appreciate the fact that spiritual and human natures are quite separate and distinct, and are not prepared therefore, to appreciate the full meaning of the Master's words when, in this connection, He declared, "That which is born of the flesh 'is flesh'; and that which is born of the Spirit 'is spirit' " (John 3:6).

Zion, as represented by the risen Saints joined with their Lord and Head, is now being established in spiritual control, and this accounts for the peculiar troubles coming upon the world to-day, together with the undermining and shaking of the present controlling powers (Matt. 24:30; Psalm 1:5). When the last members of the Body have finished their course and been gathered home, Zion will be complete. In authority and power it will then take control of all the world's affairs and thus the Millennial rule Will begin. Incidentally, this change of earth's rulership will mean a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation (Matt. 24:21).

WE SHALL BE CHANGED.

The period, between the resurrection of the sleeping saints and the passing beyond the veil of the last members of the Body, still alive upon the earth during the "parousia," is the most momentous, but at the same time, the most

blessed of all the experiences of the Church in the flesh (Dan. 12:12). To those who are walking in the light, it is a time of great joy and blessing, in that they are privileged to co-operate with the Chief Reaper, in the work of the Harvest-time. On the other hand, it is a time of severe testing of faith so searching that only the elect, overcoming class, will be able to escape the snares and deceptions of the Adversary (Matt. 24:24).

It is clear, from the general teaching of the Scriptures, that every member of Christ must complete his sacrifice in death. Our consecration, as prefigured in the consecration of Israel's priesthood is unto death the giving up entirely of the human nature in sacrifice in order that we might receive, beyond the veil, the heavenly, Divine nature. Failure to appreciate this fact, and also the part which the members of Christ—the Lord's goat class—play in the world's atonement, has led many to suppose that the members of Christ living at the time of the Lord's second advent, would not require to die at all. These, misled by false ideas regarding the manner of the Lord's second coming, and misunderstanding the Apostle's teaching regarding this matter, in his letters to the Thessalonians and Corinthians, believe that the Lord will appear in a body of flesh and that all the living saints will be momentarily caught up, without dying, in their natural bodies. This, of course, is all wrong, very crude, and quite out of harmony with the true conception of spiritual things, as well as the Scriptural teaching on this matter.

John, the Revelator, gives us the correct setting of this glorious truth, when, recording the angel's words, he writes "Blessed are the dead (consecrated ones') which die in the Lord from henceforth"—from the time of the Lord's presence (Rev. 14:13). The thought, of course, would not be that death in itself would be a blessing, but that "from henceforth" it would not be the lot of those who died in the Lord, to sleep in death as those who died previous to the Lord's Second Coming. Blessed rather, would be their change at death, from the present mortal condition to that of immortality "That they may rest from their labours (this side, the veil); and their works do follow them."

Those who look for the Lord to appear again, in a body of flesh, and expect to be caught up without, dying, at the moment of His arrival, rely mainly upon the Apostle's words to the Thessalonians, as given in the authorised version -of our Bible (1 Thess. 4:17). From this, they gather that there will be a sudden and simultaneous "rapture" of the entire Church, living and dead, at the moment of the Lord's return. A little consideration, however, should reveal that this conception of the matter is quite out of harmony with the Apostle's teachings in the context. In verse 16, he tells us that when the Lord descends from Heaven, the "dead" in Christ will rise "first." Now, it is obvious that if the dead ones only, are taken to be with the Lord "first," then the living ones cannot "also" be taken "first," but must be taken "afterwards." Indeed, the Apostle then proceeds to tell us, in the following verse, that the being ones "remain" or, as the Diaglott renders it, "are left over."

The expressions "rise first" and "remain" are clearly placed in antithesis in the context—the one relating to the dead in Christ and the other to the living in Christ. So far as those alive are concerned, they are left over, or remain, but as regards the dead they do "not remain" any longer in death, but rise at once. Thus, the dead in Christ are gathered home first, while the living ones are gathered later in the Harvest-time.

It should be mentioned here, that some obscurity has gathered around the meaning of the Apostle's words in this verse, 'by a poor translation as given in the authorised version of our Bible, but the Diaglott translation of verse 17, is much clearer and more correct. The Greek word, "hama," which occurs in the original text of this verse, is improperly translated "together"- in the sense of "in contact with" each other. Professor Young tells us that this word has no reference to locality, but is purely an adverb of time, and it is, therefore, more correctly rendered in the Diaglott—"at the same time." The time period here referred to, is the "parousia" and the sense, as already indicated, is that while the dead saints are raised at the "commencement" of the "parousia" period, the living ones will be caught away "later during the same time" of His presence—for blessed are the dead who die in the Lord "from henceforth."

THE BRIDE HATH MADE HERSELF READY.

The marriage, or union, of the Bride and Bridegroom', takes place at the close of the Harvest-time. The figure illustrates the gathering and uniting of the members of the Body with their Head. This gathering began with the raising of the sleeping saints and will be complete when the last member of Christ has passed within, and the door has been shut (Matt. 25:10).

The marriage feast follows immediately after the completion of the marriage ceremony and symbolises the joy and gladness that will fill the universe when the Church is glorified in the Kingdom. Harvest home and the marriage Feast, both speak to us of the same glorious truth, that soon, when the sufferings of Christ in the flesh are over, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then not only will the Heavenly Courts resound with songs of triumph and victory to God and the Lamb, but the earth itself will begin to be filled with the glory of God, and eventually all tears shall be wiped away (Rev. 21:1-4).

THE HOUR OF TEMPTATION.

It is our hope, that very soon the last faithful over-comers will 'be joined with the Lord beyond the veil. Meantime, it behoves all true followers of the Master, to walk soberly, meekly and humbly—yet confidently—in the midst of present circumstances. Let us not lose faith nor be stumbled, as we realise that but few of all who profess to be following the Master in these latter days, give evidence of even discerning—far less overcoming—the snares and deceptions of the Adversary, now working in our midst (Psalm 91:7). Let us not be dismayed, if even like the Master Himself, it should be the portion of the last faithful remnant, in drinking of His cup, to be esteemed by professing fellow Christians as He was—'stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted"— as though He was really the sinner (Isa. 53:4).

Our Lord, in faithfully bearing witness to the truth, was put to death by God's professing people as a blasphemer, and surely "the disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord" (Matt. 10:24).

—"The Old Paths."

KEPT IN PERFECT PEACE.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed in Thee" (Isa. 26:3).

This thought is very precious to us as New Creatures. "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding," is to rule and keep our minds and hearts (Phil. 4:7). We are to count the things of the present life as not worthy of comparison with the glories of eternity. And so the Apostle says, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:17-18) When our minds are stayed on the Lord, and we take the proper view of our experiences, we can sing with the poet:

"No storm can shake my inmost calm,
While to this Refuge clinging."

We have peace, no matter what the outward conditions may be. The trials and difficulties of life come to the Lord's people commingled with joys—the rain and storm, then the sunshine. They enjoy all righteous pleasures that are in harmony with their consecration. They learn to cultivate patience in trial, knowing that patience works out experience, and experience works out more and more that hope which maketh not ashamed (Rom. 5:3-5).

So, then, it is to the Christian that our text brings the assurance that when God gives quietness, none can make trouble. They_ "shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake," said the Muster, but then we are to "rejoice and be exceeding glad." "Let not your heart be troubled" (Matt. 5:11; John 14:1).

TROUBLE NECESSARY TO OUR PROVING.

Our Heavenly Father designs that various kinds of trouble shall come upon us, that these may develop and prove our characters. It is a part of the Divine Plan to permit us to have experiences of affliction (Psalm 119:67, 71, 75; 34:19-20). So when we see God's people in trouble or trial to-day we are not to say that God is against them. We are each to demonstrate our willingness to suffer according to His will, and often to suffer unjustly. Our Lord set us an example of cheerful, patient, submission to God's will. We are to walk in His footsteps. We have the examples of the Apostles, when trials and difficulties and persecutions came upon them; and the example of other saints all down the Age.

Trouble is not necessarily a sign of the disfavor of God. On the contrary, we know that "many are the afflictions of the righteous," and that "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." The truth will cost them something. Faithfulness to the Lord will cost them much. As the Apostle says, "If ye be without chastisement (discipline, training), then are ye bastards and not sons" (HO). 12:8). If God gives peace of heart, who can upset the one who is thus in harmony with God, in whom this peace of heart is ruling? This, then, is the greatest blessing of all. And He grants this peace to those who are faithfully striving to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. We have a Refuge, which none but His own can

know. No harm can reach us within this shelter; no storm can shake us from our moorings, for we are securely anchored to the Rock of Ages. "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

"What though my joys and comfort die!
The Lord, my Saviour, liveth;
What though the darkness gather round!
Songs in the night He giveth.

No storm can shake my inmost calm,
While to that Refuge clinging;
Since Christ is Lord of Heaven and earth,
How can I keep from singing?"

PEOPLES PAPER.

Published by the Berean Biblical Institute, at National Bank Chambers, 226 Glenferrie Rd., Hawthorn, Melbourne E 2.

(Monthly) 2/6 per annum, post paid,

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.

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

Falling Away from Faith.

When the Son of Man cometh shall lie find faith on the earth.”
The following is clipped from the “Christian World”:

ST. PAUL AND THE FALL.

“St. Paul,” said Dr. Barnes, Bishop of Birmingham, in his Lloyd Roberts lecture before the Manchester University Medical School, “imagined that evil and death resulted from Adam’s fall. We have learned, on the contrary, that evil and good are equally likely to arise at every stage of the evolutionary process.” “The notion that evil is due to a fall, to some act of spiritual rebellion against God, must be abandoned,” he said. “We need not grieve over the loss of such a theory, as it cannot really relieve God of ultimate responsibility for His Creation.”

Dr. Barnes has been prominently before the Christian world, particularly in opposing the Anglo-Catholic movement in England; and while one could admire his noble stand for Christian liberty in opposing the encroachment of Rome, it seems to make it all the more deplorable to note his remarks about St. Paul. The evolution theory, of course, will not fit in with the Bible teaching of the fall and how’ death passed upon all through one man’s sin, and so the Bishop loses his faith in the Bible as God’s inspired Word, and in Paul as an inspired writer. He says Paul only “imagined” that sin and death resulted from Adam’s fall. Certainly Paul was no evolutionist; he did teach with no uncertain sound, that by one man, sin entered and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men. This not “imagination,” but is Bible teaching from Genesis to Revelation. Only because all were representatively condemned in Adam, being included in sin, could all be ransomed from the condemnation by the one true Christ, the second Adam (Rom:5:12, 17-21). Thus; it is that, “As all in Adam die so all in Christ shall be made alive again” (1 Cor. 15:21-22).

The first three chapters of Genesis show the “Fall” and how sin and death passed upon all Adam’s posterity. The teaching runs throughout the Bible. and that the only way of salvation is by a ransom being paid, a man’s life for man’s life. So Jesus became flesh that He might “give His life a ransom for many.” The matter was prearranged, as the fall was fore-known to God, and thus we read of “the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world.” “The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” Peter says, “He bore our sins on the tree”; and Isaiah speaks of Him as “Pouring out His soul unto death”— “bearing the sins of many”—“the iniquity of us all.” -Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

Because the ransom has been paid there is to be a resurrection of all, and opportunity of gaining life during the “times of restitution of all things which God has spoken by the mouths of all the holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:20-21). So Paul was not the only inspired writer who taught the doctrine of original sin and its remedy.

It is preposterous for one professing to be a minister of Christ to belittle the Apostle, who was more used than any other to propound the Gospel, and to whom we owe nearly all the New Testament. If St. Paul only “imagined” the wonderful philosophy of his epistles, particularly the one to the Romans, also the Hebrews. then surely what Moses and all the prophets have written was, also, only imaginations. Such would be an absurdity in view of the fact that the writings by different men cover a period of about 1500 years. and yet are so wonderfully in accord. and so much has had actual fulfilment. Attacks, from without. upon the Bible by infidels are much less likely to undermine faith in God’s Word written “by holy men of old as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” than such statements from within. made by prominent leaders as ministers of the Gospel.

THE WAY TO ACCEPT A FAVOUR.

A young woman who was private secretary to the head of a college, when returning to her lodgings, slipped on the steps and sprained her ankle. She managed to reach her room, but was quite unable to go out and get something for her supper, and was delighted when the girl who had the room next to hers came in to see what she could do.

“Please let me go out and get you something to eat,” she begged.

“That is most kind of you,” said the secretary. “My purse is on the table.”

“No,” said her neighbour; “I want to get the things myself and come in and have supper with you here!”

“How delightful!” cried the secretary, “We will have a real party!”

So, instead of protesting, she let her friend give the “party.” She praised the food and thanked her for the jelly supper.

A few days later there was an afternoon tea at the college, to which the secretary invited her new friend. She explained why she came with a crutch, and told of the oilier girl’s kindness to her, and of the impromptu supper-party and how she had enjoyed it.

We should accept favours, not grudgingly, not awkwardly, but graciously and appreciatively; then watch for the first opportunity to bless the giver in return, with gratitude and love.

Question Box.

Question:—In what Way does the fourth watch in Mark. 6:48 typify the early dawn of the Millennial day, as per “Dawn Studies Comment,” by C. J. Woodworth?

Answer:—With reference to the comments on Mark 6:48, it seems that the event of Christ coming to the disciples in the fourth watch on the sea, was taken by Bro. Russell as a picture of Christ’s Second Advent (His Second Presence) , delivering His Church from the waves of trouble at the end of this Gospel Age, and bringing them safely to shore—to our heavenly shore.

This, we believe, is a beautiful picture, but our thoughts differ on the point of this taking place at the beginning of the Millennial Age. It will be remembered that Bro. Russell thought of the Millennial Age commencing about 1874, and that there was an overlapping period for the events closing one age and opening up another. No doubt most of the friends in the truth have seen for many years that the Millennial Age in no sense can begin until all the Lord’s people are gathered home, and the time of trouble over; then will be ushered in the glad day of restitution, the 1000 years of blessing and healing, and restoring, which is shown later on in the same chapter, where, when Jesus and His disciples reached the shore (the Church complete with Him), He healed the sick in all the villages and country round about (verses, 53-56).

The fourth watch, according to the Roman division of the night, which the Jews had adopted, would be from 3 a.m. to 6 a.m., and would fitly represent in the picture the closing period of this dark night of storm and trouble, sin and death, during which our Lord has come, and soon, with all His faithful saints, to arise as the morning light, at the end of the fourth watch—the Sun of righteousness with healing in His beams. Still there is yet a period of darkness for the world to go through, which will make the morning all the more beautiful, and appreciated by all when delivered from this present evil world (Psalm 30:5).

Question:—For what reason does God, the Father, give His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, the right to become our everlasting Father?

Answer:—The Scripture referring to Christ being the “Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace,” etc., as mentioned by the prophet (Isaiah 9:6-7); seems to apply to our Lord in connection with His Millennial Kingdom reign, when “the government shall be upon His shoulders,” when He shall reign, “whose right it is” (Ezek. 21:27; Dan. 2:44). Our Lord said that His kingdom was not- of this world (age) (John 18:36); but soon He is to bind Satan and establish His kingdom of righteousness for the blessing of the poor groaning creation. That will be the glad time when He will be the “Everlasting Father” (life-giver), in the fullest sense to all man-kind, both living ,and dead; for during that 1000 year day, all in the death condition will be awakened, and the obedient uplifted and restored to the condition of human perfection, from which father Adam fell,,(Acts 3:20-21; Isa. 35th ch.; Micah. 4:1-5).

Our Lord, however, is not referred to in the Scriptures as the Father of His faithful disciples of this Gospel Age, but rather that they are recognised as sons of God, on account of the merit of Christ’s sacrifice (I John 3:1); Eph. 1:3-6). It is from this standpoint of being accepted in Christ, branches in the vine, members of His Body, and partakers of His glory and honor (Rom. 8:16-17), that the Apostle could say in Heb. 2:11, “for both He that sanctifieth (Jesus), and they that are sanctified (the Church), are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.”

Correspondence

Dear Brother,

Yours of the 4th inst. duly to hand, and we can rejoice in the privilege of service for the Lord and His truth. Surely the Lord has richly blessed us in revealing to us something of His wonderful plan of salvation for the Church in this age, and for all mankind in the age to come. The evidences are many which go to show that we are living in the harvest time of the age—the end of the age. True to His promise the Lord has come forth to serve His people; and blessed indeed are those servants whom the Lord has found watching and maintaining the attitude of humble servants (Luke 12:37). How we need to heed the Master's words—"Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." (Rev. 3:11.)

We surely need very much the wisdom from above to guide us aright, that our conduct toward others may be such as will be helpful. The prayer of the Psalmist is appropriate for all: "Let the words of my mouth, and the mediation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O. Lord, my strength, and my redeemer." (Psa. 19:14.)

As you say, it is indeed a privilege to meet with others of like precious faith; we need surely to remind each other of the truths pertaining to our salvation; we need to exhort and encourage each other.

I would be glad to have a few extra copies of the "P.P." each month, about five or six would, I think, be enough, as we have a good supply of various issues of the "Voice."

With Christian love,
Yours in the service of Christ, Mg.R.

New South Wales,
5th July, 1931. Dear Brother,—

I have just received yesterday and read to-day the July "People's Paper" and notice a cross on the wrapper which reminded me my sub. is overdue, so herewith please. find , which will keep it going and the balance to be used

as your wisdom dictates. I am sorry I cannot afford to make it more at the present.

The articles in these papers are good and very much appreciated, the convention paper, "Fear Not, Little Flock," being especially appropriate and opportune at this time.

In this state the trend of events are brought more forcibly to our attention by those who have control of state affairs, showing and impressing upon our hearts the truth of dear Bro. Russell's faithful expositions of the Scriptures. Truly are men's hearts failing them, for those things they see coming on the earth. With Christian love to all the dear brethren of the Melbourne Ecclesia and yourself, Yours in Him,

M.J.

When Thou Wast Little in Thine Own Sight.

I Sam. 15:17

THE history of Saul, the son of Kish, who was selected to be king over Israel, is one of the extremely sad stories of the Bible. He is introduced to us as a noble young man, choice and goodly and tall, a head above all his fellows. He was honourable, upright, and possessed of noble qualities and abilities, and was of humble disposition. When Samuel announced to him that the Lord had indicated that he should be the king of Israel, he seemed unable to believe it. He said, "Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin, wherefore, then, speakest thou so to me." Then when Samuel came to present Saul as king, Saul had hid himself in modesty.

How strange that such a character could so soon lose his virtue and become a despot and a gruesome murderer of innocent men. Not all at once, however, for sin generally has its small beginnings.

His first mistake was to presume to offer the sacrifice to God instead of waiting in trust and patience for the coining of Samuel to do so. For this he had his own excuse, "Because I saw that the people were scattered from me and that thou (Samuel) came not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered together at Michmash. Therefore,

I said the Philistines will come down upon me and I have not made supplication to the Lord. I forced myself, therefore, and offered a burnt offering."

What a change had already taken place; where was the modesty that would hide from being made king? Now he assumes an office for which he had no authority. How plausible seemed the excuse, the emergency called for it, then it was an offering unto the Lord. He no doubt persuaded himself that as king he could officiate. and that he was doing the right thing. How easy it is to err, to take a wrong course if we trust to our own judgment—"a man's ways seem right in his own eyes"—but it is better to trust in the Lord and wait upon Him. He will never fail those who trust in Him. He will "not slumber or sleep" but guard His people, even though sometimes He sees it good to test their patience and faithfulness to principle and truth. "Wait on the Lord and keep His way."

King Saul had evidently lost some of the beauty of his character, and had become a sorrowful example of such as go before the Lord instead of, as the Psalmist expresses it, "My soul wait thou only upon God for my expectation is from Him (Psa. 62:5). He only is my rock and my salvation, He is my defence, I shall not be moved."

Then a little later, and a more serious fault occurs, a further disobedience against clear definite instructions. Samuel giving the message said, "Now hearken thou unto the voice of the words. of the Lord . . . go and smite Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, but slay both man and woman. infant and suckling, ox, sheep, camel and ass." Samuel seemed to know that it was necessary to emphasise, "Hearken to the voice of the message."

It was very plain, and there could be no misunderstanding and no excuse. Nevertheless, Saul leaned again to his own understanding and spared king Agag, and the best of the sheep and oxen, etc. He seemed to 'have persuaded himself that he had done better, perhaps more mercifully than what the Lord had commanded. He met Samuel with, the words, "Blessed be thou of the Lord, I have performed the commandment of the Lord." And Samuel said, "What meaneth then the bleating of sheep and lowing of oxen which I hear." Saul had satisfied his own mind by the thought of sacrificing these animals to the Lord. In both cases he erred respecting worship. As though something he could do would be pleasing to God. "To obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams." It is a sad condition to get into,

and yet probably many who ought to know the truth have, like Saul, taken their own way, trusted to their own understanding instead of seeking to know the Divine will and way, and such will—as surely as Saul did, lose God's favour and lose the spirit of the truth.

How serious is the lesson in this connection. God can do without our aid; it is but a privilege He may grant if we can serve Him, but anything we do, must be done rightly, must be done in His way and in His spirit. Let us never think we can improve on Divine instructions. Let us be careful of the Word of God as it stands, and not think to add to or take from it. What God requires of us is simple, earnest faith, implicit obedience, and then such sacrifice that a grateful heart may offer. Surely it was a great privilege God had granted Saul when he was little in his own eyes, to make him king of Israel, and it is a greater privilege He has granted us, to anoint us as kings and priests unto our God, joint heirs with Christ in His kingdom. Let us keep small in our own sight.

The spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit troubled him, and so he went from bad to worse until all honour was lost. and he became a jealous murderer and inquired of evil spirits. His action in slaying Ahimelek and eighty priests, because Ahimelek had given David bread, although the priest did so under the impression that David was on the king's errand, showed that he had no sense of honour or justice, and to what degradation he had fallen; and so it is with those who have known the truth, if they fall away after having tasted of the good things of the Age to come, and having been partakers of the Holy Spirit. How terrible is their condition, and one is surprised at the things they do, still thinking they do God service.

Samuel's words give the reason for the fall. It was the same reason. that brought about the fall of the great Adversary—he was no longer, “little in his own sight.” “Pride was found in thee.” That a foolish thing pride is; in fact, it is a feature of insanity; the inmates of the asylums seem, mostly to imagine they are some very important personage.

The important lesson of our text is the preserving of an humble mind and heart. “Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord” (Prov. 16:5); and so St. Peter exhorts, “Yea, all of you be subject one to another, for God resisteth the proud but giveth grace to the humble” (1 Pet. 5:5). It is so easy to be puffed up if we have any little ability, and to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to. It is even possible to have an outward appearance of humility and yet to have a proud heart, and some seem to deceive themselves as well as others. How important it is to keep “little in our own sight.” The greatest characters have always been founded on humility, and no character will stand the fiery trials which a Christian must go through, if it has not a strong ground work of humility.

The histories of Saul and of Satan are similar in many respects. Satan, like Saul; had been given a high position; He had evidently been appointed to rule or guide the human family, and by the aid of angels to instruct them. Both were beautiful in their early days, “until pride was found in thee.” Then Christ was to be the prince of righteousness and peace, to reign over, to instruct and lift up mankind, and David was anointed to be the king of Israel. As Satan has ever fought against the truth and sought to slay Christ, and all who are chosen in Him to be joint-heirs with Him in the kingdom, so Saul inherited a jealous hatred of David and sought to kill him.

As Saul could not kill David, neither could the Adversary kill Christ or His followers. While Satan appeared to have succeeded in killing our Lord, he had no power but such as was permitted of God, and what seemed a success of Satan was really but carrying out a feature of the Divine plan, and Christ arose triumphant over death. The purpose of His having been made flesh was accomplished. He had laid down the price of sin, and had now the right to make application of the ransom-price as He wished, as He declared, He had the right “to give life to whomsoever He would.”

In Satan we have exemplified, "He that exalteth himself be abased"; and in Christ we have the opposite, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Saul seemed so beautiful as a young man, and some have been inclined to sympathise with him in the penalty he incurred by his failures, and wonder how it was that David did not receive similar punishment for his misdeeds. We may, however, rest assured that "The judge of all the earth will do right." Saul's errors were different from David's. David was ever loyal to the Lord in his heart; his sin was terrible, but it was not deliberate disobedience; he was deceived by the deceitfulness of sin, his mind had evidently become befogged by his lust and he did not realise the awfulness of his crime. Then there was no attempt to justify himself, but a contrite heart sought forgiveness. He was punished and restored to Divine favor.

With Saul there was the high mind, which assumed to know better than the Divine commands and deliberate disobedience which lost him the continuation of the crown for his family. Then, instead of a broken and contrite heart seeking for pardon, he took on a terrible, jealous, murderous spirit, and would kill David, whom he knew the Lord intended should be king after him. He stands as a terrible example of how it is possible for a noble character to fall, and fall so low. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Knowing, as Saul did, that God had appointed David to succeed him as king, his action in seeking to slay David was deliberate rebellion against God, and an attempt to frustrate His purpose. How clearly Saul's course illustrates the course of Satan, and shows from what heights and to what depths one may fall who once loses the spirit of humble loyal faithfulness to God.

The way God dealt with David shows that He looked upon the heart, and, while the heart is true, He is ready to restore to His favor even though serious mistakes may be made through misjudgment, or because of the frailty of human nature and present environments.

The important lesson then for us all is to preserve the earnest desire to do God's will, to thus keep ourselves in God's love. The power to enable us to do so is our love for God. Our love for God will be preserved and strengthened by considering His love for us, "What great things He hath done," and what wonderful purposes He has revealed in His Word, not only for the Church, but for all the willing and obedient in due time. When we consider His mighty works and His acts of wisdom, justice and love, in dealing with Israel of old, we shall find our love for God is a reverential love. We recognise how little we are, how great He is, and our wonder is, that He is mindful of us. If we thus keep ourselves in such attitude of humble faithfulness to God there will not be much danger of "thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think." One may have a little more intellect than another, one may occupy a little better social position, another have had better advantages of home education, etc., but what is the shade of difference in the Divine sight? Besides, though we may be a shade better in some respects than some one else, we may be some shades worse in others. What is it that the Lord requires of us; is it, education, money, social influence, intellect, or such things? Is it clever people that the Lord is to-day selecting? On the contrary we read (1 Cor. 1:26-28) (Diaglott), "Behold your invitation brethren that not many wise ones according to the flesh, not many strong ones, not many well born, but God selected the foolish things of the world, that He may shame the wise, and God selected the weak things of the world that He may shame the powerful, and the ignoble things of the world which things that are despised God selected, and things not existing that He may bring to nought the existing things, so no flesh may boast in His presence."

The Lord uses the weak things that His strength may be the more apparent. When He would deliver Israel under Gideon, He chose only 300 men and sent the thousands to their homes so that Israel might know that it was not by their own might that the Midianites were discomfited.

The Lord will not use the proud to do His work. Moses, the meekest man on earth, was most wonderfully used to deliver Israel and lead them forty years, and to mediate the Law Covenant. Saul was chosen to be king of Israel “when he was little in his own sight”; but he was rejected when he lost that disposition. “Come unto Me all ye that are weary and I will give you rest, for I am meek and lowly of heart” (Matt. 11:29). So says the Apostle, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, though being in the form of God, did not meditate an usurpation to be like God, but took on Himself the form of a servant, having been made in the likeness of man, humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Therefore, God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.”

If we will know the riches of Divine grace we must learn to be humble, keep little in our own sight. Selfishness and pride are twins, and they are at the bottom of all sin and wickedness and troubles, and how often are these seeds of evil seen even among God’s people. We are all born in sin and inherit some taint of these abominable things, but we have received the mind of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, which can overcome the natural disposition. This is not done without a struggle; the flesh warreth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. We could not of ourselves win the fight, but it is God that will give us strength to do so, and will also work in us to will and do His good pleasure even our sanctification.

What dangers we shall avoid, what errors we shall escape, if we will keep “little in our own sight.” It will keep us from selfishly wanting our own ways. It will keep us from being self-opinionated. It will help us to rely only on God’s Word, and not trust to our own understanding. It will help us to tread the way appointed instead of wandering in search of “new light,” or something by way of a change. It will help us to give patient hearing to the earnest expressions of others’ thoughts, even though feebly expressed. It will prevent us from being critical of others, from judging, from being censorious and interfering, or trying to arrange others’ concerns. It will help us to put the best constructions on the actions of others, and to be sympathetic with the weak. It will help us to be like the Master, ready to wash one another’s feet, willing to serve in any possible way so long as it is the Lord’s way.

Had the Church as a whole preserved the disposition, “little in thine own sight,” the servants of the Church, called elders, deacons, or bishops, would never have assumed these designations of service as titles; and such things as Lord Bishops and Reverends, or holy Popes and Fathers, would have never been heard. There would have simply been a band of true followers of the meek and lowly One who said, “Be ye not called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.” And, “he that is greatest among you let him be your servant” (Matt. 23:8, 11).

How much depends upon keeping “little in our own sight.” It means success or failure in our Christian course. Only if we humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God will we be exalted in due time, to reign with Christ.

Oh, what am I that Thou should’st think
To offer me a throne,
So graciously to make me drink
Of truth and love, Thine own.

Oh, may I ever feel
The favour Thou dost grant,
In lifting me from miry clay
And on the Rock to plant.

I know if Thou dost call
To grace so wondrous kind,
I need not fear my being small,
My lack in Christ, Thou'lt find.

'Tis only if I still remain
In mine own eyes so small,
That I God's favour may retain
And thus make sure my call.

By grace I would keep little, Lord,
Faithful and meek and true,
Ever love Thy will and work,
Do humbly what I do.

Sermons We See.

I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day,
I'd rather one walk with me, than merely show the way.
The eye is a better pupil and more willing than the ear,
Good counsel is confusing but examples always clear.

And the best of all the preachers are the men who live their creeds,
To see good put in action is what everybody needs.
I can soon learn how to do it if you'll let me see it done,
I can see your hands in action; your tongue too fast may run.

And lectures you deliver may be very wise and true,
But I'd rather get my lectures by observing what you do.
For I may misunderstand you and the high advice you give,
But there's no misunderstanding how you act and how you live.

When I see a deed of kindness I am eager to be kind,
When a weaker brother stumbles a strong man stays behind;
Just to see if he can help him, and a wish grows strong in me
To be as big and thoughtful as I know that friend to be.

And all travellers can witness that the best of guides to-day
Is not the one that tells them but the one that shows the way.
One good man teaches many, they believe what they behold;
One deed of kindness done is worth forty that are told.

Who stands with men of honour learns to hold his honour dear,
For right living speaks a language that to everyone is clear.
Though an able speaker charms with his eloquence,
I say I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day.

It may be thou art entered into the cloud which will bring a gentle shower to refresh thy sorrows. —J.T.

Published by Berean Biblical Institute. National Bank Chambers, Hawthorn Printed by Hickling & Powell, Brunswick, Victoria.