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Noah's Ark a Figure of Christian Baptism

"The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."-1 Pet. 3:21.

WE see from the context that the Apostle Peter has in mind the great Deluge. He reminds his readers that all mankind perished in the Flood save eight souls, who were preserved from a watery grave by means of the Ark which God provided them. That Ark, though submerged in water, was their salvation. St. Peter declared that this is a "like figure to baptism." We are to notice that those who were saved in the Deluge were not saved from, eternal torment, and that a like figure of salvation would not indicate that the Church is saved from eternal torment by their baptism into Christ. Noah and his family were saved from death ; and the Church of Christ are likewise saved from death through their baptism.

As the whole world perished in the great Flood, so the entire world of mankind now is a dead world, a perishing world. The Church class were of that world until they got out of it through Christ. As Noah and his family were saved from death by coming into the Ark in obedience to God, so the Church of Christ are saved from Adamic death by obedience to God, by accepting His offer of salvation (John 17:16, 15:19). Noah's Ark represented Christ. Whoever comes into Christ comes into safety and salvation, out of danger and destruction. All who come into this relationship to God in Christ are said to have "passed from death unto life."—John 5:24.

Only a very limited number come into Christ and fulfil this picture. It does not include those who merely say,

"I wish to live a better life." To do this is commendable, but it does not constitute a coming into Christ; for as the Apostle says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). Just how much is comprehended in the words, "a new creature," even true Christians come to see only gradually. A new creature is one who has died to his human nature, who has new hopes, new ambitions, new affections, who has the precious promises of God and the prospect of a spiritual existence in the future instead of a human existence. He is an exception to others in that he has been begotten of the holy spirit. From the Divine standpoint, he is no longer a human being; a new life has begun in him.

This new creature is at first a babe, and must take spiritual nourishment and grow up into Christ more and more. God has provided the "exceeding great and precious promises" of His Word that this class may be stimulated, strengthened, developed, thereby becoming firmer for righteousness and in opposition to whatever is sinful. The Church is indeed a new creation, as the Apostle says.

Two Like Figures of Church's Salvation

We notice that St. Peter says, "The like figure whereunto baptism doth now save us." Salvation through the Ark was one figure of the salvation of the Church through baptism into Christ; baptism in water is another. There is a correspondence between these two figures. Noah and his family were submerged in literal water. Candidates for baptism are also submerged in literal water. But in neither case was it the water that saved. It is not the outward baptism that saves us. It represents the real. But the figure is not in washing away the filth of the flesh (the body) in water. And the filth of the flesh as new creatures can be washed away only by the grace of God in Christ, "by the washing of water by the Word" ; it is a gradual process after we become new creatures. So neither of these is what is pre-figured in water

baptism.

Our text is pointing out to us a peculiar baptism,, not a baptism that washes the flesh clean, either literally or figuratively, but “the answer (the response) of a good conscience toward God.” What has God said to which we should respond? We reply that our Heavenly Father has called us, invited us, to a wonderful heavenly inheritance, and we respond by accepting His proposition. He has invited us to be a separate people. Just exactly as God said to Noah and his family that they should be saved by gathering into the Ark, so He says to all who are invited during this Gospel Age, “Gather My saints together unto Me, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.” —Psalm 50:5.

Let us notice to whom we are to be gathered. Serious mistakes have been made here. Some have thought that we were to be gathered to Luther ; some to Calvin ; some to Wesley, etc. Not so! “Gather My saints together unto ME,” saith Jehovah. He did not tell us to gather together into the Church of Rome, into the Church of England, into the

Lutheran Church, into the Presbyterian, the Methodist, the Baptist, or any other man-made organisation. Millions are gathered into these various denominations whose lives manifest that they know not God.

The Covenant of Sacrifice

Only a very few have made this covenant of sacrifice with God, have presented their bodies a living sacrifice with Christ, in response to God’s special call during the Gospel Age. God is not trying to attract the world now. He tells us that they are blind and deaf. As Jesus said, “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” Again, He said to His disciples, “Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear” (Matt. 11:15; 13:16). We thank God on behalf of those who have the seeing eye and the hearing ear. It is a great privilege to see and hear.

The Apostle Paul tells us why the great majority of mankind cannot hear the glorious Gospel Message. He says,

“The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not” (2 Cor. 4:4). Satan is this God. He is in violent opposition to every feature of God’s great Plan. He has been God’s adversary ever since his deflection from righteousness. He does all in his power to thwart Jehovah’s arrangements. He knows that if men could see the light of God’s goodness and hear the glad Message of God’s grace, it would have such an attraction that the great majority would surely respond. Hence he tries to keep them from seeing and hearing. He has multitudinous devices for blinding men. Fair earthly prospects, ambitions to be some great one, selfish schemes for gaining advantages over their fellows—all these and many other things of like nature are held up to keep them blinded to the things of real and lasting value.

Those who are hungering for God, Satan endeavours to draw away into various reform movements, such as socialism, prohibition of the liquor traffic, etc. This he does to keep them from hearing God’s special Call. These are all, perhaps, good for the worldly. These movements are probably more or less awakening thought and developing sentiment along lines of restitution for the next Age. But none of these is the work for the saints of God on this side of the veil. Satan would delight to deceive these, however, and entice them into some of these movements to prevent them from seeing and doing the real work of the Church of Christ, and thus to prevent them from making their calling and election sure.

The real Gospel is the most wonderful story in all the world! There is nothing like it—that God is now inviting a certain class to become heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ, “to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in heaven” for the Lord’s faithful, an inheritance “that fadeth not away” (Rom. 8:17; 1 Peter 1:4). Truly “Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him.”-1 Cor. 2:9.

“The Answer of a Good Conscience”

Our surrender to the Lord was “the answer of a good conscience toward God.” When God invited us to become living sacrifices through Christ, to be saints and follow Jesus, the answer of our conscience was, “Lord, we respond, we accept Thy gracious invitation.” Was not that the answer of a good conscience? It was, indeed. What could a good conscience toward God say except to be glad to do the Heavenly Father’s will? He made a most wonderful proposition to us, providing a Redeemer to open up the way to all this glory and honour with Christ. The only answer of a good conscience could be, “Here, Lord, I give my little all to Thee!” That is what baptism means; and it is surely our “reasonable service,” as the Apostle says (Rom. 12:1). It is the most reasonable thing that could be imagined. Therefore we should carry out our covenant of consecration even unto death.

If our Lord Jesus, after He had made this Covenant of Sacrifice with God and had begun the work of carrying it out, had said, “Father, I know that I came to earth to do Your will; but I find that so many of the people misunderstand Me and speak evil of me that I cannot go on in this way. They misrepresent all the good I try to do; and I cannot accomplish

anything.” What would the Father have replied? His answer would have been, “If you prefer the approval of man to My approval, take Your choice. I cannot give You the glorious reward which I have offered to You unless You meet the conditions. You must love My will more than all else or I cannot accept You and use You.”

So it is with the followers of Jesus. We receive the same tests that He did. The Father does not permit the trials to press us too hard, and He supplies His grace for every time of need ; but we must have a heart that fully responds to the will of God, or we cannot be acceptable; we shall lose the prize, and be accounted unfaithful servants. We are to be willing that loyalty to God shall cost us something, yea, even the loss of earthly friendships and earthly prospects.

The heart-attitude that says, “So long as right is as easy as wrong I will choose the right, but if wrong is easier than right I will choose the easier way,” is disloyal to God. Such a heart would be unworthy of the glorious high calling. Indeed, it would make even an unworthy human being. We are to be loyal to the very core, or God will reject us. The Lord Jesus puts the matter in just this light when He says, “Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words in this sinful and adulterous generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels” (Mark 8:38). Jesus would be ashamed to have such an one in His Kingdom.

The Father and the Son are watching to see how true we are. If we are faithful under present unfavourable conditions, when loyalty to the Truth brings much reproach, when people point the finger of scorn at us, then the Lord will say, “These are the ones that shall reign in My Kingdom. Those who so delight in My love and approval as to serve Me through evil report, misunderstandings, persecution and sufferings, will be true when exalted to positions of glory, when the sun of prosperity will shine upon them.”

Death with Christ the Gate to Glory

Such faithful children of God “follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.” To these the Lord Jesus will say, “I take pleasure in saying to you, Sit down with Me in My throne” (Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:12, 21). In Rom. 6:3 the Apostle says, “Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ (into the Body of which Christ is the Head) were baptized into his death?” These become with Jesus The Christ of God, The Anointed of God; for the word Christ means The Anointed. God has never counted any in as members of the Church of Christ except those who have fully surrendered their wills to Him and become dead to the world.

This is our baptism into death as human beings and into life as spiritual beings. Our spirit nature is only begotten as yet, but we shall be born spirit beings at our “change” in the First Resurrection. We are now raised, as new creatures, “to walk in newness of life,” but not yet raised in the complete sense. We have not yet received our new bodies. Our new mind is in process of development. We have said that we gave ALL to God. If we continue in this attitude and fulfil our covenant faithfully, we shall abide in His love, and in due time be associates of His Son in glory. The giving up of our will in consecration is only the beginning of the matter. Day by day, week by week, month by month, we are to carry out the terms of the covenant. We are to have no thought of turning back. Having put our hands to the plough, we are not even to look back. “He that looketh back is not fit for the Kingdom of God.”—Luke 9:62.

When Jesus was here in the flesh, on a certain occasion He made some very strong statements (John 6:50-69) ; as it is written, “From that time many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him.” They said, “This is a hard saying. Who can hear it? Then said Jesus to the twelve, “Will ye also go away?” Simon Peter—impulsive, noble Peter—answered, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”

There is no other Message of eternal life open during the present *Age* than the call to joint-heirship with Christ, suffering unto death with Him that we may share His glory hereafter. This is the only way by which we can get into the Ark and be preserved from the general death all around us. Jesus is our Ark of safety. “By the resurrection of Jesus Christ” our baptism is made possible, as our text declares.

It is this same Simon Peter who tells us in our text that the Ark of Noah was a symbol of saving power, a likeness or figure of our being saved now through baptism into Christ. What a refuge is this Ark of Safety. As Noah and his family were in the world, but not of the world, and were carried to safety through the engulfing waters in which the whole world were dying, so it is with those who are in Christ. Everybody around us is in death, as the Bible says: “The whole world lieth in the Wicked One” (1 John 5:19, Diaglott). The Church alone has escaped the condemnation which is upon the world.

We who were children of wrath even as others, were sentenced to death with the rest of the world. But the Lord our God has graciously brought us into the relationship of sons, through our faith in Christ and obedience to the Divine arrangement in Him. And as Noah and his family, after their deliverance, started the world afresh, so Christ and His Bride will by and by give life anew to all of the race of mankind, who will accept the gracious provision for them in

Christ.

The dead world are soon to have a resurrection, with the opportunity to fully live again. Christ is to be the Everlasting Father of the race (Isa. 9:6,7) ; and the Church will be the mother. Grand and glorious as are the blessings in reservation for the world of mankind when they shall have learned their lesson of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, far greater and grander still will be the reward of the faithful Church, who so love the Lord as to be willing and glad to obey and follow Jesus under the trying and painful conditions of the present time.

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Convention News from Adelaide.

THE Annual Convention held over the Easter holidays once more proved a season of blessing appreciated by all attending. Friends journeyed from far and near, representatives attending from Queensland, Western Australia, Victoria, New Zealand and U.S.A. A programme full and varied promised good fare for the four days of assembling together. Provision was made for fellowship meetings, praise and testimony, addresses, Bible studies and illustrated addresses with the aid of films and slides.

The chairman extended a sincere and hearty welcome to all, after which a Bible study was reviewed from that lovely portion of Eph. 4:1-12. The first day included three addresses, reminding the gathering of the "Opportunity" to "Be Ye of One Mind" while enjoying the privilege of being "Workers Together With Him."

On the Saturday the Convention considered that timely and prophetic portion of Isa. 40:1-11, after which a visiting Brother spoke on the subject of "And Jesus Saith." The ever-popular spiritual song session, "Hymns We Like and Why," afforded all an opportunity to sing with heart and voice many beautiful hymns proposed by folk who reciprocated the poetic sentiments of particular hymns. A visiting Brother from Victoria discussed many thoughts connected with Rom. 11:33,34. Then followed a new and apparently successful method of presenting the Truth to newcomers and reminding others of Present Truth. A Brother from Toowoomba, Qld., after travelling nearly 2,000 miles, presented sound films used in America over the TV stations. Many expressed admiration and joy at both the method and presentation, requesting an additional and impromptu screening another day. Our visitor gladly complied, screening in all six 15-minute reels.

Easter Sunday included addresses from three brethren, one from Victoria reminding us of the reasons "Why God Will Create New Heavens and a New Earth." The old heavens and old earth, belonging to the first world, perished with the Flood. The "cosmos" of the present heavens and earth is freely prophesied as passing away with commotion and the great time of trouble, while the new heavens and new earth reserved for the Millennium will distil blessings for all the families of the earth. A local Brother then briefly summarised "The Book of Job," bringing out many excellent thoughts associated with the principles of righteousness. The concluding item for Sunday was an illustrated address by a Brother and Sister from U.S.A., who lately had been living in Israel. Films and coloured slides portrayed life and miraculous development proceeding apace in Israel today. Emphasis was laid on how God's Word was actually in the process of fulfilment in Israel at the present time. Confirming our faith with such evidence, hope is very bright and buoyant for the future regarding not only the full redemption of Israel, but of all the nations.

Arriving all too quickly, the last day of the Convention opened with studying the prophetic coronation ceremonies of Psalm 97, after which our Brother from Israel exhorted us concerning the many blessings surrounding so many people in their daily living. Use to the praise of God, of things surrounding us was preferred to continued bemoaning the ill-use misappropriated by society in general. One could hardly blame the equipment because it was abused by unregenerate people. Brother suggested it is easy to forget that God is responsible for most of the blessings available today because of the "increase of knowledge" promised for the time of the end. The spirit of a sound mind needed direction and guidance. The concluding address for this last day. "The Value of Knowledge," stressed the importance and necessity of knowledge without which all would surely err. Then followed the parting ceremony—"The Love Feast" with "Blest Be The Tie That Binds" and "God Be With You Till We Meet Again." Eph. 4:1-3 was selected, as a greeting from the Convention to all who so kindly remembered the gatherings in their prayers and good wishes.

"Daily Heavenly Manna."—A new supply of this helpful book is in stock. In good, strong binding, with birthday recording pages, this one dollar edition is priced at 10/6

"Israel in History and Prophecy" is the title of a very interesting and informative 64-page booklet now in stock, priced at 1/- per copy, 1/3 post paid.

Earthly Course Finished.

“She hath done what she could” ON the morning of April 18th the earthly course of Sister Martin, of Adelaide, was concluded to the praise of God. Sister had not enjoyed good health for a number of years, but had patiently and graciously borne all these hard experiences associated with the decline of natural health. As a young woman at the age of 19 years, she embraced Present Truth with ardent thanksgiving. The clouds of confusion accompanying superstition and ignorance were dispelled with the light of the true Gospel long years ago, and Sister whole-heartedly accepted the invitation of the Word to be conformed more and more to the Heavenly Pattern of the Saviour. To discuss the precious principles of Truth and Righteousness with others of like faith never wearied her, however frail and tired the natural strength.

Sincere sympathy is extended to her relatives. Sister was one of a large family, who, before her marriage with Brother R. J. Martin was well known as Miss May Barrie. To the members of her family, to her devoted husband, to all who will miss a staunch friend, we comfort with the assurance of God’s Word that “He doeth all things well,” and as so many of God’s dear children have found, “He makes no mistakes.” “The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.”

“E’en sorrow, touched by heav’n, grows bright
With more than rapture’s ray,
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day.”

“Be not conformed

. . . to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” — Rom. 12:2.

Therefore strive to be unworldly. Be not buried in the present. It is a distinct duty to use life while we are here. We are citizens of the world—we may not shrink from it. **We** must share its duties, dangers, sorrows, and joy. But then it is a duty, equally distinct, to live above the world. Unworldliness is the spirit of holding all things not our own in the perpetual conviction that they will not last. It is to have the world, and not to let the world have you; to be its master, not its slave. To have Christ hidden in the heart, calming all, and making all else seem by comparison poor and small. —F. W. Robertson.

Memorial Observances

Melbourne.

THE brethren in Melbourne gladly assembled on the evening of April 10th to observe the Memorial of our Lord's death, with thankfulness to our loving Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ for the wonderful salvation provided through the sacrifice of our dear Redeemer as the "Lamb of God."

Previous studies in Exodus 12 and Matthew 26, had impressed the type and antitype of the Passover ceremony, and we were thus refreshed in mind and heart respecting the wonderful outworking of God's plan covering centuries of time, from the passing over of the firstborn of Israel in Egypt, to the final selection of the "Church of the firstborn" at the end of this age, all in preparation for the deliverance of the human family across the "Red Sea" in the "morning" of the new dispensation at hand.

After the singing of appropriate hymns, the reading of Scriptures bearing on the institution of the Lord's Memorial and His sacrifice on the cross, the offering of prayers of thankfulness to our Heavenly Father, and an address by a visiting Brother on the importance of the annual observance, we gladly partook of the emblems in solemn remembrance of our Saviour's sacrifice and demonstrating our own participation in the sufferings of Christ, **in** hope of association with Him in the Kingdom, by God's grace.

Geelong, Vic.

On the evening of April 10 a little company met again here as in former years, glad to conform to the request of their Lord and Saviour to "do this in remembrance of Me," who fulfilled in reality that which had been typed or pictured in the old Jewish Passover observances. Although without a peer as a Teacher and Exemplar, Christians regard Him most for His obedience to the Divine will, His readiness, yea, His delight to become the "Lamb of God" to take away the sin of the world.

Previous studies had quickened again our perception of the cost, and assisted to the appreciation of all that has been done on our behalf by the Ransomer of all mankind. Four brethren assisted in the service consisting of hymns, readings from the Scripture and an address, at the close of which we partook of the emblems.

Adelaide.

On Sunday evening, April 10th, the Adelaide Class met to observe the Memorial of our Saviour's death in obedience to His request—"Do this in remembrance of Me." Our hearts are filled with thankfulness to our Heavenly Father for the wonderful gift of the Son of His love to be the Redeemer of the fallen race of mankind. Also to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ we give all thanks and praise for His willing sacrifice of Himself to be "the satisfaction for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." We praise God for His wondrous grace which enables us at the present time not only to believe in Jesus, but also to share in His sufferings as members of His mystical body.

After reading the Scriptures in Matthew 26th and 27th Chapters dealing with till, a//-important matter, one of our brethren outlined the significance of the Memorial in type and antitype; and we partook of the emblems with prayers of gratitude to God for all His goodness and grace; we also sang hymns of praise to His Name for all the benefits bestowed upon us. It was our privilege also to remember at the throne of grace the fellow members of the body of Christ, known and unknown to us throughout the wide world. "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable Gift."

Perth.

On the 10th April, at eventide, we observed our dear Lord's Memorial. We' had our minds refreshed again with the thought that man's salvation was dependent upon being redeemed by human life. After tracing how the blood of animals was used typically to cleanse sin, we had our minds directed to the real Lamb of God that is to take away the sin of the world—our Lord Jesus, who, in the days of His flesh, offered up His perfect humanity as a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. Thus, we remembered again our dear Lord's sacrifice, how He^ poured out His soul unto death, and made His soul an offering for sin.

We saw how the emblems our Lord used and offered to His disciples was an invitation to them to follow in His steps, and therefore go the same path of self-sacrificing the interests of the flesh. This was heart-searching to us all who

partook, reminding us to be “dead with Christ,” for “if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection.” (Rom. 6:5.) Surely God is testing us all to see if we individually are set apart from this world, and, are followers of the Lamb in this great offering for sin. Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

Sydney.

It was with mixed feelings that participants approached the annual celebration of our Lord’s Memorial. As we awaited the event the radiation of a full moon shining through the trees inspired thoughts befitting such an occasion.

At its inauguration she seemingly untoward events transpiring doubtless mystified the disciples, but later, enlightened by the holy spirit, they, with expectancy, awaited His return.

The gathering, though few in number, appreciated the simple service, conducted by the Sydney elders ; both the chairman and speaker carrying out their duties in an able manner.

With the prevailing unparalleled conditions in the world around, happy are those who, await “the consolation of Israel,” and with the. Master, “drink the new wine in the kingdom.” Then the Scripture will be fulfilled—”He shall see the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied,” with the glorious climax.

E’en through harsh noises of our day,
A low, sweet prelude finds its way;
Through clouds of doubts and creeds of fear,
A light is breaking calm and clear.

Tasmania.

Four of us met to celebrate our Lord’s Memorial, in response to His request “this do in. remembrance of Me,” and had a very lovely time, and were greatly blessed and felt the Lord was truly in our midst.

Stand Fast.

HOW many times do the Scriptures admonish us to “stand fast”? “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong,” says Paul. (1 Cor. 16:13.) He also says to the Corinthian Church, “Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy : For, by faith ye stand.” (2 Cor. 1:24.) Then again, “Only let your conversation (behaviour) be as it becometh the gospel of Christ; that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel.” (Phil. 1:27) .

These admonitions, so necessary at that time, are much more necessary now. How easy it would be to drift with the tide and become weary and faint.

The Apostles were arrested for preaching Christ and healing a lame man at the temple. They were illiterate fishermen, unaccustomed to speaking before the learned, and we may well be amazed at their courage, and at the straightforward presentation of the Gospel given by St. Peter. It astonished the High Court, too. They wished to arraign the Apostles, not for the good deed of healing the lame man, but rather for their preaching of Jesus. However, under the guidance of the holy spirit, St. Peter wisely and properly drew attention to the fact that they were on trial really for the healing of the sick. Again he disowned any power on the part of himself and his companions; admitting that they were merely ordinary men, he credited the miracle entirely to Jesus.

What a lesson is here for all who would represent the Lord, as His ambassadors, as St. Paul said, “We preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ.” (2 Cor. 4:5.) How courageous were the Apostle’s words, “Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole.” St. Peter was not only preaching that Jesus was the Messiah, whom the Jews had long expected, but, additionally, he was declaring that the Sanhedrin had murdered the Messiah. It was the truth, and it was necessary to utter the truth. To have evaded the point would have shown fear.

Next, the Apostle quoted to them from the prophecy of David, (Psalm 118:22), saying “This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other ; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”

Perceiving the boldness of Peter and John, and noting that they were unlearned and ignorant, these leaders in Israel marvelled; and “took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” Of Jesus, it was also said, “How knoweth this man letters; having never learned.” (John 7:15). They knew of His power with the people through the spirit of the Lord, and of His straightforward presentation of the truth. They recognised these men as of the same character, filled with Jesus’ spirit.

To this day, this is true of the followers of Jesus. “God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and a sound mind.” The Lord’s people should remember this point and should cultivate such a spirit, and be copies of the Lord Jesus, and of the faithful Apostles, so that all might take knowledge of them that they have been. with Jesus and have learned of Him.

As the Apostle indicates in his discourse, “There is none other name given among men whereby we must be saved.” We must consecrate our all to follow in His steps faithfully, even unto death. On these conditions, we become His disciples, and having become His disciples, learners in the school of Christ, and having been begotten of the holy spirit, we are privileged to show forth more and more His praises, and to let our light shine before men, that they, seeing our good works and our likeness to the Master, may glorify God on our behalf.

The Sanhedrin was perplexed. They perceived that the disciples had so strong a case, and had really turned the tables upon them, charging them before the people with being the murderers of the Son of God, the Messiah. As they looked at the man who had been healed, they perceived a great miracle, and they could say nothing. So they put forth the disciples from their midst, that they might discuss the case privately. They could not deny the miracle, and they were afraid of what it might lead to if talk of this kind about Jesus, and about their being His murderers, should spread amongst the people. They thought it best to let the disciples go, charging them not to preach any more in the name of Jesus. Then was shown the marvellous courage of the Apostles. They replied,, “Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye, for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and. heard.”

The Bible directs the followers of Jesus to be subject to the powers that be ; but while seeking to be thus law-abiding in every respect, Christians are to recognise that there is still a higher Ruler, and are to be subject to the worldly powers only in the absence of a contrary divine instruction. God had commanded the disciples through Jesus, that they should preach the Gospel. It was, therefore, the duty of the Apostles, as it is the duty of all the followers of Jesus, to make

known. the Gospel message wherever there are hearing ears, and not to fear what man may do.

The church, young in faith, had been greatly distressed by the imprisonment of the disciples, and, when they were released, a general meeting for rejoicing and praise to God was held, thanking the Lord for the courage given to the Apostles, for the promise of His Word, and for the miracle which led up to this. As a consequence, all were so encouraged that “they spake the Word of God with boldness”; and “with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all.”

This text is properly an exhortation to all of God’s people everywhere, to be faithful and loyal to God and His cause. Let us each apply it to ourselves. “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong.”

Divine Paradoxes

“Because thy loving kindness (favor) is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.”—Psa. 63:3.

THERE are two ways in which this text may be viewed, both of which are very proper. One way is to consider it merely from the viewpoint of the Psalmist and what he meant. The other is to consider it from the standpoint of prophecy. We understand the Prophet David to mean that to have God’s favor is more desirable than life; that is to say, he would rather die than live without divine favor. The other way, of viewing it prophetically, is to suppose that here, as in many other places, the Psalmist represented The Christ, Jesus the Head and the church His members.

Our consecration is unto death. God has invited us to present our bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto Him, and He has given us exceeding great and precious promises for the life to come. Therefore, because of our love for Him and for the principles of righteousness for which He stands, we are not merely willing to lay down our lives, but glad to lay them down. We are glad to lay down our human lives in doing the things that are pleasing to God.

Another of David’s Psalms gives us the thought that in God’s favor is everlasting life. (Psa. 30:5). These paradoxical statements are in harmony with the other divine paradox, that “he that loseth his life shall find it”. **H**e that surrenders his earthly life shall gain glory, honor, immortality, the divine nature. We are glad that we can appreciate these glorious things represented in the divine favor extended to the church and we gladly lay down our lives. We have chosen the better part.

“Therefore my lips shall praise thee.” The Scriptures declare “that with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Rom. 10:10.) We may say that to live righteously is one of the best ways of proving our obedience to the Lord. Yet there are some who try hard to live pleasing to the Lord, who might be restrained from making a confession of Him. There are reasons for the blessing which we receive from confession. One reason is that it is a witness to the world—showing forth the praises of Him who called us out of darkness; and a second reason is that this witnessing has a good effect on ourselves. We enlist our natural forces to support this witness, and thus bring into unison all the powers of our nature.

The preaching of the Gospel brings opposition. If our Lord had gone about casting out demons, healing the sick, etc., and had not told anything about the divine plan, He would probably have been looked upon as a fine character—as a man going about doing good. But because he preached differently from the scribes and Pharisees, and His preaching of the truth infringed upon the teachings of those about Him, it roused their ire.

So it is today. All the persecution comes about from the making known of the truth. In no time that we know has this not been true. In the dark ages and throughout the Gospel Age, the preaching of the truth has brought upon those telling the good tidings persecutions from those whose minds have been benighted by the prince of darkness. In proportion as we open our lips and tell of the Gospel of the Lord, we are opposed by Satan and those who are blinded by him. With the lips one might praise God, and with the lips he might injure men. The lips of this class consecrated to God—those who are laying down their present life in His service—should be devoted to His praise, to showing forth the glorious character and loving kindness of our God, to telling forth the wonders of the divine plan, which is marvellous in our eyes.