



## Message to the Church at Smyrna

“And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death”—Rev. 2:8-11.

**W**E notice that in respect of each of these seven messages to the seven churches of Revelation the Lord is differently described.

Regarding Ephesus He was seen as one holding the seven stars in His right hand, and as walking amidst the seven golden candlesticks. This would seem to indicate that He would be ever present, taking note of their doings and conditions, that He would be all the time fully informed concerning His people. In the case of Ephesus, He saw that they had to some extent at least lost their first love.

In the case of the Church of Smyrna, He is also described appropriately — “Write these things, saith the First and the Last, which was dead and is alive.” That is to say, one who had suffered martyrdom in loyalty to God and the truth, but was now alive for evermore. This was surely great encouragement to those who were also to tread the same way. It was as though they were to be reminded of the Lord’s words while He walked the human pathway — “Be not afraid of those who can kill the body, but cannot kill the soul.” They cannot prevent the resurrection of those whom they slay. They may be sown in dishonour, but they will be raised in glory.

While this message foretells suffering and martyrdom, yet it is full of encouragement. This introduction — “I am he that liveth and was

dead and am alive”, seems to say — “I have trodden the same path and have entered into My reward; follow Me” — “Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.” This reminds us of the apostle’s words — “We have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” — Heb. 4:14, 15.

Also, Heb. 5:8, 9 — “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience through the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.”

We also have Peter’s words along the same line — “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps” — 1 Pet. 2:21.

So we see that the Master, in addressing this church at Smyrna, is addressing His suffering church, and His message is one of loving sympathy.

One thing is quite certain, too, that it was not only the dear saints at Smyrna who had the privilege of suffering for Christ’s sake; that is the privilege of every member of the Body of Christ — “Yea, all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” Some may get more of this experience than others. The Church of the Living God is chosen out of all walks of life, and all sorts of characters. All these varied dispositions must be changed — transformed — and He who is working in us to accomplish this knows just the best process and circumstance to permit, to bring about our sanctification. Some members have more sufferings of one kind than another, just as the Church at Smyrna seemed to have more terrible experiences than other Churches. Yet each church, as also each individual, has its own peculiar circumstances and trials, which will be sufficient to thoroughly test the loyalty and

faithfulness of mind and heart, and to provide the opportunity of proving themselves overcomers, and thereby of gaining "the crown of life."

One likes to think of each of these messages to the seven churches as having first a local application to the particular church in John's day; secondly, to the particular period of the church's history, during which it applies to the Church as a whole, living at that time; and, thirdly, to Christians of similar experiences at any time during the age, particularly now at the end of the Christian dispensation.

(1) Excepting for this statement in Revelation, we would not know of the existence of this Church at Smyrna, but through church history we are informed that they were poor in this world's goods but rich in the spiritual things. It is this class which the Lord has been mostly choosing. As the Apostle James 2:5 puts it — "Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, to be heirs of the kingdom." Poverty is generally the safer condition for the Christian, and better for character development than affluence.

This church in poor circumstances has no reproof from the Lord, but the seventh church, that of Laodicea, is described as being rich and increased in goods, and in need of nothing, so it thought. The Lord thought differently, and the message reads — "Thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, poor and blind" — Rev. 3:17.

Better, indeed, to be like Smyrna, struggling with poverty respecting earthly needs, but rich toward God, enjoying His favour and protection, and having the approbation of Him who walketh amidst the candlesticks.

The Apostle Paul was one who willingly sacrificed his riches and became poor through his zeal for Christ and the truth. He described his condition — "As poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, yet possessing all things" — 2 Cor. 6:10.

Smyrna Christians had poverty and tribulations, yet they had works which the Lord could commend. Maybe, they were not able to do as much of works as others, perhaps not as much as Ephesus, but it would seem that the motive behind their works was purer; they had preserved their first love.

The Lord knew their works; He could appreciate them. Better to have only a feeble effort, better only a mite cast into the treasury with a pure, loving motive, as all that one can do, than any amount of mighty deeds if the first love be lacking, if the eye be not single. "Many will say, 'Lord, Lord, we have cast out devils in thy name, and done many wonderful works', but He will answer, 'I never knew you, depart from me workers of iniquity.'"

There is much tenderness in this comforting message to Smyrna — "I know thy poverty and

thy tribulation." What a comfort it is in all our sorrows and tribulations, injustices and misunderstandings, when friends forsake and leave us, to know that this Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, knows our hearts, knows all about us, and His sympathy and love are with us.

Yet the Lord could have relieved Smyrna from both poverty and tribulation. The loving Heavenly Father could also have relieved His only Son from the bitterness of His cup, but His love is wise, and He knows that though no chastening or disciplining for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous, yet it afterward yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness. So Smyrna was permitted its days of poverty and tribulation. We know that in those days very severe persecutions prevailed. Roman judges went from place to place; Christians were crowded before them, and hurried to execution.

Probably a literal ten days of tribulation may have occurred with the local church at Smyrna, and, if so, we may depend upon it that grace was afforded them to witness a good confession, and prove faithful unto death. What the Lord permitted, He was abundantly able to work out for their good.

In those days, just subsequent to the days of John, the Christians, according to history, courted martyrdom. They seem to have somewhat misunderstood matters, and instead of using every legitimate means of escaping, instead of offering a defence, they appear to have acted so as to invite the sentence of death being passed upon them.

Even Ignatius would not allow brethren who had influence at court to intervene on his behalf; he preferred to be a martyr. While such conduct was certainly brave, one cannot but think that the Lord would have been better pleased had they used every right means for the preservation of their lives that they might have rendered further service to the church.

If such a period of ten days' special persecution did occur at Smyrna, and many of the congregation were put to death, what a comfort and strength this message from "Him who liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore", would be. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

(2) The Historical Application — It would seem certain, however, that this message has an application prophetically to the church, in the second period of its history, which it is thought reaches down to the beginning of the fourth century. During this time the Pagan persecution raged against the church. Many of the poor martyrs were used to supply sport to the public by being thrown to the wild beasts in the arena. Sometimes women were put in nets to be tossed by bulls. Their endurance under the sorest possible experiences was wonderful. The Lord surely granted special grace to His suffering people. History supplies numerous instances of marvel-

lous fortitude, of which the details are horrible to read, yet to note the faith and loyalty to God under such extreme suffering is beautiful.

The Smyrna Church message is understood to apply historically to the period of Pagan persecutions during the second, third, and into the fourth centuries, the last ten years of the period from 303 to 313, being the fulfilment of the words — "Ye shall have tribulation ten days."

During that long period of 300 years the church indeed had little rest from persecution; yet in the few years now and again when Christians were permitted to worship God without molestation, many joined themselves unto the church who were evidently not of it. They claimed to be "Jews" — Abraham's seed. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs of the promise", but they were rather "of the synagogue of Satan."

The Church is not blamed because these were permitted to come among them. There is no reproof given on that account. There is no way in which God's people can prevent hypocrites — "wolves in sheep's clothing" — coming in. The Apostle Paul speaks of such a class even in his day, that came among them to spy out their liberty, with intention of causing division — Gal. 2:4. They were "false brethren unawares brought in." So it has ever been, not only in the Smyrna period, but throughout the Gospel Age, that some professing faith and grace have, by plausible methods, deceived many. These have been permitted for the purpose of developing faith, patience and love in the true members, and impressing the lesson of the necessity for ever holding to the Head, Christ, and the avoidance of making idols of and worshipping elders and leaders.

The periods of Pagan persecution which so quickly followed one another, while terrible to endure, had, however, a good effect upon the church — purging it of the class called the synagogue of Satan. It is a fact of history that the church has always made the best spiritual progress when persecution was raging most.

We again notice the contrast here with the Laodicean Church — the Church of our day — she knows no persecution, she sits as a queen (yea, a queen of the world), rich and increased in goods. The result is she is lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, to the Lord; she is nauseous, and is cast off.

The Smyrna Church was poor and suffering, wore no earthly diadem, but had great opportunity of gaining the martyr's crown — "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

It was at the beginning of this Smyrna period of church history, under the Roman Emperor Trajan, that Simon, the son of Cleopas, who is mentioned in Luke's gospel as one with whom the Lord walked and talked on the road to Emmaus, was martyred. During the same period,

Ignatius, who had been appointed Bishop of Antioch by the apostles, and who was well acquainted with St. John, was thrown to the wild beasts at Rome, strong in faith, and triumphant in his death.

Such persecutions continued throughout the reign of Adrian, but when Antonius Pius became Emperor in 137 A.D., there were about twenty-three years rest for the church.

With Marcus Antonius another season of severe trial came on. It was during this time that the noble Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who had been a disciple of St. John, and a companion of Ignatius, was slain. History records a peculiar circumstance of his martyrdom. The fire was kindled, but it is said refused to touch him, forming the appearance of an arch, as a sail of a vessel filled with wind, as a wall round the body of the martyr. There seemed also a fragrance such as arises from frankincense or other precious perfume. An executioner was therefore ordered to approach and plunge his sword into his body. The aged Polycarp blessed God that he had been counted worthy of this day and this hour.

It was in the third century that we have the account of great sufferings at Lyons, at Cathage, and at Alexandria. Time would fail to speak of all the sufferings under Severus, also under Decius, when Fabian, Bishop of Rome, was slain, and under Valerian, when the noble Cyprian was beheaded, which is noted as a merciful martyrdom.

There were then about forty years' rest, until Diocletian and Galerius, when the most severe ten years began. It was Galerius who seemed mad against Christians, and influenced Diocletian to begin the persecution. Every imaginable form of diabolical torture seems to have been used. Age, sex, or condition had no consideration, and it is not decent to speak of all that was done. One paragraph from Milner may illustrate to an extent — "Whole families were put to various kinds of deaths, some by fire, others by water, others by beheading after terrible tortures. Some perished by famine, others by crucifixion, of these some in the common manner, others were fastened with their heads downwards, that they might die by hunger. But the torments in Thebais exceed all description. Men and women tied by one foot raised on high and exposed naked, monuments at once of inhumanity and indecency of persecutions. Others were torn by the distorted boughs of trees; and these scenes continued some years. Sometimes ten, at other times thirty and sixty, and once a hundred men and women, with their little ones, in one day, were murdered by various torments."

It was indeed a suffering church at Smyrna, and one can appreciate the gentle message of sympathy from Him who was dead, and is alive

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## *The Lord's Supper*

THE thoughts of the Lord's consecrated people being more particularly directed toward the Memorial of His death at this time of year, we cannot fail to be benefited by a review of the institution of this Supper, which our Lord established shortly before the close of His sacrificial life on earth. It was celebrated on the day before the Passover proper began — on the fourteenth of Nisan, the first month of the Jewish sacred year.

One evangelist records that our Lord said to His disciples, "With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." It was His last commemoration of the Jewish rite, which as a Jew He was bound to observe legally, fully. We may not know the particular hour of the fourteenth day at which our Lord and the disciples partook of the Lord's Supper, but probably it was near midnight, after the Passover had been eaten, that our Lord instituted the new Memorial of His own death, substituting it for the Passover Supper of the Law, and intimating this in His words — "Henceforth, as oft as ye do this, do it in remembrance of me." "This" represented the anti-typical Lamb, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," and doing this — breaking the bread and drinking of the fruit of the vine — showed forth our Lord's death and not any longer the death of the type, because the antitype had now come, and in this same day, a few hours later, He would be killed, crucified. Our Lord was thus laying a deep and broad basis for the New Creation, His Church, and separating it from the Jewish type by pointing out to the believers Himself as the antitype, and the higher meaning connected therewith — the deliverance of all the true Israelites, not from Pharaoh, but from Pharaoh's antitype, Satan, the deliverance of all the first-born of God's people from death into life more abundant, eternal life.

It seems that Judas was not with the others when our Lord instituted with the bread and the fruit of the vine the Memorial of His death. It was better that he should be absent; and so it would be preferable, where possible, that only the true, loyal, devoted disciples of Christ should meet together to celebrate His death on its anniversary. Nevertheless, let us remember that we are not competent to judge the heart, and hence in coming to the Memorial table all should be invited to come who trust in the precious

blood of Christ for redemption and who profess a full consecration to the Lord. Let us leave it to Divine providence to scrutinise those who profess to be fellow-disciples.

In presenting to the disciples the unleavened bread, as a Memorial, our Lord gave a general explanation, saying — "Take, eat; this is my body." The evident meaning of the words is: This symbolises or represents My body. It was not actually His body, because in no sense of the word had His body yet been broken; in no sense would it have been possible for any to have partaken of Him actually or anti-typically then, the sacrifice not being as yet finished. But the picture is complete when we recognise that the unleavened bread represented our Lord's sinless flesh — leaven being a symbol of sin under the Law, and specially commanded to be put away at this time. On another occasion our Lord gave a lesson which interprets to us this symbol. He said — "The bread of God is he that came down from heaven and giveth his life for the world. I am the bread of life" — John 6:33, 35.

In order to appreciate how we are to eat or appropriate this living bread, it is necessary for us to understand just what it was. According to our Lord's explanation of the matter, it was His flesh which He sacrificed for us. It was not His prehuman existence as a spirit being that was sacrificed, although that was laid down and its glory laid aside, that He might take our human nature. It was the fact that our Lord Jesus was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and without any contamination from father Adam, and hence free from sin — it was this fact that permitted Him to be the Redeemer of Adam and his race — which permitted Him to give His life as a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. And when we see that it was the pure, spotless human nature of our Lord Jesus that was laid down on behalf of sinners, sacrificed for us, we see what it is that we are privileged to appropriate. The very thing which He laid down for us we are to "eat," appropriate to ourselves: that is to say, His perfect human nature was given for us and redeemed Adam and all his race from condemnation to death — to a right to return to human perfection and everlasting life if they are obedient.

It is this same blessing which the Gospel Church in this age receives by faith from the Redeemer, namely justification by faith — not justification to a spiritual nature, which we never had and never lost, and which Christ did not redeem; but justification to human nature, which father Adam did possess and lose, and which Christ did redeem by giving His own sinless flesh as our ransom-sacrifice. The partaking of the bread, then, means to us primarily acceptance and appropriation to ourselves, by faith, of justification to human rights and privileges secured by our Lord's sacrifice of these.

Likewise, the fruit of the vine symbolised our Lord's life given for us — His human life, His being, His soul, poured out unto death on our behalf; and the appropriating of this by us signifies primarily our acceptance of restitution rights and privileges which our Lord has thus, at His own cost, secured for us.

God's object in justifying by faith the Church during this Gospel Age, in advance of the justification of the world through works of obedience in the Millennial Age, is for the very purpose of permitting those who now see and hear and appreciate the great sacrifice which Love has made on their behalf, to present their bodies living sacrifices, and thus to have part with our Lord in His sacrifice — as members of His body. This additional and deep meaning of the Memorial our Lord did not refer to directly. It was doubtless one of the things to which He referred, saying — "I have many things to tell you, but ye cannot bear them now; howbeit, when the spirit of truth is come, it will guide you into all truth, and show you things to come."

The spirit of truth, speaking through the Apostle Paul, clearly explains the matter of this secondary and very high import of the Memorial, for he says, writing to the consecrated Church — "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the participation of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the participation of the body of Christ?" — to share with Christ as joint-sacrificers even unto death, that thereby they may be counted in with Him also as sharers of the glory which He has received as a reward for His faithfulness. "For we being many are one loaf and one body." — 1 Cor. 10:16, 17.

Both views of this impressive ordinance are important; it is necessary that we should see, first of all, our justification through the Lord's sacrifice. It is proper, then, that we should realise that the entire Christ, is, from the Divine standpoint, a composite body of many members, of which Jesus is the Head, and that this Church as a whole must be broken, and that in this respect each member of it must be a copy of the Lord Jesus and must walk in the footsteps of His sacrifice. We do this by giving our lives, — laying down our lives on behalf of the brethren — as Christ laid down His life for all. It is not our spiritual life that we lay down, even as it was not our Lord's spiritual life that He laid down in sacrifice; but as He sacrificed His actually perfect being, so we must sacrifice our justified selves, reckoned perfect but not actually so. Likewise, the cup represents suffering. It is one cup, though it be the juice of many grapes, even as it is one loaf, though it be from many grains. The grains cannot maintain their individuality and their own life if they would become bread for others; the grapes cannot maintain themselves as grapes if they would constitute the life-giving spirit; and thus we see the beauty of the Apostle's statement, that the Lord's people are participants in the one loaf and one cup.

Our Lord distinctly declares that the cup, the fruit of the vine, represents blood, hence life; not life retained, but life shed or given, yielded up, sacrificed life. He tells us that it was for the remission of sins, and that all who would be His must drink of it — must accept His sacrifice and appropriate it by faith. All who would be justified through faith must accept life from this one source. It will not do to claim an immortality outside of Christ; it will not do to declare that life is the result of obedience to the Law; it will not do to claim that faith in and obedience to any great teacher will amount to the same thing and bring eternal life. There is no other way to attain eternal life except through accepting the blood once shed as the ransom price for the sins of the whole world. "There is no other name given under heaven or amongst men whereby we must be saved." Likewise, there is no other way that we can attain to the new nature than by accepting the Lord's invitation to drink of His cup, and be broken with Him as members of the one loaf, and to be buried with Him in baptism into His death, and thus to be with Him in His resurrection to glory, honour and immortality. — Rom. 6:3-5; 8:17.

## *The Ends and the Means*

### (Convention Address)

"Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" — Acts 15:18.

**T**HERE is a very good reason why those words are familiar. "Known unto God are all His works" — known unto whom? known unto **God**, and so there we have James declaring the most fundamental of all truths. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder . . ." So there is one reason why those words are very important.

They are also important because it says — "known unto God are all his works **from the beginning of the world**", and so we see that James also declares that God has a plan, a pre-determined plan, and all the events of history that have occurred, and all the events of history that will yet occur, are simply the outworking of God's plan. Let us consider the most important purposes in God's plan — two of the most important ends.

Before we can really appreciate the historical events, both past and future, we must understand the purposes of God. Paul said in Romans — Israel had "a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." Once we understand God's purposes, we can also understand His means.

The two most important purposes in God's plan are His purpose for the earth — the world of mankind — and His purpose for the Church — and we would like to trace through how these two great purposes have been running parallel from the beginning of time.

Taking God's purpose in relation to the world of mankind, we read in Isa. 45:11, 12, 18 — "Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me. I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded. For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited." Sometimes we use that text — "He created it not in vain" — as a substantiation for the thought that the world will not be destroyed, and that is true. It is interesting also to read that really He created it **not without form** — He created it not in vain — He **formed it to be inhabited**. And surely that is God's foundation purpose for the earth.

In Gen. 1:26, 27 we see that God's initial purpose was achieved — "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." He formed the earth to be inhabited — God's purpose for the earth.

Parallel to this, God also had His purpose for the Church. In Eph. 1:3-5 we see that God's great purpose for the Church was established right back there at the same time as He established His purpose for the earth. These verses in Eph. 1 read — "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him **before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto sonship by Jesus Christ to himself" — and now note the next phrase — "according to the good pleasure of his will." Paul uses the same Greek word in Rom: 10:1 when he says — "my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is" — so we could almost say that this is according to God's own desire. He predestinated us to sonship according to His own desire before the foundation of the world.

We remember that God's purpose towards mankind initially seemed to be thwarted. We know the story well, how Eve was beguiled and fell, and Adam then followed likewise. I was very impressed by a thought expressed as to one of the contributing factors leading to Adam's fall. It was suggested that pride was one of the elements which caused Adam's downfall, and in Gen. 3:4, 5 there is an indication of that — "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened,

and ye **shall be as gods.**" And so it seemed that pride was one of the things which caused the fall of Adam and Eve.

There is a parallel in God's calling of the Church — at least I think there is. We know that when the gospel first began to be preached, it was preached only to the nation of Israel, and the supporting text for this is Matt. 10:5, 6 — "Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." That was accomplished but the Israelites did not respond at that time; perhaps pride might have been one of the contributing factors which prevented them from responding.

In John 8, from verse 31, we have the words of Jesus — "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed in him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?" In verse 37 Jesus says — "I know that ye are Abraham's seed" — and in verse 39 — "They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father." Then we read in verses 51-53 — "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my sayings, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?" **We** have Abraham to **our** father. Perhaps also there was an element of pride indicated here, which led to the Jews having their minds blinded.

From these standpoints alone, it would seem that God's two great purposes would apparently fail. Adam and Eve had fallen and the Jews had not taken hold of that which was offered to them. We know that both of these events were pre-planned by God, He having already provided the ransom sacrifice for the world of mankind. Rev. 13:8 says — "the Lamb slain from the **foundation of the world.**" As well as being foreknown by God, He had a purpose in letting Adam fall, and He had a purpose in letting Israel fall.

The purpose in letting man fall is shown to us in Eccles. 1:12, 13 — "I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem. And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith." Actually the Hebrew word for "exercised" really means "humbled" — this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be humbled thereby. God's purpose was to create man, to let him have dominion over the earth, a high and lofty place. Man strove to be even higher, and God has permitted this experience to humble him.

That method is going to be extremely **successful**. God's method of exposing man to this time

of sin and death certainly will humble him. We have the outcome of man's experiences in Isa. 2:2, 3 — "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and **we will walk in his paths**" — no desire there to be like gods. They will have tasted of the sore travail; they will have been humbled, and they will be glad to respond to the opportunity God gives them.

Regarding God's calling of the Church, Israel did not take hold of that which was offered. This too was pre-planned, as we have it in Gal. 3:8, 9 — "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." Away back there He preached the gospel unto Abraham. Foreseeing that He would justify the heathen, and who are they? those outside the commonwealth of Israel, as shown in Eph. 2:11, 12 — "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."

What was God's purpose in letting Israel fall? We saw His purpose in letting man fall; what was His purpose in letting Israel fall? The reason seems to be given in Rom. 11:11 — "I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy." Why should God want to make Israel fall? We are told that the reason is, so that salvation could come to the Gentiles, and I believe more than that. The earth, the world of mankind, had to be humbled, and it seems the Church also needs to be humbled. In Rom: 11: 18-20 we read—"Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear."

So, we do well to understand or to comprehend the words of Paul in Phil. 3:8-11 — "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the

fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." And is that not our individual prayer?

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## *Extracts from Correspondence*

Berean Bible Institute, Dear Frank and Ernest — Many thanks for the "Peoples Paper" posted to me, and to say how I appreciate your messages from the Scriptures from 3 GL of a Sunday. I would like to add how my late Dad was also a constant listener for many, many years, and who passed away aged 92 years, a listener to the end. \$2.00 enclosed. Thanking you again, with Christian regards.

Berean Bible Institute, Dear Mr. — Let me first say how much support I have received from your Frank and Ernest broadcasts, as well as the "Peoples Paper" and the booklets you have so kindly forwarded to me. I have found your explanation of the Parables in the recent broadcasts most helpful. Thank you for all this.

Enclosed please find cheque to be disbursed between the Radio Fund and the Tract Fund, and as you consider desirable. I am also enclosing \$1.00 to cover the cost of the "Peoples Paper" which I would like you to forward to my brother, — May God's richest blessings be with you in this wonderful work. Yours in the Master's service.

Berean Bible Institute, Dear Frank and Ernest — I enclose 2 dollars for your "Paper" etc., which I look forward to. Please forward the enclosed to Frank and Ernest; I want them to know how much help I get from their talks; I can open my Bible and follow them. Keep sending your "Papers" as I am house-bound, having not been outside my home for three years. Thanking you again.

Secretary, "Peoples Paper" — With the start of another year, I wish to extend greetings and best wishes to all associated with the "Peoples Paper", and am enclosing amount for another subscription. We were interested in a little paragraph on the use of epsom salts for cataracts on the eyes, and I am trying it on my dog's eyes. It seems to have made them brighter and clearer. I hope to continue with its use; if something can help people, it should also help animals. Thanking you for continued receipt of "Peoples Paper" for this year. Kindest regards to all.

Berean Bible Institute, Dear Friends — Thank you for the tracts which I received. I had a busy morning this morning delivering the tracts to the people in various suburbs. It was a joy to do them; I hope somebody through the tracts might get awakened and turn to God and the Bible. With kind Christian regards; your Friend.

Dear Sirs — Please find enclosed \$2.00 being subscription to "Peoples Paper" for 1978 and postage of same. Thanking you for interesting and informative articles contained in the "Paper." Yours faithfully.

Frank and Ernest, Berean Bible Institute — I wish to thank you for the "Peoples Paper" forwarded to me during the past months. It is with pleasure and a sense of privilege that I enclose a cheque, which I suggest you put to use where most needed—perhaps towards the radio broadcasts. During your radio sessions I have heard with pleasure two hymns — "My Heavenly Father watches over Me" and "The Stranger of Galilee" — from the book which you kindly procured for me. In His Service; Yours sincerely.

Dear Sir — Enclosed please find postal note \$2.00 being for my annual subscription with your Society; I hope that will cover the postage expense as well. I thank you for all past literature received from you; it was indeed very illuminating, everything so easily translated and so easy to understand. Yours truly.

**(Continued from page 3.)**

again, and is alive for evermore — "I know thy works and thy tribulation."

(3) Then there is the other feature of this message, to the Smyrna class of Christians living throughout the Gospel Age, including our own day. Just as we may see Ephesian Christians, those who have lost their first love, yet have works and patience, and will not allow human leaders, with great claims, to lord it over them, but maintain their allegiance to Christ and the twelve apostles; so we have some with us who seem particularly to have trials and sufferings through loyalty to Christ, yet their tribulations are borne with patience, and they are able to do some good works.

"Poor, yet Rich" — What comfort there is in the assurance of Him who has walked the same pathway, who was dead, but is alive for evermore — "I know thy works and tribulation and poverty." What is implied in that "I know"? Surely that He knows by experience — touched with a feeling for our infirmity — yes, I know, I care — "I am alive for evermore." "Be not afraid" — "Lo, I am with you always" — "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

The reward here will be seen to be the same as that mentioned, in other words, to the Church of Ephesus. To Ephesus it is said — "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God", meaning immortality. The Crown of Life here offered to the Smyrna Church indicates the divine nature, which is synonymous with immortality.

It was this great hope that enabled the martyrs of that period to cheerfully suffer such terrible

hardships. We have trials and sufferings one way and another, but how small they appear compared with the sufferings of Smyrna. Yet what comes to us will accomplish its purpose if we will only be properly exercised thereby.

Let us look to Him who was dead and is alive again and be strengthened in the way. Heb. 12: 1, 2 — "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

We remember that every member in Christ is baptized into the same baptism, even into His death — "As many as are baptized into Christ are baptized into his death" — Rom. 6:3. Our hope is not to gain human health and strength, but, on the contrary, we are aliens, strangers and pilgrims while we continue in the earthly tabernacle.

We have been purchased by the precious blood of Christ, and by faith have passed from death unto life — out of the Adamic condemnation into life — justification. We have heard and accepted the wonderful invitation to walk in Christ's steps, to follow the Lamb whithersoever He may lead. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, so we too "are accounted as sheep for the slaughter, we are killed all the day long" — Rom. 8:36. "If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him; if we be dead with him we shall also live with him." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

We may or we may not have experiences of martyrdom, but we are certain to have experiences that will just as surely test our faith and loyalty, in whatever form our trials may come.

**Passover Memorial, 1978**

The anniversary of the Memorial of Christ's death falls this year on the evening of Thursday, 20th April. It is a privilege of the Lord's people to observe this memorial at this season "In remembrance of Christ."

**Memorial Services**

**Melbourne** — Sunday, 16th April, at 6.30 p.m., at Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond.

**Adelaide** — Sunday, 16th April, at 6.15 p.m., at M.U. Hall (2nd Floor), 16 Franklin Street, Adelaide.

**Sydney** — Thursday, 20th April, at 7 p.m., at 81 James Street, Leichhardt.

**Perth** — Thursday, 20th April, at 7 p.m. Phone 293-1973 for location of service.

If we follow His steps, if His way be our way, His joys shall be our joys.—Christopher Sutton.

**FRANK & ERNEST TALKS**

**3GL Geelong, 1350Kc. — Sundays 10 a.m.**