PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM
UNDENOMINATIONAL
A RELIGIOUS NEWSPAPER

Volume XXVIII. No. 7 MELBOURNE, 1st JULY, 1945 Price—Threepence

Knowing the True God.

John 17:3; 2 Peter 1:2-3. (Convention Address).

"This is eternal life, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."

IT will be manifest to the careful student that there is a deep significance in this expressed desire of the Master, that those who ' had been (or were to be) given Him might heartily enter into the fulness of the relationship to which He was inviting them, in fulfilment of the Divine Plan which centered in Himself. The knowledge here implied is not the merely superficial kind that would make one content to affirm belief in the existence of God, and in acknowledging that there should be some measure of conformity to such knowledge. Those who enjoy properly the privilege of communion with God cannot remain satisfied with mere outward forms and ceremonies. Nominal Christians may derive a -certain measure of satisfaction from the merely superficial kind of knowledge. Of these our Lord said, "0 righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me." (John 17:25.)

Transferred from Reserve Fund 20 0 0

These words of our Lord show that the merely nominal believers are outside of the true, real acquaintance-ship enjoyed by those who know God; for such as really know the Father have a personal knowledge of Him, and to them He is near and precious. Out of a living faith and honest heart, they have sought to know His will and conform life and character to the standards and principles so grandly displayed in Him. Such know Him in the sense contemplated in our text.

We may ask, Is it possible for us to have much head-knowledge of God and the Bible, and still be deficient in the true knowledge of God—still fail to understand and appreciate His gracious character? It would seem to be so. Truth people, as well as others, need to be on guard on this matter. Some of them seem to get the false impression that head-knowledge is the basis of brotherhood. While encouraging Bible study and growth in knowledge we must still recognize heart-salvation as the aim and object of all our studies, as well as of our proclamations of the Gospel. Head-knowledge is a means to an end; it is merely the lamp which guides the way toward heart salvation,—"sanctification of the spirit through the belief of the truth." Let us beware then lest our head-knowledge causes us to become "puffed up" with self-importance. The true knowledge of God which our Lord prayed we may have, will not cause us to become harsh judges of our brethren, and general fault-finders; rather it will cause us to be very humble before God; it will make our hearts more thankful to Him and enable us to have proper reverence for Him, and for our Lord and

Head. It will bring us more peace and joy and love for the brethren, enabling us to have proper respect for the rights and, interests of the fellow-members of the Body. It will make us more kind and considerate toward all men.

The Apostle Peter's words (2 Pet. 1:2-3) show the importance and value of the knowledge of God. Grace and peace, he says, will be multiplied unto us through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord. The knowledge of God here referred to by the Apostle means an intimate acquaintance with the Father and the Son, a knowledge of the "mind of Christ," which is a full and clear representation to us of the mind of the Father. And how does the consecrated believer grow into this knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ? Growth in the knowledge of God takes place as the result of study of His Word and by using the divinely-provided helps which enable us to understand it more completely. Our studies of God's Word enable us to understand the underlying principles which govern the divine conduct, as to how divine justice, wisdom, love and power operate. These are progressive studies. Through faith in the cross of Christ we realize the forgiveness of our sins and peace with God; (Rom. 5:1.) then coming to the point of full consecration to do the will of God we receive of 'His holy spirit begetting us to newness of life in Christ. (2 Cor. 5:17.) The spirit-begotten new creature is to grow more and more in grace and in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ. Each day we should be learning something more of the glorious attributes of our Heavenly Father, as we discern these in His

Word, and seek to have them impressed more and more upon our own hearts and minds.

How, clearly the Scriptures show that if we would “know God” in the true sense of our Lord’s words in John 17:3, we must do so by cultivating in our hearts all the fruits and graces of His spirit. As our intimate knowledge of the divine plan and character , increases, so must also our grace increase; for those who do not attempt to come into harmony, step by step, with that which they see of the divine character will soon .lose interest in such knowledge, while those. who have the interest which leads to further and further study must of necessity be growing in grace continually.

The Apostle assures us that through this knowledge of God is imparted to us ‘as by divine power “all things that pertain to life and godliness.” What an assurance! This statement of the importance of knowledge for our Christian development in every direction reminds us of our Lord’s words in our text, “This is life eternal; that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” To know God, as the Apostle here explains, signifies an intimate acquaintance with Him—an understanding and intelligent participation of -the qualities of His character. It is only as we realize something oft the greatness and perfection’ of the divine character that we are able to estimate our own littleness and imperfection; only as - We see the beauties of His gracious character can we become intimately acquainted with God, familiar with His graces and virtues. The influence of this knowledge and fellowship with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, reacts upon our own hearts, and has a cleansing and sanctifying effect. Thus the Apostle prays for some that they might grow in the^ knowledge of God so as to be able to “comprehend with all saints what is the length and breadth, depth and height of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.” (Eph. 3:1419.) Those beholding the divine character, even though but dimly, as through a glass, are thereby changed from glory- to glory as by the spirit of the Lord.” (2 Car. 3:18.)

We notice how -closely our text associates the thought of knowing Jehovah, the true God, with our knowing Jesus. Christ as the One sent of God. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.” Again in the beautiful picture of the Vine and the branches is shown the, very close ‘association which exists between Christ the Head, and the Church—the members of the Anointed body. Just as the branch could bear. no grapes unless it received its sap and nourishment from the Vine stock, so the Christian could bear none of the fruits of Christ’s spirit unless he abides in Christ, by faith and obedience.

Yet history shows how easily this important lesson of maintaining our personal relationship to Christ may be forgotten. How disposed many in the past have been to lay special stress upon relationship to, or association with sects, leaders, or organisations, and to point to their affiliation and co-operation with such as the most conclusive evidence that they are the special favourites, of heaven, -and in the sure and certain enjoyment of the Lord’s approval.

The Lord’s Word, on the contrary, makes it clear that individuality of character, ‘personal relationship with Himself, and individual faith; love, and obedience, are the unalterable requirements set before each individual believer, and the one and only basis, upon which Divine approval may be expected. Let us endeavour always to keep this thought in mind, while remembering also the necessity of the assembling of ourselves together in larger or smaller gatherings,

,for mutual benefit and for the purpose of cooperation in the furtherance of the message of the truth.

Faithfulness in carrying out the Lord’s directions will mean prosperity in things spiritual to such assemblies; whereas, their neglect will result in spiritual decline and the loss of much of the blessing reserved for the faithful.

What marvellous privileges are opened up to those who now have the opportunity of knowing God; those who, the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, are permitted to know “what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches- of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.” (Eph. 1:18.) Surely to such has been given a vision of the Lord that must obscure every other object, and rivet the mind and heart upon Him in such a way as to banish every cherished earthly ambition, and enthrone Him in the life and affections as Lord of all. To these there has come the blessed realization of the fulfilment of the Master’s promise, “He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.” (John 14:21.) And what deep and holy manifestations of “love divine, all love excelling,” the, one thus devoted to the Lord may enjoy as he presses on to know the Lord!

What privileges of association and participation in the most sacred and lofty relationships and purposes into which he may now realize himself introduced, as there unfolds before his mind the lengths and depths of the love of God so gloriously displayed in the great Plan of Redemption! This manifestation will discover to him the astounding revelation of the purpose of God to select from amongst men, from such as have ears to hear and hearts to appreciate, a class to be His special treasure, to enjoy the greatest privilege, of all that wondrous Plan that has been of absorbing interest, not only to holy men who in all ages have sought to know the purposes of God, but also to angels, as the Apostle Peter tells us. (1 Pet. 1:10-12.)

To be favored with such a vision, to be granted participation in such a privilege, must fill the receptive heart with a toy

unspeakable and full of glory. To know oneself as having been admitted into the great mystery “which hath been hid from ages and, from generations, but now - is made manifest to His saints, to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery .. . which is Christ in you, the hope of glory;” (Col. 1:26-27) is surely to realize every responsive chord of mind and heart strung to the keenest pitch, and all that is within us reverberating with love and devotion to Him whose love aft(‘ goodness arranged it all. To enjoy this privilege means that we are being introduced into that blessed oneness expressed by our Master, the oneness of the Divine family of Heaven, which is oneness of purpose, a oneness of confidence, a oneness of sympathy, a oneness of love, a oneness of honor, and a oneness of mutual possession,— a sharing of joys, privileges, and positions beyond our .power to grasp or to believe possible, were it not that in His own message to us the Lord has told us that so great is His love toward us, that these are the things in reservation for those that love Him supremely. And the influence of all this upon the receptive heart, is’ to awaken every proper and noble element in our souls to gratitude and the desire to serve and honor Him.

We have found in Him the One altogether lovely, the fairest among ten thousand. “None other could with Him compare, Among the sons of men; He’s fairer, too, than all the fair who fill the heavenly train.”

In Him we find the perfection of every grace, every grand and noble quality; every ideal of character is there, and we are captivated by His love, willing and glad to be the bond-slave of Jesus Christ, bearing about in our body the marks of the Lord Jesus; happy in the knowledge that we are not our own, but belong to Him, and into our souls there comes the sweet refrain: “Since my eyes were fixed on Jesus, I’ve lost sight of all beside — So enchained my spirit’s vision, Looking at the crucified.”.

This, we believe, is in harmony with what we find set forth in the Scriptures as being the proper viewpoint from which to consider our part in the Divine Plan. It would seem that all who in sincerity of heart have laid hold of the privileges of this Gospel Age, have surely experienced something of the joys of salvation. How could it be otherwise d Could it be that we could walk by the side of the Master, and hear from His lips the unfolding of the truth of our Father’s Plan, revealing to us its depth and height and its possibilities to ourselves, and not have our hungry hearts burn within us with a holy joy? Could it be that we-could behold in Him, not only a Saviour, a Deliverer from the curse and penalty of death, but over and beyond all, our prospective Bridegroom, whose throne and glory we shall share, in whose presence we shall live—beholding I-Inn as He is and being like Him, and sharing with Him in. all the eternal ages, to come the privilege of carrying forward the Father’s Plan—and ‘still not realize ourselves transported with an unspeakable joy, far beyond the highest sensations of joy or pleasure known to the human heart? Surely we must realize these results, which are the clearest indication of having entered the’ way of life-drawn by the love of God and thereafter constrained by His love to lay hold on all the privileges of the child of God.

Strange as it may seem, notwithstanding all of these incentives ‘to love and devotion found in the Word and Plan of God, and the fact that they exercise such a powerful influence upon the life of the one laying hold of them, yet the Scriptures abound with warnings of the danger of losing our appreciation of these priceless truths and privileges. That such warnings have not been/ unnecessary has been abundantly proven time and again. Only the Lord may know how many, during the Gospel Age, have entered the race with unbounded joy and enthusiasm, and a real _determination to reach the goal, only to fall by the way when the trials and testings promised overtook them.

Against this danger our Lord Himself repeatedly warns us. How clearly He has sought to give us the proper understanding of the cost of discipleship. He has not minimised the difficulties and besetments of the way. His method has been -to clearly portray these in their true light, so that the one desiring to follow Him may have clearly in mind that the way to • the Kingdom and joint-heirship with Him is to ,be gained by way of the cross—self-denial and sacrifice. While, therefore, appreciating the love that might prompt to enthusiastic zeal in beginning the race, He seeks the love that will be of an enduring nature; the love that will be so centered in Himself, that it can never be displaced by any of the enticements of the world, the flesh, or the devil; the love that will become more fixed and unshakable with the passing of time, and that will be made stronger by the trials and difficulties of life which link us so closely to Him, as to make us sharers with Him in His cup, His baptism, as members of His body. Since, then, we find so many references to this danger in the words of Jesus and the Apostles, it behooves us to give them our prayerful consideration; and this necessity is the more clearly. recognized by those who can grasp the underlying truths relative to the importance of that “first love,” so greatly desired by the Lord, and which plays so vital a part in the Lord’s judgment of His people.

The importance of maintaining our first love for the Lord is ‘brought to our attention in the Lord’s message to. the Church at Ephesus.. Examining this message we find it contains much in the way of commendation. In His inspection of this Church, the Lord found the spirit of labor, of endurance, of hatred of evil, and that notwithstanding difficulties, they had not fainted; and yet for all that, He had something against • them, and His words indicate that the matter is of supreme importance. He found not that which they had once possessed—their first love; and because of this, He calls them to repentance, and the regaining of this most important virtue.

The love sought by the Lord, and which had once been in evidence in the Ephesian Church, is that deep, personal love and devotion to the Lord Himself—that love that finds in ‘Him that which satisfies every desire of the heart, and enlists every power possessed in His service, and causes such to sing:

“Though all the world my choice deride,

Yet Jesus shall my portion be ;

For I am pleased with none beside;

The fairest of the fair is He.”

A question then of deep importance •to each one of us would he, Am I maintaining my “first love” for the Lord?

Is His truth more precious to me today than hitherto.? An examination of our hearts to see if we are maintaining our first love for the Lord would seem to be both timely and profitable to all in these days when issues connected with the eternal interests of all who are the Lord’s are under discussion. Such as belong to this class will recognize that the judgment now upon the Church is for the very purpose of making manifest the approved ones, those who will be found acceptable to the. Lord in the final gathering together of His jewels. Who that so understands the matter could fail to be interested in the examination of his own heart, sincerely. desiring to find the Lord ruling supreme in his life; and to find there the careful observance of those vows of allegiance made in the warmth and ardor of our ‘earliest love, when our minds were illuminated with the vision of the Master and there came into our lives the all-absorbing desire to pour upon Him all our love and devotion.

How helpful, then, the thought gathered from this our Lord’s message, that the greatest safeguard against the enemies within and without, and the thing most pleasing to the Lord, will be for us to show unmistakable .evidences of our love for Him; to have Him fixed in our hearts as the One above all others, and have as the one great, burning desire of life, to please Him, and to be transformed by contact with Him into His own glorious likeness, and thereby be fitted for His presence and the future association with Him in “the glory to follow.” A recent Christian writer has well said: “The worthiness of the espoused virgin to be the Bride, the Lamb’s wife, consists not merely in sinlessness, though she will be ‘holy and without blemish’—without spot or wrinkle or any such thing’ (Eph. 5:27), made ‘whiter than snow’ in the great fountain of redeeming love, her Redeemer’s merit. . . But to be the Bride of the Lamb, she must not only be a virgin in purity, and in addition be free from sinful alliance and coquetry with the world, but she must be more, much more than this.. . She must prove that she possesses a consuming love for the Bridegroom, and an untiring devotion to His name and principles, so as to be willing to be despised and rejected of the worldly, as He was, for the sake of obedience to His doctrines.” ‘

What language could better emphasize the thought to be borne in mind; that refraining from wrong-doing and living separate and apart from unholy associations, while essential and commendable, are not the most important features of the life and conduct of the prospective Bride of Christ. The expression, “a consuming love for the Bridegroom,” seems so very appropriate when applied to this class, for the reason that it covers all the different, phases of the love and service which must be manifest in the devotion and consecration of the believer. Such love would meet every desire of the Saviour’s heart, who in the’ very nature of things must always find Himself ,occupying the chief place in the affections; the heart’s most precious treasure; and such love would always be alert to give the fullest demonstration of the completeness of that devotion. Nothing would be undertaken without having Him as the centre of it. In the study of the Scriptures, He would be always before the mind, because the end in view would be to know Him better, to become better acquainted with His will and character; and the sure result would most certainly be to find oneself developing in that knowledge that brings ,”grace and peace” through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord. (2 Pet. 1:2.)

The desire to know God and Christ in this deeper, grander sense, will become the inspiring incentive, to study the Divine revelation, and will make that study the most absorbing and blessed occupation of life. This thought seems clearly expressed by the Apostle Paul (Phil. 3:8, 10); “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; that I n-lay know Him, and the power of His resurrection; and the fellow- -ship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death.” With the Apostle, all things were simply a means to this end. Many things might have absorbed his attention—his remarkable visions and revelations superior to anything enjoyed by the other Apostles; or, his special position as a “chosen vessel,” more widely used than any of the original eleven, might have inclined Him to clothe himself in a halo of glory—but not so, Christ eclipsed everything else; he believed Christ; he preached Christ; and he lived Christ. (Gal. 2:20; 1 Cor. 2:2; Phil. 1:21.) What a lesson is here for all the footstep followers of Christ, and more particularly for those in the position of leaders or teachers! What a power for good all such would be •if all were endeavouring to copy .the Apostle in these things.

Also it is well for us to keep in mind that the Christian life is not to be thought of as a one-sided system of ethics that would be content to simply sit at the Master's feet and contemplate His beauties of character, and become so absorbed in the study of the ".Christ life" that we would forget to do Him service, or fail to remember that the life of Christ was pre-eminently a life of service. To have a consuming love for His glorious personality must then exert a powerful influence upon the heart, and inspire' the recipient of His grace with the sentiment of the poet:

"I'm not my own, dear Lord to Thee
My every power by right belongs;
My privilege to serve I see,
Thy praise to raise in tuneful songs."

"And so, beside Thy sacrifice,
I would lay down my little all,
'Tis lean and poor, I must confess
I would that it were not so small."

Truly, such will assuredly find the fire of love within the heart consuming everything—all we are and all We have or might hope for as human beings—and never being permitted to bum low or become, extinguished until every vestige of the offering' has been fully consumed. Yea, more; there must be a growing appreciation of such privileges as time goes on, on the part of the sacrificer. Again we quote: "In proportion as his love and zeal for the Lord grow day by day through a knowledge of the Truth and the attainment of its spirit, he will find himself giving more' and more of time, more and more of his influence, and more and more of such means as are-at his command, for the service of the Truth;—and planning, additionally, how he may- curtail the various personal and family obligations so as to be able to increase his offerings and sacrifices."

As we think of these things dear brethren, how do they affect our minds? Do we find ourselves lifting up our hearts in prayer to God that such devotion, love and sacrifice may ever characterize our lives? Do they quicken us to renewed appreciation of the greatness of the privileges enjoyed, and send us forth to glorify our God, and be a blessing to thole about us, imparting to them something of the knowledge and the joy that have transported us above the trivial things of earth? Or do we think of this picture of consecrated zeal as being merely a beautiful ideal, and go on our way muchas we might do if, we were not making claims of special consecration, of self-denial, of giving up of human rights and privileges? Do we feel no burning zeal to herald forth the Message of God's grace that we so often sing of as being a theme so rich and so engrossing that even in the Ages to come it will continue to be our employment- and joy to tell the old, old story of Jesus and His love"?

The position in which we may find ourselves in respect of these things, it seems, will be largely determined by the degree of our heart-knowledge of Him, and die measure of that "first-love" which we have kept alive in our hearts by the Lord's grace.

The Scriptures abound with assurances that the end of the Age would be a time of special trial, not only upon the false systems of that, time, but also those most highly favored ones who would have a share in the special light and privileges of the Harvest period. "Unto whomsoever much is, given, of him shall be much required," is a very searching truth connected with the unfolding of God's plans and purposes; and nowhere is this more emphatically moot than in-its application to our own day. "Judgment most begin at the house of God." Recognizing this, it is not difficult for the watchful saints to interpret the meaning of the present tests of endurance, alertness and faithfulness now being experienced by the brethren throughout the world; and these trials are being recognized by the faithful as being most appropriate indeed, in view of our Lord's statement, previously quoted, to the effect that such as had been thus highly favored must expect severe testings.,

As might be expected, there is a great diversity in the trials peculiar to this our day. Loyalty to the Truth, and the-possession of its spirit, will surely be on trial. Our love in all its various features will also be tested. Our consecration will be proven to be full and complete, or half-hearted, by the experiences through which we pass. Our services will be manifested' as being either acceptable or unacceptable^ by the' motives that prompt them. Will they be inspired by a pure unselfish love for the Lord, the Truth and the brethren, or will they be the results of partisan zeal, or consecration to systems, organisations, or great works? "The day shall declare it," says the Apostle.

Others, again, are being tried by present experiences on the point of "faithful continuance in well-doing." Many seem to have experienced an interruption in their well-doing that has seemed to amount almost to a full stop, and in whose minds there seems to be the thought that the Lord's providences indicate that all individual or concerted activity on the part of God's people should cease; that each by himself and for himself must be the attitude of the faithful. Here we seem to have the two extremes of thought; on the one hand, works and co-operation stressed beyond their true meaning; on the other hand, an apparent oversight of the Scriptures' most emphatic teaching regarding the inseparable oneness of

the Body of Christ, and the duties and responsibilities of every member, looking toward the well-being of the whole body.

Therefore, we believe the importance of that “first love” may again be seen as having a very real application to these experiences, and all the ways and means now being over-ruled by the Lord in the testing of His people. In this instance let us refer to the words of St. Paul (Heb. 3:6, 14), where he has something to say about the importance of first things: “Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” “For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.” It seems only necessary to turn our minds back to those earlier days of our introduction into the’ wonderful secrets of our Father’s Plan to appreciate these words of the Apostle. How strong was the beginning of our confidence! How firmly fixed our determination!

And oh, how great was our joy when we realized ourselves in the days of our Lord’s presence, and standing in the very midst of the great dispensational changes that had been the theme of the holy Prophets and Apostles; that we had reached the time of that great event which had been so earnestly and prayerfully hoped for on the part of the faithful Church of Christ—the Second Advent of our Lord—the hope that had inspired the true Church all through the Age, as she went forth to fulfil her Divinely ordained mission; for it was for this hope that she has endured the fires of persecution, the rack, the dungeon and the stake, triumphant in the faith that -the One she loved and to whom she was espoused, would return to take her to Himself and fulfil to her the rich promises of His love. We may surely read in the signs about us, in the reflecting light of inspired prophecy, the unmistakable evidence that her triumph is all but complete! And •the language of the Prophet has found its fulfilment in our hearts. “Oh the blessedness of him that waiteth, and cometh unto the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.” What unbounded joy was ours, and how precious and valued were the privileges of knowledge and service then before us; what a delight to spend and be spent in The -service of our present Lord How. much would we have been influenced then by the petty opinions of others? Flow great’ would have been the trial to find ourselves -shut off from , participation in service; how disinclined we were ‘then to deprive -ourselves or others of the privilege of hearty co-operation and fellowship; and what a blessed kinship we found in others of like precious faith. In every country and clime .God’s true people have been found gathered around the same Lord and Master; and He who understands every language, heard in every tongue the same song ofjoy. “Oh the blessedness!” .

Friends, let us call to mind these things! Let not the fact that certain circumstances which have been permitted of the Lord, and which will eventually work out our highest good, rob us of the joy and confidence and the holy zeal of those days ‘which marked the beginning of our confidence and our hopeful rejoicing; and so long as the door of opportunity for service and suffering stands open, let us do with our might what our hands find to do. What matters it to us where we may be on the stream of time insofar as serving our God is concerned? Whether here or there, sowing or reaping, in earth or heaven, the sweetest of all privileges will always be, serving Him.

“My highest place is lying low
At my Redeemer’s feet;
No real -joy in life I know,
But in His service sweet.”

As a concluding, thought may we not again refer to that important feature ‘of the various texts that we have been considering, putting all the emphasis where the Lord puts it, namely, personal contact and association with Him, and an all-consuming love for Him that gives Him absolute sway in our lives—ourselves His willing and devoted servants, and every power of mind and body consecrated to Him. Examining ourselves in the light of our study of this subject will assist every sincere and honest heart, we trust, in the effort to maintain the degree of love and zeal’ necessary to a place in the Kingdom. In such examination of our hearts, we may well inquire, Have I maintained my first, love? And in view of the fact that I may not point to my works, or my patience, or my endurance, or my hatred of error and evil, as an indisputable proof that “first love” has, been maintained, how searching is the question. Remembering the Master’s words that after we have done all, we are still unprofitable servants, do we not feel something of the helplessness of Peter, and with tearful eyes, look up into His face and say: “Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee”? We know that He will then read in our zeal, our labours, our endurance and our patience, the sure testimony of true love for Him. Every opportunity then for serving Him in all the ways provided will be eagerly grasped—privileges great or small, for serving the brethren, for pro; claiming the blessed tidings of the Divine Plan, for comforting and encouraging those about us. A love as vide as the globe will take in every member of the Body, and these will be carried in the arms of our faith and love before our Father’s throne; and our interest in them will be rewarded, we may be sure with our Master’s smile, for has He not taught us that every member of His body in the flesh represents Himself, and the service is recognised as done to Him. Under such circumstances the heart will ever remain satisfied and will never cease to sing:

“All for Jesus! All for Jesus!
All my being’s ransomed powers:
All my days and all my moments,
All my thoughts and all my hours.”

Service will continue to • represent true devotion, and will never become mere formalistic service, without the power—such as is evidenced by others less enlightened. It will be devoid of all partisan strife, all vain glory, all effort to make a fair show in the flesh. All will be done to the glory of God and in the highest interests of His people. None will surely know just how few or how many may be the years before us—perhaps it may not even be a matter of years for some of us; and such meditations make very precious to us the hope which as an anchor holds fast within the vail, and create the desire to live each day as though it were our last day of privilege this side the vail. How we would want to spend that day, were we to know that its close would finish our life of opportunity here! What zeal and love, and earnest waiting and looking for the Master, it would bring to us! A related thought it well expressed by a late beloved Christian:

“Truly ‘wise’ will those of the consecrated prove to be who, neglecting worldly enchantments, and earthly hopes arid prizes, and with hearts yearning and waiting for the Beloved, are found ready and proved worthy of the great exaltation promised, as the Bride, the Lamb’s wife.”

“Bride of the Lamb, thy charms, Oh, may’ we share.”

PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST’S KINGDOM.

Published by the Berean Bible Institute, 19 Ermington Place, Kew, E4, Melbourne, Victoria,/Australia.

(Monthly) 3 - (70 cents) per annum, post paid,

Bible Exposes No-Death Theory.

Transferred from ‘ Reserve Fund 20 0 0

UNDER the .heading, “Blunt Talk by Minister to Congregation,” the following news item from Adelaide, South Australia, appeared in the Melbourne “Herald” of 5th June:

“Many of the people attending , church tonight (Sunday) have come because the Governor is here,” said the Rev. A. G. Jones, preaching at the Whyalla Church of England evening service, at which Sir Willoughby and Lady Norrie were present.

“This is probably the first church visit this year for many of you. There was a large gathering here to give thanks for victory in Europe, but there is only the merest handful at the weekly services when there are always special prayers for the men and women of the services. . . . Too many people use the church for convenience, having two links with it—for marriage and for burial.”

From the above statements it would seem that the Rev. Jones places the responsibility upon the congregation for their small attendance at the regular church services, and apparently ,presumes that the services, including the particular church doctrines, are in no way at fault. Even if the Governor could attend this church every Sunday, would this be sufficient inducement to attract the same number of people as when the Rev. ‘Jones made the above statements? If so, it would demonstrate that it was not the Gospel message that attracted, and if attendances were satisfactory for any other reason, what real good would be accomplished?

Apart from some city churches where entertainment is provided in the way of organ recitals and well trained choirs and leading soloists, the difficulty of empty churches is more and more apparent, and sincere ministers and church workers are naturally greatly concerned, but does this concern lead to an investigation of the cause of the difficulty?

Do they examine the Word of God to determine if church creeds are really true, and whether the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ is really preached, so that it may attract and supply the need of those who wish to worship God in spirit and in truth?

A sample of a present-day church sermon was published in the Melbourne “Age” of 18th June, under the heading “Climax of Life,” and reads 4 follows:

“In opening a series of winter lectures at Wesley Church last night on the subject, Death and Life Beyond, Rev. Dr.

C. Irving Benson said death was a crisis, because life was critical throughout. There was something seriously at stake in man's life, the climax of which was death. What happened after death depended upon what had happened before it, and, similarly, upon man's relation to God. Death was not a state, it was an act. It was not a condition, but a transition ; not an abode, but an experience through which they passed. There were no people in cemeteries. It was as natural, to die as to be born. Human bodies, so wonderfully made, were by their very nature temporary—the prick of a thorn or an invading germ might destroy them any day. They were bound to wear out in time. Not only did life survive death, but personality endured."

If the preacher's name had not been included in the above report of the sermon on Death and Life Beyond, it could reasonably have been attributed to any other religious leader than one of Christianity, for these statements by Dr. Benson are in direct opposition to the teachings of the Bible as a whole, as expounded by Christ and His Apostles and prophets throughout the Old and New Testaments.

If it were true that "It was as natural to die as to be born," why did .the Prophet Ezekiel, as a mouthpiece of the Lord, declare: "For why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in ' the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye." (Ezek. 18:31, 32.) Then Jeremiah, another faithful prophet of God, declared that death is "the land of the enemy." We quote: "Thus saith the Lord, A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping,, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border." (Jer. 31:15-17,) There certainly is nothing "natural" in going to "the land of the enemy" and St. Paul explains so clearly why death is the land of the enemy when he declares—"Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for. that all have sinned." (Rom. 5:12.) Again this same Apostle declares: "The wages of sin is death.". (Rom. 6:23.) There is nothing "natural" about sinning, so death, the penalty for sin, must be most unnatural. Indeed, so unnatural is death that after about 6,000 years of dying, mankind, in losing its loved ones today, whether at home or away at the war, is as grief-stricken as were our first parents with the loss of Abel, so terrible is the wages of sin. On one occasion, Jesus Himself was so touched with the grief of the sorrowing relatives of Lazarus that it is recorded of Him—"Jesus wept." Our Lord did not tell them that it was quite natural for Lazarus to die, and that what seemed like death was really a transition — a passing to life /n another realm.

Seeing then, that death really means death and not life in any sense, in what way is the prophet's words fulfilled — "They shall come again from the land of the enemy"? The answer is found throughout the Bible in the assurance that there shall be a resurrection of the dead. Let us note carefully St. Paul and the Lord Himself as follows: "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." (1 Car.' 15:3, 4.) In Rev. 1:18 we have the words of Christ: "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell (hades—the death condition) and of death." How satisfying is the assurance again, that "Jesus by the grace of God tasted death for every man," (Heb. 2:9), in contrast to the supposition that life survives death, as stated by Dr. Benson.

St. Peter in his 2nd Epistle, 2nd chapter, declares: "There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them." There can be no doubt that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, as advocated by Dr. Benson, denies the necessity for the sacrifice of -Christ, for if the penalty for sin—"dying thou shalt die"—were not true, Christ need never have died "the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God."

While it is true that "there are no people in cemeteries" that is so not because there is no death, but rather, because the Lord has the gift of life in His keeping, and on account of the sacrifice of Christ He has provided a resurrection day, when He will create bodies anew and give again the breath of life and personality to each body, thus constituting

living souls. For the saints in the first resurrection, spirit bodies will be created, and they shall inherit the heavenly kingdom with Christ; and for the world of mankind in the general resurrection, earthly bodies will be created and they shall inherit the restored earth, if they obey the laws of Christ's Kingdom. Both the spiritual and earthly resurrections are shown by St. Paul in 1 Cor. 15:35-40. (See also Acts 24:15; John 5:28, 29, Revised Version.) •

It is very evident also, that the no-death theory supports the erroneous teachings of Spiritualism and- of Evolution which are now more prevalent than ever. St. Paul had to combat much worldly wisdom in his day, as shown by his letters to the Corinthians in particular. In 2 Cor. 11:3 he declares: "I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." The deception of Eve was accomplished through Satan's lie—"Ye shall not surely die,"—and today this lie is still accepted by the majority of church preachers, •with the result that their teachings are corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. Our Lord's

prayer in Matt. 11:25, 26 shows to whom the truths of His Gospel are , revealed—”At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, 0 Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight.”

Another matter that is at present exercising the minds of thoughtful church people is the fact that their ministers do not encourage them to study their Bibles. When most ministers visit the homes of people ‘it is stated that they talk about almost all other things than the Bible, and as for desiring questions on the Scriptures or teachings of their church, this is not at all encouraged. One lady recently stated that since she started to question the minister -of the church she had attended in past years, he has kept away from her home; others have expressed dissatisfaction at the way the ministers avoid such subjects as the second advent and the resurrection. The truth is, that church creeds cannot satisfy those who really wish to know God’s Word and become Christians, and the church ministers, being educated only in their creeds do not know the truths of the Bible, and are helplessly confused when questioned on the Scriptures.

What, then, are sincere seekers for the truths of God’s Word to do in these circumstances; are they left in any doubt in the matter? Not at all; the Scriptures foretell the ‘very condition of the churches today, and show that the Lord has cast off these systems and is calling His sincere people out of sectarian and creedal bondage into the light of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. In Revelation 3, from verse 14, we have a description of the seventh and last church systems existing in the world prior to the setting up of Christ’s Kingdom. The true and faithful witness (the Lord Himself) declares: “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will .5pue thee out of my mouth.” Again in Rev. 18:4, the Lord, in using the term “Babylon” to describe present-day church systems, exhorts His people, saying, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” Jeremiah prophesied of this same time when he declared: “Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul. . . . Babylon bath been a golden cup in the Lord’s hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad. Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed; howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed. We would have healed Babylon, but she is not ,healed: forsake her.” (Jer. 51:6-9.)

New Edition of “Good News.”

A new edition of the booklet “Good News” is now’ ready, and is most appropriate and timely for the present, showing how the Lord will make wars to cease unto the ends of the earth. Friends desiring a helpful message for today to pass out should procure these. The price is 4d. per copy, or 3/- per doz., post paid.

Do you desire “Knowing the True God” in Booklet Form?

Should there be sufficient orders, the main article of this issue—’’Knowing the True God”—will be printed in booklet form. Our friends may like to have copies for passing out, and the price will likely be about 3/- per doz., post paid. Will all friends please place their orders during July, if they desire copies.

“ Chosen People.”

A mistake was made in April “Peoples Paper” in quoting the price of booklet “Chosen People” at 1/- per copy. This helpful explanation of the Jewish question is 1/9 per single copy, and 1/6 each in half-dozen lots. post paid.

Radio Cards for All

Radio Cards advertising 2HD Newcastle (263 Metres) , and 3SH Swan Hill (226 Metres) , the two radio stations commencing 1st July, are now ready in large supply. All friends within range of these stations should send for these •cards for distribution. Cards are available of course for other radio stations as well. Do not miss the opportunity of service in this way. 2HD’sessions are at 1.15 p.m., and 3SH at 10 a.m. on Sundays.

Printed by Hickling & Powell Pty. Ltd.. Lygon St., East Brunswick

for Berean Bible Institute. Ermington Place, Kew, Melb. E4.