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What Hast Thou Done?

The Simplicity of the Master's Service.

(John 18:35, 36. Convention Address.)

ORDINARILY, when an innocent person is brought before a law court and accused of wrong doing, he is quick to deny the charge. If asked as Jesus was, "What hast thou done?" human wisdom dictates that the answer should be "I have done nothing." Jesus did not reply thus to Pilate, however, because He was not there to defend Himself, and besides He could not truthfully say He had done nothing. Jesus had done much! He had spent three and a half years doing things which had aroused the hatred of Israel's religious leaders against Him, and now they had brought Him before Pilate and demanded that He be crucified.

It was true that Jesus had committed no crimes that could be justly charged against Him, but He had been active in doing good. He had healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, cast out demons, opened blind eyes, raised the dead, and equally praiseworthy the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth had helped to loose the shackles of superstition that had been fastened upon Israel by their hypocritical leaders. These works of grace and goodness were appreciated by many of the common people who heard Him gladly; indeed, His popularity rose to a point where the Pharisees became fearful that if He were left alone the whole world would become His followers, as it is written in Matthew 23:25. This is why Jesus was hated by those whose position of power and authority in the nation was jeopardised by His teachings and works of righteousness. As members of the fallen race motivated by selfishness and unrighteous ambitions, they were utterly unable to understand (much less appreciate) the Master's selfless viewpoint and untiring zeal for the blessing of others. To them, Jesus was a misfit, one whose precepts and example exposed their unrighteousness, and in time might prevent their grasping practices of devouring widows' houses. They wanted to put a stop to His going about doing good, because they selfishly desired to continue their practice of doing evil, so they cried, "Crucify Him, crucify Him."

While Pilate probably knew, in a general way, something of the Master's activities throughout Judea, yet his question, "What hast Thou done?" was no doubt a sincere effort on his part to get a better understanding of what had caused the religious leaders of Israel to rise up against Jesus and demand His death. As for the priests and Pharisees themselves, however, there was no need for them to seek information concerning the details of Jesus' life, because He had seen to it that they were made acquainted with His activity. As evidence of this we have the account of Matthew 8:1-4, telling us of the cleansing of the leper. After Jesus had performed this outstanding miracle He said, "See thou tell no man, but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them."

From this, we see that while the Master was not interested in promoting Himself in the eyes of the public, He did desire that those who sat in Moses' seat should be aware of what He was doing and that His benefactions should be reported to the priests, in keeping with the spirit of the law given through Moses. In this, as in other miracles performed by Jesus there is revealed an utter lack of any desire or effort on His part to be personally benefited. Jesus was not willing to use the divine power at His command on behalf of Himself, but on all appropriate occasions He was glad of the opportunity to bless others.

The first suggestion made to the Master that He perform a miracle came from Satan. Jesus had been fasting for forty days, and of course would be virtually famished for food. Satan appeared and suggested that He use the power now at His command to turn stones into bread. As no one would be benefited but Himself, and in addition it would reveal a lack of faith in the manner in which God was caring for all His interests, Jesus turned down this suggestion; but when the leper came to Him saying, "Lord if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean," we read that Jesus said, "I will; be thou clean," and immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

If the scribes and Pharisees could discover that in any way Jesus was seeking to promote or benefit Himself by the good He was doing, they might have found a way to co-operate with Him in a way to serve their own selfish interests, but what selfish compromise could they suggest to a man who was willing to devote His whole life purely in the interests of others? There was only one way to deal with one like this, and that was to put Him 'out of the way.

The spirit of selfishness which motivated Israel's leaders was further manifested in their planned effort that what little good they selfishly did should be seen and heard of men; but not so with Jesus. The spirit of God which was in Him promoted a beautiful simplicity and straightforwardness in what He did that calculated to divert attention from Himself and to direct it toward God, the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

When the centurion came to Jesus, informing Him that his servant was "at home sick of the palsy," Jesus' simple reply was, "I will come and heal him." (Matt. 8:6, 7.) There was no bargaining, no hint that the centurion, by accepting this favour, would be placed under obligation, nor any attempt to wrest from him a pledge of future support—all tactics by which a selfish world, through boastfulness, has perverted charity into gainful exploitation. This was utterly lacking in Jesus.

Matthew 8:14 reads, "And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of fever." Again, there is no show or unnecessary ado. Here was a human being who needed help, and Jesus helped her. After all, the Master had come into the world that through Him all might have health and life, and why should the healing of Peter's mother-in-law be anything extraordinary for Him to do? So we read, "He touched her hand and the fever left her and she arose."

Again in Matthew 8:16, 17 we read that "When the even was come, they brought unto Him many that were possessed with devils: and He cast out the spirits with His words, and healed all that were sick; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." It would seem that in spite of the fact that Jesus made no effort to acquaint the people with His miracle-working powers, His fame spread, and by the close of this day He found Himself the centre of attraction, and His popularity increasing. That the Master was not seeking this result from the good He was doing is apparent from the 18th verse, which reads, "Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave commandment to depart unto the other side."

The plan of God reveals that in due time all men will be drawn to Jesus, that He is the true light which yet is to enlighten every man that cometh into the world. But Jesus was not desirous that the multitudes at that time be drawn to Him, nor that they should be attracted merely because of the temporary good He was able to bestow upon them. The drawing of all men in His Father's due time, was to be based, as Jesus explained, upon the fact that He would be lifted up as man's Redeemer and sin-bearer, even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness.

This supreme example of love that does good, even in sacrificing of His life that the world through him might have forgiveness of sin, must be the real drawing power for those who come unto God through Jesus, and in so coming it is necessary that one not only appreciate the unselfish sacrifice of the Master, but that he himself partake of the spirit of unselfish love that prompted it.

Jesus recognised that the crowd which followed Him for the loaves and fishes and the benefits of His miracle-working power, were not ready to recognise their need of sin atonement, and much less were they willing to follow His example of unselfishness by laying down their lives for others. They were glad to obtain all they could from Him, but few of them were willing to sacrifice their lives for the unselfish cause which He represented.

When Jesus arranged to cross to the other side of the lake to get away from the multitude that was singing His praises as long as they could receive His benefits, we are told that "a certain scribe came and said unto Him, Master,

I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." (Matt. 8:19.) Most religious leaders would have 'been flattered and pleased with this expression of devotion and pledge of support, but not Jesus. His reply to the scribe was calculated to cause the would-be disciple to change his mind unless he had indeed caught the spirit of the Master's teaching and example, and was ready to follow in His steps of self-sacrifice unto death. Jesus said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." The scribe could get no other

implication from these words except that if he followed Jesus, he, too, would have no place to lay his head, and from the world's standpoint would be homeless and an outcast. Such is the cost of a life of doing good, in this present evil world.

The good works of the Master were not occasional incidents, but His life's habits. He was never too occupied to give heed to the needs of those who came to Him for help. Not only did He use the miracle-working power of God, which was at His command, to heal the sick and raise the dead, 'but He gave all His own strength as well. So unselfishly and generously did He thus give, that His perfect human body was practically worn out in His short ministry of three and a half years.

Jesus' ministry was that of doing good unto all men, but He devoted special care and attention to His own disciples who were in training to carry on as the household of faith, following His return to heaven. This is outlined by the Apostle Paul as being the proper course for the Lord's people during this Gospel Age—"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Gal. 6:10.)

Matthew 9:18-38 gives us an interesting cross-section view of the Master's life, showing how He spent His time and His unselfish interest in the people for whom He was laying down His life. Verse 18 tells of a ruler whose daughter had died, and of his request that Jesus lay His hand upon her that she might live. In response to this plea for help we read that "Jesus arose, and followed him." Ordinarily, one going on such an important mission as that of raising the dead would not wish to be delayed by matters less important. But Jesus was not like

ordinary fallen men, who often become so impressed with the importance of their immediate undertakings that they lose sight of the human needs with which they are surrounded.

While on His way to raise the ruler's daughter from the dead, a woman who had been diseased for twelve years came behind Jesus and touched the hem of His garment. Jesus turned around, and when He saw her, He said, "Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour." (Matt. 9:22.) Then He went on to the ruler's house and despite the derision heaped upon Him by the "minstrels and the people," He proceeded with the work in hand, and awakened the maid from the sleep of death.

The fame of this miracle went abroad into all the land, we are told, with the result that, first, two blind men followed Him, asking to have their sight restored; then a dumb man possessed with a devil sought help. These good works by the Master were gaining too much popularity for Him, so the Pharisees began discounting the value of the miracles by claiming that He was casting out devils through the power of Beelzibub, the prince of the devils. But their effort failed. The hour for Jesus' death had not come; He was still to enjoy a season of measurable popularity with the people, during which time He could continue to preach the Kingdom message, and to give illustration by His miracles of the blessings that were to come to all mankind in God's due time. And so we read, "Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom and healing every sickness and every disease among the people." (Matt. 9:35.)

What a following Jesus could have obtained and what power in Israel He could have wielded had He so desired. It would be even so to-day. Individuals, even now, who profess ability to heal the sick always have large crowds at their meetings. Were these "miracles" genuine, as were those of the Master's, the whole world would soon be following any man, or group of men, who could thus heal diseases, and especially so if they could raise the dead. Jesus knew that this would be true in His case, and it became true to the limited extent that the Master permitted it. But He was not then undertaking to convert the world, nor had the time come for the restitution blessings to be dispensed to all mankind.

He rejoiced in the privilege of distributing samples of Kingdom blessings, but it was not time for the flood-gates of the River of Life to be thrown open for the healing of the nations. However, in the miracles He did perform, and His attitude toward the people displayed in connection therewith, we see manifested the real spirit of Christ and His genuine interest, not alone in those He was specially instructing as Apostles, but also in the larger number who had no deeper interest in Him than the material blessings He was able to give them. We read, "But when He saw the multitude, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith He unto His disciples, the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest." (Matt. 9:36-38.)

This request of the Master's reveals that those who truly follow Him are invited to join in His works of grace and love. In John 14:12 we read, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto My Father." Those who are filled with the Master's spirit of self-sacrifice and are faithful in following Him into death, by laying down their lives for others will, in the Kingdom, share with Him in the work of healing all the sick and raising all the dead. The healing of the people in that, day will be permanent—those who are awakened from the sleep of death will have the opportunity of living forever, on the restored earth, if they will. Thus, all the true followers of the Master will truly share with Him in doing works far greater than those which He performed at His first advent.

But, even now, and in order that we may demonstrate the spirit by which we are controlled, God gives us the opportunity, as ministers of His Word, to do all we can toward opening spiritually blind eyes, and unstopping spiritually deaf ears. We also now may use the Word of reconciliation to cleanse away the disease of sin. Those dead in trespass and sins may even now, by accepting the Gospel message as proclaimed by the feet members of the Body of Christ, be awakened to righteousness and have their mortal bodies quickened by the spirit, to serve the living God. And now, even as in the days of Jesus, those who zealously lay down their lives in thus seeking to bless their fellowmen, will not be held in high esteem by the religiously influential of our time. But it is far better that the servant of God have heaped upon him the reproaches of the world on account of his doing good, than to be placed in a position where he would need to confess that while called out of darkness into the marvellous light of the Gospel, he had done nothing about it so far as the blessing of others was concerned!

Jesus was before Pilate because He had spent His life doing good in the Father's way. He had preached unpopular truth and had exposed popular error and now the pent up animosity of Israel's leaders was being heaped upon Him, and He was rushed to Calvary. However, the Gospel accounts of the Master's life indicate clearly that while the religious leaders of that day finally were successful in causing Him to be put to death, yet there were long periods of His ministry during which He was comparatively free from opposition and persecution.

While persecution and Christian suffering are evidence of God's favour upon the true disciples, constituting important witnesses of the, spirit that we are the children of God, yet let us not be so concerned merely with the desire to be persecuted that we will be induced to do foolhardy or wrong things, in order to elicit the opposition of the powers that be. It would be a tragedy for any followers of Christ to suffer on account of their own wrong doing. It would be equally tragic for a Christian, in order to avoid the ill will of the world, or to maintain a respectable standing in his community, to refrain from faithfulness in proclaiming the glad tidings of the Kingdom. As followers of the Master there is no other course that will have God's 'approval except that of emulating His example, which is preeminently that of interest in others, at the cost of sacrifice. Jesus was consumed by the zeal of His Father's house, a zeal for doing good, for manifesting the spirit of divine love which prompted His Father to send Him into the world, that the world through Him might have life.

For us not to be interested in this viewpoint, and not to be concerned with the well-being of others, especially in connection with the understanding of God, would manifest a lack of the divine spirit by which we may be conformed more and more into the image of God's dear Son.

The Apostle Peter, who, while in a moment of supreme test and without the aid of the holy spirit, denied the Lord, nevertheless, through his association with the Master and by observing the unselfishness of His example and wisdom of His methods., learned well the lesson of love which leads to the laying down of life for others. Years later, Peter expressed himself on the subject, saying, "For what glory is it if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye take it patiently? But if when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow in His steps, who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth," (1 Pet. 2:20-22.)

We should all note well the many Scriptural declarations that if we suffer with Christ we shall also reign with Him. But let us also remember the only basis for true Christian suffering; namely, not for doing evil, nor for doing nothing, but for doing good. When we suffer for this cause and take it patiently, rejoicingly and faithfully, even unto death, we are thereby demonstrating our wholehearted devotion to God and to the spirit of divine love which must rule supreme in all those who will be blessed with life everlasting.

It will be the Church's privilege, during the Kingdom period, to instruct the world of mankind in the advantages of this way of life. Hence, all its members must qualify in advance to share in such a glorious programme of education, a programme by which the knowledge of the glory of God will be caused to fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. While the world of mankind, when restored to human perfection, will not be called upon to suffer for doing good, they will of necessity need to learn and to practice the love principle in their dealings with others. This is revealed in the Master's explanation to the restored world, as we find it in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats. To those who are invited to inherit the Kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, Jesus, explains that the basis of their acceptableness is the fact that they had manifested their interest in others. They had not busied themselves in acts of kindness with the hope of receiving a reward, but had cooperated in the restitution project because they had imbibed the spirit of God who planned it. They had been so wholehearted in the manifestation of the love which ruled their hearts that they were surprised to learn they had done that which had merited their inheritance of the restored paradise. Like the Church of this Age, they entered into eternal life, not because they had refrained from doing evil, nor because, like the goats, they had done nothing, but because they had visited and cared for their brethren.

May Pilate's question to Jesus, "What hast Thou done?" serve as a reminder to us that there is indeed something good for us to do, and that by doing it we may prove worthy to suffer and reign with Christ, and may we ever keep the sympathy of the Master's service before us, and thus follow in His steps.

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News and Views.

Conversion of Japanese. Missionary Sceptical.

“The Age” (Melbourne) Special Correspondent in Tokio, 22nd August, 1947.

CHRISTIAN missionaries who returned to Japan to find their churches had been set on fire by the Japanese between Emperor Hirohito's acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration and the arrival of the first occupation troops a fortnight later, are most sceptical about official claims of the surprising rapidity with which the Japanese are adopting Christianity.

Rev. Edwin Dozier, field representative of the Baptist Foreign Mission Board, who has lived in Japan 25 years, said that after ten months' survey of the missionary outlook in post-war Japan, a certain number of Japanese are becoming

Christians because of a strong patriotic motive to save the nation. “A great number of Japanese are finding it popular and profitable to become Christians,” added Mr. Dozier. A great number of Japanese also regard Christianity as being synonymous with Western Civilisation with the result that many are becoming Christians in name only, without realising that Christianity requires repentance and change of heart, he said.

News reports such as the above, with reference to present conditions in Japan, are not at all surprising to the Lord's people. But supposing that the official claims of “the surprising rapidity with which the Japanese are adopting Christianity” were correct, what would this mean? It would mean that numbers of the Japanese people were becoming attached to one or another of the denominational churches in similar manner to existing conditions in Australia, Britain and America etc. But would this make the Japanese people really Christians, any more than church attendance makes Christians of English speaking people? The answer is supplied by Mr. Dozier himself, when he admits that “a great number of Japanese are finding it popular and profitable to become Christians.” This proves that true Christianity is not the drawing power in Mr. Dozier's movement, for at no time since our Lord founded the Christian religion and opened up the heavenly calling has it been popular or profitable (from the worldly standpoint) to follow in the steps of Christ.

Where true Christianity is preached it never becomes popular, because the truths of God's Word call for sacrifice—a denial of self and the ways of the world, and service for fellow men, even unto death—and few of mankind are attracted by these terms, as the Scriptures attest. If any movement is so constituted that its message is contrary to the Word of God, then that movement may become popular, but it would not represent the Lord and His cause. It was the popularizing of the Christian movement in the early centuries of this Gospel Age that constituted the great falling away from the faith, and God's true people had to withdraw at that time and have ever since been separate from any movement affiliated with the world and its spirit.

The true Christian way is clearly shown by the words of Christ—“How narrow is the gate of life! how difficult that way leading thither! and how few are they who find it.” (Matt. 7:14, Diaglott.) And again in Luke 12:32 He declared—“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” How strange it would be for the Lord to so express the heavenly calling if He: were seeking the conversion of mankind as a whole. Yes, there has been great misrepresentation of the message of the Bible where people have been urged to “win the world for Christ,” as, also when evangelists have taught that the more conversions that were made the more Christ's Kingdom was extending. If more attention were given to the words of the Lord it would be seen, as He declared, “My Kingdom is not of this world,” (this “present evil world” or age—Gospel Age, John 16:36) . And even if all the heathen of Japan, China, India and Africa etc., were converted to the present condition of Christendom they would still need to be converted to be Christians to have an inheritance in the heavenly kingdom, for there is probably more evil and wickedness in the so-called Christian nations than among the heathen.

How clear it is that God is, during this Gospel Age, “taking out a people for His name” from the nations (Acts 15:14) and the few who find this way to life, as stated by Jesus, are those who are drawn and called by God (John 6:44; Acts 2:39) first of all to acknowledge and appreciate Christ as their Saviour, being justified by faith in His sacrifice, and then to gladly “present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, their reasonable service,” (Rom. 12:1.) that they may be “conformed unto the image of God's Son,” (Rom. 8:29), and thus prepared to participate in the glorious work of the thousand-year Kingdom on earth. This will be the time when all the Japanese, Chinese, Indians and Africans, yes, and Australians, as well as all others of mankind not included in the “little flock” for the Bride of Christ shall have the opportunity together with all the resurrected of mankind generally, of inheriting the restored earth, in harmony with the Lord's prayer: “Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, as is done in heaven.” See also Eph. 1:10 and Rev. 21:3-5. The fact that it states that God shall wipe away all tears, and that there shall be no more death, sorrow, crying and pain reveals that these things shall be removed from the earth, inasmuch as none of these have ever existed in heaven.

How favoured are the true followers of Christ who have the truths of God's Word revealed to them—“Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, but now (during the Gospel Age) is made manifest to His saints.” Be it noted that only the saints, those called to be saints since our Lord's first advent, understand this mystery of selecting from mankind the Bride of Christ—“Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Col. 1:26, 27.) Note also how clearly the Apostle describes the important work of this Gospel Age in Eph. 4:11, 12, and makes no mention at all of mankind in general—“And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” This is in complete harmony with that wonderful prayer of our Lord's in John 17, where we read—“I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. . . . Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe (in the next age, the Kingdom Age) that Thou hast sent Me.” (Verses 9, 20, 21.)

The work of “perfecting the saints” is very important indeed, and each child of God has a part to play in accomplishing this, both as respects his or her own sanctification and the finding and building up of other members, under the Lord’s supervision. To be faithful in the service of Christ means that the Lord’s will must alone guide and direct in all things, and all talents of both means and time are to be faithfully used in as direct service as possible.

The prevailing conditions amongst professed Christians to-day are lukewarmness and association with the world, and the tests for the Lord’s own people are very often in this same direction. Even the joys of the truth that once thrilled the Lord’s saints, and for which they gladly attended meetings far and near, can possibly become a little common if the affections are not continually set upon things above. To allow the affections to be divided between the Lord and family, home, business or other attraction is to “leave the first love,” with corresponding loss of spirituality. “He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life (withholds what he has covenanted to sacrifice), shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake (proves faithful unto death) , shall find it.” (Matt. 10:37-39.)

With the completion of the body or Bride of Christ, world conversion will follow, for with the Kingdom established on earth, “the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” (Rev. 22:17.) This will be the time when God’s spirit is poured out “upon all flesh’s whereas during the present Gospel Age the spirit of the Lord is upon God’s servants and handmaidens only. (Acts 2:17, 18.)

The effect of God’s spirit upon all flesh in the Kingdom or Millennial Age is shown by the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 8:8-13, in his quotation from the prophet Jeremiah. Commencing with the nation of Israel the enlightenment will extend to all nations and be so effective that “they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.” (See also Acts 15:14-18.) Then, under this great enlightenment, the Lord will require obedience to the laws of His Kingdom on earth, for “it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear (obey) that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.” (Acts 3:23.)

In view of the world conditions to-day with increasing evidence of deterioration in the set-up of the present financial, political, social and religious elements of society, who that understands God’s plan of the ages will doubt that we are living at the very time predicted by the Apostle Peter—“The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens (ecclesiastical systems) shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also (social order), and the works that are therein, shall be burned up.” This is accomplished not by literal fire, but by the fiery time of trouble so vividly described by many of the prophets, our Lord and His Apostles. St. Peter continues, “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conduct and godliness.” (2 Pet. 3:10, 11.) Yes, only God’s grace and strength and the pure truths of His Word will be sufficient to enable all the true people of God to stand in this evil day. “Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand: . .

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” (Eph. 6:13-18.)

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Kept in Perfect Peace.

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

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

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

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

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

Trouble Necessary To Our Proving.

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

Trouble is not necessarily a sign of the disfavour of God. On the contrary, we know that “many are the afflictions of the righteous,” and that “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” The truth will cost them something. Faithfulness to the Lord will cost them much. As the Apostle says, “If ye be without chastisement (discipline, training), then are ye bastards and not sons” (Heb. 12:8). If God gives peace of heart, who can upset the one who is thus in harmony with God, in whom this peace of heart is ruling? This, then, is the greatest blessing of all. And He grants this peace to those who are faithfully striving to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. We have a Refuge, which none but His own can know. No harm can reach us within this shelter; no storm can shake us from our moorings, for we are securely anchored to the Rock of Ages. “And we know that all things work together for good of those who love God, to the called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28).

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

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

FRANK & ERNEST BIBLE TALKS

SUBJECTS FOR SEPTEMBER 7th September—“The Coming World Dictator.”

14th September—“Increase of Christ’s Kingdom.” 21st September—“The Messianic Theocracy.” 28th September—“The Sorrows of Satan.” 5th October—“The Millennium.”

SUBJECTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2K Y 7th September—“The Kingdoms of This World.” 14th September—“The Kingdoms of This World.” 21st September—“No More Death.” 28th September—“Christ’s Second Presence.” 5th October—“A Time of Trouble.”

Correspondence.

Frank and Ernest, My Dear Friends—For many months now- you have been sending on to me the “Peoples Paper” and your radio Dialogues which I read carefully and find most instructive for the teaching of the Bible. May I once more thank you and congratulate you for the good work which you are doing, for I am sure that many people with Christian interests at heart will take comfort and renew their strength in the Good News so plainly explained in your published articles on the Scriptures.

May God make His face to shine on all of you responsible for the work you do and may your lives be blessed and protected. Am enclosing 5/- postal note for book “The Ten Camels”; please keep any change as a small subscription, as I promise now to help in future with a few more small subs. With all Christian regards.

The Manager, Berean Institute, Dear Sir—Please find herewith a postal note value 5/-, to cover cost of your very enlightening Dialogues, also the “Peoples Paper” which I would be glad to receive regularly.

I am very thankful indeed for the literature you have posted me in the past, and would send you more money if I were in a position to do so; however, there are days ahead. May God bless you. Yours in Christ.

Dear Frank and Ernest—The last three Sunday mornings I have listened to your Talks over 3GL and have found them very interesting and helpful. I wonder if you could send me a copy of last Sunday’s topic “The Holy Spirit”, also the two before that. If you could send me a copy each week I should be pleased as we have just started Bible Study Groups after church on Sunday nights and the way you explain things is very clear, so they would be very helpful to our study. If there is any charge let me know.

Wishing your session every success and may it continue to be an inspiration and help to all who listen. I remain, Yours sincerely.

(The copies of broadcast Dialogues are supplied free to all who promise to read them carefully.—B.B. Institute.)

Dear Christian Friends—Just a few lines to let you know that I received the little book called “Daily Heavenly Manna” and two other booklets and some literature. I thank you very sincerely for what you have sent me, and pray that what you are explaining to us all may be blessed, and that you may be rewarded in the future state to which we are all looking forward. Am enclosing a postal note for a small amount to help defray the cost of any future literature you may be pleased to send along. Yours very sincerely.

Berean Bible Institute, Dear Sir—Would you please send me a copy of your booklet “God and Reason” and have you any book following Volume 1 of Revelation., and at what price? Would you send three copies of “The Lord is My Shepherd”?

I am still very interested in the “Peoples Paper” which

I find a great help and comfort to me. I am enclosing L 1 and whatever is over from the cost of the booklets please keep for the furtherance of your good work. Yours sincerely.

(Volume 2 of Revelation is not now procurable to purchase, though we can sometimes loan a copy to those desiring it.—B.B. Institute.)

Dear Frank and Ernest—By accident I heard you teaching the Bible over the air Sunday week and this week at 8.15 a.m. I am very interested in your good method which was most interesting.

I would like a copy of last week’s lecture if you have any left, also this week’s. Hoping to hear from you at your earliest opportunity. Yours in Christ.

Dear Sirs—Would you please send me four copies of the Talk “Devils and Demons”, also a copy of one about the Resurrection and Gehenna. I am very interested in your Talks and am going to distribute some of the leaflets to people whom I think would like to have them. Yours in His service.

Frank and Ernest, My Dear Friends--I am very interested in your Sunday morning Talks and would like to secure printed copies so that I can study at leisure. I am an old man and cannot bear in mind like I used to be able. Thanking you in anticipation. I am, Yours sincerely.

P.S.—I would gladly pay any expenses necessary to secure a constant supply of good reading which would help me to see and understand the truths of the Word of God.

Frank and Ernest—I would like you to send me a book on the subject you were discussing on Sunday last, also “Hope Beyond the Grave” and “Where are the Dead?” I think that your Dialogues are very interesting and instructive. Yours truly.

Dear Mr. —.—It is a long time since you heard from me, but I find difficulty in getting any time for letter writing. However, I manage to read the “Peoples Paper” and most of the enclosed Dialogues every month and it is this month’s “Paper” that causes me to write this letter. I would like two extra copies of this “Paper” as the article on “The Second Advent” is exceptionally good I think, and a friend of mine will be very interested to read it I know.

We had quite a long discussion on the subject recently and also some of the “News and Views” article came into it, so I feel sure he will read it with interest. I would also like a copy of the booklet entitled “God and Reason.”

I see by last month’s balance sheet that the Radio Fund is not too financial, but I believe it must do no end of good and have pleasure in enclosing cheque for L1. Take out “Peoples Paper” subscription for further twelve months and cost of articles asked for, and use balance towards fund. Now with kind regards; sincerely yours.

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