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Why Jesus came down from Heaven

“I am the living bread which came down from heaven: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world”.—John 6:51.

IN considering this important subject, it should be helpful to examine some texts of Scripture which show that Jesus really had a prehuman existence in heaven with God, His Heavenly Father, before He came down to earth. When our risen Lord gave the wonderful revelation to the Apostle John, He was depicted as the one “in the midst of the seven candlesticks”, and these seven candlesticks represented the seven churches. When He gave the message to the Laodicean Church in Rev. 3:14 He clearly described Himself in the words—“These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.” This is the risen Lord Himself speaking to the churches through John, telling them He was the faithful and true witness, and He says He was the beginning of the creation of the Almighty Father in heaven. Can we grasp what this really means? Jesus, before He came to earth, was the beginning of God’s creation, away back there in the far reaches of eternity!

We are helped to understand what this means from Prov. 8:22, where we read as though Jesus is speaking prophetically through the writer of Proverbs—“The LORD (Jehovah) possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.” The meaning of the word “possessed” in the Hebrew is “to create.” So Jehovah, the Almighty God, created Jesus in His prehuman existence, before His works of old.

Yes, before His works of old, this wonderful Son was created. He was the Father’s Logos or great agent who created everything that was created after He was brought into existence. How do we know? Both the Apostles John and Paul were inspired to give us the answer. In John 1:1-3 we read—“In the beginning was the Word (Logos), and the Word was with God, and the Word was a God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” This refers to the beginning, away back when the Logos was created. Not the beginning when our planet was formed; this was long before that, a time of which we are not informed.

Then in Col. 1 the Apostle Paul supports what John recorded. In verses 15-17 Paul says, speaking of our Lord—“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” Christ was at the Father’s right hand at the time Paul wrote, but the apostle says He was the firstborn of every creature, away back in the far regions of eternity.

Can we visualise the greatness of our Lord Jesus as the Logos, the Lord of Creation, as the Father’s honoured agent away back in the distant ages of the past, before the planets were created, before our world was formed ?

Proverbs 8:30 is helpful in this connection. This describes the relationship between the Logos and His Father, in beautifully intimate language—quoting from the R.S. Version—“I was beside him, like a master workman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always.” Master workman He really was, bringing into being the mighty planets of our Universe, which our astronomers tell us we cannot even number. But one of the most revealing things we find in this connection is, that away back there the planning of God’s Universe was discussed with Jehovah’s only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus, as the Logos. How do we know? The Father must have revealed His plan of creation and found complete agreement in the mind of His free-willed Son, for we read in Rev. 13:8, quoting from the R.S.V., that Jesus was “the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world” in this plan of

God. How could this be? What does this imply? It implies the complete revealing of the Father’s plans to His only begotten Son—the creation of the various planets, including our earth, the creation of the intelligent creatures of various orders in the spirit world, and then man, in the perfect conditions in the Garden of Eden. All these intelligent creatures would be perfect, in the image of God, each in their own sphere.

It was foreknown to God that His human creature would fall. He had determined his sentence would be death, and He also planned in advance the redemption of father Adam and all mankind condemned in Adam. Apparently the Father desired that His only begotten Son should, of His own free will, become the Redeemer of mankind, and by so great a sacrifice as this implied, manifest His loyalty to the Father and His faith in Him. The response of Jesus to this proposition of His Heavenly Father is well expressed in the prophetic language of Psalms 40:6-8—“Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.”—“I delight to do Thy will, O my God.” What a loving and glad submission to the will of the Father is here expressed; namely, to delight to do the Father’s will to redeem the human family from death by paying their penalty in death. Here we see, first and foremost, why Jesus came down from heaven—to do the Father’s will, to redeem mankind from death. “Mine ears hast thou opened”—to know. God’s will in the matter of the salvation of mankind.

When the Apostle Paul quoted the same words from the Psalmist in Hebrews 10, he added a further thought in verse 5—“Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me.” Here we see the reference is to our Lord’s human body. This was surely one of the miracles associated with the Logos being made flesh, taking human form so that He might pay the sacrifice for father Adam and all mankind condemned in Adam. In verse 6 we read—“In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.” God had no real pleasure in the sacrifice of animals, which were merely typical of Christ’s great sacrifice. See verse 4. From verse 9 we read—“Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.” The “first” would be the typical sacrifices of the animals, in which God had no real pleasure. They were taken away, rendered obsolete by the sacrifice of Christ.

We remember what happened when the Lord was crucified and death came to Him. The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. Israel’s temple services with the animal sacrifices would be no more accepted by the Heavenly Father. Now the real sacrifice had come —“He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.”

Returning to the phrase, “a body hast thou prepared me”, we have a similar thought in John 1:14—“And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” Can we realise the condescension of this great Logos, in coming down to man’s estate, to have His spiritual life transferred to the Babe of Bethlehem, to perfect human life,

“a little lower than the angels” to taste death for every man? This great love of Jesus in so doing, was no doubt continually prompted by the thought “I delight to do thy will, O God.” We remember, too, that in being willing to be made flesh He sacrificed over 30 years of spiritual fellowship with His Heavenly Father, to whom He was daily the Father’s delight, rejoicing before Him always.

From Heb. 12:2 we have a compensating thought, so to speak, respecting our Lord’s supreme sacrifice. “Who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” What was the joy set before our Lord in His endurance of the cross? **Firstly**, the joy, the pleasure, of loving

to do the Father's will. **Secondly**, there was the joy that if faithful unto death He would be raised to the Father's right hand. In explanation we have the words of John 10:17-18—"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might receive it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to receive it again. This commandment (assurance) have I received of my Father."

Further, the joy of returning to the Father is revealed in John 14:28, in Jesus' words to His little band of followers just previous to His sacrifice on the cross. Our Lord speaking—"Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I." "If ye loved me." Of course they loved the Lord in their own way, and loving Him they wished to keep Him. But there was a higher love implied here. "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I go to the Father", to the glory He had with the Father before the world was. He was going back to the Father from whom He came, the Father to whom He was daily a delight. We remember this was Jesus' request in His prayer to the Father in John 17:5—"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

We know that the Father not only honoured Jesus with His former glory as the Logos, but honoured Him further, exalting Him to His own, Divine nature. How beautifully this is expressed by the apostle in Phil. 2 from verse 6—"Who being in the form of God thought not by robbery to be equal with God." We notice the King James Version gives quite a wrong thought. He did not meditate to be on an equality with God at all. That was Satan's ambition, not that of our Lord Jesus. Verse 7—"But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant,

" This is the risen Christ, the right-hand servant of God, the very One who created all things, the very One who came down to the earth, the very One who rose to the Father's right hand. "And all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." See also Isa. 25:6-9.

Applying our subject in a personal manner, Jesus came down from heaven to give His life for each one of us individually, that we might have life, and have it more abundantly. Surely the words of 2 Cor. 5:14, 15 are so very applicable. Paul says there—"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto him which died for them, and rose again." What a lovely text to keep in mind each day of our Christian course—"the love of Christ constraineth us" in the privilege of service, that we may be able to say that for the joy set before us we may be able to endure something of the hardness of the Christian way in the steps of the Master who has done so much for us. No wonder that in the dispensation of the fulness of times the Hallelujah Chorus of Rev. 5:11-13 will be proclaimed by all intelligent creatures, to God's praise, throughout the entire Universe. "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne . . . Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

Jesus came down from heaven, delighting to do the Father's will, and be raised to the Father's right hand. He came down from heaven, delighting to have a band of followers who would walk in His steps of sacrifice, and be raised to reign with Him in His Kingdom. He endured the cross for these. Also he endured the cross for the whole human family, that they may be brought back to God, as many as would be obedient, and live in Garden of Eden conditions throughout the wide world.

We rejoice, then, and praise God that Christ came, humbled Himself, being obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, paying the ransom sacrifice on behalf of us all, for everyone in Melbourne, for everyone in Australia and in every country of the world-not only for those who are now living, but for all who have lived from the days of father Adam and since. Praise God for this glorious plan of redemption.

"He Shall Cover Thee with His Feathers"

Some years ago a helpful incident was expressed during a study of Psalms 91 at a Convention in Melbourne, re-

vealing the wonderful protection and care which our Heavenly Father exercises over His own people who dwell in the secret place of the Most High.

It was stated that after a bush fire had swept through a property where poultry was kept, what seemed like a black stump of a tree near the ground was in reality a charred hen. On disturbing the remains of the bird a number of chickens ran out unharmed—the mother bird had protected her little ones so well with the strong feathers in her wings, but had lost her own life in so doing.

Thus the Psalmist declared of all who abide under the shadow of the Almighty—“He shall cover thee with his feathers (pinions, strong wing feathers), and under his wings shalt thou trust” Psa. 91:4. Our Lord’s words at the close of His ministry, as He wept over Jerusalem at the time of Israel’s rejection of Him, Matt. 23:37, also illustrate this important and comforting lesson of God’s loving and powerful protection over all those who truly say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress; my God; in Him will I trust.”

A Rendezvous with God

(Convention Address)

“And there will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee, from above the mercy seat”. —Exod. 25:22.

A RENDEZVOUS with God! A trysting-place where He will condescend to come near to His servant Moses in intimate communion, and there unfold His will. A meeting-ground provided by God Himself where He, the high and lofty One inhabiting eternity, will hold special converse with a mortal man. Wonderful indeed was such

a mercy-seat, center of close communion and unique revelation, that holy place where Moses, “faithful in all his house as a servant”, might be alone with God. How exceptional were his privileges, and how extraordinary the revelations he received in this rendezvous with God. See Num. 7:89; 8; 9; 10; etc.

And yet this was only a typical approach into God’s presence. Wonderful though it was, yet it was but a shadow cast before, giving promise of better and greater things to come. In a time, then distant, with a glory far excelling, a great “Mercy-seat” would be provided by God in His progressive purposes; then again with still more sublime meaning He would speak to recipients of His grace, saying, “And there will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the Mercy-seat.” In due time “Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house are we,” would be the center of a greater intimacy with God, a great unfolding of His grace, and a richer inheritance, “eternal in the heavens.” Truly, “if what faded had its glory, then what lasts will be invested with far greater glory”; and now through the spirit, and by a nearer approach to God, “we all mirror the glory of the Lord with face unveiled, and so we are being transformed into the same likeness as himself, passing from one glory to another” —2 Cor. 3:11, 18, Moffatt translation.

Well indeed should we call to mind that holy men of old “searched diligently concerning the grace that should be the happy estate of some favoured ones in a coming day”—our day. We should never forget that righteous men of other ages could not see or hear things now unfolded to us and placed within our reach, “which things’ even “the angels desire to look into.” Never should we forget that

“Not all the blood of beasts On Jewish altars slain Could give the guilty conscience peace,

Or wash away the stain.”

But now, since God has in Christ reconciled us unto Himself, “from above the Mercy-seat” He sends the word of His grace to us through His ministering apostle; “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from ‘a consciousness of evil’ (Diag.) and our bodies washed with pure wa- ter”— Heb. 10:19-22.

God was indeed in Christ reconciling us unto Himself. He was in Christ in such intimate union, in such sympathetic tenderness, and in such immeasurable sacrifice that His redemptive love remains too profound for us to fathom, and costly beyond our comprehending. How dear to the heart of God are His blood-bought children. What insight into the depths of that love comes to those grateful receptive hearts who keep constant tryst with God close by His own lovingly provided Mercy-seat. What words from above that great propitiatory are heard there, and how much those words are constantly needed by even the most faithful saints. Dark stains from the pit from whence we were digged can flash across the mind. Recollections can come which send a dart of pain through the now cleansed conscience; and moments, acts, and memories we fain would forget forever, can come trooping back like a cloud over the spirit within. How all this painful recollection will be shut out from our unsullied and unbroken communion in heaven, we know not; but while we are yet tabernacling in flesh wherein is no perfect righteousness, it is well that we do visualise at times the “horrible pit” and the “miry clay” out of which redeeming love has lifted us. Praise be to Him by whose kind favour we have been washed, cleansed, and sanctified, and there is therefore now “no condemnation.”

Oh, the peace the Saviour gives. Truly, “He is our peace.” The past, with all its stains and shadows, its foolishness and indiscretions, is under the blood—that efficacious, full-atoning blood which “cleanseth us from all sin.” The voice which speaks from “above the Mercy-seat” speaks peace, the perfect peace of which the Psalmist wrote, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered”—Psa. 32:1. A blessed state surely is this when concerning it an apostle challenges—“Who will bring accusation against God’s chosen ones? Will that God who justifies? Who is he who condemns? Will that anointed one who died? and, still more, who also is at the right hand of God, and who intercedes on our behalf? Who shall separate us from that love of God, which is in the Anointed Jesus?” —Rom. 8:33-35, Diaglott.

“We have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have been introduced into this favour in which we stand; and we boast in hope of the glory of God”—Rom. 5:1, 2, Diaglott. “This favour in which we stand”—what a heritage it is. Here “the God of peace” shall be with us, “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the holy spirit” stabilize us; and here we may be filled “with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the holy spirit”—Phil. 4:9; Rom. 14:17; 15:13. How complete is our peace **with** God, and how marvellous the peace **of** God into which it leads us. Does life have its disturbing incidents, and problems their disquieting distractions? Are there burdens of our own to bear, and loads borne by others we must share in fulfilling the law of Christ? None are immune from such personal burdens, nor exempt from such load sharing, if so be they are true to God and His children. But has God not said, “I will commune with thee from above the Mercy-seat”? And there He speaks, “Be not anxious about anything; but in everything let your petitions be made known to God; by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving; and that peace of God which surpasses all conception, shall guard your hearts and your minds by Christ Jesus”—Phil. 4:6, 7, Diaglott. What a “Mercy-seat” is ours! Blessed rendezvous with God, where weary spirits often find relief, oft escape the snare of the tempter, and find at times a ladder such as Jacob saw, and exclaim with him, “This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!”—Gen. 28:17.

Wonderful words came from the lips of Jesus, words of life and beauty indeed. Words illuminating prophetic pages, words establishing new standards of life and conduct, and words so laden with endearment that we are left in speechless **wonderment**. To those with whom God can commune “from above the Mercy-seat” the word is, “The Father **Himself** loveth you.” Loves us! Yes! but with what an astounding depth and measure! Jesus gave us its dimensions. . . . “And that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, **as thou hast loved me**”—John 16:27; 17:23. Could there be, therefore, any surer test of our nearness to God through Christ than in finding our hearts responding with an inexpressible gladness to such declarations of so unique a place in the love of God? If, as we are told, “the goodness of God leadeth to repentance”, it must surely follow that when repentance has prepared the way for this further revelation of divine love, a greatly increased inflow of love to God will lift one up where communion above the Mercy-seat will be habitually sought after, blessedly real, and give to the whole perspective a maturity embracing greater nearness to God, greater light on His inspired Word, and richer foretastes of heavenly fellowship.

Do we ask if God really craves this close, intimate, reciprocal love from us, or wonder if He finds in our ardent

affections toward Him an odour of sweet incense? Can it be that His emotional depths are stirred in a special way by the warmth of our responsive love, when, as we know, He has the sublime, unceasing, outpouring adoration of heaven's higher creatures? His Word reveals that it is even so. Is He not asking for this love in His appeal, "My son, give me thine heart?" Is it not the same appeal in this other word to us, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." Herein we perceive the divine delight in our love. He does rejoice in its overflowing purity and permanence. He is love, and it is the very character of true love to crave reciprocation. He who bestowed mother love upon woman-kind, bestowed it out of the fathomless depths of His own great parental affection. Our power to love with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind was given us to this great end. We turn the pages of the written Word, and we gaze upon the reflection of infinite love revealed in the Living Word, and love begets love, reciprocal affection becomes a consuming joy within, and from our inner being we say

"Take my love, my God; I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself — I wish to be
Ever, only, all for Thee."

But if we would know God's love thus drawing powerfully on our heart's love, how much we need to remember that it is found only around His own appointed trysting place, "the blood-bought Mercy-seat." This is where the Apostle brings us, saying, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins"-1 John 4:10. It is therefore clear that only when we keep habitual rendezvous with God at the Mercy-seat, only then will our love for Him rise up as a sweet incense, rejoicing His heart. Then too, since love is the fulfilling of the law, where, if not in this same hallowed place where God communes with us from above the Mercy-seat, will His love become shed abroad in the heart, broadening and deepening until God and neighbour are loved according to the command in which Jesus epitomized the whole law? Truly, it is through abiding in this sacred spot where God meets with man that we find joy and rest in His love, there receive and reflect His love, and there commune with joy unspeakable and full of glory. There indeed "Heaven comes down our souls to greet, While glory crowns the Mercy-seat."

Blessed rendezvous with God!

Words of assured forgiveness have come from Him who promised to meet us at our Mercy-seat. Wonderful words of love have also been spoken there to our cleansed and dedicated hearts. The past has been put under the blood, and the present made a blessed walk of close communion with God. But still there is more to follow. How like the Lord to speak again and say to us now as He said to brethren long ago—"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full"—John 15:11. And that our joy may now be complete He has spoken words calculated to give us the assurance that all we have committed to Him for the future is safely placed in His keeping. By virtue of our being His purchased possession, bought by the blood of His own dear Son, can we not by faith believe that He who began His good work in us will surely complete it? He who is able to make all grace abound toward us and whose spirit bears witness with ours, does indeed speak to us "from above the Mercy-seat", enabling us to rejoice in a hope both sure and steadfast. "He shall give his angels charge over thee" is a blessed promise. Another is equally assuring: "The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand"—Psa. 121:5. Again, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty"—Psa. 91:1. Such comfort coming from a Keeper who never slumbers nor sleeps, must, if we be true-hearted, give us faith to say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day"-2 Tim. 1:12. We read this inspiring message—"Now to him who is able to keep you from slipping and to make you stand unblemished and exultant before his glory—to the only God, our Saviour through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and for all time"—Jude 24,25, Moffatt translation.

Here, surely, is a message "from above the Mercy-seat" peculiarly comforting and assuring at this particular time. To such as are now waiting in hope "for the grace that is to be brought unto you **at the revelation of Jesus Christ**", what rest of heart there is in knowing that our trust is in One able to keep us from slipping and to make us stand exultant and unblemished before His glory. "He is **able to keep you** from falling." He who knows us, each

one, with all our weakness, He who knows our “unprofitable” service and all about our mistakes and failings, yet “He is able to keep us, each one.” Faith believes He can and will, for

“His love in times past forbids me to think
He’ll leave me at last in trouble to sink;
Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review
Confirms His good pleasure to keep me quite through.”

All along the way there has never been wanting “from above the Mercy-seat” the word in season for present needs. God has never failed to speak to us through the medium of His all-embracing Word. Comfort, warning, great and precious promise, reproof, everything necessary to our fellowship with Him, He has spoken. And now, even this wonderful **now** in which we live, there comes the message by which we are in a special way privileged to keep a rendezvous with God. On the border-line we stand, our salvation so much nearer than when we first believed. All along we have been privileged to know “a place than all beside more sweet”, a trysting place of prayer and communion where “the oil of gladness on our heads” has been no figment of our imagination, but a true witness of God’s spirit bearing witness with our own. He who had spoken forgiveness full and abiding, and sent into our life the needed heart-strengthening words of endearment, has spoken in just as faithful a manner to loyal hearts those words whereby such may rejoice in hope of a final attainment of the glory to which they have been elected in the love and foreknowledge of God. Thus, among the incidents and diversified experiences of life we treasure recollections that memory preserves for us as hallowed resting-places and to which our hearts turn for fresh encouragement when faith needs reminders of God’s never-failing love and care. And He who has spoken the word of good cheer to our hearts along the way over which we have thus far come, will not be silent to us now in times like these in which we live. As before, so He will continue to speak to us “from above the Mercy-seat”, giving strength for daily needs and assuring us that soon, perhaps very soon, He will have us with Him yonder in His immediate presence. Then face-to-face, and in a glory excelling all our previous conceptions, ours will be an eternal rendezvous with God.

Thanks be unto Him for all past and present joys of communion through Christ our Mercy-seat. Praise His Name that even here in the house of our pilgrimage He has walked with us and communed with us in such priceless fellowship. In love and joy we now long for the hour when no more with veil between, we shall see Him in all His glory and know the rapture of a perfect communion with our Father, and with a Bridegroom whom our soul loves supremely. How transporting the prospect — this eternal rendezvous in glory.

O sacred union with the Perfect Mind!
Transcendent bliss, which Thou alone canst give,
How blest are they this Pearl of price who find,
And, dead to earth, have learned in Thee to live!

And thus, while dead to human hopes I lie,
Lost, and forever lost, to all but Thee,
My happy soul, since it has learned to die,
Has found new life in Thine infinity.

With joy we learn this lesson of the cross,
And tread the toilsome way which Jesus trod;
And counting present life and all things loss,
We find in death to self the life of God.

The All-Seeing Eye

On the ceiling of many Greek churches may be seen painted an enormous eye. This is intended to represent the Eye of God. It is well to be reminded that this Eye is upon us in church, but we must not think that we are more seen there than elsewhere. Perhaps the difference between a truly religious person and one who is not, consists in this; that the first feels he is always being watched over. He looks to the Eye of God for guidance, reproof, correction, encouragement, in all times and places; he thinks of a loving Father watching over His child.

The second, when he thinks of it at all, only feels that he is watched with a view of future punishment.— Clipping.

Books Available

In view of increased postal charges, literature prices **are now as follows:-**

“God’s Promises Come True”-\$2.00 (postage from 45c to \$1.00 according to distance).

“The Divine Plan of the Ages”, Cloth-75c (postage 30c. Paper bound-50c postage 30c).

“The Creator’s Grand Design”-\$1.00 (postage 30c). “The Book of Books”-\$1.00 (postage 30c). “Daily Heavenly Manna”-\$1.00 (postage 30c). “Songs in the Night”-\$1.00 (postage 20c). “Poems of Dawn”-\$2.20 (postage 20c).

“Emphatic Diaglott”, N. Testament-\$2.00 (postage 30c). “Tabernacle Shadows”-50c (postage 20c). “God and Reason-10c (postage 7c). “God’s Plan”-10c (postage 7c).

“Hope Beyond the Grave”-10c (postage 7c). “Israel in History and Prophecy”-10c (postage 7c.) “Our Lord’s Great Prophecy”-10c (postage 7c). “Manner of Christ’s Return-10c (postage 7c). “Christ’s Return-10c (postage 7c).

“Some of the Parables”-10c (postage 7c). “Where Are the Dead”-10c (postage 7c).

“Lights and Shadows in Christian Experience”-10c (postage 7c). “Our Bible Translated”-10c (postage 7c). Numerous other smaller booklets.

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Abraham Rejoiced to See Christ's Day

“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad”—John 8:56.

THERE is much sadness as we realise that the Jews and Arabs, both descendants of faithful father Abraham, are again at war, in a most destructive encounter in which thousands of human lives will be lost in a fruitless quarrel over so many square miles of territory in the Middle East. At the moment an uneasy cessation of hostilities has been brought about by the intervention of the two great nations of the world, U.S.A., and Russia, through the United Nations.

In our text in John 8: — “Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad” —we note that Jesus acknowledged that the Jews to whom He spoke had Abraham as their father. But reviewing the context in this chapter 8 of John, *we* see our Lord did not consider a great number of them as being really children of Abraham, as indicated in verse 39—“If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham.” We notice that they were a divided class of Jews to whom Jesus spoke, in their outlook towards our Lord. Some, indeed, did believe in Him and wished to be made free, while others were in opposition, even extremely so, seeking to kill Jesus, as shown in verse 40. However, we are mainly interested in Jesus’ appreciation of Abraham.

What did Jesus mean by saying Abraham rejoiced to see His day? Turning to God’s unconditional promise to Abraham in Gen. 22:15-18, we read a most remarkable prophecy—please read. Because Abraham obeyed God’s voice in being willing to sacrifice Isaac, his son of promise, knowing in his heart, by faith, that Isaac would be raised from the dead, God gave the unconditional promise that “all the nations of the earth would be blessed” through the seed of Abraham. We notice that God’s promise to Abraham was based upon the words of verse 16—“For because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son.”

Abraham had been used to offering sacrifices of animals to God, and when the Lord provided a ram in the place of Isaac, no doubt Abraham, by faith, grasped to some extent the value of the sacrifice for sin which Jesus was accomplishing at His first advent when He declared—“Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and was glad.” It will be seen that it was on the basis of Abraham not withholding his son, Isaac, from sacrifice, that the promises of verses 17 and 18 of Gen. 22 were proclaimed by **God’s** angel from heaven.

In other words, the antitype of Isaac, even Christ, being sacrificed at Jesus first advent provided the means whereby all the families of the earth would be blessed, in due time, through Abraham's seed. The Apostle Paul's record of Abraham's faith in Heb. 11:17-19 is a further wonderful testimony respecting this patriarch Abraham.

Reviewing Gen. 22:17, we see that Abraham's seed was to be composed of two classes or sections—"as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore." When Abraham heard this reference to his seed, it must have seemed strange to him, but he would realise that much more was implied in this description than could be fulfilled in Isaac. We are able to understand more today than did Abraham, but the important lesson we learn from Abraham was his great faith that God would fulfil His promise to bless all nations through his seed, pictured by the stars of heaven and the sand upon the sea shore.

Let us examine the "stars of heaven" feature of Abraham's seed first. When the Apostle Paul sought to impress upon the Galatians that faith in Christ was an all-important requirement for progress as God's children, he used Abraham as an example to follow in gaining God's blessing of spiritual truth, as outlined in Gal. 3:5-9. Here we see that God "preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." And for the

encouragement of Christians, the Apostle adds—"So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." No doubt this presentation by Paul has been a wonderful help to the Lord's people throughout the Gospel Age.

Further, in Gal. 3:16 we read—"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Here we find the Apostle Paul enlightening Christians in respect of one part of Abraham's seed, Christ, the great Head of the "stars of heaven" seed. Paul was commissioned and inspired to elaborate the truths that Abraham saw afar off, by faith. Abraham did not know the details, but trusted God that whatever He provided would bring about the blessing of all the families of the earth. Here we see that God had Christ in mind when He said the "stars of heaven" would be one part of the seed of Abraham that would fulfil the promise to Abraham.

The Apostle Paul enlightens us further concerning Abraham's "stars of heaven" seed when he declares that truly consecrated followers of Christ are, as well as Christ Himself, members of the seed of Abraham. This is revealed in Gal. 3:26-29—"Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." The Apostle does not say, As many of you as have been baptized in water have put on Christ, but as many as have been baptized into Christ—immersed into Christ's death. There is no reference to water here at all; water is merely the symbol of death baptism. "And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." What a wonderful truth Paul brings out here! Christ the Head is the Abrahamic seed, and those truly baptized into Christ are also part of the seed of Abraham. They are the "stars of heaven" seed of Abraham, Christ and His Church, being the principal means of blessing all the families of the earth. Abraham saw this, saw Christ's day, saw the day when Christ would pay the sacrifice for mankind, just as Abraham himself was willing to sacrifice Isaac. He also saw the day when Christ would have associates, although he could not understand the details—"If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." This is surely wonderful, and we feel the day in which this spiritual seed, Christ and His Church, is developed, partly fulfils the words of Jesus—"Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." We say "partly" because this is the provision or development of the heavenly part of Abraham's seed. Abraham had faith in God's promises that his seed, as the "stars of heaven" would constitute the means of bringing blessings to all the nations of the earth, together with the "sand by the sea shore" seed.

As the Head of the spiritual seed of Abraham, our Lord had cause to rebuke the Pharisees of His day

when they asked for a sign from Him. See Matt. 12:38-42. In this passage the Lord gives two illustrations of Israel lacking appreciation of their Messiah, who came unto His own, and His own received Him not, as a people—"Behold, a greater than Jonasis here", and "Behold, a greater than Solomon is here." This, Abraham saw by faith. He saw the first advent of Christ; he rejoiced to see Christ's day and was glad, this being the antitype of the sacrifice of his son, Isaac. This, then, is the first fulfilment of Christ's day in which Abraham rejoiced by faith, and in which we also rejoice, because Christ's Church as members of Abraham's spiritual seed are also part of the "stars of heaven" class. They also fit into the first part of Christ's day during this Gospel Age, as they make their calling and election sure.

Another reference to the first part of the day of Christ in which Abraham rejoiced is revealed to us in Isa. 51:16—"And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people." The planting of the heavens, the making up of the "stars of heaven" class, was what Abraham saw by faith, this being part of Christ's day, with the preparation of this Seed. It has been going on since Christ's first advent. God desires to take "many sons to glory", to be associated in the great work of dispensing the blessings of salvation to all humanity.

With the completion of the "stars of heaven" seed, the final planting of the heavens, the laying the foundations of the earth will go forward. This will mean a wider and complete fulfilment of the Day of Christ in which Abraham rejoiced by faith also. In this connection the prophecy of Gen. 13:14-17 is most applicable—"And the Lord said unto Abram . . . Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever." Also in Gen. 15:18 we read—"In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." That is a tremendous tract of country yet to be given to the seed of Abraham, the "sand by the sea shore" seed. This does not imply that Abraham's descendants are to obtain this land by their own war efforts, but they will receive it in due time from God's hand. God has promised this land to Abraham, from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates, a great tract of country which is to come into the possession of Abraham's "sand by the sea shore" seed.

In connection with the promises in Genesis which God made to Abraham respecting the extent of the land for a possession by Abraham's seed, we have an interesting presentation of this matter in Acts 7:2-5, given by Stephen before the Jewish Council. Speaking of Abraham and the land of Israel which God promised to Abraham, Stephen declared in verse 5—"And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child." The reason Abraham did not receive the land for a lasting possession is because Abraham passed away, Isaac and Jacob and all the earthly seed passed away. But God is still going to fulfil that promise; nothing will hinder it in due time. We see what has happened in the Middle East over the last few decades, with Israel gaining a foothold and establishing itself as a nation, and all the nations around wanting to destroy them. But Israel, as well as the other nations, has to learn a hard lesson, that they are not going to receive the inheritance of the land by their own efforts. God will give it to them in His due time. In the meantime, Israel must learn the lesson of humility and dependence upon God, and not upon their own arm of strength, to gain that which God has promised. When God does fulfil this promise to Abraham and his seed, with Abraham and other fathers of Israel restored to life in the resurrection day, this will be in complete fulfilment of Jesus' words—"Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." Christ will then be reigning, with the "stars of heaven" seed complete, and also the "sand by the sea shore" seed in control of the land promised by God. However, just how God will fulfil His promise, and the seed of Abraham possess the great expanse of territory stated in Genesis, may not be clear to us at the present time.

In the prophecy of Jeremiah 30, following on the early verses where it is stated respecting "Jacob's

trouble” that “he shall be saved out of it”, we read in verses 18-20 a most important message. “Thus saith the Lord; Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob’s tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places; and the city shall be builded

upon her own heap..... and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress

them.” All that oppress Israel will be punished in God’s due time. How will God do this? In Zech. 12:2, 3, we have a very clear prophecy showing that ultimately the Lord intends to protect Israel. “Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered against it.” In God’s appropriate time He will perform some immense miracles in the Middle East, because Israel is going to be an exhibition to the whole world of nations. When God shows His hand on behalf of Israel, all the nations of the world will sit up and take notice. In the meantime, God has some important purpose in allowing Israel to be stricken and smitten and encircled in an outstanding and terrifying way.

Returning to Jeremiah 30, we read in verses 10 and 11—’Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid ... though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.” The Lord will not leave Israel unpunished. Israel has to learn that dependence upon the Lord only is going to fulfil the desires of their heart. God will never allow Israel to be exterminated. Just how He brings about their great deliverance and punishes the nations coming against Jerusalem is a matter of prophecy, and we have faith to know it will be accomplished in accord with God’s timetable, the best time, not only on behalf of Israel but also for those warring against Israel. All the other nations must learn their lesson too, that God will be obeyed if they are to benefit from the blessings to flow out from Abraham’s seed, from the “stars of heaven” class and the “sand by the sea shore” class.

From Jeremiah 31:7 onwards we read—’Thus saith the Lord; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel. Behold, I will bring them from the north country”—apparently referring to Russia. “They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them.... Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob.... Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion ... and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all.” Here we have revealed the time when all is at peace and rest, when God has delivered Israel from their enemies, and the blessings of the Lord are due to come upon Israel and ultimately upon all nations, when they learn to obey the instructions of the “lord. Then “they shall not sorrow any more at all.”

Turning to Zech. 12:6-10, we read again of the Lord’s deliverance of Israel. “ ... And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son. . . . “ Here we have revealed the time when Israel will recognise the fact that they crucified the Lord of glory. They will look upon Him, not literally, but their minds will go back to the time when Christ was crucified. The Lord will never again be manifested as a human being, for He is in the “express image of the Father’s person”, having “all power in heaven and in earth”, and will administer the kingdom blessings from above. This will be “Christ’s day” in which “Abraham rejoiced, and was glad.”

In Isa. 51:2, 3 we read—“Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you”, and we realise this is pictorial language—Abraham representing God, and Sarah picturing the Abrahamic covenant. “For the Lord shall comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places: and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord.” It is lovely to read in the prophecies that Garden of Eden conditions will be abroad in the earth again. Verse 1 1—“Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return (from the death condition), and come with singing unto Zion; . . . they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.” What lovely Scriptures we have to tell us about the great “times of restitution of all things”—Christ’s day, in which Abraham rejoiced, by faith.

Turning to Isa. 29:18, we have a prophecy with reference to all mankind ultimately. “In that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.” These are not of necessity literally deaf or blind, but in “Christ’s day” they shall hear and perceive the truths required for salvation. Then verse 19—“The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel”, which is surely lovely to contemplate. Verse 22 follows—“Therefore thus saith the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale.” That means Jacob will come back in the resurrection day, and will not grow old; he will live forever, as will everyone else who obeys the laws of “Christ’s day”, Christ’s Kingdom, in which Abraham rejoiced, by faith.

From the Psalmist (Psa. 22:27, 28) we also read—“All the ends of the world”—that is, every nation under the sun--“shall remember and turn to the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord’s: and he is the governor among the nations.” And what a Governor! Christ and His Church, as the “stars of heaven” seed, will administer from above through the “sand by the sea shore” seed, for the blessing of all the families of the earth.

In the prophecy of Zechariah 8:23 it states—“Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations (representing all nations of the world), even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.” What a change that will be to present-day conditions in the world! Then will be fulfilled the words of Micah 4:2,

3—“And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain (kingdom) of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we shall walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion (the “stars of heaven” seed of Abraham), and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (the “sand by the sea shore” seed of Abraham). And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” Praise God! Abraham truly “rejoiced to see Christ’s day, and he saw it, and was glad.”

If you were arrested for being a Christian would there be enough evidence to convict you.

God's Best Gift

WE are approaching another anniversary of the season of the year kept generally to celebrate the birth of Jesus as the babe of Bethlehem, and while it has often been stated that our Lord did not ask that His birth be especially remembered, though He did particularly request that His death be commemorated, yet there is something very inspiring in the record given by Luke respecting the birth in the city of David of our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

That our Heavenly Father could have sent Jesus into the world as a fully grown man, had this been His will, cannot be doubted, so there must have been some very good reason why an earthly mother was selected, and Jesus was born as a babe. Perhaps it was helpful for Jesus to become acquainted with members of the fallen human family over a period of thirty years, prior to entering upon His life of sacrifice. As a perfect child He must have felt the difference between other children and Himself, even as the scoffs and scourgings that He received from sinful men, in later years, would inflict great anguish upon His heart and mind—in subdued sympathy for their waywardness. From this standpoint our Lord could well appreciate the sentiment of Paul's statement long before it was formulated in the Apostle's mind—"God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8.)

The fact that an angel of God proclaimed the birth of Jesus to a group of shepherds "watching over their flock by night", is also of great interest to us. They were lowly, good-hearted men, no doubt, and while they were afraid of the heavenly visitor at the outset, the message proclaimed would no doubt calm their fears, and give them confidence and assurance that this event in Bethlehem was of the greatest importance since the creation and fall of man in the Garden of Eden.

To be told that they should "Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord", was enough to thrill their hearts, even though the full understanding of it would be so imperfectly grasped. Would that people today would meditate more upon this lovely message from the heavenly servant to those shepherds, for even a partial appreciation of these "good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" has a marked effect upon the minds and hearts of people generally, even though, from the worldly outlook today, there is so little to give hope and joy for the future.

For Christians, however, this angelic message is the basis for all future hopes and aims, for having accepted Christ the Lord as their Saviour, and having responded to the call to gladly walk in His steps of sacrifice, these "good tidings of great joy" are a continual inspiration to strive for a closer walk with the exalted Saviour, while at the same time seeking to find others to whom this joyful message has appeal. And then to know that the further message of the heavenly host "praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men" is soon to be fulfilled amongst all the inhabitants of the earth who have ever lived, in the grand resurrection day of Christ's Kingdom, truly exhibits God's great love for all His human family, in His provision of His Best Gift of Jesus, so long ago, as the babe of Bethlehem.

Giving Thanks

(Contributed Address.)

THE thought behind the few remarks put together is one with a very simple idea—giving thanks. This is a very comely trait in any person, whether a Christian or otherwise; in fact it would be a sign of human nobility, the appropriate giving of thanks, and giving it in the right way; not a flowery praise or thanks, but a sincere and genuine thanks.

On receiving my lunch at work wrapped up in a table napkin, it had four words written on it—”In Everything Give Thanks.” This, of course, is a wonderful injunction and something we do remember at mealtimes in particular. It is a proper course for us to follow.

Reading in Psa. 116, the Psalmist seems to speak to believers, and gives the sentiments of everyone who has been blessed in this Gospel Age. From verse 12, we read—”What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people. I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord.” (Verses 12-14, 17.)

We find also in our Lord’s ministry quite an emphasis on thankfulness, particularly in our Lord’s prayers. A lovely prayer is that recorded in Matt. 11:25, and it means so much to us. “At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” This was only one of the Lord’s prayers, but it is interesting He begins with the thought of thankfulness. We should be thankful that the Lord has revealed these things unto babes. We would not like to qualify ourselves amongst the wise and prudent, humanly speaking, but God has seen fit to bless us in this way.

In John 11:41 also we see Jesus again thanks His heavenly Father. This is in the incident of the raising of Lazarus. “And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.” Even though the Lord was the Son of God Himself, yet He gave thanks for these various opportunities and privileges granted to Him.

We see Him also setting us a wonderful example in the giving of thanks before the breaking of bread. This is a good exercise for us also, and it does remind us daily by the small things of how great God’s gifts are to us.

When G. K. Chesterton was asked at the end of his career what was the most important lesson he had learned from life, he is said to have stated that it was to find out whether we take things for granted or take them with gratitude. How wonderful this trait of gratitude is! Not only for the Christian, but also for every human being this is so, but particularly those who have so much for which to be thankful.

The story of the ten lepers emphasizes how scarce this trait may be. There were ten cleansed, and only one returned to give thanks. The other nine completely forgot about their gratitude when they had the gift. They got what they were after. No doubt they were pleased, perhaps even grateful, but it did not move them to any act of thanksgiving. Only one returned to give glory to God.

How appropriate it is, then, for those who are disciples of the Greater David, our Lord Jesus, the perfect, noble Man, that *we* should have not only a thankful spirit but also a thankful manner of life altogether. So the Apostle Paul gives us this injunction in 1 Thes. 5:18. This comes in a section where there.--Lagny

taief iniuncticas—to believers, but this verse says, “In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” Other versions of this verse express it differently. Phillips says, “Be thankful whatever the circumstances.” Mof- fatt says, “Thank God for everything.” The New English says, “Give thanks whatever happens.” Good News for Modern Man says, “Be thankful in all circumstances.” What a wideness there is in this thought of giving thanks in everything! In all things, in all circumstances, in all times and seasons and places, give thanks.

There is a very close link between thanksgiving and prayer. This is not surprising. *We* find Paul writing to the Philippians in regard to this thought that prayer should be with supplication and thanksgiving. “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” A somewhat similar thought is in Col. 4:2—“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.”

Someone was once asked for a technique for prayer. The inquirer said prayer came with difficulty to him. The advice given was always to start with thanksgiving. This is undoubtedly very good advice. When we begin to recall what God has done for us and all for which we owe Him thanks, the other things fall into perspective.

To whom should we be thankful? *We* should be thankful to the Giver of every good and perfect gift, as the Apostle James tells us. These come from the Father of Lights, and His most unspeakable gift is the (lift of His dear Son: for God so loved that He gave. There can be no greater gift and no greater cause for gratitude than this. The Apostle Paul in Rom. 8:32 reminds us that “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” With the wonderful gift of the Saviour, God freely is able to give us all things. These all things include not only life and salvation but also glorious hope now and for the future.

“Not alone hath grace redeemed me,
Bought me with Christ’s precious blood,
Sought me out when a stranger,
Wandered from the fold of God;
But beyond this great salvation
God hath shown me wondrous grace
Call’d me with a heav’nly calling,
Ever to behold His face.”

Believers have so much cause for thankfulness, for the privileges they enjoy and for what are ahead of them.

But do we always give thanks in every season for all things? *We* could well take to heart the prayer—“We beseech Thee, give us that due sense of all Thy mercies that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we show forth Thy praise not only with our lips but in our lives.” This is the lesson of counting our blessings. If we are doing that there can be only one result, a great sense of thankfulness to our loving Father. These “all things” for which we are to give thanks would certainly include God’s wonderful blessings. Ephesians 2 tells us that God has blessed us “with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus.”-For the rich blessings He has given us it should not be hard to be thankful. There is always a danger of taking these blessings for granted, and we must remember we have nothing we have not received of God, and be thankful at all times.

Further, the “all things” may include God’s chastenings. In Heb. 12 we have the explanatory verses on God’s dealings with us, and it is likened to the correction a human father applies to his children. In verses 6 and 11 we read—“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he

receiveth. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” So we can put things into their right perspective. This is also a cause for thankfulness on the part of the believer, for these are signs of sonship and that God is dealing with us.

These “all things” may include times of hardship, want and sickness. We have no greater example than the Apostle Paul himself, and his testimony in Phil. 4 is very eloquent, and sets a standard which makes us feel very insignificant and unequal except it were by God’s grace. See Phil. 4:12, 13, 18.

Shortly after the Lord’s ascension the eleven apostles were suffering persecution, and it is recorded in Acts that they praised God they were worthy to suffer shame for His name. These people were thankful for the times of adversity and hardship. Could we live up to that standard?

Of course, there are other blessings we have received apart from the gifts in particular already mentioned. We have been especially blessed with the knowledge of God’s will; this was not made known in other ages. But perhaps this knowledge could become commonplace. There is always a cause for the giving of thanks, and our desire is that we might continue thankfully to know more of God’s good will and purpose.

Another great blessing for which we should be thankful is the love of the brethren. It is interesting to note how many times Paul says, “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.” He thanks God for the faith of the Romans. We need to have this love for one another. We can all help one another, and this is appreciated by God. Sometimes, like children, we become appreciative of a thing only when it ceases to be there. Let us give thanks and praise now for these wonderful blessings we have.

These “all things” will include opportunities of service for God. Are we always thankful for these? Do we find, sometimes, these are inconvenient and we do not want to do them at all? These opportunities really are causes for giving of thanks if we are ready to be responsive to God’s call. “Opportunities”, says one writer, “come to all. Thank God continually in all the common days and for the simplest common things.” The trouble with many of us is that we do not improve our opportunities, grasp them, seize them as they pass and make use of them. But when we are able to do so, this is surely something for which to thank God. We should learn the lesson of “being thankful for all things.” Be thankful for all God’s gifts, all His leadings, all the painful and pleasant experiences of life. Are we thankful for every opportunity of service, for the brethren, to others, for the times when we cannot serve but only stand and wait? Have we learned the lesson of being thankful in all seasons, in joy and sorrow, in plenty and in want?

The spirit of thankfulness will surely show we have lived in this right perspective and we are seeking to see things as it were from God’s viewpoint. The key surely to this understanding of God’s will for us is found in that familiar verse of Rom. 8:28—“All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” When we can not only read that but put it firmly in our hearts and recognise its truth in all the affairs of life, we will see all causes for thankfulness. Real thankfulness is not a matter of lip service but enters into every aspect of life. How fitting are the words of Samuel in 1 Sam. 12:24—“Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.” How great things, indeed, has God done for us! How can we, in recognition of these marvellous gifts of His grace and mercy, be other than a praising and thankful people, in word and in deed. In every season, in every place, in every circumstance let us heed the Apostle’s challenge—“In everything give thanks.”

Frank and Ernest Broadcast God's Covenants (Part 1)

FRANK: In taking up our subject, Ernest, on "God's Covenants" I'd like to read two or three verses from the Apostle Paul in 2 Cor. 11; commencing at verse 1. The Apostle says—"Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But 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." Another translation quotes the latter part of the verse—"That simplicity and that pureness which is in the Anointed", and I think that is a lovely expression.

ERNEST: I think so too, Frank, I believe the whole plan of God is one of simplicity and pureness and can be understood by all who are sufficiently sincere and desirous of knowing God and His great provision for the salvation of the human family. I call to mind the words of Jesus in Matt. 11:25, 26, which agree with what you've just said. The verses read—"Jesus said, I thank thee, O 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."

FRANK: Those verses are well chosen, Ernest, for they show that God's truths are not intricate; they are not surrounded by mystery and unexplainable logic. One does not need the mind of a lawyer, or to obtain degrees at any college of worldly learning to grasp and appreciate "the simplicity and pureness which is in Christ", and which is revealed in God's plan. In 1 Cor. 1:18, 19 we have another helpful Scripture, which reads—"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but to us who are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." From this standpoint, Ernest, we approach the study of the covenants, repeating the point, that no one need feel incapable of understanding the various covenants or contracts revealed to us in God's Word.

ERNEST: Yes, Frank, and as we shall refer to the Epistle to the Galatians quite often in connection with our subject, I'd like to quote a few verses in chapter 3, from verse 1—"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? . . . He therefore that ministereth to you the spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." These verses indicate that the Apostle was rebuking the Galatians for their lack of appreciation of the spirit of sonship since they had come into Christ, for they were returning to dependence upon the works of the Law Covenant.

FRANK: That's right, Ernest, and the next two verses in Gal. 3—verses 8 and 9 read—"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. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." Those are wonderful verses, revealing the gospel in a nutshell, so to speak, and those who will be privileged to administer the gospel—"those of faith being blessed with faithful Abraham."

ERNEST: As you've quoted respecting Abraham, Frank, I'd like to read of the time when God called this faithful patriarch, and gave him the wonderful promise you read about in Galatians. It's in Genesis 12:1-3, and reads—"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred,

and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." When Abram obeyed that call of God it was the beginning of a wonderful life of faithfulness which is a lasting example even to Christians today.

-FRANK: And when God further tested Abraham, in requesting him to offer up Isaac, his son of promise, in death, that proved beyond all doubt that he was worthy to receive God's unconditional covenant of promise as stated in Gen. 22:15-18—"And the angel of God called unto Abraham out of heaven, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." There's one part of that record of the covenant God made with Abraham, Ernest, that appeals to me very much, and that is the words—"By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord", which brings to mind the words of Heb. 6:13—"For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself." Also Heb. 11:17-19 is a helpful reference to Abraham's wonderful faith.

ERNEST: I'd like to read those verses, Frank, as follows—"By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." That's very helpful, showing that God accepted Abraham's willingness to offer up Isaac, as though he had been actually sacrificed, and that offering of Isaac also pictured the sacrifice of Christ.

FRANK: That's right, Ernest, and the Apostle Paul speaks concerning that covenant God made with Abraham in Gal. 3:15—"Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto." We note Paul's intention here is to stress the importance and certainty of God's covenant made with Abraham. Even men when they make a covenant or contract and confirm it, do not disannul or add anything to it—it stands firm for fulfilment. If men are faithful in carrying out a covenant, then says the apostle, surely God will do so, for He has sworn by Himself, seeing there was no one greater with whom to register such a covenant.

ERNEST: I like the way the apostle states that matter, Frank, as you've just indicated. Then the next verse, verse 16 in this 3rd chapter of Galatians, seems most interesting. It reads—"Now to Abraham and his seed were

the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." What do you think is the meaning of this verse, Frank?

FRANK: Well, Ernest, the Apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Lord's spirit, shows that when God made His covenant with Abraham He had Christ in mind, as being the true Seed which would fulfil this wonderful promise to Abraham. Then in verse 29 of the same 3rd chapter of Galatians, Paul _further enlightens us by saying to the true followers of Christ—"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." This is a wonderful thought, that Christ and His Church are the spiritual seed of Abraham through whom all the families of the earth will be blessed in the Kingdom Age.

(To be continued)

DAWN RECORDED LECTURES

The brethren of the "Dawn" gladly provide recorded lectures for general use amongst the interested, and in view of the appreciation of these in Australia, brethren in Western Australia would be pleased to assist others who have tape recorders and would like to participate in this service. For further information write to Mr. and Mrs. W. L. Price, 66 Lyndhurst Rd., Kalamunda, Western Australia, 6067.

Melbourne Christmas Convention

The brethren of the Melbourne Class extend a cordial invitation to all friends able to attend their Annual Convention to be held this year (D.V.) on December 22nd, 23rd, 25th and 26th, in the Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond. Further information from the Class secretary—Mr. J. B. Hiam, 16 Kennedy St., South Oakleigh, Victoria, 3167.

Pilgrim Way Ended

As the last issue of "Peoples Paper" was on the press, word was received of the passing of elderly Brother Hand of Springwood, N.S. Wales. One who knew him well writes, "Brother Hand had been a Bible student for at least 60 years, and was secretary of the Sydney Class at the time the Photo Drama was in Australia. He was a very able Bible student and loved the Lord and the truth dearly." We trust for our dear Brother an abundant entrance into the heavenly kingdom, by the Lord's grace. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

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This cloth bound book has an appropriate text and comment for every day of the year, and is really a companion book to the "Daily Heavenly Manna", being helpful for evening use. One of our friends has kindly compiled an Index for this book, making it more useful; these have been duplicated, and are supplied free with all copies of "Songs in the Night" which is priced at \$1.00, plus 24c postage.

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A *new* print has been made recently of the very interesting and informative booklet, "Our Bible Translated", compiled some *time* ago by the brethren of "The Dawn". To cover cost of materials this booklet is supplied at 10c per copy, post paid

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