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FOLLOW AFTER PEACE.

“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace.”—Rom. 14:19.

EVERY right-minded individual desires peace, rest, quietness, and concord. In the beginning of our Christian course “being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” and the prophet says that God “will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Him.”

To have come into a condition of peace with God means that one has become reconciled to God. This implies a former condition of alienation, of “enmity through wicked works.” Peace with God, then, means that this estrangement is a thing of the past, that the sinner has turned his back upon sin and is seeking to walk in the path of righteousness. We may rejoice with all who have come thus far.

The Apostle elsewhere refers to those who have come further into possession of the “peace of God, which passeth all understanding.” This peace can come only to those who have given themselves unreservedly to God; their time, talents, influence, their all. These have a peace that none others can know. This peace of God rules the heart even amid turmoil and trouble; it is an inward tranquillity and rest which is the direct result of a close personal relationship of the soul with God. It is the peace of God, because it is a peace that only God can give, a peace which only His very own can know fully. What a precious legacy our Lord left with His disciples when He went away from them: He said, “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” This was truly a legacy of priceless value, and it is the inheritance of the entire Church throughout the Age.

To the world it may seem that the course of the Christian is far from peaceful, for the Lord’s saints often have a stormy voyage. But if our hearts continue to be stayed on Christ by faith, and we do not let go our anchor, we shall be kept through all the tempests of life. The Lord does not bless His people with peace in an outward sense. The Apostles were buffeted, and so all

Christ’s followers have been. The Adversary does everything in his power to prevent peace and happiness. This is true of all who walk in Jesus’ footsteps. We have “fightings without and fears within.” We are to put forth our best efforts in fighting against the world, the flesh and the adversary, against all the things that Satan would put into our minds and hearts, and we are to get the Letter of these things. The Lord blesses His people with strength to surmount these difficulties. We are not to be at peace with the flesh, but always at warfare with it. Yet there is a peace in the Lord that is born of faith in Him and in His

promises. He has promised us grace sufficient; He has promised that we shall not be overcome through having trials and difficulties that are too great for us. We are assured that we shall have the victory if we trust in His strength. This gives us a rest and peace in all our experiences: We are resting in all the Lord's promises, we are resting in His strength and in His ability to make good His promises; for we know that He who has called us is able to fulfil all His good Word.

This peace or rest is the special blessing of the Holy Spirit. Only in proportion as we receive the Holy Spirit can we have this peace fulfilled in us. As we grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord, in the knowledge of the truth, we shall have this to comfort and strengthen us; and we shall thus have more of the peace of God every day, and be able to abide in His love. It has been written for our instruction and comfort, "This is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith." "This faith is built upon the testimony of God's Word, a sure foundation. It is only through strong and unwavering faith that the peace of God will abide with His children. No good thing will He withhold from these. "All things shall work together for their good." He shall bear them up in His hands lest they dash their foot against a stone. "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry."

This peace of God is not dependent upon the smile of fortune, nor upon physical health, nor upon a host of friends; but it is a peace which abides even when health fails or poverty comes, or death steals from us the treasures of our hearts. It is a peace which none of the changes or vicissitudes of this life can take from us, and which enemies are powerless to touch. How poor would be our inheritance to-day if we were without our anchorage in Christ; but with it we can endure all things which the Father's loving providence will permit. Then let us face the coming days with calmness and courage.

In order to enjoy this perfect peace we must unswervingly trust in our Father's love and abiding faithfulness. As we look out into the starry heavens we see a manifestation of God's mighty power and majesty, but our hearts and minds would not be stayed and sustained by this. But if we have the proper foundation for faith; if we learn to know our Father through His Word, we come to have confidence in Him. If we trusted to our own reasoning we would be in a very unsatisfactory condition, all would be uncertain, we would have no sure basis for faith or assurance. But when we see that the testimony of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation reveals to us a God of wisdom, justice, love and power, our minds and hearts have something reasonable and convincing to lay hold upon. This conviction deepens, and we can rejoice as we step out upon His promises and prove them for ourselves, thus learning their reality and realising their fulfilment.

We may rejoice that this loving God has called us to redemption through His Son, we may rejoice that He has offered us eternal life and has called us to a glorious joint-heirship with our Lord. We can also further rejoice in the knowledge of the wondrous provision for the whole world in the future. All these things form a firm basis for peace, joy and confidence in the Lord; But our peace is proportionate to our constancy, our staying qualities. No one can retain this peace of God whose mind is not stayed, fixed on God. It is not a peace of recklessness or sloth, but a peace begotten of God Himself through the promises, which we have made our own. It is dependent also upon our full obedience to the Lord. This peace and the faith that inspires it can look up through its tears with joyful expectancy for the glorious fruition of our hopes which God has promised, and of which our present peace and joy are but the foretaste.

Another way of keeping this peace and rest in the Lord is brought to our attention in the exhortation of the Apostle where he says, "Be careful for nothing"; but since our English word "careful" has lost its original meaning, there may be danger of error here with some. The word originally had the thought of being full of care, care-full, anxiety, trouble. The Apostle's words correspond exactly to our Lord's injunction: "Take no thought," and signify be not anxious, full of care, or Burdened. It is proper that the Lord's people should be careful in the meaning of the word as used to-day. We should not be careless, indifferent, lax in our conduct or words, but be circumspect. Anxiety and burdens are unavoidable to

those who are depending on themselves, their own wisdom, their own strength, their own skill;_ but the members of the Body of Christ accepted in the Beloved, adopted into the divine family, are assured over and over again in the Word, that if they abide faithful all things shall work together for their highest welfare. Why should they be burdened? Why should they feel anxious? He who guards their interests slumbers not. When Christians find themselves anxious, fearful, burdened, the evidence is that they have either never grown to the point of having the proper faith in the Lord, or that they have allowed “earth horn clouds” and cares of this life to come between them and the Lord, so that they no longer have confidence that they are abiding in His love and in His care. All in such condition should go at once to the throne of heavenly grace and to the divine promises, and obtaining mercy at the former and feeding upon the latter, they should grow strong in the Lord and in confidence in Him, and their corroding care will give place to faith, confidence, peace of heart, whatever the outward conditions. Such is the counsel of the Apostle that, instead of continuing in the anxious condition, we should lay all of our affairs before the Lord, supplicating His promised providential care, acknowledging our own lack of wisdom, and gladly accepting His wisdom and the provisions of His love, we should make every request in a spirit of thanksgiving.

This spirit of thanksgiving implies a recognition that the circumstances and conditions in which we are, have been supervised of the Lord, and that we are appreciative of His care, and trust it for the future. Thanksgiving for what we have and a full appreciation of the Lord’s leadings hitherto and now will preclude any anxiety for the future; for the thankful heart will conclude that He who favoured us and redeemed us while we were yet sinners, will much more favour and do for us now that we are His through the adoption that is in Christ Jesus. The question may arise, Why will not God give us the things which He sees us to need, without our making petition to Him and claiming His promises? Undoubtedly because we need previously to come into the proper attitude of heart to receive His favours and be advantaged by them. If we have the spirit of rejoicing and trust in the Lord, and make all our requests, so far as we able to discern, in harmony with His promise, and accept with gratitude and thanksgiving, whatever His providence may send us, then the Apostle assures us, “The peace of God which passeth all understanding shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

(To be continued).

THE LORD BLESS THEE AND KEEP THEE! Numbers 6:24.

The Lord bless thee!
How shall He bless thee ?
With the gladness that knoweth no decay;
With the riches that cannot pass away;
With the sunshine that makes an endless day—
Thus may He bless thee!
And keep thee!
How shall He keep thee ?
With the all-covering shadow of His wings;
With the strong love that guards from evil things;
With the sure power that safe to glory brings
Thus may He keep thee!

Christ's Spirit of Comfort and His Second Presence.

THERE appears to be a difficulty with some to discern the difference between the Lord's being with His Church throughout the Gospel Age, and His presence as Lord of the Harvest at the end of the Age—His parousia—unseen by man and discerned only by the eye of faith, as the signs of His presence are observable.

The Lord Jesus has certainly been with His suffering saints ever since Pentecost. He has so closely identified Himself with the members of His Body that He said to the man who went "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples," "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." "For by one spirit we are all baptised into one Body. All made to drink into one spirit" (1 Cor. 12) so that Christ is represented in His Body-members on earth, in whom the Holy Spirit operates. "He who received' you receiveth Me, and he who receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me." These have the privilege of suffering with Christ, of filling up the afflictions of Christ which are left over, so that we might be dead with Him and so might live with Him.

Our Lord is represented in Rev. 1:13. and 2:1, as "He that .walketh amidst the candlesticks" and as being thoroughly acquainted with the varied conditions and circumstances of His Church—"I know thy works." He is ever with His people in their trials, and renders aid by His Spirit, through the Word of God, and through His people, sending comfort and strength in time of need.

This was His promise when taking leave of the disciples—"I will not leave you comfortless. I will pray the Father and He shall give you another comforter that may abide with you for ever." "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." "Rut the Comforter—the Holy Spirit which the Father will send in My name—he shall teach you all things and 'bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." "But when the comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, he shall testify of Me."—John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26.

It is in this way that the Lord has been with His people, sustaining them in trial, adversity, persecution and distress, by bringing to their remembrance His love, His care, His interest in their progress, and the many exceeding great and precious promises of grace to help.

As the young nobleman in the parable, our Lord went to a far country, to the heavenly courts, to receive the Kingdom, and then to return, to come again and receive His Church unto Himself, that where He is there they may be also. Then He will take His great power and order righteousness and peace in the earth.

Before dealing with mankind generally, the Scriptures clearly show that the first work of Christ on His return is in connection with His Church, and for this purpose He must be present for a season, "as a thief in the night," unknown to the world. Gradually His presence would be made known to the watching saints—those who, when they hear the "knock" indicating His presence, open their hearts to welcome their Lord and He enters and sups with them, and they with Him (Rev, 3:20), Those who do not hear the knock and those who hear, but fail to open, are left in ignorance of the second presence of the Lord.

The discourse in Matt. 24 shows that there is the work of harvest to He first attended to, a gathering of the elect.

The Lord of the Harvest will say to the reapers, "Tie the tares in bundles, but gather the wheat into the garner." True Christians are to be separated from the false and gathered home into the antitypical ark, into Christ, beyond the veil, before the burning up of the bundles of tares takes place in the "time of trouble

such as never has been since there was a nation, nor ever shall be.”

The world will be in ignorance of the fact that Christ has returned until this preparatory work in connection with the Church and the closing of the Gospel Age has been accomplished. “As the days of Noah were, so shall also the days of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away, so shall also the presence of the Son of Man be” (Matt. 24:37-39). It would seem to be difficult to make it plainer that there would be “days of the Son of Man”—a time during which the Lord would be present, dealing with His people and preparing for their deliverance, but unrecognised by the world. He would come “as a thief,” unawares.

The parables in Matt. 25 illustrate the matters dealt with in the 24th chapter. The parable of the virgins shows that only the watchers would know of the Lord’s coming, and that even among them some should fail to be properly prepared. It shows a separating work, which is still in process. The varied experiences of the harvest period continue to separate the foolish virgins from the wise. When all the wise virgins are gathered the door will be shut.

The second parable shows the Lord dealing with His people respecting the use of opportunities and talents, and rewarding them accordingly. Not only are the living saints to be thus dealt with and rewarded on completing their course, but “the dead ill Christ are to rise first.” This all indicates that there will be quite a period similar to the “days that were -before the flood,” in the “days of the Son of Man,” His parousia, prior to His commencing His work with the world, indicated in the next parable.

All this preparatory work could not be accomplished if the old thought that Christ’s coming and going would be like a flash of lightning, if all living and dead saints were to be caught together at the moment of that coming. There is something more -beautiful and reasonable, more-Scripturally harmonious and more God-like, in the manner of our Lord’s return as presented by C. T. Russell in his book, “The Time is at Hand,” which we recommend all to read and study.

We see then that there is quite a difference between Christ being with the Church during the Age by the Holy Spirit in His people to comfort and sustain, and Ilia being present again in the earth in this day of His preparation. All the evidences of His “parousia” are with us to-day. He has surely come, and has prepared the promised feast of Luke 12:37. It is the blessedness promised to come at the end of the 1335 days (about 1874) of Daniel 12. Those who have experienced the joys of this feast, since the unfoldment of truth at that time, know that He has come. They have heard the “knock” and opened their hearts, and are feasting with their Lord (Rev. 3:20). The fact of seeing these things has refreshed the hearts of God’s people. They are strengthened against the scepticism and human philosophies, theories, delusions and deceptions of this sad day, by the clearer knowledge of the Divine plan of the Ages. They are thus enabled to stand the severe tests of faith in these “days of the Son of Man,” while those who fail to recognise the “knock” seem to prefer the dim light of the dark ages, or when the Church was just emerging from the gloom of Papal errors, to the bright shining of truth radiating from the rising Sun of righteousness. Let us “hold fast that which we have received.” “Continue in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.”-2 Tim. 3:14.

44 PEOPLE’S PAPER. Tune 1st, 1931

PEOPLES PAPER.

Published by the Berean Biblical Institute, at National Bank Chambers, 226 Glenferrie Rd., Hawthorn, Melbourne E1 2,
(Monthly) 2/6 per annum, post paid,

Another year of witness

THE end of the month of April brought to a close another year for the Berean Biblical Institute, and we desire to present the Tract Fund Account as usual, showing the work just completed in co-operation with the dear friends who realise the privilege and joy of service for the Lord and His cause of truth.

- The year past with its many changes in the existing order of things, while the Lord is judging amongst His people preparatory to the establishment of His Kingdom, has no doubt brought its trials and difficulties to all who are walking in the narrow way. We trust, however, that each one has realised that even the hardest experiences for the cause of Christ are evidences of sonship, which having been permitted of the Lord, shall work together for our good, yielding the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto all that are exercised thereby.

While the work accomplished is not large, we render grateful thanks to our Heavenly Father for His blessings in connection therewith, and that under His providential care; through the sacrifices of the friends generally, the various sections of the work have been enabled to continue as in previous years.

One encouraging feature has been the many reports of appreciation of the truth message contained in the "People's Paper," and truly, those who have received the truth into good and honest hearts, find that it satisfies their longings as nothing else could do. There will be no desire for some new theory every now and again with such, but as they continue to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord, the deeper truths open up in all their beauty, in harmony with the foundation doctrines of God's plan of the ages. While the subscriptions to the "People's Paper" have been maintained, there is a deficiency to be made up each year from the Tract Fund toward its cost, as most of our readers know. It would assist the work generally if this extra cost could be relieved as much as possible, and so that all may encourage others to take the "People's Paper" regularly, extra copies are provided free on application, for distribution among likely cases. We wish to express sincere appreciation of all the willing assistance given, both in the preparation and circulation of the "Paper" in the service of the truth; and to remind all our readers that its future work and scope depends mainly upon their co-operation with us in this way.

There has been an increased supply of tracts provided during the year, and this is good evidence of many realising their responsibility and privilege of endeavouring to give to other hearts, something of the gracious hope set before the sacrificing saints of this Gospel Age; and of the glad tidings of the Kingdom that shall be to all people in the Millennial Age. Together with the distribution of the tracts to the homes of the people, free literature coupons in the newspapers have brought many earnest inquiries for further reading matter; good has been done by this means. To every enquirer for literature the "People's Paper" is sent free for three months by way of encouraging the interest, after which it is expected that there will be some further word from those desiring its continuation and who wish to cooperate with us in the service of the Master.

While we recognise that our most important work is respecting our own building up and standing in Christ, and assisting our dear fellow-members in the Body in the same, there will no doubt be many further good opportunities of service to others as the clouds of trouble gather more thickly. Earnest people with failing hearts, on account of the things coming to pass, are now to be found enquiring for some message of comfort, which only the true understanding of God's Word can bring. What a privilege then may still be ours to tell the comforting story of God's love, as the Prophet Isaiah expresses it: "To give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

A good supply of tracts is on hand for all willing workers. Let the sickle of truth be used at every opportunity, and with the return to the cheaper rates of postage on printed matter and books full advantage should be taken of this, wherever it would not be possible to receive parcels by boat. One method of receiving a supply of literature regularly would -be to make request for some to 'be enclosed each month with your "People's Paper."

In addition to the work covered by the Tract Fund Account shown below. there was the printing of a Zulu tract in South Africa from the fund specially contributed for that purpose. account of which was shown in October's "People's Paper" of last year. We fully realise that the contributions to the funds of the Institute represent much of sacrifice and self-denial on the part of the friends generally, and while the expense for the year was not quite covered, we have endeavoured to fulfil our part faithfully in the cause of the truth. We are pleased to hear from all our readers regularly, and ask that we may have their prayers on our behalf in the days ahead, that all may be done to the glory of the Lord and for His cause in this corner of His harvest-field.

TRACT FUND ACCOUNT

To Balance Carried Forward . 33 17 9

.., Donations Received 190 13 5

224 11 2

By				
	Pilgrim Work and Advertising Free			
	Literature	14	8	0
77	Postage ..	14	18	10
77	Free Tracts and Deficiency	92	18	11
'7	"People's General Expense	46	1	2
77	Personal and House	35	1	0
	Balance ••••••••	21	3	3
		.224	1	2

THE END OF THE ROAD.

THE friends in Gawler, particularly Sister Kennewell and daughters, have our sympathy in the great loss to their fellowship and home by the death of our Brother M. Kennewell, who, after a prolonged illness, passed away a few days ago. Our brother was not, may be, very widely known, but he was one loved best by those who knew him best, and he has been a faithful brother gladly using his talents in the service of the truth and as leader of the happy little class in Gawler. Is it not wonderful to think of these who seem to successfully run the Christian race being of that class of whom it is written: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth, they rest from their labours but their works follow them." "Caught away to be for ever with the Lord"

Correspondence

South Australia. 8/3/31. Dear Christian Brother,

I'm enclosing postal note for the "People's Paper," which I should not like to be without. Please forward me two copies each month; also send them as usual to and

The extra money may be used for the Tract Fund. Yours faithfully,

N.J.A.
New South Wales,

April, 1931. Dear Brother in the Master's Service,

You can imagine the joy I received when I got your letter recently. I was wondering if the Bible Students' office was removed from Temple Court, and was waiting patiently for a reply.

You know, brother, I am here alone, a single man, and not a soul to talk to on the Bible. People here are just following the man-made religion, and nothing seems to shift them from it.

I received a "People's Pulpit" here years ago, which first drew my attention to our Lord, but I could not grasp things very well then; still I sent for more of them, and just then the little "People's Paper" you sent was started at Temple Court; so I got Pastor Russell's six volumes and a Bible, also "Foregleams," "Heralds," and several other booklets.

I gave some to friends and kept some, and really at that time there were other religious books and papers sold to me, and among the lot of them I got confused; understand, I am not a learned man, but when I left here in I went to Victoria and carried my Bible with me, but I did not understand it nor the books I carried. I then carried all these from Victoria to Queensland, as I could not part with them, hoping that offered a simple little prayer to our Father through our Lord Jesus, and, brother, really, when I read the "Divine Plan of the Ages" again I saw its beauty still better, and the Bible also. So I came to the conclusion that I had to have many trials of earth first, and to be tired of all sin altogether, so that when I did start to serve the Lord, by His help I may not wish to turn back; and when I offered my simple little prayer I cried like a little child as I felt so small when I did know God truly.

So now I have consecrated my all to Him. Certainly, it is not much, but, still, I yield all with pleasure, for look at His love for those that obey Him—and the promises. Yes, brother, I have read the Bible day and night since I wrote you, and I have discovered wonderful things in it concerning God's children. I have read the Acts, Romans, Corinthians, all the New Testament, the Psalms, and the 23rd Psalm appealed to me, and many others. It is all beautiful when one does understand something of it by the Lord's guidance.

I seem to have entered in the Master's service at the eleventh hour, so I must not delay, but press on. How happy one feels when we know we have the Holy Spirit within our hearts, if when we shed a tear it is a tear of joy. How good it is of our Heavenly Father to confer such an honour to His little flock. We surely feel that we cannot thank Him enough for the light given us through our Lord Jesus.

I am sending you with this, for you to use as best you know. Thanks, brother, for the "Papers," which are very helpful.

I remain, your brother in the Lord, J.B.

New South Wales. Dear Brethren,

Re Will Jesus Come Again in the Flesh?

Some seem to think that Christ will come again in the flesh, in human form. While I do not wish to force my views on any one, for all must be allowed full liberty of thought, to prove the Scriptures for themselves, still we must not teach others what we do not know.

Jesus said, "My flesh I give for the life of the world," and, therefore, it seems to me that to teach that Christ is to come again in the flesh would be accusing both the Father and Son of a mean action, such as few of the fallen human race would be guilty of; that is, take back a gift once given.

I am 75 years of age, and can only recall one case of a gift being taken back. A father had given his son a horse that he could do no good with, but when he saw how the horse turned out he took him back from his son. The horse was taken to Sydney and ran a record race. Someone offered 1600 guineas for him, which was refused. However, as the owner was leading him over some slippery cement the horse fell and broke a leg and so had to be destroyed. So if the Lord takes back His gift it destroys all hope of both the Church and the world.—Yours, etc.,

M.G.

Dear Brother,

He Faileth Not—Zeph. 3:5.

Of our lives I often wonder whose is the most isolated. Here the bush is ever changing and pulsing with life, and radiant in beauty, and a certain peace and sweetness pervades the air, which is lacking in the city. The "wee paper" is to hand, and I think everyone enjoyed the Adelaide Convention. There has been work on every hand, and everyone enjoyed doing something for the Master; and it is just wonderful the joy and happiness it gives the heart in just doing something for the Lord, and for a better understanding of the brethren whom we love so dearly. O, how we should love to serve our Heavenly Father Who has provided such a store of good things for them that love Him (Luke 10:

27). How He has provided for us far exceeding our hopes; glories which even the wise men of old and the holy angels diligently inquired into. (1 Pet. 1:12). For whom were all these great and precious promises of love and bounty being provided for?—2 Pet. 1:4. What zeal and fire these promises should lend our flagging energies; what love they should inspire in our hearts; what fear and dread lest sin should stain our garments; what tenderness and kindness we should show to the ones who are running in the same race; what a plea should ascend to the throne of grace that God will guard, guide and bless all the brethren everywhere.

To-day prophecy is fading away, melting in the light of day; and there seems to be, as it were, a hush, just as it is before a great storm, and all nature seems to be expecting and waiting for the revelation of the sons of God; when every man who will may drink of the water of life freely. (Rev. 22:17).

Let us stir again the love fires in our hearts and plead and exhort one another to . greater deeds of love, and "lift up our heads and rejoice for our redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28); for God is not slack as men count slackness, but He is the rewarder of all those who seek Him (2 Pet. 3:9).

Convey my warmest Christian love to the brethren; remembering, I ask and need the prayers and co-

operation of the class at the throne of grace; “for the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16).

I have chosen this verse for the class (Job 36:7): “He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous, but with kings are they on the throne for ever, and they are exalted.”

May God’s peace and blessing attend you all,

Yours in the one precious hope, O.C.
Scotland, 15/4/31.

Dear Brethren,

Many thanks for nice card received through Bro. —. Re subscriptions, we just meant anything over to go to the general fund, and which would amount to very little.

We do appreciate the little “Paper” very much, and also your kindness in sending the three. We will be very pleased for you to continue sending the three; they being passed round amongst the friends, then sent to someone whom we think will appreciate them.

We are looking forward to Bro. Hoskin’s visit on the 28th inst., and trust it may be a means of rich blessing to all.

Praying the Lord’s blessing upon you all in your labour of love. Your Bro. and Sister by His grace.

Convention Bible Study.

INTRODUCTION IN PHIL. 2:1-3.

THE Apostle is setting forth here, the unity of the Church and the conditions that promote it. His expressions contain loving affection. He poured out, as it were, his whole heart to them, whom, with all his heart he loved, and the object which he aimed at was union of spirit, of purpose, of principle and of love—movement toward the same goal—Phil. 1:27-30.

Verse 1 —“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ.” The thought seems to be, if there be such things as make Christian unity possible. The “if” is not an expression of doubt, but of strong affirmation. The Greek word for consolation has the two senses of “exhortation” and “consolation,” and is closely united to the word “Comforter” in John’s Gospel. Comforting, from two Latin words, means making strong together, and has in it the thought of invigorating, inspiring and filling the soul full of courage and strength: The Holy Spirit comforted the disciples after the death of Jesus by making frightened men bold as lions, by giving joy unspeakable When persecuted, imprisoned, tortured and scattered.

“If any comfort of love.” This is almost equivalent to the word consolation, but having a suggestion of tenderness involved. It springs from Christ’s love toward us, the Greek giving the thought that it is the incentive which love brings.

“If any fellowship of the Spirit.” The thought seems to be, communion of the Holy Spirit, which makes all Christians one, or, participation in the love, joy and peace which the Holy Spirit produces.

“If any bowels and mercies.” The thought is of “tender mercies and compassions”—warmth of love, mutual burden bearing and sympathy with one another in their various trials. The Apostle had suffered much to bring them into possession of these blessings, and it was his joy in seeing the Church he had founded and the Christians he loved fulfilling their mission, and so in verse 2 he urges them to complete his joy by being like minded with himself, having supreme love to God—His cause, and to himself, as he had to God, His cause, and to them —seeking at all times and especially in affliction to act so as to secure the highest possible happiness which their Saviour could impart to them.

“Being of one accord and one mind,” has the thought of being united together in the bond of union, zeal and humility always promoting the honour of their Lord and Master—2 Cor. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:16, 17; Phil. 1:9, 10; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Cor. 3:16; Rom. 8:16; 12:16; 15:5, 6; 1 Cor. 12:4, 13, 14; Col. 3:12-14

On four occasions this Church helped to sustain the Apostle in his poverty and imprisonment—Phil. 4:16. Once at Corinth Paul was manacled in prison and could not support himself as he did in other places. The Philippian Church sent him gifts ‘by Epaphroditus.

Verse 3.—“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory,” Calvin says, “Always in discord the door is open to Satan for spreading unholy teachings, for the repelling of which the chief defence is unity. Never act from separate interests. One of the greatest enemies of Christian unity or the mind of Christ is the party spirit, the spirit of contention—not amicable discussion which is wise and helpful, but personal parties and divisions. Let every member fear and labour for the welfare of the whole—do nothing so as to promote your own reputation. —Gal. 5:25, 26; Rom. 12:16; Phil. 1:1-17; James 3:14. Vainglory—personal advantage, wishing to be prominent rather than for the good of Christ’s cause. The victory comes by a character exactly opposite to the destroyer, ill lowliness of mind, not seeking personal honour, but only the cause.

FEAR NOT, LITTLE FLOCK.

(Convention Address). Luke 12:32.

WHAT endearing words, so sweet, so simple, so full of meaning and what comfort they bring to the heart in this day of fear! They remind us of a mother who hearing a cry in the night, rises swiftly to tend the one she loves. 'Faking the trembling one in her arms and telling it to fear not, while she rocks it to sleep on her breast.

How many times we are told in the Scriptures to fear not, and our Saviour must have realised the great power fear would have over the human mind when He told His little hand of faithful followers so many times to fear not

From whence comes fear, and what makes one fear? The first intimation we have of fear in the Bible is where Adam and his wife hid themselves in the Garden of Eden. So we see that fear comes from a knowledge of sin. Once sin enters the heart we fear. John, in ch. 11:14, 15, says: "Put iniquity away . . . and thou shalt not fear." When iniquity leaves the heart fear departs with it.

What a persistent and formidable foe fear is. It attacks from every direction. It is the imp and progeny of sin, and where it hides the child of God may he sure that the Adversary is working very hard to stumble the unsuspecting one: Nevertheless, a godly fear is necessary in the composition of a true Christian character, for the child of God must fear to do evil, to wound the feelings of a 'brother, and should reverence and fear God. Fear makes a splendid watchdog, which should warn if any evil approaches the heart, but it should never repose in the heart.

How strange that in a day of full and plenty, with garner of wheat overflowing, fat cattle and sheep by the million, fruit weighing the branches to the ground, grapes in abundance in a land flowing with milk and honey, and everything that should gladden the heart of man, that fear grips the heart, leaving a dreadful feeling of unrest and insecurity.

Never in our lives do we need faith and perfect trust in God more than we need it to-day. Men seem to have lost faith in God, and evil and vice abound. What a vivid picture St. Paul paints of the men of to-day, when he declares that they would wax worse and worse; that in the last days trying times should come, for men would be lovers of self, money-lovers, boasters, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, accusers, without self-control, ferocious, rash, self-conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than God, having a form of piety but denying the power thereof; and from all such he exhorts us to turn away.

O the blessedness and peace that reigns in the heart of the children of God, who look to the Father with the faith of a little child, never doubting that the Divine hand that has supplied the wants of to-day, will also provide the needs of to-morrow ! As the mother runs to the aid of her sick child, even so, God will come quickly to the aid of those who call upon Him, and His best gifts are to those who have perfect faith and implicit trust in Him. Our Saviour teaches this lesson. When He Was with His disciples on the lake of Galilee, a storm arose, lashing the waves to fury; and in the midst of the tempest the boat had sprung a leak and the disciples were in great peril. In fear and dismay they ran to our Saviour and found Him sleeping peacefully. 'n' 114 awakened Him, saying, "Master, Master, we perish." Then, arising, He rebuked the wind and the raging of the water, and there was a great calm. And He said unto them, "Where is your faith?" In this case the disciples' fear was caused by a want of faith. Had they had perfect faith in their Master, they, too, could have slept peacefully and would have known no fear.

The Psalmist gives us a splendid pen picture of that storm in the words, "They that go down to the sea in

ships and occupy their business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep. For He commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind which lifteth up the waves thereof; They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths. They reel and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble and He delivers them out of their distress. He maketh the storm a calm so that the waves thereof are still" (Psa. 107:23-29). It may be that our Saviour had previously been discussing these powerful words of the Psalmist, and to try the effect of His teachings and to test their faith had permitted the raising of the storm. Even so it is today, amid all the gathering gloom and the banking of the storm clouds, when men stagger and reel under the power of the Divine hand.

Although the storms are of a different character, they are purposely sent by God to try our faith, and to see if we have perfect faith and implicit trust in Him. O, if we could only have that sweet love and trust in God, which even little children teach us every day by their confiding faith in us.

We see many instances where our Lord tested His disciples and gave them warnings. After Peter had made his avowal of love, our Lord had warned him that he would deny Him, and we all know the result. Jesus, revealing Himself to St. Paul on the road to Damascus, told him plainly that he would suffer many things for His Name's sake. And as we follow the Apostle Paul in all his wanderings, we see him buffeted from pillar to post, and treated by some as the scum of the earth. We follow him to prison, and in depths oft, five times he received forty stripes save one, thrice he was beaten with rods, once stoned, thrice shipwrecked, in perils often, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, and yet, in spite of all this formidable list of fears and sufferings he counts them all as light afflictions. So real was his faith, so great his love and loyalty to his Master, that fear could find no place in that noble heart. We realise that the many things he suffered acted as the chisel of persecution that shaped that noble character into a gem of loveliness, which has so endeared him to all believers.

As we look back over the mist of years and recall the wondrous words of the Apostle which have shed a halo of glory around the cross of Christ, reaching numberless hearts, stimulating and comforting, and leaving an impression which is the reflex of Christ's glorious character, let us step forward bravely and courageously into the future, -and "fear not."

He Giveth Quietness.

When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? And who but He, the ‘God of all comfort,’ can give quietness in the midst of tumults which rise upon the soul like sudden storms upon the sea? like ocean mariners in peril, we cry unto Him, and He bringeth us to the desired haven—blessed haven— of quietness and peace in God.

“What is the cry Which brings this answer of peace? It is not a prayer that all occasion for disturbance shall 1:” remove,, for it is not always the divine will to bring peace to the human spirit in that way; it is not always the best way. But there is a cry which never fails to bring the quietness in which none can ‘make trouble.’ It is a prayer for sweet, trustful, loving acquiescence in the will of God.

“‘May thy will, not mine, be done;
May thy will and mine be one;
Peace I ask—but peace must lie,
Lord, in being one with Thee.’

“What is it which disturbs my spirit? Is it anxiety about my work, my finances, my reputation, my friends? Suppose my Father in heaven should hear my prayer and remove every apparent cause for unrest in regard to one or all of these matters to-day. That would not give settled peace, for in a life so full of uncertainties as this, new occasions of anxiety would probably arise to-morrow.

“But if I say, ‘Lord, let each one of these matters which concern my peace of mind so closely fie under Thy control; order all entirely according to Thy will. for “Thou art my Father and my Friend; Thy will is that Thy children should have the very best in all things; and Thou knowest what is best for me,’ what a place of rest is that ! How the sense of too heavy responsibility rolls off; how the distracting care is shifted from the heart too weak to bear it to the strong shoulder upon which the government of all things rightfully and easily rests.

“If this experience of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price, is not realised at once, we must not be discouraged. It is not only of a great price as to value, but it often costs a great price to gain it.

“It follows successive battles. often repeated self-surrender. and multiplied trials in which the unfailing care and love of God have been clearly manifested. We were Watching the sea waters under the north-east wind; how disturbed and dark they were! Suddenly, with a fierceness that seemed cruel, the rain fell in torrents, and the unresisting waters grew perfectly calm as under an overwhelming surprises When the storm had passed, the setting sun shone gloriously, and the quieted waters were beautiful ill colors of rose and gold.

“Nature has its spiritual correspondences. Surprise comes upon surprise, sudden, overwhelming. The spirit which once tossed restlessly in chafing winds of lesser trials sinks in sweet submission under heavier griefs. We learn that even in the storm God was, and at last His conscious love. His abiding presence, His unvarying peace—the beauty of Godlikeness—glorify the character and life.”—Selected.

Hitherto the Lord hath blessed us,
Guiding all the way.
Henceforth let us trust Him fully,
Trust Him all the (lay.

Hitherto the Lord hath loved us,
Caring for His own;
Henceforth let us love Him better,
Live for Him alone.

Hitherto the Lord hath blessed us,
Crowning all our days.
Henceforth let us live to bless Him,
Live to show His praise.

FR.H.

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