



Volume LVI No. 5 MELBOURNE, OCTOBER — NOVEMBER, 1973

Is There Salvation After Death?

The subject of salvation is really the most important presented and explained to us in God's Word, because however true and beautiful other features of the plan of God may be, without salvation none of the human family would be able to enjoy and benefit from them for more than the few years of this present life. The Apostle Paul had this thought in mind when he stated—"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." (1 Cor. 15:19.) Paul would reason —If there is not real, lasting salvation, which continues in the hereafter, then we have cause to be most miserable.

Then the question may be presented to our minds —What do we mean by salvation? The main meaning of the Greek and Hebrew words, from which our English word "salvation" is translated, is—"rescue or safety". And someone may ask—Rescue or safety from what? Our Lord's words give us the answer—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16.) The Greek word which is translated by our English word "perish" means—"to destroy fully."

In other words, it means death, lasting death, with no thought at all of consciousness. So, the salvation mentioned in the Bible means, to be rescued or made safe from death, from destruction.

Inasmuch as every member of the human race has been condemned to death in Adam, the matter of salvation will have to be faced, sooner or later, by every man, woman and child who has ever lived; and the Lord be praised that it is this way, because every human being will thus have an opportunity for salvation—to be rescued, made safe from destruction: as the Apostle Paul so clearly declared—"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." And "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (1 Cor. 15:22; Heb. 2:9.)

The majority of our readers will remember one of Sankey's hymns—"Rescue the Perishing"—and this title really gives the correct thought Abehind the word "salvation", so long as *we* remember that perishing means destruction. Probably the compiler of the hymn had the thought that if people were not rescued in this present life they were lost, condemned to eternal torment. This idea is both unscriptural and unreasonable, as any school child can prove from the Bible.

Quoting from the words of Jesus, when He was speaking with the woman of Samaria, we read in John 4:

22—"Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews". Someone may say, That seems strange, why was salvation, or rescue from death, destruction, only for the Jews at the time Jesus spoke? The instructions which our Lord gave to His twelve disciples may assist: He declared—"Go not into the

way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” (Matt. 10:5, 6.) Also Jesus’ reference to Himself is enlightening, as found in Matt. 15. 24-1 am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

The Apostle Paul, looking back to the time of Jesus’ first advent and before, stated—”What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way; chiefly, because unto them were committed the oracles (utterances) of God.” (Rom. 3:1, 2.) Again, in speaking of his kinsmen according to the flesh, Paul declared—”Who are the Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all. God blessed for ever.” (Rom. 9:4, 5.)

The above quotations help us to understand what John meant in John 1:1 1—”He came unto his own (Israel) and his own received him not.” The nation of Israel had been God’s chosen people for centuries, and Christ was sent to them, as their Messiah, to give them the opportunity for salvation to the heavenly kingdom, prior to all other nations. This was surely a great privilege which the Israelites as a whole did not appreciate, as shown again by the statement of Acts 13:45--”When the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spoke against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye have put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” (See also Eph. 2:11-13.)

A further statement by the Apostle Paul is most enlightening in connection with our subject, as found in Rom.

1:16—”For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek”—Gentiles generally. How clear it is that God determined to give the Jewish people the first opportunity for the heavenly calling, but seeing that sufficient were not worthy of that “so great salvation,” the invitation to believers in Christ from all nations was made operative 31 years after our Lord’s sacrifice unto death, so that the full number of the Bride of Christ may be called, chosen and proven faithful to reign with Christ in His heavenly kingdom.

Now, it may be asked, What happens to those Jews who rejected Jesus at His first advent, who had the opportunity to hear the “gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth”? Following the words of advice which our Lord gave to His disciples in Matt. 10:6, where He directed them to preach the message to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel” only, we read in verses 14 and 15—”And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city.” It will be seen that the Israelites would be rejecting the light and truth of the Lord in rejecting the disciples of Christ, and so would not be worthy of any special consideration from the Lord as respects the heavenly calling—they had shown their lack of appreciation for such a high honour. Yet, Jesus implied that it would be a tolerable time for Israel in the day of judgment, but more tolerable for the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrhah, because the people of those cities had sinned against much less light and truth.

Through the prophet Ezekiel we have a wonderful account of how God will deal with Israel, Samaria, Sodom and all other nations in the day of judgment—the thousand years of Christ’s reign, when He will judge the world in righteousness. (See Acts 17:31.) In Ezekiel 16, the prophet, speaking for the Lord, after revealing the sins of Sodom and her daughters, declares that God “took them away as He saw good” (verses 48-50), then continues, speaking prophetically to Israel—”Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins; but thou hast multiplied thine abominations more than they, and hast justified thy sisters in all thine abominations which thou hast done When I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then will I bring again the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them. That thou mayest bear thine own shame, and mayest be confounded in all that thou hast done, in that thou art a comfort unto them. When thy sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and *her* daughters shall return to their former estate, then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate.” (Verses 51-55.)

The declaration that the Lord would “bring again the captivity” of Sodom, Samaria and Israel, is more clearly revealed in the Revised Standard Version, which translates verse 53 as follows:—“I will restore their fortunes, both the fortunes of Sodom and her daughters, and the fortunes of Samaria and her daughters, and I will restore your own fortunes in the midst of them.” Thus, God’s prophet was speaking of the great resurrection day in restoring the fortunes of these nations. They shall all “return to their former estate”—come again from the land of the enemy, death—that they may profit from past experiences, for “when the Lord’s judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” (Isa. 26:9.) (See also Ezek. 16:60-63.)

The Apostle Paul confirms the words of the prophet in Romans 11:1, 2—“I say then, Hath God cast away his people? (Since they had rejected the high calling for the heavenly kingdom.) God forbid . . . God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.” No, indeed, after showing that “blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in”—to make up the full number of Christ’s Bride—Paul goes on to state—“And so all Israel shall be saved (shall be resurrected from the death condition); as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob (natural Israel); for this is my covenant unto them (the New Covenant which the Lord will make with Israel at that time), when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel (the high calling for heaven), they are enemies for your sakes (you Gentiles); but as touching the election (by which they were promised, through Abraham, that they should be the earthly seed to bless all other nations), they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” (Rom. 11:25-29.)

Does this mean that Israel and all the Gentile nations will have a second chance for salvation? No, all who will be dealt with in the Kingdom Age will really be having their first, full chance. They were not really touched by the message of the gospel previously (even if they heard the words of Jesus or His disciples; the majority, of course, having never heard Christ’s name), hence were not called for the heavenly kingdom. Our Lord very clearly explained, even respecting those who heard Him—“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” (John 6:44.) By meditating on this statement of our Master’s we are able to see, as never before, that during the Gospel Age (between Christ’s first and second advents), God is drawing to Jesus only those in the right heart condition, If these accept Christ as their personal Saviour they may be prompted by the spirit of God to present themselves in full consecration. It is an individual matter as to who accepts the invitation for the heavenly salvation, but one must first be invited, and having answered the call, all must then be proved faithful unto death to gain the inheritance.

Truly an understanding of the drawing and calling of the members who will make up the Bride of Christ helps us to be sympathetic towards all who now do not show interest in spiritual things; for if God draws only a very limited number to Jesus during the Gospel Age, and the Scriptures affirm that this is so, then the majority of mankind cannot be having any chance for salvation in this life. Their first, full and only chance will be in the Kingdom Age. Our Lord indicated this when He said, “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the words that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.” (John 12:46-48.) The “last day” here mentioned by Jesus will be the judgment day of a thousand years on earth, and how reasonable it is to note that the words (truths, principles) spoken by Jesus at His first advent, will be the standards by which all mankind will be judged in this “last day” prior to the handing back of the kingdom to God, even the Father, when all the obedient will be able to stand before God’s justice, as was the case with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden before sin entered. (1 Cor. 15:24-26.)

Another statement by the Apostle Paul which agrees so fully with the foregoing, is found in 1 Tim. 2:4-6, where we read—“God will have all men to be saved, and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” Strange as it may seem to some people, Paul here states that all men will be saved first, and then brought to a knowledge of the truth. Yes, indeed, they could not be brought to a knowledge of anything while in the death condition; hence, they are saved from death in Adam by a resurrection, and then instructed during the Millennial Age concerning the wonderful truth that “the man Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom (corresponding price) for all, to be testified in due time.” All who then receive this testimony into good and honest hearts (it not having been their “due time” to hear it

previously) will progress up the highway of holiness to human perfection, with life everlasting on the restored earth.

Of course some texts of Scripture are misunderstood and misapplied in connection with this subject of an opportunity for salvation after death. As an example is the passage in 2 Cor. 6; 1, 2—"We, then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee; behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." The Apostle is here referring to the day of salvation for the heavenly calling, and of course the Gospel Age is the only "day" for this; but to imply from this text that there is no hope of salvation beyond the present life for mankind in general is quite erroneous. The Apostle was not dealing with mankind in general, but writing to those who had already received the favour of God, and exhorting them not to receive this favour in vain, for truly, now is the only accepted time for the heavenly calling—during this present Gospel Age, and during the present lifetime of each one called of God and who has responded to that call to walk in the steps of Christ.

How important it is to keep the salvation for the heavenly calling—to the Jew first and also to the Gentiles—separate and distinct from the general salvation for mankind in general on the earth. By so doing, there is no confusion as to whether there is a second chance for salvation after death. It is hoped that the Scriptures used in this article clearly reveal that there is one full chance for salvation for every member of the human family, and no second chance for anyone. Also that the consecrated followers of Christ receive their full chance for the heavenly salvation in this present life, whereas the world of mankind will receive their full chance for the earthly salvation in the resurrection day. Should any of the consecrated followers of the Lord reject the favour of God, and wilfully despise the blood of Christ there would be no further opportunity for salvation for them; they would die the second death. (Heb. 10:26-29.) Likewise with the world of mankind in the judgment day to come: if they refuse to obey the laws of that kingdom, under the favourable conditions of that time with Satan bound and no outside hindrances (Rev. 20:1-3), they must be destroyed in the second death also. (Acts 3:20-23.) Thus God will have perfect and obedient beings in heaven and earth following the kingdom reign of Christ, and even death will then be no more, because all then living will be worthy of lasting life, to God's praise. (1 Cor. 15:25, 26.)

How favoured are the Lord's true people during this "acceptable time" of the Gospel Age, having been drawn of God to accept Christ as their personal Saviour, and then called further to present themselves in full consecration, to walk in the way of sacrifice in the steps of their Master, in hope of the heavenly inheritance, as they prove faithful unto death. While the blessings upon all mankind in the kingdom of Christ on earth will be gracious and perfectly satisfying, even "the desire of all nations" to all in that earthly sphere who have no aspirations for spiritual things, yet the heavenly inheritance will be the glory that excelleth, for the Lord's faithful people now, as expressed by the Apostle—"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man (the naturally minded), the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us (the followers of Christ) by his spirit; for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. 2:9, 10.) It is when we see clearly the two salvations which God provided through Christ, that our hearts surely long to serve such a loving Heavenly Father, and the language of the Psalmist expresses the desire of all who are now yielding their hearts and lives to God in spirit and in truth—"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. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." (Psa. 116:12-15.)

More Value than Many Sparrows

“Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.” (Luke 12:6, 7.)

These words of the Master, which, as verse one of the chapter shows “He began to say unto His disciples first of all,” have no doubt been of very great comfort and encouragement to His true followers who, without such assurance of the care of their heavenly Father, may at times have thought they were wholly forgotten amidst severe trials and persecutions throughout the centuries of the Gospel Age.

Right through this 12th chapter of Luke’s Gospel the same lesson of the assurance of God’s utmost care over the followers of Christ is brought out for the benefit of all who have been, and are yet walking in the “narrow way” of sacrifice in the steps of their Master. Verses 24, 27 and 28 are especially noteworthy—”Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap ... and God feedeth them; how much more are ye better than the fowls?” “Consider the lilies, how they grow . . . Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass . . . how much more will He clothe you, O ye of little faith?”

But is this the only meaning our Lord intended? The question may arise as to why the Lord mentioned the sale of the sparrows—”Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings?”—or as Matt. 10:29 reads—”Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?” Then again, what is the connection between the sale of these birds and “one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.” Why should God be so specially interested in remembering these birds as they “fall on the ground” after their sale at small cost?

From the Old Testament we find that God accepted typical sacrifices of animals and birds as sin-offerings, or even a portion of fine flour when a person was very poor, and these offerings to the Lord (through the priest appointed) made satisfaction for sins in a typical way, prior to Christ’s sacrifice on Calvary. This is explained in Lev. 5:7-11—”And if he be not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring for his trespass, which he hath committed, two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, unto the Lord; one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering. And he shall bring them unto the priest, who shall offer that which is for the sin offering first,” etc. It is of interest to find that the Hebrew word for sparrow is used for all sorts of clean birds, or such whose use was not forbidden by the law; and in most of the passages where sparrow is read, we may understand a bird of any kind.

It would seem that our Lord in speaking to the disciples about “two sparrows sold for a farthing” or “five sparrows sold for two farthings” was reminding them of the typical sacrifices for sin, and in a way fitting to their own cases, which no doubt they would understand—they being men of small means who could not likely offer a lamb for sacrifice. Then He would lead their thoughts from the typical sacrifices which God was still remembering (until Christ’s sacrifice was complete) to the much more important sacrifices, even the privilege of offering themselves as sacrifices through the merit of His precious blood shortly to be shed at Calvary.

It is a truly great privilege for all the consecrated followers of Christ to be counted in with His sacrifice in the offerings for sin, the “better sacrifices” which will indeed take away the sins of the world, all the value or merit being in Christ himself—”Fear not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.” (See Col. 1:24.)

One has stated respecting this subject—”The more I consider Luke 12:6, 7, the more sure I feel that our Lord was indeed referring to the typical sacrifices. Naturally He would often behold these birds being bought and used for the purposes of sacrifice. We know the typical sacrifices were intended to impress that ‘without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.’ Therefore, while our Lord would note sympathetically the fall of the birds, He would rejoice in the Father’s good pleasure being accomplished, in that, then the requirements for atonement were being complied with. How much more, indeed, would God take note of the ‘better sacrifices’ which in His providence are to mean so much in the way of blessing to all people.”

EVENING

Another closing day,
Another setting sun:
What progress have I made?
What duty have I done?

Behold the record, Lord,
and see If I have tried to live *for* Thee,
And where I fail, O pardon me.

Have I in simple faith,
Before Thy gracious throne,
Lived only in Thy strength,
Or trusted in my own?

Behold the record, Lord, and see
If I have tried to live for Thee,
And where I fail,
O pardon me. —Anon.

OUR BIBLE TRANSLATED

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.

The Kingdom a Prize

(Matthew 13:44-52)

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”—Matt. 6:33.

There are precious lessons from the Great Teacher respecting His kingdom in this Scripture from Matthew 13. The parable of the treasure hid in the field, and the parable of the pearl of great price, both picture to us the great value of the kingdom of glory which is ultimately to be established amongst men for the blessing of the world. These parables also furnish lessons of what it will cost to secure a share, a place in that kingdom. A third parable treats of the embryo kingdom; that is to say, the parable of the net cast into the sea, pictures the condition of this present age, during which the elect, or kingdom class, the bride, is being found and gathered by the Lord’s providences.

Treasure Hid in the Field

This is not one of the parables which Jesus expounded. His people, therefore, are left to exercise their judgment of its meaning, under the guidance of the holy spirit and the light shed upon it by other Scriptures. Indeed, there might be more than one application of it correct. For instance, we might apply the parable to our Lord Jesus and say that He bought the whole world at the cost of all He had, and that He purchased the world because of the “treasure” which it contained. And that treasure might consist of a variety of treasures of different values—for instance, the church, the bride class, the Lord’s special “treasure”, and such of the world as will ultimately receive and be blessed by the Messianic kingdom.

But our preference of thought is that the Great Teacher referred, not to Himself at all, but to those whom He instructed. By virtue of His own covenant of sacrifice, the kingdom was already promised to Him, and He, in turn, in the Father’s name, was inviting those who had the ears to hear, and hearts to appreciate, to become members of His bride class—members of His kingdom class.

He recommends that these should view the kingdom after the illustration of this parable. Suppose in their journeying they saw a field for sale at a certain price, and suppose, upon examination of it, they found it to contain a great treasure. The treasure might consist of very excellent soil, especially suited to their purpose, or it might consist of a valuable vein of precious metal, or it might consist of money buried long centuries ago, and forgotten, and not belonging to the owner of the field more than to others who might find it. In such a case, the parable suggests, anyone of ordinary intelligence would be willing to invest everything that he possessed to acquire the title.

So the Master declared to those that heard Him then, and to us who receive His words now, that He has information to give respecting a great treasure, a priceless treasure, which can be obtained, but only by the expenditure of great energy and the investment of everything of value. The great treasure is the share in the Messianic kingdom—that by accepting the terms of discipleship we may become not only sons of God, but if children, then heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord to His heavenly inheritance.

This inheritance was the same as was promised to the seed of Abraham, and we acquired an interest or share in it, not by being the actual seed of Abraham and the actual heirs to the kingdom, but by becoming Messiah’s bride and joint-heir.

When we think how much time and energy are put forth, and how much money and influence are expended to obtain some little, petty earthly honor of worldly renown and glory, and when *we* reflect that these at the most will last but a few years and be unsatisfactory at best, then we can appreciate the better the glory, honor and immortality which God has in reservation for the “called and chosen and faithful”, the bride, the Lamb’s wife.

A Pearl of Great Value

In the days of our Saviour pearls were represented amongst the most precious and most desirable of jewels, and the larger and more nearly perfect the greater its value. The Great Teacher used this familiar matter as the basis for a lesson on the value of the kingdom. The merchant of the parable found a pearl so superior in every respect to all other pearls that he considered it cheap to give everything he possessed to become the owner of that pearl.

This, said the Master, illustrates the value of the kingdom, with its glory, honor and immortality, which I am inviting an elect, saintly little flock to share with me. Those who prize it properly will show their appreciation by the amount they will be willing and glad to pay for it. Whether a man be wealthy or poor, learned or ignorant, influential or otherwise, the cost of this kingdom pearl of great value will be—his all. It cannot be had for less.

The wealthiest or most talented person in the world could not obtain a share in that kingdom if he kept back one single atom of his possessions; the price of the kingdom is self-sacrifice, even unto death, and nothing less will secure it. Nor would any sacrifice that we could make secure a share in this kingdom for us, except as our sacrifice would first be made acceptable in God's sight through the precious merit of our Redeemer's sacrifice, which he finished at Calvary.

The Parable of the Fish Net

We are not to think of the kingdom as like a net, but to understand that the embryo kingdom resembles a fishing experience with a net, in which were gathered all kinds of fish, which were brought to shore and sorted. This is a parable of the embryo kingdom because it relates to a work done in this age, in connection with the finding of the "little flock" who will constitute the kingdom in glory. The

Lord during this age has not been fishing for all kinds of fish; He has not been seeking for all kinds of people.

He has been calling, drawing especially, and dealing with only the elect, only the saintly.

But, incidentally, a variety of other kinds of fish have gotten into the Gospel net, some from worldly ambitions, some because religious systems are a good matrimonial field, others because of social privileges and standing, others because they desire to breathe a moral atmosphere, others because they would use religion as a cloak for business enterprises, etc. But the suitable fish, which the Lord is seeking, which alone will constitute the kingdom class, are those who hear His message with joy and count the cost and appreciate the situation and desire to be "bond servants of the Lord Jesus Christ." They are willing to suffer with Him now that they may be glorified together with Him in His kingdom.

The parable tells us that "when the net was full it was drawn ashore" and the fish sorted. This evidently signifies that there will come a time in the end of this age when the Lord will have gathered a sufficient number of saintly ones to serve His purpose—to complete the number foreordained by the Father to be members of the elect church in glory. Then the fishing will cease. Who can say that the opportunity for entering the "net" as one of the true "fish" of the kind the Lord is seeking may not be almost at an end? Who can say that the Gospel net, with its full assortment of churchianity of every style, will not soon be drawn ashore that the suitable, the elect, may be gathered into the kingdom.

The unsuitable "fish" of this parable correspond with the "tares" of the "wheat and tares" parable. The "furnace of fire" will be the same "time of trouble" which will come upon the whole world of mankind very shortly. The unsuitable fish in the net are all church members—the unprofessing world are not represented in the parable at all.

Jesus asked His disciples if they understood the parable. They answered, yes, and He told them to consider His parables as a householder would consider his reserve of food supplies, from which from time to time truths "both new and old" would be brought.

Our text emphasizes this study. If the kingdom is the pearl, and the treasure, which the Master indicated—if we believe His testimony, then by all means let us show our faith, not merely by professions, but in every act and word. Let us seek the kingdom as the pre-eminent matter of our lives, in comparison with which all other things are inferior, and, as St. Paul declared “not worthy to be compared.” If seeking the kingdom seems to hinder some of our earthly prospects, so much the better. The Master said it must cost us our all. Our earthly considerations we have left in His hands. Let Him apportion our earthly blessings according to His wisdom of what will be most helpful to us in making our “calling and election sure” to a place in the kingdom. (From “Reprints”.)

Faith Healing

There are various schools of faith healing, such as Christian Science, Theosophy, Spiritualism, Pentecostals, and others, such as Hypnotists and healers by suggestion, who make no profession of Christianity at all. Certain men appear to be born with such powers, enabling them to bring relief to sufferers. All will agree that much of the healing done is not by the power of Christ; the question is whether any “faith healing” of today is of the Lord or not.

The fact that most of it is done under such different conditions to the miracles of Christ should be sufficient to cause suspicion. With the Lord and the Apostles they went about doing good, and sought no gain in return. They required no promise of joining their party, no promise that the restored ones would even become Christians. There was no attempt at display. There was the simple delight to do good to God’s glory. “Silver and gold have I none,” says Peter, “but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth arise and walk.” So with the Master, there were no agonising screaming prayers, no jargon of mingled shoutings by several praying aloud at the same time, while others sang hymns. There was no blaming the poor patient for lack of faith. The faith was in the Master and in the apostles, and the wondrous words, “Go in peace and sin no more,” could not be purchased by gold and silver, but they never failed to accomplish their purpose. There were some beautiful incidents of faith on the part of the cured, or by those who sought help for the afflicted. In such instances their faith was rewarded, “Thy faith have made thee whole,” as in the case of the Syro-Phoenician woman, and the faith of the Centurion resulted in the healing of his servant, but the Lord was not depending upon the faith of others for power to do His mighty works.

There was a purpose in all our Lord’s miracles. It seemed but appropriate that He who would one day reign over the earth, as the Great Physician, who would cure all diseases, aches and pains, and wipe away all tears, banish death, and empty the tomb, should during those 3+ years’ sojourn as a man, give some little illustrations of the great blessings which were due at His second presence. Thus we read, “This beginning of miracles did Jesus in

Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory.” (John 2:11.)

There seemed more the necessity also for such demonstrations of power at that time. The Lord was operating with natural Israel; none were as yet begotten of the spirit, and therefore they could not understand spiritual things. The natural mind requires natural demonstration; the Jews naturally looked for such demonstration when Messiah would appear. In this way they would expect to recognize Him as is intimated in John 7:31, “And many of the people believed on him and said, when Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done.”

While such demonstration was necessary at that time, because of the great change of dispensation which was taking place, and particularly because of treating with the natural minded people of God, there was not the necessity for its continuance. In fact, to have continued the acts of healing would surely have thwarted the purpose of the Gospel Age. It would have soon won the popularity of the world, and taken away the reproach of Christ.

That will be just what will happen when the Great Physician takes up His great power, and reigns, and heals the diseases of all the willing and obedient, not only bringing a temporary release from pain and disability, but He will then even destroy death. When righteousness will be so rewarded, the heathen and the sceptics will all be attracted, and the knowledge of the Lord will soon be popular. During this Gospel Age, however, the Lord has not attempted to make the religion of Jesus Christ popular. He has purposely allowed Satan still to reign, and sickness, sorrow, and death to prevail, and His own people to suffer persecution, "They who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." God has purposely permitted such conditions because He has not been desirous of converting the world as yet—that has been quite a mistaken idea on the part of many Christians. If God had desired to convert the world at this time He would doubtless have continued miracles of healing, etc., but the Scripture states that He has only desired to take out a "little flock," "a people for his name," such only as are willing to "suffer with Christ," and be like their great Leader, perfected through suffering. These, far from seeking to escape death, have devoted themselves to death, "as many as are baptised into Christ are baptised into his death." Only if we suffer with Him shall we reign with Him. Such consecrated followers of the slain Lamb are not looking for physical healings; they are rather looking for grace and strength to prove loyal to God in the same way that their Master trod. It is only by having similar experiences that similar character can be attained. The desire is not how to escape suffering but how to be rightly exercised by it.

We see, then, that there was no question for the continuance of miracles of faith healing, etc.; on the contrary, we observe good reasons why such should not be continued. *We* are, therefore, not surprised to find that the power to pass on the gift of miracles was confined to the apostles, and that these gifts passed away with the generation following. It was this power of passing on the gift by the laying on of hands that Simon the Sorcerer desired to purchase. When Philip the Evangelist (not the apostle) had been preaching, and had made converts in Samaria, it was necessary that the apostles should send two of their number along, in order that they might lay their hands upon the converts that they might receive the holy spirit.

The Apostle Paul, after having spoken regarding various gifts of miracles, in 1 Cor. 12:12-31, finishes by saying, "Yet show I unto you a more excellent way." He then proceeds to describe the principal grace of Christian character, and shows that while the gifts of faith, prophecy, and tongues, etc., should pass away, this grace of the spirit would be eternal, and therefore how much more important it is that we should exercise ourselves to attain the fruits and graces of God's holy spirit than that we should be so interested in such gifts of tongues and healing, etc., which were after all the things of childhood, things which were essential only during the church's infancy.

Satan has sought out counterfeits for probably everything in connection with the Christian religion, and we have such a warning in 2 Cor. 11:13-15, "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light, therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as ministers of righteousness." Spiritualists, Theosophists, and Christian Scientists all deny the fundamental doctrine of Christianity and the Cross—the ransom sacrifice for all, and therefore any power of healing they exercise cannot be of God. Regarding other "healers," we find them generally much confused on simple Christian doctrines, and we cannot but think that before God will use a man in any such remarkable way He will first lead him to a clear knowledge of Himself and His word. Others, such as the Pentecostals, do not give evidence of God's holy spirit, the spirit of a sound mind, of peace and joy and moderation, but rather by their fanatical ways in screaming prayers and irresponsible actions and unintelligible mutterings and sometimes railings on the floor, give evidence of demoniacal possession. The great adversary has surely greatly succeeded in bringing in strong delusions one way and another that if it were possible even the elect would be deceived.

No doubt all these poor people think they are right; think they are under the influence of God's holy spirit; but that is just where the great adversary has deceived them. There is nothing in the New Testament to indicate that there would be another Pentecostal shower. There is only "one baptism" of the holy spirit, which came on the Lord Jesus Christ, and flowed down to the church at Pentecost. The only way to participate in this Baptism is by becoming members in the body of Christ by repentance, faith and consecration. "We are all baptised by one spirit into one body."

I WISH THEE GLADNESS!

I wish thee gladness!—gladness, strong, uplifting:

A true, sweet gladness with each fresh-born day:

A gladness which, while landmarks all are shifting,

Remaineth firm: to ne'er be swept away.

I wish thee gladness!--gladness deep, abiding:

Which comes when eyes of faith behold the Lord.

The gladness of a prayerful heart-confiding.

And daily dwelling on God's precious Word.

I wish thee gladness!—quiet, but yet telling:

A gladness which will mark both tone and *face*:

A gentle gladness, fount-like, inward swelling,

And overflowing into streams of grace.

wish thee gladness! Yes, through all life's *sorrow*:

The gladness which, supreme, o'er all can rise:

A gladness which, however dark life's morrow,

Doth have its springs beyond earth's clouded skies!

-- J. Danson Smith.

Faith the Basis of Peace

If we would know the foundation and security of this abiding peace which is able to survive the heaviest storms of life, we have only to look to the teaching and example of the Lord and the Apostles. What was it that held them so firmly and gave them such rest of mind while they suffered? It was their faith—their faith in the Love, Power and Wisdom of God. They believed that what God had promised, He was able also to perform, and that His righteousness and benevolent plan could know no failure. (Isa. 46:9-11; 14. 27.) On the assurance of God they rested. In Him their faith was anchored; and it mattered not how fiercely the storms raged or how they were tossed by the tempests of life while their anchor still held fast to the Throne of God.

In the midst of the Christian warfare let our hearts be cheered and our minds be stayed, not only with such assurances that all the Divine purposes shall be accomplished, but also with such promises of personal favour as these:

“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him, for He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust.”

“Can a woman forget her sucking child? Yea, they may, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have engraven thee upon the palms of My hands.”

“The Father Himself loveth you.”

“It is the Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.”

“Such as are upright in their way are His delight.”

“Delight thyself also in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desire of thine heart”—the peace of God, even in the midst of storm and tempest.

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.

A very good Oxford Bible, with References, India paper, thumb index, Brevier clear type, Persian Morocco binding, is now available at \$10.50.

The Incomparable Christ

He came from the bosom of the Father and was born of a woman. He put on humanity that we might put on Divinity. He became a man that we might become sons of God. He lived in obscurity, only once crossed the boundary of His land, in childhood. He had no wealth or influence. His relations were inconspicuous and unimportant. In infancy He startled a King; in boyhood He puzzled the doctors; in manhood ruled the course of nature. He walked upon billows and hushed the sea to sleep. He healed the multitudes without medicine and made no charge for His services. He never wrote a book, yet not all the libraries of the country could hold the books that could be written about Him.

He never founded a college, yet all the schools together cannot boast of as many students as are His. He never practised medicine and yet He healed more broken hearts than the doctors have broken bodies. He never marshalled an army, drafted a soldier, nor fired a gun, yet no leader had more volunteers, who have under His orders made rebels stack arms and surrender without a shot being fired. Great men have come and gone, *yet* He lives on. Herod could not kill Him. Satan could not seduce Him. Death could not destroy Him, the grave could not hold Him. He laid aside His purple robe for a peasant's gown. He was rich yet for our sakes He became poor. How poor? Ask Mary; ask the wise men. He slept in another's manger. He cruised the lake in another's boat. He rode on another's ass. He was buried in another's tomb. All failed, but He never. The ever perfect One. He is the chief among ten thousand. He is altogether lovely. He is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Books Available

"God's Promises Come True"—\$2.00, plus postage.

"The Divine Plan of the Ages," Cloth bound—\$1.00, including 24c postage. Paper covers-75c, including 24c postage.

"Emphatic Diaglott," New Testament—\$2.00, plus postage.

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