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Hopes and Difficulties of the New Creation

(Convention Address)

WHAT do we know about the new creature, or the New Creation? There are four passages of Scriptures which we wish to read. The first passage is found in 2 Cor. 5:14-17. “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.” Now 2 Cor. 4:7—'But we have this treasure in earthen vessels; that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”

Now let us turn to Col. 3:9-11. “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him; where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all.” It does not matter what nationality a person may be. The trend of propaganda of late has been such as to cause some concern, doubtless, among some of the brethren. But the New Creature does not recognise anything like that. There is no discrimination about class distinctions or such like. There is neither male nor female, so far as the New Creature is concerned.

Now we come to the last passage, Rom. 8:10-14. It suggests fight. It will be a fight, and there will be no apologies. “If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”

Perhaps this topic of the New Creature may sound elementary. We that have been in the Truth for 20 years or longer, think we know all about it. Maybe we do, or did. Why say “we did?” We are at best leaky vessels. We forget. One long ago used an illustration that we are like a collander, we have to keep pouring something in to have anything there at all. So it is necessary for us to have our minds stirred up by way of remembrance. During this Convention we have been reminded of a number of truths that caused us joy in the past, and somehow or other their glamour or beauty became dimmed. But our minds were refreshed when they were drawn to our attention by various brethren; perhaps they dealt with their subjects from a different angle. So this New Creation is a subject of vital concern and we want to analyse it and look into it a little closer at this time.

This idea of a New Creature seems, to the outsider, like a fable, a fantasia, a fairy story. Is the New Creature actual, or is it reckoned? That is a question we might consider. In time of old God spoke to those who loved Him by signs and miracles and wonders, but now He does not speak to us that way. Everything is by faith. It requires the exercise of faith for us to determine whether we are New Creatures. Are we New Creatures? Let us ask ourselves, each one, Am I a New Creature? Are we different from anyone else? If you take any other small body of Christian people, they would be something similar I suppose, perhaps they are a little peculiar about their dress, certain clothing or something of the kind; but there is freedom here, the spirit of liberty. There is no formalism. There are many other things that are different. Well, how are we different from anyone else? There are the same physical .expressions, with variations. The contours of our bodies may be different, but nevertheless we cannot determine about the New Creature that way. How are we going to determine it? Is it because we are Bible Students? Does that make us a New Creature?

“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things have passed away, all things are become new.” That is the answer to it. Are we in Christ?—You can supply the answer.

There is a Scripture which says, “Of His own Will begat He us with the word of Truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures.” Now what precedes this begettal? We know full well that there comes a time when we realise our undone condition, we have struggled and tried to get out of the meshes of the Adversary ourselves, but the way has been opened up to us to proceed, through faith in our Lord we can get deliverance, by various processes we receive the full benefits of justification, and by faith in Him we consecrate our all. Then we are begotten of His spirit.

Now that is something. That is not reckoned. That is actual. There is a certain amount of reckoning to be done before we are finished. But that begetting is actual.

Now let us look at the matter in a nutshell. We have the new mind dwelling in us, and controlling our thoughts and words and our actions as far as possible in the present life. Then the deficiency is made up through the benefits of our Lord Jesus’ righteousness allotted on our behalf. He makes up for our deficiency. “If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away, all things are become new.” From God’s standpoint it is a New Creature, but still from the other standpoint it is a reckoned matter. That begettal has to be supplemented with nourishment and development, so that it can come forth to the birth. So there will be a fair amount of reckoning going on in order to demonstrate whether we are worthy to be brought to the birth as individuals.

Now we would say that with these old bodies, these old frames with their disabilities and peculiarities, the experience we are gaining and will gain is to be of untold value to us when we reach the goal, when we are born of the spirit. And there is another reason, so that the excellency will be of God, and not of us. We will realise that we are what we are by the grade of God, and that it is through Him that we have been brought to the birth and given such a wonderful and glorious reward.

So much now for the New Creation. The new mind is really in control, or should be, has to be, but the old man tries to assert itself, and consequently we have this treasure in earthen vessels. We have obligations. We will consider some of these obligations which come first.

Of course, primarily the spiritual ones come first, but supplementary to these there are certain obligations that we cannot disregard. It is no use thinking, I am a New Creature. I am not going to worry about the home and so on; well, that is not done. Your obligations first go to your parents, those to whom you are indebted for life. Certain responsibilities have to be discharged, you have to think of them and look after them. Then there are brethren according to the flesh, and obligations have to be attended to. You cannot let them slide because you are a New Creature. There are obligations to all around, too. Those obligations would still be there, from the New Creature’s standpoint. There is a beautiful story I heard recently concerning the north of Canada, where the place was covered with ice and snow. There was a party of hunters, it was getting near nightfall and they wanted to get across the lake. Their old Indian guide was busy chopping away with an axe, and they were getting quite anxious about it, and took him to task saying, “We want to get across before the darkness overtakes us.” The Indian said, “I was busy cutting some kindling ready for the next lot of people who come along. It is a way we have here, to leave a little more than we found.” Now that is only a simple illustration, but when we visualise the conditions that prevail, those people would have been in difficulties had it not been for the old Indian. So it is in our dealings with the world around, it is our duty to see that we help and assist, and do not disregard our obligations. •There are certain obligations to those in the world around.

Now we come to our spiritual obligations. Primarily, of course, they are to God, because He is our Father. “Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth,” and “Worthy is He to be praised,” because all that we are and have and hope for is as a result of His loving kindness. Hz it was who lifted us from that condemnation, and only too well we sense the relief to get away from the toils of Satan; what a hard taskmaster he was, and how exacting he was!

Surely if there is no reciprocity on our part or any sense of loving the Lord and doing all we can for Him, then there is something wrong.

Then, too, we have our Lord Jesus, and of course naturally we confess Him before men and seek to discharge our obligations there. But, you know, it is a good while since the Master was here. We think, if we had been there with Him what wouldn’t we have done! Well, how are we behaving with the members of His body, the brethren? If we show our love for them, we are showing it for Him. Do we love the brethren? “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he bath not seen?” (1 John 4:20). But I do not hate my brother, you will say. No. Did God hate Esau in the sense that we think of “hatred?” No, He loved Jacob, and Esau He hated, but that word “hated” means “loved less.” It means, in John, if we love our brother less, we are in darkness. It implies that we must have love for all the brethren, 100 per cent. If not, we are in

darkness.

Are we to know them after the flesh or after the spirit? —that is the determining factor, and that is where our obligations lie, after the spirit. Do we love the Truth, the Lord? Do we put ourselves out to attend the meetings? Strive to be in all activities? Do we give evidence of the spirit? We have to love our brethren according to the spirit 100 per cent. If we do so, we serve the Lord Christ.

Now maybe you have heard the difference between a specialist and a general practitioner. A specialist is supposed to know more and more about less and less. A general practitioner is supposed to know less and less about more and more. Well, we have to be specialists.

Now having begun in the spirit, are we to finish in the flesh? We made progress, maybe, in our spiritual warfare, and are we going to finish in the flesh, look at the brethren according to the flesh, and tittle-tattle about them? If we do, we are looking at them from the fleshly standpoint. If we are going to become specialists, we are going to know more and more about less and less. We will specialise on the spiritual things. It is a grand thing to have a knowledge of the Truth in its minutae, all its details. But you know, though we have all knowledge and have not love, it profiteth us nothing. The thing that will count will be the New Creature. So do you wonder that there is so much specialisation upon the New Creature? It has been dealt with from different angles right throughout the Convention. It is essential that we should specialise, and we should see to it that we bend every endeavour that this New Creature is developed. We will not ignore our obligations to our natural relatives, but we will specialise in seeing that the New Creature is nourished and developed and brought to the birth.

Now we come to the hopes of the New Creation. What are the hopes? Well, what do we. find? The hopes in the Scriptures are to this effect. “Know ye not that through much tribulation shall ye enter the kingdom?” “He that findeth his life shall lose it; but he that loseth his life for my sake and the Gospel’s, the same shall obtain a hundredfold in this life, and in that to come, eternal life.” “The servant is not above his master; if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.” Those are the hopes we have before us in this life.

Well, what about the next life? There is the hope of that body to be clothed upon, which the Apostle Paul was so concerned about. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is,” a glorious spirit being, the express image of the Father’s person, “whom no man hath seen or can see.” We can only conjecture what this new body will be like. It will far transcend principalities and powers, it will be something glorious. It is a difficult thing for us to appreciate these things, but there are the promises, showing you that it is no idle tale or fable. There are many exceeding great and precious promises.

The part that appeals most is that if we attain that glorious position of becoming New Creatures, actually born, then we will be joint-heirs with Christ to constitute that righteousness government, that administration for a New Order—not a New Order like that we hear of around the world, (we know how impotent their new orders are), but a form of government that will be equal to the occasion. It will have Divine wisdom directing it, and incidentally the part we play in it will depend upon how we use this old natural body which we have to practise on. The experience we have had will be of great value to us in helping the poor, groaning creation out of the condition into which Satan has precipitated them. Many of us, when we see the misery and suffering around us, and sense to a greater degree the suffering caused by war, feel we would like to be able to help them some way or other, and we strain at the leash, so to speak. The groaning creation are waiting—for what? “For the manifestation of the sons of God.” These, Christ and His Church will be instrumental in removing this pall over the whole world and ushering in the era of peace and joy and happiness.

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the glories which God bath in reservation for them that love him” supremely, when the work of cleaning up this earth eventuates. Who knows what work is in the future associated with the Master? This earth is going to be handed over to restored mankind, they will be kings in the earth themselves. Men will be lords of creation then, the creation of earth. We will be associated with the Master in ways we can only conjecture and surmise. But there is sufficient, I am sure, to warrant us in striving with more earnestness to seek to make our calling and election sure.

Friends, it is a privilege to be allowed by the Lord to be present with you. The changing conditions in the world, and the fact that brethren who were with us last Convention are no longer here, makes one strain every effort to contact the brethren and help them, because we know that “the time is at hand.”

Edition of “The Plan of God—in Brief.”

An edition of the book “Plan of God—in Brief’, is being published this month. Containing 104 pages of most instructive information about God’s great plan of salvation, this book is most appropriate for witness work. Friends who are able to use this book can receive supplies almost immediately and special rates of cost apply to those who purchase for resale or free distribution. Prices are : Single copy 1/- post paid, 6 copies for 5/- post paid. Quantities at lower rates.

Proposed New Edition of “Foregleams of the Golden Age.”

As the second edition of “Foregleams of the Golden Age” is nearly exhausted, and as it is such a great help in spreading the light of truth, this enquiry is presented to all readers to determine how many copies they would be prepared to take if a new edition were published shortly. Some friends may be prepared to order a dozen copies or more, others may order up to half a dozen and still others may order one or two copies; whatever your desire may be, kindly let us know. It is not possible to quote the likely price as yet, but it will no doubt be somewhat dearer than the present edition, in view of ruling prices. If you wish to help in this matter, and continue to assist others with the truths contained in this book, let us hear from you shortly.

Tracts Available.

Two newly printed tracts are available for all our friends who can use them to advantage. The one “Refrain Thy Voice from Weeping, and Thine Eyes from Tears,” contains a helpful message of comfort to all the bereaved, as well as being suitable for general use. The smaller tract, “The High Calling of God,” is also a very good message for general use. It is not intended that these tracts be placed indiscriminately, but rather delivered where there is desire for help in understanding the Bible. These tracts are free, being supplied from the General Tract Fund.

Hymns of Dawn with Music.

A supply of “Hymns of Dawn” with music, is now on hand. Containing all the original hymns (333 in number) , with an Appendix of 27 additional hymns, it makes a very nice selection. Bound in strong paper covers, it is priced at 3/9, post paid.

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PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST’S KINGDOM.

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

(Monthly) 3/. (70 cents) per annum, post paid,

While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord’s Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression used, either in the correspondence or in the sermons reported.

A Cross (a) on the wrapper indicates that the Subscription to “Peoples Paper” is overdue.

General Report B. B. Institute.

EACH year in the June issue of “Peoples Paper” a report is presented on the work of the Berean Bible Institute for the twelve months period ending at the close of April. As in the daily life and each opportunity of direct service for the Lord the thoughts of His people are lifted up in thankfulness to God for all blessings received, how much more is the desire to express gratitude and praise to our heavenly Father when reviewing, even briefly, twelve months of favours and priviliges at His hands.

By the Lord’s providence and grace, and the generous and loving help of a goodly number of the brethren the work of the Institute has continued and. some features have increased in the year past. This is encouraging, especially in view of the world-wide unrest following the conclusion of the World War.

The work generally is assisted by our monthly publication, “Peoples Paper and Herald of Christ’s Kingdom.” This is clearly indicated by the expressions of appreciation of the “Paper” from month to month, and we sincerely thank all friends who contribute to the pages of the journal, including those whose Convention addresses are published. While some increase in subscriptions to “Peoples Paper” is in evidence this periodical still needs support from the General Fund to cover its production. However, quantities of the “Paper” are supplied free in the witness work. Further, all names received for literature, from the radio witness and other sources, receive at least three months’ free copies of the “Peoples Paper.”

Since the end of the war more printing paper is obtainable and more tracts have been made available; two new tracts are procurable, namely, “Refrain Thy Voice From Weeping,” and “The High Calling of God,” as well as supplies of others. As these are much more expensive than in pre-war times, it is felt they should be placed with descretion. Kingdom Cards can be used liberally, and new printings of these will be made shortly.

The distribution of Consolation Cards by the Classes and various friends to bereaved persons, has been continued with some real good being done. This work can be taken up to advantage by others of our friends; all that is necessary is to mail the cards to those who have suffered bereavement and the invitation is thus given to apply for free literature. These cards, as well as the tracts and Kingdom Cards, are supplied free to all who can use them in the service of the Lord.

The holding of public meetings for preaching the Gospel message has been undertaken more over the past year, and the results have been most encouraging. Where good advertising is done over the air and in the press, drawing attention to timely subjects for the lectures, good attendances have been secured and good interest manifest. As a result of these public lectures, assisted by the broadcasts for some time previously, a Bible Class has been formed in the city of Geelong, Victoria. There is nothing more refreshing to the Lord’s people than to find a sincere desire on the part of others to come to the Lord and learn of His precious truths, and also devote their lives to His service. It is the great privilege of all the brethren to be alert in their opportunities of proclaiming “in season and out of season” the glad message of salvation which so rejoices their own hearts.

As in former years, supplies of books and booklets have been despatched over a wide area, including overseas. At this time an edition of the book, “Plan of God—in Brief’ is being published, and another edition of “Foregleams of the Golden Age” is contemplated. Further reference to these publications is made in this issue. A further supply of the children’s book “The Ten Camels” has been printed in recent months. Books and booklets are supplied at reasonable prices, with reduction for quantities. Those friends who can arrange to devote some time to the distribution of books and booklets—in the colporteur work —should surely do so. Full information is available upon application.

The General Tract Fund below reveals the amount of voluntary financial assistance received from our friends towards the general work, as unto the Lord and by His providence. Many sacrifices no doubt are indicated in these contributions, especially in view of the fact that the Lord’s people are of humble means. To be faithful in that which is least is the Lord’s requirement of His people, wherever they see the opportunities of service for Him. So, in the expenses shown in the General Fund, these have been undertaken in service of our Lord to the best of our ability, and in ways which it is felt would be pleasing to Him. It will be seen that considerable assistance to the General Fund has been transferred from the Reserve Fund, thus enabling more to be done over the past year in the general work. The Reserve Fund was made possible by a generous contribution of earthly means to the service of the Lord.

While the opportunities for service of the truth are with us still, it is surely the greatest privilege possible for all the dear friends to give of their best to the Master’s cause. With the conclusion of the global war, the spasms of unrest throughout the world seem to be on the increase, all of which are indications that this “present evil world” and the harvest time of this Gospel Age are drawing to a close. While all who love the Lord supremely continue to pray,

“Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as in heaven,” they also are diligent in these last days of service on earth, by the Lord’s grace, seeking to make their own calling and election sure, and being real ambassadors for Christ on behalf of others who have hearing ears. The prayers of all friends are requested upon the work, that the Lord’s guidance and blessing may rest upon the efforts, to His praise and glory. “God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be . . . . followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” (Heb. 6:10-12.)

General Tract Fund.

To Credit Balance, 1st May, 1945	£ 14	18	4
„ Donations.....	202	1	2
„ Transferred from Reserve Fund ..	230	0	0
	£446	19	6

By Free Booklets and Books.....	8	14	1
Free Tracts and Deficiency “People’s Paper”	81	2	8
IP Extra Printing Paper, Circulars, etc. ..	18	13	6
PP Advertising : Free Literature Coupons ..	21	17	0
PP Public Meetings : Advertising, Hall Rents	39	13	5
PP Towards Personal, and House Expense	175	0	0
PP General Expense (Office, etc.) ..	32	16	1
PP Postage.....	37	5	1
PI Pilgrim Work	14	10	9
PI Consolation Cards	3	7	6
Balance..	13	19	5
	£446	19	6

Reserve Fund.

To Donation .	1 600	0	0
By Transferred to General Tract Fund	£230	0	0
„ Transferred to Radio Fund	50	0	0
	320	0	0
600 0 0			

The Radio Witness.

IT is now nearly 32 years since the radio witness in this land commenced, and this opportunity of making known the message of the Kingdom is considered another privilege in the service of our Lord. Thankfulness to God for His Blessings in connection with this work is sincerely rendered, as well as gratitude for His overruling providence in making the means available, through His sacrificing people who delight to serve His cause, enabling this witness to continue in these days. In addition to the hearty co-operation of the friends in Australia, sincere appreciation is again expressed of the assistance also of our friends in U.S.A., in the radio work in this land.

While the responses to the witness over the air in the past year have not been as numerous as formerly, yet it can be truly said that they have been more satisfactory, in that the results of the message going over week after week are more in evidence in revealing those friends whose interest and appreciation of the message of the Kingdom is sustained and established.

The main object of the broadcasts is of course to encourage the interested to study their Bibles for themselves and the offering of the printed Dialogues after each session and supplying other literature has been the means of bringing quite a number to the knowledge and appreciation of the truth.

Changes in the radio stations are often necessary and desirable. The originating station for these sessions in Australia, 3GL Geelong, is the only one which has continued right through, and it has been by far the most productive of results of any station used in Australia. Commencing on Sunday, 2nd June, at 10.15 a.m., two Tasmanian stations, 7HT Hobart and 7EX Launceston, will broadcast the Frank and Ernest Dialogues every Sunday. Also on 2nd June,

3B0 Bendigo will again be used for our sessions at 10 a.m. A previous twelve months on 3B0 was quite satisfactory, so that the inclusion of this station again should revive the interest of a number in that area. It is hoped also that the first use of the Tasmanian stations may bring good results. The friends in Perth have continued steadily with the sessions over 6KY since the change to this station some time ago, and in addition to the Sunday morning Dialogues at 10.15, a Sunday evening service at 7.30 p.m., on the first Sunday in each month, through 6KY, is another good opportunity of

making known the glad message of the Kingdom in Perth.

At the end of this month, stations 2HD Newcastle and 3SH Swan Hill will discontinue the broadcasting of the Dialogues. To replace the former station enquiries are continuing in the Sydney area, and it is hoped to engage a station there if possible. As on a former occasion, 3B0 Bendigo will cover much of the area reached by 3SH Swan Hill. Since the sessions discontinued over 5AD Adelaide and SPI Port Pixie last October no headway has been made in securing other stations in South Australia apart from the promise of another station manager of first preference when they have time available.

In all the above, activities it is fully realised that apart from the Lord's blessing upon the efforts no good would result; He alone can give the increase, but He does use His sincere and energetic people to promote the well-being of still others who have ears to hear and hearts to appreciate. the glad tidings of great joy. It is the privilege of all who have a talent of any kind to use it faithfully in the service of the Lord. Advertising of the broadcasts is essential for results and this can be done by the Radio Cards, newspapers and by word of mouth, in addition to the usual Pointers supplied to each of the radio stations.

In addition to making the copies of every broadcast available to listeners, considerable numbers of these printed Dialogues are sent out to readers of the "Peoples Paper" every month. Personal application is all that is necessary for other friends to receive these Dialogues, the copies being supplied by the Radio Fund, and additional printings by the General Fund when the Dialogues are used as tracts; and so the work goes on, by the Lord's grace.

The Radio Fund below reveals the voluntary support received for the radio work over the past year, and it is most encouraging that so many friends are desirous of assisting in the cause of making known the Gospel of Christ over the air. All expenses have been fully covered and with a transfer of L50 from the Reserve Fund a credit of L54/17/3 is carried forward for this work

in the year ahead. Would all dear friends join in prayer for the Lord's guidance and blessing on this feature of the work in this section of the harvest field, that His will may be done and His name glorified in our midst.

Radio Fund.

By Radio Station-3GL, 3SH, 3B0, 2CA 2HD, 5AD, 5P1 for various periods	37310	5	
to ' 1st May, 1946,	1 3 462	6	
Advertising—Radio and other Papers, and Cards for distribution	7117	0	
Recordings	4218	0	
" Freight on Records	312	2	
„ Printing Quantities of Dialogues	190	0	
" Travel and Sundries	70	6	
Bank Charges	110	0	
" Balance	5417	3	
	£54617	5	

Additional Memorial Reports.

Perth, W.A.

On Sunday, 14th April, the Perth friends gathered as usual to remember the sacrifice of our Lord and Saviour. In the afternoon an appropriate study (1 Cor. 11:23-30), reminded us of His great sacrifice on our behalf and also of the part we are so privileged to play in common-participation with Him. The evening service began at 6.15 when we were reminded again of these truths and partook of the emblems which so beautifully symbolise His broken body and shed blood and our union with Him.

Canberra, A.C.T.

Our Memorial season has again passed away. It was very nice to meet with the brethren here again and talk over our Saviour's death and note the meaning of it all to us. How grateful we are that the opportunity to gain life everlasting is now ours. What a wonderful blessing it will be to have it free from the ills and disabilities associated with this present

existance, and further to have inherant life. The prospect before us is certainly one that stimulates our desire and endeavour to follow in His steps, to have. His spirit to a marked degree. May the precious promises in God's Word be ever a comfort and consolation to all of His people in their entire walk of life.

There were nine who partook of the emblems here this year; the expressions of pleasure because of the opportunity to do so, by those young in the truth was an encouragement to the older ones to continue to search for all those who have the Lord's spirit even though they may be but one here, one there.

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Of Interest and Help to All.

Vic., Tas. and N.S.W. Time. Sundays

Geelong, 3GL, 222 Metres 10 a.m.

Swan Hill, 3SH, 226 Metres 10 a.m.

Bendigo, 3B0, 309 Metres 10 a.m.

Hobart, 7HT, 278 Metres 10.15 a.m. Launceston, 7EX, 300 Metres 10.15 a.m. Newcastle, 2HD, 263 Metres 1.15 p.m.

Western Australian Time. Sundays Perth, 6KY, 227 Metres - 10.15 a.m.

The Development of the Divine Plan.

SINCE God tells us that He has a definitely fixed purpose, and that all His purposes shall be accomplished, it behoves us, as His children, to inquire diligently what those plans are, that we may be found in harmony with them. Notice how emphatically Jehovah affirms the fixedness of His purpose: “Jehovah of hosts bath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it be.” “The Lord of hosts bath purposed, and who shall disannul it?” “I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like .Me .. . My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. . . Yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass;

I have purposed it, I will also do it.” (Isa. 14:24-27; 46:9-11.) However haphazard or mysterious God’s dealings with men may appear, those who believe this testimony of His Word must acknowledge that His original and unalterable plan has been, and still is, progressing systematically to completion.

Therefore, as interested sons of God, and heirs of a promised inheritance, we apply to our Father’s Word, that we may understand His purposes from the plans and specifications therein given. There we learn that the plan of God, with reference to man, spans three great periods of time, beginning with man’s creation and reaching into the illimitable future. Peter and Paul designate these periods “three worlds.”

These three great epochs represent three distinct manifestations of Divine Providence. The first, from creation to the flood, was under the ministration of angels, and is called by Peter “THE WORLD THAT WAS.”-2 Pet. 3:6.

The second great epoch, from the flood to the establishment of the kingdom of God, is under the limited control of Satan, “the prince of this world,” and is therefore called “THIS PRESENT EVIL WORLD.” Gal. 1:4; 2 Pet. 3:7.

The third is to be a “world without end” (Isa. 45:17) under divine administration, the kingdom of God, and is called “THE WORLD TO COME —wherein dwelleth righteousness.”—Heb. 2:5; 2 Pet. 3:13.

The first of these periods, or “worlds” under the ministration of angels, was a failure; the second, under the rule of Satan, the usurper, has been indeed an “evil world”; but the third will be an era of righteousness and of blessing to all the families of the earth.

The last two of these “worlds” are most particularly mentioned, and the statements relative to them are in strong contrast. The present, or second period, is called “the present evil world,” not because there is nothing good in it, but because in it evil is permitted to predominate. “Now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.” (Mal. 3:15.) The third world or epoch is mentioned as “THE WORLD TO COME—wherein dwelleth righteousness,” not because there will be no evil in it, but because evil will not predominate. The blotting out of evil will be gradual, requiring all of the first thousand years. Evil will not rule then; it will not prosper; it will no longer be the wicked that will flourish; but “the righteous shall flourish” (Psa. 72:7) , the “obedient shall eat the good of the land” (Isa.

1: 19), and “the evil doer shall be cut off.”Psa. 37:9,

Thus seen, the next dispensation is to be so dissimilar as to be the very reverse of the present one in almost every particular. Our Lord’s words show why there is to be a difference between the present and the future dispensations. It is because He will be the Prince or Ruler of the world to come, that in it righteousness and truth will prosper; while, because Satan is the prince (ruler) of the present evil world, evil prospers and the wicked flourish. It is because, as Jesus said, the prince of this world “hath nothing in Me”—and consequently no interest in His followers except to

oppose, tempt, annoy and buffet them (John 14:30; 2 Cor. 12:7)—that in this present evil world or epoch, whosoever will live godly shall suffer persecution, while the wicked flourish like a green bay tree.-2 Tim. 3:12; Psa. 37:35.

Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world,” and until the era or “world to come” does come, Christ’s kingdom will not control the earth. And for this we are taught to hope and pray, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth.” Satan is the “ruler of the darkness of this world,” and therefore “darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people.” He now rules and works in the hearts of the children of disobedience.—Eph. 2:2; 6:12.

There must be some very important part of the great Architect’s plan for man’s salvation not yet fully developed— else the new Prince and the new dispensation would have been long ago introduced. Why it was postponed for an appointed time, and also the manner of the change from the present dominion of evil under Satan to that of righteousness under Christ, are points of interest which will be more fully shown hereafter. Suffice it now to say, that the kingdoms of this

world, now subject to Satan, are at the proper time to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. (Rev. 11:15.) The context shows that the transfer will be accomplished by a general time of trouble. In reference to it Jesus said, “No man can enter into a strong man’s house and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his house.” (Mark 3:22-27.) Thus we are taught that Satan must first be bound, restrained and deposed, before Christ’s reign of righteousness and peace can be established. This binding of Satan is accordingly shown to be the first work of the new dispensation. Rev. 20:2.

It should be remembered that this earth is the basis of all these “worlds” and dispensations, and that though ages pass and dispensations change, still the earth continues--The earth abideth forever.” (Eccl. 1:4.) Carrying out the same figure, Peter calls each of these periods a separate heavens and earth. Here the word heavens symbolizes the higher or spiritual controlling powers, and earth symbolizes human government and social arrangements. Thus the first heavens and earth, or the order and arrangement of things then existing, having served their purpose, ended at the flood. But the physical heavens (sky and atmosphere) , and the physical earth, did not pass away: they remained. So likewise the present world (heavens and earth) will pass away with a great noise, fire and melting—confusion, trouble and dissolution. The strong man (Satan) , being bound, will struggle to regain his power. The present order or arrangement of government and society, not that of the physical Sky and earth, will pass away. The present heavens (powers of spiritual control) must give place to the “new heavens”—Christ’s spiritual control. The present earth (human society as now organized under Satan’s control) must (symbolically) melt and be dissolved, in the beginning of the “Day of the Lord,” which “shall burn as an oven.” (Mal. 4:1.) It will be succeeded by “a new earth,” i.e., society reorganized in harmony with earth’s new Prince—Christ. Righteousness, peace and love will rule among men when present arrangements have given place to the new and better kingdom, the basis of which will be the strictest justice.

Paul was given a glimpse of the next dispensation, or, as he calls it, “the world to come.” He says he was “caught away” (physically or mentally, or both, he could not tell, things were so real to his view) down the stream of time to the new condition of things, the “new heaven,” hence the “third heaven.” He thus saw things as they will be under the spiritual control of Christ, things which he might not disclose. (2 Cor. 12:2-4.) Doubtless these were the same things which John afterward saw, and was permitted to express to the Church in symbols, which may only be understood as they become due. John, in the revelation given to him by our Lord on the Isle of Patmos, was in vision carried down through this Christian Age and its changing scenes of church and state, to the end of the present evil world, or epoch, and there in prophetic visions he saw Satan bound, Christ reigning, and the new heaven and the new earth established; for the former heaven and earth were passed away—Rev. 21:1.

A statement of the Word which belongs to one epoch, or dispensation, should not be applied to another, as things stated of one age are not always true of another. For instance, it would be an untruth to say of the present time that the knowledge of the Lord fills the whole earth, or that there is no need to say to your neighbour, Know the Lord. (Isa. 11:9; Jer. 31, 34.) This is not true in this age, and it cannot be true until the Lord, having come again, has established His Kingdom; for throughout this age there have been many seducing deceptions, and we are told that even in the very end of the age—”In the last days . . . evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.” (2 Tim. 3:1, 13.) It will be as the result of Messiah’s reign during the Millennial age that knowledge and righteousness shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

A similar mistake, and a very common one, is to suppose that God’s kingdom is now established and ruling over the earth, and that His will is now done among the nations. This is manifestly far from the truth, for the kingdoms of this world are supported and enriched through oppression, injustice and deceit, to as great an extent as the increasing intelligence of the people will permit. Satan, the present “prince of this world,” must yet be displaced, and these kingdoms, now under his control, must become the kingdoms, of our Lord and of His Anointed, when He shall take unto Himself His great power, and reign.

By the light now due to the household of faith we discern that system and order which mark the stately steppings of our God through the ages past.

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