



Times of Refreshing and Christ's Return

**Berean Series
Bible Studies**

BEREAN BIBLE INSTITUTE
19 Ermington Place, Kew,
Melbourne, Australia, 3101.

Times of Refreshing and Christ's Return

(Acts, Chapter 3)

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you”—Acts 3:19, 20.

IN studying this 3rd chapter of Acts there are various points to be considered if we would gain a clear understanding of the important truths contained therein. The Lord has given us His word for our instruction and guidance but has so arranged the truths that there must be sincere desire and effort on our part if we are to reach a correct understanding of His will and purpose.

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

The first things to settle in our minds in connection with any Scripture are, to determine at what time it was spoken, and to whom were the words intended; were

they spoken mainly for the benefit of the hearers then or have they particular reference to future times—has this or that passage of the Lord's Word been fulfilled, has it been partially fulfilled, or does it apply to a still future period of time?

The settling of such questions in our minds would be following the advice of the Apostle Paul when he said—"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"—2 Tim. 2:15. We note that he does not say it is quite right to allow others to study for us, and then we shall be thoroughly furnished by accepting their findings. No, this has been the trouble with a great number of Christians throughout the age. Many have thought, if the highly educated of our fellows are not able to understand God's Word correctly, it is little use our trying to do so. They make the mistake of reasoning that the treasures of God's Word are to be found as a result of worldly knowledge. On this point we have the statement in Acts 4:13—"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled and took knowledge of them that they had been

with Jesus." This is surely one of the finest testimonies to be found in the Scriptures.

Both the Apostles Paul and James give similar references for our instruction. The former in writing to the Corinthians says—"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise"—1 Cor. 1:26, 27. From the Apostle James we read—"Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him"—James 2:5.

Therefore, we find that the question is not, how much education have we—what college have we been through to enable us to learn of the Lord and understand His Word—but rather, how much desire is there in our hearts to know Him, how much time are we prepared to spend in searching His Word as for hidden treasure, after asking the Lord to guide us by His holy spirit? Our Lord's words are—"Ask, and it shall be given to you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh re-

ceiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened"—Matt. 7:7, 8. This is necessary not only at the beginning of the Christian way but right through to the end.

A Teacher Chosen of the Lord

So, we have in this 3rd chapter of Acts a teacher, who, though "unlearned" had to be acknowledged as having been with Jesus and having learned of Him, and we believe he has given in this chapter some of the most beautiful and precious truths to be found in God's Word.

Firstly, we believe that the Apostle's preaching as recorded in this chapter was intended to convey truths that have special reference to both the Gospel and Millennial Ages and it is our purpose to survey these periods of time and also the prior ages so that the plan of God for the salvation of mankind may be seen to be a connected whole and all revealed in the sure Word of the Lord.

Ages and Dispensations

The world's history is divided into three great periods of time, and these are clearly shown to have extended; (1) from the

creation of man to the Flood; (2) from the Flood to the second Coming of Christ, and (3) from the second Coming of Christ onward. The first period is called in the Scriptures, "the world that was"; the second, "this present evil world"; and the third "the world to come wherein dwelleth righteousness"—2 Pet. 3:6; Gal. 1:4; Heb. 2:5, and 2 Pet. 3:13.

From the account in Genesis we learn of the fall of man shortly after his creation and how sin so overtook the race that God found it necessary to send the great Flood of waters to destroy those who had become corrupted, saving only righteous Noah and his family to start the second great period of the world's history. So greatly had men fallen just prior to the Flood that God took them away as He saw good. The result of disobedience on the part of our first parents was surely a sad picture even at that time—Gen. 6:5.

During the second great period of time—from the Flood to the second coming of Christ—we find three ages distinctly marked out in the Scriptures, each being a step onward in God's plan that He had prearranged even before the foundation of the world.

The first age within the second dispensation is designated the Patriarchal Age, because during that time God dealt with certain individuals such as Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob for a special purpose. It was to faithful Abraham that God gave His wonderful covenant, from which the promise comes down to us today and is really the Gospel in a nutshell. This promise was—"In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed"—Gen. 22:18.

With the death of Jacob the Patriarchal Age ended, and the Jewish Age began because God no longer dealt particularly with individual patriarchs, but with the twelve tribes of Israel as a whole. This is confirmed in 1 Chron. 16:15-17, which please note. Jacob's name was changed to Israel, and his twelve sons were the heads of the families that were afterwards known as the twelve tribes of Israel. What of these children of Israel? Did God's promise of blessing to all come through them? No, indeed, for after seventeen hundred years of experience they not only did not bless the world but they were not ready to be blessed themselves, for though Christ came to bless them "His own received Him not"—John 1:11.

The True Seed

However, God had all this in mind at the beginning. The Apostle says that these things were an allegory. Sarah was the representative of the Covenant made with Abraham and when Isaac was promised God was speaking of a greater seed than Isaac—"which seed is Christ." God meant Christ all the time; Isaac was a type of Christ.

When Christ came to Israel at His first advent, the Jewish Age was brought to a close and another age commenced which is termed the Gospel Age. Of that time it is written—"The law and the prophets were until John (John the Baptist), since then the kingdom of heaven is preached"—Luke 16:16. John the Baptist introduced our Lord Jesus with the message—"Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"—Matt. 3:2. And Jesus Himself used the same words in opening His ministry—Matt. 4:17.

Did God mean that when Christ should come all the families of the earth would be blessed? We look about us and ask, Have all nations been blessed? We are obliged to answer, No. It is over 1900 years since Christ came and yet many

millions of people have not even heard of Him as the Saviour. Where, then, is the mistake? What did the promise mean?

The Church, the Body of Christ

When God, through the Apostle, said "Christ", He meant not only the Lord Jesus, but the Christ complete—the Lord Jesus as Head, and the Church as His Body. So the Apostle declares—"He is the head over all things to the church which is his body"—Eph. 1:22, 23. He says—"which seed is Christ"—Gal. 3:16—and after reading on to verse 29 in Galatians 3, we find it plainly stated—"If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." We see then, that "Christ" means the entire spiritual Seed, Christ Jesus as the Head and the true Church as His Body.

So, we find that the whole of this Gospel Age, in the close of which we are now living, has been set apart in God's Plan for the selection and perfecting of this spiritual Seed of Abraham, the Christ, Head and Body. This is the reason that the blessing has not yet reached the world of mankind. However, before any member of the Lord's Body could be accepted and approved as such by the Heavenly Father,

our Lord's own life had to be laid down. The ransom, or corresponding price had to be paid into the hands of justice on our account, as our Lord explained to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus—"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory"—Luke 24:26.

How clearly, then, the Scriptures portray the great plan of redemption on behalf of the human race is based on the ransom sacrifice of God's dear Son. There could have been no hope held out for salvation, either to the Church or the world, except, as the Apostle says—"Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification"—1 Cor. 15:3, 4; Rom. 4:25.

What a wonderful provision God has made whereby through our exercising faith in the sacrificial death of His Son, our Lord Jesus, we may be justified in His sight. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are

past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus"—Rom. 3:23-26.

“Silver and Gold Have I None”

We come now to the words of our chapter referring to the particular time when the Apostle Peter gave that wonderful message of truth shortly after the death and resurrection of his Master. We shall not dwell at length on the actual healing of the lame man, wonderful though that was, but rather to draw the lesson from Peter's discourse that was given after the healing of the man had opened the way. One point, however, in the opening verses of the chapter, is worthy of special note, concerning the lame man—"Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms . . . Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk"—Acts 3:3, 6. "Silver and gold have I none." No, indeed, the Apostle had cast in his lot with the Lord some years previously; he had come to see things in their true value and

so was content, yes, he rejoiced to count all things but loss that he may win Christ and be found in him.

Briefly recalling the time when our Lord commenced His ministry and appealed to Peter and John, also two other disciples to "follow Him", as recorded in Matt. 4, it is stated that when hearing the Lord—"they straightway left their nets and followed him." The same is also recorded of the other two disciples—"they immediately left the ship and their father and followed him"—Matt. 4:20, 22. That was undoubtedly a severe test of their obedience, but because they were sure that they had "found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write", they were content, yes, and rejoiced to throw in their lot with Him and follow whithersoever He would lead. So, then, by the words—"Silver and gold have I none"—we find the Apostle Peter to be of the same mind after following his Lord for 3½ years and undoubtedly his example of true discipleship could not have been better expressed.

True Discipleship

We learn, then, from the Apostle Peter, as well as from the Lord Himself and all other Apostles, the true requirements of

Christian discipleship—"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of of me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it"—Matt. 10:37-39.

However, the Apostle's words—"Silver and gold have I none"—are not to be taken as indicating that all followers of Christ should not have some silver or gold, but rather, that while all the Lord's people are expected to live justly in the sight of all men, to pay their debts, etc., they will not be accumulating the earthly treasures, but on the other hand will be faithfully using any of these they possess in the service of their Master, and so would have little of earthly treasures to pass on to others. What they have got, however, and which is of greater value than all the treasures of earth, is the gospel message of truth, and this they are to gladly dispense freely to all who have ears to hear. "Freely ye have received, freely give"—Matt: 10:8.

Christ and Him Crucified

It was these precious things that the Apostle was able to proclaim, as a result of the healing of the lame man in our lesson. Let us hear the Apostle Peter again —“Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob (note that the Apostle recognises the Patriarchs to whom reference was made previously), the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know; yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all”—Acts 3:12-16. Here, then, we have revealed the true import of Peter’s words. He was preaching Christ and Him crucified, and had bravely declared that it was at the hands of his hearers that the

Lord had suffered the cruel death of the cross. The healing of the lame man was the outcome of Christ's faithfulness unto death, as God granted the power to enable the Apostles to perform such miracles, and even to the raising of the dead, for the purpose of establishing the Church in its infancy. These gifts of miracles, however, passed away, for none but the twelve Apostles were able to pass on such gifts of the spirit to others. Other worthy ones could receive the gifts from the Apostles but could not pass them on.

The Apostle, then, had a wonderful opportunity of presenting the truth on this occasion and he used it to the utmost. After declaring that it was by wicked hands that they had killed the Prince of Life, he says—"And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it as did also your rulers." By this we see some hope for those who were instrumental in bringing about the death of Christ; they had done this terrible thing under a measure of ignorance and so were not culpable to the fullest extent. The Apostle Paul also confirmed this viewpoint when he said—"For had they know it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory"—1 Cor. 2:8.

“But those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled”—verse 18. So, in that cruel act of crucifying the Lord of glory, we find the wrath of man being used to the praise of God, for behold—“God hath raised him from the dead, whereof we are witnesses”, says the Apostle, and henceforth the risen Saviour is He who is “able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him”—Heb. 7:25. Our Lord also declared in the Revelation to John after His resurrection—“I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death”—Rev. 1:18. What a wonderful truth this is that Jesus having paid the death penalty for the whole human race, has the authority and power to restore to life “all that are in their graves”, in due time, for “all shall hear his voice and come forth”, but more on this point later.

Spiritual Refreshing

We are especially interested in those to whom Peter was speaking. He had quite rightly accused them of their terrible act, but had admitted that it was committed largely through ignorance. We note his

words of counsel and advice to these people. Verse 19 of Acts 3 reads—"Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord"—Revised Version. What did the Apostle mean by this statement? Could it be that if his hearers could be brought to a condition of repentance, a desire to seek forgiveness of God for their terrible act of crucifying the Lord, and if this attitude was supported by a complete "turning again"—by exercising full faith in the blood of Christ—they may expect their sins to be covered, enabling them to consecrate their lives to God, and to receive such seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord as would enable them to become His true people? Yes, we believe that is just what the Apostle meant; there and then those who had slain the Son of God could, upon the conditions stated, be forgiven and receive of the Lord such blessings that they could be translated from the kingdom of darkness (under Satan) into the kingdom of God's dear Son. This was and is, indeed, a wonderful provision and how it truly manifests and magnifies all the gracious attributes of our God—His justice, wisdom, love and

power—in the eyes of all right-thinking people, who seek to worship and glorify His holy name.

A quotation from the writings of one on the phrase “from the presence of the Lord”, will be of interest—“The word here rendered ‘presence’ is not ‘parousia’, but ‘prosopon’ and ‘apo prosopon’, rendered ‘from the presence’, does not signify ‘as a result of presence’, but rather, ‘out from the face of.’ The thought is common to us and was much more common in eastern countries long ago. To show the face was a mark of favor, while to turn the back was a mark of disfavor. Thus of our Lord at His first advent it was written—‘We hid as it were our faces from him’—that is, we were ashamed of and would not acknowledge Him. Thus it is that Jehovah ‘would not look upon sin’, but since the ransom has been given He waits to be gracious.”

God does not disregard men and treat them as sinners by turning His back upon them when they come to Him in the appointed way, but He sends them refreshment from His face, His favor, and will also send Jesus for the great future work, His Agent in the restitution of all things.

We have the same thought in our hymns —“Show Thy reconciled face”, and “Show Thy face and all is bright.”

The Blessing of the Lord maketh rich

So, the Apostle Peter presented a wonderful message at that time for all who could receive it, and act upon it in spirit and in truth. While there is to be a general refreshing of an earthly nature throughout the times of restitution for the whole world, the refreshing which Peter proclaimed is of the spiritual kind, the fulness of which cannot be appreciated except by those who have tasted thereof. And we today may also receive of that spiritual refreshing from God's presence of which the Apostle spoke at that early period of the Gospel Age. Yes, indeed, until the full number of God's elect has been selected and developed to become joint-heirs with our risen Lord, the same spiritual refreshment is flowing out to those who hunger and thirst for it. Surely, “the blessing of the Lord it maketh rich” —Prov. 10:22.

Refreshing not of the Future, but Present

If in the past we have not experienced the Lord's refreshing that can relieve the

burdened heart and give gladness and rest to the weary soul, which all so much desire, let us come to God's Word with open hearts, and by obedience thereto come into such harmony with Him through Christ that we shall never want any other way. We realise that there never has been a time of such threatened world-wide trouble as today, which is in fulfilment of the words of Jesus—"Upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth"—Luke 21:25, 26. But the Lord is sufficient for these things and surely we shall not doubt His ability to cope with every circumstance and condition, and to give us the desire of peace and happiness, if we take Him at His word.

Further, if we have experienced a measure of refreshing but lack that fulness that will enable us to rejoice in the Lord always, we may be sure that we are living below our privileges. Could we ever think of the Lord's storehouse of blessing being exhausted or even reduced by our calls upon it? Surely not, but then the Lord does not pour out His refreshing indiscriminately—He waits to be gracious, to

see how much we desire His choicest blessings. "Prove me now, herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it"—Mal. 3:10.

Let us ever remember that this promise is to "even as many as the Lord our God shall call." When we recognise the call, let us respond promptly, praising God for it, and like the Apostle Paul, say—"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do"—Acts 9:6. There is no time to be wasted; soon this Gospel Age will close and with it all opportunity of ever entering upon the "high calling of God in Christ Jesus." It is written respecting this "so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord"—"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation"—Heb. 2:3; 2 Cor. 6:2.

What about the Masses of Mankind?

While many are so glad that the Lord has purposed the exaltation of the elect Class, the Body of Christ, at the close of the Gospel Age, what is to be provided for the remainder of mankind? Of the

saintly Class our Lord said—"Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." These are the overcomers who shall sit with Christ in His throne, having obtained "so great salvation." But what about those who are not of this "little flock"? Are they forever lost when death takes hold upon them, and they go down into the cold grave? Can it be that God, who so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son to taste death for every man, should fail to give everyone the opportunity to hear of the saving grace and power through faith in Jesus' death? No doubt we will all admit that millions of mankind have lived and died without even hearing of the name of Jesus as the Saviour from death. Since no one can be saved by ignorance, as "there is none other name (than Jesus') under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"—Acts 4:12—and as the Apostle Paul tells us—"God will have all men to be saved (from Adamic death), and to come unto the knowledge of the truth"—1 Tim. 2:4—should we not look further into God's Word with respect to the future destiny of so many of the human family?

Before doing so, let us briefly review the ages that are past, and see if we can approximate the number of godly people there were in comparison with those who were not godly. During the First Dispensation, how many righteous people were there? At the time of the Flood there were eight only—Noah and his family. Then, in the Patriarchal Age there were a few righteous people only with whom God held communion, such as Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Further, during the Jewish Age there were not many godly people, for when Christ came to Israel, God's chosen people, only a "remnant" received Him. All the rest were still a stiffnecked and perverse generation. And how has it been during this Gospel Age? There have not been many saints—only a "little flock", as noted previously. The vast majority of mankind have not known God, nor desired to know Him.

The question then is, What is to become of the multitudes of humanity? What is to be the future for all who have not come into harmony with God by faith in His promises and obedience thereto? What plan has God for the blessing of the others, for we must remember that the promise away back in Abraham's day was

not that a few should be blessed, but that "all the families of the earth should be blessed?" But how? How can the blessing be accomplished?

Times of Restitution

Let us note again in Acts 3, verses 20 and 21, which please read. "He shall send Jesus Christ." The Apostle was not speaking here about the first advent of Christ. As seen previously, he spoke the words of this chapter following the day of Pentecost, after the holy spirit had been poured out upon the waiting disciples, and ten days previously he with others had seen Christ ascend to heaven. He was speaking of Jesus' second advent—"God will send Jesus Christ."

Our Lord Himself had promised that He would come a second time, saying—"If I go away, I will come again"—John 14:3. The teaching of our Lord's return is made very prominent in the Scriptures, and also in all the creeds of the various denominations. Along with others, Catholics believe in the second coming of Christ. They do not, indeed, confess that He is coming to bless the world, but rather that He is coming to condemn the world. The wonder is that with such a conception of things

any are willing to pray—"Even so come, Lord Jesus." The beloved disciple who uttered those words had no such anticipation; he knew of the time of blessing and it was for this that he longed.

The coming of Christ has been the hope of the world, though unknown to them. It has been the end of the prayers of all the saints. They have been "looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ"—Tit. 2: 13—"Whom the heavens must retain until the times of restitution of all things." The word "restitution" means restoring, restoration. If men's hearts were right, if we had perfect men and women "times of restitution" would not be needed. "By one man's disobedience sin entered into the world and death by sin"—Rom. 5:12. What mankind needs is to be restored to Edenic perfection, and this it is promised, will be done.

The Resurrection of the Dead

But now the question is, How is the blessing to come "to all the families of the earth", including the great majority who have passed away in death? It is to come by the resurrection. When Paul spoke to some in his day about the resur-

rection, many of them mocked; and others said—"We will hear you again on this matter." The idea of a resurrection seems absurd to many, and it is so, as viewed by the majority. But nevertheless, "there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust"—Acts 24:15. Our Lord Himself also said in John 5:28—"All that are in the graves shall hear his voice (the voice of the Son of God) and shall come forth." On one occasion when our Lord went into the synagogue, and a copy of the book of Isaiah was handed to Him, He turned to chapter 61, and read—"The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord"—Quoting Luke 4:18, 19.

It will be noted that He does not say He will bind up all hearts, but the "broken" hearts only. And what is meant by "deliverance to the captives"? Did He mean that He would come and set all the convicts free. He certainly could not have meant that, but rather He was referring to the great prison-house of death, and

the “prisoners of hope” which the great enemy, Satan, has bound therein. They are “prisoners of hope” because Christ has died for them. Under Satan the world has been going down into death, but Christ was manifested in order that He might destroy death and “him that hath the power of death, that is, the Devil”—Heb. 2:14. These prisoners in the tomb, prisoners of hope, will all come forth to the privileges and opportunities of the Millennial Age, of coming to human perfection and securing eternal life afforded under the Millennial reign of Christ and His saints, because—“Jesus Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man”—Heb. 2:9.

As stated previously, the thing most needed is the promised “Times of Restitution” and this restoration of all the obedient of mankind to their former estate—to that from which our first parents fell—“God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” Who, then, will deny or even doubt the truth of the Apostle’s statement concerning the restitution of all things, inasmuch as God has testified to its truth not only through our Lord Jesus and the Apostles,

but—"by the mouth of all his holy prophets"? Here is a means whereby we may discern God's true prophets, for if any omit to proclaim the Lord's purpose to restore mankind and the earth to perfection on account of the sacrifice of His dear Son, then they are not true prophets of God.

However, as we search through the prophets in God's Word we shall find they have been true witnesses of all that God required of them. Should anyone desire a complete list of Scriptures from all the prophets confirming this truth it will be gladly supplied, but for the sake of space just one or two are mentioned here. We should not overlook also the necessary disciplinary experiences to which the whole world will be subjected in order to prepare their hearts for the blessings to follow. There must be first of all, the great time of trouble upon the earth, of which time it is written—"Seek righteousness, seek meekness, it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger"—Zeph. 2:3. And again—"For his anger endureth but for a moment; in his favor is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning"—Ps. 30:5.

The New Age, wherein dwelleth righteousness

It is to the glad morning that we look, the Millennial Age when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea", for "when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness"—Isa. 11:9; 26:9. That is, the majority of mankind will heartily fall into line with the laws of Christ's Kingdom, but those who wilfully reject the loving and gracious provision whereby they may gain eternal life, shall be cut off from amongst the people. "All the wicked will God destroy." "It shall come to pass that every soul which will not hear (obey) that prophet (The Christ, Head and Body) shall be destroyed from among the people"—Psa. 145:20; Acts 3:23.

On this wonderful truth of restitution please read Isaiah 35. "The ransomed of the Lord shall return", compares so beautifully with 1 Tim. 2:5, 6—"There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." How harmonious are these two statements, and inasmuch as the

majority of mankind have not had the truth of "the ransom for all" testified to them during the present life, the "due time" for that testimony must be future—in the resurrection day. Yes, it will be during the Millennial reign of Christ—"For God hath appointed a day (a day with the Lord is as 1000 years), in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead"—Acts 17:31. That will be the time also of which the prophet Jeremiah wrote in chapter 31:34—"And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more."

Heavenly and Earthly Inheritance Separate and Distinct

Let it not be understood that restitution, though grand it will be, is the hope of the Church—for Christians of the Gospel Age. It is not the hope of the Church, for all of this Class have special promises of an

inheritance far above that of the world. If we walk in the footsteps of Jesus, faithfully to the end of our course, we shall become "partakers of the Divine nature." Not only is our Lord Jesus to bless the world, but the world is also to be blessed by the Church who will reign with Him as His joint heir.

Our Lord Jesus said—"In my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you." The Church is to have the new place prepared by her Lord—to inhabit that mansion—after having gladly sacrificed everything of an earthly kind, even life itself, in the Master's service. The world, under other conditions, is to inhabit another of these mansions—the restored earth.—"The Lord created the earth not in vain; he formed it to be inhabited"—Isa. 45:18. Many millions are to have the blessings of restitution—to that which was lost, to that which Adam originally possessed in the beginning—but we (the Church) "shall be like him" (Christ) "if we make our calling and election sure."

And now, what does God's great plan of salvation mean to us? Are we content to say, "the times of restitution" will be grand, we shall wait for that time? Do

we think that would please our Heavenly Father who has done so much for us? Does not also the love of Christ constrain us now to desire to be His, to have our feet placed upon the rock, and be lifted out of the condemnation right now? Yes, indeed, that should be the desire of our hearts, and if this step be taken, though it be a narrow way of sacrifice, it will lead to that life abundant of which the Apostle says—"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"—2 Cor. 4:17—and in the daily of glory"—2 Cor. 4:17—and in the daily laying down of our little all we shall have such refreshing from the presence of the Lord, that we shall be able to say from the heart with the Psalmist—"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in his temple...I had fainted,

unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord"—Psa. 27:1, 3, 4, 13, 14.

The interested reader of this booklet is invited to apply for free samples of the bi-monthly "Peoples Paper", also other free literature, supplied from—

BEREAN BIBLE INSTITUTE

**19 Ermington Place, Kew,
Melbourne, Australia, 3101.**