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Has Judgment Day Begun?

"God hath appointed a day in 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.

THE words of our text are those of the Apostle Paul, spoken from Mars' Hill, in his celebrated discourse to the men of Athens. Of such great import are his words that they have been inscribed in Greek on a bronze plaque on the hillside.

Some have expressed the thought that we may have already entered a Judgment Day, if not *the* Judgment Day of our text, and have asked the question: Has Judgment Day begun?

Before attempting an answer to this question, let us consider the two terms "judgment" and "day" and see how they are employed in the Scriptures.

The term "judgment" signifies more than merely the rendering of a verdict. It includes the idea of a trial, as well as a decision based upon that trial. And this is true not only of the English word judgment but also of the Greek word which it translates.

The term "day," both in the Scriptures and in common usage, though most frequently used to represent a period of twelve or twenty-four hours, really specifies any definite or special period of time. Thus, for instance, we speak of Noah's day, Luther's day, Washington's day; and thus in the Bible the entire time of creation is called a day, where we read of "the day that Jehovah God made the earth and the heavens" (Gen. 2:4) -- a long, definite period. Then we read of "the day of temptation in the wilderness" -- forty years (Heb. 3:8, 9); also of the "day of Christ," the "day of judgment," and "His day"; terms applicable to the Millennial Age, in which Messiah will reign over, rule, and judge the world in righteousness, granting trial as well as rendering sentence. Those who will carefully consult a complete concordance of the Bible with reference to the Day of Judgment, and note the kind and amount of work to be accomplished within that period, will

soon see the absurdity of the common view of a twelve or twenty-four hour day, and the necessity for giving to the term "day" its wider significance.

The Scriptures make mention of a number of judgment days. Two of these relate to the human race as a whole. Between these two, several others are stated as taking place.

The first of the world's two judgment days was at the beginning, in the Garden of Eden, when the whole human race was judged representatively in Adam, its head. Some have been disposed to resent this judgment, insisting that Adam misrepresented rather than represented them, but God, whose wisdom is infinite, states the contrary to be true.

The second and final Judgment Day for the world is yet future, when each will be judged individually.

WHO WILL BE THE JUDGE?

We are further informed that when God gives the world this individual trial, it will be under Christ as judge, whom God will thus honor because of his obedience even unto death for our redemption. God has highly exalted him, even to the divine nature, that he may be a Prince and a Savior (Acts 5:31), that he may be able to recover from death and grant judgment (including trial) to all whom he purchased with his own precious blood. Since it is the plain declaration of Scripture that "God has committed all judgment unto the Son," and has given him "all power in heaven and in earth," there is nothing to dread, but on the contrary, there is great cause for rejoicing on the part of all, in looking forward to the judgment Day. The character of the judge is a sufficient guarantee that the judgment will be just and merciful, with due consideration for the infirmities of all, until the willing and obedient are brought back to the original perfection lost in Eden. With this conclusion *all* the prophetic declarations agree. It is written: "With righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity." - Psa. 98:9.

BY WHAT LAW WILL THE WORLD BE JUDGED?

This coming judgment will be on exactly the same principles as the first. The same law of obedience will be presented, with the same reward of life and the same penalty of death. And as the first trial had a beginning, progressed, and culminated in a verdict and sentence, so also will the second; and the sentence will be life to the righteous and death to the unrighteous. The second trial will be more favorable than the first because of the experience gained under the results of the first trial. Unlike the first trial, the second trial will be one in which every man will stand the test for himself alone and not for another. None will then die because of Adam's sin or because of inherited imperfections. It shall no more be said, "The fathers have eaten a sour grape and the children's teeth are set on edge; but he that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge." "The soul that sinneth, it [and not its children] shall die." - Jer. 31:29, 30; Ezek. 18:4.

Under the reign of Christ, mankind will be gradually educated, trained, disciplined, until they reach perfection. And when they have reached perfection, perfect harmony with God will be required, and any who then fall short of perfect obedience will be cut off, being judged unworthy of life. God had a right to demand perfect obedience of Adam, since he was created perfect; and he will demand the same of all men when the great work of restoring them is complete. None will be permitted to have everlasting life who then in the slightest degree fall short of perfection. To fall short of perfection, then, will be to sin wilfully against full light and perfect ability.

We do not wish to be understood as ignoring the present responsibility of the world, which every man has, according to the measure of light enjoyed, whether it be much or little, whether it be the light of nature or of revelation. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good," and "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil" (Prov. 15:3; Eccles. 12:14). The good and evil deeds of the present time will receive a just recompense of reward either now or hereafter.

JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS

Between the world's two judgment days discussed foregoing, a period of about six thousand years intervenes. During this long period, God has been selecting two special classes from among men, and specially trying, testing, disciplining, and training them to be his honored instruments during the second of the world's judgment days.

These two classes are respectively designated, by St. Paul as the "house of sons" and the "house of servants" (Heb. 3:5, 6), the former being composed of those overcomers tried and found faithful during the Christian dispensation (the Gospel Age), and the latter being composed of the faithful overcomers who lived before the Christian dispensation. Those who successfully pass the trial for either of these special classes will not come into judgment (including trial) with the world, but will enter upon their reward when the world is coming into its second judgment day. They will be God's agents in the blessing of the world; in giving to men the instruction and training necessary for their final testing and judgment. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" - 1 Cor. 6:2.

The world's second judgment day is immediately preceded by a judgment of the nations, as such. They are to be judged politically, ecclesiastically, and socially. Many Scriptures make this clear. However, while noting these, it is important to bear in mind the difference between national judgment and individual judgment. While the nation is composed of individuals, and individuals are largely responsible for the courses of nations, and must and do suffer greatly in the calamities which befall them; nevertheless the judgment of the world, as individuals, will be distinct from its judgment as nations. The day of individual judgment for the world will be the Millennial Age, as previously noted. Then, under the favorable conditions of the New Covenant, and granted a clear knowledge of the truth and every possible assistance and incentive to righteousness, all men individually, and not collectively as nations, will be on trial, or judgment, for eternal life.

The judgment of the nations which precedes this individual trial is a judgment of men in their collective capacities. The civil institutions of the world, social, political, religious, have had a long lease of power. And now, as the "Times of the Gentiles" come to a close, they must render up their accounts. And the Lord's judgment, expressed beforehand by the Prophets, is that not one of them will be found worthy of a renewal of that lease or a continuance of life. The decree is that the dominion shall be taken from them and that he whose right it is shall take the Kingdom, and the nations shall be given to him for an inheritance. - Ezek. 21:27; Dan. 7:27; Psa. 2:8; Rev. 2:26, 27.

Let us listen to a few passages from the pen of other Prophets which bear directly on this subject: "Come near, ye nations, to hear, and hearken, ye people . . . for the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies" (Isa. 34:1, 2). Again: "The Lord . . . is an everlasting King; at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation" (Jer. 10:10). "A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind [that is, intense and complicated trouble and commotion] shall be

raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth." - Jer. 25:31-33.

In calling attention to this subject, it is not our intention to arouse a mere sensation or to seek to gratify idle curiosity. Nor can we hope to produce in the minds and hearts of men such a condition of repentance as would work a change in the present social, political, and religious order of society, and thus avert the calamity. All the powerful causes which produce the trouble have been long at work; and no human power is able to arrest their operation and progress toward their certain end. No hand but the hand of the Lord could stay the progress of the present current of events, and his hand will not do so until the bitter experiences of this conflict shall have sealed their instruction upon the hearts of men. Our only object, therefore, in mentioning the subject at all, is to forewarn, forearm, comfort, encourage, and strengthen the "household of faith," so that they may not be dismayed but be enabled to look beyond the severest measures of divine disciplining in the chastening experiences of the world and see by faith the glorious outcome in the precious fruits of righteousness and enduring peace.

HAS THE JUDGMENT DAY OF THE NATIONS BEGUN?

As we look about us and note the conditions in the world today, it is difficult to escape the conclusion, especially when these conditions are considered in connection with time prophecies, that the nations have already entered their judgment day, that they are even now being weighed in the balances and found wanting. Indeed, for years it has been seen that the gathering of the nations and assembling of the kingdoms, preparatory to pouring upon them his indignation, "even all his fierce anger," as yet another Prophet (Zephaniah 3:8, 9) graphically describes it, has been in process.

Modern discovery and invention have made the remotest ends of the earth neighbors to each other. Travel, mailing facilities, the telegraph, the telephone, the radio and television have brought all the world into a community of thought and action hitherto unknown. Truly, the nations are "assembled" in a manner not expected, yet in the only manner in which they could be assembled, namely, in common interest and activity; but alas, not in brotherly love, for selfishness marks every step of this progress. The spirit of enterprise, of which selfishness is the motive power, has prompted the construction of the railways, the steamships, the airplanes, the telegraphs, the cables, the telephones, the radios, the television sets. Selfishness regulates commerce and international relationships, and every other energy and enterprise except the preaching of the Gospel and the establishment of benevolent institutions; and even in these it is to be feared that much that is done is inspired by motives other than pure love for God and humanity. Selfishness has gathered the nations and has been steadily preparing them for the predicted, and now fast approaching, retribution which is so graphically described by the Prophet as the "fire of God's jealousy," or anger, which is about to consume utterly the present social order. Yet this is speaking only from the human standpoint. From the standpoint of the Prophet, this gathering of the nations is ascribed, not to man's own efforts, but to God. Both standpoints are true; for while man is permitted the exercise of his free agency, God, by his overruling providence, is shaping human affairs for the accomplishment of his own wise purposes. And therefore, while men and their works and ways are the agents and agencies, God is the great Commander who now gathers the nations and assembles the kingdoms from one end of the earth to the other, preparatory to the transfer of earth's dominion to him "whose right it is" -- Immanuel.

The Prophet tells us why the Lord thus gathers the nations, saying, "That I may pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger." This message would bring us sorrow and anguish only, were it not for the assurance that the results shall work good to the world, overthrowing the

reign of selfishness and establishing, through Christ's Millennial Kingdom, the reign of righteousness referred to in the words of the Prophet: "Then will I turn unto the people a pure language [their communications with each other shall no longer be selfish but pure, truthful, and loving, to the intent] that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent."

CLOSING THOUGHTS

We see the deepening clouds of trouble. We hear the thunder tones of judgment that "call the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof" (Psa. 50:1) -- from the east to the west. We see the lightning flashes of truth and righteousness, and observe how the whole earth is now in the shaking process which will eventuate in the complete overthrow of all existing institutions, systems, and governments. Present events indeed speak in trumpet-tones. Even as these words are being set up in type, a military expert (note-not a preacher but an army general) ends his radio newsbroadcast with a quotation from the Bible: "A sound of battle is in the land, and of great destruction" (Jer. 50:22). How shall we regard these things? Surely, dear reader, it will be with thoughtful and reverent hearts! In this eventful period everything that can be shaken will be shaken, that only the unshakeable things of truth and righteousness may remain (Heb. 12:25-29). Everyone called to a share in the coming Kingdom must be a lover of righteousness, one who will courageously and loyally exercise an influence which is always favorable to righteousness, justice, mercy, and peace. All others will be shaken out. In the end only the true will remain. "Seeing that we look for these things, [let us] be diligent, that we may be found of Him in [inward] peace, without spot, and blameless," as the Apostle exhorts. - 2 Pet. 3:14.

When our Lord was here in the flesh, the destruction of Jerusalem and the utter ruin of Palestine were close at hand. In those days our Savior forewarned his disciples against laying up treasures for themselves on earth. His counsel and advice to them was to lay up their treasures in heaven, and in the end they would find them there. The Lord's true people of today occupy a similar position. The great, symbolic-burning day is near. Christendom is about to be destroyed. In this great symbolic conflagration the possessions of earth will be valueless. The opportunities for laying up treasures in heaven will soon be overpast. Let us, therefore, brethren, heed the Master's words, dedicating, or rededicating, as the case may be, our all of earthly life and fortune upon his altar and seek to employ time, talent, and ability in the service of him who hath called us from darkness to light; of him who will at last welcome the faithful to the place that he has gone to prepare, in the Father's house of many mansions; for there we shall find the heavenly treasures that can never fade, never tarnish, never rust, and the glory and luster of which will abide throughout all time. Amen.

- Condensed from "*The Herald*," August, 1940.

"The Effect of Every Vision"

"We see not our signs. There is no more any prophet, neither is there among us any that knoweth how long." - Psa. 74:9.

IN THESE few words of our text, beautiful even in their pessimism, there is summed up all the despair and all the hopelessness of a generation that had lost its youthful enthusiasm. In the early flush of youth they had eagerly embraced all the good promises of the Prophets and looked forward with earnest longing to the day when their golden words would be fulfilled in dazzling reality. They had dreamed dreams and seen visions, and in all those dreams and all those visions they had pictured themselves as the favorites of God, called and chosen by him to be his associates in the day upon which he would arise to rule the nations. They ardently desired a rule of righteousness upon earth and the overthrow of evil. They loved the name of the Lord and they wanted to see that beloved name cleared of the misunderstandings and false charges that had clustered about it. They had given themselves to God and he had accepted them for his own, to be a covenant people and a light to the nations, and life had become a different thing to them. Of course it was unthinkable that they should ever change their attitude! They had but to wait in the joy of this new-found relationship and when the day of deliverance dawned, their dearest hopes would be gratified.

But the years went by and a new and unknown factor emerged. . . . There were disappointment and disillusionment lying in wait to test faith and endurance; the insidious suggestion that more complete knowledge would reveal the instability of the foundation upon which those earlier golden visions had been built; the realization that many of the fond expectations had not materialized; and, perhaps worst of all, the onset of old age with its weakening of the natural powers and increasing difficulty of retaining the intellectual understanding of earlier years. What wonder that these things manifested themselves in a growing impatience with the enthusiasm of such prophets as remained in the land and a peevish insistence "there is no prophet; none there are who can tell us how long"?

We can sympathize with those disappointed Israelites of old, for we ourselves face a very similar situation. Things have turned out so differently from what was expected and some begin to doubt the certainty of earlier years. There was so much zeal and energy expended in those days, so much time and money given to a work that seemed worthwhile, so much organizing and building, and what has it all come to? Was it so much a work of the Lord as was thought? . . .

Nay, who are we that we presume to question the wisdom of the Great Shepherd? We may not have perceived every aspect of the Divine Plan with unquestioned accuracy, but then a great many Christians throughout the Age have been in that same position. If we have grown weary of deferred hopes, it is not because our Lord has grown weary of us. Neither is it necessarily that we are inconstant or changeable; more probable that we are uncertain....

The prophets have not failed us. The Holy Spirit is still active in the work of God, quickening the minds of his people and showing them visions of things yet to come as the time becomes due for those things to be understood. The drama of world history has stepped up its pace many times over in these last years; the succession of events is more rapid, the significance of each world crisis of greater moment, the possibilities of each situation more far-reaching. We see with our own eyes that of which our fathers in the faith told us, the breaking-up of a world order preparatory to the establishment of the Kingdom of God's dear Son. We see the progressive lining up of

all world forces under the banners of one or other of two Great Powers. We see the land of promise and prophecy slowly becoming caught between the spheres of influence of those two Powers as in a pair of giant pincers. We hear the growing demand of Jacob that he be restored as of right to his ancient inheritance. We perceive these things and we know what they portend. When the faint-hearted children of Israel came to Ezekiel with their complaint, "The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth," the Lord gave him a word for them. We can take that word to heart, for history has repeated itself. "Tell them therefore, Thus saith the Lord God; ... the days are at hand, and the effect of every vision." Let us give more earnest heed to the sure word of prophecy, for now, in the world's Saturday night, it speaks with clear voice of the things that are yet to be, and as we see those things unfold on the screen of world history, we shall know of a surety that our faith has been well founded and that to, us belongs the word, "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved."

- A. O. Hudson, Eng.

Leaves from a Christian Diary

"Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope." - Romans 5:3-4.

"When the storms of life are raging
Tempests wild on sea and land."

WITHOUT the storm winds blow; within are conflicts and struggles. We are threatened, driven and tossed like frail skiffs upon a boisterous sea. Around, the dear ones struggle, half-fainting with the effort to steer their frail earthly craft, amidst overwhelming sorrows, difficulties, and temptations, toward the heavenly shore. Comes the question, What is man? At our very bravest and best, we are frail human fragments. Tired, faulty, yet striving; not merely against flesh and blood but against the unseen forces of darkness.

"Weak and weary in the conflict,
'Wrestling not with flesh and blood,'
Help us, Lord, as faint we falter;
O revive us by Thy Word!"

Above the strife and tumult, rings the sweetness of assurance: "My grace is sufficient for thee." Fainting hearts revive, and ears become more alert to catch each word. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you." Faltering steps are spurred forward again. It is no strange thing to pass through the furnace. We gave our gold to the Refiner to be purged of its dross, and the cleansing flames we said we would bear. Or to turn to the other picture, we tread with patient zeal the narrow tortuous way. Come storm or tempest, we will continue on to the end, but how we wish the end were in view.

"Be thou faithful unto death." Like a sweet clarion call, sounding above the din of conflict, the words of a risen, glorious Savior, rouse us to activity. Gone is all the lassitude and weakness. Clothed in his strength, we continue to fight the good fight -- just for today.

CONSCIOUS OF FAILINGS

And what of today? Each day is so nearly like yesterday we become dismayed by our examination of the hours. We seem to have such a struggle with the simplest of things. The days are filled with common tasks. It seems an effort to do these tasks at times, we get so tired, so beset by weaknesses. To get a little time for study or private meditation is well nigh impossible some days. When we do get it, we are so tired it is a mental effort to concentrate upon whatever we want to read or think about.

And when it comes to the evening hour and we look back across that gap from dawn to setting sun, how disappointed we often feel. What an ordinary, empty, unsatisfactory day it has been. We cannot recount our victories, we cannot revel in opportunities we have had to tell the Good Tidings to some questioning soul. There has been little time to think or study, and worst of all we are conscious of failings -- thoughts, words, action perhaps, not quite all of that sweet, pure gentleness which becometh "His very own."

We cannot go to our Father and tell him of joys; we have only a story of rush and bustle, of failings and regrets to relate. We feel poor and mean, dissatisfied, and restless, longing with all our heart for better things.

"God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith." Hence the dear ones of his choice need to work hard and long under present conditions for their temporal sustenance. To those who have given their lives wholly to his service, the every-day routine, the constant jar and fret of little things, seems at times, scarcely understandable. Why should we have to live such ordinary work-a-day lives, with so little opportunity to do the things we want, when we long so much to do them?

TRIBULATION WORKETH PATIENCE

Many earnest children of God question thus, forgetful of the full import of the Apostle's words, "tribulation worketh patience." Tribulation is a state of affliction, oppression, pain and misery. We are oppressed by the daily round. All these ordinary, mundane tasks filling up consecrated hours which we long to use for other things, become at times an oppressive burden.

We grow discontented and tired. Then little things begin to go wrong. An unkind thought may creep in. Perhaps we are unjustly dealt with and a sharp word is spoken. Some mean action

It is specially important to watch the little things. Seldom do we conquer trifles as we conquer great things.

GOD CHOOSES A MAN OF STAMMERING TONGUE

We know that it has been God's eternal purpose to have with him a royal family-children who would reflect the beauty of his character; children whom he could love with all the fulness of his Divine nature; children who would be all love, even as he is love, who could and would fully reciprocate his love bestowed upon them.

When we stop to consider this we see something of the importance of the daily round. Out of the fallen race he has chosen this family which shall be his future joy. His creative works have required long ages for their accomplishment, but in the space of our short lifetime, his grace is sufficient to transform the sin-stained worldlings of his choice, into vessels of praise to his own glory.

"I know this stained tablet must first be washed white,
And there Thy bright features be drawn.

If some other way would have been better for the imprinting of that sweet image of Christ upon our hearts, then surely the wisdom of God would have chosen it. But since most of us are left to live these ordinary work-a-day lives, then that must be the very best way in which to develop those sweet graces of the Spirit which will enable us to reach the mark, and win the prize, of eternal life with Jesus Christ.

Nothing is more remarkable than some of the means which God has chosen in times past for the carrying out of his purposes. As if to teach us to trust in nothing and in none but himself, he selects means that seem the worst fitted to accomplish his ends.

Does he choose an ambassador to Pharaoh? -- it is a man of stammering tongue. Are the streams of Jericho to be sweetened? -- salt is cast into the spring. Are the battlements of a city to be thrown down? -- no explosive is employed, but simply the breath of an empty trumpet. Is a rock to be riven? -- neither earthquake nor lightning is employed, but a simple rod. Passing by schools, halls and colleges, God summoned his preachers from the shores of Galilee. The helm of the Church is entrusted to hands which have never steered but fishing boats. By the mouth of one who had been his bitterest persecutor, Christ pleaded his cause before the philosophers of Athens, and in the palaces of Rome.

A LITTLE WHILE

What wonder then, that looking for a stone upon which to trim and polish the living stones for his eternal temple and dwelling place, he uses the apparently simple round of common tasks. The very fact that the daily routine is so unsatisfactory, so full of struggles and failures, makes us long for that day when we might leave it all behind, and enter into the bright realms of Immanuel's land. In these imperfect bodies we do so much we dislike, and only the sweet promise that "we shall awake in his likeness" keeps us patient; keeps us still striving.

Daily tribulation cultivates patience -- patience to strive continually to make today better than yesterday, and tomorrow better than today. It develops in us experience, or character -- the character of Christ. With the knowledge that by his grace we are getting ever nearer to the mark for the prize, comes sweet hope--the hope of seeing him face to face and being made like him.

"A little while,' with patience Lord,
I fain would ask, 'How long?'
For how can I, with such a hope
Of glory and of home,
With such a joy awaiting me,
Not wish the hour were come?
How can I keep the longing back,
And how suppress the groan?"

As the Apostle Paul says, "We ourselves groan within ourselves," longing for an end of strife, and an entrance into the joys of our Lord. So often the heart, tired by ceaseless battle with the little things, whispers its longings to the One who has the ever-open ear. In sweet assurance comes the answer

"Not now, My child, a little more rough tossing,
A little longer on the billows' foam,
A few more journeys through the darkened wilderness,
And then the sunshine of thy Father's Home."

"Let patience have her perfect work," in the little things. Once more through the furnace, once more to the battle, once more that lonely walk in the dark, with only the touch of his hand, once more 'round that slowly turning grindstone of daily little things, and then -- Oh the sweetness of *then!* That blessed after-while of rest, peace, and joys for evermore.

IN THE HANDS OF THE GREAT SCULPTOR

It is not so many years ago since one we dearly love, said, "As the sun sinks at the close of each day and the shadows gather around us, how sweet to sing, 'I'm one day nearer Home.' We have nearly reached the mountain top, and every day multiplies the evidences that the journey is nearing its end. Just how long it will be we cannot know; probably it is best we do not know. But we believe that it will not be very long."

"Herein is the patience of the saints," to keep on day after day, week after week, year after year, if it please him in whom we trust, until he shall call us home.

"This day the noise of conflict,
the next the victor's song,"

should be the inspiration of those oppressed by the daily littleness. Being girt about by patience, strong in experience and inspired by hope, such can never fail. In the sweet hereafter, looking back on those little things, when each succeeding day was "twin sister of the last," they will see that nothing could have been a better instrument in the hands of the Great Sculptor, by which to fashion in them, beauty which would stand the eternal years.

"Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." - James 1:3.

-F. A. Shuttlesworth, Scot.

Full Consecration

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

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

- Poems of Dawn

Half Hour Meditations on Romans

No. 28

"The Lord our righteousness." - Jer. 23:6; 33:16.

The "righteousness of [or from] God," which "now," "apart from law," "has been manifested" in the life and death of the Savior; the righteousness which is "attested by the Law and the Prophets," is still further elaborated by the Apostle. It is even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe (Rom. 3:22).

Evangelical Righteousness

These words are obviously in explanation of what has just been said in Rom. 3:21. The expression "righteousness of God" is capable of more than one meaning, and the Apostle would leave us in no doubt as to which meaning he intends to which righteousness he refers. His words have been well paraphrased by another thus: "God's righteousness, I have said, has been manifested. It is true; and an all important truth. *But*, let it be borne in mind that the righteousness of which I speak is not that in the possession of which God himself is righteous; but it is that which he has provided for unrighteous men that which is to them through faith in Jesus Christ." This explanatory use of the word "even" may be seen elsewhere in the Scriptures, as for example: "The Gentiles . . . have attained to righteousness, *even* the righteousness which is of faith (Rom. 9:30). "He [Jesus]. . . became obedient unto death, *even* the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8).

Through Faith in Jesus

"When the Apostle says, through [or by] faith of Jesus Christ . . . he evidently means, through faith *in* Jesus Christ. The genitive of the Saviors complex name is objective. . . . Compare such expressions as . . . the faith *of* the Gospel (Phil. 1:27; faith or belief of the truth (2 Thess. 2:13)." See also James 2:1: "My brethren, have not the faith *of* our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons." In these passages the evident intention of the inspired writers is "faith *in* the Gospel"; "faith, or belief, *in* the truth"; "faith *in* our Lord Jesus Christ." Some, however, have supposed that in Rom. 3:22 the reference is not to faith in Jesus but to faith *possessed by* Jesus, that faith which he maintained even through the ordeal of the crucifixion. There can be no doubt, however, that the faith here spoken of is the same as that referred to in the great theme text of this epistle (Rom. 1:17), and also in Rom. 9:30, quoted above. In neither of these texts is there any mention of Jesus Christ, and consequently there is no room for supposing that the faith referred to is that *possessed by* him.

Faith Brings Jesus Near

The word "faith" we have already discussed in connection with Rom. 1:17. (See Meditations Nos. 15 and 16.) "Its import is nothing recondite; otherwise it would be a term altogether unsuitable for being used in an exhibition of the duty of universal man, uncultured as well as cultured. Faith is such a persuasion or conviction of the mind in reference to things unseen, and so far as direct intuition is concerned, unknown, as supplies the place of vision or envisaging. Its moral power, in its relation to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is resolvable into the peculiarity of its object, and not into any peculiarity in the act. What is needed, consequently, in order to continuous and continuously increasing peace, joy, hope, gratefulness, holiness, and devotedness is that faith be directed continuously and with continuously increasing breadth and depth of range to its glorious Object. He who lives by faith in Jesus, is continuously present with Jesus in the most exalted way

in which presence can be realized; . . . in mind, in thought.

And the power of the presence of Jesus . . . is, when the presence becomes to the inner eye intensely self evidencing and luminous, imperial It is apparently in virtue of this mighty moral power of faith in Jesus that it has been divinely invested with what is called its justifying function."

I need thee every hour;
Stay thou near by;
Temptations lose their power
When Thou art nigh.

Unto All and Upon All

Scholars tell us that "there is some difficulty in determining the correct reading of the clause" which in our Authorized Version is translated "unto all and upon all them that believe." The phrase "and upon all" is not found in the four oldest Greek manuscripts, yet as we learned in Meditations No. 9, this fact, though of considerable weight, is not necessarily conclusive.

In the present case the great body of critics agree that "it seems to be more difficult to account for its admission into the text [of those manuscripts and ancient translations which contain it], if spurious, than for its omission [from those documents which do not contain it], if genuine." If the genuine text reads: "unto all and upon all them that believe," it is easy to understand how a copyist could have written "unto all them that believe," accidentally or (through a failure to distinguish the two thoughts of the Apostle) intentionally omitting the words "and upon all." On the other hand if the genuine text reads: "unto all them that believe," it is very unlikely that a copyist would have accidentally interpolated the words "and upon all," and it is not easy to understand why he should have intentionally done so.

But what then, is the distinction between the phrases "unto all" and "upon all"? Many expositors see no distinction, but believe that the Apostle is merely repeating one idea for the sake of intensity. "I see no difference," says one, "more than betwixt Aarons beard, and the beard of Aaron."

Yet, as another has observed, the Apostle was "fond of using his prepositions *distinguisshingly*, " as for example, in Rom. 9:35, "For *of* him and *through* him, and *to* him, are all things." (Here, surely, he is saying three things, not repeating one thing three times.) "And it should certainly be our very last resort to suppose that his discriminative use the two which are employed in the case before us is unmeaning.

There does seem to be an ascent in the thought. And unless it is utterly impossible to work out this climactic idea in consistency with sobriety, and with the scope of revelation and with the facts of human experience we should not fall back upon the idea of mere indiscriminate accumulation."

Unto All Men Upon All Believers

It would be unbecoming in us to express our view of this passage dogmatically, especially in view of the difficulty scholars have experienced in determining the correct reading of the text, yet we cannot but think that they accurately grasp the Apostles meaning who understand the words "unto all" to refer to all *men*, and the words, "upon all" to all *believers*. This glorious

righteousness of God, which "now," "apart from law," "has been manifested"; this righteousness which is "witnessed by the Law and the Prophets"; this righteousness which is "by faith in Jesus Christ" this righteousness is "unto all" men. The Apostle, we think, does but parallel here a thought that is elsewhere expressed in the Scriptures: Christ "gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:6); He "tasted death for every man" (Heb 2:9); "He is the propitiation . . . for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). These expressions would appear to be but other aspects of the idea that the evangelical righteousness of God is *unto all*. The Gospel of Gods grace which announces the *ransom*, the *death tasting*, the *propitiation*, and the *righteousness* equally is a message of mercy to "every man that cometh into the world."

Justification May Lapse

But while this righteousness is as universal in its invitation as the need for it is universal, its actual possession and enjoyment is limited to them that believe. It is "unto all" in the unlimited offers of the Gospel it is "upon" them only that believe. It is, moreover, upon them that believe *only while they believe*. (See Meditations No. 17.) "For continuous ness of faith is necessary in order to the continuous enjoyment of the blessings that are wrapped up in the Divine, evangelical righteousness. The life must be a life of faith. Momentary faith may, indeed, suffice for momentary blessings. More than momentary, and yet temporary, faith may suffice for more than momentary yet temporary blessings. But perpetual faith -- faith that is held unto the end -- is needed for perennial life, for everlasting glory." This evangelical righteousness, this reckoned justification, or justification by faith, "holds good so long as faith continues and is backed by endeavors to do the Lords will. If faith and obedience cease, at once the justification ceases to be imputed." (S. S. Vol. VI, pg. F103.)

"But it remains the fact -- of such infinite value and fruitfulness is faith in God, as he has shown himself in Jesus, that when a man first believes -- aye, whenever, over and over again, he returns to belief -- he is in Gods sight on a new basis, however dark be the background of his previous sins; and he can be dealt with simply on the new basis, according to the movement of the Fathers heart of love which his faith has set free."

There Is No Difference

For there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. -- Rom. 3:22-23

The Apostle says "all have sinned, and come short."

He "is not to be understood here as affirming the absurd and manifestly false proposition that there is no diversity in the character of men or in the respective measures of their guilt. It is true also, that *we* are far from being competent judges of the measures of evil and of guilt in different characters; and that he who searches the hearts and tries the reins, and with whom that which is highly esteemed amongst men is so frequently abomination, may in many cases see most where we might fancy there was least. But still differences there are -- differences in kind and degree. The Apostle does not mean to deny this." His words must be understood in the light of the subject under discussion. He is speaking of them "that believe" upon whom has come from God a precious "robe of righteousness," and he tells us "there is no difference" between believing Jews and believing Gentiles so far as this evangelical righteousness of God is concerned. They are both in equal need of it and for both it is equally available. Compare Romans 10:11,12: "For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him."

"This principle of indifferentiation in relation to the righteousness of God is applicable to men, not only considered as Jews and Gentiles, but also considered in all possible diversities of physical, intellectual, moral, and social condition. In the matter referred to there is no difference between sovereigns, for instance, and their meanest subjects; between the cultured and the most uncultured; between the sage and the savages; no difference between the most punctilious Pharisee who observes every ceremony of the church and (gathering up his garments) steps fastidiously aside from every indecency of social life and the most reckless offcasts who rough it on the highways of life, or riot and rot in the lowest of our city dens."

-- *P. L. Read*

Hebrew Christians

"Standing before an embroidered Star of David and a seven-branched menorah (candlestick), David Bronstein faced his congregation and began: 'This is Hanukah week, as we all know. And we all know that Hanukah, the Hebrew feast of lights, has a special meaning for us.' The meaning: that Jesus Christ is the Light of the World." So reports *Time*.

"The Rev. David Bronstein is no rabbi but a pastor," continues *Time*, "and the 100-odd members of his Chicago congregation, almost all of them born Jews, call themselves Hebrew Christians...."

"Pastor Bronstein's services follow a conventional Protestant order, with special emphasis on the connections between the Old Testament and the New. Jewish holidays are celebrated with Christian interpretations...."

"The New Testament is the fruition of Biblical Judaism," says Hebrew Christian Bronstein. "To me, any Bible student, if sincere and wide-awake, will see that the Old Testament is just promises. The New Testament is a fulfilment of these promises. The first church in Jerusalem was a Hebrew Christian Church entirely. We are reviving the original Jewish atmosphere of that first church."

"The Upper Room"

(Continued from last issue)

"And he will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us." - Mark 14:15.

THE tender love of our Lord for his disciples, which we have seen so manifest on that last evening in the Upper Room, is no less evidenced in our next key word:

4. SCARLET-WORLD

The next key word is world, which occurs forty times. This we associate with the fourth color, scarlet, suggestive of suffering and death. Going to the Father, our Lord was leaving behind his beloved disciples in a world which was not only unfriendly but actively hostile, where they would be treated as he was treated, having to endure sufferings and death. His heart goes out to them in deepest sympathy and love as he sees in prospect their sufferings duplicating his own. With prophetic insight he foresaw in outline what he later revealed to John in exile at Patmos and recorded in the Apocalypse. There would be the cruel persecutions under Pagan Rome, when the souls under the altar would be crying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood." (Rev. 6:10.) There would be later the far more cruel and extensive persecutions under Papal Rome, when the mother of harlots would be drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus. What a totally different prospect this was from that in the minds of all the disciples as they were gathered together in that upper room. They had followed Jesus, believing that the Kingdom of Heaven in its earthly phase was at hand. Their last question, put to him immediately prior to his being taken up was: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?" - Acts 1:6.

This evening of evenings, when no thought of his own sufferings disturbed the peace and joy of Jesus, in the prospect of going so soon to the Father, he was filled with the deepest concern for them and for all who should believe on him through their word right down to our day. Notwithstanding this deep concern, he prays (John 17:15): "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." As with himself, the world was to be the scene of their witness and of their triumph. It would be a source of strength and joy to them to remember that in all their sufferings they were following in his steps. And so he tells them (John 15:18, 19): "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Again in John 16:33 he encourages them and us through them, saying, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

"While they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight." (Acts 1:9.) Could the disciples have foreseen that between this and the fulfillment of the angels' message that this same Jesus would come again in like manner, would be an interval of over nineteen hundred years, how lost they would have felt. God kindly veiled their eyes, and the eyes of all his people since, for history tells us that every generation of the Church treasured the hope that the Lord's coming was imminent. In times of great stress, however, individually and collectively, they have often been tempted to feel that the Lord was far away. Perhaps we have all felt at times like the diver going down into the depths, trusting his life to another. What if his companion above should fail to note or to heed his signals, or to insure the constant supply of air? As if in anticipation of

such a fear on our part our Lord gave this wonderful assurance that in every possible contingency we could ask anything we needed from the Father and it would be given to us.

Note how all-comprehensive are the following: John 15:7: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask *what ye will*, and it shall be done unto you." John 15:16: "That *whatsoever* ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." John 16:23, 24: "*Whatsoever* ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. ... ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

In addition to this abounding grace of asking the Father, in his name, for anything they might need, with the assurance that it would be granted, Jesus left them and all who should believe **on** him through their word, a legacy of his own peace and joy. John 14:27: "Peace I leave with you: *my peace* I give unto you." John 15:11: "These things have I spoken unto you, that *my joy* might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." There was yet one thing more that Jesus assured them of. In the world they would be despised and rejected like as he was, but theirs would be the supreme honor of complete identification with him. John 13:20: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." John 17:22, 23: "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, *as* thou hast loved me."

There can be no doubt that were our Lord visibly present at our Upper Room gatherings, he would discuss with us all these things pertaining to our experiences in the world. Invisibly present by means of the spirit, he guides and directs, comforts and encourages in the same way, to which we can all testify by experience.

5. WHITE-REUNION

The last thread of thought running through the fabric of John 13 to 17 is the white of reunion. White, because it speaks of the marriage of the Lamb.

"The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her it was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." (Rev. 19:7, 8.) Gold, Blue, Purple, Scarlet, and now White.

Uppermost in the minds and hearts of those who love each other dearly, when it comes to the final parting, is the hope of reunion. At the last supper Jesus said (John 14:2, 3), "In my father's house are many mansions:.. . I go to prepare a place for you... . And ... I will come again, and receive you unto myself." In his institution of the Memorial he established a perpetual reminder of the hope of meeting again, saying, Matthew 26:29: "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom." To this Paul adds, 1 Cor. 11:26: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

We've waited long,
we're waiting still,
Longing with Thee to be."

Thus does the hymn express the attitude of the Church for now nearly nineteen centuries. But this, too, is the attitude of Jesus. With the love of the heavenly Bridegroom for his Bride, he anticipates the day when the barrier of the flesh will be removed from between them. The earthly

union which consummates the happiness of two deeply in love, is a type of the heavenly one. Like all types, the earthly will pass away, for in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage. The antitype, however, will continue throughout all eternity.

Meantime we are still in the period of the sufferings of Christ, for the Lord suffers with and in his people. "In every pang that rends the heart, the man of sorrows has a part." In all our afflictions he is afflicted. Just as the mother tending her little one distressed with pain, suffers with her child whose pain she would gladly bear instead, so with our Lord. Not only collectively but individually is this true. The Lord loves each one of us, as if there were but one of us to love. In the same way, as if there were but one of us, he suffers with each of us. All this "till he come." And surely all the marvelous signs of our times add up to the conclusion that at long last the end of the reign of evil is in sight.

The Bible's last message from our Lord is: "Surely I come quickly." (Rev. 22:20.) To this, John, speaking for the Church ever since, replies, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." What if we are of those described in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 as "we which are alive and remain," who are to be "caught up to meet the Lord in the air"? Whatever the view we *may* take of this passage, it seems clear that at the very end of the Church's course on earth, those who are "alive and remain" will all be taken away together. Our Lord has repeatedly told us that we shall not know beforehand. "Watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch." (Mark 13:33, 37.) "The Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not." (Luke 12:40.) The time is left uncertain so that we might live in an attitude of daily preparedness for the great event.

Now that we have so much reason to believe that at last it is nigh at hand, even at the doors, what a continual inspiration this thought should be to us. In that first "Upper Room," before our Lord was Gethsemane and Calvary, but he looked beyond this and said, "I go to the Father." Before us is what? Fear of the horrors of nuclear warfare? Fear of what may come to those near and dear to us? Fear concerning ourselves, which may include the increasing disability and weakness due to advancing years? How often we are robbed of our present peace and joy through fear of what may never happen. Instead of the fear and foreboding of coming calamity, let us have the hope and inspiration that ours may be the blessed experience of 1 Thessalonians 4:17, knowing that the deliverance of the Church is the forerunner of the deliverance of the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain. - Rom. 8:21, 22.

CONCLUSION -- "GATHERING UP THE THREADS"

"The Upper Room" of Mark 14:15 embodying John 13 to 17 is symbolic of every gathering where Jesus is "in the midst." Were he visibly present, he would converse with us along the lines of the five principles denoted by the key words and the colors. Invisibly present, he "breaks to us the bread of life in these same settings, which are:

1. *The Father*, his love, his care and keeping, his sanctifying power, and that we too, like Jesus, "go to the Father."
2. *The holy spirit*, whereby the Lord can be present in every Upper-Room gathering, no matter how many, at one and the same time.
3. *Love*. The love existing between the Father and the Son has to be in the Church, making us one with them as they are one with each other.

4. *The world.* As the world had hated him, it would hate them. But they would share his victory, his peace, and his joy. Despised, they would have the honor of representing him.

5. *Reunion.* "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am;, there ye may be also." - John 14:3.

"Bride of the Lamb, awake! awake!
Why weep for sorrow now?
The hope of glory, Christ, is thin;
A child of glory, thou.

"But see, the night is waning fast,
The breaking morn is here;
And Jesus comes, with voice of love,
Thy drooping heart to cheer.

"He comes, for O! his yearning heart
No more can bear delay,
To scenes of full unmingled joy
To call his bride away."

- *A. D. Kirkwood, Scot.*

Britain Revisited by R. Robert Hollister

It was in 1910 when Brother Russell introduced Brother R. Robert Hollister to our British brethren and also to the British press. Urged often to return, Brother Hollister and his dear wife did so in 1956. A most interesting account of this second extensive visit, which also describes highlights of the 1910 mission, has been printed in the form of a forty four page brochure for distribution at no cost to brethren who are vitally interested in the Bible Student Movement. For a copy write to R. R. Hollister, Route 2, Waynesville, Ohio.

The Bible -- The Book for Today

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." - Matt. 4:4.

THE Bible is the most interesting and instructive collection of writings in existence. Its sixty-six books comprise the handiwork of at least sixty authors, the latest of whom lived only nineteen hundred years ago and the earliest nearly five thousand years ago. Of all the books that are now before the reading public, this one is the most up-to-date. It presents a full and adequate explanation of life, of life's problems and perplexities, and of life's possibilities and opportunities. Above all, it points unhesitatingly to the One who is the source of contentment, happiness, and peace.

The Bible is the oldest book in existence. It has outlived the storms of forty five centuries. Men have endeavored by every means possible to banish it from the face of the earth; they have hidden it, burned it, made the possession of it a crime punishable with death, and the most bitter and relentless persecutions have been waged against those who had faith in it; but still the book lives. Today, while many of its foes slumber in death, and hundreds of volumes written to discredit it and to overthrow its influence are long since forgotten, the Bible has found its way into every nation and people of earth. It has been published in more than one thousand different dialects and languages. In the last one hundred and fifty years alone, four hundred and fifty million copies have been printed and circulated.

Between its covers is found law, ethics, poetry, drama, history, travel, prophecy, romance, philosophy, political and social instruction; in short, everything that has to do with the life of man. Its authors were as varied in character as are its contents. Kings, emperors and princes; poets, sages and philosophers; fishermen, statesmen and priests; poor men, rich men, preachers, exiles, captains, legislators, judges, men of every grade and class, have contributed to the writing of this book.

General Smuts once said:

"Whenever I see anything great or anything really moving, my mind always passes into the language of the Old Testament. It is the language of the human heart, the language of the human mind and soul expressing pure human feelings and human emotions, with a universality which appeals to all races and all ages."

No other sacred writing possesses this appeal. The sacred books of Islam and Buddhism, the two great non-Biblical religious faiths are less than two thousand years old and cannot be compared with the Bible. They give no detailed history of nations as does the Bible, neither do they pronounce with such authority and reason on the burning questions of man: his origin and destiny; and of evil: its origin, the reason for its permission, and its end.

The Bible therefore merits the thoughtful consideration of every reflective person. Upon the earth there is distress of nations with perplexity; a voice that speaks with authority is sorely needed. The Bible is that voice. *The Bible is the book for today.*

As a record of history the Bible is unsurpassed. Over two-thirds of its contents are historical narratives. These narratives are authentic and reliable. Prof. Sayce, one of the greatest of archaeologists, has said: *"I do not for a moment hesitate to assert that the investigations in*

Assyria and Egypt thoroughly corroborate the statements of the Old Testament," and Prof. Yahuda, another authority, declares: *"Every archaeological discovery in Palestine and Mesopotamia contemporary with the Bible period bears out unfailingly its historical accuracy."*

There is evidence in the opening chapters of the Bible that they were written in Mesopotamia not later than twenty five centuries before Christ. The history thus commenced was continued by successive writers for some two thousand years and was completed only four centuries before Jesus Christ came to earth. In the later decades of the nineteenth century the historical accuracy of these writings began to be questioned by critics, but today that skepticism has been proved unjustified, largely in consequence of the decipherment of Egyptian and Asiatic written records and the further discoveries of archeologists. A tremendous amount of excavation has been undertaken in Mesopotamia, Palestine, and Egypt since the war of 1914, and practically every part of Bible history has now been confirmed or illuminated by the results of this work. Numerous books have been published setting forth these facts. *The verdict of twentieth century research is that Bible history is true!*

There is poetry, drama, and philosophy of a high order in the Bible. The Book of Ruth is an idyllic romance of three thousand years ago; the Book of Esther a rare study in human character. The passionate drama of the Book of Job stands in strong contrast to the measured soliloquies of Ecclesiastes, and the staccato epigrams of the Book of Proverbs to the delicate loveliness of the Song of Solomon. The crisp sunlight and shadows of the Book of Acts make it one of the most vividly interesting books of travel ever written, and the Book of Psalms is full of the most inspiring poetry. Each of these books is one to be read slowly and sympathetically as a work of art having its own characteristics and its own peculiar appeal.

The English language has been built up largely around the Authorized Version of 1611; the English love of liberty and justice is due in no small measure to general appreciation of its teachings; the finest of British characteristics must be attributed in considerable degree to three hundred years of consistent reading and preaching of the Book. Very truly, then, was it said by the famous biologist, Prof. T. H. Huxley, some seventy years ago, *"Consider the great historical fact that for three centuries this Book has been woven into the life of all that is best and noblest in English history; that it has become the national epic of Britain; that it is written in the noblest and purest English, and abounds in exquisite beauties of a merely literary form; and, finally, that it forbids the veriest hind who never left his village, to be ignorant of the existence of other countries and other civilizations, and of a great past, stretching back to the farthest limits of the oldest nations of the world."*

In the practical things as well as in the cultured tastes of daily life, therefore, the Bible is a sure guide. For good health of body and of mind the Bible contains ample instruction. For guidance in affairs of nations as well as in relations between individuals, the Bible is the best authority. This Book, which has inspired the creative genius of writers, poets, and painters through the centuries, is no less effective in the lives of ordinary men and women who read and ponder over its pages. *The Bible is the book of daily life.*

Finally, and first in importance, the Bible is the Divine Revelation.

Man does not live by bread alone. A full and rich life is the portion of those who consciously seek to fulfill the Divine will. For all such the Bible is the teacher.

The Bible message is that sin and death are intrusions among men and will one day be removed. The first human beings were created sinless, undying, with ability to use the earth's resources for

good. Tragically, they forsook the laws of righteousness and allowed selfishness, malice, injustice, to influence their course of life. Inevitably, pain, disease, and death followed and has continued until now. Bible history follows the course of that sad progress, and then tells of the coming to earth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to redeem the world from its sin and the consequences of that sin. The immediate fruitage of his life and death on earth has been the development of the Church -- a world-wide assembly of Christians completely devoted to his service. A further fruitage will become evident when his Kingdom on earth has been established, and under his beneficent control, and the administration of his Church, all humanity will be instructed and guided in that better way which will "make wars to cease unto the ends of the earth," abolish disease, poverty, and all the ills from which mankind now suffers, and bring to an end sin and death. "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written 'Death is swallowed up in victory'" for "there shall be no more death."

The Bible, then, is the book of the future. The time spent in reading, studying, and discussing this, the greatest of all books, will not be time wasted. It cannot fail to broaden the mind and ennoble the character. It cannot fail to make the reader more thoughtful for others, more desirous of serving his fellow-men, more confident of the future. It cannot fail to establish intelligent faith in God, and a conviction that men have a mighty destiny before them, reaching far beyond the limits of things that are now seen and known, and extending into eternity.

- *Bible Study Monthly*, Eng.

The Question Box

Question:

Will you please discuss 2 Cor. 3:18, particularly in reference to the word "beholding"?

Answer:

In the *Authorized Version* this verse reads: "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord."

The *American Revised Version* (A.D. 1881-1885, edited A.D. 1901) translates: "We all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the spirit." In the *margin* an alternative translation is given: "reflecting as a mirror." The *American Revised Standard Version* (1952) also retains "beholding" in the *text* but gives "reflecting" in the *margin*.

It has been held that "reflecting" must be rejected on three grounds: (1) grammatical form, (2) context, and (3) doctrine. Let us examine the question from these three points of view.

GRAMMATICAL FORM

In regard to the grammatical form of the Greek word, the writer is without qualification to pass on the question. In the three translations above quoted, it will be noted that "beholding" is preferred. However, "reflecting" is given in *Weymouth's* translation and appears in *Rotherham's*. It is preferred in the *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, and also in the *Devotional Commentary* published by the Religious Tract Society; and, in addition to the *margin* of the *American Revised Version* and the *American Revised Standard Version*, is adopted in the *text* of the *English Revised Version*.

In the light of the foregoing, there would appear to be plenty of scholarship of the highest type in favor of "reflecting," and in the presence of such testimony we do not know that "laymen" such as the writer, can reach any other conclusion than that, so far as its grammatical form is concerned, the word is capable of being so rendered. *Moffatt's* translation reads: "We all mirror the glory of the Lord," and in a note on the verse, *Rotherham* comments: "If we could say so, 'Mirroring,' both 'receiving' and 'reflecting.'"

Another eminent writer, J. E. McFayden, in the *Interpreter's Commentary on the Epistles*, although himself preferring "beholding," admits that "reflecting" is possibly correct. He writes: "The word *katoptrizomenoi* has been the subject of much dispute; the two possible meanings are given in the (*English*) *Revised Version*, margin and text respectively—*beholding* and *reflecting* (as in a mirror). The active voice means 'to show in a mirror,' and the precise force of the middle [voice] must be determined by the context."

CONTEXT

In examining the context we find that St. Paul is here contrasting the glory attending the "ministration of death" (the Law) with the far greater glory of the "ministration of the spirit" (the Gospel) -- see 2 Cor. 3:7-8. However, there is some difference of thought as to the points of contrast he is making. We submit the following to the consideration of our readers:

To properly understand the passage it seems necessary to keep in mind the fact: that one of the prominent purposes, if not the main idea of the Epistle, is that of vindicating the Apostle's own preaching and conduct. In other words, and because it was necessary in the interests of the true Christians in Corinth, he is, in this Epistle, making a "fool" of himself (so his enemies would say) by "boasting." (2 Cor. 11:16, 19, 23, etc.) And it is important to observe that even so magnificent a subject as the contrast between the old and the new dispensations *is incidental to this "boasting,"* and is introduced into the Epistle primarily because when rightly understood, such contrast will materially contribute to the Apostle's personal vindication. Consistently *with this purpose,* the contrast he is here presenting is not between Moses and Jesus, as many appear to think, but between Moses and himself. "We," he says, speaking of himself, "use great plainness of speech and not as Moses," etc. - 2 Cor. 3:12-13.

We next inquire: In what respect does the Apostle contrast himself with Moses? To answer this question it is necessary to refer to the narrative in Exodus 34:29-35. Here we read that when Moses appeared from communing with Jehovah, the children of Israel were at first afraid to come near him because of his shining face, but that he overcame their fears and *with unveiled face talked* with them. Then having, *with shining face,* delivered Jehovah's message, *and not until then,* he put the veil on (a point misrepresented in the *Authorized Version,* which in Exodus 34:33 wrongly reads "till" for "when"). That this procedure was invariably followed may be seen from the remaining verses of the Exodus passage.

No reason is assigned in Exodus as to why Moses veiled his face, but the Apostle does not infer, as many students of the Bible do, that it was to hide the reflected glory of the Lord, which shone from his countenance. Recognizing the fact that the delivery of Jehovah's message *was accompanied by the shining face,* the Apostle infers from the donning of the veil *immediately afterwards,* that the glory began thereafter gradually to vanish, and *the veil was to hide its evanescence.* 2 Cor. 3:13.

Quoting from Moffatt's translation we read: "Such being my hope then, I [Paul] am quite frank and open-not like Moses who used to hang a veil over his face to keep the children of Israel *from gazing at the last rays of a vanishing glory.*" - 2 Cor. 3:12-13, italics ours.

Moses, then, had something to hide, namely the fact that the glory of his countenance was a fading glory. True "reflection," though the glory of his countenance was, of Jehovah's own shining countenance, and symbolizing, as it did, the glory of the Mosaic dispensation, it was but a vanishing glory. The Apostle, on the contrary, had nothing to hide. The Gospel he ministered was not transient but permanent -- "everlasting." (Rev. 14:6.) He "reflected" or "mirrored" it *continuously.* His opponents might accuse him of dishonorable practices, but such accusations were false. "Boasting" in the surpassing glory of the Gospel, and in the firm conviction that its glory will never fade before a yet greater glory, he assures the Church at Corinth that, unlike even Moses, he had nothing to conceal, but at the risk of being accused of self-commendation, preached with confidence, frankness and courage. True, his Gospel was veiled to some, but only to those whose minds were blinded by the Adversary. (2 Cor. 4:3, 4.) But so far as his own personal intentions were concerned, he says: "I disown those practices which very shame conceals from view; I do not go about it craftily; I do not falsify the Word of God; I state the truth openly and so commend myself to every man's conscience before God." - 2 Cor. 4:2, *Moffatt.*

After 2 Cor. 3:13 the Apostle's argument proper would appear to be resumed in 4:1-'Therefore, seeing we have this ministry [Oh! how glorious a ministry contrasted with even that of Moses), as we have received mercy, we faint not.' But there is another lesson which the metaphor of the veil has stirred in his mind, and he pauses long enough to give it expression. It was not alone from the

Israel of Moses' time that the *transience* of the Law Dispensation was veiled. It was veiled also from the Israel of his own day. And this lesson, by a slight variation in the metaphor of "the veil" he proceeds to press. "Even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil [of prejudice, etc.,] is upon their heart" (2 Cor. 3:15), and thus they still think of their covenant as permanent. It is only when any one of them turns to Christ that the veil is taken *away* and they recognize that the glory of the old covenant is a fading glory.

This happy thought, that others besides himself had had the veil removed from their eyes, suggests yet another contrast. The Old Covenant was ministered by a single man, Moses, but *the New Covenant is to be ministered by the entire membership of the Christ Company*. "We all," says he (referring, in our understanding of the passage, to *all Christians*, who have consecrated themselves to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, even unto death), "with unveiled face behold, reflect, mirror, the glory of the Lord." - 2 Cor. 3:18.

In their consideration of this passage some hold the thought that the Apostle does not here refer to any veil that may have been lifted from our eyes, but, understanding him to be contrasting Moses with Jesus, refer to the "unveiled face of our Master Jesus Christ." But we submit, and in the foregoing paragraphs we have sought to show, that the contrast is not between Moses and Jesus but, in the first place, between Moses and Paul, and next between Moses and the entire Church. In this view of the context it appears that the Apostle does indeed refer to the veil, now happily removed, which used to be on our hearts. We might have expected him to say: "We all with unveiled *hearts*" (in view of the word he uses in 2 Cor. 3:15), but the metaphor of the veil is not worked out with strict consistency, but is varied somewhat in the same way as he varied the metaphor of "the epistle" earlier in the chapter. (2 Cor. 3:13.) There, it will be remembered, "the epistle" in one place is said to be written on Paul's heart (2 Cor. 3:2), while **in** another place it is said to be written on the hearts of the Corinthians themselves (2 Cor. 3:3), yet the meaning is not difficult. So here, the veil is at one time on the face of Moses (2 Cor. 3:13), at another it is on the heart of Israel. (2 Cor. 3:15.) But the thought of the Apostle seems clear. Just as Moses reflected the glory of the Old Dispensation, so did Paul reflect the glory of the New. Just as Moses reflected the glory of the Old Dispensation, so do we, the Church, reflect the glory of the New. Unlike Moses, Paul needed no veil, neither do we, but, like Paul, we may continuously reflect the surpassing glory of the Gospel Dispensation. "Reflecting" in this view of the matter does not appear to be out of harmony with the context, while *Moffatt's* translation: "We mirror," together with *Rotherham's* interesting comment: "'Mirroring,' both 'receiving and 'reflecting,'" to our mind still further illuminates the passage.

DOCTRINE

One further point: To some minds the thoughts contained in the words "beholding" and "reflecting" are incompatible-in doctrinal conflict-and must, therefore, mutually exclude each other. In this view, the one who "beholds" remains passive; the change which takes place in the "beholder" is clearly seen to result not from anything he did, but from the influence of the One beheld. On the other hand, so such reason, "to reflect" is an activity accomplished by the "reflector" and, therefore, his transformation, resulting as it does from his own efforts, must be held attributable to the individual himself. Those who thus reason believe the translation "reflecting" must be rejected as in conflict with the general tenor of Scripture which teaches that our transformation is "all of grace."

To our understanding "beholding" and "reflecting" are not incompatible but complementary to each other. It is impossible to *truly* behold, without *faithfully* reflecting. The faithfulness of the reflection is always a certain indication of the clarity of the vision. Nay, more than this, it is the

only certain indication of it. And where Christ is not reflected it is reasonable to conclude that he is not beheld. "I will show thee my faith [and my clearness of vision) *by my* works [my reflecting]."

"One ship sails east, another west,
By the self-same wind that blows;
It is not the gale,
But the set of the sail,
Which determines the way they go.

"Like the winds of the sea
Are the ways of time,
As we voyage along through life;
'Tis the set of the soul,
That determines the goal,
And not the calm or the strife."

While, therefore, for the purpose of clearness in thinking, we may separate in our minds the two ideas, "beholding" and "reflecting," we should ever remember that they are inseparable in fact.

RECEIVING AND OBEYING

It was not an advocate of "great works," of "much preaching," of "converting the world in this Age," etc., but our beloved Brother Russell himself who, in commenting on 1 Peter 1:14-15, wrote: "Some Christians have the erroneous idea that God does all the fashioning, and that his children are to be merely passive in his hand; but Peter does not so express it. He exhorts us to fashion ourselves according to the divine instructions." Brother Russell elsewhere reminds us that "bur Lord always links the progress and development of our spiritual life with our *receiving* and *obeying* the truth," and in a direct reference to 2 Cor. 3:18 he wrote: "This change comes in proportion as we 'behold the glory of the Lord' -- in proportion as we come to appreciate *and learn to copy* the grandeur of the divine character."

"Too long have I, methought, with tearful eye
Pored o'er this tangled work of mine, and mused
About each stitch awry, and thread confused;
Now will I think on what in years gone by
I heard of them that weave rare tapestry
At royal looms, and how they constant use
To work on the rough side, and still peruse
The picture pattern set above them high;
So will I set my copy high above,
And gaze, and gaze till on my spirit *flows*
Its gracious impress, till some line of love
Transferred upon my canvas, faintly *flows*;
Nor look too much on warp or woof, provide
He whom I work for sees their fairer side."

- P. L. Read.

Recently Deceased

Sr. Marie H. Cooper, Los Angeles - (Dec.)
Bro. James F. Foster, Richmond, Va. - (Oct.)
Bro. Wiley C. Gardner, Fresno, Cal. - (Dec.)
Sr. W. M. Jensen, Waupaca, Wis. - (Dec.)
Bro. Oswald Koerber, Brooklyn, N.Y. - (Dec.)
Bro. G. C. McDaniel, Farmington, Mo. - (Dec.)
Bro. John E. McFarland, Kansas City - (June)
Bro. Geo. Rondabush, San Francisco - (Dec.)
Bro. W. S. Stevens, Atlanta, Ga. - (Dec.).
Sr. C. Taylor, Glace Bay, N. S. - (Dec.)
Bro. Aaron L. Vining, Chanute, Kans. - (Feb.)
Bro. H. J. Wharton, Kansas City, Mo. - (Nov.)