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The Coming World Potentate

"Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him." - Psalm 72:11.

THE Bible may be likened to a mighty mountain range of truth rising above the plane of human seasonings, with high peaks which especially evidence Divine inspiration, such as its magnificent introductory chapter -- a record of events to which no human being was witness; or certain Psalms, as the 46th (Psa. 45), so descriptive of events in our day and those to be in the near future; or the 45th, that wonderful, royal marriage hymn in which both the King's Son and Daughter are so graphically described. Again, the awesome prophetic 22nd Psalm (Psa. 22) is one of these high peaks, opening as it does with the dreadful cry of the Sufferer of a thousand years later, continuing through his agony on the cross to the abrupt change of tone between verses 21 and 22 (Psa. 22:21-22), significant of the silence of the grave, and concluding with the triumphal resurrection paean.

And what can be said of that most remarkable key to the Bible's last book, the 17th chapter of Revelation? These and many like portions are indeed "God-inbreathed" (Gk. *Theopneustos* - 2 Tim. 3:16) words, a reservoir of sublime truth, refreshing and stimulating -- particularly so in our day when the position of the Bible as sacred, infallible, and authoritative is constantly assaulted by modern scientific theories, anthropology, and comparative religion studies.

Let us consider in detail one such "mountain peak" of divinely revealed truth, the majestic second Psalm which celebrates the dignity, power, and ultimate triumph of an Anointed One; the world-dominion of a king who is a son of David and a Son of God. His is a universal Kingdom; the whole earth is his inheritance; all nations are subject to him, and under his sway righteousness and peace everywhere prevail. It is a Kingdom in permanent form and without end. Jehovah has found One who can be in the highest sense his King and his Priest; and this one, by whom he acts in all his works, both of judgment and of blessing, is thus distinguished from and lifted up above all his predecessors.

The occurrences of his time which determined the mood of the Psalmist and called forth these glorious words, are no longer clear to us. From these occurrences he is transported in thought into the end of the age, into the very midst of those commotion among the nations which eventuate in

their becoming the "Kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15). Hence this Psalm is of the nature of a prophecy which awaits its final accomplishment. It had a partial fulfillment, no doubt, in the banding together of Herod and Pontius Pilate against Christ, and was thus applied by some in the early Church (Acts 4:25, 27), but this was not the complete or final fulfillment which is yet to take place.

The Psalm divides naturally into four parts, of three verses each. In the first, Psa. 2:1-3, the presumptuous rebellion of the princes of the earth is mentioned. In the second, Psa. 2:4-6, Jehovah expresses his contempt for the rebels, and announces his purpose to overthrow them by the agency of his Anointed One. In the third, Psa. 2:7-9, the Anointed One declares his office, and his resolve to carry out Jehovah's will, and execute vengeance. In the fourth, Psa. 2:10-12, a practical and solemn warning and admonition is given to the princes and people of the earth. In this order, and using Darby's translation, let us consider the prophecy in detail.

THE MADNESS OF NATIONS

Psa. 2:1-3. "Why are the nations in tumultuous agitation, and why do the peoples meditate a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the princes plot together, against Jehovah and against his Anointed: Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us."

The Psalm opens abruptly; it is an utterance of amazement, breaking from the lips of one who looks out upon the nations and generations of men. He discerns in his widespread view a rebellion against God, which in the vast ignorant masses of the world is half unconscious, but in their leaders finds utterance, assumes shape and formula. It is Jehovah himself who is assailed in the person of the King whom he has set on the throne. How can they succeed who set themselves against the Lord and against his Christ? Will men "fight against God?" Such an enterprise cannot but fail. In its very nature it is a "vain thing."

Positive interpretation of these strange words in their application to our day would be premature. We must await the future for full understanding of such expressions as "these shall make war with the Lamb" (Rev. 17:14). But as we consider the present state of world affairs, we may discern in the trend of human events a glimmer as to their ultimate direction, and, consequently, the significance of the prophecy.

The "shaking of nations" which commenced in 1914, has progressively increased and will continue to that terrible climax when, but for the grace of God, "no flesh should be saved" (Matt. 24:22). By all Scriptural indications we stand at the threshold of the Kingdom of God. "It is near, even at the doors" (Matt. 24:33). "When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand" (Luke 21:31). Yes, "the morning cometh," but, "*a night* also" (Isa. 21:12). The "morning" is as yet undiscerned by the nations, but there is a gradual apprehension of a steadily increasing "night" descending on all the earth.

Two prostrating global wars have upset the economic and social equilibrium of nations. The resulting wave of discontent and disillusion sweeping all before it, has resulted in the rise of atheistic totalitarianism now dominating half the world and threatening to engulf it all. Peoples of all races and colors are in a state of terrible ferment in their search for political autonomy and economic freedom. Further, the decline of real faith in supernaturalistic religion, and the additional corruption of spirit resulting from the crass materialism so rampant, have together gendered attitudes of mind in the human race causing grave concern to serious thinkers.

As "men's hearts fail them for fear" in apprehension of the things coming upon them, from all sides is heard the cry that the present "distress of nations" must be resolved by a new order, a worldwide collaboration in human affairs. Mankind now recognize that their safety and very existence necessitate a unity independent of race, creed, color, or language. Active search for practical means of attaining such a world order to embrace all nations and assure their well-being is a marked sign of these latter days.

With this hope, every Christian must be in sympathy, for not only the creation, but "we ourselves groan within ourselves" in view of the suffering throughout the earth. We cannot, however, ignore the inspired record which witnesses that all human efforts to establish a just and equitable arrangement of society are foredoomed to failure. The "desire of all nations" will not be brought about by human ability. Every such hope, commendable as it may be, is a "vain thing."

There can be no peace apart from the Prince of Peace. There can be no world order apart from the World King. Man must learn the lessons of his own insufficiency and utter dependence upon his Creator. Such has been God's purpose in the permission of evil. Our present generation is but reaping the consequences of six thousand years of sowing contrary to the law of God. This law requires (as requisite for well-being, happiness, and prosperity) first, love supreme for the Creator, and second, love for one's fellowmen. Violation of this law, whether as individuals, as nations, or as a world, is sin. And the wages of sin is death, for "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7). The time has approached for the establishment of Christ's Kingdom upon earth and all things that can be "shaken" [that will not stand up under the present testing by "fire"] will be removed (Heb. 12:26, 27).

"BE STILL, AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD"

As we return to the Psalm, the scene abruptly changes - Psa. 2:4-6. "He that dwelleth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision. Then will he speak to them in his anger, and in his fierce displeasure will he terrify them: And I have anointed my King upon Zion, the hill of my holiness."

The scene of the first act of this drama is laid on earth; the scene of the second is laid in heaven. The transition here is a sublime one, from the noise and agitation of earth to the safety and tranquility of heaven. As we pass onward we pass upward. Watching all the turmoil and rebellion below, and calmly surveying the nations as they rage, there sits the One against whose rule this unwitting revolt is made. He reposes far above them and beyond their reach, in undisturbed majesty.

The Psalmist sees the utter futility of revolt against God; he discerns the strength of the Almighty; the pillars of the eternal throne are before his soul; he can find no other words to express the vanity of man's revolt than to say, "The Lord shall laugh." There is something very awful in the representation here given of God. First, as if in calm contempt, "He laughs," then there is a bitter derision which in its effect brings their counsels to naught, and baffles their purposes "He mocks them"; "then," at last, with the thunder of his word, He discomfits them. "Who thought," says Luther, "when Christ suffered and the Jews triumphed, that God was laughing all the time?" Beneath this bold expression there is hidden a profound truth, namely, that to all superior beings, and above all to God himself, there is something in sin not only odious, but absurd; something which cannot possibly escape the contempt of higher, much less of the highest intelligence.

It may be asked, Why should the attempt of struggling humanity to set up a world order be thus so displeasing to the Almighty? Is not such an arrangement highly desirable and justifying men's

greatest efforts? Is not the present global turmoil a natural prelude to a global order? Should not such an ambitious undertaking for the benefit of all receive instead the bounteous blessing of a benevolent Creator?

At first thought it would seem indeed that such a proposed happy arrangement would be prospered by a loving God to the blessing of the nations. But as we look deeper into the provisions of the Lord for the ultimate and eternal welfare of all people, we discern that this humanly-instituted arrangement would actually be a direct expression of resistance to God's will. For though a beneficent worldwide government is the logical solution to the problems of mankind, no strength or wisdom of man can possibly effect such a solution. Rather, the inherited burden of individual sin, plus the hatreds and prejudices engendered by the conflicts of nations, have raised insuperable obstacles to such a Utopian scheme, and this truth is recognized by practical men. But whether man realizes this truth or not as regards his helplessness, God does, and has wisely provided his own arrangement for the welfare of mankind. Consequently, he "who ruleth in the kingdom of men" (Dan. 4:32), and guides the course of human history, as once to the literal sea, so now to the raging "sea" of humanity, says, "Hitherto shalt thou come and no further" (Job 38:8-11; see also Luke 21:25; Ps. 104:5-9; Jer. 5:22). "Vain" will be any attempts to "break the bonds and cast away the cords" of restriction set up by divine omniscience as limits to the unhindered exercise of human ingenuity. To permit man to go further in his social experiments would be to endanger his very existence. "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved" (Matt. 24:22).

So the Lord speaks, and here in the sixth verse (Psa. 2:6) we have God's own answer to those that oppose him: "I [the pronoun is emphatic in the Hebrew], the King of heaven and earth, have set my own King, my Son and my Vicegerent, on the throne. His, and his alone, shall be earth's world dominion, and he who dares to attempt accomplishing this through human ability is setting himself against me and my unalterable purpose. I have constituted my King upon Zion, my holy hill, and he, and none other, shall work my sovereign will, for he alone is worthy."

In the light of the above expression of the divine counsel, verse five of this Psalm, which speaks of an outpouring of wrath, can be linked with the judgments of Revelation 16 which terminate at Armageddon. And what a wealth of other Scriptures comes to mind! "Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought . . . Say ye not, A confederacy." "The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his King, and exalt the horn of his Anointed." "The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought; he maketh the devices of the people of none effect." "The heathen raged, the Kingdoms were moved: He uttered his voice, and the earth melted." "The nations were angry, and thy wrath is come" (Isa. 8:9-12; 1 Sam. 2:10; Psa. 33:10; Psa. 46:6; Rev. 11:18; Zeph. 3:8, 9; Isa. 2:11, 12, 19).

"O EARTH, RECEIVE THY KING"

And now with inimitable beauty the Messiah himself appears, and speaks, witnessing to his sonship and kingship, and to the constitution -- the grand charter of rights -- under which this fallen world is given to him as his empire.

Psa. 2:7-9. "I will declare the decree: Jehovah hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; I this day have begotten thee [brought thee forth - Young]. Ask of Me, and I will give thee nations for an

inheritance, and for thy possession the ends of the earth: Thou shalt break [shepherd -Rotherham] them with a sceptre of iron, as a potter's vessel thou shalt dash them to pieces."

No word of transition, no formula of introduction, marks this sudden passage from the words of Jehovah to those of his Christ. Just as Jehovah in opposition to the rebels acknowledges the King upon Zion, so in opposition to the same rebels the King upon Zion appeals to God. He pronounces the Father's counsel concerning himself, a royal decree which like that of the Medes and Persians is irrevocable. He reigns not by the will of man, but by the grace of God; not by right only as the Son of Jehovah, but by covenant and promise likewise. (Note the force of Hebrews 5:5.) The plain thought of the decree is: "This day, by anointing thee as King on my hill of Zion, I have recognized thee as my Son. This enthroning is my public and solemn recognition of this relation" -- a relation never brought to the knowledge of created minds till this momentous inauguration as King. So Paul understood this verse, for he finds it fulfilled in Christ's resurrection and subsequent ascension and enthronement in heaven. (See Acts 13:33; Acts 17:31; Rom. 1:4.)

Jesus is the Son of God, and therefore dear to him; his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased; and because the Father loveth the Son, he hath given all things into his hand (John 3:35; John 5:20). Being a Son, he is Heir of all things, and since God has said unto him, "Thou art my Son," it becomes each individual to say to him, "Thou art my Lord, my Sovereign." And since the nations are given for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, there awaits a great unveiling of the glory of earth's rightful King the proclamation on earth of the decree of Heaven. This we believe will be accomplished at the time of the deliverance of natural Israel from "Jacob's Trouble," in a miraculous demonstration of divine power; the first *visible* evidence to an astounded world of the new heavenly arrangement for earth. Then shall every knee begin to bow to him (Phil. 2:9-11), and every voice acknowledge his right to lordship. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power" (Ps. 110:3). Then shall be revealed God's wonderful provision for the eternal welfare of the suffering creation; his answer to their groanings and prayers--and this,

when evidently faith in a divine helper will be at its lowest ebb. Just when man will realize his necessity the most, when the consciousness of his own weakness will be well-nigh overwhelming, yea, when he shall cry out in fear and the despair of his soul, God shall answer by the revelation of his chosen King, who with his associated saints, shall commence the reign of righteousness which will more than satisfy the needs of mankind. But, there must first come divine judgment upon the institutions of man through this same righteous King, for "He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Rev. 19:15).

"THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, HEAR YE HIM"

Finally, the Psalmist, who has heard the words of Jehovah and the words of his Anointed, seeks by wise counsel to dissuade the rebels from their mad enterprise - Psa. 2:10-12: *"And now, O kings, be ye wise, be admonished, ye judges of the earth. Serve Jehovah with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way, though his anger burn but a little. Blessed are all who have their trust in him."*

Thus closes this sublime and solemnly impressive Psalm. It will be observed that these last three verses of the Psalm correspond to the first three. The revolt against the Lord and his Anointed finds its parallel in the injunction to serve the Lord and to kiss the Son, for there can be no resisting his authority. For of him Moses truly prophesied, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he

shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people" (Acts 3:22, 23). Therefore, "kiss the Son," do homage to the King, O ye mighty ones of earth "lest he be angry and ye perish in the way." Be quick to obey, for his anger may easily be kindled. In his Kingdom nothing shall be permitted to hurt or destroy, and the slightest opposition to his authority

shall be summarily dealt with. But trust him, obey him, confide in him, and he shall bless you with a "feast of fat things," for he and those with him are appointed to "bless all the families of the earth." For "he shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.... Prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.... His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed" (Ps. 72:6-17).

What a glorious message does this. second Psalm hold forth! Oh that men could see within its beautiful and impressive words the lesson of submission to the divinely decreed arrangement! What a thrill of hope and joy would surge through the troublewacked earth! Praise God that men will yet see, and this we believe, in the not far distant future. *"Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, Who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name forever: And let the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen, and Amen"* (Ps. 72:18, 19).

- W. J. Siekman

Israel Today

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness." - Zechariah 8:7, 8.

In the July-August issue of *The Herald*, we noted that one of the ways of explaining the prophecies of a Restoration is to represent them as having had their fulfillment at the restoration from Babylon.

On page 57 of that *Herald issue*, we submitted three of the reasons which compel us to reject this interpretation. Those three reasons were:

- (1) The Restoration promised was to include the entire twelve tribes, reunited in one kingdom.
- (2) After the Restoration predicted, Israel is to enjoy, not only national independence, but national supremacy.
- (3) The Restoration promised is to be a "second" restoration. Its extent is to be worldwide. It is to be followed by no further dispersions, and is, therefore, to be permanent.

Below we submit two additional reasons.

- (1) The prophecies of a Restoration were reiterated *after* the restoration from Babylon.

One such reiteration is that from Zechariah, given at the head of this article. In this connection, attention is drawn to the instructive comment from the pen of Dr. A. W. Kac, on page 41 of his *Rebirth of the State of Israel*:

"The significance of this prophecy lies in the fact that it was written by Zechariah, one of the three prophets who lived in Palestine following the termination of the Babylonian Exile. Babylon is not even mentioned here. This prediction of a Return from the East and the West, *coming as it did after the ingathering of the Babylonian Exile had already taken place*, certainly implies another Restoration."

- (2) The extent of the land promised has not yet been possessed.

Even today, Palestine may truthfully be said to be "The Land of Promise," *having never yet been possessed in all its promised length and breadth*. In the January-February *Herald*, in an article by A. O. Hudson, attention was drawn to four title deeds and the statement was made (page 10) that "the territory . . . includes not only contemporary Israel but the whole of the State of Jordan and parts of Egypt, Arabia, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq. There must obviously be a considerable political adjustment of frontiers to be effected before the Holy Land assumes the shape foreseen in the Pentateuch."

Sometimes the Land of Promise is spoken of as extending "from Dan to Beersheba." However, John Wilkinson, in *Israel My Glory*, tells us that "this comprises only about twentyeight or thirty thousand square miles." Dr. Alex Keith, author of *Evidences of Prophecy*, has given us the results of his personal investigations and measurements in his book called *The Land of Israel*, according to which the extent of the promised land is 300,000 square miles.

Now this, as John Wilkinson has observed in *Israel My Glory*, "is twice and a half as large as Great Britain and Ireland together.... Now it is admitted that all of the promised land was under tribute to both David and Solomon, but not actually possessed. Israel must have in possession every inch of land God has promised, but Israel has possessed only about one tenth of that which God has promised; we therefore naturally infer a future restoration of Israel."

- P. L. Read

God's Goodness and Mercy

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." - Psalm 23:6.

The words of our text as applied to the Lord's sheep of spiritual Israel, express the feelings and sentiments of those who have experienced a considerable measure of the blessedness of the "life that is hid with Christ in God"; they express the sentiments of those who have come in contact with the many trials and tribulations that lie in the narrow pathway that leads to life, to immortality -- the pathway that is marked by the footprints of the Good Shepherd, who trod the way before his sheep. These closing words of the Psalm describe the experience of one who has learned good by coming in contact with evil, and who perhaps for a time was overcome by it. It describes the experience of one who, amid the varied scenes of human life, has fully tested and proved the Shepherd's power to deliver, as well as the shepherd's graces -- the goodness and mercy of the Lord, of whom he sings. It seems very apparent that the words of this Psalm were first sung by one who had suffered deeply; one who had tasted of life's bitter, as well as of its sweet.

The Psalm means even more to spiritual Israel than to "Israel after the flesh." To spiritual Israel of the Gospel Age, the Psalm speaks of the infinite goodness, the tender mercy, the long-suffering and patience of a loving Father. It teaches the blessed privilege of a life of faith, of intimate fellowship, and of daily communion with the great Shepherd. The words, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life," describe a confidence and trust possessed by one who has learned to depend upon God, learned to yield the will to him in the daily providences of life, learned to take him at his word and to *"know"* that all things work together for good to them that love God, to the called according to his purpose."

The Psalmist says, "Surely *goodness* and *mercy* shall follow me all the days of my life." How often does David link these two words together. "The Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting." One has said, "There never will come a day throughout all the future in which we shall not have the two guardian angels, heavenly escorts, and God-sent messengers, *Goodness and Mercy*, who have been told of and commissioned to attend the believer during all the days of his earthly pilgrimage. When, benumbed with cold, and bewildered with the mist which has suddenly settled down upon his track, the traveler across the highland moor sinks down exhausted on the drenched herbage, what an infinite comfort it is, through a momentary rent in the midst, to get a glimpse of a plaided figure of a shepherd close beside him; or to discover two servants from the distant paternal home, sent out to scour the hills in search of the missing one, and to bring him safely to its shelter and warmth! But it is in some such way as this that the eye of the believer may detect, in moments of weariness and solitude, the presence of those twin angels of God - *Goodness and Mercy*."

Goodness and Mercy -- one has called them the celestial escort of the Christian on his journey to the New Jerusalem. Mercy is spoken of as "the daughter of God -- his delight" -- He delighteth in Mercy'; his wealth -- 'He is rich in mercy'; his throne -- 'I will commune with thee from off the mercy seat.'" They *follow* the sheep, while the shepherd always leads them. Goodness and Mercy are like the shepherd's watchdogs that bring up the rear. They constitute a rear guard, as it were, to protect against the wolves that sometimes follow in the rear. One who likens goodness and mercy to guardian angels has beautifully expressed the relationship these two attributes of God sustain to the Lord's sheep: "We have two strong helpers to lift us from tier to tier of the pyramid of life, keeping us from falling backward, whispering words of comfort, and placing strong hands under our arms in circumstances of difficulty and stumbling.

"In that word *follow*, it is possible that there is a suggestion that we are going away from God, and that he sends his goodness and mercy after us to call us back. It may be so. If a prodigal leaves a widowed mother for the sea, she never forgets him; her prayers and tears and loving thoughts follow him; and to win him back she sends out only the tenderest yearnings of a heart almost crushed. Even so with God and his own; they may wander from him, but he follows them. He sets Goodness and Mercy on their track. Sometimes it seems as if disaster on disaster, stroke on stroke, pursues them; but it is not really so. Things are not always as they seem. And these are but the disguises which Goodness and Mercy assume; their outer garb, protecting the delicate woolen garments which are prepared for the weary head and tired limbs of the wearied, wandering, starved, and ragged prodigal. He will not break off his kindness; nor suffer his faithfulness to fail; nor forsake the works of his hands; 'for his mercy endureth forever. "

"Surely" his goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. Does not the Psalmist speak too confidently? Some may say, It was all right for him, but it would hardly be proper for us to so speak. We refer such to St. Paul, who not only speaks for himself, but for all the Lord's followers: "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:31-39).

God's goodness and mercy will follow us all our days. We may, like David's sheep, wander from the path of righteousness; we may not appreciate, or we may neglect his lovingkindness and tender mercy; we may for a time ignore the presence of these guardian angels; we may even think that they are gone; but if we turn, we shall still find them there, with wistful longing looks, expressing their desires that we call upon them for help. *"Surely"* -- because he has said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee"; *"surely"* -- because long and varied experiences have attested this to be a fact: *"surely"* -- because, as one has truthfully said, "If he has set his love on us in eternity, he is not likely to forget us in time. So surely shall never a day come in our earthly pilgrimage, in which God shall not be at our side in goodness and mercy." "He that hath begun a good work in us, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ." "Having loved his own, he loved them unto the end."

- R. E. Streeter

The Truth Shall Make You Free

"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." - John 8:31, 32.

"IT WAS a maxim of the Jews, 'that no man was free, but he who exercised himself in the meditation of the law.'" By the simple process of inventing this maxim the bondage of the great mass of the Jews to the law was assured. There was no reason to seek freedom from the law as long as they were convinced that liberty was to be gained by mere meditation on it. It is true that "whatsoever things were written aforetime [including the law] were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope," but this fact does not make true their maxim, for the sacred writings bring their blessings only to those who use them as they were intended to be used. It is just as false a maxim today to say, "I have the truth, therefore I am free." Every slave knows some truth. The better translation which Rotherham gives of our text makes clear why the Jews of Jesus' day, who thought they were faithful followers of Moses, as well as the majority of those down to our present day who have thought of themselves as followers of Jesus, have never attained liberty. His version reads: "If ye abide in my Word of a truth my disciples ye are; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Deliverance from the slavery to which Jesus alluded was promised only to true disciples; and true discipleship, he said, could be attained only by abiding, dwelling, in his word. "Continue" is too mild a word to describe the state of a genuine disciple. He will *dwell* in that Word, daily, hourly, moment by moment. This means a devotion to that Word that makes it, or strives to make it, the guide of every moment-of every thought, of every act. The result is not just a knowledge of truth, but, as the Greek clearly shows, a personal, intimate, practical, living knowledge of truth. Of the four Greek words meaning "to know" that are used in the New Testament, Jesus here uses the one giving this deepest meaning. This is not something acquired the day we hear a discourse or read a book, but it is attained by the long process indicated in the Greek and shown by Rotherham's marginal reading, "Ye shall *get to know* the truth."

SIN'S BONDAGE

Our Lord's explanation that follows our text, that "*whosoever* committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34), is used by the Apostle Paul as the basis of his discussion in the sixth to the eighth chapters of Romans, culminating in the glorious prospect of every creature in the universe having the opportunity of deliverance from every form of bondage into the glorious liberty of the sons of God (Rom. 8: 21). The One who has planned this transfer from the kingdom of darkness into his Kingdom of Light determined that every one in it should first have an adequate acquaintance with bondage before having freedom offered to him. The little handful comprising the Church are granted in advance of the rest what amounts to a complete liberation, but without depriving them of the advantages of contact with sin and its ravages. The fact that they are left in the midst of an evil world under the rulership of the most guilty of all sinners, the hardest of all taskmasters, does not lessen their freedom of heart; no, not even the fact that the new creature must be content to find its present expression through a body the members of which are distorted and contaminated by sin. The new creature's own sinful body has no more effect on its freedom from sin than have the other sinful bodies that surround it. The new mind is entirely devoted to righteousness, and therefore, while patiently accepting and profiting by the imperfections of its temporary body, and the imperfections of its neighbors and brethren, it holds a steady reign on every tendency of that natural body. The mind

of Christ can never be a slave to the human appetites and propensities but must be the master of them. It can never hide behind the excuse, "That is just my way." For the Christian, however, to take over the responsibility of regulating the lives of others would be a sin comparable to that of neglecting to regulate his own life in conformity with the mind of Christ, thus failing to "dwell" in his Word, to "walk in the light."

The "Jerusalem which is above is free.... We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise, . . . not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 4:26 -5:1). Paul's reference in this passage is evidently to freedom from the law. For those Jews, as both Jesus and Paul imply, the thing greater even than being made free from the law, is the freedom offered in common to Jew and Gentile, freedom from sin and the curse which it brought - death. This deliverance is not merely as regards the final stage of death, but the death that reigns in our mortal bodies, manifesting itself in depraved affections, unworthy ambitions, selfish purposes, petty aversions, prejudices, superstitions, willfulness, fault-finding, touchiness, impatience, foolish anxieties, fears, avarice, envy, strife, and a multitude of other little demon qualities that haunt the lives of all who in any degree seek their own will. What a changed universe it will be when "the creation itself [R.V.] also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21). This "Declaration of Independence" will eventually have the signature of every creature in the universe who is willing to "dwell" in His Word. Already, by various testings, a little Gideon's band is being found of those who are devoted not only to the knowing but also to a doing of His will in such fashion that it pervades every moment of every day. They alone can now truly say, "The law of the *spirit of life* in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2).

LIBERTY IN CHRIST

The spirit of life in Christ Jesus must of necessity be in every respect counter to the spirit of Satan and of the world that he governs. The one therefore who is in Christ is a new creature in the most absolute sense, though it is the will only and not the body that is new. This new creature is liberated from all blame as to the sinful tendencies of the old body, for he not only takes no pleasure in its evil ways and desires, but vigorously opposes them by every effort and strategy he can invent. Additionally, that his liberation may be complete, he has an imputation of the merit of Christ's righteousness covering the imperfections of his body, and balancing all that is charged to his account in God's records. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1), but instead, freedom "from the law of sin and death." The situation is paradoxical in that to gain *liberty* one must become a *bond-servant* of Jesus Christ. This he cannot be and be a manpleaser. "The fear of man bringeth a snare," and any one who is in bondage to man or to the opinion of others cannot serve the Lord with a "single eye." If he is a slave to himself or to any other creature he must first gain his freedom to become the bondservant of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:10; 4:3, 9). "No man can serve two masters" (Matt. 6:24). The first step of Christian discipleship, Jesus said, is to "deny self." Thus having gotten rid of the old master, one is ready to "follow" the great Burden-bearer.

YIELD YOUR MEMBERS SERVANTS UNTO HOLINESS

One would suppose that surely the lower appetites would be instantly brought under control of the divine will as soon as the truth is understood that "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price" - with our gracious heavenly Father's chiefest treasure (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). But how few can claim that "whether we eat or whether we drink, or *whatsoever* we do, we do *all* to the glory of

God"? (1 Cor. 10:31). Death even to these lower appetites is a long, a tedious process for most disciples, for it means that the habits of years must be broken that the dictates of the flesh may be forsaken and no human functions be used except so far as they operate to fulfill the original and wise intentions of the Being who implanted them.

Still more subtle are the deceptions of those appetites we speak of as the higher ones - desire for knowledge, fellowship, the esteem of others, and the like. As eating and drinking are essential in our present existence, so also are these higher propensities. But even though they are less base than the others, their abuse is none the less to be reprehended. To acquire knowledge merely that one may argue more effectively, is to cultivate pride, an inveterate and merciless foe of the new creature. To seek fellowship merely to gratify the social instinct, is to give compliance to a starving spirit. Pride is served if the esteem of others is sought for any purpose other than the glory of God. We are "a spectacle for men and for angels" not that they might admire us, but that they might see God in us, as he was manifest in Christ because of his never varying love for the Father's will. This love for God's will can mean only that love for righteousness and hatred for evil will always be active, always in operation.

BONDAGE TO WHIMS

In cultivating an aversion to evil one can become so enamored with his self righteousness as to be entirely unconscious of the fact that instead of using this aversion as God intended, he is becoming a slave to it. As for instance, one might, in his aversion to evil, be continually fretting and fuming about it; thus making himself and everyone else miserable. The purpose of our experience with evil is that we may learn to set our hearts on things above. An aversion to evil is inevitable, essential, and proper, and must in some degree include all imperfections of which we are conscious. Evil will eventually be banished from the universe, but the one who endeavors the impossible task of eradicating it before the time by attempting a complete reformation of his brethren and neighbors, in accordance with his own imperfect ideals of perfection, is not only inevitably doomed to disappointment, but what is more important, he is using time and energy that could have been, *should* have been used in bringing his own body into subjection.

But while aversions to evil are essential and proper for the Christian, there are other aversions that are improper and should not be encouraged, as they may deprive one of spiritual blessings. Sometimes, perhaps because one's mind is in a degree carnal, some little personal trait of a speaker is made to be of greater importance than the beautiful truths he is declaring; or the listener, not agreeing with the speaker on every point, is so engrossed with his disagreements that he fails to discover the many sanctifying truths on which he could have agreed and received much benefit. Similarly many privileges of service are missed by those who choose to perform only those for which their flesh has no aversion. And in a multitude of other ways uncontrolled aversions rob the life of its joys; but for the one who has attained emancipation through the power of the spirit, new beauties unfold every day as he centers his heart, his affection, his vision on things above and beyond this sin cursed earth. This is the walk of faith.

MANIFESTATIONS OF BONDAGE TO SELF

In ways too numerous to mention, bondage to self is manifested: confirmed fault-finding -- an effort to conform every one to our imperfect judgment; easily disturbed feelings -- because things are not going our way; impatience -- because our ideal of perfection is not attained by others; excitement -- because others have not agreed with us, etc. He who possesses true liberty of spirit is not easily excited by opposition. By the power of grace he has inward strength, and the nature of strength is to be deliberate. When his views are opposed, therefore, he is not hasty to reply. While

not indifferent, he replies calmly and thoughtfully. Confidence in God gives confidence in the truth, and we are assured that God can have no fellowship with that which is opposed to truth. If our own sentiments or beliefs are not correct, they will pass away in due time; because "everything which is false necessarily carries in itself the element of its own destruction." Therefore if the teachings of those who oppose are false, they bear no stamp of durability. They must sooner or later fall. Our strong faith in God and in his truth, of which he is the protector, should destroy all our over eagerness of nature. We should therefore be calm amid opposition, patient under rebuke.

Again, he who enjoys this true liberty of spirit, when he has submissively and conscientiously performed a duty, following the leadings of the Lord, will not be troubled or unduly anxious with regard to the result. He who asserts that he has left all in the hands of God, and at the same time manifests a troubled and agitated spirit about the results, gives evidence that he has not made the complete surrender which he professes. Entire surrender and undue anxiety cannot exist at the same time.

As another has remarked, the true spirit of liberty is found only in those who "keep the heart totally disengaged from [free from enslavement to] every created thing, in order that they may follow the known will of God"; or only in those who, in the words of St. Paul, are "dead, and their life is hid with Christ in God." The supremacy of the divine will in our life, the reign of God in our heart, must necessarily have a direct and powerful operation in our mortal body, bringing all into subjection and subordination to that will. True liberty consists in being free from self; liberated from the dominion of the world -- a heart where the Spirit of God rules.

From all forms of bondage there may be temporary liberation by human means, and there will be moments of peace and happiness resulting; but there is only the one means by which permanent deliverance may be accomplished. This blessing is for those who "get to personally know the truth" by the process of "dwelling" in his "Word." One simple and glorious truth, if made a transforming power in the life, is sufficient to emancipate one from nearly all the enslavements of self that have been mentioned. That truth, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed," reveals the "Kingdom of heaven" and its divine King. "If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8: 25). "God be thanked, that [though] ye were the servants of sin, ye have *obeyed from the heart* that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17, 18). "Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also [who claim to have been made free by the truth] should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).

- P. E. Thomson

Notice of Annual Meeting

As announced in our May-June and July-August issues, the Annual Meeting of the Pastoral Bible Institute, Inc., is scheduled to be held on Saturday, September 20 at 10:00 a.m., in the Central Y.W.C.A, North Carolina and Pacific Avenues, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

While only members of the Institute may vote (in person or by proxy), all those who love our Lord Jesus and his appearing are welcome to attend.

The agenda will include a report by the chairman, reviewing the activities of the Institute for the preceding period. Following his report, the election of directors for the coming year will take place. Opportunity will also be given for the consideration of such other matters as may properly come before the meeting.

The seven brethren now serving as directors are candidates for reelection. Brothers Laurence Iannaccone, Wilbur Twelker, Jr., and Edward Zielinski have also been nominated.

Our Safety in the Last Days

"Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." - Psalm 119:117.

THE "LAST DAYS" are specifically mentioned in the Scriptures. There are many "signs" or events by which we can identify the "last days" as the time in which we now live. The Prophet Daniel designates this period as "the time of the -end," at which time "there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation." The Apostle Paul names these days as "perilous times," "evil days," etc. St. Peter and St. Jude say that "there shall come in the last days scoffers" or mockers.

Our Lord speaks of this same period as recorded in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke (chapters 24 and 21, respectively). According to Luke, Jesus spoke of events marking the last days thus: "On earth anguish among the nations in their bewilderment at the roaring of the sea and its billows; while men's hearts are fainting for fear, and for anxious expectation of what is coming on the world. For the forces which control the heavens will be disordered" (Luke 21:25, 26, *Weymouth*).

This being true, the question concerning our safety in these "perilous," "hard," or "critical" times, is very important. Since we are in the world, this present evil world, though not of it, some of us may be subjected to trials and difficulties similar to those through which the world in general will have to pass. The Apostle Peter says: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try 'you, as though some strange thing happened unto you" (1 Pet. 4:12).

Referring to this same time, which is designated as the last days, the Prophet Malachi (3:1-3) asks these questions: "Who shall *abide* the day of his coming? Who shall *stand* when he appeareth?" Where do we, the followers of the Lord, *abide*, and where do we *stand*? Let us remember the words of our Master: "*Abide in me*. ... He that *abideth in me* and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:4-6). Abiding in Christ and being "found in him" is the only safe place for the Christian in time of trouble.

In Psalm 91:1 we read: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High, shall *abide* under the shadow of the Almighty." These words of the Prophet are applicable to the Lord's consecrated saints, living daily in communion and fellowship with their Lord, the Good Shepherd, who, speaking concerning our safety, uttered these words: "My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, nor shall any one wrest them from my hand" (John 10:27, 28, *Weymouth*).

Now let us consider the second question the Prophet has set before us: "Who shall *stand* when he appeareth?" Where do we stand? The following quotations from the Scriptures will give us the answer:

"Watch ye, *stand fast in the faith*, quit you like men, be strong" (1 Cor. 16:13).

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the *Gospel* . . . *wherein ye stand*" (1 Cor. 15:1).

"By whom also we have access by faith into this *grace wherein we stand*, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2).

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free" (Gal. 5:1).

"So then, brethren, *stand firm, and hold fast to the teachings* which you have received from us [the inspired Apostles], whether by word of mouth or by letter" (2 Thess. 2:15, *Weymouth*).

"Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so *stand fast in the Lord*" (Phil. 4:1).

"Only, do lead a life that is worthy of the Gospel of Christ. Whether I come and see you or only hear of you in absence, let me know you are *standing firm in a common spirit*, fighting side by side like one man for the faith of the Gospel" (Phil. 1:27, *Moffatt*).

Indeed, in all the above quoted texts are beautiful words of life, admonishing us to be firm, steadfast, unmovable, firmly rooted, and grounded in faith. Not passive or inactive, but "always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). Nevertheless, while we, as good soldiers of Christ, are "fighting side by side like one man *for the faith of the gospel*," "earnestly contending for the faith which was once delivered to the saints," we will not be entirely free from danger. Knowing this, the Apostle says: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).

To his disciples Jesus said: "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). His followers are invited also to "overcome, even as he overcame." (See Rev. 3:21.) No one could be an overcomer unless there was opposition, something to overcome. And in order to overcome, we need faith, real faith, strong faith; for it is faith that overcometh the world. The surest way to overcome our opposers is to quote Scriptures and explain God's Plan in a loving and understandable manner. The best answer is: "Thus saith the Lord," or, "It is written."

In Isaiah 26:2 we read: "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation, which keepeth the truth, may enter in." To keep the truth, means to regard it as something precious, valuable; it means to guard it, to observe, and to defend it. If we will guard the truth, the truth will also guard us. The Apostle Peter tells us that we "are kept [safeguarded] by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1:5). Again this mighty power of God that safeguards and sanctifies us is the Gospel Truth (John 17:17; Rom. 1:16).

The Psalmist, who knew the safeguarding power of God and relied on it, said: "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety" (Ps. 4:8). So sure was he of the Lord's safekeeping power, that in Psalm 121: 4 he writes: "Behold, He that keepeth [safeguardeth] Israel, shall neither slumber nor sleep."

In Deuteronomy 33:12 we read: "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders." These beautiful and heart-cheering words were prophetic, and may well be applied to the "beloved of God" during this Gospel Age; and particularly now, in the "last days," when God's protection and safeguarding is needed more than ever before. Note well the gracious words: "*and the Lord shall cover him all the day long.*" The Psalmist (91:4) says: "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust." Here is our sure and safe refuge, a mighty fortress, a Rock that is "higher than I:'

In Proverbs 18:10 it is again written: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." How fortunate and how glad are we because we know who is the "strong tower" - the "name of the Lord." If the Lord had not revealed these things to us, we could

not "run into it" and find refuge and safety. It is necessary to know and to accept the truth; to rely upon and to trust in God's promises, knowing that they will come to pass in his own due time. To acquire this knowledge of our place of refuge, and where and when to "run into" this safe hiding place, requires some effort on our part. This is in harmony with the words of the Apostle James (James 4:8) "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you."

Again, in Proverbs (Prov. 3), the necessity of following the wisdom from above is linked with the safety and well-being of the man of God. In Prov. 3:21-23 we read: "Keep sound wisdom and discretion [divine instruction]: So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck. Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble." Valuable words of divine instruction are found again in Prov. 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

The same Prophet of the Lord, in Proverbs 29:25, again gives us sound words of wisdom: "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe."

Having therefore before us such wholesome words of divine wisdom and instruction, let us remember, dearly beloved, that we are constantly reminded to watch, to be alert, to walk circumspectly, for the days are evil. Let us always be attentive and obedient to the voice of the Good Shepherd. Let us carefully study his Word of Truth and let us daily endeavor to apply his instructions to our lives, remembering that faith "without works is dead." "For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall."

-J. R. Muzikant

The Question Box

"We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." "The dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them."

- 1 Corinthians 15:51; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17.

Question:

As you know, differing views are held by sincere, consecrated brethren on the scriptures cited. It would be appreciated, therefore, if you would discuss them in *The Question Box*.

Answer:

Perhaps it would simplify our discussion of the points on which views differ, if we first noted that there are some important *areas of agreement*. These include the following:

The Question Box

"We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." "The dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them." - 1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17.

AT THE close of our discussion of these texts in the March-April issue, we said:

"One related question remains. It has to do with the Greek word *hama* translated in 1 Thess.. 4:17 by the word 'together.' In recent weeks the question has reached us from several quarters as to how the Apostle's use of this word is to be harmonized with his earlier statement. In other words, he has said that the dead are to be raised *first* and that it is not until *afterwards* that those who are alive and remain are to be dealt with. How can this be, if both divisions of the church are to be caught up *together*?

"In seeking the solution to this difficulty, the preferred method is to locate every place in the New Testament in which *hama* appears and study that word in the light of its context." This we propose to do now.

For the benefit of English students who have had little or no experience with Greek word studies, may we suggest the following procedure:

1) Turn first to Strong's concordance, under the word "together ". This will be found listed on page 1066. On that page it will be noted that the word "together" (in 1 Thess. 4:17) is a translation of Word No. SG260.

2) Word No. SG260 appears on page 10 in the Greek Dictionary at the back of the concordance, and is the Greek word "hama " .

3) "Hama" , it will be seen, properly means "at the same time", but is also freely used to denote "close association " .

4) The meaning of the phrase "at the same time" varies, depending on its context, as may be seen by reference to an unabridged dictionary of the English language. Before me is a copy of Webster's second Edition, published in 1959. In this dictionary, on page 2649, the phrase is defined as follows: "at the same moment or during the same period". It is important to notice these two meanings as, when we come to examine the scriptures in which "hama" appears, it will be necessary to determine, in each case, which of these two meanings expresses the thought of the inspired writer.

5) Refer next to the Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament, to the "English and Greek" section, commencing on page 873.

In this section, turn to the word "together". (Page 935). It will be noted that the word "together" is used to translate a number of Greek words. However, our present study has to do with only one of these, namely, "hama", which is the fourth on the list, the reference being to page 32.

6) On turning to page 32 we find all the verses in which "hama" occurs, listed in scriptural sequence. We note also that they are ten in number, and that "hama" is not always translated by the word "together", but is sometimes translated by other words. The following is a summary.

<i>Translation Occurrences</i>	
early	1
with	1
also	1
and	1
withal	3
together	3
Total	10

Let us now consider the ten scriptures in which "hama" appears, postponing our consideration of 1 Thess. 4:17 until after we have examined the other nine scriptures.

(1) MATT. 13:29

"He said, Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat *with* (hama) them."

The context shows our Lord relating the parable of the wheat and the tares. A sower of good seed had been followed by an enemy who sowed tares amongst the wheat. The question is raised by the householder's servants: Shall they go and gather up the tares? Our text contains the householder's reply.

Now, to gather up the tares from a wheat field would take more than a moment; it would require a period of time. Here "hama" evidently has the sense of "close association", and while the thought of time is not excluded, the idea of only "a moment" must be rejected.

The servants are not to gather up the tares, lest they "root up also the wheat *during the same period*".

(2) MATT. 20:1

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early (hama) in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyards."

Another parable is here being told by the Master. Again "close association" is present. The "going out" of the householder was "closely associated" with the early dawn.

He went out "to hire laborers". This was not accomplished in a moment, but took a period of time; time enough, it appears from verse 2, for an agreement to be entered into as to wages.

(3) ACTS 24:26

"He [Felix] hoped also (hama) that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him; wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him."

The words of this text occur in connection with Paul's appearances before Felix. Again, the thought of "close association" is present;-the association of Felix's hopes for money, with his hearing of Paul's arguments. The time during which this "close association" took place was not a momentary matter, but extended over a period of two years, as we learn from verse 27.

(4) ACTS 27:40

"And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea, *and* (hama) loosed the rudder bands, and hoised up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore."

The context unfolds the details of a shipwreck experienced by Paul and those with him en route to Rome.

To take up anchors, loose rudder bands and hoist the mainsail, would probably not take long, if several members of the crew co-operated, and might well have been accomplished simultaneously, during a brief period, but hardly "in a moment".

(5) ROM. 3:12

"They are all gone out of the way, they are together (hama) become unprofitable. "

In the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans the Apostle Paul has called attention to the sinful state of the Gentiles, and in the second chapter has shown that the condition of the Jews was no better. In chapter 3, in our text and related verses, he quotes from the Psalms (14:1-3) to show that they (Gentiles and Jews) are (i.e. during the same period) "together" become unprofitable.

Not merely a single moment but a period of many centuries is in evidence here.

(6) COL. 4:2, 3

"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; withal (hama) praying also for us."

At the same time as the brethren at Colosse continued in prayer, and while, in the spirit of thankfulness, they watched the Lord's providences, to see how their prayers would be answered, they were also to make special request on behalf of Paul and his associates in the ministry. "Withal" (at the same time), in this text, must surely be understood as "during the same period."

(7) 1 THESS. 5:10

"Whether we wake or sleep, we should live together (hama) with him. "

Here, again, the thought of "close association" is present; the association of the members of the church with their Lord and Head. Nor is this association to be for only a moment. No! it is to be for eternity !

(8) 1 TIM. 5:13

"And withal (hama) they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house."

Here the Apostle Paul is cautioning Timothy concerning certain young widows, who were becoming back-sliders, and who, "at the same time" were learning to be idlers and busybodies. "Withal" (at the same time) in this context, must be understood as having the sense of "during the same period."

(9) PHILEMON 22

"But withal (hama) prepare me also a lodging."

"At the same time" as Philemon was to receive his run-away slave back again (not, indeed, as a slave, but as a beloved brother in the Lord) he was to prepare a room for Paul to occupy.

Here again, the meaning must be "during the same period", not "at the same moment".

This concludes our review of the meaning of "hama" in 9 of its 10 occurrences in the New Testament. In none of them does the context permit us to understand it to signify "a moment", but in every case "a period of time" is intended.

(10) 1 THESS. 4:17

Let us now turn to our text, and see what light our study may throw on "hama" here. It will be particularly helpful if we note that our text almost parallels the expression in 1 Thess. 5:10 (considered foregoing). It is the same- word "hama" that occurs in both verses. In both "hama" should be translated by the word "together" (as the eminent translator, Rotherham, has been careful to do.) In the one case, the members of the church are to be " closely associated" with their Lord -and this not for a moment, but for eternity. In the other verse, members are to be "closely associated" with other members and also "ever be with the Lord."

In the light of the foregoing discussion it is submitted that, by his use of the word "hama" in 1 Thess. 4:17, the Apostle is not contradicting his earlier statement that the dead in Christ are to rise first, but that if, in this verse, the word "hama" is allowed to have the same meaning which it has in all its other ,occurrences in the New Testament, namely, "during the same period" any surface appearance of a contradictory statement disappears.

-P. L. Read

(1) The events mentioned in these texts are to occur in connection with our Lord's Second Advent.

(2) These events refer to the true church only-not to the remainder of mankind, whose future is not under consideration in these texts.

(3) The true church, in the Apostle's view, is seen to be (temporarily) composed of two groups, namely, the "dead" and the "living"; - the "dead" being those who had already died at the time the Apostle wrote, and all others who would die prior to our Lord's Second Advent; the "living" being those who would not have died, but who would be living at that time.

(4) The "dead" (in the previous paragraph) are really dead at the time mentioned -not living in any sense of the word.

So much for areas of agreement. We turn next to some *points on which views are known to differ*.

Let us first examine the Greek word translated "sleep" in 1 Corinthians 15:51. It is a form of *koimaomai*. Scholars are agreed that it means "to fall asleep." It occurs eighteen times in the New Testament. (See page 426 of The Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament.) Generally it is associated with death and thus conveys the thought of falling asleep in death.

However, in 1 Corinthians 15:51, the form is that of a verb in the future tense, passive voice, and indicative mood. This may be seen from the change in its spelling. It is here spelled *koimethesometha*. In this form it *may be translated properly* "be asleep" or "be sleeping." This, too, no scholar would dispute. (Examples of the translation "be asleep" may be seen in the Diaglott interlinear and in Young's Concise Critical Comments, while "be sleeping" is given in a marginal note on 1 Corinthians 15:51 in The Companion Bible. (See also page 983 in the Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament.)

From the foregoing it will be seen that the Greek is capable of two translations, each *grammatically* permissible; that is to, say, each conforming to the rules of grammar. These two translations are:

(1) "We shall not all fall asleep (in death)."

(2) "We shall not all be asleep (in death)."

When we come to examine carefully these translations, however, as we will do in a succeeding paragraph, we will see that they vary considerably in their meaning. This being the case, it is clear that only one of them can correctly reflect the Apostle's thought. The problem is to determine which of the two does so.

Since neither of them may be rejected on grammatical grounds, a translator is under the necessity of turning to the context for guidance. Since he cannot choose both, he is compelled to adopt the translation which, in his judgment, best suits the context.

It is at this point, therefore, that there is introduced, not only in an exposition, but also in a translation, *an element of interpretation*. This being true, a translator, with the very best of intentions, may produce a faulty translation, *and will do so, if he misunderstands the context*.

In view of the fact that most Bible scholars indicate, in their translations, a preference for "fall asleep," it would ill become me to write, dogmatically, in favor of "be asleep." Yet the conviction is strong with me that *the context requires that translation*. In the spirit of a disciple, therefore, and not in that of a master, the following paragraphs are submitted to the consecrated judgment of each individual reader. Such must, of course, understand that they are perfectly free to accept or reject them, or any other exposition ever offered in these pages.

On the assumption, then, that the phrase which *may grammatically* read "We shall not all be asleep" is, in fact, the translation which correctly reflects the Apostle's thought, let us see how well it fits the context. If it be asked: "*When will this be true?*" the answer is to be found in the context. It is to be true at the time of our Lord's return. *At that time*, while some of the church will be asleep (in death), the Apostle declares that this would not be true of them all.

Again, if this translation be the correct one, it will be seen that a number of commonly held views are not sustained. Note, for example, that *in its light*, the Apostle is not to be understood as saying that those who are alive and remain will not die, nor that they will. He is not to be understood as saying that they will "fall asleep" in death, nor that they will not. While he will, in due time (indeed, he does, in his next phrase) tell us what is going to happen to the church at our Lord's return, *he does not do so in the phrase we have been discussing*. Here, if our preferred translation be correct, he says only the one thing, namely, *that when our Lord returns, not all the church will be asleep*.

In his next phrase, the Apostle proceeds to show that, at the time of our Lord's return, *the entire church* (whether asleep in death or alive as human beings) are to share in an experience *common to them all*. His words are: "We shall *all* be changed."

In the case of those who will be sleeping, their change will be accomplished by a resurrection, as the Apostle notes in 1 Cor. 15:52. In the case of those who are alive and remain, their human nature must also be surrendered (in death) if they are to share in the First Resurrection (Rev. 20:5, 6). By remaining faithful *unto death* (Rev. 2:10), and only by so doing, these too, are to "attain unto the resurrection *from dead ones*" (Phil. 3:11, Diaglott); that is, they will *thus* qualify (and only thus) for a share in our Lord's own resurrection (Acts 26:23). They cannot, with flesh and blood bodies (i.e., with human nature) inherit the kingdom of God, as the Apostle has previously stated (1 Cor. 15:50).

The change to be experienced by all the members of the church will be stupendous. It will be from corruption to incorruption; from mortality to immortality. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him" (1 John 3:2).

This change will be so sudden as to occupy no appreciable space of time and so the Apostle illustrates it by saying that it will be in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor. 15:52).

Again, after having said this, he goes on to tell us *when* that is to be. It is to be, he says, "at the last trump."

In this phrase the word "at" is an unfortunate translation. Reference to the Diaglott interlinear shows that the meaning is "in." Rotherham uses the word "during." We shall be changed "in a moment" *in* or *during* the last trump.

The last trump is the last in a series of seven and, like the previous six, is symbolic, as students of the Book of Revelation are aware. They represent seven great periods of time and their events. It is sufficient here to say that we find ourselves today in the midst of the very events which mark the sounding of the seventh trumpet. The increase of knowledge, the angry nations, taken in connection with time prophecies, establish this as a fact. Its fulfillment extends through a period of 1,000 years. Its events mark and coincide with all the various features of the Millennial reign of Christ.

Each member of the Church then, those who are asleep in death at the time when Christ returns, and those who will be living at that time, will be changed, in a moment, during the sounding of the seventh trump.

Will they all be changed in the same moment? Some so hold and teach. Let us see if this thought is scriptural.

Had this question been limited to those in Christ who are asleep at the time of his return, and the question asked: "Will all *these* experience their resurrection change in the same moment?" I would reply: "I know of no scripture which teaches otherwise, and I know of no good reason why this should not be."

However, if the question remains as first presented: "Will they all (those asleep in death and those who will be living) -will all *these* be changed in the same moment?" my reply must be, on the word of an inspired Apostle: "No." In 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17 the Apostle Paul makes this very clear. His words are: "The dead in Christ shall rise *first*: then (i.e., *afterwards* - see Diaglott) we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them."

One related question remains. It has to do with the Greek word *hama* translated in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 by the word "together." Recently the question has reached us from several quarters as to how the Apostle's use of this word is to be harmonized with his earlier statement. In other words, he has said that the dead are to be raised *first* and that it is not until *afterwards* that those who are alive and remain are to be dealt with. How can this be, if both divisions of the church are to be caught up *together*?

In seeking the solution to this difficulty, the preferred method is to locate every place in the New Testament in which *hama* appears and study that word in the light of its context. This we propose to do now.

For the benefit of English students who have had little or no experience with Greek word studies, may we suggest the following procedure:

- 1) Turn first to Strong's concordance, under the word "together". This will be, found listed on page 1066. On that page it will be noted that the word "together" (in 1 Thess. 4:17) is a translation of Word No. SG260.
- 2) Word No. SG260 appears on page 10 in the Greek Dictionary at the back of the concordance, and is the Greek word "hama".

3) "Hama" , it will be seen, properly means "at the same time", but is also freely used to denote "close association ".

4) The meaning of the phrase "at the same time" varies, depending on its context, as may be seen by reference to an unabridged dictionary of the English language. Before me is a copy of Webster's second Edition, published in 1959. In this dictionary, on page 2649, the phrase is defined as follows: "at the same moment or during the same period". It is important to notice these two meanings as, when we come to examine the scriptures in which "hama" appears, it will be necessary to determine, in each case, which of these two meanings expresses the thought of the inspired writer.

5) Refer next to the Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament, to the "English and Greek" section, commencing on page 873.

In this section, turn to the word "together". (Page 935). It will be noted that the word "together" is used to translate a number of Greek words. However, our present study has to do with only one of these, namely, "hama", which is the fourth on the list, the reference being to page 32.

6) On turning to page 32 we find all the verses in which "hama" occurs, listed in scriptural sequence. We note also that they are ten in number, and that "hama" is not always translated by the word "together", but is sometimes translated by other words. The following is a summary.

<i>Translation Occurrences</i>	
early	1
with	1
also	1
and	1
withal	3
together	<u>3</u>
Total	10

Let us now consider the ten scriptures in which "hama" appears, postponing our consideration of 1 Thess. 4:17 until after we have examined the other nine scriptures.

(1) MATT. 13:29

"He said, Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat *with* (hama) them."

The context shows our Lord relating the parable of the wheat and the tares. A sower of good seed had been followed by an enemy who sowed tares amongst the wheat. The question is raised by the householder's servants: Shall they go and gather up the tares? Our text contains the householder's reply.

Now, to gather up the tares from a wheat field would take more than a moment; it would require a period of time. Here "hama" evidently has the sense of "close association", and while the thought of time is not excluded, the idea of only "a moment" must be rejected.

The servants are not to gather up the tares, lest they "root up also the wheat *during the same period*".

(2) MATT. 20:1

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early (hama) in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyards."

Another parable is here being told by the Master. Again "close association" is present. The "going out" of the householder was "closely associated" with the early dawn.

He went out "to hire laborers". This was not accomplished in a moment, but took a period of time; time enough, it appears from verse 2, for an agreement to be entered into as to wages.

(3) ACTS 24:26

"He [Felix] hoped also (hama) that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him; wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him."

The words of this text occur in connection with Paul's appearances before Felix. Again, the thought of "close association" is present;-the association of Felix's hopes for money, with his hearing of Paul's arguments. The time during which this "close association" took place was not a momentary matter, but extended over a period of two years, as we learn from verse 27.

(4) ACTS 27:40

"And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea, *and* (hama) loosed the rudder bands, and hoised up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore."

The context unfolds the details of a shipwreck experienced by Paul and those with him en route to Rome.

To take up anchors, loose rudder bands and hoist the mainsail, would probably not take long, if several members of the crew co-operated, and might well have been accomplished simultaneously, during a brief period, but hardly "in a moment".

(5) ROM. 3:12

"They are all gone out of the way, they are together (hama) become unprofitable. "

In the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans the Apostle Paul has called attention to the sinful state of the Gentiles, and in the second chapter has shown that the condition of the Jews was no better. In chapter 3, in our text and related verses, he quotes from the Psalms (14:1-3) to show that they (Gentiles and Jews) are (i.e. during the same period) "together" become unprofitable.

Not merely a single moment but a period of many centuries is in evidence here.

(6) COL. 4:2, 3

"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; withal (hama) praying also for us."

At the same time as the brethren at Colosse continued in prayer, and while, in the spirit of thankfulness, they watched the Lord's providences, to see how their prayers would be answered, they were also to make special request on behalf of Paul and his associates in the ministry. "Withal" (at the same time), in this text, must surely be understood as "during the same period."

(7) 1 THESS. 5:10

"Whether we wake or sleep, we should live together (hama) with him. "

Here, again, the thought of "close association" is present; the association of the members of the church with their Lord and Head. Nor is this association to be for only a moment. No! it is to be for eternity!

(8) 1 TIM. 5:13

"And withal (hama) they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house."

Here the Apostle Paul is cautioning Timothy concerning certain young widows, who were becoming back-sliders, and who, "at the same time" were learning to be idlers and busybodies. "Withal" (at the same time) in this context, must be understood as having the sense of "during the same period."

(9) PHILEMON 22

"But withal (hama) prepare me also a lodging."

"At the same time" as Philemon was to receive his run-away slave back again (not, indeed, as a slave, but as a beloved brother in the Lord) he was to prepare a room for Paul to occupy.

Here again, the meaning must be "during the same period", not "at the same moment".

This concludes our review of the meaning of "hama" in 9 of its 10 occurrences in the New Testament. In none of them does the context permit us to understand it to signify "a moment", but in every case "a period of time" is intended.

(10) 1 THESS. 4:17

Let us now turn to our text, and see what light our study may throw on "hama" here. It will be particularly helpful if we note that our text almost parallels the expression in 1 Thess. 5:10 (considered foregoing). It is the same- word "hama" that occurs in both verses. In both "hama" should be translated by the word "together" (as the eminent translator, Rotherham, has been careful to do.) In the one case, the members of the church are to be " closely associated" with their Lord -and this not for a moment, but for eternity. In the other verse, members are to be "closely associated" with other members and also "ever be with the Lord."

In the light of the foregoing discussion it is submitted that, by his use of the word "hama" in 1 Thess. 4:17, the Apostle is not contradicting his earlier statement that the dead in Christ are to rise first, but that if, in this verse, the word "hama" is allowed to have the same meaning which it has in all its other occurrences in the New Testament, namely, "during the same period" any surface appearance of a contradictory statement disappears.

"Some day of days! Some dawning yet to be
I shall be clothed with immortality!
And in that day I shall not care
That Jane spilt candle grease upon the stair.
It will not grieve me then, as once it did,
That careless hands have chipped my teapot lid.
I groan, being burdened. But in that glad day
I shall forget vexations of the way.
That needs were often great when means were small
Will not perplex me then at all.
A few short years at most (it may be less)
I shall have done with earthly storm and stress,
So, for this day, I lay me at Thy feet.
Oh, keep me sweet, my Master; keep me sweet!"

- P. L. Read

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