

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

VOL. LV January / February, 1972 No. 1

New Year Thoughts

"WATCH!" - Mark 13:37

THIS SINGLE word, "WATCH," is suggested to the Israel of God as the key thought for the new year into which we are entering. There is an impressiveness and force in it, thus isolated, that may well stir our hearts, for it is the direct admonition of our Lord uttered in connection with the prophecy concerning his return. The lapse of nineteen centuries has not diminished its strong note of concern, exhortation, and warning. The fleet passing of another of our own few years but emphasizes' the need for solemn alertness as we face the significant future. It comes to us all individually as a personal message from the Master himself and thus, alone and apart from our fellow Christians, we must heed its warning implications. But hear the context!

"Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore; for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, WATCH." - Mark 13:32-37.

Four times in the span of these few verses do we note this all-important word, WATCH -- in each case the Greek word, Gregoreo, meaning to be awake and vigilant. Concerning the great and notable day of which Jesus here spoke, two facts only are announced -the certainty of its coming, and its suddenness or unexpectedness. The element of uncertainty is intended not to excite the imagination to curiosity, but to arouse the conscience to vigilance, and the heart to fidelity. Each servant of Christ holds everything in trust for his Lord, and uses time, talents, means, life itself, for his glory. Fidelity to such trust shall be rewarded, if persevered in to the end. 'Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And it he shall come in 'the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.'" - Luke 12:37, 38.

The return of Christ and our gathering together unto him is the most cherished hope in the heart of each true Christian. In these latter days so much study and thought have been devoted to a consideration of the Scriptures bearing on this subject that perhaps little more can be added. It is probably true that at this late stage of the Church's experience, each individual has more or less become set in his own convictions. In a spirit not of compromise but of conciliation, it were well for us to seek a common ground of understanding. It is impossible to avoid the conclusion, when we carefully consider all our Lord's words bearing on his return, that fulness of knowledge will not be ours until we have passed beyond the veil. There will be room for individual faith and for patience with one another to the last day of our earthly pilgrimage.

But let us examine ourselves as a collective body of believers in "Present Truth." Primarily, we can all meet on the broad platform of the Apostle's words: "all them that love His appearing." (Gk. Epiphaneia.) Such a love is engendered by Christ himself and is a natural consequence in any mind "fixed on Jesus." Thus we are all believers in the Second Advent and its glorious objective, the restitution of all things. Additionally, we believe we are living in "the last days, a time which is seeing the dissolution of human institutions to be superseded by the Divine Kingdom on earth. Our hearts jointly thrill in the realization that earth's long night of weeping is soon to terminate in a wonderful morning of joy. The fruition of our hopes is just before us.

But as regards the details of this extraordinary time, candidness and honesty require, yea, compel us to recognize that we all lack full knowledge. Undoubtedly some see more clearly in God's Word than their brethren. It will not do, however, to naively assume that any variation by others from our Scripture-interpretations is because of moral defection on their part. Such reasoning may appeal to the natural man, an attitude which is responsible for the dreadful record of God-dishonoring religious persecution of past ages, so contrary to the spirit of Him who set the broadest example of tolerance, even to the seed of the Evil One, by his words "let *both grow together* until the harvest." (Matt. 13:30.) The spirit of Christ constrains us to accept the fact that brethren fully consecrated to the Lord and bearing outward testimony to their spirit-begetting, can and do, sincerely and honestly, differ in their understanding of Scripture. "Now I know in *part*," the great Apostle could testify, and so may all God's people. Omniscience can be no human claim. We must wait the future for perfection of knowledge.

Many of us believe that our Lord's return is an event of the past; that he has been invisibly present for some years now—since 1874, 1893, 1914 or some other date we have determined upon as correct. Does this sincere conviction make further watching, further alertness, unnecessary? Of course not! There are other phases of watching that are of vital importance. Consider Revelation 16:15: "Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that *watcheth and keepeth his garments*, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

On the other hand our many brethren who, sincerely believe the Lord's presence is a future, though imminent event, have all the more reason to *watch*, to be alert, to be awake. For what if the Lord's presence is indeed a reality now! Will the heart-growth be such that it will survive the revelation of head errors? Neither pride nor self-will may be found in the overcomers. Therefore to have our portion with them, we must *watch and keep our garments*. It is a reasonable belief, the writer feels, that every one of the overcoming class will pass beyond the veil still hampered by some erroneous views. If we accept this thought as true (for who can claim to understand all spiritual truth perfectly?), it will move us to larger measures of patience and forbearance with one another. For obviously if we *knew*, each one of *us*, *what* we believe erroneously, we would immediately remove every last vestige of error. But since we do not know upon exactly what our heads may be wrong, it behooves us to be very careful in judging our brother, for it may be that we ourselves are the ones in error. What humility of mind this thought should stir within us! How

happy we should be that each "to his own Master stands or falls. Yea, he shall be holden up: for *God is able to, make him stand.*" - Romans 14:4.

This generous,, true-brotherly attitude regarding our beliefs and message is well reflected by Brother Russell's words of fifty years ago:

"The teachings which were to be presented to the nations are specified by our Lord as being -- 'Whatsoever I have commanded you.' This, then, proves that the kernel of the Gospel is not the Jewish Law, nor certain scientific theories and abstruse problems; but the simple teachings which our Lord delivered to the Apostles. What are these?

"(1) He taught that all men were sinners.

"(2) That he came into the world to 'give his life a ransom' -- a corresponding price for the sins of the whole world.

"(3) That no man could come unto the Father, but by him.

"(4) That all who would come by, him, must, in addition to the exercise of faith in him, also take up, his cross and follow him.

"(5) That all believers are one with him, as the branches of a grape-vine are parts of the vine.

"(6) That every branch to abide in him must bring forth fruit, else it will be taken away.

"(7) That those who trust in him are to hope for and to expect his second coming -- I will come again, and receive you unto myself.'

"(8) That the ultimate end of our hope for all promised blessings is in and through a resurrection of the dead.

"(9) That love is the law of the New Covenant -'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul, and strength; and, thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself.'

"We are fully authorized, therefore, to teach, and to believe that these are the points of, faith and practice which are necessary to both, Jews, and Gentiles who shall be favored with the call of this Gospel Age; and that nothing else is necessary or pertinent to the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ or 'the faith once delivered to the saints.' *Whoever makes the tests greater or less than these is in ERROR.*" - R2319.

Let then the New Year find us watchful, for watchfulness is a habitual attitude of spiritual alertness. We are not of the night but of the day, therefore let us not sleep as do others. The consummation of our hopes is at hand. Let us earnestly take heed to moral and spiritual environments, noting especially exposures to harm and loss from inimical forces within our own hearts and wills, from worldly allurements and Satanic temptations. Let there always, be a deep consciousness of spiritual danger axed damage impending from these foes within and without. And may our watchfulness include a profound sense of weakness, insufficiency, and utter unreadiness on our own parts to meet and avert or resist -these assaulting spiritual foes. Let there be a constant recognition of God's efficient interposition and a conscious dependence upon his proffered help. Our watchfulness must further imply an actual reliance upon his direction,

guardianship, and deliverance, and a looking for and expectation of a blessed result, by reason of his certain and assuring promises.

Let us take heed, watch and pray always (Mark 13:33), watch and pray lest we enter into temptation (Matt. 26:41), watch and stand fast in the faith (1 Cor. 16:13), watch and be sober (1 Thess. 5:6), watching thereunto with all perseverance (Eph. 6:18), watch with thanksgiving (Col. 4:2), watch unto prayer (1 Pet. 4:7), be watchful and strengthen the things that remain. - Rev. 3:2, 3.

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. *Watch* ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." - Luke 21:34-36.

For some of us, this may be our last year of watching. What shall be the results of such faithful alertness to the end? "*Blessed is the man that heareth Me, watching daily at My gates. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching. Blessed is he that watcheth.*" (Prov. 8:34; Luke 12:37; Rev. 16:15.) For such shall enter into the "joys of their Lord." They shall stand before the Son of man.

"I will stand upon my *watch*, and set me upon the tower, and *will watch* to see what He will say unto me." - Hab. 2:1.

And still, as of old, so today does our Master speak:

"I say unto *all*, WATCH!"

"My soul, *be on thy guard*;
Ten thousand foes arise;
The hosts of sin are pressing hard
To draw thee from the prize.

"O! WATCH, and fight, and pray;
The battle ne'er give o'er;
Renew it boldly every day,
And help divine implore.

"Ne'er think the vict'ry won,
Nor once at ease sit down;
Thine arduous work will not be done,
Till thou halt gained thy crown."

- *W. J. Siekman.*

A Song Celebrating the King's Marriage **A Meditation on the Forty-fifth Psalm**

"My heart is inditing a good matter." - Psalm 45:1.

THIS Psalm was undoubtedly composed to celebrate the marriage of a Jewish king with a royal bride, the bride being apparently of foreign birth. This was evidently its primary purpose and application. However, as we read and study it, we shall see that the Psalm is Messianic in character and that much of the language employed transcends the circumstances of any earthly monarch's marriage.

Verse one reads: "My heart is inditing a good matter; I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer."

Whoever it was that wrote this Psalm feels very strongly that his subject is great. He says his heart is "inditing" a good matter; the margin reads "bubbleth"; other translations read "boils," "overfloweth." Such is the condition of his heart. The word occurs only here according to the scholars.

SURPASSING EXCELLENCE OF THE KING

Next he addresses the king about whose marriage the Psalm or poem is written. Verse two: "Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into thy lips; therefore God hath blessed thee for ever."

First the King's beauty is mentioned; then his persuasive eloquence. An able commentator has remarked that it is more kingly for kings to win their subjects' hearts by gracious words than to rule them by brute force. Concerning Messiah, the true King, we read that men wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth (Luke 4:22) for never man spake like this man (John 7:46). Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17). To him Jehovah gave the tongue of the learned that he might know how to speak a word in season -that he might know how to sustain with words them that are weary (Isa. 50:4).

The Psalmist continues, Psa. 45:3-7:

"Gird thy sword upon thy thigh,
O most mighty,
With thy glory and thy majesty.
And in thy majesty ride prosperously
Because of truth and meekness and righteousness;
And thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.
Thine arrows are sharp
In the heart of the King's enemies;
Whereby the people fall under thee.
Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;
The sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.
Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness;
Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee
With the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

Yes -- King Messiah is not only fair to look at, and gracious of speech, but he is mighty in battle. However, he does not engage in war for the purposes usually underlying warfare -- to acquire more territory, or commercial supremacy, or personal aggrandizement, or glittering renown, but in behalf of truth and meekness and righteousness. Truth and meekness and righteousness have been humiliated in his kingdom and for *this* cause he takes his sword.

"LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED INIQUITY"

In connection with verses 6 and 7 we note the passage in Hebrews 1:8, 9:

"But unto the Son he saith, 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy Kingdom. Thou has loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.'"

These words of the inspired New Testament writer settle forever the fact that this Psalm is Messianic in character, for he quotes these verses as distinctly referring to the Son (our Lord Jesus). He is endeavoring to show the superiority of Christ to the angels, both in nature and in office. In proof of that superiority he quotes from a number of old Testament passages, among them being this very Psalm, as an evidence, which the Hebrews to whom he wrote would not dispute, of Christ's supremacy, and the righteous and endless character of his reign.

Turning again to the Psalm, verses 8 and 9, we see our King pictured once more, not now clad in armor but in marriage robes:

"All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia. Out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.

"Kings' daughters were among thy honorable women; upon thy right hand did stand the Queen in gold of Ophir. "

"A KING SHALL REIGN IN RIGHTEOUSNESS"

It is difficult to read this description of the King in this Psalm, as one possessing more than human grace and beauty, as a victorious warrior, as a righteous sovereign, as a bridegroom arrayed for his approaching marriage and surrounded by the praises of an exultant people, without recalling the vision recorded in the Book of Revelation, chapter 19, of one who is declared to be the King of kings and Lord of lords, who is all, King and Warrior and Bridegroom. We quote Rev. 19:11, 15, 16:

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

"And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

"And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, *King of kings, and Lord of lords.*"

Also Rev. 19:1, 6-7:

"And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God;

"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."

THE BRIDE "ALL GLORIOUS"

Returning now to the Psalm, we find the poet turns from the King to address the Bride. Let us read the 10th, 11th and 12th verses (Psa. 45:10-12):

"Hearken, O daughter, and consid.r, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him. And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favor."

For so kingly a bridegroom, as Messiah has been described in Psa. 45:2-8, where shall a fitting bride be found? Surely she, too, must be of exalted character and great spiritual loveliness, queenly in rank -- that is to say, the daughter of a king - and queenly in the purity and excellency of her spirit.

Such is her description here, and the language employed by the Psalmist can be truly applicable only to the Church in glory.

He says her appearance is "all glorious," her clothing of "wrought gold" and that she is to be brought to the King "in raiment of needlework." In the Book of Revelation 19:8, we read:

"And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

Note also, in this connection, the words of Eph. 5:25-27:

"Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it . . . that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

In the *Diaglott*, the rendering of Eph. 5:27 is: "That he might place the Congregation [the Church] by his side, glorious." In other words, when Christ (the King) who is our Life, shall appear, then we also shall appear, with him in glory (Col. 3:4).

After addressing the Queen in the words of Psa. 45:10, 11-12, the Psalmist apparently waits while all eyes turn in her direction. According to *Rotherham*, Psa. 45:13, 14, 15 may be understood as being exclamations of admiration on her splendid appearance. She is seen within the palace, at her King-Bridegroom's right hand, his Queen. And the first wondering exclamation on beholding her is "All-glorious!" Then, as the Divine Fatherhood of the Ecclesia is discovered, a second

acclaim is heard: "Daughter of a king!" We quote these three verses from *Rotherham's* translation:

"All glorious! daughter of a king!
"Pearls in chequer work of gold her clothing!

"On tapestry of divers colors is she conducted to the King; virgins in her train her companions are brought to her, with gladness and exulting are they conducted to her, brought into the King's palace to her."

Once more the Psalmist is the speaker, and ere the King finally disappears in his palace and the Queen is conducted to him, followed by her companions, the Psalmist addresses both King and Queen, congratulating them and expressing hopes as to the issue of the marriage. These words appear in the last two verses of the Psalm, 16 and 17 (Psa. 45:16-17), and read as follows:

"Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.

"I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations; therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.

These last two verses have perplexed scholars for centuries. Many of them, not seeing the special salvation of the Church as distinct from that of the world, offer only confusing comments.

Some get a little nearer the truth, suggesting that the words appear to Israel only, there is yet a blessed future awaiting mankind also under the gracious government of *Immanuel*; that one of the effects of the completed work of Christ will be to place the saved nations of the eternal Kingdom in a restored paradise, completely delivered from the tempter, and so established in righteousness that the Holy One can take up his abode among them for ever. 'He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.'

"The salvation of the Church of this dispensation is not the whole result of the death of Christ. There is to be in addition the establishment for ever of a Kingdom of God, in which his will shall be as fully done by men on earth as it is now done by angels in heaven. The consummation, for which we daily pray, is destined to come at last; and holy and happy service, without a flaw and without an interruption, is yet to be rendered to God, not merely by the glorified saints of the New Jerusalem, but by redeemed nations on the earth, who walk for ever in the light of the celestial city."

These and other writers, then, saw clearly that Christ and his Church, the Second Adam and his Bride, were to be blessed with "children," some of whom they may make "princes in all the earth." But how are these children to be "instead of thy fathers"? Only in the writings of our late beloved pastor, Brother Russell, have we found any satisfactory answer to this riddle of the centuries. "The fathers," as he observes in his luminous exposition of this passage, *Scripture Studies Vol. V*, pages E142, E143, was the honored title applied to the patriarchs, prophets, and founders of the nation, and it was a title that would be especially applicable to such as were in the kingly line from which Messiah was to come. But these "fathers" of the nation had *no life* in the true sense of that word; they were all members of the death-condemned race. "And when Jesus took hold upon our humanity, and became identified with the seed of Abraham and of David, and accomplished the work of redemption, it applied not only to the world in general," (as Guinness

has so ably presented in the previous paragraph) "but as well to these, his progenitors according to the flesh.... Hence, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David

and all the Prophets, and all the remainder of the world, must receive future and everlasting life from Christ, or not at all." He will be the "Everlasting Father" and together with his glorified Church will accomplish the world's regeneration, the regeneration of "the fathers" included. These "fathers" will thus become the "children." With what intense delight will Christ and his Church establish them as "princes in all the earth"!

Behold the Bridegroom

"Our lamps are trimmed and burning,
Our robes are white and clean.
We've tarried for the Bridegroom,
And now we'll enter in.
We know we've nothing worthy
That we can call our own --
The light, the oil, the robes we wear,
Are all from him alone.

"We see the marriage splendor,
Within the open door,
We know that those who enter
Are blest forevermore;
We see our King more lovely
Than all the sons of men;
We haste because that door, once shut,
Will never ope again.

"Behold, behold, the Bridegroom,
And all may enter in,
Whose lamps are trimmed and burning,
Whose robes are white and clean."

- *P. L. Read*

Job's Hope of Life Beyond the Grave

"For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." - Job 19:25-27.

AS WITH all Scripture, this passage will be best understood when studied in relation to its context.

Obviously it is part of job's reply to Bildad. In Job 18:17-21, Bildad had threatened job that his name and memory would perish; that posterity would either utterly forget him, or remember only to condemn him with horror and amazement.

To this threat job here replies by making a solemn and formal appeal to posterity. So far from forgetting or condemning him, he is sure that subsequent generations will remember the story of his faith and patience, and the end of the Lord concerning him, with sympathy and admiration; he is certain that he has at least one thing to say which the world will never let die, one bequest to make which cannot fail to bear his name honorably down the stream of time. This treasure is the truth that there is to be a life beyond the grave, *a retributive* life, in which every man will receive the due reward of his deeds.

Job did not always have that hope, that conviction. Before afflictions beset him, things had gone very well with him. He had greatly prospered. And in those days, he had believed very much the same as his comforters, namely, that *all suffering is punishment for sin; that it is in this life that men are rewarded for right doing and punished for doing wrong.*

Things were different now with Job. Overnight he had had a complete reversal of fortune, and was experiencing severe trials and suffering. And along with these new experiences, he is learning, what his comforters have not yet started to learn, that there is something lacking in his previously held doctrine; that doctrine to which his comforters still tenaciously cling, but which he knows is, to say the least, defective. He now knows that while that doctrine may contain *some* truth, it is far from being *"the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."* He knows now that that doctrine, stated without qualification and held to be of universal application, *becomes false doctrine.*

His first adverse experience had been the loss of his children and of his possessions. Note his remarkable reactions as recorded in the last three verses of chapter one:

Then Job arose ... and worshipped, and said: Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

In all this job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

Next Job loses his health; he is visited with a loathsome disease; his wife clings to his old discarded doctrine; insists that he is suffering on account of his misdeeds, and turns against him. Notwithstanding all this, he stoutly maintains his integrity; at the same time he refuses to renounce God; and still does not sin with his lips (Job 2:10).

However, Job cannot understand the reason of it all. And therefore, as he is at death's door, without hope of recovery in this life, and with no thought of a life beyond the grave, he begins, in chapter 3 (not to curse God, as some mistakenly think, but) to lament the day of his birth - he expresses the wish that he had never been born (Job 3:1-10).

That he had, *as yet*, no hope of life beyond the grave, is abundantly evident from what he says in chapter 14. There, in Job 14:7, he calls attention to the fact that:

Even a tree hath hope, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again.

But this is not the case with man, he notes, in Job 14:10.

Man dies, and is laid low; man breathes his last, and where is he? Again, in Job 14:14, he inquires:

If a man dies, shall he live again?

To which inquiry the context shows that Job would reply in the negative, for in Job 14:21 he goes on to remind us that the dead man's sons:

come to honor, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.

However, even in his misery and despair, Job cannot long rest with this conclusion. And as he continued to ponder the matter, further light began to break through his bewilderment. The more he weighed the situation, the more impossible it became for him, since he believed the great Ruler of men to be just and unchangeable, to conclude that the God whom he had done nothing to offend was really hostile to him, though he seemed hostile; or that he would always continue to *seem* hostile to him, never acknowledging his integrity. And as he had lost all hope of being redeemed and vindicated in this life, as, therefore, he could no longer admit the present life to be a strictly retributive one, he was compelled to look for, till he discovered it, *a retributive life beyond the grave*. He realizes that, for him, the present life is about to end. To the "world of tomorrow," therefore, he must look, if his hopes are to find fruition. *This*, it seems to us, is the gist of the matter; *this*, the line along which Job's thoughts traveled to the lofty conclusion he reached; *this*, the spring of living water that threw up the beautiful fountain of hope which still attracts our eyes.

This wonderful hope of Job is contained in Job 14:25-27, cited in our text. However, before we consider it in detail, let us note the brief preface by which it is introduced in Job 14:23, 24. We quote them from the *American Revised Version*:

"Oh that my words were now written!
Oh that they were inscribed in a book!
That with an iron pen and lead They were graven in the rock for ever!"

Whatever may become of his other words, some of which he elsewhere admits he loathed, and would retract (Job 42:6), he wishes the words he is about to utter to remain. They express his deepest, his unalterable, convictions. His previous speeches reflect all the fluctuating and uncertain moods and emotions of his heart -- his doubts and fears, his cravings and aspirations; but now he is going to say only what he is *sure of*, what he *knows*. And, therefore, he wishes his words to be written down in *a book*, a book formed of skins or parchments, as scholars tell us the

etymology of the Hebrew word denotes; he would have them enshrined in the most permanent form of ancient literature. Nay, more, he is conscious of such value in his words that even parchment is not durable enough for him. He would have them *cut deep in the rock*, raised above all accidents of time, that they may speak with an eternal tongue to the fugitive generations of men. And, in very deed, his wish has been more than fulfilled; for, as Chrysostom, commenting on these verses, finely says: "Job's words have not been written down with an iron stylus, as he desired, but far more durably. Had they been written as he wished, time would have obliterated them; but they have been inscribed in the imperishable records of Holy Scripture. They are graven on the rock of God's Word, and there they are still read, and minister comfort to all generations."

But all this is only preface. The Inscription itself, as we have already noted, is contained in Job 14:25-27. According to one scholar, "In the Hebrew it is written throughout in the true monumental, or lapidary style, the style appropriate to words which were to be so laboriously hewn and engraved. The thought is crushed into the fewest possible phrases, the phrases into the fewest possible words; and, as might be expected in so memorable a sentence, a sentence designed to quicken thought and hope in many generations, at least some of the words are capable of a double sense, and the full intention of the whole is not to be arrived at save with labor and pains." Let us take this remarkable Inscription, then, word by word.

"I know"

According to the scholars, the Hebrew word denotes absolute perception, absolute cognition, absolute certainty of knowledge. It is no mere guess, speculation, yearning, that we are to hear from Job, but that of which he is profoundly and unalterably convinced; the very best and surest thing he has to tell us.

"My Redeemer"

In Hebrew the word is *Goel*. This word Goel was the name for the next of kin who, among the Hebrews, was bound to redeem a kinsman who had fallen into debt or bondage, and to avenge his blood if he had been slain in a quarrel. It is no mere man, no human kinsman, that Job had in his thoughts. The best men he knew had already turned against him. It is God himself that Job has in mind who will be his Goel, that God of whose eternal justice he was so fully persuaded as to believe that he would raise and vindicate the very man whom he himself had smitten to the earth. [In the light of the New Testament we know, what Job could not have known, that the Son would be the Father's active agent in this, as in all other matters (1 Cor. 8:6); that the Umpire, Daysman or Arbiter for whom, in Job 9:32-35, he had expressed himself as longing, was to be none other than the Messiah -- our Lord Jesus, in resurrection glory.]

"My Redeemer liveth"

Job's Goel liveth. That is to say, this Goel did not come into existence centuries later, but was already existing, when the Book of Job was written, and when Job himself was living. This much, at least, the word implies; this much, at least, was in Job's mind.

"And he shall stand"

Job's Goel will rise up even after he himself has gone down into the grave; rise up, as the word hints, like a conqueror, a redeemer -- a redeemer being always a conqueror; for how should he deliver the captive save by subduing his captor?

"At the latter day"

Scholars tell us that the original word is ambiguous, and may be taken substantively or adverbially. Those who take it in the first way render it by the word "Survivor" or the "Last One." They understand Job to mean that this *Goel* who *lives* and who is to appear for him, is absolutely the "Last One"; and that, as Job's Survivor, he is bound to vindicate and avenge him. Most scholars, however, hold to the view that the more common Hebrew usage requires the word to be taken adverbially, and render it by "at last." Such understand that Job, either because he did not know (or did not wish to say) when his deliverance should come, left the time of it indefinite. He simply throws it forward to some distant date, in "the world of tomorrow."

"Upon the earth"

Here, again, commentators tell us that we have an ambiguous phrase, capable of more than one sense. "Upon the earth" is the rendering of both *Authorized* and *Revised Versions*, and is, perhaps, as good and probable a rendering as any. *Rotherham*, however, and several others translate: "Over (my) dust." Whichever translation be accepted, it could hardly be taken literally. Job could scarcely have meant that his victorious Goel would literally stand upon the earth, whether over his tomb or elsewhere. It seems better, therefore, to take the phrase metaphorically, and to understand it as equivalent to "after my death."

Perhaps without adding anything to the sense of the words, the contents of the verse may be summarized thus: "I, for my part, *know* (though I know not *how I* know) that my Goel already exists, and is preparing to take up my cause; that God himself will be my Goel, that *he* will do a kinsman's part for me, both redeeming me from my miseries and wrongs, and avenging me on those who have inflicted them upon me. *When* he will come I know not, nor *how* nor *where*; but this I know, that at last, long after I have sunk into the tomb, he will appear for me, clad in robes of victory and of judgment."

"Though after my skin worms destroy this body"

There seems no reason to doubt that Job fully expected a speedy death, fully expected, therefore, that his deliverance would not take place until after his death. This conclusion is put, one would suppose, wholly beyond question, when we combine with this phrase the final clause of the previous verse: "And he shall stand at the last over this dust." And yet there are some scholars who gravely maintain these phrases to mean no more than that Job believed that he should be reduced to a skeleton before God appeared to save and clear him, that his rehabilitation would therefore take place in this present life! Even Albert Barnes, in his justly celebrated "Notes," came to the conclusion (he confesses with great reluctance) that the passage does not refer to the Messiah and the resurrection of the dead, but merely to "an expectation which Job had that God would come forth as his vindicator in some such way as he is declared afterwards to have done," at the close of this present life.

But if Job meant no more than that, he surely took the strangest way of conveying his meaning. Any man whose body is torn to pieces, devoured, destroyed, reduced to dust, could not be other than dead, if words have any force or significance. Moreover, if Job intended to predict only an occurrence so common as the restoration of life, health, and wealth, to one emaciated by disease and broken by misfortune, why does he introduce his prediction with such an amazing pomp and emphasis? Why speak as though he had made some grand discovery of truth so invaluable and transcendent that it deserved to be cut deep in the rock, to abide for ever? The whole tone, no less than the express words, of the Inscription, demand a far larger interpretation than this.

"Yet in my flesh"

Once again, according to the scholars, we have an ambiguous expression. For the Hebrew word is translated variously, "from," "in," "out of," "without" my flesh -- "from" being the literal translation.

Whether Job would be in a body of flesh or without such a body when, at last, he would "see" God, he, of course, did not know. However, it seems most unlikely that, at the time he uttered these words, he even concerned himself with such a question. He had just reached the positive conviction that after his death, God himself would vindicate his integrity and that he, Job, would see him do so. With such a hope suddenly invading his mind and taking instant but full possession of it, it seems most unlikely that he would at once begin to wonder as to what the nature of his body at that time would be; whether flesh or some other substance.

In the light of the New Testament, *we*, the Gospel-Age Church know that in Job's case, it will be in his flesh that he shall see God.

"Shall I see God"

Job must *see* his Goel, for any vindication of which he were to be unconscious would have no value to him. A deliverance of which he remained insensible, would be no deliverance to him. No! -- he must *see* God.

On this point he is insistent, referring again and again to it, even in this brief inscription. For example, note the very next words: "Whom I shall *see*"; and, moreover, see "*for myself*"; that is to say, as the *Revised Version* makes clear, see "*on my side*"; redressing the wrongs which he himself has inflicted, and clearing the character which he himself has brought under suspicion; no longer an adversary, but a champion; no longer *against* me, but *for* me.

So, also, in the next clause of the verse: "*And mine eyes shall behold, and not another.*" Here, again, while he does not mean to assert that no one but himself will be aware of his vindication, he does surely mean that when his vindication comes, he himself, will know it. Not (only) the eyes of others shall see his Vindicator (and know that he is indeed Job's Vindicator), but *his own eyes shall see him*.

In speaking of a time to come when in his flesh he will "see" God, we are not to understand Job's utterance to be in conflict with the teaching of New Testament writers, who inform us that "No man hath seen God at any time"; "whom no man hath seen nor can see" (John 1:18; 1 Tim. 6:16). Rather we are to understand Job's words to be in harmony with such expressions as "all flesh shall *see* the salvation of God"; "*look* unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" (Isa. 52:10; 45:22); or, as Christians today sometimes remark: "*I see* God's hand in this, that, or the other matter."

Conclusion

To summarize then: Job had lost confidence in the doctrine he had once held, and which his comforters (?) still urged upon him, that in this present life every man receives his due. *That*, since it is contradicted by the most intimate facts of his own experience, is no longer credible to him. But he has not, therefore, lost confidence in the justice of God; he is simply driven to the belief that the divine justice is of a larger scope than he had hitherto conceived; that it covers a wider space and demands longer periods of time for its full development, periods which stretch beyond the narrow span of this present life, into the "world of tomorrow."

He knew and was sure that God would appear for him and redeem him; but he did not know how or when. And having come to this happy conclusion, the cry of his heart was "How long, O Lord, how long!" This we may gather from his closing words: "My reins be consumed within me," or, as another translates: "My heart pines away within me." His very hope evidently filled him with a sick, an almost heartbreaking, longing for its fulfillment; such a longing as filled the heart of St. John who, on hearing the words of Jesus: "Surely, I come quickly," responded (as have all the footstep followers of the Master since), "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

- P. L. Read

Refrain Thy Voice From Weeping

"A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Thus saith the Lord, 'Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy.'" - Jeremiah 31:15-17.

THE Lord through the Prophet Jeremiah sends a message of consolation for the heart of every bereaved parent trusting in him.

Five items in our text fasten our attention

First. Sorrow for the dead, which is universal; as the Apostle declares, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together."

Second. The nature of the comfort described -the hope of a resurrection, the hope of the recovery of the dead -- "They shall come again," they shall be restored to life.

Third. That in death our dear ones are in "the land of the enemy"; in harmony with the Apostle's declaration, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:26).

Fourth. That the labors of the parents in endeavoring to properly rear their children are not lost, "Thy work shall be rewarded."

Fifth. Last but not least in importance in this text is the declaration that this is the Word of the Lord, which cannot be broken-the Word which is sure of fulfillment, however different it may be from the word of man on this subject.

TEARS NOT WEAKNESS -- "JESUS WEPT"

Sorrow for the dead is not a sign of weakness, but rather the reverse - a sign of love and sympathy, of something more than selfishness. If any demonstration of this thought were necessary it is furnished us in the statement of the shortest verse in the Bible - "Jesus wept." Our Lord's tears were shed on a funeral occasion, too; Lazarus, his friend, the brother of Martha and Mary, was dead. Our Lord entered fully into the spirit of the occasion, with a deeper appreciation of the awful meaning of the word death than could possibly be entertained by those about him. He appreciated more than any of the fallen, dying race the great blessing and privilege of living, and what a terrible affliction was death-destruction, annihilation.

On the other hand, however, he understood more clearly than any of his hearers the gracious plan of God for the rescue of the race from annihilation. He realized that for this purpose he had come into the world, that he might give his life as the ransom price for Father Adam, and thus incidentally for every member of the Adamic race involved in death through the first transgression in Eden. The Master realized from the standpoint of faith in the Father's plan, and his confident intention to carry out his own part in that plan and to lay down his life as our redemption price, that thus resurrection blessings would come to every member of the race.

"NOT DEAD BUT SLEEPING"

Let us note carefully the nature of the consolation which our Lord tendered to the sorrowing ones about him on this occasion. Let us be assured that "He who spake as never man spake" gave the soundest and best comfort. The consolation which he gave was that "Lazarus is not dead, but sleepeth." He neither spoke of him nor thought of him as being dead in the sense of annihilation, because he had full confidence in the divine plan of redemption and in the resurrection blessings resulting. Hence the interim of death he spoke of as sleep -- quiet, restful, waiting sleep.

What a wonderful figure is this, so frequently used throughout the Scriptures by all those who trusted in the divine plan of a resurrection morning. In the Old Testament Scriptures we read frequently of sleep. Abraham slept with his fathers, so did Isaac, so did Jacob, so did all the Prophets, so did all Israel.

In the New Testament it is the same. Not only did our Lord speak of Lazarus sleeping, but the Apostles frequently used this same figure of sleep to represent their hope in a resurrection - that the dear ones who went down into death were not annihilated, but, as our text declares, "Will come again from the land of the enemy" -- will awaken in the resurrection morning.

Thus, too, of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, it is written that though stoned to death, he "fell asleep," sweetly, restfully, trusting in Jesus and the great power which he ultimately would exercise to call forth from the power of death all redeemed by the precious blood. This, too, we remember, was the comfort the Apostle set before the early Church, saying, "Comfort one another with these words - They that sleep in Jesus shall God bring from the dead by him" (1 Thess. 4:14-18). Referring to the matter on one occasion the Apostle remarked, "We shall not all sleep, but we must all be changed." He referred to those who would be living at the second coming of Christ, whose resurrection "change" will not be preceded by a period of unconsciousness in death.

Let us go back to Jesus and the sorrowing sisters at Bethany, and hearken to the words of comfort extended to the bereaved on that occasion. We cannot improve upon the great Teacher and the lessons which he presented. Let us hearken to his conversation with Martha. He says: "Thy brother shall live again." He does not say thy brother is living now. He did not say, as some erroneously teach today, thy brother is more alive in death than he was before he died. No! No! The Lord would not thus mock the commonsense and reason of his hearers, nor could he thus violate the truth and declare the dead not dead.

Hearken! The Lord admits that a calamity has befallen the household. He says not a word about his friend Lazarus having gone to heaven-not an intimation of the sort. On the contrary, he has tears of sympathy, and holds out as the strongest and only truthful solution of the sorrow, the hope of a resurrection -- "Thy brother shall live again." "I am the resurrection and the life!" The hope of all the dead centers in me. My death will effect the cancellation of the original Adamic condemnation, and I shall have the right then in harmony with the Father's plan to call forth all the dead from the great prison-house of death, from the tomb. "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in which all who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and shall come forth" (John 5:28).

THE RESURRECTION MORNING

At the close of his conversation with Martha, explaining that her hope must center in a resurrection of the dead and that he was the center of that resurrection hope, our Lord asked for the tomb, intent upon giving an illustration of the power which by and by in the resurrection

morning will be exercised toward the whole world of mankind. Standing at the door of the tomb our Lord cried in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth" and the dead came forth-he had been dead, he was quickened by our Lord's power and authority.

This, like other miracles performed by our dear Redeemer at his first advent, we are particularly told, was a fore-manifestation of his coming glory and power, an advance exhibit of what he will do at his second advent, only that the work at the second advent will be universal, higher, deeper, broader every way, "All the blind eyes shall be opened and all the deaf ears shall be unstopped"; all that are in their graves shall come forth, not merely to relapse again into blindness and death, but a permanent recovery -not only recovery from the loss of natural sight and hearing, but the eyes and ears of their understanding will be opened also; not merely aroused from a sleep of death to a few years more under present conditions, but aroused to the intent that by obedience to the Divine arrangement of the Millennial Age all the awakened ones may attain to all the glorious perfections, mental, moral and physical, lost by Adam's disobedience.

"TIMES OF REFRESHING SHALL COME"

Glorious hope of a glorious time. What wonder that the Apostle speaks of it as "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord when he shall send Jesus Christ." What wonder that he speaks of those years of the Millennial Age as "times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy Prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:19-21).

Lazarus died again, Jairus' daughter died again, the son of the widow of Nain died again. Their awakening from the tomb was merely a temporary matter, merely an illustration of the Lord's power; as it is written, "These things did Jesus and manifested forth his glory." These were merely foregleams of the coming power and glory and blessed work of the gracious Prophet, Priest, and King whom God has appointed not only to redeem the world, but in due time to grant to all the opportunities secured by that redemption sacrifice.

DEATH "THE LAND OF THE ENEMY"

Why should death be called "The land of the enemy"? Why should it be written, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death"? All because, disguise the facts as we may, death is an enemy. The suggestion that it is a friend comes not from the Word of God, but from heathen philosophies. The suggestion that it is unreal comes not from the Scriptures, but from heathendom. The suggestion that the dead are more alive than they were before they died is totally out of harmony with the Scriptural declaration -- "The dead know not anything; their sons come to honor and they know it not, and to dishonor and they perceive it not of them," because "there is neither wisdom nor knowledge nor device in the grave, whither thou goest" (Job 14:21; Eccl. 9:10). The suggestion that we deceive ourselves and imagine without reason that the moment of death is the moment of greater life, is of the Adversary, who contradicted the Lord's statement in Eden to our first parents, and when the Lord had declared, "Ye shall surely die" for your sin, declared in contradiction, "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:2-4).

THE KEY OF DEATH'S PRISON

Let us comfort our hearts with the true comfort, the substantial comfort of the Word of God -- there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust. All that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and shall come forth. The thousands of millions who have gone down into the great prison-house of death shall be released, because the Great

Redeemer has the key, the power, the authority, to bid the prisoners come forth, even as the Scriptures declare.

What a glorious resurrection morning that will be! What a glorious reunion! We understand the Scriptural teaching to be that the awakening processes will continue throughout a considerable portion of the Millennial Age, the thousand-year day of resurrection and restitution. First will come the resurrection of the Church, the "Bride," the "Lamb's Wife," the "Body of Christ." These, as the Scriptures declare, will constitute the First Resurrection -- not only first in order of time, but first in the sense of chief. In that company will be none except the saints; as it is written, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the First Resurrection; on such the Second Death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:6). Nevertheless that will be but a little flock, as the Scriptures declare, including "not many wise, not many great, not many learned, but chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith, heirs of the Kingdom" (1 Cor. 1:26, 27; James 2:5).

Not long after the First Resurrection (the glorification of the Church), will come the resurrection of the Ancient Worthies -- the overcomers of olden times prior to the Gospel Age. The assurance is that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the holy prophets -- yes, all who were approved to God by their faith and their efforts to obedience--will come forth from the tomb to human conditions, glorious, grand, earthly illustrations of the heavenly Creator, to constitute the earthly representatives of the Kingdom, the instructors of mankind.

The instruction of the world will forthwith proceed. We are assured that "the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the great deep" -- to such an extent that "They shall teach no more every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord."

THE LAST FIRST, THE FIRST LAST

After the Kingdom of God shall have been fully established in the earth, and Satan shall have been bound, after the darkness shall have rolled away and the true light shall have lightened every creature, the time will come for the awakening of all the families of the earth -- not all at once, but gradually, "they shall come again from the land of the enemy." The Scriptures do not go into details on this subject, they leave much to faith; but give us a firm foundation for that faith, nevertheless, in the positive promise of the Lord's Word.

To our understanding those who have fallen asleep last, will be among the first to be called back from the land of the enemy, to be awakened, and thus the work of awakening the sleeping ones will progress backward, as we might express it; the living ones will prepare for their brothers and sisters and parents, and they in turn for their brothers and sisters and parents, and so on all the way back, until finally father Adam and mother Eve shall come forth to see the world filled with their progeny, in accord with the Lord's original commission that they multiply and fill the earth.

Then truly they will see what God has wrought: First, his justice, which provided the great redemption price and would not otherwise clear the guilty. Second, his love, manifested in the same connection in the giving of his Son. Third, they will come to understand how that during this Gospel Age God has been selecting his Church to be the Bride of Christ and joint-heir with him in the Kingdom. Fourth, they will perceive that when this election was complete and the members of the glorified company had all been tried and polished and tested and glorified, then the blessing of the world through the glorified Christ, Head and Body, came upon all mankind in

the restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began (Acts 3:20).

"THY WORK SHALL BE REWARDED"

Finally, consider the Lord's Word to us all as a race, and particularly his word to parents, "Thy work shall be rewarded." What a blessing and comfort! What a consolation and encouragement are in these words to those parents who, seeking to train up their children in the way they should go, are sadly wounded and discouraged when the arrow of death smites down the dear ones they had so loved and cherished. They are disposed at first to say, Ah, my love, my counsel, my motherly care, my fatherly provision, were wasted. But not so, saith the Lord; thy works shall be rewarded.

You shall see the fruit of your labor in the future; we shall know as we are known by and by. Our dear ones will be with us, and to whatever extent time and effort will have been expended upon them to mold and fashion them along the lines of righteousness and truth, uprightness and godliness, these surely have not been spent in vain. The child shall come forth that much more advanced in its mental and moral development; to that much more easy attainment of the grand heights which the Lord will then open up before it.

On the other hand, the parent who has been careless of his children, neglectful of his privileges and obligations as a parent, will undoubtedly have his negligence rewarded in the future as he shall see what he might have done for his children but did not.

And more than this. By a Divine law of reaction, every parent who is faithful in the discharge of his parental duties shall have his work rewarded in himself, and likewise every parent neglectful of his duties shall have his work rewarded in himself. For who does not realize that there is no greater privilege or opportunity for self-development than comes to the parent in his endeavor to train up his children in the way they should go, in the reverence and admonition of the Lord.

Undoubtedly it is true, too, that every effort to do good unto others, especially to your own children, has its compensating blessings upon your own hearts. May this blessing deepen as the years go on.

In conclusion, "Comfort one another with these words" of our Lord to the effect that your little ones shall come again from "the land of the enemy," and that their return shall be even much more blessed, under much more favorable conditions than at present. Then, the great King reigning, all evil will be in subjection, all evildoers will be under restraint, all the influences of righteousness will be let loose, and the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the great deep. Blessed prospects are these before us, and to him who loved us and bought us, and to the Heavenly Father, who designed the great plan, we give everlasting thanks and praises, and show this by our daily lives!

- C. T. Russell

THE QUESTION BOX

James 1:25; Matthew 10:29; Exodus 24:9

Question:

In James 1:25 we read of "the perfect law of liberty." The language here employed seems contradictory. On the one hand "law" is defined as a rule of action prescribed by authority. "Liberty," on the other hand, suggests freedom from restraint. What has "law" to do with "liberty?" Do they not mutually exclude each other?

Answer:

At first glance it would seem so. Closer study, however, discloses that while the terms are self-contradictory, the statement itself gives expression to a remarkable truth. Other instances of this paradoxical form of expression may be found in the New Testament. To mention but one, we quote 2 Corinthians 6:9, 10: "As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

Here the Apostle likens himself to the son of a millionaire, not yet in possession of his future inheritance, but nevertheless able to draw on the infinite resources of his Father. From one point of view he had nothing, yet, since Jehovah himself was his portion, did not the Apostle truly possess all things? No doubt from one standpoint he was poor; yet who could appraise his value to the Church, and how rich he has made us by the lavish manner in which he spent and was himself spent in the service of the Master and in the service of us all.

So it is with this peculiar expression, "the perfect law of liberty." It is a paradox. Let us examine it. It can be best understood perhaps by means of an illustration. Here, let us say, is a boy to whom has been given an untrained dog. The dog is totally unacquainted with the boy. It is taken out into the fields when, without the least warning, it breaks loose from the boy and scampers away, paying no heed whatever to the boy's whistles and calls. Here we have an illustration of liberty without law.

Eventually the dog is recaptured and placed on the end of a chain. Thereafter, whenever the boy and the dog go out for a walk, the dog is always on the end of a chain. He is allowed no freedom. This illustrates law without liberty.

During this period of law without liberty, however, the boy is teaching the dog to love and respect him. No one is allowed to feed the dog except the boy. The boy speaks encouraging words to him when he is well-behaved; scolds him at other times. The day comes at last when they go out together to the same fields as they went on their first walk. The chain is removed, and again the dog scampers off. The boy whistles and what happens? The dog gladly heeds the call of his master and scampers back. The chain of steel is no longer there. Another one, however, has taken its place -- an even stronger one. It is the cord of love and understanding woven during the training period. Here is an illustration of the law of liberty.

So long as the dog remained untrained, he was unfit for the law of liberty. Law without liberty, as illustrated in the chain, must be his only portion. From this homely illustration we believe it will be apparent that the perfect law of liberty mentioned by the Apostle James is for the well disposed only; that is to say, it is applicable, at the present time, only to members of the new

creation -- the little flock. Others are still under the Mosaic Law, as servants, not fit for "the liberty wherewith Christ makes free" the sons, or else they are under the condemnation of the original law, the condemnation of death.

Before these, Jews and Gentiles alike, will be fit for the perfect law of liberty, they must be placed under the rule of a rod of iron, for a thousand years. During that time they will be shepherded by Christ and his Church, who will administer the laws of the Kingdom with justice tempered with mercy.

Not until the close of the Millennial Age, when the wilful evildoers shall have been cut off in the Second Death, will the race, proved perfect and fully in accord with the divine standard, be put under the perfect law of liberty -- love and its golden rule.

Question:

Will you please explain Matthew 10:28, where we read:

"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

If we are a soul and do not possess a soul, how are we to understand the use of "body" and "soul" in this Scripture?

Answer:

For a proper understanding of this text we must first ascertain the Bible answer to the question: "What is man?"

There are two general views on this subject which, while each contains elements of truth, are, on the whole, misleading. One is the so-called orthodox view; the other, the so-called scientific view. Neither represents the Bible viewpoint, and those who hold either are thereby prevented from securing the benefit which the Bible teaching would have on their hearts and lives.

The position of orthodox theology, briefly stated, is that man is a composite being of three parts--body, spirit, and soul. The body, it is believed, is born after the usual manner of animal birth, except that at the time of birth God interposes and, in some inscrutable manner, implants in the body a spirit and a soul which, being parts of God himself, are indestructible, and therefore can never die. These two parts, spirit and soul, orthodoxy is unable to separate and distinguish, and hence uses the terms interchangeably.

Scientists answer the question, "What is man?" by stating that man is an animal of the highest type yet developed. They offer no suggestion as to a future life for any individual, but, believing they can trace an evolutionary development of mankind in past ages, are disposed to the view that the race may by natural processes (and apart from the power and purpose of a personal God) yet be developed into a superior condition to that of the present.

The Bible answer to the question recognizes man as composed of two elements, body and spirit. By body is meant the physical organism; by spirit, the animating power -- the breath of life. The union of these two elements produces the man himself, the sentient being -- the soul. As we read

in Genesis 2:7: "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

It is the teaching of the Bible that when the spirit is separated from the body, the man (that is to say, the sentient being, the soul) ceases to exist. To quote from James 2:26: "The body without [or apart from] the spirit is dead." According to the Bible, any hope of a future life for an individual man who has died must lie in the power and purpose of God. The Gospel undertakes to prove that God has both the power and the purpose to accomplish a resurrection for all, and that everlasting life will be offered to all -- on certain conditions -- either in this Age or in the Age to come.

The Greek word twice rendered "soul" in our text is "*psyche*." It is frequently translated "life" and indeed is so translated a little later in this same discourse of our Lord. "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 10:39). This variation in translation has served to confuse, creating the impression that "life" is one thing and "soul" another, and that a man might lose his life without losing his soul. Such confusion is particularly noticeable in Mark 8:35-37: "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" In this passage the word "*psyche*" is twice translated "life" and twice "soul." Had the word been uniformly translated the truth would not have been obscured.

In the light of the foregoing discussion let us return to Matthew 10:28. What does our Lord mean when he says: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul"? Does he mean that when the body is killed there is a mysterious, invisible something called a soul, which men are not able to kill, and which, therefore, escapes death at their hands and continues to live on - apart from the body? Such is the orthodox view, which, as we have indicated, we cannot share. But even those who hold it should be on guard against embracing the further error of supposing that such an escaped soul is possessed of the quality of immortality -- deathlessness. The closing words of this very verse make that plain. They speak of one (God himself) who has the power to destroy both soul and body.

But, if the orthodox view be wrong, what is the proper one? I answer: Our Lord well knew that when men killed the body, they then and there destroyed also the present life, the soul, the sentient being. He was not denying this obvious fact. The disciples, however, had hope of a future life -- a life beyond the power of the killer to harm, much less to destroy. This hope of life came to them through the Gospel -- came as the result of the redemption provided by God himself, through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus. This hope of a future life was shortly to be confirmed to them by our Lord's resurrection from the dead. Because he lived they would have grounds for believing that they, too, would live.

The present life they would lose, whether men killed their body or not -- they would lose it in old age if not sooner. But their future life -- their prospect for eternity -- this lay in the power of God. He it is, then, and not men, whom they should fear.

Benjamin Wilson, in the *Emphatic Diaglott* translation, by using the word "life" and by supplying the word "future" has given us what we cannot but believe is the true meaning of our Lord's words. We close this discussion by quoting his translation, which reads as follows:

"Be not afraid of those who kill the body, but cannot destroy the [future] life; but rather fear him who can utterly destroy both life and body in Gehenna."

Question:

In Exodus 24:9-11 the statement is made that "they saw God . . . the God of Israel." How is this to be understood in harmony with St. John's statement in John 1:18, where it is written: "No man hath seen God at any time."

Answer:

The Exodus passage must be understood as a vision in which a representation of God and his glory was seen. St. John's statement, on the contrary, is a literal statement of fact.

The impossibility of human beings seeing God with their natural eyes is plainly stated by other New Testament writers and is attested also in the Old Testament. Our Lord Jesus, himself, in his conversation with the woman at the well, recorded in John 4:24, referred to God as a Spirit; that is to say, as a Spirit-being.

The statement of St. John (John 1:18), that "no man hath seen God at any time," is repeated by St. John in his First Epistle, chapter 4, verse 12 (1 John 4:12), in identical words. In Colossians 1:15, St. Paul speaks of the "invisible" God.

In 1 Timothy 1:17 St. Paul writes:

"Now unto the King eternal, incorruptible, *invisible*, the only wise God."

In that same Epistle, chapter 6, verse 16 (1 Tim. 6:16), he tells us that our Lord Jesus also, as well as the Father, "dwelleth in the light which no man hath seen, nor can see." The writer to the Hebrews states in chapter 11, verse 6 (Heb. 11:6) that "he that cometh to God must *believe* that he is." These words imply that God's existence is not possible to establish by an appeal to any one or all of our five senses. We cannot see, hear, taste, touch, or smell him. If we would draw near to God; we must do so by faith; we must *believe* that he is. This same writer, in the same chapter, Heb. 11:27, tells us concerning Moses, that "he endured as seeing him who is *invisible*." This fully agrees with the word of God to Moses himself, recorded in Exodus 33:20: "Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me, and live."

How, then, is the Exodus passage (Ex. 24:9-11) to be understood? We reply: It was a vision. That which was seen was a representation of God and his *glory*. In examining the vision we find that except for the mention of his "feet," no description is given of the God of Israel whom they saw. The entire description is concerning the pavement under his feet, which is said to be of a sapphire stone. This description is identical with the description of the throne of God given by the Prophet Ezekiel. In chapter 1, verse 26 of his prophecy (Eze. 1:26), Ezekiel writes: "There was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it." Because of this similarity between the throne described in Ezekiel's vision and the description of the "pavement under his feet" in the Exodus passage, it is probable that here, too, as in the vision given Ezekiel, God appeared as a man. In neither case, however, would it be the person of God that was seen, but merely a representation of God.

The conception of God as possessing human attributes and affections underlies every reference to him throughout the Scriptures. In view of the fact that man was originally created in the image of God, it is not to be wondered at that our conception of him is as though he were like us, except, of course, very much grander and higher. Our Lord Jesus taught us to look up to God as our

heavenly *Father*. The only way we could do this is to conceive of him as in some way like our earthly fathers. Our earthly fathers are able to see -so also is God. Hence we think of him as possessing eyes. Our earthly fathers are able to hear-so can he. Hence he possesses ears. And so, throughout the Scriptures he is represented as like a human being in that he possesses a hand, an arm, nostrils, feet, voice, etc. (Josh. 22:31; Jer. 32:17, 21; Ex. 15:8; Nah. 1:3; Gen. 3:10). Like a military leader, he "musters his host" to battle (Isa. 13:4). He "makes bare his holy arm" (Isa. 52:10). In Genesis 3:8 he is represented as *walking* in the garden. The High Priest was instructed to bless the nation in these words: "The Lord make his *face* shine upon thee" (Num. 6:25). He is said to have spoken unto Moses "face to face" (Ex. 33:11). After wrestling until the breaking of the day with a man, Jacob said: "I have seen God face to face" (Gen. 32:30). These expressions are all figurative. They describe the vivid impression experienced by the persons concerned. They were all associated with outstanding events in their lives or in the life of the nation.

In the case of those who "saw God" in Exodus 24:9-11, the vision given them came in connection with an extremely important event. The previous verses show that it was in connection with the giving of the Law Covenant. How appropriate that the leaders of the nation should be given a vision of God at such a time, while they were engaged in eating and drinking the covenant-meal!

- P. L. Read

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