

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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A General View of the Messianic Kingdom

"And I John saw the Holy City, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven."-Rev. 21:2.

THROUGH THE Prophet Daniel and others, the divine promise was given to Israel that at some future time the God of Heaven would set up a Kingdom on the earth; that this Kingdom would be world-wide-"under the whole heaven"; and that it would last forever. (Dan. 2:44; 7:27; Isa. 2:2-4; etc.) This Messianic Kingdom is to be established to meet the exigencies of the case of fallen humanity and to bring mankind back into harmony with the divine arrangements. This Kingdom will intervene between the divine government and mankind, because the fallen race of Adam in its weak condition is unable to meet the requirements of the divine law.

The great Emperor of the Universe, Jehovah, has given the Messianic Kingdom to our Lord Jesus, who was the first representative of that Kingdom. While on earth, our Lord was treated with violence and ignominy. All down the Gospel Age, His disciples have been used in a similar manner. Yet the Kingdom which they represent will **surely** be established. Already the Father has appointed our Lord as King (Psa. 2:6), and will soon deliver to Him the power and glory of His office.

The object and purpose of this Kingdom is clearly set forth in the Scriptures. When it shall have been established, some -of its subjects will be asleep in death, and others will be awake. At that time none of the fallen race will be recognized of God as having any life whatever. The control of the whole world will be in the hands -of our Lord, as the One who purchased it with His own precious blood, and who is competent to bless it, according to the promise made four thousand years ago to Abraham, that in him and in his seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.-Gen. 12:3; 22:18; Gal. 3:8, 16, 29.

The Kingdom of Heaven, as foretold by our Lord, will come about without manifestation -- outward show. (Luke 17:20, margin.) But with all these suggestions, let us not suppose that the Kingdom is to be an earthly government. On the contrary, the Scriptures instruct us that those who inherit it must become spirit-beings before they can enter into it. (1 Car. 15:50-52.) The

living members will all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and the dead members must be raised to receive their change before they can be forever with the Lord.

The Lord and the glorified Church will all be spirit-beings, fully able to administer the world's affairs and yet be unseen by mankind. They will be manifest in the rewards, punishments, and judgments of that day. The difference between the King and the Kingdom is that the King is the person who has authority; but the Kingdom includes both His dominion and His associates. In this case the latter are the Church, who will sit with Him in His throne.

The Church will always be in the **heavenly condition**. Nothing in the Scriptures indicate that she will be restricted to one **place** rather than to another. The intimation is that after the Church has experienced her change, she will be absent from the earth for a while and will be brought into the presence of Jehovah, the great King. She will be arrayed in glorious clothing of wrought gold "in raiment of needlework." (Psa. 45:13-15.) These statements are figurative expressions indicative of the beautiful character wrought out in all who become actual members of the body of Christ.

The Seat of Divine Government

Whether the New Creation are afar off or on the earth, they will ever be of the spirit nature. Their particular place is on the divine plane. The various orders of spirit beings have each its own sphere, but the Church of Christ has no place among them. She is invited to occupy a position next to her Lord, who is on the right hand of the Majesty on High (Heb. 1:3) -- higher than all other planes of spirit being.

At the time of the First Advent, this place had not been prepared for the Church, although the Father evidently had it in mind. Our Lord ascended on high in order to prepare that place. (John 14:2, 3.) This He did by making an imputation of His merit on behalf of the Church, thereby permitting them to become participators with Him in the sufferings of the present age, that they may also become sharers with Him in the glories to follow. Thus He has prepared the way for the Church to enter the highest of all planes.

We are not sufficiently informed respecting the spirit condition to know just how possible it will be for the Lord and the Church to remain in the Father's presence and at the same time maintain the government of the earth. While this may be possible, yet perhaps it may not be a wise arrangement. Perhaps it will be necessary for them to be absent from the immediate presence of the Father, and approximate the earth.

Our thought is that The Christ will be very closely associated with the earth, just as Satan's kingdom is. Satan's seat of government is in Tartarus -- the atmosphere. He and his associates, the fallen angels, are near the earth, whither they were cast down, separated from their own plane because of sin. They are invisible to mankind, however, amongst whom they have done an evil work. Satan has also his human agents-wicked men and women, who are under his control, sometimes through ignorance and superstition, and sometimes through mesmeric influence. The Scriptures inform us, however, that shortly Satan is to be bound for a thousand years; and the place which he has occupied will then be vacant. - Rev. 20:1-3.

St. Paul informs us that the Church is to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, during the time of His Second Advent. (1 Thess. 4:15-17.) This does not necessarily mean, however, that they will occupy Tartarus. We are told that they will be forever with the Lord; wherever He is, there the Church will be also, in harmony with the divine will and executing the divine purposes. Men will not see the Lord and the Church, even as they do not see Satan and the fallen angels. The

Christ will be very closely associated with the earth-as before intimated-though invisible to mortal eyes. They will be doing a good work, a powerful work on the spirit plane. They will be kings and priests unto our God, and they shall reign on the earth. - Rev. 5:10.

With The Christ will be various agencies. The great company will undoubtedly be associated with them. Then there will be the earthly agents, just as Satan has his assistants. These agents of The Christ will be the faithful ancient worthies, who will render intelligent and willing service in the Kingdom of Messiah.

In Isaiah 11:9, the statement is made: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy Mountain." Comparing Daniel 2:35 with verses 44 and 45 of the same chapter, we perceive that in prophecy

a mountain is the symbol for a kingdom. Isaiah's statement, therefore, seems to imply that under the Messianic Kingdom there will be a restraint placed upon all who do wrong. At the same time we are to remember Daniel's statement that the Kingdom is to **grow**. The prophecy is that the stone **became** a great mountain and filled the whole earth. Many years will doubtless pass before the prophecy will be fulfilled.

Future Sufferings of the Ancient Worthies

As soon as the Kingdom shall have been set up in power, the ancient worthies will be raised from the dead as perfect human beings. Psa. 45:16 evidently refers to these faithful servants of God, who are to be princes in all the earth. Presumably they will have a great work of instruction to do for the rest of humanity. While they will have this service to perform, nevertheless they will have great honor in doing it; for it is always an honor to serve the Lord.

The service which the ancient worthies will be given will be more than God would ordinarily entrust to a perfect human being. It will be a part of this service to deal with "the imperfect, fallen creatures and to help them up out of sin and imperfection. While in one sense of the word this work is desirable, yet it is not what a perfect human being would prefer. These ancient worthies will come forth from the tomb perfect; but during the entire Millennium, they will be amidst imperfect surroundings. The world of mankind will be imperfect then as now, although gradually these imperfections will come to an end.

Adam was created perfect. After he had sinned, he was cast out of Eden to delve in the imperfect earth, and to struggle with the thorns and thistles until he returned to the dust, whence he was taken. Surely he must have suffered because of his surroundings. Our Lord Jesus was perfect. Not only did He leave the heavenly glory, but for thirty three and a half years He was amidst imperfect surroundings, constantly witnessing the pain and sorrow of the fallen race. To be in such surroundings must have comprised a large share of His sacrifice; for the fact that He was perfect would increase His sufferings.

In the case of the ancient worthies, who, as perfect human beings, will be in an imperfect environment for a thousand years, it would seem as if they will undergo much suffering. Knowing what we do of our heavenly Father, we are inclined to believe that, if they are faithful in serving the Almighty, He will abundantly reward them, more than they could have asked. Should any one inquire, What reward will the Father give them, if they maintain their obedience? we answer, During the Millennium they will receive no special reward for their service, so far as we can see; but we think that from God's standpoint, theirs will be a meritorious service which He will be pleased to reward. This seems to be His method of dealing with His faithful servants.

Although our Lord Jesus delighted to do the Father's will, yet God rewarded Him. Our God is gracious!

We cannot think of any greater reward than to bestow the spirit nature upon these faithful ancient worthies. Long ago they proved their loyalty by choosing to suffer rather than to indulge in sin. There is nothing in the Scriptures, however, which says distinctly that they will ever be made spirit-beings. Whatever we may suggest on this subject is purely inferential.

Future Reward of the Faithful Princes

A part of the evidence leading to the deduction that, the ancient worthies will be made sharers of the spirit nature and become members of the great company class is built upon the fact that they seem to be represented typically by the tribe of Levi. The fact that this tribe had no inheritance in the land seems to imply that the ancient worthies will have no earthly inheritance. We might think that their exaltation to be princes in all the earth (Psa. 45:16) would be an abundant reward; but inasmuch as God will give the spirit nature to the great company, who passed through no more severe experiences than did the ancient worthies, and, inasmuch as the lowest form of life on the spirit plane is higher than the highest form on the human plane, it follows that the great company would receive at the hands of the Lord a greater blessing than would the ancient worthies.

Since the heavenly Father has been pleased to arrange for the great company a place on the spirit plane, and since He is operating according to some general principles of righteousness, we are inclined to think that He may have something more for the ancient worthies than will come to the remainder of mankind. So far as we can perceive, the great company have not demonstrated that they are any more loyal to Him than were the faithful ancient worthies. When Abraham was called upon to offer up his son Isaac, he exhibited a degree of loyalty greater than the great company will be called upon to manifest.

Furthermore, in Genesis 17:8, God said unto Abraham, "And I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." Two thousand years later, St. Stephen said that God never gave Abraham so much as a foot of the promised land (Acts 7:5); but he implied that Abraham will yet receive that land and afterward **leave it to his posterity**. If the **land** is to be given to Abraham and his coadjutors, and then to be left **to his seed** and mankind in general, the thought would seem to be implied that the ancient worthies will pass to the spirit nature.

This same thought seems to be pictured in the Revelation. At the end of the thousand years, Satan will be loosed, that he may go forward to test the people that are on the earth, to manifest to what extent their hearts are loyal to God and to the principles of righteousness. The result of this test will be that some will fall away. - Rev. 20:7-10.

We read, "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." (Rev. 20:9.) The "beloved city" is the new Jerusalem, the Church in glory, not the Church in the flesh. The rebellion incited by Satan will be not only against the earthly princes, but also against The Christ.

By that time having reached perfection of organism and powers, the people will assert themselves in thus going up to encompass the camp of the saints. That the Church cannot be meant is evident from the fact that human beings could not attack an unseen force of spirit-beings, as the Church will then be. Just as in Great Britain, the people have gone to Parliament to protest, so the rebellious faction of mankind will protest against their faithful princes. We fancy that we hear them say, "It is time that this government was turned over to us. We protest against your remaining in power any longer." In rebelling against the earthly phase of Messiah's Kingdom, however, they are rebelling against the Lord. Consequently, divine judgment will overtake them -- "fire from heaven."

Since this rebellion is to occur at the close of the Millennial Age, and since mankind will at that time have reached perfection, therefore, this separation of the ancient worthies from the rest of the world seems to imply that God has some special purpose in respect to them. The term "camp"

itself implies that theirs is only a **temporary** condition or arrangement, and that God has some better thing in store for them.

If our surmise that the ancient worthies will same day attain the spirit nature be true, we can readily see that it will not be necessary for them to die in order to attain that plane of existence. If those members of the body of Christ, who are living in the time of His second presence can be changed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," so could- the ancient worthies have their change. If they were thus changed from the human plane to the spirit plane, they would be exchanging a perfect human nature for a perfect spirit nature as a reward for faithfulness in the service of the Lord.

The Glory of the Lord the Laudable Ambition in the Kingdom

Under the beneficent rule of the Kingdom, we may be very sure that the Lord's arrangement will be an equitable one--a fair chance for every one of the human race. It is reasonable to suppose that the general line laid down in the Scriptures will be followed respecting the earth. It is written: "The earth hath He given to the children of men." (Psa. 115:16.) The race as a whole will have possession of the earth. God has not made any allotments. Every man will have a share in the commonwealth.

Future Work of The Christ

The changes will come about gradually. There will be inequalities of brain and muscle; but the Kingdom will even up these differences. There will always be some kind of incentive to energy. Either there will be an impetus of some sort, or else there will be some sort of punishment to help people along. The Lord will hold out certain inducements to those who are willing to cooperate along the line of advancement, and will impose stripes, punishments, to assist those who will not be induced otherwise. Both rewards and punishments will be in operation during the Millennium.

Looking back over the history of the world, we see that selfishness has been a great evil; yet at the same time it has worked wonders. If it were not for ambition and acquisitiveness, man would not be much above the animals. We are, therefore, to consider these qualities to be great blessings, when rightly exercised. Under the rule of the Kingdom, all possible blessings of mind and body will be held out to the obedient, so that the trend of selfishness will be offset by a more laudable ambition than at present; and as mind and body develop, the standards of humanity will rise higher, and selfishness will be more and more seen to be contemptible. When perfection is attained, everything will be done for the glory of the Lord rather than for earthly name and fame.

Gradually all mankind will come into fellowship with the Kingdom, and indirectly become associated with the Kingdom itself. Just as any good man helps the government, so all mankind will be blessed in proportion as they approve and uphold the divine arrangements. Thus the Kingdom will be spreading for the thousand years, not only from one individual to another, but gradually back to full perfection. We read that "of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." (Isa. 9:7.) It will conquer everything before it; nothing shall stop it. After every evil thing has been destroyed, every creature in heaven and in earth will be heard praising God. (Rev. 5:13.) Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess (Phil. 2:10, 11), and His Kingdom shall be without an opponent "from the river unto the ends of the earth." - Psa. 72:8.

After the thousand years shall have been finished, the Kingdom will cease in the sense that Christ will deliver the authority over to the Father. (1 Cor. 15:24.) This will not mean, however, that law and order will be disregarded as they have been during the reign of sin and death. The Messianic

Kingdom will by that time have helped mankind out of their fallen condition; and therefore it is the divine purpose that Messiah relinquish this subordinate Kingdom, in order that it may merge into the empire of the great Jehovah, of which it will ever after be a part.

Justice then will operate. Mercy will no longer be required; and the heavenly Father will not then be pictured as a merciful King to His creatures. They will by that time be perfect so that they will **need** no mercy; and they will be glad to meet all the requirements of the divine government, and in so doing will be blessed.

Having terminated this work of the restitution of mankind to the plane of human perfection, our Lord and the Church will not be left without an occupation. Our Lord will continue, according to the Scriptures, to be at the right hand of the Majesty on High-next to the Father. After He has relinquished the oversight of earthly affairs. He will assume once more the position of Associate Administrator of the Universe, in connection with the heavenly Father.

We are not to suppose, however, that the Father and the Lord will be kept busy hearing and deciding cases and in administering justice. Nothing of the kind will be necessary. The equilibrium will be such that there will be no necessity for deciding cases. The government of the universe will go on so smoothly as to be practically with out a head, and yet there will be the **Head** -- Jehovah Himself. Next in authority to the Father will be the Son, and next to the Son will be the Church. What work will thenceforth progress is not revealed to us, except in a very indefinite manner.

Through the aid of the telescope, we understand that the fixed stars are suns, each of which seems to have its own planetary system. It is only reasonable for us to infer that, if God made this earth a planet to be inhabited, all other planets will sometime be inhabited also; and that they will be under obligation to the heavenly Father as a part of His wonderful universe. So far as we can understand, the power of Jehovah is boundless. When we consider the hundreds of millions of suns and planets beyond the power of human mind to comprehend, then it is reasonable to assume that the work of The Christ will be limitless; and that some such work for creatures yet unborn will be their blessed privilege to all eternity. We wonder in amazement at the magnitude of God's goodness to us, who has lifted us up from our low condition and who will exalt to future glories interminable those faithful ones who make sure their calling and election to glory, honor, and immortality.

- Condensed from an article by C. T. Russell in Reprints, February 15, 1913, p. R5181.

"Lord, Teach Us to Pray"

"After this manner therefore pray ye." - Luke 11:1; Matthew 6:9.

HERE WE conclude our meditation begun in the May-June *Herald*, continued in our July-August issue.

FORGIVE US OUR SINS

We cannot do God's work without the supply of temporal food for our physical necessities; therefore our Lord taught us to offer this last petition. But it is equally the case that we cannot do His work unless we are at peace with Him; therefore the petition which follows: "Forgive us our sins as we forgive *our* debtors." This petition, to be day by day prayed, supposes that he who prays this prayer will be always penetrated, to the last, by conviction of his sins. Some, who resent this doctrine, reject also this prayer, regarding it as provided not for Christians but for Jews, insisting that after Pentecost Christians could not consistently use it. But it is certainly of Christians and of no one else, that the Apostle John speaks, when he says: "If *we* confess *our* sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Our Lord was not suggesting here that His disciples should petition the Father to release them from the condemnation which came upon Adam and on them as his children because of Adam's sin. Provision for their release from *that* condemnation would shortly be accomplished for them by His contemplated sacrifice at Calvary, and the union with His resurrection life by the spirit begetting influence of the Father, which would follow "not many days" later. But thereafter, as new creatures in Christ Jesus, as long as they remained in the flesh, they would find themselves unable to do perfectly. Again and , again they would find themselves omitting to do certain things they should have done, and doing other things they should not have done. Such are the debts which they would incur and for which forgiveness was to be daily sought.

And how eminently proper it is that the one who would thus pray should himself be able to exercise a similar largeness of spirit towards others. For it takes the same kind of a disposition to *receive* forgiveness as to *show* forgiveness. And the two are inseparably joined together by our Lord. Indeed, in this very connection He reiterates the matter, thus: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you; if ye forgive men not their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

Elsewhere He emphasizes this same doctrine in a parable-that of the unforgiving servant. In debt to his master ten thousand talents and freely forgiven, he yet had no compassion on his fellow-servant who owed him a hundred pence, a comparatively insignificant sum. Ah! is not. this parable true to life? We fret and chafe over the wrongs and injuries done to us by others as if they were really enormous. But how fared it with this unforgiving servant? Did he not find his old debt rolled back upon him with all its crushing weight? He did indeed. And our Lord, bringing home the lesson very forcibly to His disciples, concluded the parable with the words: "So likewise shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye do not from your hearts forgive every one his brother their trespasses."

A lesson which is so plainly taught by our Lord, and emphasized by so many repetitions, must be a most important one. The duty of forgiving others is not merely one of the refinements of

Christian culture, something which adds to the beauty of a Christian character, though not essential to it; rather it is a vital element in every true Christian life. We pray that we may be made like Christ, that His image may be impressed upon us; but we cannot be like Christ unless we have the spirit of forgiveness. Too many people who call themselves Christians seem to give little thought to this phase of the Christian life. They may seek to be truthful, honest, just, and upright, but they pass over the duties of love. There is a great lack of tenderness in many lives. Yet we cannot read the New Testament without finding the lesson of gentleness on every page. In the culture of our Christian life we are exhorted to put away every trace of bitterness, and to gather into our character everything that is kindly and loving. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." "Put on therefore a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye." These quotations show the tone of the whole New Testament. But how close to these teachings is the Church of Christ living? Are we not all disposed to be too keenly alive to anything in others which appears to touch us unkindly? We praise love, but do we live it? We want other people to practise forgiveness, but when one has wronged us we are slow to practise it ourself.

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

With the remembrance of past trespasses there succeeds in the mind of the Christian the realization of his weakness and the danger of further stumblings and failures. His prayer, therefore, passes naturally from the petition to be forgiven sins already committed, to a petition for guidance, and protection, so as to avoid sins in the future. "Lead us -not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One."

Scholars tell us that the word "to tempt" originally meant "to try, or "to test," without indicating in the least whether the purpose of the trial' was good or bad. Hence the word "attempt," which may be employed in a good or a bad sense. So also the word *tentative*, which- is but a contraction of the word *temptative*, and which we know means trial, as for. example, in the case of the unforgiving servant we were noticing in a previous paragraph. He was forgiven- tentatively, provisionally, with the understanding that his own character and conduct would show some correspondence to the grace of the One who had forgiven him. In Gen. 22:1 we read that God did *tempt* Abraham, that is, He made a holy trial of Abraham's faith. In John 6:6 the word is translated *prove*: "This Jesus said to *prove* Philip, for He Himself knew what He would do." - This was a good trial or temptation, intended to, develop Philip's faith. In 2 Cor. 13:5 -we read: "*Examine* yourselves, whether ye be in the faith." If the word had been uniformly translated, it would read:

"*Tempt* yourselves, whether ye be in the faith." We thus see that the word is often used in a good sense; however its prevailing use is to denote an evil trial, trial that would ensnare, trial that is with the put pose of alluring to wrong-doing-morally insidious, seductive temptation.

Now concerning the first sort of trial, a trial that is intended to have only a good result, the Apostle James exhorts: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience." Again, he says: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." Surely then, we are not to suppose that Jesus is here instructing His disciples to implore their Father not to lead them into this sort of temptation.

But on the other hand, if we adopt the bad sense in which the word temptation may be taken, another difficulty arises. How could we ask God not to lead us into a trial with the malicious intent of ensnaring us into wrong doing? God Himself cannot be enticed into evil, neither *in that sense* does He tempt any man.

We believe the solution of this problem depends upon our settling the question as to who is the author of the temptations which this petition anticipates. And the next clause supplies the answer to that question. It is none other than our Adversary. "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the *Evil One*." The one who is responsible for the temptations referred to in this petition is Satan.

Now of course our Father would not lead us, guide us, impel us, into the snares of the Adversary. On the contrary He would lead us in an opposite direction. But if one is led away by his own uncontrolled desires, our Father's usual method of waking such an one up is to withhold for a moment His guiding and protecting hand. Especially does He do this with one whose heart is lifted up in pride, one who is beginning to think more highly of himself than he ought to think. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed, lest he fall." We hear rather overmuch these days of *independent* Bible students. It is possible that from one standpoint the word may be rightly used, but more often than not it has no right to be used. None of the readers of this journal, we trust, are independent Bible students in the wrong sense of that word. We are very much dependent on each other, are we not? And we are especially dependent on our Father. And that is the point of emphasis here. This petition is a recognition of our dependence on Him, and is equivalent to asking Him not to abandon us to our own unaided strength to the snares of the Evil One. It is as though we would petition our Father for our brethren and for ourselves: "Father, if today an occasion to sin presents itself, if the enemy of our souls seeks to ensnare any of us today, grant, Father, that any one of us open to such a snare may be found walking so close to Thee, that it will not be necessary for Thee to chastise him by abandoning him to that snare, with the certain humiliation and shame which must result to him ere he is recovered out of the snare of the Adversary. But on the contrary, deliver us, rescue us"(the term' is a military one, denoting the deliverance of a prisoner who had fallen into the hands of the enemy) "deliver us, Strong Deliverer, from the Evil One."

And His gracious word to us is that He will. As St. Peter writes: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations," and He will do so, and as St. Paul declares: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

Was it not this same spirit of dependence on His Father that enabled our Lord to overcome, that made Him more than conqueror? *He* had no disposition to rush heedlessly into danger zones in the spiritual warfare. No experienced soldier would ever enter lightly into another battle, least of all one who had been a hero in the strife. Instead of such a spirit of bravado He manifested the contrary spirit. We hear Him praying in the garden, praying with agonizing earnestness: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." Here was no self-confidence, but if anything a sense of distrust of His own powers. But there was no distrust of His Father, for with a deep conviction that His Father's power would enable Him, and that His Father's will was best, He adds: "Not My will but Thine be done." May His spirit be ours in ever-increasing measure.

- P. L. Read.

What Say the Scriptures? **Basic Bible Studies No. 2 -- The Bible a Divine Revelation**

"Borne by holy spirit, men spoke from God." - 2 Peter 1:21, Literal.

IN OUR previous study we noted that scientific Rationalism has made wondrous progress in triumphing over time and space, microbes and atoms. But this pathway, with its absolute and almost naive faith in cerebral processes, has also led to a mechanistic concept of the origin and destiny of Man, a "gospel" of hopelessness. Furthermore, the resulting great technical advances have, in our day, brought pressing problems to the social world. There is mounting and alarming evidence that mankind is entering an era of Scientific Barbarism. It has become obvious that man's mentality has not kept pace with his techniques. The barbarians are making more progress in the application of science than Science is making in the control of barbarism. Two tragic conflicts of unprecedented violence have penetrated into the remotest corners of the world to shake modern civilization's illusions of solidity and permanence. In a world faced with disaster, apprehensive hearts, weary of destructive materialism and paralyzing skepticism, long for a resurgence of spiritual values. But from whence shall they come?

Whittier has said:

"We search the world for truth. We cull
The good, the pure, the beautiful,
The graven stone and written scroll
And all old flower-fields of the soul;
And, weary seekers of the best,
We come back laden from our quest,
To find that all the sages said
Is in the Book our mothers read."

Fully persuaded that this wonderful book, the Bible, is the only fount of truth which can satisfy hearts and minds, our succeeding studies will examine its teachings in detail, in the firm assurance we shall find them the answer to all the questions of men. But first, for confirmation of its claim to divine origin, we consider briefly the testimony thereto of men, of reason, and of our hearts.

THE TESTIMONY OF MEN

From the many testimonials of scholars, statesmen, scientists, philosophers, and others concerning the Bible, we submit the following:

Chevalier Bunsen, German scholar: "The Holy Scriptures are intelligible to the humblest, commanding the reverence of the wisest; the only story of the origin of our race which we can harmonize with our natural conception of God, or with science."

Francis Bacon, English philosopher: "There never was found in any age of the world either religion or law that did so highly exalt the public good as the Bible. . . . I believe the Bible is the Word of God whereby his will is revealed."

Michael Faraday, English physicist: "As tears come from the heart and appeal to the heart, so the Bible comes from God, and he that is from God listens to her voice."

Sir William Jones, British jurist and Orientalist: "The Bible is the light of my understanding, the joy of my heart, the fulness of my hope, the clarifier of my affections, the mirror of my thoughts, the consoler of my sorrows, the guide of my soul through this gloomy labyrinth of time, the telescope sent from heaven to reveal to the eye of man the amazing glories of the far distant world. The Bible contains more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, more pure morality, more important history, and finer strains of poetry and eloquence than can be collected from all other books in whatever age or language they may have been written."

Sir John Frederick Herschel, English astronomer: "All human discoveries seem to be made only for the purpose of confirming more and more strongly the truths that come from on high and are contained in the Sacred Writings."

Immanuel Kant, German philosopher: "The Bible is an inexhaustible fountain of all truths. The existence of the Bible is the greatest blessing which humanity ever experienced."

Galileo Galilei, Italian physicist and astronomer: "The Holy Scriptures can in no wise say a lie or have a mistake; its pronouncements are absolutely and inviolably true."

James Dwight Dana, American geologist, in speaking to a graduating class in Yale University said: "Young men! As you go out into the world to face scientific problems, remember that I, as an old man who has known only science all my life long, say to you, that there is nothing truer in all the Universe than the scientific statements contained in the Word of God."

Simon Greenleaf, American lawyer:

"The genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures are established. The Scriptures are the voice of God."

John Locke, English philosopher: "The Bible is one of the greatest blessings bestowed by God on the children of men. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture for its matter. It is all pure, all sincere; nothing too much, nothing wanting."

Sir Isaac Newton, English philosopher: "We account the Scriptures of God to be the most sublime philosophy. . . . I find more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible than in any profane history whatsoever."

Sir William Ramsay, Scotch chemist: "The longer I study the New Testament, the more convinced I become of its absolute trustworthiness. . . . Christianity is the religion of truth; it is founded on truth, absolute and perfect truth."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, German poet and philosopher: "It is a belief in the Bible, the fruit of deep meditation, which has served me as the guide of my moral and literary life."

Rudolf Virchow, German scientist: "The Bible is God's Word.... Evolution is all nonsense."

Jean Jaques Rousseau, French philosopher: "Peruse the works of our philosophers; with all their pomp of diction, how mean, how contemptible are they, compared with the Scriptures! Is it possible that a book at once so simple and sublime should be merely the work of man? The

Jewish authors were incapable of the diction, and strangers to the morality contained in the Gospel, the marks of whose truths are so striking and inimitable that the inventor would be a more astonishing character than the hero."

Matthew Arnold, English poet and essayist: "To the Bible men will return, because they cannot do without it; the true God is and must be preeminently the God of the Bible, the Eternal, who makes for righteousness, from whom Jesus Christ came forth, and whose spirit governs the course of humanity."

John Ruskin, English writer: "Everything that I have written, every greatness that has been in any thought of mine, whatever I have done in my life has been simply due to the fact that when I was a child my mother daily read with me a part of the Bible and daily made me learn a part of it by heart."

John Wanamaker, American merchant: "I cannot too greatly emphasize the importance and value of Bible study -- more important than ever before in these days of uncertainties, when men and women are apt to decide questions from the standpoint of expediency rather than on the eternal principles laid down by God himself."

Frederick William Farrar, English clergyman and author: "Nor has the widest learning and acutest ingenuity of skepticism ever pointed to one complete and demonstrable error of fact or doctrine in the Old or New Testament."

Sir Walter Scott, British novelist and poet -- it is related that about a week before his death he said to his son-in-law, Lockhart: "Read to me from the Book!" and when Lockhart asked him from what book, he said, "Need you ask? There is but one."

Daniel Webster, American statesman: "I have read the Bible through many times, and now make it a practice to read it through once every year. ... A great jurist must go to school to the Book; lying back of Blackstone and the Habeas Corpus Act and the Roman Institutes are the statutes of the Mosaic Code."

Giuseppe Garibaldi, Italian patriot: "The best of allies you can procure for us is the Bible, which will bring us the reality of Freedom. This is the cannon that will make Italy free."

Woodrow Wilson, twenty-eighth president: "When you have read the Bible, you will know it is the Word of God, because you will have found it the key to your own heart, your own happiness, and your own duty."

Melvin G. Kyle, clergyman and Egyptologist: "There has never been found anything that discredits statements of facts in the Bible."

William Ewart Gladstone, English Prime-minister: "I have spent seventy years of my life studying the Book to satisfy my heart; it is the Word of God. I bank my life on the statement that I believe this Book to be the solid rock of Holy Scripture. All the wonders of Greek civilization were not as wonderful as the single book of Psalms."

THE TESTIMONY OF REASON

This commendatory verdict of notable men is most assuring. But if the Bible be the Word of God it is its own best witness. Let us examine it therefore with our own intellect. We are not here concerned with the minutiae of historical and archaeological details so wonderfully corroborative of the Scripture records and which are accessible to all in libraries. We shall restrict ourselves to a consideration of four major facts revealed in the volume itself, to account for which, we believe, requires the admission of super-human activity.

1. Opening the Bible's pages we find it to be not one but sixty-six separate books, one of which consists itself of one hundred and fifty separate compositions. These treatises come from the hands of at least thirty distinct writers of every sort of temperament, of every degree of endowment, of every time of life, of every grade of attainment, of every condition in the social scale, from shepherd to king. The time of their labors stretches over a period of some fifteen hundred years, from Egypt's hoary past to Rome's splendor under Augustus, and embraces specimens of nearly every kind of writing known among men: histories, codes of law, ethical maxims, philosophical treatises, discourses, dramas, songs, hymns, epics, biographies, letters both official and personal, prophecies-all gathered here in one volume. Confined for ages to a rough, isolated corner of the globe, in the keeping of a peculiar tribe of men, it suddenly bursts all boundaries and deluges the world. In the face of stinging contempt and blood-thirsty cruelty, opposing ancient prejudices, habits, customs, and religions, it sweeps them away like so many straws. Human society in every stage of development, under every form of administration, and composed of every race of men, yields itself to it. It is difficult to conceive the immense revolution in the lives of men which it wrought. And still does the Bible stand in all the world exercising its immense power in the restraining of evil passions, and in the advancement of all that is good and true and elevating. Where does this Book get its influence? Does not this remarkable formulation of diverse writings over such a span of time, from so many unrelated sources, and with such influence, indicate the supernatural? ,

2. As we observe the internal character of the volume, a most striking unity is found to pervade the whole despite its diverse parts. They are so linked together that the absence of any one book would introduce confusion and disorder. The same doctrine running like a golden thread from beginning to end, strings book after book upon itself like so many pearls. Each book adds something to what the others proclaim, but the development is orderly and progressive. An unbroken historical continuity pervades the whole. The Old Testament ends with Malachi pointing through the silent ages to a path seen in the Gospels. The New Testament fits on to the Old so exactly that it is difficult to doubt they were consciously planned each for its place. The gradual framing of the Bible in all the marvelous harmony of its inner relations, indicates design kept constantly before an Intelligent Mind for fifteen hundred years, and so excludes human supervision.

3. Another outstanding fact is the Bible's numerous prophetic statements. Prophecy is a continual miracle set in the midst of the Bible as sure proof to all ages that it comes from God. Space would fail for an enumeration of the multitude of minute details of predictions which have already been fulfilled, and which announced the fall of flourishing cities, the ruin of mighty empires, the coming of the Messiah and the subsequent fate of the Jewish race -- the latter an everliving witness to the truth of the predicted judgments of long ago. The remarkable events of our own day -- the worldwide distress of nations, the amazing increase in knowledge, the phenomenal means of transportation, the extreme emphasis on the material rather than the spiritual in daily life, the lack of vitality in the religious professions of the vast majority and their instructors, and the restoration of the Jews to their homeland -- all fulfillments of prophecies

recorded thousands of years ago -- are perfect demonstrations that the Book which contains such predictive information is indeed divine. So admirably has this sort of evidence been contrived by the wisdom of God, that in proportion as the lapse of ages seems in men's minds to weaken the argument derived from the miracles recorded in the Scriptures, the unfolding of fulfilled prophecy, by that very lapse, serves only to strengthen the argument for the supernatural origin of the Bible.

4. The fourth fact bearing on the inspiration of the Bible and one of greatest weight is, that amid all the diversity of its subject matter, the whole Book is taken up in the *portrayal of one person*. On its first page he comes for a moment before our astonished eyes; on the last he lingers still before our adoring gaze. From that word in Genesis which describes him as the "Seed of the woman" and at the same time her Deliverer -- through book after book, in Levitical sacrifices, in the lives and experiences of men of faith, in the intensely emotional Psalms, in the eloquence of Prophets, in the records of his disciples -- to the end, where he is discovered on the throne and judging all nations, the one consistent but gradually developed portraiture grows before our eyes. Are we to believe that the astoundingly successful creation and dramatization of such a character through the ages is but a human fiction? This would demand for its author something more than has yet been seen in man. Rather are we drawn irresistibly to the conviction that such a portraiture revealed from Genesis to Revelation is undeniable evidence that the Bible owes its origin to a Mind able to superintend its composition for fifteen hundred years with a genius unexampled among men.

THE TESTIMONY OF OUR HEARTS

Lastly we consider the Bible in its appeal to our hearts. Do we find in it the truths which answer our questions, which satisfy the hunger of our spirits? We open its pages, and confusion becomes order and darkness light. It takes us straight into God's very presence, and gives its message there by an authority which is his and his alone. It satisfies every longing of our natures, it irradiates with clear and certain light the whole duration of our existence, both the present life and the future beyond it. It tells us all we need to know and in it we find peace and rest. It supplies our practical wants, alleviates our sorrows, remedies our ruin, and throws light upon our darkness. It is a book that is adapted to all the different divisions into which society is divided by rank, and birth, and wealth, and fashion. It fills the heart with happiness amid the sanctities of our Christian homes, and comforts the wanderer in a strange land. It ennobles life and tranquillizes death, and gives to man the hope of glory and eternal life. Within its compass is milk for babes and strong meat for men -- plain truths, simple enough for the loving comprehension of a beginner in faith, and mysteries high and deep enough to overtask the powers of an archangel. Its great truths are universal truths; truths capable of reaching and making entrance into and taking a strong hold upon the heart of man as man, and of all men equally, independent of their race, affinities, or intellectual advancement. It is a book which knows us, puts our thoughts into words, fills up our need, and teaches us the prayers which God can answer. It dries our tears, rejoices our hearts, and sets our feet upon the pathway that leads to God. It is in its sanctifying thought, its agreement with the character of God, and its living energy and ability to deal with all our needs and hopes that we recognize its authority to speak as the Revelation from God. All the evidence, both of contents and results, binds us to stand upon the "impregnable rock" of Holy Scripture. And sealing its testimony are the words of Him who is Himself the Truth

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

- *W. J. Siekman*

(The subject of the third article in this series will be: "The First Man, Adam.")

The Salt of the Earth

*"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?"
- Matthew 5:13.*

IN THESE days of growing moral corruption and increasing violence in human society, the question might arise in the minds of some, Why this excess of immorality, indecency, and destructiveness? As on every other question occupying the mind, the answer is in the Word of God did we but listen to its message.

In Matthew 5:13, Jesus, speaking to his disciples, said, "Ye are the salt of the earth." This is an excerpt from what is familiarly referred to as The Sermon on the Mount, which was a very special sermon spoken to a very special people, as we read: "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth, and taught them." These teachings were not given to the multitude; and the reason for not doing so may be understood when we consider the searching truths proclaimed -- truths which could be relevant only to those who could see that life does not consist of outward conduct, but has to do with "the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). It has been many times said that these teachings of Jesus are beautifully idealistic, but that they just do not fit this world. Well, Jesus never said they did. How could they when they are diametrically opposed to the customs, practices, and interests of this present world society, which is not according to divine law in its origin and operation?

In Matthew 5:3-12 Jesus, in what are called The Beatitudes, sets forth the qualities of life that not only are approved of God, but also are a blessing to such ones who possess them. We note that each of first eight beatitudes are spoken as though of general application, "Blessed are they," but in verse 11 Jesus changes the pronoun and addresses himself particularly to the disciples: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." What Jesus is saying to these, his followers, is that the manifestation of these godly qualities would be a witness against the corruption of such segments of society with which they would come into contact, and would arouse opposition and reviling; but when this became their lot, even this would be a blessedness. Those whose inner life and conduct are delineated in the beatitudes are "the salt of the earth."

SALT

We mostly think of salt as a seasoner to give pungency to the taste of food; but not so as Jesus used the symbol. In the semi-tropical climate of Judea and Galilee, salt was used as a preservative to retard spoilation. Refrigeration, of course, was unknown. When food was to be kept for future consumption it was salted and dried, much the same as is done with some foods in our day. Thus salt, as used symbolically by Jesus, denoted the influence which true discipleship would have -- it would retard the spread of corruption.

LEAVEN AND HONEY

In Leviticus 2:13 we read, "With all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt." Perhaps we might see the lesson in this by considering that which must not be burnt on the altar, neither leaven nor honey. Invariably in Scripture leaven is used as a symbol of that which is corrupt in itself and corrupting in its influence. As the Apostle wrote in 1 Corinthians 5:8: "Let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness." A chemist's definition of leaven is that it is a corruption or spoilation, the atoms of which are continually in motion. A fit type of sin, as Paul writes in Romans 7:5: "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." Yes, indeed, sin and all evil is continually in motion, and works death! So leaven, being a symbol of evil in its continual spread, was excluded from the altar of burnt sacrifice. We note, too, that honey, which itself causes fermentation, was likewise forbidden to be burnt on the altar.

The exclusion of these two ingredients, leaven and honey, to our understanding, conveys the idea that the sweetness of human nature, as well as the evils of that nature, are alike unacceptable to God. The truth of this may be seen in the violent opposition set in motion against the preaching of the Gospel. In Acts 13:50: "The Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts." And in Acts 17:5 we read: "The Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, ... and set all the city on an uproar." Alas, it is true, the sweetness of fallen human nature is as corruptible and opposed to the true doctrine of Christ as the more vile of the species! It matters not to Satan, the Opposer, whether his instruments are "the devout and honorable women" or "certain lewd fellows of the baser sort." All, alike, are corrupt and corrupting.

THOU SHALT OFFER SALT

So this brings us to the instruction of Leviticus 2:13: "With all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt." Leaven was forbidden to be put on the altar, while salt was commanded to be an accompaniment of every sacrifice. What is indicated by this use of salt? Seemingly, because of its preserving quality it was a fit emblem of sincerity; and in connection with the sacrifice on the altar would indicate that the offering was made with wholehearted devotion, with no reservation, no hypocrisy. We see this, too, in Numbers 18:19: "All the heave offerings of the holy things . . . have I given to thee [Aaron], and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: it is a covenant of salt." That is, an incorruptible covenant given in sincerity with no reservations. This is seen, also, in the promise which was made to David that one of his descendants would sit upon his throne forever. Although it is not recorded in 2 Samuel 7:8-16 that an oath was given to David at the time of the promise, yet we do get this information in Psalm 89:3, 4, and 35, 36: "Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me." By adding his oath, God made this promise an incorruptible covenant. This is seen in 2 Chronicles 13:5 where David's great grandson Abijah, in remonstrating with Jeroboam and his host, exclaimed: "Ought ye not to know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom to David for ever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt?"

Although the emblem of salt is not mentioned in connection with the promise to Abraham, we do read in Hebrews 6:13-18 that "when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself." This, the oath added to the promise, was the salt that made the promise immutable, incorruptible, absolutely sure of fulfillment, inasmuch as it was given by the incorruptible God, who cannot lie.

SALT AS AN ANTISEPTIC

Salt as an antiseptic bites and frets in its action, and when applied to an open wound, stings. Thus it is an emblem of the Word of God as it is brought to bear on an aroused conscience. This was manifest in Felix, for when Paul speaking to him "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," Felix trembled. Why? Because the holy spirit was in the words of Paul convicting of sin and righteousness and judgment as foretold by Jesus (John 16:711). Salt was at work, fretting the conscience, bringing conviction; but a conviction, which in this case, was deferred. "Go thy way for this time; when I have a more convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25). And when Paul, by invitation, defended his Gospel before Agrippa (Acts 26:22-28), the king exclaimed: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Even though we might prefer another rendering of that exclamation, "Dost thou persuade me," the fact is the same: in neither of these cases was Paul seeking principally to "persuade," only to proclaim and explain the Gospel which he was commissioned to bear. It was the action of the spirit of God as it came to grips with the conscience that brought forth the exclamations of both Felix and Agrippa. The disciple is salt as the spirit of sincerity is in his testimony. Where this is lacking, there is no bite, no power, no convicting.

OTHER USAGES OF THE SYMBOL

A very puzzling parabolic statement of Jesus is found in Mark 9:49, 50: "For every one shall be salted with fire, . . . Have salt in yourselves." This was said following his warning against offenses: "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off"; "if thy foot offend thee, cut it off"; "if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out" for it is better to enter into the kingdom of God maimed than to suffer the final consequences of continued offenses, "to be cast into Gehenna" -- destruction. It is not God's pleasure "that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). And to this end God will continually work to bring about a change in the disposition of a disciple, to produce salt in his character, though it be by fire.

But, some will ask, Did we ever hear of fire producing salt? No. Then what did Jesus mean by this enigmatic statement of Mark 9:50? To answer this we quote, in part, 1 Peter 1:6, 7: "Though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." And again, 1 Peter 4:12, 13: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." Trying experiences come, oftentimes known only to the individual, as the spirit of God wrestles for submission and obedience. As Paul exhorts in Philippians 2:12, 13: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." And Peter's benediction in his first epistle [1 Pet. 5:10] is: "The God of all grace, who has called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." That is, make you incorruptible, and an influence against corruption.

Another instance of salt being used symbolically is in Colossians 4:6: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt." That is, let your ordinary manner and tone of speech be unctious, kind, gentle, considerate, but never insipid, flat, lifeless. Speech should be forthright, stimulating, sounding conviction; and, at times, if necessary, a bit acrid, even as we see in the example of Jesus and Paul. What wisdom we need for this!

SALT THAT HAS LOST ITS SAVOR

As one has remarked in reference to salt that has lost its savor, "It is no longer salt." That is it! It has lost its preserving qualities; it no longer has tang, bite. It is no longer an antiseptic. "It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men" (Matt. 5:13). How near to this condition was the church at Sardis: "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead" (Rev. 3:1). A dead church can bear no witness to a living Lord. The exhortation to this church is very pointed: "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect [fully performed, Diaglott]" (Rev. 3:2). What were the works that were not well performed? Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in Christ's name among all nations - Luke 24:47, 48; Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19, 20.

The example of Lot, as recorded in Genesis 19, is very revealing. Seemingly, as Peter writes, 2 Peter 2:7, 8, Lot was a just person. Even though living in Sodom he in no sense practiced any manner of unrighteousness prevalent in that city. But, "that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed [tormented] his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds." Even though he surely disapproved of their conduct, he tormented his soul by staying there. Why did he not leave? The answer is obvious. He had become integrated with Sodom, even to becoming one of the recognized judges in the city: "Lot sat in the gate of the city," the place where judgments were determined (Gen. 19:1, 17, 18). He had borne no oral testimony against the awful ungodliness of the Sodomites, so that to his sons-in-law "he seemed as one who mocked" when he conveyed to them the angels' warning that the city was to be destroyed because of its wickedness. Unfaithfulness cannot testify; its testimony is pointless, unconvincing, valueless, lacking in power; -- "good for nothing."

It is recorded in Numbers 25:10-13 that the Levitical priests had been given special dispensation because of the zeal of Phinchas for Jehovah; but through the centuries the priesthood kept neither faith nor practice as the Lord's ministers, so that "the covenant with Levi" could not be honored by their God (Mal. 2:5-10). "My covenant was with Levi . . . but ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble ... therefore have I also made you contemptible." By the very elevated position which they held before the people, their failure in that position was the reason for their being held in contempt. And so it is in the ministry today. Utter worldlings and outright skeptics and, in a few cases, some with atheistic tendencies, are occupying the position of spokesmen for Christ. Their worldly lives and pointless ministry not only stultify the Word of God, but bring Christianity into contempt. No wonder that for decades the reason advanced for not embracing discipleship has been, "The church is full of hypocrites." No salt, no testimony, no conviction.

LAODICEA

But, perhaps, we are more familiar with the message to the church at Laodicea; they who said, "[We] are rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," and knew not that, in the Lord's estimation, they were "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." They were lukewarm as to presenting the true Gospel message of eternal redemption in Christ Jesus; of "a ransom for all"; "of eternal judgment"; and the real meaning of the great doctrine of the Resurrection. And because of this indifference the warning is: "I will spue thee out of my mouth" - Rev. 3:16, 17.

In the beginning of the Church age, the fellowship of the disciples was centered in the risen Christ himself. He was the bond that united them as one. How quickly the center changed. To some, as in Corinth, the rallying cry became: "I am of Paul; and I am of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of

Christ" (1 Cor. 1:12). To others it was the keeping of some of the ordinances of the law (Col. 2:16). Even while the Apostles were still present, apostasy from Christ had set in. Antichrists flourished, even to denying that Jesus is the Christ (1 John 2:18-22). But there was this saving feature: there was a sharp cleavage between those who were Christ's and those who were not. How different is the condition seen in the visible church today; how insidious the doctrines and aims of ecumenism. Today one can be in good standing in many professedly Christian churches without any faith in Christ whatsoever. Recently the writer heard a man on a TV program, an ordained minister of the gospel and currently pastor of a congregation, who had written a book against the idea of God and claiming that the Bible was merely the writings of men without inspiration; and yet parading under the title of Reverend! No wonder we have the picture of Christ standing at the door of his professed church knocking for admittance!

To see the significance of this portrayal we relate a story told of one of the several paintings of this scene. A friend of the artist, being allowed to view the picture before it was unveiled to the public, in criticism remarked: "You have forgotten something. You have no latch on the door." "Ah," replied the artist, "this door opens only from the inside." And so it is. Jesus has been shut out of his visible professing church. He shouldn't have to knock for admittance. He should be the center of our fellowship, and the central theme of our testimony. As he himself said, in another connection: "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). Apart from Christ all testimony is insipid and flat, lacking in convincing power -- saltless.

A PREDICTION

In closing, we quote Paul's prediction of the perilous times that were to come in the last days of the age, 2 Timothy 3:1-5, and note that this is not referring to the world but to Christendom, the ultimate fruit of apostasy: "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." The days here depicted are already coming on this generation; there is, along with the apostasy, "a form of godliness." It is still considered good form to profess a degree of faith, even though there is no submission to it as a power in the life. When even the leaders in the professing church assent to the immoral permissiveness of the day, where is the bulwark to hold back the encroaching tide of atheism, and godless wickedness, and violence? "The salt that has lost its savor is fit for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men."

- *F. A. Essler*

"Even at the Doors"

*"What will be the sign of thy presence, and of the consummation of the age?"-Matthew 24:3 (Diaglott).
"When ye shall see all these things, know that he is near."-Matthew 24:33 (margin).*

IN THE previous installment of this series (March-April 1973 *Herald*), on page 30, in our discussion of 2 Thessalonians 2:2 we noted first, that instead of "Day of Christ" the phrase in this verse should read "Day of the Lord, or preferably, "Day of Jehovah."

In the second place, we observed that, when the Apostle had been with them, he had told them, not once, but frequently, that certain developments must precede the coming of the Day of Jehovah. - 2 Thess. 2:5.

A third point noted was that those certain developments are referred to in the context. According to 2 Thess. 2:3, one of them was "the falling away" or "the apostasy," as the word *apostasia* is translated.

In regard to this word *apostasia* the question had been raised as to whether "departure" was a possible rendering. We said that it was, and promised, in a footnote on page 30, to discuss . this possible rendering further. This we plan to do in the following paragraphs.

That "departure" is a possible rendering of the Greek word *apostasia* is indicated, in the Amplified Bible, in a footnote to 2 Thessalonians 2:3. The complete footnote there reads:

"A possible rendering of *apostasia* is 'departure [of the church].'"

The careful student will note that, in this footnote, the words "of the church" are in brackets, indicating that those three words are *"words or comments not actually expressed in the immediate original text."*

It is also worthy of note that, while admitting "departure" to be "a possible rendering," the Committee of Scholars responsible for the translation given in the Amplified Bible, *did not themselves adopt it*, but used the word apostasy, in their translation of verse 3, as the following quotation shows:

"Let no man deceive or beguile you in any way, for that day will not come, except the apostasy comes first - that is, unless the [predicted] great falling away of those who have professed to be Christians has come - and the man of lawlessness (sin) is revealed, who is the son of doom (of perdition) . . . Daniel 7:25. . . ."

Kenneth S. Wuest, late Professor of New Testament Greek at the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, *does* adopt the word "departure" in his *Expanded Translation of the Greek New Testament*. His translation of 2 Thessalonians 2:3 reads:

"Do not begin to allow anyone to lead you astray in any way, because that day shall not come except the aforementioned departure [of the Church to heaven] comes first."

Once again, the careful student will note that the words "of the Church to heaven" are in brackets, Professor Wuest, by the use of brackets, indicating that the five words contained therein *constitute interpretative material*.

Mr. Wuest tells us, in his "Preface to Paul's Second Letter to the Thessalonians" that the change from the A. V. "falling away" to the word "departure" preferred in his *Expanded Translation*, "is a very important and serious change and demands from this translator [that is, from himself] a detailed explanation." This explanation he proceeds to present in his next several paragraphs. The points he seeks to establish there, may be summarized as follows:

- 1) The word apostasia means departure. Whether the departure is a departure of men from the true faith, or a departure of the Church to heaven, is not indicated in the word apostasia, but must be determined from the context.
- 2) The translators of the A. V. made the mistake of failing to take into consideration the definite article before the word apostasia. (Instead of the letter "a" they should have used the word "the.")
- 3) Wherever the Greek article is used, it points to a *previous* context. Failure on the part of the A.V. translators (to recognize the Greek article) led them to make a further mistake, namely, to look for guidance (as to the meaning of the word apostasia) to a *subsequent* context, which they found in 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12, a passage which, admittedly, speaks of an apostasy from the faith.

They should have looked to a *previous* context, namely, the departure of the Church, mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17.

In examining Professor Wuest's three points, as summarized above, we may say at once that we know of no scholar who would dispute the accuracy of his first and second points.

In regard to his third point: Whether the error (of translating "a" instead of "the" before apostasia) on the part of the translators of the A. V. led them to look to a subsequent context for guidance, we have no means of ascertaining. However, we do know that their error has been corrected by numerous later translations; by all of them, in fact, that we have had opportunity to examine. Among these may be mentioned the English Revised Version (1881) and the American Standard Version (1901). The translators of *these* versions were not led to look to a *subsequent* context for guidance as to the meaning of the word apostasia, yet their understanding of that word, as shown in their translations, is the same as that given in the A. V.

Moreover, it is clear that the Committee of Scholars responsible for the translation given in the Amplified Bible were not led to a *subsequent* context for guidance either. Not only were they, themselves, aware that they should look to a *previous* context, but they made their readers aware of this also. They did so in two ways:

- 1) By supplying the word "predicted," in their translation; and
- 2) By going back to the prediction they had in mind. This took them back much further than 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; further back, even, than the time mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2:5, (the time when the Apostle had been with them). They went back to the Old Testament, to the prediction of the prophet Daniel, (Dan. 7:25), as they indicate in the scriptures cited at the close of their translation, *as we saw in the quotation given in an earlier paragraph*.

In closing this discussion, we submit a few definitions of *apostasia* from the works of recognized scholars. It will be noted that while they might admit "departure" as a "possible rendering," that word has not been included in their definitions by any of them.

1) *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon* (page 67).

A falling away, defection, apostasy. In the Bible, namely, from the true religion. Acts 21:21; 2 Thess. 2:3.

2) *Vine's Expository Dictionary* (page 73).

A defection, revolt, apostasy. Is used in the New Testament of religious apostasy.

In Acts 21:21 it is translated "to forsake"; *literally*: thou teachest *apostasy* from Moses.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:3 "the falling away" signifies apostasy from the faith.

3) *Bullinger's Lexicon and Concordance* (page 274).

The apostasy, namely, the one foretold by him, 2 Thessalonians 2:5, and by our Lord, Matthew 24:10-12.

- P. L. Read

Meditations

"I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living." - Psalm 27:13.

DAVID, King of Israel, when surrounded by enemies and false witnesses, was of a different frame of mind from that of him who wrote "To look for divine support seems to me a counsel of despair." Philosophers of that school believe only in what they see. They have little to live by and less to die by. Having no faith they are as travelers, stumbling over a rough path through a dark forest, having no destination. What a lot and what a life is that which has no discoverable purpose! Like mariners who observe neither charts nor stars, they are bound to end in the shoals of peevish disappointment or on the rocks of human perversity.

The Bible, through its many contributions, is the one certain testimony to the truth of experience. It is a record of divine deliverance from tight situations, where all would have been lost but for the movement of invisible powers in many visible ways. There is little credit in believing only what the senses tell, yet even these reveal Intelligent Power at work in the beauty and strength of the earth, in its rich provisions for its creatures and the adaptability of one to the other. To reach out beyond the realm of the seen to the unseen, to grasp by faith the spiritual forces by which the visible is governed, is not only possible, but the privilege of human intelligence.

Since the advent of man upon the earth there have been men and women who have put their trust in God rather than in their human contemporaries. These have constituted a "household of faith" who have endured the ups and downs of life with cheerful and patient fortitude, believing in the promises of God with unwavering hope. Following his leadings, content to walk toward a confidently expected end, their faith in the goodness and power of God has been a light in the world. The salt of their integrity has preserved that world from too swift corruption by its own evils; maintained it in partial sanity from its own strong delusions.

With the counsel of God to guide them, and the power of God to guard them, such people have wisdom and love for living, comfort and courage for all the hard places of pain, loneliness, and death. The arm of flesh may fail, but the Everlasting Arms of God remain their strength.

As the sun continues to pour down its flood of light and energy, so does God send out his life-sustaining powers to all men everywhere. When one's mind links itself by faith to the "Power House" of the universe, there begins an experience unknown to the five natural senses.

The Bible contains the testimony of men and women linked with God, who have not fainted in adversity, who have mounted on the wings of enthusiasm, who have run with vigor life's rigorous race, who have walked at eventide without weariness. The poet who wrote "Without thee I cannot live . . . without thee I dare not die," declared not a counsel of despair but a creed of confidence, of trust in the power and love of a Creator who cannot and will not forsake any one who has sought shelter and repose in him - the Eternal God.

- Selected

Entered Into Rest

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