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Weeping All Night

"Keeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." - Psalm 30:5

NO OTHER book treats the matter of human woe and sorrow in the wise, tender, sympathetic, helpful manner of the Bible. It assures us that however cold, heartless and disappointing the world may be and our friends may be, or those from whom we may have expected better things, we have, nevertheless, a God of sympathy -- a God of love. No heathen religion knows anything of such a God. With them God's attributes are merely more or less of ferocity. Their gods are to be placated and worshiped *from fear* of what they otherwise would do to their creatures. The God of the Bible assures us of his love, his sympathy, in all of our distresses -- his interest in our affairs and his provision for the ultimate welfare of all those who will come into the attitude of loving righteousness and hating iniquity -- the only proper attitude of heart, the only one which he can approve and bless with everlasting life.

A NIGHT OF SORROW AND DEATH

The Scriptures point out to us what we recognize to be the truth--that the world has been under a pall and blight and curse of death for six thousand years. Appropriately our text describes this period as a dark time of hard, lighting experiences, a night of weeping -- of sorrow. In harmony with this figure it declares that "darkness covers the [civilized] earth and gross darkness the people."

Not alone does this condition affect those who are in alienation from God through ignorance and superstition and the power of sin, but it affects also those who have accepted the grace of God, who have turned their backs upon sin and who are seeking to walk in the narrow way, in the footsteps of Jesus. Well does the Apostle say, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our

Body" -- the Body of which Jesus is the Head or Chief and we are symbolical members or an under-priesthood (Rom. 8:22, 23).

There is a difference, however, between the Church and the world in this groaning, as suggested by the Apostle's words. The world groans aloud without alleviation, and even its waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God is a waiting in ignorance; for, being out of touch with the Eternal One, they know not of his gracious purposes and arrangements -- for these are kept secret from all except his sanctified ones. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear [reverence] him; and he will show them his Covenant" (Ps. 25:14). These who possess the secret of the Lord "sorrow not as others who have no hope" (1 Thess. 4:13). They "groan inwardly" and wait for the glorification of themselves and all the brethren, members of the symbolical Body of Christ, by participation in the First Resurrection. The hopes of these must be realized first, before the blessing can come to the "groaning creation" in general. The latter are waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God; namely, the Church in glory.

A LIGHT IN A DARK PLACE

The Bible represents itself as being the candle of the Lord, the lamp of Divine Truth and enlightenment. But it tells us that its light is not for the world -either now or at any time future. Its light is only for those who by faith and obedience unto consecration seek to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. They need the light. God provides it for them. These are represented by the Prophet as saying to the Lord, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path [footsteps]" (Ps. 119:105). This light evidently does not shine far into the future, but enough for each onward step as it becomes due.

St. Peter amplifies the same thought. After telling us of the assurance which he himself and his associates had upon the Mount of Transfiguration when they beheld "*the vision*" (Matt. 17:1-9) of the Lord miraculously transformed and with him Moses and Elijah and heard the voice from heaven, it was forceful to their minds as teaching the coming of our Lord in glory, in due time. Nevertheless, says the Apostle, honoring the Bible above any vision, "We have a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise" (2 Pet. 1:19), indicating that the morning is at hand and that the Sun of Righteousness will soon fulfill its mission of blessing all the families of the earth.

BUT WHY IS THIS THUS?

Why does God permit the reign of sin and death, injustice, unrighteousness, sorrow, trouble, pain, headaches, heartaches, etc.? Why does he not deal with humanity graciously, kindly, lovingly, as a Father -as he deals with the angelic sons of God? Is it just or loving on the part of our Creator to bring forth millions of his creatures under these admittedly unfavorable conditions-beset by weaknesses and sinwardness from their birth and surrounded by others similarly weak, and beset by Satan and his minions -- wicked spirits? Is it just that we should thus be in an unequal fight subjected to weaknesses and dying and imperfect conditions on account of the sin of our first parents and then, on the same account, be in danger of an eternity of torture with nine hundred and ninety-nine chances out of a thousand against us?

The inheritance of weaknesses, blemishes, sorrows, pain, and trouble, to which we were born, is quite sufficient and, according to the Scriptures, these are all part of death, and all reach their culmination in death, which is the *real penalty* for sin prescribed by our Creator. The fact that these blemishes still continue with the race proves that their sins are not yet blotted out, and to this agree the Scriptures which point us to the oncoming glorious day of blessing a thousand years

long, the Millennium, in which Divine blessing will be bestowed upon every member of Adam's race. The merit of Christ's sacrifice, the ransom-price for sinners which he laid down, will by that time be made available "for the sins of the whole world."

The merit of that sacrifice has already been applied to the Church -- "The household of faith" -- since Pentecost. It has brought to this class very special privileges, though very different ones from those it will bring to the world during the Millennium. The willing and obedient of the world will then get *restitution* gradually (Acts 3:20), back to human perfection and a worldwide Edenic home. The blessing upon the Church is different. The promise now made to those who can and will walk by faith and not by sight is a heavenly one. They are to have a heavenly or spiritual reward and in their resurrection become partakers of the divine nature and have no share thereafter in human nature. The conditions of the present time are severe, proportionately to the greatness and grandeur of their heavenly calling. The terms of acceptance to the divine nature include not only faith and love, but a self-sacrificing will. These sacrifice their earthly restitution rights and privileges for the privilege of suffering with Christ, that they may also reign with him in his Millennial Kingdom.

LEARNING BY SUFFERING

The same thought is elsewhere expressed. Only those who hear his voice and obey him as the Teacher sent of God will be successful in their endeavor to become members of the "Royal Priesthood," now being selected from the world. Only those who, during the Millennial Age, will hear and obey will there receive this great blessing of eternal salvation -- eternal life under Divine favor, free from the curse. The reward to the world in the close of the Millennium and the reward to the Church in the close of this Gospel Age will each be eternal salvation; but the Church's reward will include eternal glory, heavenly glory, and joint-heirship with the Redeemer himself in his great work of administering God's blessings to the world of mankind, as Mediator of the New Covenant between God and men -- the world.

It seemed wise to our Heavenly Father that our Lord Jesus should learn obedience through sufferings and be tested in respect to his willingness to endure suffering for righteousness' sake. How appropriate it is that the same Father should make similar arrangements for all of the Church, whom he will receive from among the race of Adam to be members of the Royal Priesthood under Jesus, the High Priest of our order. We see a necessity for this, not only as respects our own testings and a thorough proof of our own heart-loyalty to the Lord, but additionally we see a wisdom on God's part in thus preparing a priesthood of the future. The term priest as recognized among the Jews was not merely one who offered sacrifices, although every priest was of necessity a sacrificer. The special mission of the priestly tribe among the other tribes was that of instructing, helping, healing, teaching. And so God is preparing a Royal Priesthood for the Millennial Age to bless, to heal, to teach, to uplift all the willing and obedient.

The royalty of the priesthood signifies that it will no longer be a sacrificing class, for all sacrificing will be at an end. It will be a glorious class, royal, of the Divine nature, and representatives with our Lord Jesus of the Divine power. As priests who will have to do with judging and chastening, healing, and helping humanity, how much sympathy do we suppose that these Royal Priests should have? Are they not to be on the Divine plane of glory, "members of the Body" of Messiah, the great kingly priest after the order of Melchizedek? And of him has not the Apostle written that he must be a faithful and merciful High Priest, able also to sympathize with the people in their infirmities? Does he not declare that it was for this reason that our Lord was touched with a feeling for humanity's infirmities? And is it not in perfect keeping with this that all those accepted as "members of his Body" should have such experiences in this sacrificing time as

would demonstrate their loyalty to the Lord and guarantee their deep sympathetic interest in the world, then committed to their care. To such will be committed the work of human *restitution*, uplift out of sin and death conditions -- mental, moral, and physical.

THE MORNING OF JOY

How glad we should be that our Heavenly Father's sympathy for us will provide "a morning of joy" to be ushered in, in his "due time!" Additionally he sympathizes with us to the extent that he has given us in advance a message and Revelation and explanation to comfort us, to sustain us in the way! We have already seen that this Revelation is only for those who have the eyes of faith and the ears of faith at the present time. "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear." "He that hath an ear, let him hear."

We recognize the wisdom of God in withholding the secret of his plan from the world in general. We recognize that for the world to know the deep things of God at the present time would be injurious rather than helpful to them. It might possibly work an interference with the Divine Program. Nevertheless we are bound to sympathize with the poor groaning creation in its blindness and ignorance. The poor world knows not why it came into being. In an animal fashion, eating, drinking, etc., it seeks to use the opportunities of present life and after a few short years full of trouble, it goes down into the tomb, ignorant of the purposes of its creation, and usually considerably appalled by fear respecting the future beyond the portals of death.

How we may rejoice in spirit as we perceive the length and breadth and height and depth of the Divine Program for the future and the blessings which it will bring to this "groaning creation." How we long for the time to come when the Church shall be made ready through the sufferings of this present time for the glories of the future -of the Kingdom! No wonder the Apostle declares, "He that hath this hope in him [lots] himself even as he [the Lord] is pure (1 John 3:3). He is our exemplar, our pattern. We seek to copy him. Although we cannot hope to be like him in the flesh, we can be like him in the spirit of our minds and thus be of the character-likeness which the Father will be pleased to honor with a share in the "First Resurrection." By that glorious "change" we shall be made like him actually and see him as he is and share his glory.

The morning of joy, the Millennial Morning, of course, cannot be ushered in until the rising of the Sun of Righteousness. Its beams of grace and Truth will flood the earth with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God to such a degree that it will drive out, expel, all ignorance, superstition and sin, which have worked such havoc in our race.

But what is this Sun of Righteousness? Whence comes it? The Bible answers the question by telling us that it symbolically represents the Lord himself and the elect Church of this Gospel Age. The Sun of Righteousness is a synonym for the Seed of Abraham, of whom it is written, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The Mystery hidden for a time from many is the fact that the Church is to share with her Lord in every feature of his glorious work, not only in suffering, but also in reigning. Thus we have St. Paul's assurance that the overcomers will be members of the Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:29). And we have our Lord's own words that this faithful class will be represented in the great Sun of Righteousness, the Great Messiah, the great Prophet, Priest, King, and Mediator between God and men (Matt. 13:43).

"WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS"

St. Peter, in viewing the prospects of the Church, inquires as to "what manner of persons we ought to be in all manner of holy living and godliness." He refers to us, who know that the present order of things is the reign of sin and death from which our Lord died to deliver us. What manner of persons ought *we* to be, who have heard the Lord's invitation to joint-heirship in his Kingdom, and who know

that we are now on trial to determine by our voluntary course our worthiness or unworthiness of that glorious position to which we have been called by God's favor! How paltry, how insignificant, do all the affairs of the world appear in comparison to this great *prize* set before us in the gospel!

And what should be our attitude toward the world, seeing from this inside standpoint of Divine Revelation the real condition of the world and God's sympathy for it? Its ignorance should make us very sympathetic, and very much disposed to lend a helping hand of relief in every possible manner. We should be ever ready to remove the scales of blindness from the mental vision of all who give indication of a desire for God - any who seem to be "feeling after God, if haply they might find him" (Acts 17:2 7). Only such will be ready for the Kingdom, fit for the Royal Priesthood, every member of which must be "touched with a feeling" for earth's infirmities.

- *C. T Russell*

"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).

IT HAS been well observed that "broadly speaking there are two methods of studying the Scriptures, one, the telescopic, following the wide sweep of the development of the purpose of God in history and prophecy. The other, the microscopic, occupied rather with the detail of that development, and particularly with the words in which it is expressed."

The telescopic, rather than the microscopic, has been, for the most part, the method followed in the previous installments of this series. In this, and in occasional subsequent installments, which it may be our privilege to submit, we expect to use, chiefly, the microscopic, although not to the exclusion of the telescopic, "for indeed the two are not rivals, each is good, and one the complement of the other."

PAROUSIA

In the November-December 1979 and the January-February 1980 issues of the *Herald* we discussed, at some length, the meaning of the Greek word *parousia*, noting that in every place in which it appears in the New Testament its meaning is *presence*. We endeavored to show that in none of its twenty-four occurrences does it mean *arrival* merely, but always includes what follows an arrival, namely, the presence of the individual who has arrived. As an able scholar has noted: "Always, wherever it occurs, *parousia* refers to a period of time more or less extended. The usual translation, *coming*, is misleading, because *coming* is more appropriate to other words, such as *erchomai* (Luke 12:45); *eleusis* (Acts 7:52); *eisodos* (Acts 13:23, 25); the difference being that whereas these words fix the attention on the journey to, and arrival at, a place, *parousia* fixes it on the stay which follows on the arrival there." - *W. E. Vine*

Below we submit, in question form, a few supplementary notes relating to this important subject.

Question No. 1

Is Christ's *parousia* identical with that which the Scriptures elsewhere speak of as the *Day of Christ*?

Answer:

The phrase *Day of Christ* (or variations of the phrase having similar import) appears in six Scriptures as follows:

<i>Day of Christ</i>	
Phil. 1:10; 2:16	2
<i>Day of Jesus Christ</i>	
Phil. 1:6	1
<i>Day of the Lord Jesus</i>	
1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14	2
<i>Day of our Lord Jesus Christ</i>	
1 Cor. 1:8	1
<i>Total</i>	<hr style="width: 100%; border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> 6

Note:

In the Authorized Version, the phrase *Day of Christ* also appears in 2 Thessalonians 2:2, but the translation there is erroneous. A preferred translation is given in the Revised Standard Version, namely, *Day of the Lord*. The New World Translation renders the phrase, *Day of Jehovah*.

DAY OF CHRIST HAS TO DO WITH CHRISTIANS ONLY

Examination of the six passages above-listed shows that they each refer to the same period; *and that this period has to do with Christians only* -- the remainder of mankind not being under consideration in any one of the six.

For example, in 1 Corinthians 5:5, the Apostle expresses his judgment as to the action which the church at Corinth should take in connection with a brother Christian who had lapsed into grievous sin, and who was continuing in an unrepentant condition. The Apostle's judgment was that the Church should "deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit [the newly begotten nature] may be saved in the *Day of the Lord Jesus*." This, doubtless, is the same "Day" to which he had referred earlier in this same Epistle; that day in which the work of Christians will be made manifest; the day in which, if a man's work abide, he shall receive a reward; the day in which, if any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he, himself, shall be saved; yet so as by fire. - 1 Corinthians 3:12-15.

In Philippians 1:10, another of our six "Day of Christ" Scriptures, the Apostle exhorts the brethren at Philippi to "be sincere and without offence till the *Day of Christ*."

In Philippians 1:6 he tells them that God, who has begun a good work in them, "will perform it until the *Day of Jesus Christ*."

Again, in 1 Corinthians 1:8, he assures the church at Corinth of the confirming work of God in them, so that they "may be blameless in the *Day of our Lord Jesus Christ*."

Looking forward to the same time, he says, in 2 Corinthians 1:14, "we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are our's, in the *Day of the Lord Jesus*."

PAROUSIA AND DAY OF CHRIST ARE INTERCHANGEABLE TERMS

Moreover, the language in each of our six Scriptures resembles that used elsewhere concerning the *parousia*. Compare, for example, 1 Thessalonians 2:19 and 1 John 2:28 with Philippians 2:16. In 1 Thessalonians 2:19 the Apostle Paul asks: "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at [in] his *parousia*?" In 1 John 2:28, another Apostle, anticipating the same time, says, "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at [in] his *parousia*." In other words, the Apostle John desires that both he, himself, and they who have been the objects of his care, may have boldness and not be ashamed, when they come before the judgment seat of Christ, in the period of his presence -- his *parousia*.

However, in Philippians 2:16, the last of our six "Day of Christ" Scriptures to be reviewed, we find the Apostle Paul expressing a similar desire (to that expressed by the Apostle John) in regard to the church at Philippi with whom he had labored, but, instead of calling it the *parousia*, he uses the other term, namely, the *Day of Christ*. He expresses his desire that they should be blameless

and harmless, and should shine as lights in the world, that he might "rejoice in the Day of Christ," that he had not run in vain, neither labored in vain.

In the light of the Scriptures considered foregoing, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the period referred to in some Scriptures as Christ's parousia is identical with the period referred to in other Scriptures as the Day of Christ.

HOW IS THE DAY OF CHRIST INTRODUCED?

Apparently the resurrection of the sleeping members of the church, followed by the "change" of those who "are alive and remain" (expounded by the Apostle in 1 Thess. 4:16, 17 and 1 Cor. 15:51-53), introduces the Day of Christ -- the period of his parousia. Then it is that "we," that is to say, the members of the church, shall all stand before the judgment seat of God (Rom. 14:10, RSV) which, since the Father "hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22), is the same as appearing before the judgment seat of Christ, "in order that each [member of the church] may then receive an award for his actions in this life, in accordance with what he has done [literally practiced], whether it be good or whether it be worthless." - 2 Corinthians 5:10, Weymouth.

To the same effect, note the instructive words of Brother Russell in his 1916 Foreword to S.S., Vol. 3:

"Messiah's Kingdom has various stages of inauguration. First, in his parousia the glorified Jesus quickens, or resurrects, the sleeping members of the Body of Christ. This is the first executive act of the Great One God has so highly exalted -- the Heir of the great Abrahamic promise. . . . Next in order the Master deals with the living members of his Body the Church."

Question No. 2

Is the Day of Christ identical with the Day of the Lord?

Answer:

Hogg and Vine, in their Notes on the Epistles to the Thessalonians, have pointed out a number of considerations which, in their judgment, go to show that the Day of Christ and the Day of the Lord are distinct periods. Included in the considerations they list are the following:

(1) The Day of the Lord, since it is a period of judgment and punishment, is a "great and terrible day" (Joel 2:31), and is to be anticipated with dread; the Day of Christ, since it is a period of rest and reward, is to be anticipated with joy (chastened by the solemn consideration that then the believer is to render account of himself to Christ).

(2) From the Day of the Lord believers are to be delivered; in the Day of Christ they are to meet him, and be with him.

In the Divine Plan of the Ages, its author, C. T. Russell, devotes a whole chapter to the Day of Jehovah. Amongst other matters discussed there, he observes that "It is called the Day of Jehovah because, though Christ, with royal title and power, will be present as Jehovah's representative, taking charge of all the affairs during this day of trouble, it is more as the General of Jehovah, subduing all things, than as the Prince of Peace, blessing all." - Pages A307-A341.

The phrase "Day of the Lord" occurs in many Old Testament Scriptures. Invariably the meaning is Day of Jehovah, and it is so translated in the American Standard Version (1901).

In the New Testament the phrase "Day of the Lord" appears in only four Scriptures, namely, Acts 2:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:2; and 2 Peter 3:10. Let us look at them briefly, and see for ourselves that in each of them the evident reference is not to the Day of Christ but to the Day of Jehovah.

The first reference, Acts 2:20, is part of Peter's illustrious sermon delivered on the Day of Pentecost. It comes towards the end of a paragraph extending from Acts 2:17 to Acts 2:21, and is cited from Joel 2:28-32. No scholar will question that "the great and terrible Day of the Lord" in Joel's prophecy, and in Peter's citation, have reference to the Day of Jehovah; not to the Day of Christ.

Coming now to the second of our four Scriptures, namely, 1 Thessalonians 5:2, and considering, at the same time, our fourth, namely, 2 Peter 3:10, we take pleasure in submitting the comment of William Neil, in the Moffatt Commentary. After pointing out that the Day of the Lord Jesus "becomes interchangeable with the Day of Christ" (as we ourselves have noted in an earlier paragraph), he goes on to say:

"Here and in 2 Peter 3:10, the expression 'Day of the Lord' is used as in the Old Testament."

Moffatt's translation of the next verse, namely, 1 Thessalonians 5:3, reads

"At such a time, when 'all's well' and 'all is safe' are on the lips of men, then all of a sudden Destruction is upon them, like pangs on a pregnant woman -- escape there is none."

Neil, after quoting this verse, continues his comment as follows:

"The whole sentence clearly refers, not to the Ecclesia, but to the . . . world. This vivid and terrifying picture is paralleled in Isaiah 13:6-8, where the coming of the Day of the Lord is with more graphic detail likewise compared with a woman's labor pains. . . . Ezekiel's warning to Jerusalem (Eze. 13:10) prophesying disaster upon those who said 'Peace' when there was no peace, is in similar vein (cf. Jer. 6:14, 8:11)

"The Destruction will be overwhelming, complete, and cataclysmic, as it was in the days of Noah, when the Deluge obliterated an evil world, or when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah for their wickedness. This was the Old Testament view of what would happen at [in] the *Day of the Lord*. (Isa. 13:6 ff; Ezek. 30:3 ff; Joel 2:1 ff; Zeph. 1:14 ff; Zech. 14, etc.), and it is likewise the New Testament view of the Day [of Jehovah] that is impending." - Acts 2:20.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:2

We have one more of our four "Day of the Lord" New Testament Scriptures to be reviewed, namely, 2 Thessalonians 2:2.

In an earlier paragraph we drew attention to a mistranslation in the Authorized Version noting that instead of "Day of Christ" the phrase in this verse should read "Day of the Lord" (or, preferably, "*Day of Jehovah*"). This distinction will be helpful now, as we review this verse and its context.

It is apparent, from the opening verses of his First Letter to the Thessalonians, that when he had brought the Gospel to them, the Apostle had not only taught them to turn to God from idols, but also to "wait for his son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come." - 1 Thessalonians 1:10, *ASV* (1901).

His stay among these new converts had been but brief, and in the interval between his departure from their city and the writing of his first letter to them, he had heard that some of their number had died. Not only had these losses plunged them into sorrow; they were perplexed by them, uncertain as to the consequences, to those of their brethren who had died, of their removal, by death, before the fulfillment of the promise of Jesus to come to deliver them from the threatened calamity, namely, "the wrath to come." And this perplexity would be greater if, as is possible, the deaths had been the result of persecution. Might not that mean that they had been the victims of the very catastrophe-the Day of the Lord-from which they had been promised deliverance?

Not only so, but what did these happenings mean so far as they, themselves, were concerned? Had the Lord Jesus come and delivered the faithful but, for some unexplained reason, failed to deliver them? If so, did that mean that they were now in the midst of the Day of Jehovah, that "great and terrible day" spoken of by the Old Testament prophets?

To allay these fears, and give them comfort, they needed, first, a reassuring word from the Apostle, "concerning the *parousia* of the Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him" (2 Thess. 2:1). Such a reassuring word he was able to give them as the result of a new revelation which the Lord had given him, which he communicated to them in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

In the second place, while they did not need any new revelation from the Lord, through the Apostle, in regard to the Day of Jehovah, it is evident that they did need another reminder of what he had previously told them about *that day*. Certain developments must precede the coming of *that day*. This he had told them, not once, but frequently, when he was with them. "Remember ye not, that, when I was with you I told you these things?" (2 Thess. 2:5). *Note*: The word "told" is in continuous tense: "I used to tell you."

Their present trials, therefore, severe though they were, could not be an indication that *that day* (the Day of Jehovah) had arrived, for those "certain developments" had not yet occurred.

WHAT DEVELOPMENTS WERE FORETOLD TO PRECEDE THE DAY OF JEHOVAH?

What were those "certain developments" which the Apostle "used to tell" them about, when he was with them -- developments which must precede (not the Day of Christ, but) the *Day of Jehovah*? The Apostle refers to them in the context. One of them was "the falling away," "the apostasy" or, as the word *apostasias* may be rendered, "the departure." - 2 Thess. 2:3.

Another was the development of the spirit of lawlessness (which, at the time the Apostle wrote, "doth already work" - 2 Thess. 2:7) into the Man of Sin (2 Thess. 2:3); otherwise designated by the Apostle as "That Wicked One" (2 Thess. 2:8) and "The Son of Perdition" (2 Thess. 2:3). This character is termed by the prophet Daniel "The Abomination that maketh desolate" (Dan. 11:31; 12:11). It is referred to by our Lord as "The abomination of Desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet" (Matt. 24:15). It is prefigured by a "little horn" (coming out of a "terrible beast" that Daniel saw in his prophetic vision) which had eyes, and a mouth that spoke great things, and which made war with the saints and prevailed against them (Dan. 7:8, 21). Moreover, it is seen

also and warned against by the Apostle John. "Ye have heard that Antichrist shall come" (1 John 2:18-27). It is discussed in detail in the Book of Revelation.

Yet another foretold development was the presence of a restraining influence which was even then at work, hindering the manifestation of the Lawless One until the time appointed. What this restraining influence was the Apostle knew; so also did the brethren at Thessalonica to whom he wrote (2 Thess. 2:6). This restraint against lawlessness would be exercised until the restrainer is "taken out of the way" (2 Thess. 2:7). Then, but not until then, would the Lawless One be revealed. - 2 Thess. 2:8.

The Apostle, who, in this passage, is pointing forward (from his day) to the *Day of Jehovah*, passes over (except for a brief mention in 2 Thess. 2:9 and 2 Thess. 2:10, of the Man of Sin's Satanic power and deceitful influence) the long interval of the "Dark Ages" during which this Man of Sin held sway over the nations, and speaks at once of his doom. - 2 Thess. 2:8.

Note: In *The Time Is at Hand*, its author, C. T. Russell, devotes a whole chapter to an exposition of "The Man of Sin." A review of that chapter should prove helpful at this time in connection with this study.

HOW IS THE DAY OF JEHOVAH INTRODUCED?

In an earlier paragraph we considered the question: "How is the *Day of Christ* introduced?" and we expressed the belief that *that* "day," otherwise called Christ's *parousia*, would commence with the resurrection of the sleeping members of the church, followed by the change of those who "are alive and remain." We now inquire: How is the *Day of Jehovah* introduced? Do the Scriptures reveal the answer to this question?

It is our conviction that they do. We understand them to teach that it will be introduced by our glorified Lord Jesus, accompanied by his glorified Church, when the manifestation of his presence takes place. On what Scriptures is our belief based? One is given in the context of 2 Thessalonians 2:2 - the last of our four "Day of Jehovah" Scriptures just reviewed. We refer again to 2 Thess. 2:8 which, in the *ASV* (1901) margin reads:

"Then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to naught by the manifestation (*epiphaneia*) of his presence (*parousia*)."

That the Church will be with the Lord Jesus when he is thus manifested, may be seen from Colossians 3:4, which, in the *ASV* (1901) reads:

"When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory."

SUMMARY

In the foregoing paragraphs, we have endeavored to show:

- 1) The period of Christ's *parousia* is identical with the period referred to in other Scriptures as the *Day of Christ*.
- 2) The above-mentioned period has to do with Christians only; the remainder of mankind not being under consideration in any one of the six Scriptures in which the *Day of Christ* is mentioned.
- 3) This period is introduced by the glorified Lord Jesus, who first resurrects the sleeping members of the church; afterwards effecting the "change" of those who "are alive and remain." -1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.
- 4) Following the rapture of the Church and during the period of the *parousia* (or *Day of Christ*) all the members of the church appear before the judgment seat of Christ, in order that each may receive an award for his or her actions in this life; in accordance with what he or she has practiced.
- 5) The *Day of Christ* and the *Day of Jehovah* are distinct periods.
- 6) No attempt has been made, in this installment, to determine, or even to suggest, (a) the date when the *Day of Christ* begins, (b) how long a period it is, or (c) the date when it ends. The manifestation of his presence with his church brings this period to an end and introduces the next period -- the *Day of Jehovah*.

(Continued in next issue).

- P. L. Read

The Valley of Dry Bones

1. Bone coming to Bone 2. A Nation Born in a Day 3. Descent of the Spirit

This is the last installment of a series written against the background of belief held by many students of the prophetic word to the effect that before the Messianic Age commences there is to be a restored and unified nation of Israel gathered in the Holy Land to play an important part in the evangelistic work of that Age.

The vision of the valley of dry bones, seen by the prophet Ezekiel and recorded in his 37th chapter, is a parable of the manner in which that restoration is to take place.

A NATION BORN IN A DAY

"And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above; but there was no breath in them" (Ezek. 37:8).

This is the second stage in Ezekiel's vision. At first he had seen the heterogeneous collection of disjointed bones lying in the plain coming together and joining themselves together to form complete skeletons -lifeless, unmoving, but skeletons nevertheless. Now he saw the skeletons growing and changing into bodies; sinews, flesh and skin appearing as if from nowhere and clothing those bones so that now the plain appeared full of recumbent bodies-still, and without movement, but in every respect complete and perfect, needing only the spirit of life from God to vivify and animate them and set them on their feet, a living and mighty host.

A very fair analogy can be drawn here between the vision as recorded and the actual development of Ezekiel's people into a nation in the latter days. If, as outlined in the first part of this treatise, the coming together of bone to bone could be held to picture the slow assembling of the framework of the Jewish State

and people during the period between 1897, when Theodore Herzl set in motion the forces which have resulted in the present situation, and 1948, when the Israeli State was formally proclaimed and began its independent existence, then quite logically the years since 1948, when the nation has been steadily gathering strength and solidity, could well be pictured by the sinews, the flesh and the skin covering those bones. That which was a bare skeleton in 1948 is now in fair process of becoming a well-rounded out body.

At the establishment of the State in 1948 there were 650,000 Jews in Palestine, and with the departure of the Mandatory Power they were left with a land that was virtually bankrupt, without government, without organization and without resources. Almost every function of modern civilized national administration came to an end and by all the rules the land should have relapsed overnight into anarchy, a ready prey to the invaders who waste eagerly around its frontiers. Today, little more than thirty years later, there are more than 3,000,000 Jewish inhabitants living and reasonably prospering under a well-planned and well-run Administration which has won the admiration and envy of other nations and is already extending its influence and assistance to other emerging nations in Asia and Africa. Israel may have been a skeleton in 1948; it is most certainly not so to-day.

First of all, the sinews cover the bones. Money has often been called the sinews of war; in this case money became the sinews of peace. Not only money, but men, immigrants, poured into Israel from the very first day of the new regime. The restriction imposed by Britain in 1936 in a desperate attempt at Arab appeasement vanished overnight; the doors were thrown open to all

who would, of the sons of Jacob, to return. And return they did, from every place under heaven, creating an immediate problem which all but wrecked the struggling embryo nation. Money came too; many Jews, particularly in America, who for various reasons were not prepared to join in the rush for the land, made their contribution in cash or in financial assistance so that the nation could begin to put itself upon a commercial basis. The bones could not boast of flesh at first, but they certainly began to acquire some sinews, something to give the muscular power which they would need so much later on. As the facilities became available so industries began to re-open or to develop. Stagnated or relict farms began to be cultivated. Struggling communities unable for years to do more than produce enough to keep themselves alive began to organise and increase production so that they could contribute a share to the nation's export business, essential if the nation was to survive at all in this modern competitive and commercially minded world. Men came searching for new outlets of business and production, like the Australian who remembered the sulphur nuggets he found during his war service in Palestine, came back and explored, and started a prosperous sulphur mining industry. Imaginative schemes were drawn up for exploiting the country's incipient resources, such as the gigantic water pipeline running two hundred miles or so from the head waters of the Jordan in the far north to the parched deserts of the Negev in the south, bringing the blessings of irrigation and abundant water to the farming communities struggling to make the wilderness blossom as the rose. That pipe-line was a sinew indeed! So the sinews appeared on the bones as the strength and resources, the industries and trades, began to grow and become established.

After the sinews in Ezekiel's vision came the flesh, clothing the bare bones with a semblance of shape and form. So, after the basis of the new nation's economy had been assured by the provision of men, and of money, and of farm implements, and of factories, and of ships, and of all the means which a nation must have if it is to grow and prosper, came the fruit of these things. Crops, herds, manufactures, raw materials gathered from the land itself, minerals, oil, fertilizers, all these began to appear in increasing measure both for the enrichment of the national life and for export further to enhance the national stability.

So, at a certain point, the skin began to cover the body, sign of a completion and rounding out of this second stage in the revival of the dry bones. Social and commercial organization, the establishment of stable financial and political institutions, all that makes for a sound national economy; in short, an orderly and firmly seated Government administering the affairs of a virile and thriving community conscious of its own potentialities and determined to maintain its own separate identity in a world at the same time friendly and hostile according to circumstances. Here was the skin, the medium which held the fabric of the nation together, binding the elements of the body together and enabling it to present a united and homogeneous front to the world.

It cannot be said that this second stage is anything like complete at the present time. Israel is a secular State; there is no question of reliance completely and utterly upon the power of God for their national prosperity and safety. Still, there is no question yet of the breath of life from God blowing upon them to vivify those rapidly developing bodies. The sinews and the flesh and the skin are still in process of clothing the dry bones, and not until that process is seen to be complete can the third and final stage be expected. Just to look at things from the strictly natural point of view, it is obvious that the polity of Israel is still upon a very insecure footing. Economically they are only just beginning to become truly self supporting; politically there are internal strifes and conflicts and externally the ever-present menace of the Arab world, planning and preparing for the day of decision. Religiously, even although honour is paid to the Bible in the highest circles and religious thought and observance probably stands at a higher level than any European or American country, it cannot by any stretch of the imagination be likened to the Holy Nation which will at the end experience the most spectacular of every Divine deliverance which the

world has ever witnessed. We must expect the present process yet to continue until the nation has measurably fulfilled the glowing predictions of Isaiah and Jeremiah *"They shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and the herd . "* (Jer. 31:12). *" . . . the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land"* (Ezek. 38:12). *"Thy waste and thy desolate places and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away"* (Isa. 49:19). *"The seed shall be prosperous; t e vine shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things"* (Zech. 8:12). Some of these Scriptures draw attention to a problem which is even now facing Israel, the limited area of land available for the rapidly increasing population. The present territory of Israel amounts to no more than about 9,000 square miles; the land which God promised to Abraham and his seed for an everlasting possession, the land which is to become the Holy Land of the Messianic Age and which is to be possessed by the Holy Nation before the work of that Age begins, amounts to many times that area. Somehow or other, before the final onslaught of the forces of evil upon the serene and confident Holy Nation at the full end of the Age, a great accession of territory to the nation has to take place. How that will come about is not at present clear, but that it must be so is necessitated by the Divine promise and purpose. It is not yet true that the holy city of Jerusalem is delivered from the power of the Gentiles. The 1967 war did certainly bring the whole of the city under Israeli control, but it is still too early to say whether this is going to be permanent. When Jesus said (Luke 21:24) that Jerusalem would be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled, He was undoubtedly referring to Gentile power over Israel as a whole, and at the present time Israel is still dependent upon a great deal of Gentile help and protection. Not until the new nation is standing completely independent of outside support can it be truly said that the treading down by the Gentiles has ceased. The site of the Temple on Mount Moriah, the holiest place in the world to the believing Jew, is still occupied by the Moslem shrine, equally holy to all true Moslems, known as the Dome of the Rock. This is a question which has yet to be settled and perhaps will not be settled until there are far more peaceable relations between the two peoples than is the case at present. These and many similar problems have to be solved and Israel enter much more fully than is the case at present into possession of the Land of Promise before it can be said that the clothing of the dry bones with sinews, flesh and skin has been completed and the time has come for the Divine Spirit to inbreathe new life into that nation that it may live and stand upon its feet, an exceeding great army.

The promise to Abraham envisaged a land of Israel stretching from Sinai to the Euphrates but any development which brings such an extension of territory into view must pre-suppose the peaceful solution of what is euphemistically termed the "Arab problem" and the establishment of friendly relations between Israeli and Arab. That such an outcome is not outside the realm of practical possibility is demonstrated by the recent peace treaty concluded between Egypt and Israel. One has to remember that the Divine promise to Abraham was not confined to Israel only; God also declared that He had plans for Ishmael, progenitor of the bulk of the Arabs, that he also would become a great people. Somehow, therefore, it may yet be found that a perhaps quite unexpected turn of events will bring the Arab world into the sphere of Divine purpose at the end of the Age. Here is ample scope for watching with keen interest the day-by-day developments in that land and perceiving how the Divine purpose is moving steadily toward its fore-ordained climax.

At some future time, then, how far in the future we do not at this time see, the bones will have been completely clothed and the Spirit waiting to come upon the nation. What is the great event which so turns Israel's heart that the Spirit can enter in? That is the next question to answer. The Spirit cannot come unless the people are ready; God cannot deliver unless the people believe and

trust; that is fundamental in all his dealings. So before the last great onslaught, when God rises up as He did in the day of battle to deliver his people from their enemies, the people must have been converted. By what power or influence will that great change have been effected? The breathing of the wind of God upon those slain depends upon that!

DESCENT OF THE SPIRIT

The fulfillment of the third phase of this vision lies altogether in the future. We do not yet see the descent of the Divine Spirit upon Israel, although that epoch-making event is plainly foretold in Scripture and many of its associated effects minutely described. It is a happening which will be clearly evident to the peoples of earth, one about which there can and will be no mistake. There is no doubt therefore that it has not happened yet, and Israel is still a nation without spirit, a body without breath. Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones has been justified by history only about halfway up to the present.

"Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the our winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army" (Ezek. 37:9-10).

This is one of the most telling passages in the Bible where the analogy between breath and wind and the Holy Spirit is set forth. It is more than an analogy; there is a definite relationship and there is much in the revealed purpose of God which becomes more lucid when the connection between human life, the powers of Nature, and the operation of the Holy Spirit is understood. Here in this vision Ezekiel calls upon the four winds to breathe into this vast army of recreated but inert bodies and instil life into them, that they may live. In verse 14 the reality is expressed as the impartation of the Spirit to the restored nation of Israel. *"Ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put m spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it" (37: 13-14).* The same Hebrew word -- *ruach* -- is used in the Old Testament for "wind," "breath" and "spirit"; the Hebrew language recognizes an affinity between the two ideas, that of the life-giving breath which animates a man's physical body and makes him a living being, and the Divine Spirit which is the vehicle of life from God to man. Right at the beginning we have this conception; *"the Lord formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7).* The whole story of man's creation is built around the central truth that all life comes from God and is continually dependent upon God; it is the withdrawal of God-given life because of sin which brings death, and death is thus the antithesis of life. So here in the vision of Ezekiel the reality is the coming of the Holy Spirit in power upon the newly awakened people of Israel to vivify them and endow them with life that they might take their rightful place in the outworking Divine purpose at the end of the Age.

This coming of the Spirit is with power. That is always the case when the Holy Spirit descends to bestow new life. The verbal form rendered "breathe" in this passage is *naphach*, which is also used for "breathed" in Gen. 2:7 above quoted. But no gentle, quiet inflow of air is indicated here. The word has the implication of turbulence or irresistible force. Although it is nowhere else used in the sense of breathing, *naphach* is also rendered "I see a seething pot" (Jer. 1:13); "out of his nostrils goeth smoke as out of a seething pot or cauldron" (Job 41:10); "I have created the smith that *bloweth* the coals in the fire" (Isa. 54:16); ". . . into the midst of the furnace, to *blow upon* the fire, to melt it" (Ezek. 22:20); "Then the spirit took me up and I heard behind me the voice of a great *rushing*" (Ezek. 3:12). A seething, blowing, rushing, tumultuous blast which forces its

way into every nook and cranny and makes its presence known with energy and power; that is the entry of the Spirit when God sets his hand to perform a great and momentous work. So it was on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon the waiting disciples and the work of this present Christian Age began. *"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting . . . and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 2:2-4). That is how Ezekiel saw the four winds come together, sweep down from the sky, and breathe life into those slain bodies, that they might live. So it was that they received strength and stood on their feet, an exceeding great army.

The Hebrew prophets were very definite that the Spirit will thus one day come upon Israel and fit them for their destiny. The preceding chapter of Ezekiel's own prophecy, the 36th, is full of it. *"A new heart also will I give unto you, and a new Spirit will I put within you ... and I will put my spirit within you"* (Eze. 36:26-27). Says Isaiah *"I will pour my spirit upon thy seed"* (Eze. 44:3) and again *"My spirit that is upon thee . . . shall not depart ... henceforth and forever"* (Eze. 59:21). The magnificent apocalyptic vision which constitutes the subject of the 3rd and 4th chapters of Zechariah culminates in a Divine declaration that the great mountain which is the symbol of evil is to be destroyed by the instrumentality of the Lord's servant -- and Israel is part of that servant -- *"not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts"* (Zech. 4:6-7). It is by that same power and that same Spirit that the new governors of Israel in the End Time are to pledge themselves and their people to loyalty to that same Lord of Hosts (Zech. 12:5) and it is this that is to make Israel a living force, incapable of harm from her enemies and irresistible in the work she has been Divinely ordained to accomplish -- to be a light to the nations and to declare God's salvation to the ends of the earth (Isa. 49:6). That is purified and consecrated Israel's mission in the Messianic Age, the Age which is to succeed this present one and the commencement of which is signaled by the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

One thing intervenes, one obstacle the removal of which is necessary before that people, now gathering strength in what will one day become the Holy Land in truth, can experience the descent of the Spirit upon them. That obstacle is unbelief. Until the people believe, until they repent, until they come to God in faith and loyalty and trust themselves to his power and leadership, the Spirit cannot come. Never yet has an unbeliever been filled with the Spirit. Never yet has one become a member of the Kingdom of Heaven without first putting off the works of darkness and putting on the armour of light. The bones may have come together, bone to bone, by the power of God; the flesh and the sinews and the skin may have formed around them, but not until there is faith and surrender can the Divine Spirit enter with its life giving breath and constitute that assemblage of dead bodies a living and potent force for the evangelization of the world. So as we look upon prophecy passing into history we can expect to see noteworthy progress in the creation and development of a nation in apparent fulfillment of all the old prophecies relating to Israel, but we cannot expect to see another Pentecost until first there is repentance, surrender, faith and prayer, and a waiting upon God just as was the case with those disciples in the Upper Room two thousand years ago. Until that position is reached the nation is not ready for its destiny and the work of the Messianic Age cannot begin.

What will bring about such a national repentance,-for national it will be. Temporal prosperity is hardly likely to do so; the tendency is usually in the reverse direction. The achieving of security from present threatening enemies, if security can be gained by the normal methods of political and military action, is more likely to breed self assurance than to increase faith in and reliance upon God. *"Therefore he brought down their heart with labor; they fell down, and there was none to help. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses."* (Psa. 107:12). Throughout Israel's history, when they apostatized and forsook the Divine covenant they fell into the power of their enemies and went into captivity; so soon as they turned

to the Lord in repentance He delivered and restored them. The highlights of Israel's history were the occasions of their deliverance from the Philistines in the days of Samuel, the Moabites in the days of Jehoshaphat, and the Assyrians in the days of Hezekiah (1 Sam. 7, 2 Chron. 20, and 2 Chron. 32) and each time it was because they turned to the Lord in faith and He delivered them. The prophetic Scriptures speak of one final trial of faith which is yet to come upon Israel, when in vision the prophets see all nations gathered against Jerusalem to battle, and God delivers. Zechariah and Ezekiel and Habakkuk and Isaiah are all quite certain about it and give, each in his own characteristic fashion and as guided by the Holy Spirit, his own vivid pen-picture of the event. Perhaps it is in that great crisis that the faith and belief of Israel comes to the surface and God is able to come forth from his place and fight for them, as the prophets say He will come forth and fight, because at last they do cry unto him in their trouble and receive from him in return the spirit of grace and supplication which, to Zechariah at least, marks the turning point in Israel's history (Zech. 12:10).

When will all this take place? If what is now to be witnessed in the development of Israel is indeed the clothing of the bare bones with flesh, sinew and skin, how soon before the Spirit descends to finish the work? Not before the full end of the Age, for the conversion and purification of latter day Israel, no less than their deliverance from their enemies, mark the time when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of Christ, that He may reign for ever and ever. There is much in the prophetic Scriptures to fill in the details of that final troublous time when God comes out of his place to intervene in earth's affairs and set up the kingdom of righteousness which has been promised for so long. Every time there is political trouble in the Middle East the eyes of many Christians are turned in that direction; one day, of course, their watchfulness will be rewarded and the end will come. In the meantime we can only go on looking at the flesh and sinew building upon those bare bones, knowing of a surety that as truly as the dry bones have become whole bodies in our own day and before our own eyes, so will the Spirit sweep down from above at God's set time and cause Israel, the earthly missionary nation of the Messianic Age, to *"live and stand up upon their feet, an exceeding great army."*

- A. O. Hudson

Our Priceless Heritage in the Bible

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." - Joshua 1:8.

THE greatest of God's priceless gifts to men are the Living and the Written Word. Many are the statements within the pages of the written Word, bearing testimony to the inestimable value of these gifts of His love. In the ages past, as in the present time, God's making known His will and character to men has been a source of incalculable joy and inspiration. It was so when in times past God spoke by the Prophets, but vastly more so now when "in these last days" He has spoken and revealed Himself through His Son. The greatly tried and afflicted patriarch job prized above his daily food, the revelation he had of God. (Job 23:12.) The Psalmist found it "more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." (Psa. 19:10.) And to him it was a source of constant joy and of progression toward man's true objective, to glorify God by attaining the ultimate purposes of His will. "Blessed," he sings, "is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night" - and with what blessed results: "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Psa. 1:1-3.) No wonder that he later wrote, "Thy Word. have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee " - Psa. 119:11.

From the lips of Him who spake as never man could speak, how often the words were heard, "It is written" and expressions of like portent. Blindness He attributed to a lack of knowledge of the Word of God, saying, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." To perplexed and disappointed men He came, "And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself," and left them saying, "Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" Luke 24:25-32.

No marvel then that Apostolic testimony to the importance of the Word itself is in similar tone. We cannot wonder at Paul urging: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly"; nor are we surprised to find him making special note of the qualifications of Timothy for efficient service in the Church -- "From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation." (Col. 3:16 2 Tim. 3:15.) And thus it 'is that from the pages of this Book of books, adapted to the needs of all who love its unfoldings, there comes so much of "comfort of the Scriptures," so much that is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. 3:16.)

*"Blessed Bible, precious Word!
Boon most sacred from the Lord:
Glory to His name be given,
For this choices gift from heav'n.*

*"'Tis a mine, aye, deeper too,
Than can mortal ever go;
Search we may for many years,
Still some new rich gem appears."*

To think of but a few of the influences and characteristics of that "precious Word": Human schemes and achievements astound a generation or two, then pass into the realm of the obsolete, relics of primitive stages in the onward course of progress. The classics in human literature are generally limited to the confines of a certain language. Shakespeare spoke to the race that speaks his tongue, and how unintelligible his greatest works are to numberless other tongues and races. The Bible speaks as clearly, as potently, as comforting and illuminating to 'all "kindreds and nations and tongues." Its language is universally complete.

"All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. But the Word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you." (1 Pet. 1:24, 25.) How illuminating is that Word! "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." (Psa. 19:7.) How manifestly it came from the One who in judgment is "no respecter of persons," for "the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Heb. 4:12.) To a race sold under sin, helpless to break the chains of bondage, how assuring the word spoken by the Son: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32.) To sinners saved by grace, how assuring of . ultimate sanctification is the Savior's prayer "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth." (John 17:17.) To "the called according to His purpose" how comforting the words: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (2 Pet. 1:4.) Well indeed has Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." - Matt. 4:4.

That the great Adversary of God and man should be the enemy of a Book in which the character of God and His benevolent purposes for man are set forth, is no surprise. We marvel not that "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. 4:4.) But to know that in the house of its professed friends that Word has suffered greatly because of misrepresentation is both sad and surprising.

It has been said that "Every Christian is either a Bible or libel." . Perhaps this was the very same thought in the mind of the Apostle that caused him to so urge the brethren to "adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things." (Tit. 2:10.) And perhaps it was the same thing which led him to admonish Timothy to be "an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." (1 Tim. 4:12.) What other reason did he have when reminding other brethren that they should remember that as "the epistle of Christ" they were being known and read of all men? Indeed it was the failure of some professing Christians to thus adorn the Gospel of Christ by their daily lives that caused him in tears to write: "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." As we live and move before any who are praying for "some new ray of light for guidance on our way," are we a libel or a Bible? Are we fulfilling the glorious purposes of our calling, and being as Jesus said we should be, "the light of the world"? Are we really shining as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, and known as such by those who know us, or are 'we causing others to look beyond us and say, "**We seek to know Thee as Thou art**"? Are we revealing to others within the circle of believers, and to such as are without, that we "have been with Jesus and learned of Him"?

That Paul was not alone in his tears over the Bible's misrepresentation in the house of its friends, is well attested by the laments of many others. Dean Farrar will be remembered by many as an

outstanding character of some years ago, and some will remember his fearless exposure of the unscriptural teaching of eternal torment for the majority of our race. From his pen we cull the following pertinent quotations:

"It is one of our trials that the Bible, with its tender and hallowed bearing upon all that is sweet and noble in our lives -- with its words so stately and full of wonder, and full of music, like the voice of an Archangel -- should have been made in these days the wrangling-ground for sectarian differences; but if with our whole hearts we are striving to live according to its spirit, we need fear but little that we shall trip in a right pronunciation of the shibboleths of its letter. Surely it is deplorable that, because of mere questions which after all are but questions of doubtful authorship, of historical accuracy, or verbal criticism, having for the most part little or no bearing on the spiritual or moral life, party should be denouncing party, and Christian excommunicating Christian, and so many hands tearing in anger the seamless robe of Christ. It is, alas, the due punishment for our lack of charity, that while we have been so eager about such controversies, the love of many should wax cold."

The Bible Alone Makes Wise Unto Salvation

"The Bible teaches us its best lessons when we search its pages as wise- and humble learners; when we judge of it by the truth, which we learn from it, and not by the prejudices and prepossessions which we bring to it.... Let me entreat you not to confuse mere questions of exegetical or scientific learning with the deep, awful, and imperishable lessons which the Bible, and the Bible only, can bring home to your souls. In whatever way those questions may be decided, the infinite inner sacredness of God's Word remains inviolate forever. There may be shifting clouds about it, but through them break beams of eternal radiance; there may be mingled voices, but clear and loud among them all are- heard the utterances of eternal wisdom. Other books may make you learned or eloquent or subtle; this Book alone can make you wise unto salvation. Other books may fascinate the intellect; by this alone can you cleanse the heart. In other literature may trickle here and there some shallow streams from the 'unemptiable Fountain of wisdom' -- and even these, alas! turbid too often with human passions, fretted with human obstacles, and choked at last in morass or sand -- but in this Book, majestic and fathomless, flows the river of the water of life itself, proceeding from the throne of God, and of the Lamb."

From the "Divine Plan of the Ages" we quote in similar strain from Chapter III:

"The Bible is the torch of civilization and liberty. Its influence for good in society has been recognized by the greatest statesmen, even though they for the most part have looked at it through the various glasses of conflicting creeds, which, while upholding the Bible, grievously misrepresent its teachings. The grand old Book is unintentionally but wofully misrepresented by its friends, many of whom would lay down life on its behalf; and yet they do it more vital injury than its foes, by claiming its support to their long-revered misconceptions of its truth, received through the traditions of their fathers. Would that such would awake, re-examine their oracle, and put to confusion its enemies by disarming them of their weapons! . . . Other writings upon religion and the various sciences have done good and have ennobled and blessed mankind, to some extent; but all other books combined have failed to bring the joy, peace and blessing to the groaning creation that the Bible has brought to both the rich and the poor, to the learned and the unlearned. The Bible is not a hook to be read merely: it is a book to be studied with care and thought; for God's **thoughts are higher than our thoughts, and His ways** than our **ways**. And if we would comprehend the plan and thoughts of the infinite God, we must bend all our energies to that important work. The richest treasures of truth do not always lie on the surface."

To this we all agree as being applicable to Christian people in general. Are we as willing to test ourselves by the same rule? Honesty demands that we shall so examine ourselves.

God's Book

The Bible is not only the special book of God because inspired by Him; it is His book in the sense that he has the sole right and ownership of it. And because it is God's property, and intended by Him to be the book of the common people, it has never been recognized by Him as being the peculiar possession of a clergy class. And yet; no blacker pages in human history can be found than those recording the attempts made from time to time to make the Word of God to men the exclusive right of the few. For twelve hundred years it was kept "clothed in sackcloth," the sackcloth of dead languages. When it was brought out of that state and given to the people, only God can fully estimate the cost. Could we with Him number up the years of imprisonment its possession meant to faithful students of its pages in darker clays; could we with Him measure the pains, the sufferings borne on rack and stake, by which the freedom of that Word was secured to us of a happier day, would we ever cease to give thanks to God for its preservation at so great a cost? If all the fires of martyrdom were caused to pass before our vision -- fires John was given to see in his Patmos vision of the "souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, grid for the testimony which they held," would we ever be found fighting against liberty of conscience in the study of an open Bible? Surely not! Lest we forget that the human heart is ever capable of reacting to influences which make wrong to appear right, and that wrong be thought "doing God service," let us take but one leaf from the pages on pages of the blackest record of man's inhumanity to man -- his religious intolerance:

"Besides the common forms of persecution and death, such as racking, burning, drowning, stabbing, starving and shooting with arrows and guns, fiendish hearts meditated how the most delicate and sensitive parts of the body, capable of the most excruciating pain, could be affected; molten lead was poured into the ears; tongues were cut out and lead poured into the mouths; wheels were arranged with knife blades attached so that the victim could be slowly chopped to pieces; claws and pincers were made red hot and used upon sensitive parts of the body; eyes were gouged out; finger nails were pulled off with red hot irons; holes, by which the victim was tied up, were bored through the heels; some were forced to jump from eminences onto long spikes fixed below, where, quivering with pain, they slowly died. The mouths of some were filled with gunpowder, which, when fired, blew their heads to pieces; others were hammered to pieces on anvils; others, attached to bellows, had air pumped into them until they burst; others were choked to death with mangled pieces of their own bodies; others with urine, excrement, etc., etc.

"Some of these fiendish atrocities would be quite beyond belief were they not well authenticated. They serve to show to what awful depravity the human heart can descend; and how blind to right and every good instinct, men can become tinder the influence of **false, counterfeit religion.**"

Ah, present day Christian, say not your Bible cost only a few dollars or pence. Its cost is written in the anguish, the horror, the inhuman and Satanic awfulness inflicted on these suffering souls who purchased for you the liberty to read its pages unmolested and unafraid.

And again, "lest we forget," and because we live in a different day, and far removed from such inhuman treatment as the historian records of the past we then conclude that there is little danger either of our being called upon to thus suffer "for the Word of God," or of our being among those blinded into being the ones to inflict suffering on other faithful witnesses, let us remember that the "souls under the altar" are still being told that "they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, should be killed as they were." In God's way of

looking at such things it matters not what the mode of being "killed" may be. Thus until the last members of the Church have finished their appointed time, there lies within the bounds of possibility for each one of us, a state of mind by which the afflicted or the afflictors may be our role, as pertaining to this altar picture.

Shall we not then prize the liberty we enjoy today. Shall we not rejoice in the possession of a Book which is not of man, but God's own revelation, inspired by His Spirit, and taught to the humblest of His children by that same Spirit? Shall we not remember that it is written "They shall all be taught of God," and the one great fundamental lesson He teaches is that "He that Bath the Son path life; and he that bath not the Son bath not life," and "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, lie is none of His." Shall we not remember that as great truths are dearly bought, so has the liberty we enjoy been purchased at tremendous cost, and that it should be very zealously guarded against all expedients calculated to discourage its right and proper enjoyment? Shall we not all make it our special concern to see that we are ourselves closely following the Living Word, and through Him being truly sanctified by the written Word? And will it not be our greatest concern to assist others to know our Jesus and the power of His Spirit in their life also? Surely so.

Then "With each individual Christian standing fast in the liberty wherewith he was made free by the Lord (Gal. 5:1; John 8:32), and each individual Christian united in loyalty to the Lord and to His Word, very quickly the original unity which the Scriptures inculcated would be discerned and all true children of God, all members of the New Creation, would find themselves drawn to each other member similarly free, and bound each to the other by the cords of love far more strongly than are men bound in earthly systems and societies. 'The love of Christ constraineth us' [holds us together, Young's Concordance]."

- The Herald

Entered Into Rest

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