

# THE WORD OF TRUTH

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## *DEFINE YOUR TERMS*

The teacher that deals with the great subject of the nature of man and the destiny of man can expect opposition from every side if he at any point questions or points out the errors in the commonly accepted popular views. Ministers as a rule make it a point never to deal with these subjects except in the most general way. The commonly accepted popular view is held by the men of the world as well as the professing Christian. There are men of the world who readily admit they know nothing about the Word of God, yet they do not hesitate to speak with finality about the nature of man and his destiny. The world believes that man is a soul who dwells in a house called the body, and that at death the soul abandons the body which is buried while the man goes to a place called heaven or a place called hell. This is what men of the world in general believe, and the view of the professing Christian is the same.

There are men who profess to have been taught by Scripture who use a great number of Biblical terms such as spirit, soul, body, life, death and resurrection, but they always use these terms in such manner that their hearers cannot tell what they mean by them.

As one who rebelled against the orthodox view of man's nature and man's destiny, I find that I am the target of much opposition. I do not object to this in the least, even though some who oppose me seem to have dipped their pens in acid before they write. Opposition serves a good purpose. The fact that I know my teaching will be opposed acts about the same as the brakes on my car. They keep me from going around the curves too fast, and hold me back when going down hill.

In my quest for the fullness of truth, I want to feel that I have honestly considered every objection that can be raised. However, if in the midst of controversy men use terms which they never define and fail to give any clue as to what they mean by them, their criticisms are of no value to any who may be searching for the truth. If these brethren would define their terms, their writings would be of help to those who are reading or hearing both sides of the matter under discussion. Some concrete examples of failures to define terms will not be out of place.

In his publication *The Morning Star* Pastor Harry Bultema writes: "The word *sheol* is the place for the departed souls." Again he says: "The human spirits meet other spirits in the spirit-world and there is full consciousness as is proved by their conversation, hearing, recognition, joy and sadness." (*The Morning Star*, Vol. S-No.7). In his article Pastor Bultema makes a quick transition from "souls in sheol" to "spirits in the spirit-world", using these terms interchangeably as if their meanings were understood by all his readers. However, his writings will be searched in vain for a single hint as to what means by "soul" or "spirit", whether these two are identical, and whether "sheol" where "the departed souls" go and the "spirit-world" where the "spirits" go are the same.

In his book *The Unsearchable Riches of Christ*, Pastor J. C. O'Hair says: "So we learn in the Bible that man became a living soul; and that man has a soul". But in all his writings we look in vain for a single definition of the word *soul*. He has made positive statements about something he has failed to define. It would be interesting indeed to know just what this thing is that man *became* as well as man *has*.

In regard to the whole subject of man's nature and destiny, I know I have no desire except that the truth of God shall be uncovered and recovered. I am convinced that His truth has been lost in the awful mass of confusion and contradictions that are generally believed today. There is an enormous amount of work that needs to be done upon such subjects as the soul, the human spirit, the meaning of death, the state of men between death and resurrection, the nature and duration of future punishment, and the meaning of such words as *sheol*, *hades*, *gehenna*, *destruction* and *perish*.

Concerning these subjects, it is even as in Nehemiah's day. There is much rubbish of traditional views to be removed and the burden bearers lack strength. Every contribution anyone can make to these labors will be welcomed by those who are longing for pure and fresh truth from the Word of God. Unbiased and unprejudiced minds are needed for this work, and one laborer should not be guilty of belittling the sincere efforts of another workman.

It is my conviction that, in view of the present difference of opinion, it would be well if Pastor O'Hair and Pastor Bultema would define the terms they use, providing illustrations in order to make their definitions crystal clear and understandable by all. If they will do this, I will be glad to publish their definitions in *The Word of Truth*. This will make for better understanding among all who seek for truth upon these subjects.

The work of reclaiming and reconsidering the commonly accepted views concerning man's nature and man's destiny is open to anyone who has the heart for such labors. In rebuilding this "temple of truth" diggers are needed as well as architects. Any man with a Bible can read through the New Testament listing every passage that has any bearing upon the subject of the nature and duration of future punishment, or upon any other subject. However, when he thinks he has discovered some truth, he must remember that some views would be abandoned at once if they are followed out to all their logical conclusions. Let us consider some examples of this.

It is generally believed that man is a tripartite being, that is, a being composed of three parts, body, soul and spirit. As a rule **1 Thessalonians 5:23** is quoted as being the unanswerable proof of this belief: **I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Of course, this passage settles the question of the tripartite nature of man for all who want it settled that way. However, there is another passage which sets forth something entirely different.

In **Luke 10:27** we read:

**Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.**

Therefore, it is logical to insist that if the first passage demonstrates that man is a tripartite being composed of body, soul and spirit, then the second passage proves he is a quadripartite being composed of heart, soul, strength and mind.

The man who desires truth above all else will not use either of these passages to prove his idea concerning the constitution or nature of man. This is not the subject of either of these passages. Nothing concerning man's nature is taught in either one of them, and the honest teacher will not force them to speak upon a subject with which they do not deal.

Those who insist that man is composed of three parts, body, soul and spirit, usually define the soul as being "the true man". These two ideas are contradictory as will be seen by anyone who follows them out to their conclusions. If the soul is the true man, and, if man is composed of body, soul and spirit, then the soul is composed of body, soul and spirit. And while they teach that man is a tripartite being composed of body, soul and spirit, they contradict this by saying that if the body and spirit are eliminated there is still a complete man left in the soul. Thus they insist that man is composed of three parts, yet they hold that two of these parts are really not essential to him, since they can be eliminated and there still be something that is every inch a man.

They tell us that man has a body, that man has a soul, and that man has a spirit, yet we are not told just who or what this man is who owns these three marvelous possessions. If man is merely a combination of three things he possesses, then there is no such thing as man. If man has a soul, then the soul cannot be a part of man for that would be nothing more than man having a part of himself, which does not make sense. If man has a soul, he is greater than his soul. If he has a body, he is greater than his body. If he has a spirit, he is greater than his spirit. Who then is this man that is greater than body, soul and spirit? Pray do not tell me that this man is the soul.

To hold that the soul is the real, true or essential man, then to insist that man has a soul is most illogical. If this is true then the soul has a soul, and, logically, that soul should have a soul. That may sound like a crack in the record, but it is merely the confusion one gets into if he attempts to follow the Platonic theories concerning man's nature instead of the Biblical.

The same confusion reigns when we closely examine the teachings of many men concerning death. They preach sermons and write articles on, "Are the dead alive?," and in answer declare dogmatically that they are. Strange indeed that they call them "the dead" when they insist that they are alive. In fact, they set out to prove that the dead are alive and end up by proving that the living are alive, for if the dead are alive that is what it amounts to. They preach sermons against spiritism, almost invariably using the subject, "Can the living talk to the dead?" but they wind up trying to prove that the living cannot talk to the living, since they hold that the dead are alive.

That the living cannot talk to the dead can be demonstrated by the simple process of going to any funeral parlor where a dead man is awaiting burial. But such simple proof as this will not suffice for those who believe the dead are alive. They have declared that the dead who are alive cannot talk to the living-who are alive, or some such thing. It is certainly foolish to hold that the living cannot talk to the living. All that is needed is some means of communication. I can take my telephone and speak with a man in Australia, but I cannot speak to a dead man even if he is next door. We who believe the Scripture testimony concerning death (Eccles. 6:5) have no problem whatsoever concerning spiritism.

Our detractors accuse us of believing in "soul-sleep," then in the next breath say that we do not believe man has a soul or that there is any such thing as a soul. How they can accuse us of believing that something sleeps, which they say, we do not believe exists, I am unable to understand. It may be that this convenient epithet (soul-sleeper), which they hurl when they lack honest arguments, is one

reason why they do not reveal what they mean by the word *soul*. Once they define it no matter what their definition may be, all ideas of "soul-sleep" become ludicrous and their favorite epithet will be gone. The only "soul-sleep" I believe in is that which men do each night. Believing, as I do, that men are souls, and knowing from personal experience that men sleep, I know that this is the only way souls ever sleep.

Many who profess to be Bible teachers have spoken or written on the subject, "Are the dead conscious?" As a rule they declare that they are. Having proved this to their own satisfaction, they declare that all who do not agree with them believe that the dead are unconscious, then they call upon us to defend this position. This we refuse to do. We will not defend any fort built of rubbish, which our opponents have erected. We know that the terms *conscious* and *unconscious* can be applied only to the living. A man can be alive and conscious or alive and unconscious. I have seen men in both conditions. But when men are dead, they can neither be conscious or unconscious. These terms cannot apply to them. **The dead can only be dead.**

Those who insist that the dead are alive would probably pity John in his ignorance. He wrote that, "the rest of the dead lived 20:5. Poor John! Too bad he did not know these people were alive all the time. However, it could have been that John was right, and these people were dead until resurrection caused them to live again..

In dealing with the subject of man's nature and destiny, I too use the terms man, soul, body, spirit, death and resurrection. These terms have been defined in my writings, but to avoid all misunderstandings, I will do what I call upon others to do - define the terms which I use.

## What is Man

Man is a created being, originally made in the image and likeness of God. This fact alone is sufficient to distinguish him from all other creatures, making him higher than all other orders of created beings such as angels, spirits or animals. I do not believe that in making a man, God brought a spirit, a soul and a body together. Therefore, I do not believe that man is a tripartite being composed of body, soul and spirit. In the creation of man, the material God used was the dust (soil) of the ground. After having created man, **God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul. See Genesis 2:7.**

## What is Soul

The word *soul* sets forth one of the characteristics of man; or, to say it another way, one of the aspects of man. Looked at or considered from one standpoint man is a soul. Soul is not a peculiar characteristic of man alone for this same characteristic is possessed by animals, angels and spirit beings. All beings that have sensory capacities such as the ability to see, hear, smell, feel or taste must be classified as souls. In connection with man the word *soul* describes his ability to receive mental impressions through the action of certain sensory organs of the body. Man became a living soul, that is, he became a being that could see, hear, smell, feel and taste, when God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. If God takes away the breath of life, man will cease to be a living soul. He will no longer be able to see, hear, smell, feel or taste. "The dead know not anything" is the testimony of the Word of God, and there is nothing in the Scriptures or in human experience that contradicts this. If any object that this witness is from the book of Ecclesiastes, they are reminded that the same testimony is in the book of Psalms. See Psalm 6:5, 30:9; 31:17, 88:11. Also Isa. 38:18-19.

It is illogical to say that man has a soul, for man cannot have what he is. A woman can be a wife, but cannot have a wife. A man can be a husband, but cannot have one. Neither can man be a soul and have one too. All passages that seem to suggest that the soul is something man possesses (See Genesis 12:13) are figures of speech in which the word soul means *I, myself* or *me*.

### **What is Body**

The word *body* sets forth another characteristic or aspect of man. All things that possess shape, size or organization are bodies. Man shares this characteristic with animals and angels, but not with spirit beings. Spirit beings have no bodily characteristic or aspect. Man does not have a body. He himself is a body. Only in a figurative sense is it ever right to speak of man having a body. If we do speak of him literally as possessing a body, then we must identify or define the man who owns the body. If, as some say, this man is the soul, then insist that the soul is one part of the tripartite man, this leads to utter confusion. I do not believe that the body is a dwelling place for man, or that man can be separated from the body. If there is no bodily characteristic, the being is not a man. The human being does not become a spirit being at death. In life, in death, and in resurrection we will always be what God created us to be - human beings.

### **What is Spirit**

In the English language the word *spirit* is used to set forth everything from God's Holy Spirit all the way down to an alcoholic beverage. This is bound to cause confusion unless we diligently seek to keep our thoughts upon a single track. The writer of Ecclesiastes declares that at death the spirit returns to God who gave it. He also asks if anyone knows that the spirit of man goes upward or that the spirit of beast goes downward" The spirit of man that at death returns to God who gave it might properly be called the human spirit and regarded as something which man has or possesses. When God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, that breath of life became the spirit of man. It is not a distinct entity, for all living have the same spirit; neither can it be regarded as a separate personality. Looked at from one standpoint we call it life, looked at from another we call it spirit. It was with God before it came to us, and it returns to God when it departs from us. Man's spirit is his life. It is not a spirit being.

The word *spirit* in relationship to man also sets forth a characteristic or aspect of man. Man is an intelligent being with almost unlimited power to think, reason and exercise faith. Man's ability to do these things is called *spirit*, just as his ability to feel is called *soul*. God's Spirit, witnesses to our spirits that we are the children of God. "God is spirit," is the declaration of John 4:24. The indefinite article (a) should not be in this passage. This statement declares the character of God, but does not tell what He is. He is not a spirit being. He created all spirit things, but He is not one of them. In one aspect, we are spirit, and it is in this aspect that we can worship God.

### **What is Death**

When death is considered from the Biblical standpoint it will be found to be a *return*. The first mention of death is found in Genesis 2:17 where it is set forth as being the penalty if Adam transgressed the command of God, When he did transgress, the Lord made it plain that the penalty was not to come upon him at once, that he would live and work under adverse conditions until he returned to the ground, "for," said Jehovah, "out of it you were taken: for you are dust, and unto dust you will return." Genesis 3:19. When this is linked up with **Ecclesiastes 12:6** where it is said that at death, **the dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it,** we learn the true meaning of death. It is a return.

When Adam died, the work of creation that had produced him went into reverse. God had made him out of soil, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and he became a living soul. The man came from the soil, and the breath of life or spirit came from God. This is the creation of man, and if the process is reversed, it brings about man's death.

If the breath of life returns to God from whence it came, and the dust returns to the ground from whence it came, it results in the death of man. **Death is the complete withdrawal of life. It is not life in another place.**

Popular theology teaches that the word death has one meaning when it is used in connection with animals, and an entirely different meaning when used of man. The Scriptures teach that in the matter of death, man is not superior to the beast. As one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath of life. The real difference between the death of a man and the death of an animal is that death marks the end of the animal, while man will live again in resurrection.

### **What is Resurrection?**

God's answer to death is resurrection. Whatever death is, resurrection is the opposite. Whatever death does to a man, resurrection will undo it.

Since some people believe that death touches only one aspect or part of man, the body, they must follow this up with the idea that the body is the only aspect or part of man affected by resurrection. The Bible testimony reveals that both death and resurrection touch the entire man. This is the whole burden of Scripture from beginning to end. It does not need to be proved by certain carefully selected passages, and it cannot be disproved by the quoting of passages such as Matthew 10:28. It is man that dies, it is man that is buried, it is man that is raised from the dead. This resurrection is actual, literal and bodily. It is the whole man, and not some part of him. Among men the phrase "resurrection of the body" is used continually. This phrase is never used in the Word of God. The phrase used consistently in the Bible is "the resurrection of the dead."

Resurrection is not *reincarnation* in which something called soul or spirit is reincarnated in the body. It is *re-creation* in which man is again taken from the dust, given again the breath of life (spirit) so that man again becomes the very living soul that he was before. "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?"

### **In Conclusion**

In the words above, my readers have my definitions of man, soul, body, spirit, death and resurrection as best I am able to briefly set them forth. Some will attack my views, and I do not object to this. There is no evidence that I have ever been offended or become angry when my views are attacked. However, I would urge any who deny my views to make sure that they set forth their own. You may call me a "soul-sleeper," but I have no means of finding in this epithet what you believe about the soul.

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## ***GOD'S CHASTISEMENT OF HIS SONS***

A major obstacle in the presentation of truth to those who are unfamiliar with it is that the truth usually conflicts with ideas that they feel are most surely the truth. A conflict arises from the fact that they must give up the familiar for the strange, and they are not equal to the task of judging new ideas without prejudice from old ideas that are already held.

Since Paul emphatically declares it, many would like to believe that God's present administration is one of absolute grace, but they are unable to follow this out to all its conclusions and accept all the consequences that come from embracing this truth.

If this administration or dispensation is that of the grace of God, then every act of God, every attitude of God, every purpose of God at the present time must be completely gracious in its character. However, many ideas concerning God's dealings with His own contradict this, and these ideas are an effectual barrier against the reception of this glorious truth. Thus instead of the seed of truth finding warm and good soil in the heart of man, it remains exposed until some satanic bird snatches it away.

In presenting in written form any conception of truth, great care is exercised so that every possible objection to it has been fully considered. This was done before presenting and teaching that every act in this administration, which can be traced directly to God will be found to be an act of grace, that is, an act of love and favor to the undeserving. No direct act of God at present can be characterized as the payment of a debt, the keeping of an agreement, the fulfillment of a covenant, making good a promise, the reward for faithfulness or the punishment of a sinner or saint. In this administration God is dispensing grace, and nothing else.

Some who have considered this truth feel that Paul's statement in **Hebrews 12:6** creates a difficulty in the full acceptance of it. This passage states:

**For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.**

From this passage they reason that if it is applicable to the present dispensation, then some of God's acts toward His own are not acts of grace. However God has declared that His present administration is one of grace, and if chastisement is punishment then the dispensation is not one of pure grace.

It is my conviction that God does chasten those whom He loves, but I do not believe that chastisement is punishment.

Many people believe that the material reverses, sicknesses and sorrows that come upon God's children are his chastisements. As a rule when the believer passes through these things he reviews his life to see if there is not some sin or failure in it which has brought these things upon him. And since he can always find some failure in his life he feels that his experience is God's punishment for his sin.

This could have been true in the Acts period, as is clearly indicated by 1 Corinthians 11:30 and James 5:15-16. But it cannot be true today, for it would not be an act of grace upon God's part if He visited a man with sickness, sorrow or loss. These things may come upon any man, but in this day they cannot be attributed to God. If He cannot act in grace, He will not act at all. At the present time His grace rules in all His dealings with men.

Like so many other difficulties, this one arises from a misconception. A modern meaning has been fixed upon the old English word *chasten*, which makes it to mean punishment. The old meaning, now obsolete, is "to train", and this is what the Greek word means. This same word appears as follows: in 1 Timothy 1:20 it is translated *learn*, in 2 Timothy 2:25 *instructing*, in Titus 2:12 *teaching*, in Ephesians 6:4 *nurture*, and in 2 Timothy 3:16 *instruction*. If these references are

examined, it will be found that the word does not mean punishment. It means discipline or training. It has to do with correcting faults and establishing in the right way.

This is what the Lord does for everyone whom He loves. He teaches us, nurtures us, corrects our faults, and trains us so that we can walk and live for His glory. We do not deserve such personal attention from Him, but it comes to us as an act of undeserved favor. Every child of God has a private tutor. If they will accept His discipline or instruction, they will grow in grace and knowledge.

Some will ask about scourging. The passage also declares that he scourges every son whom he receiveth. Scourging is most certainly punishment, and it cannot be an act of grace.

As sorely as they may need it, God is not scourging His children in this dispensation of grace. His sole means of dealing with His children are acts of grace. It is the grace of God that trains us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires, and to live. soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. See Titus 2:11-12.

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## ***LESSONS FROM JEREMIAH*** **(Continued from Vol. IX, No. 1.)**

### **Jehovah Speaks of the Horrors of the Invasion 8:1-3.**

**At that time, saith the Lord, they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of his princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves: And they shall spread them before the sun, and the moon, and all the host of heaven, whom they have loved, and whom they have served, and after whom they have sought, and whom they have worshipped; they shall not be gathered, nor be buried; they shall be for dung upon the face of the earth. And death shall be chosen rather than life by all the residue of them that remain of this evil family, which remain in all the places whither I have driven them, saith the Lord of hosts.**

These verses must not be detached from the preceding chapter. They are warned that at the time the invasion from the north takes place, the invaders will violate the tombs of the kings, princes, priests, prophets and people of Judah. They had been responsible for the corruption and idolatry. Their bones would be taken from their tombs and spread before the sun, moon and stars. They had loved, served, pursued, sought and worshipped these heavenly bodies. Their bones would never again be regathered or buried. but would be as a fertilizer for the earth. Those who remained alive and were carried away captive would wish that they had died in the invasion.

### **Jehovah Speaks of Judah's Perverseness. 8:4-7.**

**Moreover thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord; shall they fall, and not arise? shall he turn away, and not return? Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return. I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? everyone turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle. Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but My people know not the judgment of the Lord.**



When men fall they get up on their feet again. When they depart from their homes they come back again. It would be abnormal and unreasonable for them to do otherwise. But Judah fell into iniquity and never rose again. They loved it like the sow loves the mire. They turned from their God, but never returned to Him. Thus they had done the abnormal and the unreasonable thing. They had fallen into a perpetual apostasy and clung to their deceit. Even as men today move at a distance from God and remain in that condition, they leave the far country for the Father's house, but move back to the devil's halfway house and sign a lifetime lease. They cling to the things that stand between themselves and God. They cling to error while warning against the least grain of truth.

Jehovah gave attention and listened, but none in Judah spoke the truth. No man repented of his wickedness saying, "What have I done?" They failed to see that the sin of the nation was simply the collective sins of the individual. Each man chose his own way and rushed into destruction as the horse charges into battle. The birds in the heavens by instinct knew the appointed time for their migration, but the Lord's people did not understand the clear revelation of the Lord, which told of judgment that would come upon them.

### **Judah Criticized for Her Speech 8:8.**

**How do ye say, We are wise and the law of the Lord is with us?**

They knew they possessed a wisdom not granted to other people, and laws that had been given to no other nation. They boasted in this wisdom and rested in their possession of the law. See Roman 2:17-18. They failed to recognize that the possession of these things placed upon them a greater responsibility and made their sins all the more grievous. See John 9:41.

### **Jehovah, through Jeremiah, Answers Judah's Boast. 8:9-13.**

**Lo, certainly in vain made he it; the pen of the scribes is in vain. The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: Lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them? Therefore will I give their wives unto others, and their fields to them that shall inherit them: for everyone from the least unto the greatest is given to covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, with the Lord. I will surely consume them, saith the Lord: there shall be no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree, and the leaf shall fade; and the things that I have given them shall pass away from them.**

The lying pens of the scribes had turned the message of God into a lie. The wise men who should have had wisdom to give to the people were ashamed and dumbfounded. They had rejected the word of Jehovah, apart from which there is no wisdom. The word *rejected* marks the second of four downward steps. First it became a reproach, 6:10; then it was rejected, 8:9; scoffed at, 17:15; and finally perverted, 23:36. Verses 10 to 12 are repeated from chapter 6:12-15. No repentance had taken place in the twelve years that had elapsed since the words were first spoken. They are warned that when the judgment falls all the gifts that God had given them would be withdrawn. This happened to Israel again at Acts 28:28.

### **A Faithful Remnant Speaks 8:14-16.**

**Why do we sit still? assemble yourselves, and let us enter into the defenced cities, and let us be silent there: for the Lord our God has put us to silence, and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against the Lord. We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a**

**time of health, and behold trouble! The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan: the whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones; for they are come, and have devoured the land, and all that is in it; the city, and those that dwell therein.**

There were some in Judah who believed the warnings of Jeremiah and acknowledged the hand of God in the judgments that had already fallen upon the land. They suggest that they stir from their lethargy and move as a body into the defenced cities and there await their doom. They say the Lord has doomed them to destruction, and has given them poisoned water to drink because they had sinned against Him. They believed the scribes and looked for peace and health, but an evil time and disaster had come upon them. Verse 16 is extremely vivid. Reports had come to them of the invasion at the northern border of Dan, and the whole land was trembling before the power of amassed armies, against which Judah had no defense.

### **Jehovah to Judah 8:17**

**For behold, I will send serpents, cockatrices, among you, which will not be charmed, and they shall bite you, saith the Lord.**

The invading armies will be like serpents that cannot be charmed. Judah will most certainly feel their sting. The judgments of the Lord cannot be averted.

### **Jeremiah Laments 8:18-19**

**When I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me. Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them that dwell in a far country: Is not the Lord in Zion? is not her king in her?**

Jeremiah looks about but can find no encouragement. He is unable to comfort himself or speak a word of comfort to the people. The situation is hopeless from every standpoint. His heart melts as he hears the lamentation in Jerusalem for those who have already been carried into captivity. They ask if the Lord is truly in Zion.

### **Jehovah Replies 8:19**

**Why have they provoked Me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities?**

The question of the people is answered by Jehovah asking another. He was most certainly among them but they had provoked Him to anger with their idolatry.

### **Daughters of Jerusalem Lament 8:20**

**The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.**

The helpless people realize that their opportunities for deliverance are gone. There is remorse, but no turning to God.

### **Jeremiah's Lament 8:21-9:2.**

**For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.**

**Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! For they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.**

Jeremiah felt keenly the sufferings of his people. He knew their present sufferings as well as what awaited them. "I am black" means that he lived as one in mourning, and "astonishment hath taken

hold on me" means that he had been seized by a feeling of terrible horror. There had been healing measures as God sought to alleviate the wounds of His people, but there was no recovery. He wishes that his head were water and his eyes a fountain of tears, that he might weep continuously for those who are already slain. He longs for a place in the wilderness, some hermit retreat so that he would see his people no more. He had labored for years to turn them to God, but they remained idolatrous. They were men who could not be trusted.

### **Jehovah to Jeremiah 9:3**

**And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies; but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not Me, saith the Lord.**

When Jeremiah spoke of the visible and outward sins of Judah, the Lord takes up the message, confirms his declaration and makes a further revelation of their hearts. They were skillful and bold when it came to lies, but were incompetent and fearful when truth was thrust upon them. They went from bad to worse until the knowledge of Jehovah disappeared from among them.

### **Jehovah Counsels Jeremiah 9:4-6**

**Take ye heed everyone of his neighbor, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbor will walk with slanders. And they will deceive every one his neighbor, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity. Thine habitation is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know Me, saith the Lord.**

Sad indeed is the condition when God must warn every man to be on guard against his neighbor, and for no man to trust his brother. He declares that every brother is a supplanter and every neighbor is a slanderer, that each one cheats his neighbor and no one speaks the truth. They had trained their tongues to speak lies, so that lying had become a fine art among them. Jeremiah is told that his own dwelling is in the midst of deceit, and through deceiving themselves they remained in willful ignorance of their God.

### **Warnings of Retribution 9:7-11**

**Therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, I will melt them and try them; for how shall I do for the daughter of My people? Their tongue is as an arrow shot out; it speaketh deceit: one speaketh peaceably to his neighbor with his' mouth, but in heart. he layeth in wait. Shall I not visit them for these things? saith the Lord: shall not My soul be avenged on such a nation as this? For the mountains I will take up a weeping and wailing, and for the habitations of the wilderness a lamentation, because they are burned up, so that none can pass through them; neither can men hear the voice of the cattle; both the fowl of the heavens and the beast are fled; they are gone. And I will make Jerusalem heaps, and a den of dragons; and I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant.**

The Lord declares that Judah must pass through the furnace of affliction, to be smelted and tested, for there is nothing else to be done in view of the wickedness of the people. Their tongues have become like poisoned arrows. With their tongues they speak fair words to their neighbors, but in their hearts they are setting a trap for them. Jehovah laments the terrible judgment that must fall upon the land from the mountain tops to the plains. He sees it as a barren waste, where no men pass through, no cattle graze, and even the fowls of the heaven have abandoned it.

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# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**QUESTION:** You have used quite often the phrase "distinguish the things that differ." What is the source of this?

**ANSWER.** It is found in the margin of the *American Standard Version* as the alternate rendering of "approve things that are excellent." A more literal rendering of the entire verse would be: "And it is my prayer that your love may be more and more accompanied by dear knowledge and keen perception, so that you may distinguish the things that differ, in order that you may be sincere and no stumbling block for the day of Christ."

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**QUESTION:** Could the good olive tree of Romans 11 be Christ?

**ANSWER:** If we take each statement made in Romans 11 concerning the good olive tree we will find that many of them cannot be true of Christ; therefore, He cannot be represented by the good olive tree. By taking one or two statements out of the chapter and applying them to Christ it can be made to appear that He is the olive tree. When the truth set forth in this chapter is fully considered the idea that it is Christ is preposterous. Note the following:

1. A good olive tree is a cultivated olive tree. A wild olive tree is an uncultivated one. The thought of a "cultivated Christ" and "uncultivated Christs" is an abhorrent one, but that is what we will become involved in if we make the good olive tree to be Christ.

2. Such an interpretation would require that the trunk alone be the tree and the branches no part of the tree. This is illogical, for a tree is composed of root, trunk and branches. If the good olive tree is Christ, then some parts of Christ had been cut off, inasmuch as some of the branches had been cut off.

3. If the good olive tree is Christ, then there is a warning or threat of men being severed from Christ after having been brought into living association with Him. See Romans 11:21-22. If this is true, then it makes void all that Paul said in Romans 8, and it eliminates the promise of eternal security contained in the gospel of the grace of God.

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## ***THE EDITOR TO HIS FRIENDS***

\*\*\*\*The new pamphlet on "The Dispensation of the Grace of God" is being very favorably received. This is most gratifying. It is impossible for me to reply to the many letters of appreciation received concerning this study, but I would have the senders know that their words are also appreciated. This is the first of five or six pamphlets which, the Lord willing, I hope to issue in 1947. Many orders have been received from friends who desired copies of "The Dispensation of the Grace of God" to be sent to others. One friend sent in ninety-three names, another sent in sixty-five, and many others sent in from one to five. Lack of time made it impossible for us to acknowledge all these orders, but I wish to say that to each name sent in, a package has been sent containing the pamphlet, the last issue of the magazine, a list of writings, and a return post card, so that the one receiving it could, if interested, make request for THE WORD OF TRUTH.

\*\*\*\*Printing costs have skyrocketed. It cost \$81.00 more for the last *issue* of the magazine than it did the preceding one of same quantity and number of pages. There is no choice in the matter except to pay these increased costs if we desire to continue this publication. Help will be needed for the next issue, so I trust the friends will feel led to respond.

\*\*\*\*The meetings announced for Los Angeles, California, under THE EDITOR'S MINISTRY have been under consideration for a year. I had planned for an extended visit to California for the first six weeks of 1947, but so many things intervened that I cancelled all plans and put the idea out of my mind. However, due to the insistent pleas of some of the friends of this ministry in Los Angeles, I reconsidered and decided to make a streamlined version of the trip originally planned. The trip will be made by train so as to spend as little time as possible in traveling, and Los Angeles will be the only city visited while there. The sole purpose of this trip is to teach the Word of God in the metropolitan area of Los Angeles. Therefore, I must disregard the insistent invitations of friends in other places to spend some time with them, even though I would very much like to do so. These meetings are sponsored by THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY and they will be held under the auspices of a new witness there, THE LOS ANGELES BIBLE TESTIMONY. Mr. Elroy Robinson is the Director of this work, and he has a capable helper in Mr. Hershey Julien. These two brethren along with C. V. Duff, James Schwimmer, William Lindsey and Paul Robinson are the Trustees of this Testimony. I am personally acquainted with these men and have unlimited confidence in them as sincere believers in Christ Jesus and lovers of the Truth.

\*\*\*\*The headquarters of THE LOS ANGELES BIBLE TESTIMONY is located at 317 Westminster Avenue. No meetings will be held here during the Conference. Call Mr. Elroy Robinson at Whitney 5106 for any further information you may desire.

The expense of such a meeting is far more than this new testimony can undertake to meet. The rent for the hall is \$175.00 for the eleven nights. If any friend of the ministry would like to have a part in this, their fellowship; in this effort will be deeply appreciated.

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