

The Word of Truth Ministry Presents

“ONE A DAY”

87 BRIEF BIBLE STUDIES

BY

OTIS Q. SELLERS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Otis Q. Sellers, the author of the messages published in this booklet, wrote them to stir people up to search God's Word.

For seventy of his ninety years he had been a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ and for the same period of time a diligent Bible student and teacher. For sixty of those seventy years he had no denominational affiliation of any kind, it being his desire to keep himself totally free to believe and to teach all that he found written in the Word of God.

These messages were originally published in newspapers throughout the United States and, until now, have never been published in a compiled form. He has left a legacy of Bible study messages. We hope they continue to stir people up to search for the truth in God's Word.

NOTE: This file contains “hyper links”. For more information on using hyperlinks, see Appendix 1 at the end of this document or click [here](#).

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1

PROCLAIM THE WORD

This is God's solemn charge, and this is what I plan to do through space purchased in this newspaper. Permit me to introduce myself. My name is Otis Q. Sellers. I am a personal believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. I belong to Him. I love Him, and I serve Him. I believe in perpetual and progressive Bible study, being convinced that very little of Scripture is at present understood, and that if it ever comes to be understood it will be because free men have applied themselves to the study of it. My findings are set forth in a publication called THE WORD OF TRUTH and in various pamphlets, which I have written.

I practice and proclaim a way of life for the active believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, which is called Christian Individualism. I am convinced that in order to fulfill my responsibilities to Him it must be done as an individual. I cannot waste my time looking for some group or waiting upon some group to do it with me.

It is my conviction and my experience that it is the divine privilege of the individual to lay hold of Jesus Christ in all that He can ever be to any man, and to enjoy all His rich blessings and fellowship wholly apart from any institution or organization. Such things as nearness to God, likeness to Jesus Christ, devotedness to His Word, and separation from the world can all be attained to and maintained by the individual believer in Him without being any part of an organized company. He can be attached to Christ, to His Name, to His Word, to His cause, yes, even to His people, and yet be no part of organized religion.

To all fellow-believers, to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, I would say that our Lord is under severe attack. We are seeing the fulfillment of the Psalmist's words, "the tumult of those that rise up against Thee increaseth continually" (Psalm 74:23). We wait and pray for Him to arise and plead His own cause, which He will most certainly do. But while we wait, there are things I desire to say in His behalf.

These things concern His person and His work. They will be founded upon statements made concerning Him in the book we call the Bible, which I believe to be the verbally inspired word of God.

I invite you to watch for these Bible-teaching messages in this newspaper from week to week. These will deal with many pertinent Biblical subjects. Jesus Christ will be proclaimed as the Savior of sinners, verbal inspiration of the Bible will be magnified, the interpretations given will be completely dispensational. I will show from the Word that God has plans to intervene in the affairs of this world and set up His own government upon the earth. The Biblical truth concerning man's nature and destiny will be faithfully presented. It will be shown from God's Word that this earth, and not heaven, is the future home of all of God's redeemed.

I am not alone in this work, as I have many helpers who are willing to serve in the background. Literature is available to all who may be interested. Write us.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO JESUS CHRIST

On every hand men are being exhorted to believe, but are they being given anything to believe? Are they being told the transcendent Biblical facts concerning the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the record God has given of His Son? May I introduce Him to you?

First of all there is God Absolute, the Being who above all other beings is supreme. To Him you need no introduction. That He exists is known to all men. It is admitted by most. It is denied by some. His existence is no part of the Biblical record, it being assumed there. It is known to men who have never seen a Bible. It was known before the Bible was written. This knowledge or God-consciousness is a distinctive feature of our humanity. Men degenerate and become inhuman when it is given up. But beyond the fact that He exists, we can know nothing concerning Him, unless in some manner He sees fit to reveal Himself. This He has done. He that comes unto God must believe that He exists, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6). He has spoken; therefore we seek Him in the book that tells us what He has to say, the Bible. When we open the Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, we come face to face with God Manifest. For the purpose of revealing Himself, God Absolute has assumed a divine form, which in some aspects is like those of the man who was later created in His image. This is the Creator, the Elohim Who expresses, represents, and declares the Absolute God to men. It is God in manifestation who is seen in action throughout the Old Testament. He is called by the name Jehovah (Yahweh). This made it possible for believing men to say "Jehovah is my Elohim;" that is, He is the One who expresses, represents, and declares God. Yet the revelation does not stop there.

Going on in the Bible we find that the One who was God Manifest in the Old Testament has become God Manifest in the flesh in the New. The One who was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich (2 Cor. 8:9). The great Jehovah of the Old Testament emptied Himself and became the Lord Jesus Christ of the New.

Thus Jesus the Christ became our Elohim, the One who represents,

declares, and expresses God Absolute to us (John 1:18). To know Him is to know the Father (John 14:7); to believe in Him is to believe in the One who sent Him (John 12:44).

It was the great Creator who became our Savior. Such a One, and He alone, is worthy and capable of being the Savior of sinners. He is available to individuals as a personal Savior. Anyone who can truthfully say, "Jesus Christ is my Savior," has also the God-given right to say, "I am saved." So why go on being a sinner without a Savior? Why not become a sinner with a Savior? God's Word to you concerning this is: **"But as many as received Him, to them gave He authority to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name."** John 1:12.

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GOD MUST INTERVENE

We live in a world that is sick unto death, a world beset with all kinds of complex maladies. One period of peril follows another, and the old optimistic illusion that we can do something about it has given way to doubt. Sober-minded statesmen are admitting that the problems of nations and races are beyond solution. Even the American dream of a compassionate and vigorous nation fighting for a world of order and decency has given way to disillusionment and despair.

All the while 'evil men and seducers wax worse and worse,' as the Apostle Paul declared. Daily it becomes more evident that we are not just passing through another of those crises, which are common to mankind, but that we have reached a cataclysmic junction in the history of the world where something has to happen. It has been said that we are now living in "the golden age of the criminal." If evil men continue to wax worse and worse for another decade, life on this planet will hardly be desirable. Man has continued to ruin this world until he has brought it to a state where he can no longer endure the appalling conditions he has brought into existence.

In view of this desperate situation the question is asked by some demanding inquirers, "Why doesn't God do something?" Others more reverently say, "God must do something." And since He has not seemed to act, some are concluding that He does not exist or that He is dead.

The Biblical answer to these questions is that God is going to intervene. He has declared this in His Word. It is His purpose to inject Himself into the flow of history, to reverse that flow and turn it toward Himself. This is the substance of many declarations and promises. He will break the strength of evil and wicked men, and bring their wickedness to an end (Psalm 10:15). He will assume sovereignty over all men, and become the governor among the nations (Psalm 22:27,28). He will cut off all evil doers (Psalm 37:9). He will speak from heaven and cause wars to cease, destroying all instruments of war by His voice (Psalm 46:6-10). He will stop the flow of iniquity (Psalm 107:42). He

will lift up a standard against the enemies of righteousness (Isa. 59:19). He will turn His hand upon Israel and begin to fulfill His wonderful promises to that people (Isa. 1:25, Ezek. 34:11-31). He will pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh (Acts 2:17). He will send forth His judgments unto victory (Matt. 12:18-21).

All these things God will do through His Son Jesus Christ, while He remains in His place at the right hand of God. Not one of these promises are dependent in any way upon the return of Jesus Christ to the earth. The day is surely coming when God will assume sovereignty over all mankind, take the reins 'of government into His own hands and the kingdom of God will be a reality upon the earth. May God speed the day.

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THOSE TURNING FROM THE CHURCH SHOULD TURN TO JESUS CHRIST

On every hand we hear of those who are dissatisfied with and who are turning away from organized religion, commonly called "the church." They insist that the church has nothing to offer them, that it does not fulfill their need. They complain that it is trying to lead them down political paths they do not wish to travel, and into political activities in which they do not want to become involved. They say they do not care for all the social and "make work" activities that burn up valuable time which could better be spent in other ways. They do not like the elaborate rituals which more and more become characteristic of what the churches call worship. They are rebelling against creeds imposed upon them from above, creeds with which they are not in sympathy and which they do not believe. Because of such things as these, and for many other reasons, they are turning from the church. And the tragedy is that many of these now feel that there is nothing for them but agnosticism and unbelief.

Apropos of this, a leading churchman and theologian has said: "It is unmistakable that today, in Europe especially, there prevails a far-reaching mistrust of everything that has to do with the Church, even among such as are quite open to the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must not forget that the idea of the Church is heavily compromised by nineteen hundred years of Church history, and the churches have accumulated obstacles between Jesus Christ and individual man which are often impossible to surmount."

In view of this those who have tried the church-centered life and found it unsatisfactory should try the Christ-centered life. Those who are giving up being churchmen, should try being Christians. There are many who are Christians in every Biblical sense that can be given to this exalted name, yet they are Christians wholly apart from all institutions and organizations that are called churches. They hold that it is the divine privilege of the individual to lay hold of Christ in all that He can ever be

to any man, and to enjoy all His rich blessings and fellowship wholly apart from organized religion as such.

I claim to be one of these. In fact I am convinced that the only way I can live out my life as an active believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is to do it apart from all organized religion. This course alone permits me to give Him the preeminence in all things.

I would heartily recommend this way of life to others. I would advise them that if they see fit to give up the church, they do not need to give up Jesus Christ. He is available to all men as a personal Savior.

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THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The theme of the Bible is the kingdom of God. This is its central idea, the concept that embraces its total message. To understand what is meant by it is to hold the key that will unlock the treasures of God's Word.

Any book that makes sense or conveys a message must have a central idea, a theme, a plot. When men make the claim, as many do, that the Bible is a confusing book, and that it has no relevancy to the present time, it is probably because they have ignored altogether its central theme.

The man who has no understanding of the kingdom of God has no real knowledge of the Bible, no matter how many bits and pieces he may have collected. In order for these to make sense they must be related to the theme of the kingdom of God.

The Greek word translated "kingdom" is **basileia**. Today the word kingdom has been debased to mean a country whose head of state is designated as a king, but this is not what the Greek word means. It means government, and that which is called the kingdom of God in our versions is in reality the government of God, or God's government. In the New Testament this term usually refers to a definite period of time when this earth and all men upon it will be governed by God.

In this land of ours we see many things that can be called federal, state, or city government. But there is not one thing on this earth today that can be called God's government. Men are governing the earth today, not God. His present dispensation is one of grace, not government. Not until He intervenes and assumes sovereignty will there be a dispensation of divine government upon the earth.

It is the message of the Bible that the kingdom of God is a condition of divine government, which will yet be a reality upon earth. It will be an ordered system, embracing the whole earth, and will be administered by Jesus Christ from His exalted position at the right hand of God. He

must reign (govern) until He has put all enemies under His feet (I Cor. 15:25). He will not leave His present position until His foes have been made His footstool (Acts 2:35).

There is nothing that is more sorely needed today than God's government. It will never be brought in by anything that man can do. It will begin the moment that God in Christ speaks from heaven and assumes sovereignty over the earth and all nations upon the earth. Very few know it, but this is what men are asking for when they pray, "Thy kingdom come."

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GOD'S GOVERNMENT

It is promised in God's Word that the day will come when God will take the reins of government into His own hands and rule the earth and men upon it. This will take place when God has completed His present purpose. Today we speak of government "of the people and by the people," but even this concept will have to give way when God assumes sovereignty and the kingdom of God becomes a reality. Divine government will not be offered to men. It will be imposed upon them. The inspired words of the Psalmist declare of God: "Thou shalt judge the peoples righteously, and govern the nations upon the earth" (Psa. 67:4). This is the hope of the earth and the hope of the nations upon the earth.

There are many who feel that this glorious destiny for man can be achieved only by the visible personal return of Jesus Christ to the earth. "There can be no kingdom without the King," is the dogmatic statement of those who hold this view. They fail to realize that what they are insisting is that there can be no kingdom until the King is upon the earth. This is not true. He can assume sovereignty and govern just as well from His exalted place in heaven as He could if He were upon the earth. His government of this earth is not dependent upon His actual presence upon it.

The kingdom of God will not be brought in by anything that man does. If so it would be man's government and not God's government. It is not the result of men setting up a government and making God to be the head of it. God's government will come about as a result of great acts of God himself, a great complex of events that will result in divine government upon the earth.

In a passage that at first appears to be a statement of present truth, but which is in reality a great prophecy, the Psalmist says: "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's; and He is the governor among the nations" (Psa. 22:27,28).

The coming of God's government upon the earth is not a long and

gradual process. It is not the result of the second coming of Christ. He comes in order to be personally present, after He has long governed the earth. The kingdom of God is pre-advent, it precedes His coming; it is pre-millennial, it precedes the millennium; it is pre-eschatological, it precedes all the events set forth in the book of Revelation. Like Joseph of Arimathea (Luke 23:51), we also wait for the kingdom of God.

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GOD'S PRESENT PURPOSE

What is it? What is He now doing?

It is the faith of all who believe in God that the day will come when He will put forth all His wisdom and power to insure the triumph of good and the defeat of evil. There is a destined limit to the reign of evil in this world. Present conditions will not continue forever. The time will come when the God of wisdom, power, and love will do the thing that all God-fearing men believe He can do and should do.

It is not strange that God will yet exert His power to bring about the victory of good. It is what you would do if you were God; it is what I would do if I were God. It is no mystery that He will do it. The great mystery is that He delays so long — a fact that has led some to think that He is an indifferent spectator of the unequal struggle between good and evil upon the earth. If the God of heaven be all-powerful, all-wise, and all-good, how can it be that darkness and error, vice and evil are rampant on every side and yet He do nothing about it?

All this is explained and all such questions are answered when one comes to a knowledge of God's present purpose. This purpose is to write into the history of His long dealings with mankind an absolute record of the grace that is inherent in His character. This is being done by means of a dispensation (administration) of grace in which every act of God toward men is one of love and favor to the undeserving. For 1900 years God has acted only in grace, and when He cannot act in grace, then He does not act at all. By thus acting He establishes a complete record of His love and favor to undeserving mankind.

There is a time coming when "every sin and transgression will receive its just recompense of reward." This will be divine justice, but not divine grace. It will be under a display of divine government, but it is not so at the present time.

In the Biblical revelation of the polarity of the divine character, God is set forth as "the judge of all the earth," and as such He will do what is

right (Gen. 18:25). But He is also set forth as being "the God of every grace" (I Pet. 5:10), and as such it is not strange at all that He would demonstrate His grace, without admixture, over such a long period of time. When the time comes for Him to reveal Himself (Isa. 40:5), we will be a billion times richer in the knowledge of Him because He took time to establish the record of His grace. This is what He is now doing. His purpose is not failing; it is meeting with complete success.

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CREATION OR EVOLUTION

By divine inspiration Moses wrote that **"the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground"** (Gen. 2:7). The Lord Jesus said, **"He which made them in the beginning made them male and female"** (Matt. 19:4). Paul declared that. **"God made the world and all things therein"** (Act 17:24).

In the 2000 years that have passed since the last of these statements was made, man's knowledge has rapidly advanced, making almost unbelievable strides. And yet in all that man has discovered in the heights, on the surface, or in the depth, not one single fact has been uncovered that would show that these men did not know what they were talking about.

However, it is well known that these statements from the Bible are flatly contradicted by a theory, a hypothesis, that has now become an article of faith, believed by almost everyone. This theory travels under the name "Evolution", and it claims that algae, amoebas, worms, apes, and men are all the products of lower forms of life evolving into higher forms. The proponents of this idea always pose as if they were in possession of complete evidence in support of its validity, but when the demand is made for proof they cannot produce as much as one single fact in evidence.

If this charge is not true, then why would Sir Arthur Keith, an avowed evolutionist, have said: "Evolution is unproved and unprovable. We believe it because the only alternative is special creation, and that is unthinkable." Or, as Sir William Dawson, Canada's great geologist, said of this theory: "It is one of the strangest phenomena of humanity, it is utterly destitute of proof." There is no evidence anywhere in nature today or in the fossil world of yesterday for the theory of evolution. It all exists in the imagination of evolutionists, who hire model makers to make models and artists to paint pictures showing the steps by which one form changed into another.

Since at the beginning of its message the Bible declares that God

created the heavens and the earth, and then created man upon the earth, these facts become the fountainhead of all the truth that Scripture reveals. If a man cuts off from this, he cuts himself off from the flow of truth at its very start and it is not possible for him to take it up at some later point.

The acceptance of the revelation of God as the Creator leads a man to feel that he has some connection with and responsibility to the Creator, and that this imposes upon him certain obligations that must be acknowledged and honored. But this is what most men do not want to do; therefore, they refuse to take the first step, which is bound to lead to such convictions.

The writer is not among those who feel it mandatory to yield to every so-called scientific theory. He is not a mind-worshipper who cannot stand the stigma of not being classed with the intellectuals.

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FUTURE PUNISHMENT

Future punishment for the grievous sins committed in this life is admitted by all who accept the authority of the Word of God. As to the nature and duration of this punishment there is a wide difference of opinion. There are few indeed who know that the teaching of orthodox theology was manufactured by theologians and is not based upon facts concerning this doctrine that are found in the Bible. The time for a restudy of what the inspired Book has to say about this subject is long past due.

John Stuart Mill, the famous English philosopher, once remarked that when compared with the doctrine of endless torment any other objection to Christianity sinks into insignificance. These words were spoken at a time when all Christians believed in what they called "hell" on principle and enjoyed describing it in terms as grisly and crude as they could manufacture.

"Eternal conscious torment" are the words generally used to state the position of church theology on the nature and duration of future punishment. If these words express the mind of God, they are well and good: but if they do not, they are a slander against the truth and should be abandoned.

A Biblical belief in the nature and duration of future punishment should come about as follows: The New Testament should be read carefully and every passage that has any possible bearing upon this subject should be carefully noted. The translation of these passages should be checked against the original Greek to make sure we are considering what God said rather than some incorrect version. Then an honest interpretation or understanding of what God meant by what He said must be arrived at. All prejudices and preconceptions must be put aside at the start. It is only by following such a course that one can arrive at the truth set forth in the pages of God's Book.

In times past many Christian men proclaimed some very coarse and crude ideas concerning future punishment. These ideas were so re-

pugnant that compassionate men rejected the idea that "the miser would have molten gold poured down his throat," or that "the damned shall be packed like brick in a kiln, and be so bound that they cannot move a limb, nor even an eyelid; and while thus fixed the Almighty shall blow the fires of hell through them forever."

Such coarse and revolting ideas have been abandoned by most Christians, but very few have any real Biblical ideas to take their place.

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CHRISTIAN INDIVIDUALISM

In the sight of God each man exists as an individual and he is dealt with as such. He cannot change this by joining an organization in the hope that he will be dealt with on a group basis. He does not become a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ by affiliating himself with a company of believers. There is no institution that can mediate between God and man. No man should try to hide from God in an organization. You cannot identify yourself with God by becoming identified with a church.

Christian individualism as a way of life for the active believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is being practiced by many who have discovered that their loyalty to God's truth has brought them into conflict with the practices of the organizations that call themselves churches. These organizations settle matters of great spiritual importance by majority vote, feeling that the voice of the people is the voice of God. Decisions and programs are often handed down from someone above, and the individual is supposed to submit to these no matter what his personal convictions may be.

Most men revere organizations, and they worship crowds and numbers to such an extent that they cease to have any personal feelings. They are persuaded that if a thing is believed or practiced by many people it must be true and right and all others should conform to it. Thus they cease to have any real personality or character because all their springs of individuality have dried up. Personality and character are built by the exercise of discrimination, evaluation, and choice. If these personal faculties are not used, they grow blunt and dull and finally wither away. When this happens a man becomes depersonalized, a human automation. This is supposed to be an ideal situation in relationship to man's spiritual activities. In the realm of religion men are supposed to be depersonalized, to act, to think and move as a group, not as individuals. If they ask questions, they must be stock questions, and they are expected to receive stock answers without further discussion. They are not supposed to exercise discrimination or to evaluate

anything.

This is an intolerable situation for the active believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Why should he fight with some great organization in order to take one step in advance in the truth? He is constantly urged to read and study the Bible, but he is subjected to abuse if he finds anything in it that contradicts the traditional creed. Thus the only path open to him is one of Christian individualism. In this way of life he can fulfill his place as a believer in this unbelieving world.

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GOD'S JUDGMENTS

The Lord Jesus Christ rebuked the Pharisees because they made "the Word of God of none effect" through their traditions. Today we see an example of this in the way in which Christians handle the word judgment. In all theology this word is taken to mean punishment; so much so that this has fixed upon it a definition of "a calamity sent by God by way of recompense for wrongs committed." It has come to mean this in English only because men have insisted upon using it this way, but it constitutes a very serious error when this meaning is carried into God's Word.

The worst thing that theologians ever did to the truth of God was when they took the word judgment and made it to mean punishment. A leading evangelist continually speaks of "God's terrible judgments" which, he says, are to be poured out upon the earth. Those who make a study of the word judgment in all its occurrences in the Bible will find that God's judgments are never terrible and that this word never means punishment. This is a very prominent word in the Bible, and if it is given a false meaning, we are bound to foul up our understanding of the many passages in which it is found. Promises of great good and infinite blessings are changed into dire threats of terrible calamities when the wrong meaning is read into the word judgment. Thus the truth of God is changed into a lie.

The verb judge means to make a determination in regard to a matter. The result of such an action is a judgment. In the Bible the word judgment has to do with a determined and established order, system, or arrangement, and when it speaks of God's judgments, it usually refers to an order or arrangement that has its source in Him, one that He has determined and established. In this light, consider the beautiful words of David when he said: "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is Thy servant warned: and in keeping of them is great reward." (Psalm

19:9,10.)

Through Isaiah God declared that if favor (grace) is shown to the wicked, they will not learn righteousness (Isa. 26:10). This is what God is doing today, and true to this it is not producing righteousness. He also says, "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the World will learn righteousness." (Isa. 26:9.) This will take place when God causes judgment to be heard from heaven (Psa. 76:8). He has promised to make His judgments plain to the nations, to send forth judgments until He has gained the victory." (Matt. 12:18,21.)

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THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

Great and numerous are the prophecies in the Word of God that set forth a glorious future for Israel. By Israel, I mean the descendants of Abraham who came through the line of Isaac and Jacob, the man whose name was changed to Israel. One of the greatest of these explicit prophecies, spoken to "all the house of Israel wholly" is found in Ezekiel 11:16-21.

Thus said the Lord God; Although I have cast them far off among the nations, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come.

Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God; I will even gather you from the peoples, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.

And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence.

And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh:

That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God

Not one item in this prophecy has yet been fulfilled. Israel has not yet been gathered out of the countries where they have been scattered. Some have returned to their ancient homeland, but it has not been given to them. They have bought or fought for every inch of land they now hold there. The detestable things and abominations have not yet been purged from the land. They have not been given one heart; they are a sorely divided and fragmented people.

The fulfillment of this prophecy is not one of long and gradual human effort. It breathes of the miraculous in every statement. Its

fulfillment will begin on the day that God speaks from heaven, assumes sovereignty over all nations and His government, the kingdom of God, becomes a reality in this world.

This is seen in Ezekiel 20:23 where God says: "**Surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you.**" It is after this rule begins that all Israel will be denationalized and repatriated by God (verse 34). It is after this that He will deal with them personally and directly (verse 34). The world will yet see miraculous things happen to the people called Israel, but all prophecies concerning them await the coming of the kingdom of God for their fulfillment.

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DIVINE INTERVENTION PROMISED

We have a definite promise from God that "**when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him**" (Isa. 59:19). The result of this divine invasion of the earth by the Spirit of God will be that men will fear the Name of the Lord from the west to the east.

If there ever were a time in human history when the enemies of truth, righteousness, and Godliness have come in like a flood, it is the time in which we now live. In view of this abounding iniquity, those who believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God have every right to believe that God will intervene, inject Himself into the flow of history, and turn that flow unto Himself. This is our hope; this is our only hope; this is the last best hope of mankind. God will not fail. He will do what He has promised.

One of the great lost truths of the Bible is that God has the most definite plans to invade the earth by His Spirit, to occupy the earth by His Spirit, and to establish and maintain His order upon the earth by means of His Spirit. The first of these is declared in Isa. 59:19. The second is stated in Joel 2:28 and Acts 2:17. The third is declared in John 16:7-8.

All this is accomplished through Jesus Christ during His present session at the right hand of God in heaven. His enemies become His footstool while He is there (Heb. 1:13). It is the Spirit of the Lord that lifts up a standard against the forces of evil. This is done by a word from the Lord in heaven that in substance declares to all wicked men, "Stop — you shall go no further" (2 Tim. 3:9). God has promised to break the strength of evil and wicked men (Psa. 10:15), and to bring the wickedness of the wicked to an end (Psa. 7:9). These are remarkable promises, and it is a tragedy that very few know anything about them.

The promise of God that He will pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh (Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17) is one so great that it staggers the imagination. Very few who claim to believe what God says are able to bring

themselves to believe this specific statement. Nevertheless, this is the way that God will invade the earth by His Spirit and occupy the earth by His Spirit. When this promise becomes a reality, then the great promise of Christ that the Spirit of God, acting as an Advocate (one positioned alongside to advise), will make the facts known to the world in regard to sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:7-8).

It is then that a man will hear a voice behind him saying, "**This is the way, walk ye in it, when he turns to the right hand, and when he turns to the left**" (Isa. 30:21).

We can only pity those who see no work of God ahead for mankind except the blackness of tribulation and an imaginary Armageddon. God has made great and wonderful promises. These will be fulfilled to the letter.

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DIVINE INTERVENTION IMPENDING

The great truth that God is going to intervene in the affairs of mankind is one that is founded upon many statements in the Word of God. See Psalms 9:8, 19, 20; 22:27, 28, 46:6, 9; 67:4 as examples. History records many instances where one nation has invaded another, occupied its territory, assumed sovereignty over its people, and established its own order in the conquered land. This, in modern times, has been done by highly trained forces using tanks, planes, guns and all other means known to modern warfare.

When God invades the earth, He is not going to do it this way. He will not send His Son from heaven accompanied by the armies of heaven in order to subject His enemies. It will all be done by His Spirit. He will invade the earth, occupy the earth, assume sovereignty over it, and establish His own order upon it, all by the Spirit of God. When this is done, the kingdom (government) of God will be a reality upon the earth. God's long display of grace will have come to an end and a dispensation of divine government will come in. Men will yet know what it is to live in a world that is completely governed by God.

It is evident from the Bible that God invades the earth, assumes sovereignty, and establishes His order in a time when nations are in distress, and in a time of unusual iniquity. It is at a time when nations are in turmoil and when every government is shaking that the Lord speaks from heaven and makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. This is the truth revealed in Psalm 46:4-10 when it is properly translated and interpreted.

It is a time when there is a conspiracy of evil men, an insurrection of the workers of iniquity that God acts and they are wounded with the arrow of His Word. This is the message of Psalm 64. The time is now ripe for such divine action.

We are told in Psalm 92:7 that when the wicked spring up like the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it leads to them being put out of commission forever. The very thought of this leads me

to pray:

Arise, O God, plead Thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth Thee daily. Forget not the voice of Thine enemies: the tumult of those that rise up against Thee increaseth continually.
Psalm 74:22, 23.

It is when the enemy comes in like a flood that the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him. (Isa. 59:19). It is at a time when darkness covers the earth and thick darkness the peoples that God will again speak from heaven and say, "Let there be light." (Isa. 60:2).

The time is now ripe for divine intervention. It is impending. Watch for it! Wait for it! It is our hope! May God speed the day.

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THE EARTH, NOT HEAVEN, IS THE FUTURE HOME OF GOD'S REDEEMED

The Hebrew word for heaven (shamayim) is found 419 times in the Old Testament. The Greek word for heaven (onmnos) occurs 284 times in the New. By means of a concordance a student can examine every passage in which these words are used, noting what is said in each one, and assemble all the truth that is declared concerning heaven in the Word of God. If this is done he will find that the popular idea that heaven is the future home of God's people did not come from the Bible. This popular belief is not declared in any passage in which the word heaven occurs.

Does it not seem strange indeed that a doctrine that is so fervently held by both the world and the church should be so completely lacking in Scriptural support. One would think that it would be a simple matter for the proponents of this idea to rush into debate with hundreds of plain passages in which it is unequivocally declared that heaven is our future home. But this teaching cannot be found in the Bible. It is often declared in the last verse of many hymns, and it is imposed on certain obscure passages of Scripture, but it is not the teaching of God's Book.

It is the promise of God that, "those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth" (Psalm 37:9). The word inherit means to have a place or to enjoy a portion. Again it is promised, "But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (Psalm 37:11). A still stronger statement is found in Psalm 37:22 where it is declared, "For such as be blessed of Him shall inherit the earth."

If the Old Testament is carefully searched, nothing will be found that in any manner contradicts these statements. When the Lord Jesus Christ appeared upon the earth He confirmed these promises by saying, "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5). There are no statements anywhere else in the New Testament that sets aside or changes these words of David and the Lord Jesus. If some opposing

statement is manufactured, then the Bible is made to contradict itself.

Those who "wait upon the Lord," are those who are doing what they are supposed to do. This is the chief characteristic of a good waiter. The "meek" are the submissive. It is not that they allow men to walk all over them, but they allow God to do so. Since we expect to be "blessed of Him," we have His word for it that we will have a place and enjoy a portion in the earth; not this earth as it is today, but the earth when it has been redeemed, renewed, and restored by God.

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THE ACTS DISPENSATION

There is one concept of truth, which above all others will help the student of the New Testament to understand it. It will answer questions, solve problems, clear up contradictions, and make possible logical and viable interpretations. It is the truth that the thirty-three year period of which the book of Acts is the history was a unique dispensation of God. In this era He was dealing with men in a way He is not dealing with them today, and was accomplishing purposes upon which He is not even working today.

Failure to recognize this great truth makes it impossible to properly understand many portions of the New Testament. This is especially true of the six epistles written by Paul during this period. These are First and Second Thessalonians, First and Second Corinthians, Galatians and Romans. These are in harmony with the administration of God under which they were written. These books contain many eternal truths, which are not subject to change, but they also contain dispensational truths, which changed when the dispensation ended. For example see Rom. 1:16 (last clause), Rom. 3:1, 2, Rom. 15:27, 1 Cor. 6:1, 1 Cor. 7:27.

The foundation of the Acts dispensation is found in the words of the Lord Jesus recorded in Mark 16:15-18. **"And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."**

These words were fulfilled to the letter in the Acts period. This is demonstrated by Mark's final words: **"And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following"** (Mark 16:20).

The chief characteristic of the Acts period was that God-

commissioned men (**apostles**) went forth speaking a God-inspired message, each word of which was given to them each time they spoke it and in the mother tongue of the one for whom it was intended. The word they spoke was always confirmed with signs that followed, and when anyone believed the message, his faith was confirmed by miraculous signs in His own life. This was the unvarying pattern of the Acts period. It was entirely different from God's method of dealing with men today. We proclaim an inspired Word that is written. It is not confirmed by signs. We are shut up to faith in the written Word, and are satisfied to be in that blessed company "**that have not seen, and yet have believed**" (John 20:29).

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FOUR GREAT DAYS

The period of time in which a person is prominent is usually called his day. Four such days are set forth in Scripture, and the understanding of these will help greatly in comprehending the meaning of the Bible. It brings nothing but confusion to take what belongs to one day and attribute it to another. The four great days in Scripture provide a broad outline of the order of events when we consider things present and things to come. Let us consider these in their chronological order.

THE DAY OF MAN. This is the time in which we now live, a time in which man is having his unhindered day. Its title is found in the original language of I Cor. 4:3. It began when Noah emerged from the ark and human government became a reality upon the earth. During man's day all nations are permitted to walk after their own ways (Acts 14:16). It reaches its greatest height in the present dispensation of grace when all punishment for sin is in abeyance, and God continues to be gracious in spite of all that man does against Him. Man's day will come to a sudden end when God invades the earth by His Spirit, assumes sovereignty over all men and all nations, and sets up His own government upon the earth. See Isa. 59:19; Psa. 22:27,28; Psa. 67:4

THE DAY OF CHRIST. This title is found in Phil. 2:16. It begins with the unveiling of Jesus Christ and His manifestation to the world. It is the day when He will have His way with the world and with all men upon the earth. It is dominated by the fact that the glory of the Lord has been revealed and all flesh has seen it simultaneously (Isa. 40:5). It is the day of the manifest kingdom of God. We have reasons to believe that it will be seven hundred years in length.

THE DAY OF THE LORD. This is the day that "comes as a thief in the night" (I Thess. 5:2). No single event will announce its beginning. The great tribulation, the second coming of Jesus Christ, the long period of His personal presence, all take place in this day. It is at least a thousand years in length. Every event, without exception, predicted in the Book of Revelation takes place in this period of time. It is not next in

order, and great confusion of thoughts has resulted from attempts to advance it in time.

THE DAY OF GOD. This title is found in 2 Peter 3:12. The truth concerning it is set forth in Revelation 21. It is the day when the center of God's activities (His tabernacle) will be with men, and He will dwell with them. The planet earth will then become the mediatorial planet in relationship to God's program for the universe.

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A PERSONAL TESTIMONY

"Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He has done for my soul." Psa. 66:16. It has now been forty-eight years since God through Jesus Christ moved in relationship to my life. I did not at that time understand what He was doing, and I do not fully comprehend it now. But I do know that He moved in relationship to my life to relate Himself to it and become a part of it. I was a sinner and He desired to be my Savior. He wanted me to be saved.

This work of God in my behalf was wholly gracious. It was an act of love and favor to one who was undeserving, for this is what grace is. Grace is God's supreme expression of love, and it seeks for love in return. I now love Him because He first loved me (I John 4:19). But God's love, while persistent, does not force itself upon anyone. I could have refused God's gracious effort in my behalf. Today, I am glad I did not slam the door in His face and refuse Him a place in my life.

God's work in my behalf was not only gracious, it was also a secret. This is in harmony with God's present method of dealing with men, gracious and in secret. I would be ignorant of that fact that God in grace had ever touched my life if I had ignored and refused His gracious work. To yield to His work in our lives will result in time in one coming to realize that God has worked in his life. But let one reject that work and anything that God did will be unrecognized.

The very fact that one stands as a believer in Jesus Christ is proof positive that God has worked there. A literal translation of I John 5:1 reads: "Everyone who is believing that Jesus is the Christ has been generated of God." It is divine generation that is behind the faith of every believer. The position he has before God is not of man, neither by man, but it is of Jesus Christ and God the Father. In the providence of God, lest faith in Jesus Christ should perish from among men, our God is continually initiating a work in the lives of men, which if yielded to and followed out will result in a man becoming a God-produced believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is my claim that God did this work for me. I yielded to it, was carried along by it, and as a result I now stand as a theogenic; that is, a God-produced believer in the record God has given of His Son. By the authority of His Word, I lay claim to every privilege, every blessing, and every honor that God has promised to those who believe. You can find what these are by examining the following passages, paying close attention to the occurrences of the word "believe." John 1:12; John 3:16 and 18; John 3:36; John 5:24; Rom. 3:22,23; Rom. 4:3-5.

I take honest pride in being a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. I claim no denominational affiliation, but I do claim to be affiliated with Him. I am not related to any organization, but I am related to God through faith in Jesus Christ. To all sinners who desire a Savior I would say, "He is the Savior you need."

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THE DIVINE PURPOSE

It is the declared purpose of our God that some day He will govern the earth and all men upon it. He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He has designated, the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 17:31). To judge is to determine, declare, establish, and enforce what is right. It includes everything that comes under beneficent and righteous government. David, speaking by the Spirit of God, promised that He would "judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon the earth" (Psalm 67:4).

God does not govern simply to be governing. Divine government will have a goal. This will be to produce a people who know Him, who understand Him, who appreciate Him, and with whom He can dwell. This goal is revealed as being a reality in Revelation 21:1-6. There the tabernacle of God is seen as being with men; He is dwelling with them; and He is their God. A tabernacle, in Scripture, is always a center of activity. The time will yet come when God's activities will no longer be centered in the place called heaven, but in this planet we call the earth. This earth will yet be God's mediatorial planet in relationship to the universe. It has a glorious future. Do not sell it short.

But it must be remembered that this goal is not reached in an instant. This earth and men upon it must pass through two long periods of intense and manifest divine activity. The first of these is called in Scripture "**the kingdom of God.**" It is a long period of time during which God through Jesus Christ governs the earth and the men upon it. The second of these is called in the original language "**the parousia of the Lord.**" This is a thousand years in length, and is commonly called "the millennium" because of this. It is the time when the Lord Jesus will be actually and personally present upon the earth.

In every age and under every condition God has always held out to man the hope that he could be alive and upon earth in the day when He governs. If a man should be dead when God begins to govern, he can be raised from the dead to live upon this earth. If he is living when it

begins, he will not need to die. However, let it be noted that God will determine what is right, first for all who are living and then for all who are dead when He assumes sovereignty over all mankind (2 Tim. 4:1). The kingdom comes with great blessings, but all will not be allowed to live to enjoy them Better assure yourself that you will be raised if among the dead or allowed to live if among the living when this comes. See John 20:31.

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DEALING WITH GOD

No man can go through life without doing something about God. Examine your own life and you will find that at some time or other you did something about Him. It may be that you treated Him in an ill manner, insisting that He had no claim upon you, or you denied His existence, or you sought to put all thoughts of Him out of your mind. Or it may have been, like so many do, that you respectfully admitted His existence, acknowledged your accountability to Him, but in the end never got around to any definite dealings with Him.

The fact that there is a Supreme Being to whom all men are accountable is inherent knowledge. That He must be dealt with and that there is great danger in ignoring Him are truths to which the conscience of man gives continual witness.

You may be one of that great number who feel that God should not be excluded from your life, and it may also be that you truly desire to give Him a place in it. However, when the searching rays of divine light are turned upon you, it becomes quite evident that you have had no personal dealing with Him. You may have meant well, but due to the confusion that exists on every hand, you have dealt with men and not with God.

It is a deplorable situation when men deceive themselves into thinking they have had dealings with God when in reality they have dealt only with men whom they vainly hope are representing Him. There are multitudes who think of God as if He were a great oil company with filling stations all over the land, marked by steeples and stained glass windows, and all they need to do is to stop at one of these stations on any Sunday morning and the attendant there will fill them with the life of God.

Many churches eagerly foster this idea. They claim to represent God, to speak in His behalf, to dispense His salvation. They claim that their buildings are His house, the place where He dwells one day in seven.

When God is dealt with, He must be dealt with through the One who represents Him. **"There is One mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"** (I Tim. 2:5). This is the inspired Word that tells us who this representative is. If a relationship with God is established, it must go through Him. Jesus Christ bodily claimed: **"He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me, but on Him that sent Me."** John 12:44. From this it is evident that true faith or belief in Jesus Christ is automatically transferred to the One who generated it. Christ must be received or there is no relationship with God. John 1:12 tells us how He is received. It is by believing in the record God has given of His Son. Let no one deceive you. You receive Jesus Christ by believing in Him, not by going to the front in an evangelistic meeting.

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FAITH - WHAT IS IT?

In the New Testament the word for faith and the word for belief is the same Greek word. Thus the definition we give to one has to be given to the other. The Greeks could do much more with their word *pistis* than we can do with our word *faith*. We cannot say "faithed" or "faithing," so we fall back on the word *belief* and say *believed* or *believing* in translating these forms of the Greek word. But we should not allow this necessity of translation to lead us astray. In every passage where we find a form of the word *belief* we should read into it all that is inherent in the word *faith*, and when we find the word *faith*, read into it all the meaning found in the word *belief*.

In the Bible *faith* or *belief* is simply taking God at His Word and responding accordingly. The response might be a physical act, as in the case of Abraham when told by God to "get out of his country." Of his act we are told that "by faith Abraham went out not knowing whither he went" (Heb. 11:8). He took God at His word and responded accordingly. Or the response might be a mental one. For example, since the Bible tells us that God made man of the dust of the earth, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul (Gen. 2:7), it becomes an act of true faith when we take God at His word, respond accordingly by always thinking of Him as man's Creator, and thinking of man as being a living soul, and not as one who has a soul. We will be credited by God for an act of faith if we do this.

A grand illustration of faith is seen in the act of Peter when the Lord Jesus made use of his boat as a platform from which to teach the people. When He finished, Simon Peter was told by the Lord to launch out into deeper water and let down the nets for a catch (Luke 5:3, 4). Peter and his companions were experienced fishermen. They knew the waters and all the arts related to commercial fishing. They had already toiled all night long and had taken nothing, so the reasonable thing would have been to treat His advice kindly, but ignore it with some excuse about the

bad condition of the nets. This they did not do. Peter replied:

Master, we have toiled all night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless at Thy word, I will let down the net. Luke 5:5.

He took the Lord Jesus at His word in regard to this matter and responded accordingly. Thus his faith was made perfect by his works.

We are told in the Bible that "**without faith it is impossible to please God**" (Heb. 11:6). No other act will satisfy Him if there is no act of faith. And since "faith comes by hearing" and the hearing must be "by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17), we need to turn to the Word as never before if we would lay hold of the faith that honors and pleases Him.

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THE LAST DAYS

After forty-eight years of assiduous Bible study it is now my conviction that we are living in the concluding days of God's dispensation of grace. This fact does not need to disturb or distress anyone, for nothing better could happen to the world, the nations, mankind, and the believer than that God should end His long display of grace and impose His righteous government upon the earth. As a grandfather who deeply loves his grandchildren, I could ask nothing better for my five young grandsons than that they should grow up and live in a world that is governed by God.

The conviction that we are living in the last days of this dispensation is based almost entirely upon a revelation of God set forth in 2 Timothy, chapter 3. In this the Spirit of God is quite explicit as to the conditions that will prevail in the days when God's long display of grace draws to a close. Twenty-one social conditions are set forth which will be so prominent and conspicuous that they make it possible for those who are watchful to know the time. In fact, a syndrome of the last days is presented; twenty-one concurrent things are set forth as signs or indications. However, this revelation has been poorly translated, badly misinterpreted, and often misapplied. I have studied every word of it in the Greek for many years and believe that this is what it tells us.

In the concluding days of God's dispensation of grace one period of peril will follow another. Men will be utterly self-centered, and they will be lovers of money. They will be empty-pretenders, arrogant, given to blasphemy, and in obstinate opposition to their parents. They will be utterly lacking in gratitude, disposed to do harm, and without natural affection. They will be coarsely abusive in their speech, uncontrollable and violent. They will be despisers of all that is good, betrayers; they will be rash and conceited. They will be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, and they will maintain the forms of godliness while they deny its power. They will slip into homes and find easy prey in the silly women who are motivated by various lusts and the desire for gratification.

If one reads the newspapers and newsmagazines, if he listens to those who are in a position to know, he will have to admit that, unless all these reporters and observers are badly misinformed, these twenty-one signs are manifest today. These men in their writings are documenting the reality of what the Spirit of God said would be the syndrome of the last days. These things are appearing concurrently. Some of the terms used by Paul are startling in their accuracy and aptness of description when applied to present conditions. We are now in the last days.

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SOMETHING TO BELIEVE

A lack of faith is nothing more than a lack of belief. To have faith in God is to believe God, and to believe God is to take Him at His word and then think or act accordingly. The belief is our faith and the response is our works. Faith without works is dead, being alone (Jas. 2:17). To believe in Jesus Christ, or to have faith in Him, is to take God at His word and then respond by believing the record God has given of Him. This leads to a simple trust in Jesus Christ that is God-honoring and God-pleasing. If we go to the Bible to find the answer to the question, Who is Jesus Christ? we will find in that answer something important to believe.

In tracing out the record the Bible gives of the Lord Jesus we must begin with a fact already known, the fact of God, the Absolute, the Supreme. This is the one spoken of by John when He said, "**No man hath seen God at any time**" (John 1:18). This is the one the Lord Jesus meant when He said, "**Ye have not heard His voice at any time nor seen His shape**" (John 5:37). This is the one whom Paul called "**the invisible God**" (Col. 1:15). This is the infinite being who cannot possibly be seen, be heard, or be known by finite men unless He Himself provides some means of tangible expression by which they can lay hold of Him.

That God exists is stamped upon the consciousness of every man. It is part of man's inherent and instinctive knowledge. It was this knowledge that caused deep thinkers long ago to cry out for a logos (an expression) from God. They desired something tangible that would be to them the visible and tangible expression of this invisible and intangible being.

The reply of the Bible is that from the beginning there was always the Word (Logos) or Expression of God. God Absolute had assumed a form before He created the earth or anything upon it. In doing this He extended Himself in order that there might be communion between Himself and His creation. Thus, in the Expression of God we find Him

reaching out and reaching down. This expression was God in manifestation, and this is the One we see throughout the pages of the Old Testament, a personality who was both seen and heard. This is the Elohim who created the earth, the One of whom it is said:

In the beginning was the Word (Logos, or Expression), and the Word was with (pros, in relationship to) God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. John 1:1-3.

It was the Expression of God who became a man upon the earth, as declared in John 1:14, "**And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.**"

Thus it is that in the terms God Absolute, God Manifest, and God Manifest in the flesh we have the Biblical revelation of God. It was God Manifest in the flesh who died for our sins. This is the record God has given of Him. We obtain the guarantee of life by believing the record God gave of His Son (John 20:31). Do you know and believe this record?

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WHAT IS MAN?

This question is both asked (Psa. 8:4) and answered (Gen. 2:7) in the Bible. There we find three great orders of intelligent beings: angelic beings, spirit beings, and human beings. These are usually called angels, spirits, and men. In view of this the first great truth to be learned, believed and always remembered is that man is a human being. He was created this; he is this in life; he is this in death; and he will be this in resurrection. There is nothing in life, death, or divine action that will ever change a man into an angelic or spirit being. If there were, it would be a step downward, since man is the highest order of creation. Man was made in the image and after the likeness of God. This "image and likeness" is badly marred at present due to the long reign of sin and death.

The message of the Bible deals with human beings, although now and then angels and spirits are mentioned because of some contact made with man. These brief mentionings do not reveal all we would like to know concerning them. However, it is helpful to know and remember that spirits do not have "flesh and bones"; a truth declared by the Lord Himself (Luke 24:39). And we should also recognize that even as there are now good and bad men, there are also good and bad angels and good and bad spirits. Those who are bad were not created this way. They became this of their own volition (2 Pet. 2:4).

We are constantly told that man is a tripartite being composed of a body, a soul, and a spirit. This is false information, and those who say this are usually found contradicting themselves. They say that the body can be eliminated from this trinity and man will still be a man. Thus, what they actually believe is that man is a dual being composed of two main parts and one unessential part that can be eliminated without damage. Some go a step further, eliminate the spirit, and then insist the whole man exists in one part called the soul.

The statement of Paul in 1 Thess. 5:23 is constantly pointed out to show that man is a tripartite being, inasmuch as body, soul, and spirit are

mentioned in this passage. However, if any care to do so, they can turn to Luke 10:27 and insist that man is a quadripartite being (one composed of four parts), inasmuch as heart, soul, strength, and mind are set forth there. Such a position would be just as sound as the one based on 1 Thess. 5:23.

The fact is that man is a unit and indivisible, a human being with many aspects, like a gem stone with many facets. Considered from one point of view he is body, from another he is soul, from another spirit (but not a spirit being). It was a man that God made from the earth, and then by another operation He breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul (Gen. 2:7). This is what the Bible tells us and we should have explicit faith in its revelation. Our next message will be WHAT IS THE SOUL?

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WHAT IS THE SOUL?

The Hebrew word for soul (nephesh) is found 754 times in the Old Testament. The Greek word for soul (psyche) is found 105 times. This provides a vast amount of material for study, but few indeed have ever paid much attention to it, being interested only in the one or two passages that can be twisted to support their own views. If the student will check it out he will find that after "man became a living soul" (Gen.2:7), the word soul is constantly used as a designation for the entire man, the man's whole self, that living personality which results from the union of spirit (the breath of life) and flesh.

This can be clearly seen in passages such as Gen. 46:27, ("All the souls of the house of Jacob which came into Egypt,") and in Ezek. 18:4, ("The soul that sinneth it shall die"). In both Testaments such terms as "my soul" means "I" or "myself". In Isa. 42:1 and Matt. 12:18 the term "my soul" is used by God and it is plain it means "I" in both passages.

On every hand we hear that man has a soul, that he has a body, or that he has a spirit. Yet those who say this do not and cannot identify who or what the man is who possesses these wonderful things. It makes sense to say that a man has a house, or a wife since the man who has these things is an entity apart from them. So to all who say that man has a soul, we would ask who or what this man is. Is the owner greater than the thing possessed?

Since man became a living soul by an act of God after his creation, it is evident that the word soul is used to describe an aspect of man's being. If we would say that a man married and thus became a husband, we use the word husband to describe an aspect of the man. From the day of his marriage he is a husband and can be described by this term. And while a woman may readily speak of her husband, there can be no husband apart from the man. If the man dies, the husband dies also.

The word body has to do with man as a physical being, the word spirit has to do with man as an intelligent being, and the word soul has to do with man as an emotional being. However, all these words cover a

broad spectrum of usage, and passages could easily be quoted where they are not used these ways.

When the Psalmist said, "My soul is also sore vexed" (Psa. 6:3) he meant that his emotions and feelings were strained to the breaking point. When he said, "Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee" (Psa. 119:175), he recognized that praise is a matter of the emotions, the feelings, even though it should be undergirded by knowledge (spirit) in regard to what God is and has done.

There is no value in crying, "Back to the Bible", unless we are willing to go back to what it reveals concerning the soul. Our next message will be GOD'S WORD CONCERNING DEATH.

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GOD'S WORD CONCERNING DEATH

The subject of death is not a popular one. Few like to think of it. If I were seeking support or a following I would leave it alone. However, I am not interested in my following but in God's leading.

One fact that is evident to the careful observer is that those who profess to believe the Bible have not been informed as to what is said there concerning death. Furthermore, they are not only uninformed, they have been misinformed as to what is declared there. Thus most professing Christians are living in a constant state of ignorance and unbelief so far as God's revelation concerning death is concerned. They refuse to inform themselves, they close their eyes to all Biblical facts, and thus they stand as truth rejecters in the sight of God.

It is my conviction that we would all be healthier spiritually if we accepted what the Bible declares concerning death, faced up to it honestly, and quit trying to hide from it. There is no value in deluding ourselves about the reality of death. On this subject God has spoken. It is our sacred duty to discover and believe what He has said.

The salient Biblical fact concerning death is that it is the end of life, not the beginning of a new one. In other words, the Bible teaches that the dead are dead until they are raised from it. If this is not true, then death is meaningless and resurrection is more so. If death is a reality, then resurrection is also. The only possible answer to the question, "If a man die shall he live again?" is that he will live again only and if God raises him from the dead. If there be no resurrection of the dead, "then they also which have fallen asleep in Christ have perished" (1 Cor. 15:18).

These Biblical truths are believed by very few, and they are openly rejected by the world. The widespread view is a philosophy that makes death to be the open door or introductory event to a larger and fuller life. Thus the role of resurrection is assigned to death. This is not right.

While the above statements may seem dogmatic, they are not a

dogma based upon ignorance. For almost a half-century I have assiduously searched out and considered every fact in the Bible that has any bearing upon this subject. What I have found has brought about great changes in my own thinking, leading to my present understanding of God's Word concerning death. In view of this I feel it is my duty to bring to bear upon the minds of all who profess to believe the Word of God the facts declared there on this subject.

Jesus Christ said, "Thy word is truth." The one who knows and believes what God's Word says about death is one who knows and believes the truth. I am happy in the fact that I now believe and proclaim what God has to say about this subject. Our next message will be **WHAT IS DEATH?**

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WHAT IS DEATH?

Consider, if you will, a positive Biblical fact in regard to death. The first time it is mentioned in God's Word it is set forth as being a divine penalty to be executed against Adam and Eve if they disobeyed the express prohibition declared by God (Gen. 2:17). In view of this, can it truthfully be said that the penalty threatened was that they would be shoved through a door that would bring them into a larger and fuller life. Yet that is all the threat amounted to if the popular belief concerning death is true.

Another fact to be considered is that after they had sinned, the penalty was restated in other words, making it plain what the punishment actually was. To Adam, God said, "In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread, till you return unto the ground; for out of it you were taken: for you are dust, and unto dust you shall return" (Gen. 3:19). In view of this, if anyone believes that Adam is anywhere else than in the ground awaiting resurrection, then he does not believe the plain statements of God's Word.

While death is usually said to be the separation of the soul from the body, the Bible testimony is that death is a return, a return to a former state. In it we are told that at death, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return to God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7). We can understand this better if we consider together the great truths of creation, death, and resurrection.

In creation God took the soil of the ground and from this He formed a man. However, this man was not yet a living soul. God then breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life (man's spirit, that which makes him spirited or living), and man became a living soul.

In death this process is reversed and the soil (dust) returns to the earth as it was and the spirit returns to God who gave it. Thus man ceases to exist as a living soul. The Bible says that if God would gather unto Himself His spirit and His breath, all flesh would perish together (Job. 34:15).

In resurrection the fact of death is reversed. The man is again taken from the soil, the breath of life is sent back from God, and man begins anew as a living soul.

God's answer to death is the great promise of resurrection. Whatever death does to a man, resurrection will undo it. Whatever death is resurrection is the opposite. Therefore, what we believe concerning death will have a profound effect on what we believe concerning resurrection. If we accept God's truth concerning death, we can go on to God's truth concerning resurrection. If we accept the popular errors concerning death, then we will have to wrest the truth concerning resurrection to make it fit our ideas. According to the Bible, death is an enemy. It cannot be made to be a friend. Our next message will be THE REALITY OF DEATH.

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THE REALITY OF DEATH

If we honestly desire to understand the Biblical revelation concerning death we must have fixed in our minds the difference between the process of dying and the ultimate consummation of that process which is death. We lack proper words in English to express these two conditions, but this should not be allowed to hinder our understanding of them. Both of these come before us in the first mention of death in the Bible. In the prohibition spoken by God to Adam and Eve, we find two forms of the same Hebrew word, which if faithfully translated would read:

But of the tree of knowledge of good, and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof dying thou shalt die. Gen. 2:17.

From this we know that the actual penalty threatened if they ate of the one forbidden tree was that the process of death would begin to work in them on that day, and would continue to work in them until it had reached its consummation. Adam, starting with perfect health and a perfect body lived for centuries after he had sinned, yet death was working in him all the rest of his days.

Later the Bible tells us that "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death passed upon all men" (Rom. 5:12). Thus that which happened to Adam also happens to everyone of his descendants. Death and life are both working in us the moment we are born. In some the process of death is stronger than the process of life and they do not survive the first day, or month, or year. But most of us do, and in the days of our youth it seems that the life processes greatly outstrip the processes of death. This continues until we reach what is commonly called middle-age when the processes of death working in us begin to gain on the life processes, continuing to do so until we are dead.

All sicknesses, all diseases, all illnesses are related to the process of dying. It is for these that we call the doctor, and it is for the consummation of these that a call goes out for the undertaker. Traditional theology admits the reality of the first of these processes, but denies the reality of the second, insisting that "It is not death to die."

The Christian Scientists deny the reality of both of these, insisting that they are only delusions of the human mind.

We will begin a new day with the Bible when we face up to its testimony in regard to the reality of death. This will permit us to see that God's answer to death is resurrection. Man does not survive the experience of death. He will be released from it by the act of Him who alone can raise the dead. So in answer to a question put to me by a young man, "Is death for real?" I would answer, "The Bible says it is." Our next message will be DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

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DEATH AND RESURRECTION

The records of death and resurrection in the New Testament are full of informative teaching. They were recorded for our instruction. The simplicity of their witness is such that their message cannot be misunderstood, unless that misunderstanding is willful and deliberate.

When our Lord sent forth the twelve disciples to proclaim that heaven's government was impending, He commanded them to raise the dead (Matt. 10:7,8). This act was intended as a demonstration of what men could expect when He governs the world. This charge to raise the dead appears in a list of other merciful acts such as heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; each one of which was a positive blessing. These acts delivered men from sickness, leprosy, demons, and death.

This leads to numerous questions. If death is such a blessed state, why would anyone want to be delivered from it? If these dead were happy in heaven, why remove them from this blessed state and bring them back to this sin-cursed earth? Who would feel grateful to anyone for having done them such a disfavor? Is it not plain that resurrection is no blessing if death is the entrance to a larger and fuller life?

In Luke 7:11-15 we have the record of the raising of the widow's son. From it we can learn much about death and resurrection. Each word needs to be carefully considered, so I ask the reader to go over it carefully in his own Bible. In it we are told, "There was a dead man carried out." These are not the carelessly chosen words of a man. They are the verbally inspired words of God. When the Lord spoke to this young man He said, "Young man, I say unto thee arise". And the faithful record tells us that "he that was dead sat up."

In view of these emphatic statements, let the following questions be honestly answered. Was this a dead man, or was it merely a dead body from which the man was gone? Was this man dead or alive? Was this resurrection or reincarnation?

There are many great truths to be learned from this positive record of

the resurrection of one who was dead. There is an entirely erroneous conception of resurrection, which makes it to be nothing more than the reclamation of elements which long ago were mingled with and lost in the dust. This is not the meaning of resurrection, and it should not dominate our thoughts of it. Resurrection has to do with restoring to life and activity the actual person who died.

The Biblical truth of resurrection does not demand that the very elements that made up a man at the time of his death shall be reassembled-and formed into a body again. I am not today composed of the same elements as I was seven years ago. Nevertheless, I am the same man. It is not necessary that I in resurrection shall be composed of the same elements I am at the moment of death. The important thing is that it be Otis Q. Sellers, actually, literally, bodily. Our next message will be LIFE AFTER DEATH.

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LIFE AFTER DEATH

The Bible teaches that there is life after death, and I believe it. It does not teach that death is an experience that man survives and is alive and well after it is over with. We survive accidents and operations, but we do not survive death. In Isaiah 38 we read of the serious illness of King Hezekiah. It was a sickness unto death. Isaiah the prophet went to him with a message from the Lord saying: "Thus saith the Lord, set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live." Isa. 38:1.

These words, the words of Jehovah, make it plain that if King Hezekiah died, he would not live, and if he lived he would not die. Such statements seem almost childish, yet they must be made since so many do not believe them. In the Word of God, death and life are two great opposites. As Moses said to Israel, "I have set before you life and death, therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live." Deu. 30:19. Death and life are mutually exclusive. No one can be dead and alive. No one who is alive is dead.

These Biblical facts cannot be set aside by calling in those passages where the word dead is used in a figurative sense, such as Matt. 8:22 and 1 Tim. 5:6. Both of these passages deal with living people. The word dead is used in them as a figure of speech. They were dead to certain things, even as we are now dead to sins. Nevertheless, we are alive. But we cannot be alive and dead at the same time when we use these terms in their literal meanings.

One can believe in life after death without trying to believe the impossible idea that the dead are alive. Anyone who believes in the resurrection of the dead believes in life after death. The Bible affirms a future life upon the great truth of the resurrection of the dead.

Upon reading this some will be sure to say, "Then you believe that the soul sleeps between death and resurrection?" In answer I would say, "The Bible does not teach this and I do not believe it." Others will say, "Then you must believe that the dead are unconscious." And again I answer, "Neither does the Bible teach this and, therefore, I do not

believe it." I believe that a living soul (a man) can be awake or asleep, or that he can be conscious or unconscious, but if he is dead these terms cannot properly be used of him, except figuratively. And if he is dead, only resurrection will release him from this state.

The proper and full answer to the question: "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14:14) is, "Yes, he will live again when he is raised from the dead." For if the dead rise not, then they also that have fallen asleep in Christ have perished (1 Cor. 15:18). Our next message will be **THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.**

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THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

The majestic truth of the resurrection of the dead is a divine truth. It is not found in human religions, unless these have been touched in some way by the Word of God. This truth is peculiar to the Bible alone.

In traditional theology we find continually the phrase, "the resurrection of the body." This phrase is not found in sacred Scripture. The term used consistently in the Bible is "the resurrection of the dead." This teaches us that it is the dead who are raised, not just some part of man called the body.

An important passage bearing upon this subject is the record of the death, burial, and resurrection of Lazarus as set forth in John's Gospel, chapter eleven. Here John gives a detailed account of events which he witnessed.

Lazarus was sick, and his sisters, Mary and Martha, sent word to the Lord Jesus reporting his illness. When the Lord was told of it, He declared that this sickness was not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified by it.

After two days had passed, the Lord Jesus announced to His disciples, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of his sleep" (John 11:11). The disciples misunderstood His words when He referred to death as sleep. They took Him literally, but there was no excuse for any such misunderstanding. Nobody would go on a journey to awaken a sick man out of his sleep. The Lord corrected them immediately by saying plainly, "Lazarus is dead" (John 11:14).

When Jesus arrived in Bethany, He found that Lazarus had been "in the grave four days already." Martha told Him that if He had been there her brother would not have died. Jesus said unto her, "Your brother will rise again."

It should be noted that the language of this chapter is in complete harmony with Biblical truth concerning death and resurrection. It was Lazarus who was sick, Lazarus who died, Lazarus who was in the grave

four days. Martha said "my brother" in speaking of his death, and the Lord said "your brother" in speaking of his resurrection. And as if to climax the force of the truth, we are told the Lord shouted, "Lazarus, come forth." Then the inspired word tells us "He that was dead came forth" (John 11:43,44).

There are many who insist that they believe in the Bible, and yet it is evident that they believe very little recorded in this chapter. They do not believe that Lazarus was dead, and they do not believe that he was in the grave four days. They interpret all this as speaking of something they call Lazarus's body, insisting that the real Lazarus was alive all the time. But they make only feeble attempts to explain where Lazarus was and what he was doing these four days.

The fact is that Lazarus was dead. The Bible declares that "the dead knoweth not anything." It tells us that "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave" (Eccl. 9:5-10). This explains why Lazarus gave no report of his experiences while in the state of death. Our next message will be THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

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THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Before His crucifixion the Lord Jesus told His disciples that He would be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be put to death, and that on the third day He would rise again (Luke 24:7).

In Paul's summation of the gospel, which he declared he had proclaimed to the Corinthians, through which they were saved upon believing, he states; "That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:1-4). In this we find three great facts that are essential to the gospel message, the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ

There are many who profess to be Christians who do not believe that Jesus Christ died. In fact they do not believe that anyone ever dies, that all that takes place is a transition from one form of life to another. Furthermore, they do not believe that He was buried. They insist that it was only His body that was buried. In view of this it is impossible for them to fully believe in His resurrection, since He never really died and was not actually buried. Thus they fall short of the qualification set forth in Romans 10:9; They do not believe in their hearts that God raised Him from the dead.

The same Bible that tells us that Jesus Christ was born and that He lived, also tells us that He died, that He was buried, and that He arose from the dead. His restoration to life was not resuscitation or reincarnation. It was resurrection.

One of the better spiritual songs, very popular in evangelical churches, has for its first verse and chorus the following words: "Low in the grave He lay — Jesus my Savior!/Waiting the coming day — Jesus my Lord!/Up from the grave He arose, with a mighty triumph o'er His foes;/He arose a victor from the dark domain, and He lives forever with His saints to reign./He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!"

I like to sing this because I believe every word of it. After His cruci-

fixion we are told that His friends claimed His body, and "in the garden a new sepulcher, wherein was never man yet laid, there laid they Jesus" (John 19:38-42). So it was true, "Low in the grave He lay, Jesus my Savior." If men do not believe this, then they should be honest and not sing it.

Over and over we hear men say that we do not worship a dead Christ. This is true, we worship a living Savior. But it must ever be kept in mind that the reason we can say this is because He arose from the dead. And it should also be remembered that once we enter into the state of death, we will live again only through resurrection. It was because of Christ's resurrection that He could say, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive forevermore" (Rev. 1:18).

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THE FAITH WE NEED

It was of a Roman centurion, a Gentile, that the Lord Jesus said, "I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel." Matt. 8:10. If we examine the record to find what it was that caused Him to declare that He had not come upon such great faith before, it will be found in the fact that this man explicitly believed that the Lord could heal at a distance.

Just before this incident a leper had come to Him saying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean" (Matt. 8:2), and as a result had received immediate healing from the worst scourge known to man. This was indeed a great display of faith, but the Lord offered no word of commendation.

However, as the Lord entered Capernaum this centurion came to Him saying, "Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented." In answer the Lord said, "I will come and heal him." But the centurion, realizing fully the censure that would come upon the Lord if He entered into the house of a member of the Roman army of occupation, declared that he was not worthy of such an act. He said, "Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." By these words he expressed his full faith that the Lord could heal at a distance, and the Lord commended him for such faith.

Today on every hand we find those who believe that the Lord Jesus can do nothing for the world and nothing for suffering humanity until He comes again and is personally present. They feel that His present location in heaven renders Him powerless to do anything for mankind, for the nations, or for Irsael. They hold that the world is in the mess it is at present because of His absence, and that there will be no change until He is present.

Those who think along these lines have no appreciation of the fact that He told His disciples that it was to their advantage that He should go away (John 16:7). They have no faith in the ability of the Holy Spirit to do a work upon earth that will bring God's order in place of man's chaos and confusion. They reason that if the Lord should speak from heaven

His voice would fade out before it reached the minds of men upon earth. They insist that Jesus Christ must come back and be personally present in Jerusalem before there can be any change for the better in world conditions. They fail to see that even if He were in Jerusalem, He would need to send His truth and His Spirit half way round the world before it would be of any effect in Los Angeles. He can do this just as well from heaven as He can from any location upon earth. Furthermore, He will not leave His present position until His enemies are in subjection to Him. Heb. 1:13.

There are few today that believe the Lord can work at a distance. The centurion believed this and was praised for His faith. This is a faith that is sorely needed today.

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THIS IS THE WORK OF GOD

In dealing with God the paramount importance of believing is made clear by an incident that happened during the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus. He had just fed five thousand people out of a food stock of five biscuits and two sardines (John 6:9). It was a demonstration of what will be possible and can be expected when He as King governs the earth (Psa. 145:15,16), and the multitude was so impressed that they planned to take Him by force and make Him a king. This of course would have put Him in direct conflict with the Roman Empire, and the Lord wanted no part of this. He did not enter into the political conflicts of His day. So He left the crowd and went into a mountain alone.

In the evening His disciples went down to the sea and took a ship sailing toward Capernaum. The Lord joined them later by walking on the sea and together they arrived at their destination. When the people saw that He was gone, they also found passage and came to Capernaum seeking Him. Upon finding Him they began to question Him as to how and when He got there, probably wondering whether or not they had missed any meals. This led Him to charge them with seeking after Him, not because they were interested in Him, but because they were looking for another free meal.

He then exhorted them not to work so hard for that food that did not last, but labor for that food that would continue on into eternal life, declaring that this is the food that He would give them, He being the one who bore the stamp of God the Father.

This led them to ask Him a simple and direct question, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" (John 6:28).

We today can be glad that they asked this question, since the reply brought forth one of the most explicit truths to be found in the Bible.

Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent. John 6:29.

To better understand the force of these words, let us consider as an

example the fact that while there are many who can be called "sons of God", there is One alone who stands above all and is called "the Son of God." Likewise while there is much that can be done that can rightfully be called "the works of God", there is one work that stands alone and this was called by Jesus Christ "the work of God." This one work is the supreme work of all, that we believe on the One whom God has sent, concerning Whom He has spoken, of Whom He has given us a record. If we have not done this work, then all other works become meaningless. They become human service, but cannot be called divine service.

There is one divine work upon which all other works must be built. Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:11). In order to produce believers and to bring men to a place where they would stand as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ was the purpose behind God inspiring John to write his gospel. He tells us: "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name." John 20:31.

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REPENTANCE--WHAT IS IT?

In many religious circles great anguish of soul is demanded before faith in Christ can be exercised. Some people, because of their emotional make-up, are able to produce this anguish at will. The demand for it is easy for them. Others cannot produce it, no matter how hard they try, so it would seem that the way of salvation is barred to them. In such circles the validity of one's salvation is measured by the anguish that precedes it, and great sorrow for sin is considered to be a meritorious work.

Since men have long been brainwashed into believing that one can make amends for his sins by being sorry for them, the ideas set forth above find fertile soil in the human breast. These ideas are often supported by Bible texts in which the words repent and repentance appear. A false meaning is read into these words, and this false meaning is in turn supported by the erroneous translation of the Greek word **metanoia**, the original of the word we are now considering.

Dr. A. I. Robertson, whose reputation as a Greek scholar is well known, often quoted Dr. John A. Broadus, his father-in-law and a scholar of equal rank, as having said, "The translation of **metanoia** by 'repentance' is the worst translation in the entire New Testament."

This is a serious indictment, and the truth of it has been admitted by most scholars, yet very little has been done about it, as demonstrated by the perpetuation of this error by most modern translations. The little that has been done is to say that the Greek word means "a change of mind," but in my opinion this second error is as bad as the first.

The Greek word actually means submission, and the call was "to submit" where the verb is used, and the act should be called submission where the noun is used. In view of this, John's great call should be understood as meaning, "Submit: for heaven's government is impending" (Matt. 3:2).

The elements that make up this Greek word mean after-mind, and the call is for us to have the mind now that we will have after the demand is made or the truth is revealed. To submit is to yield to the will or

authority of another.

In the true Christian experience, submission is not a one shot thing. It is an attitude that is resumed every day in regard to God and to His Word.

Ruth revealed complete submission to Naomi when she said, "Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God." (Ruth 1:16). She declared that the mind or purpose that she had before she knew what the circumstances and requirements were would be the same mind and purpose after these were known. This is what the Greeks would call "having the aftermind." This is true submission. Go thou and do likewise.

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THESE PERILOUS TIMES

The Spirit of God, speaking through the Apostle Paul, is most explicit as to the conditions that will prevail in the concluding days of God's long display of grace. The first of these conditions is that "in the last days perilous times shall come" (2 Tim. 3:1). A more literal translation of this would read, "Perilous periods will be present;" that is, one period of peril following another.

It is part of the glory of God's Word that a man living two thousand years ago could say that after twenty centuries of human progress, one period of peril would follow another. Paul's words are a very accurate description of the conditions that exist on this earth at the time in which we now live.

It cannot be said truly that it has always been this way. To do so is to ignore history. In times past when grave peril threatened a nation or a people, there were scores of others to whom it was no threat. And among those threatened, many could move away from it to a more secure place. As a rule, once the period of peril was past, a period of peace, progress and security could be expected. But this is no longer true. One period of peril follows close on the heels of another.

At the present time all nations and all people live under the constant peril of total destruction. As Arnold J. Toynbee, the historian of civilizations, has said, "Since 1949, when Russia, too, got the bomb, it has become possible for the human race to destroy itself. If we are able to survive, we are going to live in danger from here on."

The late President Kennedy declared, "We are destined —all of us here today —to live out most if not all of our lives in uncertainty and challenge and peril." And former President Eisenhower has declared, "We must learn to live under the threat of nuclear aggression, possibly for decades."

Thus what Toynbee, Kennedy, and Eisenhower declare to be the present state of human existence was predicted by the Apostle two

thousand years ago — one period of peril following another, with no respite in between.

However, Paul not only declared what the conditions would be, he tells how this situation is to be changed. It will be brought to an end by divine intervention. In the most completely ignored declaration of Scripture he tells us, "They shall proceed no further, for their folly shall be manifest unto all men" (2 Tim. 3:9). Something takes place that stops all evil men in their tracks. It is not a visitation of divine wrath, but an outpouring of divine light. God will break into the minds of men in a supernatural manner. He will yet speak from heaven and say, "Let there be light."

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THE PROMISES OF GOD

The reader of the Old Testament soon becomes familiar with the marvelous promises that are made there. The careful student soon realizes that these promises have to do with the one central idea that flows all the way through the divine Word — the expectation of Messiah-King who would bear rule over a world of men that He himself has converted to God.

As the pages of the Old Testament are turned, one reads of a time to come when the entire flow of satanic evil will be overwhelmed by a greater flow of righteousness from the one who is the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15). He goes on to read of a time when all the earth will remember and be turned to the Lord (Psa. 22:27); when all the earth will fear the Lord and all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him (Psa. 33:8); when the meek shall inherit the earth and delight themselves in the abundance of peace (Psa. 37:11); when wars will cease and God will be exalted among the nations (Psa. 46:8-10); when God will judge the peoples righteously and govern the nations upon the earth (Psa. 67:3-4); when the world will be established so that it cannot be disrupted (Psa. 96:10); when nations will beat their swords into plowshares and turn all instruments of destruction into instruments of peace (Isa. 2:4); when the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf be unstopped; when the lame will leap as a hart and the tongue of the dumb sing (Isa. 35:5, 6); when the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh see it together (Isa. 40:5); when God will fulfill His great promise to Israel to seek them out, and bring them out from all the peoples and all countries and bring them to their own land (Eze. 34:11-24).

These are but a part of the marvelous promises that God has made through the prophets of Israel. These promises embrace all nations, they promise special and unique blessings for Israel, they concern the earth, they promise salvation for the world, for the nations, for Israel, and for the individual. However, all the way through them is found the strain that every one of them will be fulfilled by one designated by God. This One would be God's anointed One, the Christ, the Messiah. It would be

through Him that divine government is to be established, not only in Israel, but in every nation, even the entire earth. See Isa. 9:6, 7.

It is my firm belief that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, that is, the Christ. All these promises are to be fulfilled through Him. He alone is the One who can bring Messianic times upon the earth.

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JESUS IS THE CHRIST

It is the utmost importance that those who claim the Lord Jesus as their Savior and acknowledge Him to be their Lord should also have a positive faith that Jesus is the Christ. In fact this is so important that one can never qualify as a mature believer until he has this understanding and this conviction. The central truth of the gospel is that Jesus is the Christ, and he who does not believe this cannot be believing the gospel.

The importance in believing that Jesus is the Christ can be seen in the fact that there came a time in the providence of God that the salvation-bringing message of God was no longer to be transmitted by means of commissioned men (apostles) speaking a divinely inspired message as they did during the time set forth in the book of Acts. The salvation-bringing message of God, the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation, was to be written and stand written in an inspired book which thereafter anyone could read, anyone could believe, and anyone could proclaim. The commission to write came to a man named John, and divine inspiration produced the book commonly, called the Gospel of John. Near the close of this book we find a clear statement concerning the purpose for which God caused it to be written.

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book: But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name. John 20:30,31. j

The plural pronoun "Ye" in this verse has no antecedent. This is a common literary device, which makes the message applicable to anyone who reads it. The Gospel of John, the fourth book of the New Testament, I was inspired by God with the end in view that men might believe that I Jesus is the Christ. Inasmuch as no such statement is made in connection with any other book in the Bible, this is the most important book in all Scripture in relationship to believing and to obtaining the guarantee of life through His name.

If we desire to qualify as believers in God's sight, then it is to this

book we must turn. If we wish to possess the assurance of "life through His name" then this book must be given its proper place in our lives so that it might fulfill the purpose for which it was written. And to qualify as a believer, to be worthy of this designation, the one truth above all others that must be entered into and believed is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

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BAPTISM - WHAT IS IT?

At present the Biblical truth concerning baptism has become so twisted and overlaid with error that it is difficult to give a simple answer to the question raised by the above title. In the present use of the term, baptism is regarded as a religious ceremony involving the use of water required by the churches of those seeking membership. In view of this it needs to be declared once and for all that no such ceremony is required by Jesus Christ of the sinner who is seeking salvation.

Those who seek Biblical truth in regard to baptism will need to make sharp and clear distinctions between the ritual which is called baptism and the reality which is called by the same name. Men are guilty of overemphasizing the "forms of godliness" (2 Tim. 3:5) when they read the ritual into almost every passage in which this word is found. I believe that we should always insist upon the reality in every passage, unless it is crystal clear in text and context that the water ritual is meant.

The reality of baptism can best be understood by tracing out the history of the Greek word from which our English form of this word is derived. The original meaning of the verb was "to dip", but this word made progress and in time became related to the industry of dyeing wool, cotton, and other fibers. As the dyer stood before the vat holding the material to be dyed, he had to be sure of what he was doing. Once it was committed to the vat, the act was irrevocable. There was a merger between the material and the dye that could not be broken apart. The material became so identified with the dye that it often took on a new name. Thus "wool" became and was called "purple", once it was dipped into the highly-regarded Thyatirian dye. See Acts 16:14, also Exodus 26:1.

If we will bring together the ideas contained in the words commitment, merger, and identification, we will be very close to the true meaning of the word baptism when in Scripture the reality is being set forth, not the ritual. Thus in passages such as Mark 16:16 where it says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," the water ritual is not

in view. The demand here is for commitment to Christ and to be identified with Him in a relationship that amounts to a merger. This is also true of Acts 2:38 where Peter declared, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." Those who read the water ritual into this passage are guilty of exalting a "form of godliness but denying the power thereof."

Far too many have been baptized (the ritual) who are not baptized (the reality) at all. Our next message will be THE REALITY OF BAPTISM.

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THE REALITY OF BAPTISM

If a person is committed to Jesus Christ in a personal entrustment that is reflected in his daily life, if he is identified with Jesus Christ in such a way that there is a merging of his life with that of Christ, then he has been baptized into Jesus Christ in the highest and holiest meaning of this term. If there is no commitment, no identification, no merger, no fusing of his life with that of Jesus Christ, then he has never been baptized, no matter how many times he has gone through the water ceremony.

The English word baptism is a word that is derived from the Greek word baptisma. This shows that the word has not been translated. It has merely been carried over from one language to another with slight modification of the spelling. Thus the honest student is forced to ask what English word could be used if it were translated rather than transliterated. And the answer seems to be that there is no single English word that can be used to truly set forth its advanced and developed meaning. If men use the words "dip" or "immerse", as many do, they will be declaring what it originally meant, but not what it had come to mean in the first century when the New Testament was written.

Take, as an example, our word broadcast. If one should insist that this means a casting or throwing seed in all directions, he would be right, for this is the original meaning of this word. And he would have dictionary support if he insisted that this was the only meaning, so long as he consulted only those dictionaries that were compiled before the advent of radio. However, this word has made progress and taken on meanings it never had before.

Even so it is with the word baptism. This word which, in its verb form, originally meant "to dip" came to mean what can probably be best expressed by our words identify and identification. I am not suggesting this as a translation, for it falls short of the flexibility found in the word baptism. However, if when we come upon the word baptism we always think of an identification that amounts to a merger we will be thinking

along the right lines. To express all the truth we must see in the word baptism such ideas as committing, merging, identifying, and fusing. All these ideas are there. But, alas, so many see nothing but a water ceremony. Our next message will be BAPTISM IS IDENTIFICATION.

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BAPTISM IS IDENTIFICATION

Christendom has made everything of the ritual of baptism and in turn made little or nothing of the reality of baptism. This brings to mind those who make so much of the ceremony of marriage but there is seldom the reality of marriage. If anyone should ask me if I am married, my mind does not go back to a ceremony, but it dwells upon forty-six years of reality, and the answer is "Yes, I am married." Thus I speak of a present reality, and not of some past ceremony.

If I am asked concerning baptism, my answer will have to be, "Yes, I am baptized, and I have been for forty-nine years. I am committed to Jesus Christ. I am identified with Him. He is my Savior." When one knows this reality, the ritual is no longer important.

When we recognize that baptism is identification, and when we add to this word such ideas as committing and merging, the truth expressed in many passages becomes radiant and full of meaning. Consider the following:

Do you not know that as many of us as are identified with Jesus Christ are identified with His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by being identified with His death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Rom. 6:3,4.

Sometimes a stronger term is necessary as in 1 Cor. 12:13 where it declares that "In one Spirit are we all merged into one body." This is real baptism and not the ceremony. It is the Lord that does it and not man.

Furthermore the great truth that baptism is identification will help us greatly in understanding a difficult passage such as 1 Cor. 15:29 where it speaks of being "baptized for the dead." The whole discussion here has to do with the resurrection of the dead, and particularly with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If the dead rise not, then Christ is not raised, and men are identifying themselves with the dead. This would be of no value. We have cast our lot with the living Christ, not a dead one.

It also helps us to understand 1 Peter 3:20-21, where we see that seven people were saved because of being identified with Noah. They were his wife, his three sons and their wives. By a like figure we are now saved by being identified with Jesus Christ.

It is my conviction that the water ceremony has neither place nor purpose in this dispensation of the grace of God.

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ONE BAPTISM

In the seven-fold unity of the Spirit, which all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are exhorted to endeavor to keep, we find the principle of ONE BAPTISM (Eph. 4:5). A principle such as this is intended as a guide for conduct and procedure. It is sad indeed that so many coming upon this true and basic fact have already determined in their minds that baptism is a water ritual or ceremony, and from this false premise they try to understand or interpret the truth of ONE BAPTISM. So they reason that this must have to do with the numerous forms of the ritual such as sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, and that once they decide which form is the correct one they have laid hold of the truth of which form of baptism is meant here. This is tragic, it leads to nothing but confusion, inasmuch as the reality and not the ritual is in view in this passage.

There have been thousands who have determined to go to the Bible to find there what God has declared concerning baptism. But almost without exception they have come to the Scripture with the false premise that baptism is a water ritual, and they try to take the statements of the Bible and apply them to the dipping into or the pouring or sprinkling water upon a person as a religious ceremony. We wonder how they can ignore the correcting power that is found in Scripture. For the moment one comes to the phrase "He (the Lord Jesus) shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 3:11) he should know that the word baptize does not always have to do with the water ceremony. And if this is not enough, consider the occurrences of this word in Luke 12:50 and Matt. 20: 22,23.

The ritual and reality, which are both designated as baptism can be illustrated by the ritual and the reality, both of which are called marriage. The rite or the ceremony can be very simple or very elaborate, or there may be none at all, but there is no ceremony that can produce a marriage. When a minister says that he has "married three couples this week" he is referring only to the ceremony. In reality he has not married anyone. A marriage is in reality a union that can be brought about by the

parties involved, working at it and developing it over a long period of time. In the reality of marriage there must be commitment, identification, a merger, and a fusing, so that two might be "one flesh." Alas, indeed, many are married so far as the ceremony is concerned, who in reality are not married at all.

In the reality of baptism there must be a commitment to Christ, identification with Christ, and a merging and a fusing that makes a reality of the words of Christ, "Ye in Me, and I in you." No water ritual can bring this about. No water ritual has anything to do with it.

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A REMARKABLE PSALM

If you are troubled in mind and heart about the moral depravity that is manifest on every hand today, and if you are longing for something solid from the Word of God that will bring tranquility and strength, I recommend that you master and assimilate the truth revealed in the sixty-fourth Psalm. You will find here a very graphic description of present conditions. But, best of all, you will find a declaration as to what God is going to do about it. Open your Bible and have it before you as you read these brief notes.

The Psalmist prays that his life may be preserved from the fear of the enemy. We should follow his example and petition God for this very necessary blessing if we are to know any measure of tranquility in these perilous times. He also asks to be hidden from the secret counsel of the wicked, that conspiracy of wicked men who are determined to make everyone as wretchedly immoral and as godless as they themselves are. He asks also to be hidden "from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity." This is a highly illuminating phrase that perfectly describes what we are witnessing on earth today.

In the next two passages (verses 3 and 4) he speaks of the calumniators, those who deal in slander and false accusations. This is a manifestation of evil which we can expect to be very prominent in the last days of the present dispensation of God's grace, as will be seen in the words "blasphemers" (calumniators) and "false accusers" (slanderers) in 2 Tim. 3:2, 3.

Reference is then made to those who "encourage themselves in an evil matter," a common practice today as will be seen in the writings of those who would justify and make respectable even the vilest forms of iniquity. He then speaks of those who "search out iniquities," accomplishing a most diligent search in order to fulfill their desires to participate in the orgies of sin.

Then the Psalmist tells us what God is going to do about this, giving us a promise that is just as important and true as any promise in the

Word of God.

But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded. Psalm 64:7.

This arrow is God's arrow of truth. It will make known who God is and what God is. It will reveal His attitude toward all iniquity. It is concomitant with the promise that "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together" (Isa. 40:5). It is harmonious with 2 Tim. 3:9 that declares of all wicked men "that they shall proceed no further."

The results of these divine actions are declared. A torrent of self-condemnation shall flow from the lips of all workers of iniquity. All men upon earth shall stand in awed recognition of the majesty of God. They will logically consider the work He has done. The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and shall trust in Him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.

This is our hope. This is our blessed hope. It will be your hope if you incorporate into your thinking the message of this Psalm.

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COMMITMENT TO THE TRUTH

In the providence of God, lest the love of His truth should perish from the hearts of men, He sees fit to do a gracious work upon the minds of many who stand before Him as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a generating work. It is based upon the desire of God that the truth revealed in His Word will become the supreme principle in regard to their conduct and procedure. It is by this work that God opens the eyes of men to see the value and importance of the truth.

There are men, and this writer claims to be one, who possess the deep conviction and faith that the Bible is God's own Word. The Holy Spirit and God's Spirit alone is the author and giver of such a conviction. A man can refuse to be led of the Spirit in this matter. He can repudiate the gift of faith that is offered to him. But if he will allow himself to be driven by the Spirit, as the wind drives a sailing vessel, if he accepts the gift of faith in God's Word that is proffered to him, it will result in a divine certainty that is impervious to the assaults of doubt.

However, even a conviction such as this will be sterile and produce nothing if there is no personal commitment to the Word. There should be an irrevocable declaration to God by all such men that, "Thy Word is truth." These words of the Lord Jesus Christ should be a constantly reiterated principle in the lives of all who profess to know God and who believe in the Lord Jesus.

It is the duty of every Christian to ask the question, "What is truth?" It is also his duty to find the answer. My own answer to this is that truth is that which accords with the facts in the case. Furthermore, since I have the conviction and the faith that the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God, I hold that the facts are to be found in the sixty-six books that make up the Bible. Divine truth is based upon divine facts and not upon human philosophy.

We live in a time when, in the thinking of many, doubt has virtually become a creed, and convictions based upon Biblical statements are looked upon as outmoded heresy. Nevertheless, truth must not be

suppressed because men are wicked and blind. The facts of God's Word must not be limited, restricted, or carefully delineated to meet the needs of modern man's mind. Our task is to proclaim the Word whether men will receive it or not. That is what we are doing.

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THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST

In the first verse of the Bible, One who bears the title of God (Elohim) is declared to be the Creator of the heaven and the earth. In John 1:1, One designated as the Word (Logos) is declared to have brought into existence all things, and "without Him was not anything made that was made." Thus the Elohim (God) of Gen. 1:1 is the Logos (Word) of John 1:1. In John 1:14 we are told that the Word (Logos) became flesh, and this One is identified as being Jesus Christ. It follows, therefore, that if the Creator of all things be not God, language has no meaning. That the New Testament teaches the Deity of Jesus Christ is indisputable.

Our faith in Jesus Christ is the belief we have in Him. This faith or belief must be based upon "the record God has given of His Son," otherwise it has no foundation. The true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is one who holds Him to be "God manifest in the flesh." He is committed to this proposition. Anything less than this is a lack of faith, and it does not qualify as belief in Him. Not all men have this faith. It is the conviction of a very few. It is my conviction. With Thomas of old I willingly fall at the feet of Jesus Christ and say, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28).

In the Bible, Jesus Christ is invested with every attribute that belongs to Deity. All the prerogatives of Deity are ascribed to Him. All the titles and names of God are given to Him.

Since the Bible says that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father (John 5:23), there is no honor I give to God that I withhold from Jesus Christ.

Since the Son did nothing but what He saw the Father do, I make no distinction between the works of God and the works of Jesus Christ. John 5:17-19.

Since to know the Son is to know the Father, no distinction can be made between God and Christ as an object of knowledge. John 8:19.

I make no distinction between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of Christ. What one knows the other knows. John 10:15. This position is held in recognition of Mark 13:32 which I believe is wrongly translated.

The power of God is not surpassed by the power of Christ. John 10:29-30.

I make no distinction between the Father and the Son as to belief (John 12:44). To believe in Christ is to believe in God. The words of Christ were the words of God (John 12:49). If we believe one we should believe the other (John 14:1). To hate one is to hate the other (John 15:23). Our Savior is our God.

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BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

In every occurrence of this phrase in the Greek New Testament, it is always "baptism IN the Holy Spirit," never By or OF. The poorly translated passage in 1 Cor. 12:13 should read: "For in one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." The truth declared here is that because they were "in one Spirit" they were merged or fused into one body, no matter what their nationality or status in life.

It is important that every follower of Jesus Christ should be able to answer the question, "What is the baptism in the Holy Spirit?" This phrase has been taken by many egocentric sects, and by them has been so cheapened and degraded that it is nothing more than an emotional experience. Such experiences are then passed off and accepted as being the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The true meaning of this experience can best be found in the lives of those believers who lived in the Acts period, men of God who most certainly enjoyed this rich blessing. To them baptism in the Spirit meant complete identification with the Spirit of God, one in which a fixed relationship was established. It brought them unlimited power, it commissioned them as God's witnesses, and their lives became so merged with the Holy Spirit that all their words and works were those of the Spirit.

It was this experience that made it possible for Paul to say, "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teach-eth" (1 Cor. 2:13); and to say to the Thessalonians, "For this cause thank we God without ceasing, because when you received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the Word of God" (1 Thess. 2:13).

It was Paul's identification with the Spirit of God that made it right for him to say, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). His every move was dictated by the Spirit.

The baptism in the Spirit did not cause the apostles to lose control of

themselves, to go off on some emotional jag. It did not cause them to roll on the floor — a senseless act which no man who has the mind of Christ would want to do. But it did cause them to speak forth the Word of God, in whatever language the hearer understood, and with an inerrant accuracy that no man can claim today.

The baptism in the Spirit is an experience that is not available to men today. No man is merged with the Spirit of God. This is said in spite of the claims of many who try to pass off some cheap emotional and egocentric experience as being this glorious work of God.

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THE SALVATION OF THE WORLD

There is something radically wrong with the world. Something is seriously wrong with the order, the system, the arrangement into which everyone is born and in which we must live. A malignancy has insinuated itself into every part of the environment which is man's home. Its constant workings and cumulative effects are now being seen and felt as never before.

The Lord Jesus spoke of the joy of a woman when "a man is born into the world" (John 16:21). This is normal, and good parents will always be happy when a child is born, but it is doubtful if serious-minded parents today can find joy in the kind of a world into which a child is brought forth.

Men have always been born into a situation characterized by sin, and they have ever been molded by the iniquity in the world (Psa. 51:5), but at no time were they ever brought forth into a world so permeated by iniquity as this one. Because of our educational, social, and political systems, and due to our highly developed means of communication, men today are being "shaped by iniquity" as never before.

The cumulative effects of the sin and death, which are in this world have resulted in a world that is desperately ill, so seriously ill that many wonder if it can be saved. The eruptions of evil that are seen on every hand are indicative of the deeper illness that lies within. Men do what they can to alleviate-these openly festering spots, but they are dealing only with the symptoms, not the underlying cause. A malignancy is rampant in the world from which the world needs to be saved.

That the Bible teaches individual salvation from sin is a truth with which most Christians will agree. But that it teaches the salvation of the world is one with which few will agree and most know nothing about. That Christ died for sinners they accept, but that He died for the world they reject. However, in spite of what men feel or believe, the Bible declares that God loved the world (John 3:16), that the world was made by Him (John 1:10), that Jesus Christ is the lamb of God that takes away

the sin of the world (John 1:29), that God sent His Son into the world that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:17). The world is now in "the bondage of corruption." From this it waits to be delivered. Its deliverance from the thralldom of sin and death is one great segment of the work that will result in the kingdom of God becoming a reality upon the earth. God's government is to be over a world that He has saved.

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THE RESULTS OF BELIEVING

In the Bible men are urged to believe and strong words of condemnation are spoken of those who believe not. A man's belief is his faith, and the object of belief or faith in the New Testament is the Lord Jesus Christ. He came to earth so that all through Him might believe (John 1:7). It is declared that all who receive Him are given the right to become children of God, and this reception of Him is defined as believing on His Name (John 1:12). And without equivocation the Bible says, "He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God (John 3:18).

On the basis of the Biblical message we are able to say that God holds out magnificent benefits and blessings to those who are believing, to the one who has personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. On Calvary's Cross He dealt with the question of human sin and settled it forever. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:3). Since He paid the penalty, all who now believe enjoy absolute forgiveness of all sins, past, present, and future. "We have forgiveness" can be the true claim of every believer. This forgiveness is in accord with the riches of God's grace, that love and favor He shows to undeserving men. The permanency of this forgiveness is guaranteed by God's grace (Eph. 1:7).

All believers are recipients of the blessing of justification. "By Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39). The work of Christ has purchased for us a righteousness which is put to our account when we believe. To the believer belongs the happiness of those to whom God is imputing righteousness and not sin (Rom. 4:6). The One who assumed our guilt has given unto us His righteousness. This is unto all and upon all who believe (Rom. 3:22-25).

The One who was delivered for our offenses was raised from the dead for our justification (Rom. 4:25). In His resurrection the believer finds the pattern and expectation of his own resurrection. As Christ was

raised from the dead, so also the believer will be raised. Death is a fact that all men must face, but "the resurrection of the just" is God's answer to the fact of death. That which now qualifies us for a place in this resurrection is faith in Jesus Christ. Belief in Him guarantees us the gift of eternal life. John 3:16.

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WHEN GOD GOVERNS

The Psalmist spoke of a time to come when God would "judge the peoples righteously, and govern the nations upon the earth" (Psa. 67:4). He called upon God to act and do the things that would bring this about, and declared that when this was a reality the earth would yield her increase, bringing an end to food shortages and famines. This is just one of many good things we can expect when God governs the earth.

The Psalm referred to above has to do with what the New Testament calls the kingdom of God, that time when God governs the earth and the nations upon it. When Jesus Christ sent forth His disciples to proclaim that the kingdom of God was impending, He told them to do certain things that would let the people know what they could expect under His government.

Aspirants for political office, those who seek to be rulers over men are prone to make promises and tell men what they can expect when they are in authority. As a rule they do not and they cannot make good their promises.

Our Lord did not hesitate to show men what they could expect when He assumed sovereignty over mankind. The disciples were told what to say and what to do.

As ye go, proclaim, saying, the kingdom of the heavens is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. Matt. 10:7,8.

This gives us some clear ideas as to what the kingdom of God will be like. Jesus Christ is not going to share His sovereignty with sickness, death or demons. We see from these samples what it will be when the world is governed by God. "The inhabitants will not say, I am sick" Isa. 33:24.

However, we must remember that the world to come will be one in which absolute justice will prevail. When God governs it will always be well for the good and ill for the wicked. Some would like to think that

this is the way it is today, but the obvious facts tell us that we are not now living in a moral universe where sin brings an automatic penalty and righteousness always brings its own reward. The present moral chaos does not come from the rule of God.

When God governs, grace will no longer be the supreme characteristic of His dealings with men. Under the divine constitution of the kingdom every sin and transgression will receive its just recompense of reward. It is a time of absolute government in contrast with the present time of absolute grace.

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THE FUTURE OF NATIONS

When people are organized into a sovereign state, they become a nation, and in the Bible they are looked upon as nations by God. There are over one hundred nations today in the United Nations. At the present time God deals impartially with nations. Today, the nations are "joint-bodies" in His sight (Eph. 3:6). They are permitted to walk after their own ways (Acts 14:16), and God does not favor one above another. The pattern of nations is constantly changing. They come into existence and they go out of existence. They unite and they divide. They go to war and they make peace.

There is a place for nations in the future plans of God. The Bible has much to say about this, but very little attention is paid to it. All nations are to be reconstructed or remade when God assumes sovereignty over them. And all nations that He makes "shall come to worship before Him, and shall glorify His name. (Psa. 86:9).

The theology that developed out of and after the reformation saw no future for any nation. It developed a very simple eschatology. There was to come what was called "the day of judgment," and this was held to be the second coming of Christ, even though it was not held that He returned in person. At this day of judgment all mankind from Adam on would be summoned before God. A great separation was to be made, with all the righteous finding a place forever in heaven, and all the wicked being consigned to live forever in hell. The earth would then be destroyed. There was no place in this theology for any period of divine government during which the nations would be found trusting in Christ. Since the King James version was translated by men who accepted this theology, definite attempts were made to translate all promises to nations in such a way that it would no longer be there. The Hebrew word for nations was usually translated "heathen" or "Gentiles" and the same was done with the Greek word.

Nevertheless, there remains in the Bible a pre-written history of nations which declares that as a result of great and manifest divine

activity, the nations of the earth will be turned to God and will put their trust in Christ the King, Note these passages:

And the ends of the earth (the people living in the most remote places) shall remember (have truth imprinted on their minds) and turn (be converted) unto the Lord: and all kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's: and He is the governor among the nations. Psalm 22:27, 28.

Also see Psalm 67:4, Psalm 72:11, Psalm 72:17, Psalm 102:15, Matt. 12:21; Rom. 15:12. Read these and rejoice in the future of the nations.

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THE END OF INIQUITY

There is a destined limit to the reign of sin in this world. The present immorality and iniquity is not going to go on forever. It is declared again and again in the Bible that God will act miraculously, powerfully, and openly to insure the total defeat of evil. In fact, this is the first promise in the Word of God. We will see this when we understand that the Hebrew word translated "bruise" in Gen. 3:15 means to overwhelm and that the word "head" signifies an outflowing source. The One who is the seed of the woman will yet overwhelm all the evil that has Satan as its source.

There is a prayer in Psalm 10:15 that reveals the end of iniquity. "Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man: seek out his wickedness till Thou find none." This is what we want God to do. The "arm" in Scripture is usually the symbol of strength or power. The strength and power of evil men today is frightening to contemplate. This will be broken by God.

Warning and promise are intermingled in Psalm 37:9. "For evildoers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth." God will speak, and all evil acts will come to an end.

The end of iniquity includes that which is practiced by nations. "The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered His voice, the earth melted." Psalm 46:6. "He maketh wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow, and he cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire." Psa. 46:9.

After a description of some of the evils practiced by men the Psalmist declares, "But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded" (Psa. 64:7). This act of God changes them from practicers of evil to condemners of evil within themselves: "So shall they make their own tongue to fall upon themselves."

The end of iniquity, and what causes it to end is set forth in Psa. 76:8: Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still."

Apropos of this we read, "The righteous shall see it, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth. Psa. 107:42.

The prophet Isaiah declares: "When the enemy shall come in like flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." (Isa. 59:19). Notice that this is a work of God's spirit.

Finally, Paul, after setting forth the evils that would characterize the last days of this dispensation of grace, declares emphatically, "But they shall proceed no further" (2 Tim. 3:9). And it is evident that these evil men are stopped by God turning on the light.

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WHEN GOD ARISES

There is much in the Bible about God arising. So much that it is one of the truly important themes of God's Word, one worthy of being traced out and embraced as a major item of divine revelation.

The word arise, as it is used here, means to spring into action, to become operative. By this is not meant that God is ever inactive or inoperative. At the present time He is actively gracious, ever showing love and favor to the undeserving. However, this is to change, and we are told, "He that shall rise to reign over the nations, in Him shall the nations trust" (Rom. 15:12). Thus the "arising" or "rising up" we speak of is when He shall assume sovereignty and become the ruler of the nations upon the earth.

In Isaiah 3:13 we read, "The Lord standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the peoples." The word "judge" here denotes all the functions of government, and "to plead" indicates a recital of all the pertinent facts. When this is considered in the light of Ezekiel 20:33,35, it becomes plain that the Lord arising has to do with His assumption of sovereignty and the beginning of His government. The time will yet come when men will give thanks to the Lord God Almighty because He has taken to Himself His great power and is governing (Rev. 11:17).

We are told in Psalm 12:8, "The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted." This is a condition we see on every hand today. The vilest of men are exalted, and the wicked walk proudly on every side because their kind have the preeminent place. This will not always be. God declares in Isa. 33:10: "Now will I rise, saith the Lord; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself." When He does this we can announce among all nations that "The Lord reigneth." (Psa. 93:1, 96:10, 97:1), and every blessing that the Psalmist says will result from his reign will be manifest before our eyes.

It is not surprising that many of the most fervent prayers in the Psalms have to do with God arising. Notice how pertinent these are, even in our day.

Arise, O Lord; let not man prevail: let the nations be judged in thy sight. Put them in fear, O Lord: that the nations may know themselves to be but men. Psa.

9:19-20.

Arise, O Lord, O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble. Psa. 10:12.

Arise, O Lord, plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily. Forget not the voice of thine enemies: the tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually. Psa. 74:22,23.

Arise, O Lord, judge the earth; for Thou shall inherit all nations. Psalms 82:8.

These are petitions which we should be making daily.

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THE PRE-ADVENT KINGDOM

It is my belief and my teaching that the Word of God predicts a long period of manifest divine government before the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is commonly said that the Lord returns to set up His kingdom, but this is a mistake. God has established His throne, the seat of His government in the heavens and it is from this place that Jesus Christ will govern as King of the earth ((Psalm 103: 19).

There are many Christians who believe that God has no plans for this earth except to set a match to it. Ideas such as this arise out of ignorance of God's revealed plans for this earth and for the nations upon the earth. If they would carefully read Isa. 2:1-5 they will learn there of God's program for the nation of Israel and for the other nations of this earth. If any ask, "How can these things be?" then let them read Psalm 22:27-28; 46:6-10; 64:7-10; 66:3,4; 67:1-7 and they will find the answer.

It is common practice to refer to all these prophecies to the millennium, and insist that they will be fulfilled after the second advent of Jesus Christ. This is impossible, for if these prophecies are not fulfilled before He returns they will simply go by default. It must be remembered that when Jesus Christ returns He takes vengeance on all who know not God and who obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 1:8); therefore, if He were to return now there would be no nations left upon the earth for whom His prophecies could be fulfilled. Jesus Christ will never leave the throne of the Father until by a process of divine government, His enemies have been made His footstool (1 Cor. 15:25, Heb. 1:13).

The first great stage of divine government is to be before the return of Jesus Christ. This is the pre-advent kingdom. It is based upon God speaking from heaven and assuming sovereignty over the earth and all its inhabitants. The second great stage follows His return. This is the post-advent kingdom, commonly called the millennium.

The average progressing Christian knows nothing of the pre-advent kingdom. They begin all future activity with the second coming of Jesus

Christ. They take every promise of future blessing and apply them to the millennium. By doing this they eliminate the pre-advent kingdom altogether, and they lose the blessed hope of divine intervention, which will change the whole course of earth's history.

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IT IS WRITTEN

We are told in Proverbs 14:9 that "**Fools make a mock at sin,**" At present even the most heinous sins are treated as if they were one big joke. We see this on television, in literature, on the stage, and in motion pictures. Such sins as homosexuality and lesbianism are matters of common jest, and these practices are treated to convey the idea that they are commonly accepted. The words of Alexander Pope are pertinent here:

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

It has been surprising, even shocking, to see how many ministers, and certain denominations, have spoken out in approval and toleration of those engaged in the practice of homosexuality. However, the Word of God has also spoken, and it is imperative that attention be called to what is said there.

When God established Israel as a nation and gave them statutes, which even today reveal His mind and feelings toward certain practices, He said to them: "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination." (Lev. 18:22). And again the Lord spoke to Moses saying, "If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death" (Lev. 20:13). Thus we learn that it was the judgment of God that both parties in this abominable sin should be put to death.

In the first chapter of Romans, Paul excoriates the sins that were prominent in his day, the very sins that brought about the fall of the Roman Empire. At that time men had altered the truth of God into a lie and God had given them over to dishonorable passions. The outcome was "that even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature; and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the

women, burned in their lusts one toward another; men working with men that which is indecent" (Romans 1:26,27). The apostle concludes his denunciation by saying that even though these men knew that it was God's judgment that they which commit such sins are worthy of death, they not only do them but they endorse and approve such practices in others.

Sinners such as these do not like to be solitary in their sins, so they encourage these practices in others. They find a sense of security in the fact that these vices which are known to be wrong are commonly practiced.

Concerning such sins, God has spoken. What He has said is written, and it stands written.

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PRINCIPLE OF INTERPRETATION

There is an important principle of interpretation declared in the Word of God with which every reader should be familiar. In Romans 4:17 we are told that God "**calleth those things which be not as though they were.**" In other words, He makes reference to things that do not exist as if they did exist, and speaks of things that are not now true as if they were true. He does this, and He has told us He does it. Failure to believe His declaration and recognize this principle has resulted in much confusion.

The importance of this principle is seen in the fact that when God "speaks of a thing that is not as if it were," the statement becomes automatically a prophecy. What He speaks of as being true will most certainly become true. The example given in Romans is that God spoke of Abraham's descendants even though he was childless and both Abraham and Sarah had lost all procreative power. God spoke as if Abraham's multitude of descendants were a fact because it most certainly would be a fact. Thus His statement became a prophecy that had to be fulfilled. If not, God could be charged with deceit. The Bible abounds in statements where God calls "things which be not as though they were," especially in the Psalms.

In Psalms 22:28 we find the bold declaration that, "The kingdom is the Lord's, and He is the governor among the nations." Since the word "kingdom" means sovereignty or government, there is nothing more evident today than the fact that God is not exercising sovereignty over the nations and that the nations are not being governed by Him. In our own country we insist that the sovereignty (the right to govern) belongs to the people. At the present time God is permitting "all nations to walk after their own ways" (Acts 14:16), and when we witness a session of the United Nations this is quite evident. Thus what seems to be a statement of present fact is in actuality a prophecy. The safeguard against taking this as a present fact is found in the passage that precedes it. This will also be fulfilled.

In Psalms 97:1 we find the statement, "The Lord reigneth," which in the Hebrew reads, "Jehovah has become King." The earth is called upon to rejoice because of this. This is a clear example of God speaking of something that is not true now as if it were true. Divine government is not a present condition. The balance of the Psalm demonstrates this for it speaks of things that will be manifestly apparent when God governs the earth. Not until then will He "judge the peoples of the earth righteously, as .declared in Psalm 96:10. See also Psalm 105:7; 98:1-3; and 103:19 as examples of this principle.

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GOD HAS SPOKEN

The most important fact in the universe is that God has spoken. The believer in the Lord Jesus Christ insists that the total record of what He has said is contained in the sixty-six books called the Bible. Since God has spoken, the supreme duty of all God-fearing men is to discover what He has said. But, alas, even professing Christians are not doing this, so there is an ever diminishing company who are instructed in the facts of the Word of God.

Many who profess to be heralds of the Word are extremely careless in the use they make of it. If its statements will serve their purposes, they make use of them. If not, they feel free to ignore them. In relationship to many things they refuse to allow the Bible to give any testimony.

It is good to know that in the providence of God, lest the love of His truth should utterly perish from the hearts of men, He sees fit to do a gracious personal work upon the minds of many who believe in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is a generating work, done with the end in view that the truth revealed in His word will become the supreme motivating factor in their lives. This is a gracious work in which God opens the eyes of men to see the importance and value of His truth; in which He draws them to His truth by making manifest some of its beauties and glories. Thus He encourages men to take a stand for His truth, and He ever stands ready to provide strength and wisdom to all who respond to His gracious call. All of this is done in secret, and if it is not told, it is known only to the one in whose life it has taken place.

As already stated, this work is a gracious gift, an act of love and favor to the undeserving. It is a work done for the believer, and its continuance and completion depends upon his step by step response. And if the one who is quickened to God's truth refuses to respond, it will be his loss, not God's. There are others who will respond.

When a believer has responded to this gracious work, he has the conviction that it is a serious sin to be unfaithful or disloyal to the truth of God. Faithfulness to revealed truth becomes a part of his character.

He will seek for truth even as some men seek for wealth. Never again will he even try to conform to the commonly accepted religious thoughts and practices of this world. He will never compromise or temporize in order to have some place of service. He has made his choice, and he declares it in the words of Scripture, "I have chosen the way of truth" (Psa. 119:30).

In all humility, boasting excluded, and giving glory alone to God, the writer claims to be a man in whose life God has done such a work.

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CREATION AND RESTORATION

The Bible opens with the statement, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1), and this is everything it has to tell us about the original creation. We are not told when it took place, how long it took, or what was the method of operation. This is an example of what is called the infinity principle of divine revelation. The principle is that God in His Word tells everything we need to know in the realm of the finite, but confines Himself to simple declarations of fact in the realm of the infinite. By so doing God leads finite beings (men) to walk by faith in the unexplained infinite. And this we do.

However, by logical deduction we can say that since all of God's works are perfect, the original creation was perfect. We can rest assured that the creation was worthy of the Creator Himself, and that it reflected all His perfections. "He is the Rock, His work is perfect," we are told in Deu. 32:4. This is certainly true of His creative work set forth in Gen. 1:1.

In the second verse of the Bible we read that "the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep." These words describe a chaotic condition as far removed from order and perfection as one can imagine. The words "without form and void" are in the Hebrew *tohu va bobu*, which literally mean "chaotic and empty." So we are faced with a problem. It is unthinkable that a dark, chaotic and empty earth would have come from the hand of the God of light, order, and fullness of life.

This problem can be quickly solved by those who make a practice of believing God. In Isaiah 45:18 we are told in emphatic language that, "He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited." The Hebrew word here translated "in vain" is *tobu*. Thus we are told that He created it not a chaos. This settles it for all who take God at His word.

Furthermore, the verb *hayah*, translated "was" in Gen. 1:2 should be translated "became," just as it is in Gen. 2:7; 4:3; 9:15; 19:26 and many other places.

Thus we see in the opening verses of Genesis the perfect creation of a perfect world. Next we see the earth as chaotic and empty. It was not created this way, it became this way. Scofield says, "There are not wanting intimations that connect it with a previous testing and fall of angels." Dr. von Huene says, "In the gap between verses one and two of Genesis 1 belongs the fall of Satan with all the powers that followed him." From this chaotic condition a restoration was necessary before man could be placed upon the earth. This restoration is recorded in the balance of Genesis 1.

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GRACE AND GOVERNMENT

The polarity of God's character is expressed in the words grace and government. These two terms express in full the character of God in all His works and ways. They sum up all that He ever has been or ever will be to the human race. Every act and attitude of God can be classified as being one of grace or one of government. When we read that God saved Noah, that was grace; and when we read that He brought "the flood upon the world of the ungodly," that was government. See II Peter 2:5.

The word grace includes all such acts and attitudes of God such as love, mercy, patience, kindness, tenderness, and compassion. The word government embraces such things as justice, kingdom, authority, power, judgment, law, and punishment.

The One who is the God of all (every) grace (1Peter5:10) is also the Judge of all the earth (Gen. 18:25). If God is known, if He is understood, we must know Him as the God of grace and the God of government. Thus when we reason that because of the great and abounding love of God no man will ever be punished, they are ignoring one great aspect of God's character. They are recognizing the God of every grace, but they are ignoring the God of government, the Judge of all the earth who does what is right.

In God's grace we see His perfect love, but in His government we see His perfect justice. Men dealt with in grace receive what they do not deserve. Men dealt with under government (in justice) will receive what they deserve.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that God's present method of dealing with mankind, His present attitude toward all men is one of absolute grace. We are today living in and under the dispensation of the grace of God. God may be passively gracious, or He may be actively gracious, but at present if He cannot act in grace, then He will not act at all. God's present method of dealing in grace began with Paul's great pronouncement recorded in Acts 28:28. God was not dealing in absolute grace in the thirty-three years of the Acts period.

God has a purpose in this long display of grace, and this purpose is being perfectly accomplished. His purpose is to write into the history of His long dealings with men a perfect and unchallengeable record of the grace which is inherent in His character.

God is not acting in government (justice) today. He is acting only in grace, but this will not go on forever. Mankind is yet to see and experience an open demonstration of the government of God. Its power and principles, its morals and methods, its justice and judgments, its light and life, its healing and health, its benefits and blessings will all be seen in manifest operation when God speaks from heaven and assumes sovereignty over mankind.

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PRAYER FOR THE KINGDOM

Should the concerned believer pray for the coming of the kingdom of God upon the earth? This is a question often asked. My answer is, "Yes, positively yes." If this is what we want, then we should pray for it. If we honestly want God to assume sovereignty over mankind, if we want Him to take the reins of government into His hands, if we want His will to be done upon earth, if we want to be done with government of the people and have the government of God, then we should pray for the coming of His kingdom upon the earth. While others are petitioning congress for relief, the believer should be petitioning God for relief.

We are told in God's Word that in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to let our requests be made known unto God (Phil. 4:6), so if the kingdom of God is what we want, we should make request for it.

The Lord instructed His disciples to say when they prayed, "Thy kingdom come." It is my conviction that this should now be our fervent request, more so than ever before. The moral and spiritual condition of mankind has become so desperate that nothing short of divine intervention is going to be of help. However, the constant repetition of the three words, "Thy kingdom come," is of no value. The effective fervent prayer of a righteous person will avail much, but the constant repetition of even a Scriptural phrase is useless. If many who say, "Thy kingdom come," were asked what they were requesting, they would have no answer.

There are ministers who lead the people to pray, "Thy kingdom come," when it is their belief that the kingdom is here now. They do not know that God's kingdom is His government and that it can only come about by divine intervention. They have idle dreams about "the church" conquering the world, and they have no place in their thoughts for a world invaded, conquered, and governed by God.

There are many prayers in the Bible, which are petitions for God to intervene. These show us many ways to say, "Thy kingdom come." Our

own prayers should be fortified by these inspired words.

O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end: but establish the just. Psa. 7:9.

Arise, O Lord; let not man prevail: let the nations be judged in thy sight. Put them in fear, O Lord; that the nations may know themselves to be but men. Psa. 9:19,20.

Arise, O God, plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily. Forget not the voice of thine enemies: the tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually. Psa. 74:22-23.

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A REMARKABLE PASSAGE

There is a passage in the New Testament, which is a divine re-statement of a prophecy by Isaiah which to me is one of the most important revelations to be found in the Bible. It is a passage that is little appreciated, seldom discussed, and usually ignored by expositors and commentators. It sets forth a segment of God's prophetic program that is yet to be fulfilled. This passage is Matthew 12:17-21.

The occasion for this utterance is found in the healing by our Lord of a man's withered hand. This was done under such circumstances that it led to an official meeting of the Pharisees to consider how He could be destroyed. Our Lord knew that if they went through with their plans it would result in open combat in which some of His enemies would probably lose their lives. He would not allow Himself to die one step short of the Cross, but He wanted no conflict on the way, so He withdrew Himself from that place. Great multitudes followed Him and He healed them all (12:15), but charged them that they should tell no man where He was.

As said before, He wanted no conflict with the Pharisees in which He might be forced to destroy the lives of some of His adversaries. What He wanted was that the words of Isaiah might be fulfilled when he said:

"Behold My servant, whom I have chosen; My beloved in whom My soul is well pleased: I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall shew judgment to the nations. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory. And in His name shall the nations trust. Matt. 12:18-21.

Note carefully what is done here. Jesus Christ will show judgment to the nations. Judgment is a commodity that all nations lack today. There is a world scarcity of this valuable asset. There is no nation today that knows what to do or what is right. All this will be changed when God causes judgment to be heard from heaven. Then the peoples of the earth will stand in awed recognition of the power and majesty of God.

Judgment is not punishment. The Judgments of the State of California can be read in any legal library. These guide and regulate the people of this state. God's judgments will yet be made known to the nations. When He does it will be because He is taking over; He has become king of all nations.

When He does this there is no strife, no conflicts in the streets, no shouts, no cries. No one gets hurt in this process, at least not until He has gained complete victory by sending forth His judgments. And the climax of it all is that the nations are seen trusting in Him. This is all entirely different from that segment of prophecy set forth in 1 Thess. 4:16-17. The events in Matthew introduce the kingdom of God. These in Thessalonians introduce the personal presence of Jesus Christ.

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SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

This writer takes second place to no man in believing that the time will come when Jesus Christ will leave His place in the heavens and come back to be personally present upon the earth. I fully believe the words of the heavenly witnesses when they said, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

When I was 18 years of age I bought a book called "The Second Coming New Testament." This was the King James Version, except in it every direct reference to the second coming was printed in boldface type, and every related reference was in italics. I set out then to master these passages, memorizing most of them, and thus became familiar with everything the New Testament has to say on this subject. In the almost fifty years that have elapsed since then I have constantly labored to translate and correctly interpret all these passages, giving special attention and time to research into the Greek word **parousia**. I do not claim perfect understanding of these passages, but I do claim complete familiarity.

It is because of this familiarity that it is impossible for me to believe that Jesus Christ may return at any moment; neither can I accept the idea that the early disciples believed this. There is in the Word of God a well-established time-table of events, and while no date can be set, the order of events can be fully established, and the second coming is not next. And even though I believe that God is about to bring to pass some great segment of unfulfilled prophecy, I do not believe that it will be the return of Jesus Christ.

There is a positive revelation in the Word of God that demonstrates that Jesus Christ will remain in His present place at the right hand of God until His enemies are made His footstool. See Psalm 110:1; Acts 2:34,35; Heb. 1:13. A truth that is repeated three times should not be treated lightly. In 1 Cor. 15:25 we are told that, "**He must reign**

(govern) until He has put all enemies under His feet." After careful study I am convinced that to be "made a footstool" and to be "placed under someone's feet" mean exactly the same thing. These are both figurative statements and both mean "to be brought into or under subjection." And since this is accomplished by a process of governing, it is evident that there must be a period of manifest divine government upon this earth before Jesus Christ leaves heaven to return to earth. God is not governing the earth today. He is dispensing grace, not government.

The next event in the prophetic calendar is the divine assumption of sovereignty resulting in the manifest kingdom (government) of God upon the earth.

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CONDITIONS THAT PREVAIL

When God assumes sovereignty and the kingdom of God becomes a reality it will be a composite of many miraculous acts, yet it is one event. When these acts are set forth in the Bible there is usually a statement of the conditions that prevail when God injects Himself into the affairs of this world.

This can be seen quite clearly in Isaiah 59:19. One great act of God when He takes over the reins of government is to lift up a standard against the enemy. According to ancient custom, this is equal to God saying to every man, "Take one more wicked step and you are at war with me." This act of God takes place at a time when "the enemy shall come in like a flood." Thus we are taught that we can expect God to act at a time when iniquity has overflowed its banks and is sweeping all before it. Such a condition exists today. The enemy has come in like a flood. Can we expect God to act? We can! And I am praying He will do it.

Recognizing that the prayer of Psalm 9:19,20 is in reality a prophecy, we know that the Lord will arise, that the nations will be judged in His sight, that they will be brought into a state of reverential fear and will come to know that they are nothing but men. However, it is evident that these acts take place at a time when governments are insisting they are divine and the states are acting as gods. We live in a time when men look to government, but not to God.

In Psalm 46:6 the divine act is set forth as God speaking from heaven. He utters His voice, and the proud men of the earth melt before Him. And if we pursue the matter further we see that He speaks at a time when nations are in turmoil and the kingdoms (governments) are in a state of agitation and confusion. These are the conditions we see on every hand today. There is not one solid, firmly established government on the earth today. The conditions are right for God to act. When He speaks "wars will cease" (Psa. 46:9).

In Psalm 64:2,7 we find that God sends forth His arrows of light and truth at a time when there is an insurrection of the workers of iniquity. We have such an insurrection today. Will the arrow of the Lord go forth? Is this the time? I hope it is.

While Isa. 60:1-2 has specific reference to Israel we know from this passage that God sends forth His light at a time when moral and spiritual darkness covers the earth and thick darkness upon the peoples of the earth. We have this condition today.

Finally, there is the act of God set forth in 2 Tim. 3:9. "They shall proceed no further." Thus God stops all iniquity by turning on the light. This happens in a time of iniquity, a time such as we have today.

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DIVINE ELECTION

The word election in the Bible means exactly the same thing as when we speak of the election of a president, governor or mayor. In electing we make choice of a man who is to serve in a special capacity or to perform a certain service. In a democracy this is done by a majority of votes, but in the divine realm it is accomplished by God's vote. God elects or makes choice of men to perform special services.

In this country, no man is elected to citizenship. He becomes a citizen by birth or by naturalization. He cannot be elected to any office unless he is a citizen. The same is true in God's realm. We do not become children of God, we are not saved by being elected. We must be the children of God, we must be saved before we can be elected.

Election has nothing to do with salvation, forgiveness, or the gift of eternal life. These come to us as the result of our faith in Jesus Christ, and the exercise of faith must precede our election. Such election takes place in a man's lifetime. It is a present act of God. Not some act performed in the remote past. At the present time God is electing all believers to serve Him in a special capacity when He assumes sovereignty over the earth.

If an honest examination and interpretation is made of every passage in the New Testament where the Greek words that have to do with election are found (verb, adjective and noun), the truth of all the statements made above can be verified. This involves a study of only fifty-one passages in their contexts, and this should be done by all who want to be found believing God's truth on this subject. Some of the truth is hidden by arbitrary translations, but this can be overcome by the use of an analytical concordance.

If such a study is made it will be found that the twelve apostles were chosen (elected) out of the Lord's many disciples (Luke 6:13). They were elected then and there to perform a special service.

It will be found that Judas Iscariot was chosen (elected) by Jesus

Christ (John 6:70; John 13:18).

This shows that the word has nothing to do with salvation.

It will be found that Jesus Christ was elected by God to be the Messiah (1 Peter 2:4,6).

It will be found that the present day believer in the Lord Jesus Christ has been chosen (elected) to be "holy and without blame before Him" (Eph.1:4). This election happens in one's own lifetime, it is one of the results of our faith. This is before God founds His world, an event that is still future.

See Psalm 95:10—"the world also shall be established."

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PREDESTINATION

The Greek word translated "predestinate" is found only six times in the entire New Testament. It is translated "determined before" in Acts 2:48, "ordained" in 1Cor. 2:7, and "predestination" in Rom. 8:29,30, Eph. 1:5 and 1:11. The Greek word means to designate beforehand or to determine beforehand, and it is not in any passage related to salvation, forgiveness, or the gift of eternal life.

In Acts 4:28 this word has reference to the things that happened to Jesus Christ at the time of His crucifixion. These men carried out what their own wicked wills purposed and intended, and yet they carried out what God had determined beforehand.

In Rom. 8:29,30 this word appears in a passage, which has to do with God's Provident care of those who serve Him, those whom He determined beforehand should be conformed to the image of His Son. This was something predetermined for believers, not for sinners. It has particular reference to His apostles, prophets, and teachers of the Acts period. He justified the acts of all such men, binding and loosing in heaven that which they bound and loosed upon the earth.

In 1 Cor. 2:7 this word is used in connection with predetermined wisdom, the truth that Paul set forth in his message. The proclamation of "Christ crucified" was no afterthought or change of plan.

In Ephesians 1:5 and 11 this word tells us of God's determination that those who are now children of God through faith in Jesus Christ will become sons of God and serve Him in a very special way. The Greek here reads; "designating us beforehand for the place of a son." This word is to believers.

The Calvinistic theory of predestination as defined in the third chapter of the Westminster Confession is that a certain number of men are by the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death; the particular individuals thus predestinated and preordained are

unchangeably determined; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished; the decree of God that some men shall be saved does not rest upon any foresight of their faith; the decree of God that others should be lost does not rest upon any foresight of their unbelief.

Speaking as one who has assiduously studied the Bible for almost fifty years, I would say that the above theories are not to be found in the Word of God. Only the technical terms of Calvinistic theology will be found there, but these terms do not set forth the Calvinistic ideas. God elects and predetermines the future of men who are "in Christ." He does not predestinate the destiny of sinners.

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THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD

It is customary to attribute to God omniscience, to say that He has universal knowledge that He knows to an infinite degree all that is knowable, whether actual or possible. This leads some to say that God knows every detail of the future, even such things as the exact date and circumstances of an individual's death; which leads them to reason further that the time of one's death is already fixed by God's foreknowledge of it.

A recent writer declares that, "Almost every person that is familiar with the Bible readily agrees that God possesses a foreknowledge of everything that has been, is now, or ever will be." From this false premise he reasons that if God "knows that something is going to happen, then it will happen. Nothing can change it."

As one who claims some degree of familiarity with the Bible, permit me to say that I do not "readily agree" to this. Such a concept is based upon human reasoning about God and not upon the truth revealed in the Bible. The facts in the case are that God knows or foreknows only what He desires to know. You cannot force knowledge or foreknowledge upon God. As the omnipotent (all-powerful) God He can bring to His mind anything that has been, is now, or ever will be. He can, if He sees fit, totally ignore a man from his birth to his death, and yet bring every minute detail of that man's life into His mind in a split second. In fact this is what He will do when He judges the living and the dead (2 Tim. 4:1).

The true God is the one revealed in the Bible, and the truth set forth there shows Him to be One who has foreknowledge of only such things as He has determined. At the time men were building the tower of Babel, He took no knowledge, He paid no attention to what they were doing. In due time He did pay attention and "came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded." (Gen. 11:5). When He appraised their effort, He pronounced an adverse judgment upon it.

The sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was of such nature that the cry of it

arose unto God. He determined to know of this by a personal investigation. He declared, "I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which has come unto me; and if not, I will know." (Gen. 18:21). Thus the God of the Bible is revealed to be One to whom all knowledge is available. He can enter into understanding of anything He desires to know, but knowledge cannot be forced upon Him.

Our God is the only one who can truly remember, and He is the only one who can truly forget. What we try to remember, we often forget, and what we try to forget, we usually remember. Not so with God. He remembers and He forgets. He can know, or He may see fit to take no knowledge.

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THAT BLESSED HOPE

In Titus 2:11,12 the people of God are exhorted to live "looking for that blessed hope." This forces upon us the task of finding out with certainty what "that blessed hope" is. Some say that it is a pretribulation rapture, and others say it is the second coming of Christ. Statements such as these are easily made, and they do not seem to reveal any real exercise of heart and mind to discover what our blessed hope is from Biblical truth.

The very passage that exhorts us to live looking for it declares that the blessed hope is "the shining forth of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." This is a literal translation of the original language. The Greek here is quite simple and no problem to translate. The two statements are appositional, one defines the other; "that blessed hope" is "the shining forth of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ."

This is not a new truth, which was suddenly declared to Paul by Titus. It is a restatement by the Holy Spirit of a prophecy which was spoken long before by Isaiah:

And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. Isa. 40:5.

The word glory here has to do with the esteem in which one is held by another. We constantly hear what men think about Christ, His enemies as well as His friends. However, the all important thing is what God thinks of Christ, the esteem in which the Father holds the Son. And, according to God's Word there is to be a miraculous act of divine intervention in which God's truth concerning Jesus Christ will be forced upon the mind of all flesh — every man, woman and child living upon this earth. Yes, even the babes will utter praise to Him. (Matt. 21:16).

The Greek word in Titus 2:13 which is in the King James Version is translated "appearing," and which I have rendered "shining forth," is *epiphaneia*. This same word is found in 2 Tim. 4:1 in another appositional setting which reads literally:

I charge you before God, even the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall determine what is right in regard to the living and the dead in harmony with His shining forth, even His kingdom.

His "shining forth" is the event that introduces the kingdom, God's own government upon this earth. It will have a continuing effect that will give the character to the time when He governs. It is the initial event when God assumes sovereignty, takes the reins of government into His hands and the kingdom of God becomes a manifest reality upon the earth. This is our blessed hope. This is what we are looking for.

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THE GENERATION GAP

Believe it or not, four hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ an obscure prophet spoke of the present generation gap and told what God would do about it.

There are numerous passages in the Bible, which seem to defy interpretation, until in due time the inexorable flow of events makes their meaning quite clear. This is especially true of many prophecies. We will not know what the prophet spoke about until the fulfillment begins to take place. This is true of the final great statement of the Old Testament, one of the truly great promises of the Bible, a prophecy that has not yet been fulfilled.

Behold, I will send unto you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. Malachi 4:5,6.

Some portions of this prophecy have always been plain to men of faith, those who take God at His word and think accordingly. It is the promise of God that He is going to send "Elijah the Prophet." This designation is so specific that we do not need to settle for anyone else. John the Baptist did not fulfill this prophecy. He did not do the work God said Elijah would do, and he declared unequivocally that he was not Elijah (John 1:21).

It is also plain that the appearance of Elijah the Prophet takes place before the day of the LORD (Jehovah) begins; therefore, it takes place in and is an aspect of the day of Christ. We also know that he will accomplish a great work of such spiritual importance that it prepares the earth for the second coming. If it were not for this great work, which will eliminate a malign condition, the Lord, when He comes, would find it necessary to smite the earth with a curse.

However, it is the phrase "turn the heart of the fathers to the children,

and the heart of the children to their fathers," that, until now, has always been obscure.

In the past decade there has come into full bloom a condition that is commonly called "the generation gap," a revolt of youth against their elders, and this is the cause of widespread concern today. Social agencies, citizens groups, federal as well as state and local committees are being set up all over the United States to deal with the problem. The rising tide of this problem is well summed up in the words of one eminent sociologist, "Everyone, including the experts is at a loss to understand what is happening. One thing is certain: we must straighten out this horrible condition."

This condition and its ultimate straightening out is what the prophet Malachi was talking about. When Elijah appears it will be in connection with that divine assumption of sovereignty, which will establish God's government upon the earth.

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THE PAROUSIA OF JESUS CHRIST

The strange word in the title is one of great importance to all who love God's Word. It is found twenty-four times in the New Testament where it is erroneously translated "coming" twenty-two times; a meaning that has been imposed upon it ever since this was done by the King James translators. This is an error somewhat like that which called the original inhabitants of this country "Indians." They are not Indians, and they never will be Indians, no matter how many times this error is repeated. Even so the word **parousia** does not mean "coming," and it never will mean "coming," no matter who or how many repeat the error.

In two occurrences of the word parousia, the evident facts in the context forced the translators to be more honest. In 2 Corinthians 10:10 and Philippians 2:12 it is translated "presence," a rendering that at least shows a decent respect for the root and suffix that forms the word parousia. It is made up of para which means "beside," and the participial form of the verb "to be," ousia, which means "being." The compound word means literally "being beside," that is, being present, and when used of a person it cannot mean less than an actual, physical, personal presence. And while it is true that a "coming" may be required before a "personal presence" is possible, the fact remains that parousia does not mean "coming." The very elements of this word cry out against such a definition.

However, when all the occurrences of this word in the New Testament, the Septuagint, Classical Greek, and the papyrus manuscripts are examined it will be found that parousia is a technical word which indicates a certain kind of personal presence. This word indicates a personal presence when one is present because of what he is and what he does. Thus, a personal presence may not be parousia if the one present is not there in relationship to his position or office and the service he performs as such.

The importance of this word is seen in the fact that what men commonly call the millennium, the Bible calls the parousia of Jesus

Christ. Sometime after all His foes have been made His footstool, He will leave His present place at the right hand of God and descend from heaven to earth. This will result in Him being personally present upon the earth for a thousand years, and He will be present because of what He is and what He does.

This world is not yet ready for the personal presence of Jesus Christ. The voices of His enemies are heard on every hand. The tumult of those who rise up against Him increaseth continually (Psalm 74:22,23). God must assume sovereignty and reign (govern) until all enemies are subject to Him (1Cor.15:25). He must govern long from His throne in heaven before this earth will be ready for His presence.

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THE ORDER OF EVENTS

It was Charles F. Kettering, former head of General Motors who first said, "We should all be concerned about the future because we will have to spend the rest of our lives there."

The Biblical revelation of the future has to do with this earth and the men who live upon it. The average professing Christian does not have much interest in this since he long has been brainwashed into thinking that his whole future is to be spent in a place called heaven. As one who believes and teaches that this earth and not heaven is the future home of all God's redeemed, I am captivated by what the Bible reveals about this planet to which we have given the name "Earth." As Patrick Fairbairn has well said, "Were I left to choose out of all creation's bounds the place where my redeemed nature is to find its local habitation, enjoy its redeemer's presence, and reap the fruits of His costly purchase, I would prefer none to this." The future of this earth is set forth under three great stages.

1. **The kingdom of God.** "Thou shalt judge the peoples righteously and govern the nations upon earth," is the great promise of the Psalmist (Psa. 67:4). "He must reign (govern) till He hath put all enemies under His feet" is the word we have from Paul (1 Cor. 15:25). To be completely governed by God is the next great experience of this earth and the men upon it. The LORD will be our judge, the LORD will be our lawgiver, the LORD will be our king (Isa. 33:22). Thus He will be the directing head and final authority of all the divisions of a complete government; judicial, legislative, and executive. This kingdom will be produced upon earth by the power of God operating miraculously. "The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this" (Isa. 9:7). He has already established His throne (seat of government) in heaven, and it is from this seat of government that He will rule the earth (Psalm 103:19).

2. **The parousia of the Lord Jesus Christ.** The Greek word parousia means a personal presence when one is present because of who he is and what he does. Jesus Christ is to be personally present upon the

earth for a thousand years, accomplishing every purpose that is set forth in His many titles and offices. This period of earth's history is what men commonly call "the millennium," a human description that emphasizes the length. In order for Him to be personally present there must be a return to earth upon His part.

3. **The new heavens and new earth.** The final condition, set forth in Revelation 20 and 21, when the tabernacle of God will be with men. This earth then becomes the mediatorial planet in relationship to God's purposes for the universe. With this in view, "Let the earth rejoice" (Psalm 97:1).

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THE SYNDROME OF THE LAST DAYS

The "last days" referred to in 2 Tim. 3:1 are the concluding days of God's dispensation of grace. More than 1900 years ago our God began an operation that is entirely gracious. His purpose has been to establish an absolute record of the grace that is inherent in His character. All through these nineteen centuries, He has done nothing except show undeserved favors to the human race. All punishments for sin and all divine justice are in abeyance while God is perfecting this record of His grace. This record at present is a secret record, the present dealings of God in grace are unsearchable, but they will not always be. When God's present purpose is complete, He will assume sovereignty, and this earth and all men upon it will be under the kingdom (government) of God.

A "syndrome" is a set of concurrent things that indicate a certain state or condition. In 2 Tim. 3:1-9 the Spirit of God sets forth twenty-one social conditions as indications of the last days. When these signs or symptoms are manifest there can be no honest diagnosis except that we are living in the concluding days of God's long display of grace. We are startled by the accuracy of Paul's presentation.

We are told that the last days will be characterized eras of ferocity or displays of fierceness. The Greek word *chalepos* (perilous) is found only here and in Matt. 8:28. Violence, brutality, ferocity are the frightful signatures of the present time.

It is now quite apparent that men have become inordinately narcissistic (self-lovers), money lovers, ostentatious, proud, calumniators, stubborn toward and disrespectful of parents, lacking gratitude, disposed to inflict suffering (malignant), calloused, implacable, slanderers, uncontrollable (ungovernable), fierce, despisers of those that are good, betrayers, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure, yet all the time maintaining a facade of godliness.

In the past twenty years these things have become particularly prominent and conspicuous in the world. They are so commonplace that they create difficult problems for society. They are cause for anxiety

among educators, peace officers, and parents.

All this declares one thing to the man who takes God at His word and thinks accordingly. We are living in the last days of God's dispensation of grace. In view of this we live in daily expectation of divine intervention. Human governments have utterly failed. The rule of man must be replaced by The rule of God. May God speed the day.

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ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

The word salvation summarizes all of God's gracious works such as forgiveness, deliverance, and justification. It is the provision that God has made for sinners. Men need to be saved. We are told that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes (Rom. 1:16). The word believe represents all that a sinner can do and all that a sinner must do in order to be saved. Many would like to do more or to give more, but belief is what God requires and it is all that God requires. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. 4:5).

The word faith is a synonym of the word believe. In fact, these two words are the same in the Greek New Testament. We must have faith, or we do not believe. Saving faith is belief in the record God has given of His Son. To add or subtract from this sole condition of salvation is most perilous.

The freeness of God's grace, the clarity and definiteness of God's plan of salvation is such that honest consideration of it is bound to bring the conclusion that one can know and one should know that he is saved. If our faith in Jesus Christ, in His work, and in His great sacrifice is such that we have turned from dependence on all else to complete dependence upon Him, we should possess a complete and abiding assurance of our salvation. Since God has declared that He justifies the ungodly, since He has declared that His righteousness is unto all and upon all them that believe, then those who believe must also believe that their salvation is an accomplished fact.

The lack of assurance that is found among so many professing Christians has numerous causes. Chief among these is a lack of faith in the person of Christ. They give Him the title of Savior, but they cannot quite believe that He is equal to it. They are unable to turn to Him in complete dependence that He is a capable and powerful Savior who is well able to do the work that God has given Him to do. Their lack of confidence in Him makes them unable to place the whole matter of

salvation into His hands. They call themselves believers, and they say they have faith in Jesus Christ, but their tearfulness shows that genuine belief and faith is not theirs.

With all such no abiding assurance of salvation is possible.

We need to admit the justice of God's verdict, which says we have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). We need to admit our need of a Savior, and then find in Jesus Christ the Savior we need. We need to talk to God and tell Him that as a sinner we take Jesus Christ to be our Savior. Then we can go forth and live as one who has God for his justifier, Jesus Christ as his Savior, and the Holy Spirit as our helper in all our infirmities.

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JESUS CHRIST OUR SAVIOR

An unknown poet said long ago:

"Some call Him a Savior, in word,
But mix their own works with His Plan:
And hope He His help will afford,
When they have done all that they can:
If doings prove rather too light,
A little they own they may fail,
They purpose to make up full weight,
By casting His name in the scale."

There can never be assurance of salvation until men cease the practice of connecting God's work of salvation with innumerable things with which it has nothing to do. The salvation that God provides for sinners has no relationship to religion, church membership, church attendance, ordinances, ceremonies or rituals. It has nothing to do with men acting as mediators, not even with preachers of the gospel. The intrusion of such things into any consideration of God's plan of salvation serves only to create confusion and uncertainty. These things must be divorced from any relationship to the plan of salvation before one can enter into settled peace and assurance.

How blessed it is to realize that the clashes of religion, the apostasy of churches, the controversies over ordinances, and the failure of ministers can never touch or have any effect upon God's great provision of salvation for sinners.

The only cure for uncertainty in regard to the knowledge and assurance of salvation is to end it with certainty. Uncertain things must be abandoned and divine certainties must be brought in to take their place. Why debate any longer as to whether church membership and baptism is the same as believing? It is preposterous to think so!

Why wonder any longer if religion will take the place of faith in the sacrificial work of Christ? It will not! Why try to deceive yourself into thinking that "having religion" is the same as having Jesus Christ as your Savior?

It is not!

Would you like to know the blessedness of being one unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works? Would you like to experience the joys of being one who iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered? Would you like to be among that happy company to whom God will not impute sin?

All this can be yours. It is described in Romans 4:6-8, and we are told there how this can be ours.

But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth (declares righteous) the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Rom. 4:5.

Jesus Christ is the Savior. If He is our Savior we will be saved. Our part is to believe.

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GOD WILL ACT

It is certainly not a new idea to see the Kingdom of God as being God's own government inaugurated by a supernatural act of divine power, bringing upon this earth a whole new order of existence. However, it is a new idea to see this taking place miraculously and being a concrete reality long before the second coming of Jesus Christ and before the thousand years of His personal presence upon the earth. It is also quite different to see the government of God as being a reality upon this earth without it first being preceded by a period of indignation. I do not believe that divine wrath is a preliminary to God assuming sovereignty.

If men are to be punished, it must be done by God's government and under His government and not as a preliminary to it. I reject the idea that internecine warfare and chaos will sweep the world before God intervenes to set up His benevolent government. Such warfare with modern weapons would wipe the earth clean of its inhabitants and make impossible the fulfillment of hundreds of prophecies in which God has promised blessings to Israel, to the nations, and to the peoples of the earth.

In view of this we proclaim a pre-advent kingdom, it precedes the second coming of Christ; a pre-millennial kingdom, it precedes the thousands years of His personal presence upon the earth; a pre-tribulation kingdom, it precedes all the events recorded in Matthew 24 or the book of Revelation.

The coming government of God will be the result of divine action. The manifold problems which now trouble the people of all nations, most of them clearly delineated by the illogical and disruptive ferment which is seen on every hand, will never be solved until there is divine action. This action has been promised and men of faith are now looking to God for the fulfillment of His Word.

God speaks of a time when men shall stand in awed recognition and reverence for His name from the west to the east. Then He tells of the

divine action that will bring this about.

When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him. Isa. 59:19.

It is to be noted here that this is an act of the Spirit of God. God has revealed His plans to invade the earth by His Spirit, even invading the hearts and minds of men (Isa. 40:5). God will conquer the earth by His Spirit and set up His own order upon it by means of His Spirit. In the world to come the Spirit of God will make known to the world the facts concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. (John 16:7-11). Men of faith should now be looking for the second coming of the Holy Spirit.

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A LIVING SOUL

In Genesis 2:7 we are told that the Lord God formed man of the dust (soil) of the ground, then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life with the result that man became a living soul. Thus the declaration that man is a soul is the Biblical concept, while the idea that man has a soul is the Platonic philosophy. Many people try to hold the foolish idea that man has a body, that he has a soul, and that he has a spirit. But when we ask just who or what this man is who has all these wonderful things they begin to reason in circles trying to say that he is a being composed of these three things.

The Word of God reveals that primarily and basically we are men, members of the human race. It was a man that God created, not a body and not a spirit. He made a man of the dust of the earth. No revelation could be more explicit than this. However, in spite of the common and lowly material He used, He made a marvelous creature having many aspects.

Since he is composed of organized material, man is a body. He does not have a body, he is a body. Man has form, dimensions, and organization, all of which are essential before he can be called a body.

As to his senses and activity, man is a soul. When God did that which caused man to become a living soul, he became a creature that could see, smell, hear, taste, feel, and move about. Plants cannot be called souls since they must be rooted in one place. Animals can be and are called "souls" in Scripture. The Hebrew word nephesh is applied to animal life four times in the book of Genesis before it is applied to man.

As to man's ability to reason and to exercise faith he can be described as a spirit. By this it is not meant that man is a spirit being, nor does it mean that man possesses the breath of life, which is also called spirit. Man is a human being, not a spirit being.

The terms spirit, soul, and body when used of man are highly

expressive. They are necessary in order to properly represent the various aspects of man. God speaks of men, and man speaks of himself, as being body, soul, or spirit. The figure of speech generally used to express these ideas are "my body," "my soul" or "my spirit." This is taken by many to prove that these are entities which when combined make up the whole man. However, if a man speaks of "my strength" or "my mind" we do not think that he is speaking of something that has reality apart from himself.

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THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

It is quite evident that most professing Christians believe that the Holy Spirit is given to men in order to expand their minds and increase their powers and mental abilities. They dream about becoming "flaming witnesses" and men of great power and influence if only they can lay hold of God's Spirit. This causes many to get out of the will of God as they seek to be something and to do things, which are not God's purposes for today.

When the Lord Jesus sent forth His twelve disciples, He did not send them forth powerless (Matt. 10:1-8). "He gave them power (authority) against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease" (10:1). Thus they were told to "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils" (10:8). They had received this power freely, and they were to dispense its benefits just as freely.

This is a clear example of how the Spirit of God works in men when it is God's purpose to work in such a way. If God would give me this authority, I could perform any of these marvelous works just as well as any one of the twelve to whom this power was given. Their ability to do these things was based upon this divinely given power or authority, and upon nothing else. Even Judas Iscariot, who was then a practicing thief, and who later betrayed the Lord Jesus, was one to whom this authority was given.

There is no man upon earth who has this power today. If there were, he would not need to pitch a tent, organize the choir, and pass out cards in the afternoon to a carefully selected few who will be prayed for that night. He would walk right into the great centers of illness, such as Cook County Hospital in Chicago, and empty it ward by ward and bed by bed.

I firmly believe that if it were God's will for me to raise the dead, as it certainly was His will when He sent forth the twelve apostles on their first heralding mission (Matt. 10:8), He would give me of His Spirit and I would be able to do it.

However, being cognizant of the time in which we live, and fully believing that we are today shut up to faith in His written Word, I neither seek nor expect from God any portion of His Spirit that will give me the power to perform this miracle. It is His will today that men believe without seeing (John 20:29). God can produce just as much faith in a man from that man reading the written record of a resurrection as He can if one actually witnessed the miracle. We believe without doubt that God can raise the dead. Not because we have ever seen it, but because it is written in His Word. Thus we take our place in that blessed company who having not seen, yet have believed (John 20:29).

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SO THAT YOU MAY KNOW

We are told in I Corinthians 2:12 that the believer is given the Spirit of God so that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. We are also told that while we can know the things of men because of the spirit of man which is in all of us, yet the things of God cannot be known by any man save by the Spirit of God. Yet there are many whose attitude seems to be if that is what the Spirit of God does, they are not interested. They have already so exalted their own opinions above all that is written in Scriptures, that they feel there is nothing more for them to know, so this ministry of the Holy Spirit is of no value.

If God should answer the prayers offered by many, and give them of His Spirit, it could be that it would be given so that they might know more of the things He has so freely given in His Word. Or it could be that the Spirit might be given so that they might overcome the sins of pride, selfishness, bitterness, wrath, clamor, evil speaking, and malice. However, this is not what they wanted, so the gift of the Spirit is of no avail. They have no intention of giving up the pleasures they find in these sins.

The Holy Spirit is given by God to accomplish whatever purpose He may have in mind. It is never given to fulfill some self-centered purpose of personal power and exaltation, which we may have in mind. When the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters as declared in Gen. 1:2, it was to bring order out of chaos, to dispel darkness and end confusion. Since God did this for the material world, and it was so effective, we now believe He will do the same for the world of mankind.

When King Saul sent messengers (soldiers) to arrest David and bring him in, they were defeated in their purpose when the Spirit of God came upon them. They could do nothing but prophesy. He sent other messengers, a second and a third time, but they were stopped when the Spirit of God came upon them. Finally, in great rage, Saul went himself, but the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied (I Sam. 19:18-24). This provides an important lesson in regard to what God has done

and may do through His Spirit.

It will be a great work of the Spirit when wicked men are stopped in their tracks as promised by Paul in 2 Tim. 3:9. "They shall proceed no further," is God's sure promise. This will take place when God pours out of His Spirit upon all flesh (Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17).

Instead of selfishly praying that God will pour out of His Spirit upon us, we had better pray that God will pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh.

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THE SECOND COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The title above sets forth one of the most important truths in the Bible, yet it is a truth that is sadly neglected. It is never good when men allow one divine revelation to so dominate their minds that it completely excludes one that is equally important. This has happened in regard to the great truth of the second coming of Jesus Christ. To many this is the only truth that has to do with future events. Thus they utterly fail to recognize and enter into the Bible doctrine of the second coming of the Holy Spirit.

If we are asked what event introduces the kingdom of God upon the earth, what act of God will indicate that He has assumed sovereignty, what great event will make it possible for us to joyfully cry out "The Lord reigneth." (Psa. 96:10), we answer without hesitation that it is the second advent of the Holy Spirit.

It is the twice-declared promise of God that the day will come when He will pour put of His Spirit upon all flesh (Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17). This promise is as trustworthy as any to be found in the Bible, yet it is not believed, it is not received, and it is not expected. Quite often it is explained away.

This is usually done by claiming that this prophecy was fulfilled at Pentecost when God poured out of His Spirit upon 120 believers. This is said to be the complete and definitive fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, even though nothing that Joel predicted took place that day. True, Peter said, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16), but it should be noted that he did not say it was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy.

If Pentecost was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, then we must either charge Joel with gross exaggeration, or charge God with an under fulfillment of His promise.

God will yet make good His promise. He will pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh. When He does, this divine outpouring can truly be called

the second coming of the Holy Spirit. This will bring all mankind under a new responsibility and accountability to God, and it will introduce God's beneficent government upon the earth.

The first coming of the Holy Spirit is set forth in John 14:16-18. This promise became a reality on the day of Pentecost. The second coming of the Holy Spirit is declared in John 16:7-11. The second advent of the Spirit will mark the beginning of the kingdom of God upon the earth. The second advent of Jesus Christ will mark the beginning of the thousand years of His personal presence.

It is the second coming of the Holy Spirit that is spoken of in Isa. 59:19, also in Isa. 32:14-16. In the latter passage we see that the second coming of the Spirit is the hope of Israel, but in John 16:7-11 it is seen to be the hope of the world.

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OUR GOD, A PERSONAL GOD

The Bible reveals and declares a personal God. He is not an impersonal force. He knows that we exist. He loves us, and we can return His love. He cares for us, and we can care for Him. We are in His thoughts, and we can put Him out of our thoughts. He notes this if we do.

When we speak of a personal God, it is not a suggestion that He is a human being. We mean that He is a personality. Or, to say it another way, our God has personality. The personality of God is revealed in the Bible. There we find a record of His words, His works, and His ways, and through these we can, by the help of His Spirit, come to know Him.

Personality is the distinguishing feature among men. It is the basis by which we distinguish one man from another. If it were not for personality, two men weighing the same would be just two packages of flesh. Even identical twins are easily distinguished by those who know their personalities. And just as personality is the distinguishing feature among men, the personality of God is that which distinguishes Him from all other beings.

Personality is revealed and made known through man's multifarious expressions, and in no other way. When one lacks expression, he lacks personality. The look upon our faces, the words we say, how we act, what we do, the responses we make, all reveal what we are, that is, our personalities.

The Bible speaks of dumb idols. These are idols that do nothing, nothing, and lack mobility. Our God is not one of these. He is not dumb. He has spoken. He does not lack expression. He has made Himself visible, He has acted, He has moved. He has personality. And, let it be carefully noted, that His personality is discovered in the One who reveals, declares, and expresses Him — the One who was the Jehovah of the Old Testament, but became flesh and is seen as the man Christ Jesus in the New Testament.

As an honest translation of the original Greek declares:

No one has seen God at any time. The only-begotten God, the One existing in the bosom of the Father, He has made Him known.
John 1:18.

It is in Jesus Christ that we see the Father (John 14:9). He is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15). It is through Him that we know the Father (John 14:7), and apart from Him the Father will never be seen or known. His own words were, "**No man cometh unto the Father but by Me**" (John 14:6).

In relationship to others, my expressions are me. Those who receive my expressions receive me; those who reject them reject me. However, God is not a man, and His Expression (Logos) is not like our varied expressions. His Expression is a personality, and this personality must in some most definite way be God, or else it does not truly express Him. In a more faithful translation of John 1:1 we are told:

In the beginning was the Expression (Logos-Word), and the Expression was in relationship (pros-toward) to God, and the Expression was God.

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THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

There is hardly any subject in the Word of God concerning which there are as many misconceptions as there are concerning the ten commandments. These come about from a tendency throughout Christendom to make these commandments and the so-called "Lord's prayer" to be the two main portions of the Bible. Some commands to keep and a prayer to say are essential in all human religions, and the religious feel quite "Christian" if their commands and prayer came from the Bible.

The ten commandments are supposed by many to be a complete moral code, setting forth man's complete obligations toward God and his fellow men, but it is most evident they are far from being this. They say nothing about love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, faith, meekness, and temperance. They do not forbid bitterness, anger, clamor, evil speaking, and malice.

We are told that they are the basis of all morality, and that apart from them we would not know the difference between right and wrong. And yet before the commandments were ever given, Moses was able to find one man out of every ten in Israel that feared God, a man of truth, who hated covetousness (Exo. 18:21). How did it happen that these men "hated covetousness" long before God had said, "Thou shalt not covet (Exo. 20:17).

There are many who hold that if a man diligently keep these ten precepts, he will be saved. This is held in spite of the fact that God has declared, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). Again Paul says, "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. 2:21).

We need to recognize that these ten commandments are in reality the ten terms of a covenant which God made with the nation Israel. This is a truth almost universally ignored in spite of two plain declarations:

And he (Moses) wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. Exo. 34:28.

And He (God) declared unto you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and He wrote them upon two tables of stone. Deut. 4:13.

Before these terms of the covenant were given, God had said to them, "If ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel" (Exo. 19:5,6).

The people of Israel accepted the covenant (Exo. 19:8), kept its terms for about forty days, then openly broke the first and seventh terms of it (Exo. 32:1,6,23). Now the rich promises of it will never be fulfilled until God makes a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah (Jer. 31:31-37) .

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THE WORDS OF THE LORD

The title above will be found in Psalm 12:6. The words of the Lord are as silver that has been purified seven times. We can depend upon them. These facts, if accepted and believed, will impel us to discover the exact words God used and then to find their full and exact meaning.

It may seem strange to do so, but men need to be constantly reminded that the Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew and the New Testament was written in the Greek language that was in common use in the first century. In order that we may enjoy these they must be translated into the English in common use today, and the efforts to do this have resulted in many versions.

The King James Version of the Bible was produced over 350 years ago by men who spoke the language and thought according to the patterns of that time. And since the English language has made constant progress and undergone many changes since then, there are hundreds of words in this commonly used version which are meaningless to the present day reader. Also there are many words that may have been very expressive to the people who lived in 1611 A.D., but they fail to set forth to a man of today all that the original languages implied. In view of this the most important study of the Bible is the study of the words that God used.

It requires some skill, but no great ability, to take a word in any language and to so work upon it that one enters into all its possible meanings and shades of meaning. Take for example our commonly used word piano. We all know that it means a musical instrument, and every musician knows that it also means "soft." These facts should cause us to wonder how a word meaning soft could also be the name of an instrument made of iron, steel and the hardest of woods. But this imposes no great problem for the word detective.

It all began with the Latin word planus, which means smooth or even. Our words plain and plane come from this. It then advanced to the Italian where it appeared as piano and meant "soft." When Spinetti

invented the forerunner of our modern piano, it was a great improvement over the harpsichord which could be played only forte, that is, strong or loud. He called his instrument the pianoforte, because it could be played both loud and soft. The English penchant for shortening things soon caused this to become piano.

When work like this is done with the words used in the New Testament it will often produce amazing results and demonstrate just how relevant the Bible is to the time in which we now live. In the providence of God marvelous tools have been provided for those who wish to do this kind of work. I feel sorry for the person who has never heard of Young's Analytical Concordance.

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THE CHANTING IMPOSTERS

In a recent message it was suggested that if a careful study is made of the actual words that God used it will often reveal just how relevant the Bible is to the times in which we now live. This became evident once again as I made an exhaustive study of the original language of 2 Tim. 3:13; **"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."**

In the seventh and eighth grades of school children are taught that the parts of a word help to determine its meaning, that prefixes and suffixes combine with roots to produce a word and that these also indicate the meaning, that the root carries the basic meaning of the word, that context gives indication of the exact meaning, and many more such rules that are of proven help in comprehending any statement, whether written or spoken. However, all such sound principles as these are cast to the four winds when men begin to handle the Bible. The literal, grammatical, interpretation of Scripture is abandoned.

Thus men are able to make the words of God mean anything they want them to mean, and so bring all revealed truth to nothing.

God's words were given to be understood. Therefore, it follows that He must have employed language to convey the sense intended, agreeable to the laws that control all languages. We should never be seeking for some sense which the words do not themselves contain, for we should obtain the sense which the words embrace, making due allowance for figures of speech which are a part of every language.

The Greek word for "evil" in 2 Tim. 3:13 is **poneros**. This is composed of two elements, one meaning misery and the other meaning gush. And while misery-gush may not make any immediate sense, it will if we think about it. This word speaks for those whose acts are the kind that unloose a flood of misery, the impulsive violent acts of men, which bring untold suffering to all even remotely connected with the victim. You read about such acts almost daily. The misery-gushers are much in evidence.

The word for seducers here is **goes**. This means literally a chanter or a howler, and yet it is evident from usage that it came to mean an imposter. It is used of charlatans, and of hypocritical conduct and deliberate deceit. Rotherham has translated this "howling imposters," but "chanting imposters" is nearer the truth. It is a term that is descriptive of those who have no basis of truth in their protests and make up for it by howling and chanting. Remember this the next time you see a chanting and howling mob of protestors, especially those who are whooping it up for the television cameras. Think of it when you read of a house of worship being turned into a hootenany hall.

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LIVING IN AN EVIL DAY

Those who profess to be believers in and servants of the Lord Jesus Christ need to recognize that there is always danger of yielding to the influences that surround us, and of lowering the standard of our testimony and the character of our discipleship in order to meet the existing condition of things.

"Holding fast the faithful Word" (Titus 1:9), and "Holding forth the word of life" (Phil. 2:16) should be the chief motivating factors in our lives. This is what God expects of us. However, there are far too many who believe that doing this means such things as calling upon those who failed to attend services on the previous Sunday, planning church picnics, and going to choir rehearsal.

At the present time many who claim to be serving the Lord are greatly moved and disquieted by the conduct of the rulers of this earth and the acts of the sinners who are upon it. Thus it becomes easy to involve them in the task of trying to set things right in this world. They turn away from petitioning God and end up petitioning congress. The result is usually that the cares and anxieties of this world choke the Word and it becomes unfruitful (Matt. 13:22).

There are those who would have us to believe that Christians are intended by God to be His agents to bring about social justice, civic righteousness, and general human betterment in the world. This is not true. Such things may be the duties of men simply because they are men and an integral part of a great brotherhood, but they are not the specific task of a man because he follows Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus did not involve Himself in any campaign which had better living conditions for its goal. He ignored altogether Roman imperialism and colonialism, Roman bondage and slavery, and the Roman unjust taxes. His opponents tried to involve Him in these, but He refused. He did not link His gospel of the kingdom of God with any social cause.

If any one thing has become apparent in recent years it is that social and political changes do not change the characters of men. The self-

centered remain self-centered, the demanding increase their demands, the implacable remain unsatisfied. Often the social changes that are made put these men in a much better position to indulge their self-interests.

We cannot help but agree with those who tell us that the fate of America now hangs in the balance. Powerful forces are at work to make this a godless and immoral nation. On every hand there are those who seek to destroy the very values that made this country great. And yet the thing that should move and stir the follower of Christ and should drive him on is not the fate of America but the business of God. We are reminded of this when we consider the exhortation, "Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:60).

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ARE YOU WATCHING?

It is my conviction that every Christian should make an exhaustive study of 2 Timothy, chapter 3 and become familiar with the meaning of each word spoken there. Then as he hears the newscasts, or reads the newspapers and newsmagazines he can watch for those things that are set forth as being the characteristics of men in the last days.

He will need to remember here that the "last days" spoken of here are the concluding days of the dispensation of grace, that long period of time during which God has been writing by His gracious deeds a record of the grace that is inherent in His character.

These last days are to be characterized by "perilous times," a phrase that means, when the Greek is considered, periods of fierceness of violence. Then we are told what the predominating social characteristics of men will be. Nineteen of these are listed, thus providing us with a set of concurrent conditions that indicate whether or not we are in the "last days" of this dispensation. Without involving the reader in the actual Greek words that are used, an attempt will be made to tell what each one of these words actually mean.

"Lovers of their own selves." This is a faithful translation. It means exactly what is said.

"Covetous." This means lovers of money.

"Boasters." This means ostentatious, empty pretenders.

"Proud." This means just what it says.

"Blasphemers." This means caluminators, although such terms as maligners, villifiers, defamers, and libelers could be used to translate this word. It has to do with those who speak evil of a man for the purpose of injuring and without regard for the truth.

"Disobedient to parents" means stubborn toward and disrespectful of parents.

"Unthankful." This means lacking gratitude, especially in regard to

God.

"Unholy." This is a very poor translation. The Greek word means unbeneign, malignant, disposed to do harm, to inflict suffering and cause distress.

"Without natural affection." This words means calloused.

"Truce-breakers." An incorrect translation. The Greek word means implacable, and speaks of those whose demands can never be satisfied.

"False accusers." This means slanderers.

"Incontinent." This means ungovernable or uncontrollable.

"Fierce." A good translation, although brutal, inhuman or cruel would also fit.

"Despisers of those that are good." This indicates that they are also lovers of that which is evil and those who are evil.

"Traitors." This Greek word is used of Judas Iscariot in Luke 6:16. It could also be translated "betrayers."

"Heady." This word means rash.

"Highminded." This should be conceited, a failure to see oneself truly.

"Lovers of pleasure" etc. A good translation.

"Having a form of godliness." Phillips translates this, "Having a facade of religion."

Watch for evidences of these things as you read or hear the news.

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GOD'S EARTH

If a man were to stand upon the moon and look out through space toward the planet earth, he could truly say as he gazes upon it, "Glorious things of thee are spoken." And if he were asked what authority he has for such a statement he could point to the revelation contained in the Bible, the book we believe to be the inspired Word of God. Concerning the future of this planet God has spoken, and its future is glorious. We must never forget, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein." Psa. 24:1.

It has long been the practice of traditional theologians to ignore or to explain away every declaration and promise God has made concerning the glorious future of the earth. Most of them put forth the idea that this planet has no future. They say that the time will come when it will cease to exist and nothing will remain in the universe except heaven and hell. They insist that man's future abode will be found in one or the other of these two places.

Consider here the excellent words of George N. Peters (The Theocratic Kingdom) in regard to this: "Besides this, it may well be asked whether an earth so highly honored by the birth, presence, sufferings and death of Christ (and which is His also by inheritance) can possibly be blotted out of existence. Events, the most intensely interesting in the moral government of God, have here taken place; the most astounding display of Divine attributes is linked with its history; the marvelous redemptive process has magnified this globe into a prominent place among all the worlds of the universe, and, unless specifically declared, it is opposed to all our higher and nobler views of God's grandeur, Christ's honor, and the Spirit's agencies, to suppose that such an earth, which witnessed the humiliation, tears, sufferings, agony, and blood of Jesus; which was hallowed by His infant, childhood, and manly feet and voice, and consecrated by His miracles and works of mercy and love, should ever be utterly destroyed. Neither piety nor reason, neither the glory of God nor the welfare of man, desire an earth containing a Bethlehem, a

Jerusalem, a Gethsemane, or a Calvary to be erased from the universe. The thought is revolting."

Let no one point to the phrase "the end of the world" as proof that the earth is to be destroyed. They will only reveal their ignorance of the true meaning of this statement if they do. The same is true of 2 Pet. 3:10. There is no passage within the covers of the Bible that teaches the destruction or annihilation of the earth. When the tabernacle of God is with men and He dwells among them, this earth will be the mediatorial planet of the universe.

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THE RAPTURE

The word rapture is not found anywhere in the New Testament. That event which is commonly called "the rapture" is an incident related to the personal return of Jesus Christ to this earth. As He descends from heaven in order to be personally present upon this planet of ours a company of people are "caught up to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. 4:17). If the entire portion is read carefully it will be found to be a prophecy of the Lord descending from heaven to earth. This is its main thrust. It is not a prophecy of the Lord coming part way to earth in order to meet a company of saints and lead them back to heaven. Neither is it a record of the Lord moving from heaven to some place in the air and His saints going there for a session with Him.

It is not right to take a prophecy that speaks of the Lord returning to the earth and twist it into one of people going to heaven. It speaks of the Lord descending from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God. This is in fulfillment of the great promise made by the angel in Acts 1:11. And it is most certainly a different event than the one described in Matt. 12:18-21.

The great event described in Matt. 12:18-21 has to do with the second coming of the Holy Spirit, and with the divine assumption of sovereignty over the earth. There are no shouts or cries related to it and no one gets hurt by it. at least not until He has gained the victory by sending forth judgment. In it He shows judgment to the nations and it results in the nations putting their trust in His name.

In the event spoken of in 1 Thess. 4:15-17 there is a shout, His voice will be heard, and some are going to be hurt by His coming. 2 Thess. 1:7-10 demonstrates this.

At the time of His descent a company of saints are raised from the dead, and a company of living saints are caught up to meet the Lord in the air. They are not going into the air to be with Him there. They go forth to meet Him as He is descending to the earth.

It is not right to take a detail related to a great event and make that detail to be the event itself. Furthermore, it is not right to take that detail and separate it from the actual event by a period of seven, or more, years, as so many try to do.

This "catching up" has to do with those "who are alive and remain unto the parousia of the Lord." There is a time table for His parousia. This can be found by tracing out the occurrences of this word in Matt. 24:3,27,37 and 39. It cannot possibly be the next great event in God's prophetic program, no matter how many men chant, "Next the rapture."

They cannot alter God's established order of events.

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KINGDOM CHARACTERISTICS

What will the kingdom of God be like? What will it be like to live upon this earth when it is governed by God? These are questions that have exercised many, and the answers to them can usually be found by the extrapolation of some definite statement made in the Word of God. For example if we take the statement, "they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks," and project it we see all weapons of war turned into peaceful uses. Men are desperately trying to do this today under the slogan "Atoms for peace," but are not meeting with much success.

Believing, as I do, that divine intervention is impending, and that at any moment God may inject Himself into the affairs of men, imposing His government upon mankind, I find myself wondering what it will be like to live upon this earth when God governs. My interest in this has caused me to seek a greater degree of familiarity with that part of the Old Testament from the Psalms to Malachi. It is my conviction that most of these books deal primarily with the time to come after God has founded His order upon the earth.

When the kingdom breaks into human history it must begin with things as they are. It must set right the things that are wrong, and this it will do. Any government that is not interested in the health of its people is not fit to continue. God's government will take care of this, for the Son of righteousness will arise with healing in His wings (Mal. 4:2) and the result will be that the inhabitant "shall not say, I am sick (Isa. 33:24). And of course the result of such a gift of health would mean that millions would suddenly become unemployed. However, a government that is indifferent to the full and proper employment of its people is not fit to continue and we can depend on the proposition that God's beneficent government will take care of this.

The world to come is one in which absolute justice will prevail. It will always be well for the good and ill for the wicked. Those who enjoy the benefits of God's government must live up to its requirements. No

form of unrighteousness will be tolerated.

Evil men will never be given a place in it (1 Cor. 6:9,10). The character of divine justice will be immediate. There will be no time lag between the sin and its consequences. The offense will be dealt with and the punishment administered without delay.

Under God's government there will need to be a vast readjustment of moral values. No longer will men call evil good and good evil. No longer will they put darkness for light and light for darkness (Isa.5:20).

These are the conditions men are praying for when they say, "Thy kingdom come."

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GOD'S KINGDOM TRUTH

In the New Testament, and especially in the language of the Lord Jesus, the term "the kingdom of God" is always a future reality that is to come about by a miraculous intervention of God. This will be found to be true even in such passages as Matt. 12:28 and Luke 17:21 when these are faithfully translated and honestly interpreted.

This intervention will terminate the rule of man (human government) and will inaugurate the rule of God (divine government).

The importance of God's kingdom truth as being the great general and unifying message of the Bible is one that deserves fresh study. This is the truth to which every other truth in the Bible must be related. Its importance is established by these facts.

Jesus Christ was sent to this earth to proclaim the kingdom of God. (Luke 4:43). It was the message that He gave in every city and village, which He visited (Luke 8:1). It was the subject of almost all of His parables (Mark 4:26).

The kingdom of God was the hope of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets (Luke 13:28,29). It was the hope of Joseph of Arimathea, that good man who arranged for the burial of Jesus Christ (Luke 23:50,51). This man was waiting for that time and that condition of blessedness in which the whole earth would be under the rule of God; for that marvelous intervention of God, which would end the domination of sin and death over human society.

The kingdom of God was the subject of the ministry of Jesus Christ in the forty days that elapsed between His resurrection and His ascension (Acts 1:3). These were very important days. They would be the last that He would spend with His disciples before ascending into heaven. But the theme of His message did not change. He continued to speak of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God was the hope that Paul held out to his earliest converts (Acts 14:22). It was Paul's message for three months in

Ephesus (Acts 19:8), and it continued to be his message for two years after he was forced out of the synagogue (Acts 19:9 and 20:25).

The kingdom of God was Paul's message during the full day that he met with the chief men of the Jews in Rome (Acts 28:23).

This day ended with Paul making the announcement, which declared a great dispensational change. The salvation bringing message of God has been made freely available to the nations (Acts 28:28).

This introduced God's present dispensation of grace. Yet, Paul's basic message did not change. He continued for two years in his own rented house, "Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things that concern the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 28:30).

This is our message today, and if I had only one more message to give, this would be it.

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Appendix 1

Hyperlinks are identified by blue text with underlining. By clicking on these characters, the reader will be taken to the related location in the document.

If you clicked the text “[here](#)” (in the note that lead you here,) you used a hyperlink. The user will also notice that the cursor icon will change slightly as one hovers over hyperlinks.

These hyperlinks are placed through out this study as a way to navigate through the study package by way of the Table of Contents. At the end of each study, a hyperlink has been place on the right side to send the reader back to the table of contents ([Back to TOC](#)).

Another way to navigate through this study package would be through the use of Adobe features. Adobe is the format being used to capture the text in a format that cannot be edited easily. The feature that maybe useful to the reader would be the bookmark function (see [Figure 1](#) below.) It is hard to go into detail here because of the subtle differences between Adobe revisions. The screen capture in [Figure 1](#) is from Adobe version 7.0. Your experience may vary depending on the revision of Adobe being used.

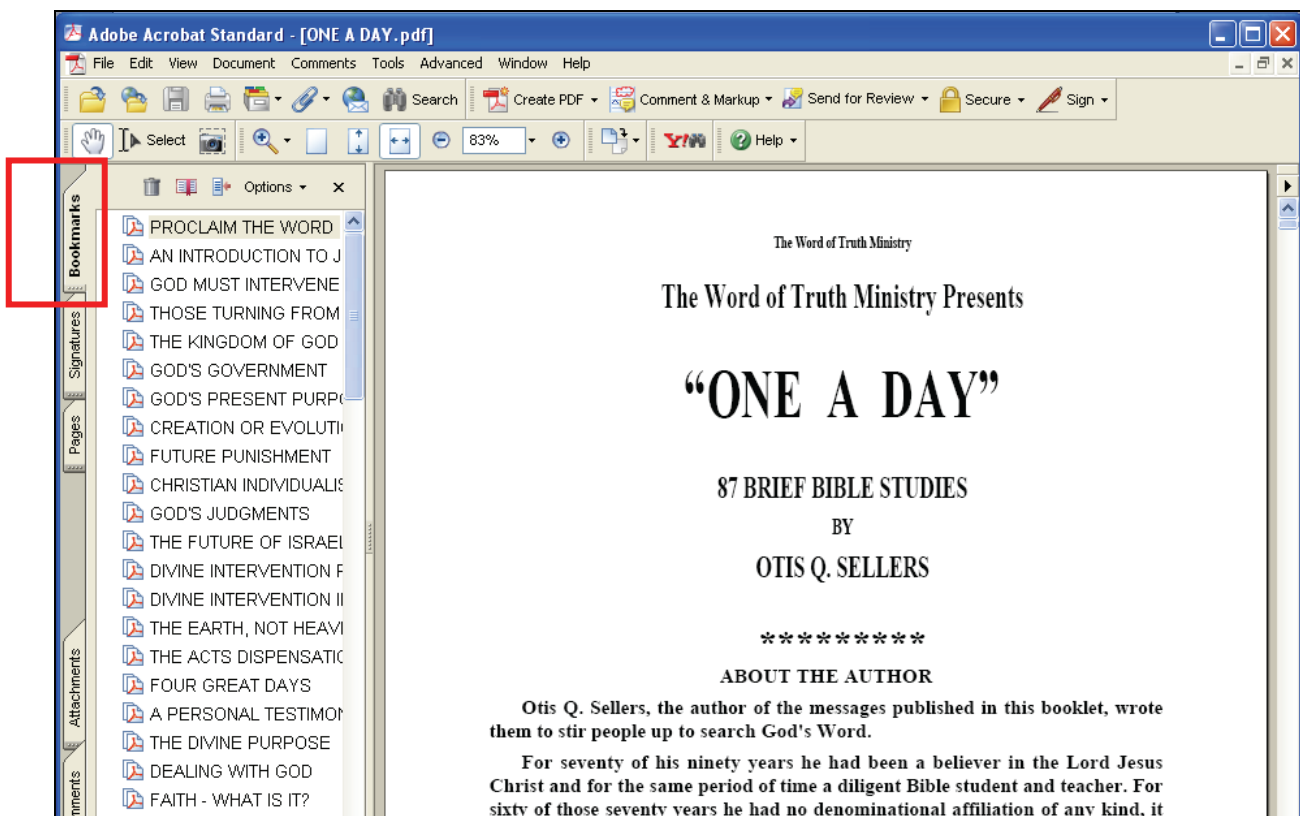


Figure 1

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Subject:
Author: Gateway
Keywords:
Comments:
Creation Date: 6/2/2005 7:39:00 PM
Change Number: 48
Last Saved On: 2/22/2010 2:38:00 PM
Last Saved By: Covidien
Total Editing Time: 736 Minutes
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As of Last Complete Printing
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Number of Words: 47,323 (approx.)
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