

The Word of Truth Ministry Presents

Special Full Length Studies

#SS25

[As the incessant march of events brings mankind ever nearer to the verge of the eclipse of civilization and the destruction of the human race, the question arises as to whether we can expect any definite and manifest move on the part of God in regard to these matters. To this question, this pamphlet seeks to supply an answer from the Word of God - - O.Q.S.]

THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF MANKIND

Otis Q. Sellers, Bible Teacher

Foreword

It is my personal conviction that we are living in a time when God is about to bring to pass some great segment of His prophetic program as set forth in the Word of God. Looking into the future by means of His Word I see such marvelous and wonderful things happening that I would feel great bitterness of soul if I thought I should miss the next installment of divinely pre-recorded history. But I do not expect to miss it, for while I may not live until that day, I know that as a result of my personal faith in Jesus Christ I will be raised from the dead to take my place upon this earth among the nobility in the kingdom of God. It is my faith that the outcome of being a believer in this unbelieving world will be to become a manifest son of God in a world that is to be founded by Him.

Wilbur M. Smith has said: "The Word of God seems definitely to encourage us to believe that, as we come near to that hour in which so many great predicted events are to unfold, increasing light will be cast upon the sacred page by the Spirit of God, giving us knowledge of His Word beyond that which preceding ages has had" (World Crises and the Prophetic Scriptures, Moody Press, Chicago, 1951, page 33). With this, I agree, since we are emphatically told in Scripture that "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." (Prov. 4:18). However, I do not believe that knowledge of God's Word beyond that which preceding ages has enjoyed will be the portion of those who seek for the pure water of truth in the stagnant pools of tradition. Nor will it be the portion of those mind-worshipers who cannot stand the stigma of being put in a class

apart from the scholars. It will be the portion only of those who are willing to make a break with that great mass of errors that are repeated so often, that by sheer inertia they gain a place in the minds and upon the lips of men who yield to them because they find them too difficult to oppose.

Those who confess that "God has spoken," those who believe that what He has said is recorded in the sixty-six books we call the Bible, those who claim to be students of His Word these owe to God a definite quest for the truth within its pages. Bishop Butler has declared that it is incredible "that a book which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."

It is these "yet undiscovered" truths that we need today more than ever before, and they are not going to be found unless men make a quest for them. My own life is devoted to this task, in spite of my own inability and insufficiency for it. This is the service which I am rendering unto Him, and I can say in all humility that this quest has not been fruitless. The truths which I have found have forced me to see a radically different concept of the central theme of all Scripture - the kingdom of God.

It is not radically different to see the kingdom of God as being God's government inaugurated by a supernatural act of God bringing upon this earth a whole new order of existence; yet it is radically different to see this as taking place and being a reality long before the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is also quite different to hold that there will NOT be first a period in which God will pour out indignation upon the earth as a preliminary to setting up His rule over it and His order upon 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 of its inhabitants and make utterly impossible hundreds of prophecies in which God has promised blessing to the nations and to the peoples.

I do not believe that it is necessary for the great King of God's kingdom to be upon the earth in order for God to govern the earth. I reject the oft repeated error that there cannot be a kingdom until the King comes back again. In Revelation 11: 17 the twenty-four elders are seen giving thanks to God in Christ because He has taken to Himself His great power and is reigning, and this is before His second advent set forth in Rev. 19: 11-16. I believe that during His pre-advent kingdom He will govern the earth from His throne in heaven (Psalm 103: 19), and that in the post-advent period (commonly called the millennium) He will rule the heavens from His throne upon the earth. Furthermore, I believe that the great initial act of God when He breaks His long silence and imposes His benevolent government upon the earth will be The Enlightenment of Mankind. It is this and other acts of God that are concomitant with it that are dealt with in these pages.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF MANKIND

"Let there be light." These are the words we meet upon the very threshold of

divine revelation. They were spoken by God at a time when this earth was chaotic and empty, at a time when darkness covered the face of the deep (Gen. 1: 2) . God could have allowed the earth to remain in this condition, but it is evident that He cared enough for it that He did not permit it to be that way. His Spirit moved upon the face of the waters, His command went forth that there should be light, and there was light. Thus, darkness gave way to light, and chaos was replaced by order. This is what God did at one time for the physical earth.

In the light of these facts, consider another fact. During the sojourn of the Lord Jesus upon the earth, He severely criticized the Pharisees because they would do for an ox what they would not do for a man, because they showed more regard for a sheep than for a human being, and because they cared more for a coin than they did for a sinner.

Now if we consider these facts together, it will force upon our minds the question as to whether God might not lay Himself open to criticism if He should fail to do for the human race that which He did for the physical earth. Of course, no man has the right to criticize God. Nevertheless, in the Book that reveals Him we do find that He did something for this planet that He has never yet done for the human race that lives upon it. He has never yet spoken from heaven in regard to the darkness and confusion that is upon mankind and said "Let there be light." Even the fact that He has done this for certain individuals, such as Paul, makes the fact stand out all the more that He has done no such thing for all men.

Does this indicate that God cares more for the physical earth than for the human race which now lives upon it? It probably does - if He never does such a work for mankind. However, it is written in the Word of God, written as plain as any other truth in this Book, that the time will surely come when God will speak from heaven and mankind will be encircled and penetrated with light and truth. This is not declared only once. It does not rest upon some single passage. It is intimated, suggested, taught, or declared in a multitude of passages in holy writ. In fact it is so plainly taught in the Word that I do not hesitate to say that many who make a boast of believing God's Word are guilty of failing to believe one of the most evident truths set forth in it.

Anticipating an objection that the fact that God has done something for the physical earth does not in the least require that He do as much for mankind upon the earth, I will say that I readily admit this, and it is not my position. But I do say that we have every right to expect that He will do for mankind what He did for the planet upon which men live. However if this is not taught in the Word of God, then it is nothing more than wishful thinking. I contend that the enlightenment of mankind is taught in the Bible in so many places and in so many ways that it will amount to a rejection of positive truth if it is not believed once it is pointed out.

At this point I feel it necessary to say that if there be any reading these lines who are among that number who believe only such things as are generally believed and taught, there is no use for them to read further in these pages. Far too many are in a

class with the Pharisees of old who asked concerning Christ: "**Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him?**" (John 7:48). The fact that none had was sufficient reason to them that none should.

I know of no teacher and no writer who believes and teaches that God's next great public act will be to speak from heaven, enlighten the human race, and plunge mankind into light and truth. To a certain degree I stand alone in holding and proclaiming this great truth. I believe this, not because others do, but because I have a firm conviction that this is a truth set forth in the Word of God. However, I do thank God for the fellowship of those men, who as a result of my presentation of this great truth have shown that true Berean spirit, received the Word with all readiness of mind, and then searched the Scriptures daily to see if these things are so ('Acts 17: 10, 11). These are now able to say, "Now we believe, not because of your saying, but because we have gone to the Word and found out for ourselves." (Compare John 4:42).

It would not be difficult to give the names of hundreds of teachers who believe and declare that God's next great public act will be to remove all believers, then plunge the rest of mankind into error and darkness. And since men are steeped in error and darkness today, they hold that God will plunge mankind into far greater error and darkness than he has ever been in before. In support of this idea they usually quote II Thessalonians 2: 11, 12 where Paul declares:

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

It should be quite evident to any reasonable mind that in order for God to bring such severe punishment upon man, it will have to be based upon the fact that He has first given them strong light which they have rejected. There must be a clear, unmistakable opportunity to believe the truth which has been rejected. No such opportunity exists today, but a day is coming when it will be given. Since this punishment is part of a series of events which must occur before the day of the Lord can come (II Thess. 2: 3), we are safe in concluding from Acts 2: 17, 20 that God will have poured out "of His Spirit upon all flesh" before this time. The punishment set forth in II Thess. 2: 11, 12 is discriminatory.

It comes only upon those who do not welcome into their hearts the love of the truth and who find their pleasure in unrighteousness. Before sentencing any man to the punishment of a divinely sent "strong delusion," God will give clear, demonstrable, perceptible light, even as He did to many in the day when Christ was upon earth. Of this He said:

If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. John 15 :22. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father. John 15 :24.

Thus, the facts stand that the Son of God had come and had spoken unto them, and He did in their sight many works that none other had done before Him; therefore, they were without excuse for their sin. Any adverse judgment that was pronounced upon them was richly deserved. However, it was a limited number who heard Him speak and who saw His works. This was true only of those whom He personally contacted, but a time is coming when it will be quite different. The next time He speaks it will be from heaven, bringing all mankind under a definite responsibility, and none who turns from Him who speaks shall escape.

See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven. Heb. 12:25.

I will now proceed to show that the idea of a future enlightenment for mankind is supported by many infallible proofs from the Word of God.

1. The enlightenment of mankind is declared in the statement found in Psalm 22:27, 28.

All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto 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.

For a fuller understanding of this passage, some clarification of the terms used is needed. The "ends of the world" should read "the ends of the earth." The word earth here stands for the people living upon the earth - a common figure of speech in the Old Testament. The phrase "ends of the earth" means those living in the most remote places, including of course all in between. Thus, this takes in everyone, everywhere - from the Eskimo at the North Pole to the most savage Indian in the Amazon basin, or the most benighted man in darkest Africa, including all so-called civilized men between these remote places. Yes, this even includes the little children, for "**Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou has perfected praise**" (Matt. 21: 16).

The word **remember** here does not accurately translate the Hebrew, since as a rule remember indicates to bring back to mind something known before, or to hold in the mind something already known. The Hebrew word used here has to do with fixing something in the mind, that is, to consider and set in the mind, then to act accordingly. Young suggests "**imprint**" as the definition, and this is helpful. It is not that men recall something God has done, but that God will speak and imprint some portion of His truth upon the mind of every man. The results, as we shall see, will be glorious.

The word **turn** could be more accurately translated "**shall be turned,**" in harmony with Psalm 51:13 where the same word is rendered "shall be converted." In both passages a divine work of conversion is set forth, not a human work. This means that all men are turned around and pointed or set in the right direction, that is, toward God. What they then do as a result, will determine their future.

"Kindreds" means "families," and "nations" is correctly translated. These families

are seen as worshipping before the Lord. All this will come about because the kingdom (rule or sovereignty) is the Lord's and He is the governor among the nations. This is not true now, as any of the present-day gathering of nations so painfully demonstrates.

When this passage is read in the light of these facts it tells us of a time when God in Christ will have imposed His government upon the earth and will actually be governing the nations. Concomitant with this divine rule all men everywhere will have a measure of divine truth imprinted upon their minds and will be turned in the right way. This will result in all the families of the nations standing in awe before Him.

If this passage is ever fulfilled, if it does not go by default, then at some time in the history of the human race, God will need to speak from heaven and enlighten all men living upon the earth.

2. Since God maintains His character through all ages we can expect at some time in human history the enlightenment of mankind. This is indicated in Psalm 25:8, 9.

Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will He teach sinners in the way. The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way.

This passage, which is far stronger in the Hebrew than in the English, has troubled many expositors. It speaks of the good and upright One "teaching sinners in the way." Rotherham thinks this is "morally improbable," so he drops the word "sinners" in his final translation of the Psalms as set forth in his Studies in the Psalms. We are apt to read into this word "teach" a continuous process, but the Hebrew does not indicate this. This Hebrew word (yarah) is translated shoot 19, cast 5, direct 1, inform 1, and teach 46 times. When it is translated "teach" it does not indicate protracted instruction. This word means to show, to guide, to direct, as if the information were shot or cast into the mind of man.

Apropos of this we can say that while God has a purpose in His present silence, yet we must not think that God has forever wrapped Himself in thick darkness and will leave men always to grope after the way. The pure and loving One will someday speak from heaven and say to all men, "**This is the way, walk ye in it**". Then, as the passage before us declares, all who submit (the meek) are promised further light for the path as they walk upon it, for it goes on to say, "**The meek will He guide in judgment and the meek will He teach His way.**" This word "teach" is lamad, and unlike yarah, the previous word translated "teach," this signifies the imparting of information by extended instruction.

This is a promise that is yet to be fulfilled. We have every right to expect that the character of God will cause Him to enlighten the whole human race. This is also suggested in Psalm 33:8:

Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.

Will this remain an unanswered call forever, or will it be that the day will come when God will provide the light and truth required to make this possible?

3. Psalm 67:7 can never be fulfilled apart from God enlightening mankind.

God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.

The phrase "all the ends of the earth" in this passage is identical with "all the ends of the world" in Psalm 22:27. Here it is correctly translated. Literally it means "all men everywhere," but is stated in this manner to emphasize the all-inclusiveness of the truth stated. Thus we have a picture set forth here of all men everywhere, without distinction or exception fearing God. And when we remember that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Psalm 111: 10), again we have a prophecy of a condition to come that is a challenge to our faith. However, the full appreciation of this statement can come only by considering the entire short 67th Psalm of which this is a part.

In this Psalm the nation of Israel is seen in the place of the intercessor. The primary blessing of Israel is seen in connection with the concurrent blessing of every nation. The instructed Israelite knew quite well that when his nation received her enlightenment, the nations would receive theirs. In the promises God made to Abraham, it needs to be recognized that God has promised to bless, and He will in time bless all nations through Israel. But at the same time it needs to be seen that God has made promises of blessing to all nations, all peoples, even to all the ends of the earth, that do not flow through Israel. In other words, nations will be blessed in many ways apart from Israel, and in many ways nations will be blessed through Israel. There is nothing in the promises God made to Israel that could lead them to think they were to be the sole channel of blessings to mankind. This is a mistake often made - it is one that I have made - but it should be corrected.

The whole of Psalm 67 is a picture of conditions that will prevail when mankind has been enlightened.

God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause His face to shine upon us; Selah.

That thy way may be known upon the earth, thy saving health among all nations.

Let the peoples praise thee, O God; let all the peoples praise Thee.

O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the peoples righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah.

Let the peoples praise thee, O God; let all the peoples praise Thee.

Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us.

God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.

The writer of this Psalm (probably David) was an Israelite who rightfully loved his nation and regarded it above all others. His attitude is seen in this Song, yet there is no exclusiveness. He knew that the time would come when God's face would shine upon Israel, but he knew that it would also, concurrent with this, shine upon all nations. This would result in God's way being known throughout the earth, and cause His saving health to be known among all nations.

The term "saving health" here is simply "salvation," yet the rendering "saving health" certainly expresses the truth. It was always the expectation of Israel that in the redemption of the nation all sickness and disease would vanish from among them. It was the promise of God that if Israel met certain conditions, He would "take sickness away from the midst" of them. (Exo. 23:25, Deu. 7:15). They were promised a time when "the inhabitants shall not say, I am sick" (Isa. 33:24).

In the New Testament this blessed condition of "saving health" is indissolubly linked up with the proclamation of the kingdom of God.² There we read that He "spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing" (Luke 9: 11). There can be no doubt but that at one point in the proclamation of God's kingdom, disease and death were eliminated for a season in that region that had Capernaum for its center. And even as these healings are linked up with the kingdom of God, so is the "saving health to all nations" linked up with God's government in Psalm 67.

A gift of light to all men and the gift of health to all men are the initiatory blessings when God begins His universal reign. Under God's kingdom program He always blesses first in a manifest and evidential manner, following which He expects and requires a proper response. This is seen "in part" in the Gospel period and throughout the Acts period. In a day yet to come, this will be universal, when governance and guidance will be the portion of every man, as Psalm 67 declares. God will yet do a work among men which will cause every man on earth to inquire, "To whom am I indebted for this great blessing, and who do I thank for it?" This brings a new accountability and responsibility, and woe be to that man who fails to do right in that day.

The blessed conditions described in Psalm 67 can never come to pass apart from God enlightening mankind.

4. The future enlightenment of mankind is certainly suggested in a divinely inspired prayer recorded in Psalm 74:22, 23.

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.

This prayer is a request for speedy divine intervention. The fact that God has given this prayer is an indication that this is what He will do. When men from the heart repeat this prayer it declares to God that it is their desire that He will do what He is going to do. And what better thing could those who love God desire to see come to pass than that He should arise and plead His own cause.

All who seek to serve God in truth know that their work is one of pleading God's cause. They also know what a difficult task this is. For more than forty years now, I have sought to plead God's cause by a constant setting forth of the truth as to who Christ is and what He is in the sight of God. I know the problems of getting an unprejudiced hearing, and when a hearing has been obtained how difficult it is to overcome all the misconceptions and falsehoods that surround the Lord Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, the servant of God must toil on, finding encouragement and hope in the fact that the day will yet come when God will arise and plead His own cause. This plea will be made before all mankind, and it will not fail. The result will be that there will not be a man upon this earth who will not know who Christ is and what Christ is in the sight of God. This will be "the manifestation" of Jesus Christ, a truth which will be more fully considered later. God's future enlightenment of mankind will center in the person of the Lord Jesus. Man will then know. And what he then does with this gift of knowledge will determine his continuance upon this earth.

5. The future enlightenment of mankind is positively declared in Psalm 76:8.

Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still.

This is a prophecy. There is nothing in past history that fulfills this declaration. The word judgment here is *din* and it means that which is right in God's sight. The earth means the people of the earth. The picture is a strong progressive one, and one that is very pleasant to contemplate. It suggests that the peoples of the earth are in turmoil. Nations are striving, clamoring, quarreling. Strife fills the air. Discord characterizes all relations. Suddenly God causes judgment to be heard from heaven. The result is one of universal fear and quietness. This God inspired fear can be the beginning of wisdom. If any turn away from it, he will have to suffer the consequences. I believe the reader will agree that there never has been a more appropriate time for God to cause judgment to be heard from heaven than the present moment in human history.

6. The future enlightenment of mankind is again declared in Psalm 97:4.

His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw and trembled.

The truth declared in this passage will be best realized when it is seen that Psalm

96, 97, and 98 are a unit. Psalm 96 begins by calling for a song that is new. This is needed because a new thing has happened in the earth. This new thing is divine rule, the assumption of authority by Jehovah Himself, bringing to an end fallible human government and establishing infallible divine government over the whole earth. The singers are exhorted to herald the glory of this divine reign among all nations, its glory among all peoples (plural) 96: 2. They are to say among the nations that "the Lord reigneth," to declare that He has established the world, founded it in such manner that it shall not be shaken; and that He will judge the peoples righteously (96: 10).

Psalm 97 begins with the declaration that "**The Lord reigneth,**" that is "**Jehovah has become king.**" Concurrent with this, is His great work of illumination, of which it is said, "**His lightnings enlightened the world.**" The peoples of the earth have discerned this and are seen standing reverent and expectant. This is also set forth in verse 6, "**The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the peoples see His glory.**" Could language be plainer than this? Now the question can no longer be "Do you agree?" but, "Do you believe?"

7. This future enlightenment of mankind with some of its accompaniments is seen in Psalm 98. Note the first three verses.

0 sing unto the Lord a new song; for He hath done marvelous things: His right hand, and His holy arm, hath gotten Him the victory. The Lord hath made known His salvation: his righteousness hath He openly shewed in the sight of the nations. He hath remembered His mercy and His truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Once again all men on earth are called upon to sing to the Lord a song that is new. Old songs are inadequate to set forth the new thing that God has done. When God governs the earth there will need to be new songs and new music, new oratorios and new symphonies. Blessed are those who will be given the honor of producing these.

However, this new song is called for because "**He hath done marvelous things: His right hand, and His holy arm, hath gotten Him the victory.**" Then comes the declaration: "**The Lord has made know His salvation: His righteousness hath He openly showed in the sight of the nations**" (Psalm 98: 2) .

Think how exceedingly strange and different this will be, when after God's long silence, which has now lasted for 1900 years, He breaks His silence, makes known His salvation, and openly shows His righteousness in the sight of all nations. Think what will take place in the minds of all this world's statesmen, rulers, and politicians when God makes known to all nations that which can be called "righteousness" in His sight. How else can this be done apart from the enlightenment of mankind?

All this, of course, is related to the fact that God has gained the victory, that He is governing, that the kingdom of God is a manifest reality in the earth. Israel will then

enjoy her special blessings, as declared in 98: 3, but most glorious of all is the truth declared in this same verse:

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Psalm 98 :3.

This great declaration, which is the greatest to be found in God's Word concerning future blessings, is found in two other places in the Bible.

The Lord hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. Isa. 52 :10.

Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Luke 3 :5, 6.

Thus, this truth is established in the mouth of three witnesses, and the repetition makes possible a clearer understanding.. "All the ends of the earth" in the Old Testament passages is interpreted for us in the New as meaning "all flesh." This statement sets forth a fact that will be true of all men, everywhere, without exception or distinction.

The word "see" in these passages means to discern, in the sense of comprehending and understanding.

The word "salvation" is the important word in these passages. The egocentric never seem to be able to see in this word anything but personal redemption and forgiveness. It means much more. To understand it we must begin with the basic idea that this word signifies a blessing, that is, some great and benevolent work that God does for man. However, for such a work to be called "salvation" it must have in it the factor of rescue, deliverance, and safety. I will try to illustrate this.

Separating the State of New York from the province of Ontario is one of the shortest, yet one of the most important rivers in the world. Only 34 miles in length, it is navigable from its source to the upper rapids, a distance of about twenty miles. One cannot help but be amazed at the great number of boats, large and small, which make use of this river, especially the pleasure boats which circle around Grand Island, within three to five miles of the rapids that lead to Niagara Falls. At times boats do get into trouble and begin to drift helplessly with their passengers toward the Falls. When this happens it calls for immediate rescue operations, for the purpose of delivering those in danger and making them safe by setting them on land once again. A work such as this could be properly described by the word "salvation," since it has in it all the elements that are in this word.

At the present moment in the history of the human race a work of salvation for mankind is needed more than ever before. The work needed is so great that God alone can perform it. Everywhere, responsible and logical men insist that we are in an hour of dire crisis, unparalleled in human history. The march of events has brought us on the very verge of the eclipse of civilization and the destruction of the human race. As another has said: "We live amidst one of the greatest crises in human history. Not only war, famine, pestilence, and revolution, but a legion of other calamities are rampant

over the whole world. All values are unsettled. All norms are broken. Humanity has become a distorted image of its own self. The crisis is omnipresent and involves almost the whole of culture and society from top to bottom. It is manifest in the fine arts and science, in philosophy and religion, in ethics and law. It permeates the forms of social, economic, and political organizations, and the entire way of living and thinking. There is every reason to expect that the disastrous effects of such calamities will fall upon us in a much more intensive and extensive scale during this catastrophic age of ours. (P. A. Sorokin: Man and Society in Calamity, E. P. Dutton and Co., New York 1942, p. 308).

The student of current events will realize how much more pertinent these words are today than when written during the late World War. Never in all history has there been a greater need for God's great rescue operation than there is today. Never has the stage been more perfectly set for it than it is now. The human race does not need to go over the brink of Niagara before God intervenes. After He has intervened and accomplished His great work of salvation, all flesh will discern His salvation. Men will then know the frightful disaster from which they have been delivered. It is God's promise that all flesh shall discern and comprehend His great work of deliverance. In order for this to be true, God must first do the work and then enlighten every man so that man will know Who did it and what was done. Today we cannot even comprehend the danger. It is so great that the human mind cannot take it in. But once God intervenes, all flesh will know the holocaust from which it has been saved. Then the words of David can be spoken by all men:

He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord. Psalm 40 :2-3.

Thus it is that the establishment of divine government is linked up with divine enlightenment, a divine gift of health, and divine salvation for the human race. This is all so unthinkable that none would even imagine it if it were not declared in God's Word. God's thoughts and plans for the human race are so great that they cannot be summed up and set in order.

Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. Psalm 40 :5.

8. The promise of God in Isaiah 11:9 can never be fulfilled apart from God giving light to all mankind.

For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Isa. 11 :9.

I cannot feel much sympathy for those who imagine a great difficulty in this passage in order to make it fit some preconceived solution. "How can the waters cover the sea," they ask, "when the sea itself is water?" A minimum of research would show them at once that the word sea is used in a two-fold way in Scripture-of the depression in the earth that holds the water, and of the water that fills the depression. Note "fill the waters in the seas" in Gen. 1: 22, also the "molten sea" which Solomon made as set forth in I Kings 7:23.

It is all too obvious that the earth is not full of the knowledge of the Lord today. If this promise is ever fulfilled, if the earth ever becomes full of the knowledge of the Lord, then it will need to be by a supernatural act of God in which every man on earth is enlightened. How else can this be fulfilled?

9. The future enlightenment of the whole human race is unequivocally declared in Isaiah 40: 5.

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.

The context of this passage, when linked up with the New Testament revelation, will show that the "Lord" here is the Lord Jesus Christ. This passage will be fulfilled when He is manifested (Co1. 3:4). It is His glory that shall be revealed. God will make known to all men who Christ is and what Christ is in His sight. This is to be perceived by every man upon earth equally and at the same time. The words "all flesh shall see it together" excludes the idea of light being given to a limited number and these passing it on to others in ever-increasing numbers until the last man is reached. In the light of this passage, this matter of the divine enlightenment of mankind is not just a matter of personal opinion or of being "one man's teaching." "The mouth of the Lord has spoken it," is the declaration of the prophet. Again I say, it is no longer a question of "Do you agree?" but, "Do you believe?"

10. The specific enlightenment of Israel, along with the concurrent enlightenment of all other nations is declared in Isaiah 60:1-3.

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles (i.e. nations) shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

This passage speaks of the special light and the special service of Israel at the time when God enlightens all nations. In the repetition of ideas, which is a characteristic of Hebrew poetry, we have here a twice repeated truth preceded by the word "behold" in order to call attention to that which is said. "The darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples," is the divine description of the conditions which will prevail when God speaks to Israel and says: "Arise, shine, for thy light is come." This sad condition prevails today, and it is further described by Isaiah in the previous

chapter.

We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noon day as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men. Isa. 59:10.

A great mistake will be made if passages such as Isaiah 60: 1-3 are limited to the nation of Israel. The picture here is one of enlightened nations seeking to increase their knowledge of God by coming to Israel's greater light. Whatever God does for Israel. will always be felt by other nations. As Paul tells us:

For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what. shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead. Rom. 11:15.

11. The future enlightenment of mankind before the personal presence of Christ is seen in the promise made to Israel in Malachi 4:5, 6.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart 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.

The return of Jesus Christ to the earth in order to be personally present is an event that takes place in the day of the Lord. This passage tells of a work to be done before the coming of the great day of the Lord. Beyond all question, this is a promise to Israel. It sets forth a work for Israel of such far-reaching spiritual importance that when the Lord comes there will be no need for Him to smite the earth with a curse. However, even though this promise is to Israel, there are no blessings promised to Israel without an accompanying blessing for other nations. Elijah comes to an enlightened nation and performs his great work of restoration for a nation that exists in the midst of enlightened nations.⁴

12. The enlightenment of mankind resulting in victory for Jesus Christ is declared in Matthew 12:18-21.

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.

The word here translated "shew" is *apangelo*, which means to announce or declare. And He not only announces judgment, but He also sends forth judgment until He gains complete victory. When Christ announces judgment to the nations, He will not need to be upon earth to do so. He will not be upon earth when this is done, for no man will hear His voice in the streets. This is a work which He does from heaven. It is in complete harmony with Psalm 76:8.

Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and

was still.

If the truth revealed concerning Christ announcing judgment to the nations is compared with the truth revealed concerning His second coming in I Thess. 4: 16, they will be found to be two different events. When He announces judgment He does not cry, nor will His voice be heard. When He comes again He will descend from heaven with a shout and with the voice of the archangel.

Once God has announced judgment (5) to the nations there will not be a nation that does not know what God wants, what He expects, and what is well pleasing in His sight. What they then do about this will determine their future as nations. However, we are assured that the result of this work will be that nations will put their trust in Him. Matt. 12:21, Rom. 15:12. Truly He is to be **“a light to lighten the nations, and the glory of thy people Israel”** Luke 2:32.

13. The enlightenment of the world is declared in John 16:7-11 to be the great purpose for which the Spirit of Truth has been sent.

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. John 16:7-11.

The Greek word here translated "reprove" is elengcho, which means to appraise, that is, to make the facts known. It is the work of the Spirit of Truth to make the facts known concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. Today it would be hard to find even two sincere Christians who could agree as to what is sin in God's sight, what constitutes righteousness before Him, and what His judgment is in regard to any matter. Nevertheless, the Spirit cannot be charged with failure, since this is not the work He is doing in the world today. The battle has never yet been joined between the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error. This is a work that belongs to the time when God governs the earth, and it is quite evident that it is not being done in this intercalary dispensation of the grace of God. When the time comes for God to enlighten the world, the Spirit of God will make the facts known concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. Never again will men need to question if a thing is right, or if a course of action is God's will and order. The facts will be known.(6)

The work of the Spirit in enlightening the world is both an initial work and a continuous process. The initial work lays the foundation and sets forth the principles

of divine government. The continuous process of enlightenment will keep men abreast with the progress of the kingdom of God. As Isaiah declares:

And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left. Isa. 30 :21.

14. The enlightenment of mankind is indisputably declared in Acts 2: 17.

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh.

To understand this passage, the entire portion in which it is found needs to be considered. Read Acts 2: 16-21. In the context of this passage two definite time elements need to be noted. This pouring out of God's Spirit upon all flesh takes place "in the last days" (v. 17) and "before that great and notable day of the Lord comes" (v. 20). As noted before, the return of Jesus Christ to this earth to be personally present for 1000 years is an event that belongs wholly to "the great and notable day of the Lord," therefore, this is an event that precedes the second advent.

In order to fulfill this, all God needs to do is give some portion of His truth to every man upon the earth. The words He speaks are Spirit (John 6:63), so if He speaks from heaven to all men, He will be pouring out of His Spirit upon all flesh.

The declaration that God will pour out "of His Spirit upon all flesh" is prefaced by the words "saith God." Thus, again it becomes a question-not "Do you agree?" but "Do you believe?" Do you take God at His word that He will pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh?

Since these words were spoken by Peter to "Ye men of Judea, and all that dwell at Jerusalem" (Acts 2: 14), some have tried to limit this promise to "all flesh in Israel," but this cannot be done. Long before this, God made a statement to Noah concerning "all flesh" and said, "The end of all flesh is come before Me" (Gen. 6: 13). Can this be limited to Noah and his family? Certainly not! Even so, when Peter spoke to "Ye men of Judea," the things he said concerned "all flesh."

15. The enlightenment of mankind is certainly indicated in Romans 13:12.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand.

The Lord Jesus made it plain that the kingdom of God would be in stages, somewhat like the stages of growing grain – the blade, the ear, the full grain in the ear, the ripened grain, and the harvest (Mark 4:26-29). He also made it plain that the early stages would be the night period of God's kingdom. This, they were warned, would be a time of severe testing. When Paul wrote his Roman epistle very late in the Acts

period, he stated that the night is far spent. His confident expectation was for the dawning of the day. This he declares to be "at hand." However, the advent of God's present intercalary dispensation of grace postponed its coming. We can rest assured that when God's present purpose in grace is completed, it will not be followed by a long black night, but by the day that was prophesied to come next.

16. The enlightenment of mankind is seen in the fact that there is yet to be an unveiling of Jesus Christ as declared in I Corinthians 1: 7.

Waiting for the unveiling of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The erroneous translation of the King James Version here is the basis of two wrong ideas. One is that the first century believers expected the second coming to take place at any moment, and the second is that the personal return and the unveiling are one and the same. This is the only place out of nineteen occurrences of apokalupsis that it is translated "coming." It means unveiling.

Jesus Christ is now veiled, even though today He becomes known to men of faith who believe the record God has given of Him. This veiling is not caused by His absence from the earth, nor is His unveiling in any way dependent upon His personal presence. Even if He were present, He would still need to be unveiled before any man would know who He is or what He is. The unveiling of Christ will take place when God speaks from heaven and enlightens mankind.

17. The enlightenment of mankind is seen in the fact that Jesus Christ is yet to be manifested, as set forth in Colossians 3: 4.

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

The word manifest means evident; apparent; distinctly perceived; hence, obvious to the understanding; evident to the mind; easily apprehensible; plain; not obscure or hidden.

If Jesus Christ were manifested to just one man upon earth, then that man would know with exactitude who Christ is and what Christ is in the sight of God. This would not be to him a matter of patiently searching out and believing a written revelation as one must do today. It would be a matter of positive truth imprinted upon the mind. This would bring upon such a man the grave responsibility of acting according to this God-given light, and his place among the living could be lost to him forever if he failed to respond to the light that God had graciously given.

However, the manifestation of Jesus Christ is not to be the work of God for just one man or for a company of men. This work of God will be the portion of the whole human race, bringing a new responsibility and demanding a new course of action for everyone upon the earth.

18. God's present work of preserving mankind, and His future work of enlightening mankind is declared in I Tim. 2: 3, 4.

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

The word "men" here is a generic term, and sets forth man as distinct from angels or spirits. The words "all men" emphasizes the unity of the object in view, as when we say "all the world." "All men" does not mean every individual, but mankind as a whole. Note this in Rom. 12:17, 18; II Cor. 3:2; I Tim. 2:1. The word saved here means preserved. On many occasions God has rescued the human race from certain destruction. Throughout its entire history He has acted as its preserver. He is the Savior of mankind.

An illustration of this is seen in the fact that after sin entered into the world, it was still normal for a time for men to live more than nine centuries. But the life span became shorter and shorter. If this had continued, men would have lived such short lives that reproduction would not have been possible. This was a threat to the human race, so God intervened, fixed the life span in general at "three score and ten" and thus preserved mankind. This alone is sufficient to make Him "the Savior of all men" as He declares Himself to be in I Tim. 4: 10.

In view of the fact that hundreds of voices are today warning us that "we may be the last generation of the human race" it is good to know that God is the preserver of mankind. However, mankind is now faced with the greatest threat to his future existence that he has ever faced in his long history. He has discovered and is developing the means of destroying himself. He is now able to wage atomic warfare, chemical warfare, biological warfare, and radiological warfare, and God will need to intervene before man loses these destructive forces upon himself. God has willed the preservation of mankind and we can expect Him to act to keep mankind from self-destruction.

That mankind should be preserved is not all that God has willed. This work of preservation has an end in view. God has also willed that mankind shall come into the knowledge of truth. There is no definite article before the word truth here, as we find it in other passages such as John 8:32. It is not "the truth" or "all truth." It is simply "truth." And there can be no doubt but that this truth will concern and center in the One who is "the truth."

God's purpose in preserving the human race is with the end in view that it shall come to the knowledge of truth. In view of this declared purpose we must repudiate the idea that mankind is going "to go deeper and deeper into darkness until the time will come when he plunges into the final error of worshipping the man of sin." God's great display of grace is not going to result in a satanic counterfeit dominating the whole earth.

At this point a word of warning needs to be sounded. The knowledge of truth does not mean that a man is forgiven, redeemed, or justified. Truth must be acted on before it brings any permanent benefit. There was a time when men knew God, but they glorified Him not as God (Rom. 1: 21). There were men who had the knowledge of God but refused to retain God in their knowledge (Rom. 1: 28) . The gift of truth to mankind means that every man on earth will have a portion of truth. This gift will place every man under a new responsibility, making him accountable to God for what he does with the truth that God has given to him.

19. Another witness to the sudden and dramatic enlightenment of mankind is found in II Timothy 3:9.

But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as their's also was.

In the context of this statement Paul sets forth the result of God's long display of grace so far as human conduct is concerned. Long before this was written, God had declared through Isaiah that if grace is shown to the wicked they will not learn righteousness (Isa. 26: 10). The "last days" spoken of in II Tim. 3: 1 are the resultant days of God's administration of grace. The sequel of God's long display of grace, so far as men's actions are concerned, will be that the evils that have characterized it throughout will become greatly intensified. Men are described as self lovers, money-lovers, empty pretenders, proud, calumniators, stubborn toward authority, ungrateful, malignant, destitute of natural affection, implacable, slanderers, uncontrollable, brutal, opposed to goodness, treacherous, headstrong, conceited, pleasure-lovers, and at the same time having a form of godliness.

While evils such as these have always been present, there comes a time when they force all life to be lived in a manner that fits in with their presence. In other words, they dominate the scene as God's long display of undeserved favor draws to its conclusion. Many of these evils are quite favorable to the work of certain religious leaders. If men want a "form of godliness," many will help them put it on. These men of corrupt minds creep into houses and lead into captivity great numbers of simple women who are easily led astray because of the many desires they seek to gratify. There are thousands of religious leaders who do nothing else but minister to the desires of these simple-minded women. Egocentric religions are the order of the day.

However, according to the Spirit inspired message of Paul, the time is coming when something will happen which will stop every false religious worker in his tracks. Never again can they take another step in deception. "They shall proceed no further" is Paul's emphatic word concerning them. And that which brings their deception to an end is declared to be, "their folly shall be manifest to all men."

The only way this can ever take place is for all mankind to come to the knowledge of truth, for God to speak the word and enlighten every member of the human race. This He will most certainly do. And when this takes place, the dispensation of grace will be at its end and a new dispensation of divine government will begin.

20. Since truth is personified in Jesus Christ, and error is personified in Satan, the revelation in I John 3: 8 would lead us to expect the enlightenment of the human race.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Weymouth translates this, "**for the purpose of undoing the works of the devil**"

The manifestation referred to in this passage is that of His first coming. This makes it quite evident that the blessed results of His first coming are not yet complete. When we think of the darkness, the confusion, the disorder, the disease, and the death that is the constant burden of mankind, we are forced to say "an enemy has done this." This enemy, we know, is the being called Satan. He is not an omnipotent being and his works can be annulled by Christ. The time will come when this will be done and the works of Satan will be undone. The human race as a whole will then begin to enjoy some of the benefits which were purchased for it by Christ in His death. He does not need to come again in order for mankind to be rescued from error, darkness, disease, and death.

IN CONCLUSION

There is a destined limit to the reign of evil and darkness in this world. It should be the conviction of all who believe in God that the day will surely come when He will put forth all His wisdom and power to insure the triumph of good and the defeat of evil. We cannot believe that God will permit the present condition of things to go on forever. We know that the hour will come when the Almighty God will do the thing that all God-fearing men believe He can do, should do, and will do.

The fact that God has long delayed to put forth His power and bring about a victory for good and the defeat of evil has led many to think that He never will do it. They take His present silence to indicate indifference to the darkness and error, the vice and godlessness that is rampant on every side. But they do not know that God's present silence is explained by His present purpose. This purpose is to write into the long history of His dealings with mankind a complete record of the graciousness of His character. This is now being done through an administration of grace under which every act of God is one of grace, that is, undeserved favor. For 1900 years, ever since God announced through Paul that His administration or method of dealing with men would be gracious (Eph. 3: 2), God has acted only in grace. He has been actively gracious and passively gracious, but if He could not act in grace, then He has not acted

at all. His gracious record is perfect, and it will stand forever as a witness to His grace.

God's long display of grace is not going to be followed by a great display of wrath. This would destroy His record of grace. God's present method of dealing in grace will come to an end in the greatest act of grace He has ever performed. Upon the sinful and undeserving human race He will pour out light, truth, and health. To nations He will make known His judgments. This will make it possible for them to put their complete trust in Him. Then, and not before, they will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

These blessed gifts to mankind will touch every man, bringing each one under a new responsibility, which will require a proper response. From that day forth, God's administration of grace will be at an end and an administration of divine government will begin.

As the last note of an octave is also the beginning of the next, even so it will be when God sends forth His final great act of grace. The act which completes God's long display of grace will be the first act in a new dispensation of divine government.

There are those who feel that we are simply passing through another one of those crises which are not uncommon to mankind. They feel that this too will pass, and that we will again enjoy peace and be measurably safe here upon the earth. Some harbor the dream that if nations do become involved in war, the more destructive weapons will not be used-that all nuclear, biological, chemical, and radiological weapons will be left at home and not be taken to the field of battle. It is my opinion that these are empty hopes - a case of saying that there will be peace when there is no ground for peace.

The unceasing march of events brings mankind nearer and nearer to the verge of destruction. He has in his hands the means of destroying himself. If one nation makes a wrong move it may unloose the holocaust. Since God has proclaimed Himself to be the Preserver of mankind, He must make His move before this takes place. What His move will be, I have attempted to set forth in this study. In view of the conditions that now exist upon the earth, I feel impelled to pray:

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

The End SS25

1. See article on What Does Basileia Mean, Vol. XV -No.4, The Word of Truth
2. See study on A Foretaste of the Kingdom, Vol. XV-No.2, The Word of Truth
3. See study on The Coming of Elijah, Vol. XI-No. 6, The Word of Truth
4. See study on Before the Day of The Lord, Vol. XV-No.1, The Word of Truth
5. See study on Judgment, Vol. XVI -No. 1, The Word of Truth
6. See study on The Great work of the Spirit, Vol. XII -No. 4, The Word of Truth

7. See study on The Interpretation of Colossians 3:1-4, Vol. XV -No.5, The Word of Truth
8. See the writer's pamphlet on God's Present Purpose for additional material on this subject.
9. See the writer's pamphlet on Sorting Prophetic Material.