

THE WORD OF TRUTH

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THE SYNDROME OF THE LAST DAYS

The interpreter of the Bible, whose honest goal is to uncover and set forth the truth revealed in its pages, must always avoid the practice of giving private meanings to commonly used words. He is under obligation to respect divine usage, and should not fail in this important duty.

In 2 Timothy 3:1-8, Paul paints a picture of world conditions that will characterize "the last days." The word here for last is *eschatos*, from which we get our word *eschatology*. It is found 54 times in the New Testament, and it is translated "last" in 46 of these occurrences. In the other eight it is translated "lowest" 2 times, "uttermost" 2, "last state" 2, "ends" 1, and "latter end" 1. That this word means "last" is a fact that will be readily admitted by the honest interpreter. However, since it is an adjective it may draw certain shades of meaning from the noun it qualifies or the context in which it is found. In some occurrences one gets the idea of "resultant", that is, something that follows as a result or a consequence.

There is nothing in 2 Tim. 3:1-8 to indicate that this word might mean "resultant" in the opening verse. Present conditions are not the result of God displaying grace. His purpose in grace is to establish a record of His grace, and this is being accomplished.

In most occurrences of *eschatos* in the New Testament, the usage clearly shows that it sets forth the concluding member or members of a series, or that which concludes anything.

When Paul wrote his second epistle to Timothy, the administration (dispensation) of God's grace had begun. From the day it became effective, God's method of dealing with the nations and with all mankind was to show them a love and favor that they do not deserve. This method of dealing

continues to this present moment. In this administration of the grace of God, an exceedingly important purpose of God is being accomplished, one of such importance that we cannot realize the significance of it, and will not, until its effects are manifest. God's present purpose in this long display of grace is to write into the history of His long dealings with the human race an absolute record of the grace that is inherent in His character. Indeed, He is the God of every grace! He is demonstrating this at the present time. The record is at present untraceable, but it will not always be so.

God's present administration of grace is not going to continue forever. It had its beginning, and *it* will have its end. It had *its* first days and *it* will have *its* last days. It *is* my conviction that "the last days" of 2 *Tim.* 3:1 are the concluding days of God's administration of grace. These "last days" are a definite period of *time*, the length of which is not made known by God.

The fact that there *is* no definite article before the phrase "last days" *is* thought by some to be significant. I do not agree with this. Would they have us think of this as being "a last day"? From what I know of Greek usage, no article *is* needed here. The article *is* usually omitted before names or designations of things of which there can be only one. We need the article in English to make *it* sound right, and so all translators render this "the last days", which is what *it* means.

Thus the simple and obvious meaning of "the last days" in 2 *Tim.* 3:1 *is* that *it* speaks of the concluding days of God's long display of grace. We are given a list of twenty-one social conditions which are intended to be taken as symptoms that when taken together will permit us to make a proper diagnosis and say, "It is my considered opinion that these are the last days."

There are some who have considered the picture presented here, and say that this has always been the image of man—that men were of this character in the days of Paul and they have been this way ever since. In view of this they feel that "the last days" refers to the whole *time* period of the dispensation of grace. So they seek to find a meaning of the word *eschatos* that will fit in with this concept. This results in an effort to get away from the evident meaning of this word as determined by its usage in Scripture. It is said that the word *eschatos* can mean *ensuing*, and that this is the way it should be understood in this passage; therefore, we should understand this portion to be a description of the character of men in the days that would follow.

This idea is not new. In fact, it has long been the position of the anti-dispensationalist. The only thing new about it is the meaning being given to the word *eschatos*, a meaning that is not suggested by any lexicographer, so far as I have been able to determine. And while it is always possible that the lexicographers may have missed the meaning, it still should be suggested somewhere in the 53 other occurrences of this word in the New Testament. To *ensue* is to follow, to come afterward; and there is not a single occurrence of the word *eschatos* in the New Testament that would show it to have this meaning.

There is a New Testament word that does mean *ensuing*. It is the word *epiousa*, and it is found in Acts 7:26, 16:11, 20:15, 21:18, and 23:11. It is translated "next" in the first three occurrences, and "following" in the last two.

If Paul had meant "in ensuing days", he would have used the word *epiousa*, not *eschatos*. And if he had meant to say "in subsequent days", he would have used the word *husteros*, just as he did in 1 *Tim.* 4:1 where he spoke of "subsequent times." But he used neither of these words. He used the word *eschatos*, which means *last*, in the sense of a concluding member of a series.

There is no logical way that the term "last days" can be made to include the entire dispensation of grace. This dispensation had a beginning, and it will have an end. The days that precede its end are its "last days".

As already suggested, we do not know how long the period of time called "the last days" will be. It could be a hundred years in length or it could be ten. Furthermore, there is good reason to believe that it does not burst upon the world full blown, but that there is a gradual increase in the conditions that are indicated until the time comes that the wise will know and understand that the final days of the dispensation of grace are upon us.

The Spirit of God, speaking through Paul, is very explicit as to the conditions that will prevail in the last days, and what the image of mankind will be as seen by the eye of God. The description is succinct and accurate. Nevertheless, some seem to be saying, "Pay no attention to these words. We are not living in the last days. Men have always been just as they are described in 2 Timothy 3:1-8. These conditions have always prevailed. There have always been men who were covetous, proud, disobedient to parents, and all the other things listed there by Paul."

In proof of this we are pointed to the first chapter of Romans (verses 29 to 31) where Paul uses many of these same terms in describing the apostate condition of men in former days.

Those who advance this argument fail to see that if they follow it out they will be forced to include in "the last days" the entire period of man upon the earth, not just the dispensation of grace. Furthermore, they fail to see that they stultify and nullify Paul's witness in 2 Tim. 3:18, making it to be nothing more than a repetitious recounting of some of the sins of which men have always been guilty. This cannot be what Paul is setting forth.

The truth is that Paul sets forth twenty-one social conditions which at some time become so prominent or conspicuous that when considered together they make it possible to identify a period of time as being "the last days." In other words, Paul presents a syndrome of the last days.

The word *syndrome* is used to describe a set of concurrent things, especially of a group of symptoms or signs typical of a disease, disturbance, or condition. It is especially apropos in setting forth Paul's message in this portion. These twenty-one social conditions are given as symptoms or signs so that when they occur together there can be no other diagnosis but that they indicate that the last days are upon us.

When the portion is carefully studied it has to be admitted that no man today could write a more accurate description of the social conditions that now exist and are so prominent. Furthermore, I challenge anyone to point to any twenty-five or fifty-year period of human history when these twenty-one social conditions converged and were prominent as they are today.

The opening words of this chapter make it plain that Paul is speaking of conditions that will exist some time in the future:

Now this know, that in the last days perilous periods will be present. 2 Tim. 3:1 TRV.

I am indebted to Dr. Robert Shacklett of the Physics Department of Fresno State College for the suggestion that this word be used to describe what Paul is presenting - the last days syndrome.

These words speak of a time when one period of peril follows close on the heels of another, a very apt and accurate description of the time in which we now live. And it cannot be said that it has always been this way. To do so is to ignore history. In times past when peril threatened one people or one nation, there were many others to whom it was no threat. Once the peril was past, a period of peace, progress, and security could be expected. This was the course of history for almost nineteen centuries, but it is *no* longer true. At present all nations and all people live under the constant threat of destruction. As Arnold J. Toynbee, the historian of civilizations, says: "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."

After declaring what world conditions will be, Paul goes on to declare what the image of men will be in the last days of this present dispensation. Long before Paul wrote, Isaiah had declared:

Let favor be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness. Isa. 26:10.

The nineteen hundred year period, in which every act of God has been an act of favor to the undeserving, has not produced a righteous world. In fact, this is not God's purpose in the grace He is now showing. His purpose is to fabricate and establish a record of His grace, which when it is open for inspection will give absolute witness to His character.

The picture that Paul paints of the character of men in the last days of God's long display of grace is the image that man projects when he is viewed by God. It is *not* a flattering image. Men may look at themselves, and judging themselves by themselves fail to see this image. It declares that they are self-centered, money-lovers, empty pretenders, arrogant, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, malignant, calloused, implacable, slanderers, uncontrollable, brutal, averse to that which is good, perfidious, rash, conceited, pleasure lovers, ever putting on the forms of godliness but denying the power thereof.

If one reads the daily papers and news magazines, if he listens to the words of those who are in a position to know, he will have to admit that unless all these observers and reporters are badly misinformed, these words accurately describe the image that man presents today.

Some of the terms that Paul used here are almost startling in their accuracy and aptness of description. These have been reviewed before, but since we are now considering these things collectively as the syndrome of the last days, it will be well to look at them again.

FOR MEN SHALL BE. In the preceding epistle (1 Tim. 4:1-3) a warning had been given in regard to evils that would be seen in "some" in subsequent eras, but it is of evils quite distinct in time, character, and extent, from what is set forth here. There, instead of a widespread condition of men, he spoke of "some" only. But here the eye is led to traverse a general state of decadence and moral corruption. It does not say all men will be or even that most men will be. It accurately speaks of a widespread characteristic; even as Paul said in Rom. 6:19, "I speak after the manner of men." It was not that every man spoke in like manner, but that it was a characteristic way of speaking.

LOVERS OF THEIR OWN SELVES. A strange phenomenon has manifested itself in recent years, which points this up in a startling way. It is the unwillingness of men to help when a fellow human being is in trouble. Women being attacked, even being murdered, have screamed in vain for help, but onlookers would not trouble themselves to call the police. If selfishness is one symptom that makes up the syndrome of the last days, then these days are upon us.

COVETOUS. In its wider sense the Greek word *philarguros* means a lover of money. However, this word specifically means a lover of silver. A recent writer has wondered about this inordinate love for silver which has long characterized many Asiatic nations, and now has become prominent in our own nation. Neither Russia nor China has exported a pound of silver in the past two decades, they treasure this metal so highly. In India, small flakes of silver are sprinkled on food before it is served. In our own country, silver coinage has almost disappeared from circulation. And while much of this could be attributed to hoarding by speculators, this is far too simple an explanation. When all facets are considered, we live in a time when a fascination for silver is a prominent characteristic of men today. So whether Paul meant a love of money or a love of silver, both of the symptoms are obvious.

BOASTERS. The Greek word used here (*alazones*) has to do with those who think more of themselves than the reality justifies. It is used of those who promise what they cannot perform and those who are full of big words. We at once think of many world leaders who have asserted foolish propositions that have no basis in common sense or experience. And yet a more pertinent example can be seen in the vast television industry, which has such a great influence upon the thinking and mores of men today. Each fall a new season of programs begins, and for weeks before the boast is made that these are to be the greatest things that men have ever seen, each one an accomplishment equal to the creation of the earth or the building of the pyramids. Then, what do you get? The same old dreary programs under different names, with the same faces wearing different wigs. Such boasting is a characteristic of life today. Men are constantly promising what they cannot produce. The presence of this indicator of the last days cannot be denied.

PROUD. This word means haughty, arrogant, a disposition to claim or take to oneself more consideration or honor than is warranted or justly due. This type of person abounds in society today. Men love those *lies* that save their pride.

BLASPHEMERS. The word *blasphemoi* means a calumniator, one who accuses falsely and maliciously, one who indulges in personal mockery, especially against God. There is so much of *this* today that it is dominating the mediums of communication. So much so that when I read it or hear it I find myself praying: "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.

DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS. The word here for "disobedient" is *apeithes* which means stubborn or unpersuadable, or, to be more specific, to be in obstinate opposition. This same phrase is found in Romans 1:30 where it is listed as one of the sins that caused God to punish men of ancient times by giving them over to reprobate minds. And it can be said beyond all question that there *is* no social condition that is quite as prominent and conspicuous in the world today as the obstinate opposition of children toward parents. Books and articles by the hundreds are being written upon this phenomena. Even the titles of these are quite revealing. "The Revolt of Youth", "The Teen-Age Tyranny", "The Rebellious Young", "The Overthrow of Parental Authority" are a sample. For years the words of Paul seemed to be somewhat far-fetched, and attempts were made to interpret them as being a reference to lawlessness upon the part of so many who despise and reject authority. Now these words no longer seem strange. The teen-age rebellion, the domination of parents by children, disrespect of parental authority are facts that are being examined and reported by every form of news media. Indeed, Paul was specific, and present events demonstrate the accuracy of his words. The rebellion of the young is one of the frightful signatures of our times—one more specific symptom that makes it possible to diagnose the syndrome of the last days.

UNTHANKFUL. The Greek word here means lacking gratitude, that is, ungrateful. Our own nation continually sees this in the total lack of appreciation of those people whom we have helped. This is so apparent that nothing else is needed to show that a lack of gratitude is a dominant characteristic of men today. However, this word may also mean without grace, and may be used to describe that which is without beauty, attractiveness, or charm. These are characteristics, which are unusually manifest in art, music, literature, and grooming today.

UNHOLY. This is a very poor translation of the Greek word *anosios*. The word *basion*, which is the root of this means benign or benignant. The opposite of this is unbenign or **malignant**. This is what *anosios* means. This word speaks of those who are disposed to do harm, to inflict suffering, or to cause distress. There are so many of this kind today that it is a cause of anxiety to legislators, educators, peace officers, and parents. This has caused an editor of a great newspaper recently to cry out: "When will we put a stop to this brutality. Where is this violence going to end. Eight nurses

murdered in their home! Six youngsters shot to death on the streets by lawless gangs. Mobs marching through our streets screaming, 'Hate! Hate!' A teen-ager killed by a sniper near his home. And now the senseless unbelievable murder of a young girl who brought nothing but beauty and love wherever she walked." This editor was referring to that which had happened in a few months in Chicago.

WITHOUT NATURAL AFFECTION. These three words are one word in Greek (*astorgos*), and they speak of a social menace that is prominent today. A startling thing that is revealed by the statistics of every police department is the great number of parents who physically harm their children, a crime that even rudimentary natural affection, if it were present, would keep them from committing. Dr. Leontine R. Young, an authority in the field of social work has recently declared that "child abuse is becoming an increasing problem." She said, "Do all parents love their children? Why must we assume that this concept is true and then be shocked at the realization when we learn otherwise? As difficult as it might be to believe, child abuse is happening everywhere. It is not an occasional, but an increasing problem. It is a problem that cannot be ignored by social workers."

This word also has reference to all who are calloused or inhuman. But whatever it may mean, it is one of the obvious symptoms that, when taken with all other evidences, tells us that these are the last days.

TRUCEBREAKERS. The Greek word *aspondos*, which is used here means implacable or unrelenting, and it has reference to those who are not satisfied until they have done their worst. Such people are devoid of any pity or feeling that would cause them to relent and restrain through compassion the fury or violence of one's rage, hatred, or hostility. The rage of men and the fury of men is a manifest thing today. In the commission of crimes, more people are being beaten, kicked, or stomped to death that has ever been known in the recorded history of mankind.

FALSE ACCUSERS. The word here is *diabolos*, which should be familiar even to those who know no Greek. It is usually translated "devil" (in 35 out of 38 occurrences), but literally means a slanderer. It is used of those who calumniate, slander, or defame. The word covers those who are scurrilous, coarsely abusive, and vituperative. These things are commonplace in the political life of all nations today.

INCONTINENT. A continent person is one who exercises restraint upon his passions or desires. The incontinent are those who do not restrain these, especially in the realm of sex. The Greek word used here (*akrates*) means either uncontrollable, or without self-control. We see this in the alcoholics, the compulsive gamblers, and the impulsive killers, but especially in the great wave of unrestrained sexual indulgence that is sweeping the world today.

FIERCE. This is an important word in Paul's list of symptoms. The word *anemeros* means brutal, violent, inhuman, cruel. Civilization boasts of its long and gradual rising up from a savage state, but at present it is faced with a truly savage spirit of man. The most violent people on the earth are not the "savage" tribes of the African Congo, or the primitive inhabitants of the Australian bush. No other nation on earth has a worse record than the United States for murder, manslaughter, criminal assault, armed robbery, sluggings, muggings, carnage on the highways, and assorted forms of fierceness and violence. If there are any who fail to see this, they need to be reminded of the words of Alexander Pope:

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.

This question was put to the Chief of Police of Cincinnati, Ohio by an interviewer: "How do you explain the wanton brutality that seems increasingly to go along with crime these days?" He answered: "I can find no explanation. I can understand why a man might want to steal to get the necessities of life. But must you gouge out the eyes of your victim? Must you stick a pair of shears in his stomach? Tear his hair out by the roots?" J. Edgar Hoover has said that there is no way of understanding the senseless brutality of present day criminals.

In the United States we have somehow bred a national character in which violence seems to play a dominant motive. Sports are violent, and television programs and motion pictures are especially so. Dr. Fredric Werthan, in a recently published book says that from his psychiatric and sociological studies he has arrived at the thesis that "violence is becoming more entrenched in our social life than people are willing to believe."

DESPISERS OF THOSE THAT ARE GOOD. This phrase is one word, *aphilagathos*. It means averse to the good or despisers of goodness. This would include those who would destroy all moral landmarks simply because they have no relish for good. They "call evil good, and good evil; they put darkness for light and light for darkness; they put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter." On every hand today we find those who heartily approve the wicked practices of themselves and of others, while at the same time *they* dishonor and disapprove even the things of God. This symptom of the last days is manifest in the present time when men have a bad name or names for all that is good.

TRAITORS. The Greek word *prodotes* here can best be understood when we remember that it is applied to Judas Iscariot in Luke 6:16. It speaks of those who without scruple would betray another to man, and here it has special reference to those who betray the Lord, who profess to follow Him, but who long ago burned their draft cards so far as fighting the battle for truth is concerned. The betrayal of Christ is seen daily in the actions of those who profess to proclaim Him, but spend their time making Him a party to and participant of every movement they are interested in, even the most abominable.

HEADY. Rash or headstrong would be a much better rendering of the word *propetes* which is used here. It describes those who rush inconsiderately and determinedly in pursuit of their own will. We see this in the rush of the young to get married, and in the rush of others to get a divorce; in the sudden changes of belief, and precipitate disavowals of God and Christ. This word describes all who rush into acts under the influence of passions and emotions. A mob or a riot is always made up of rash people. This condition now prevails in world conditions wherever we look.

HIGHMINDED. The Greek word here is somewhat complex. The exact word here is *tetuphomenoi*, which is an inflection of *tuphoomai*, which is from *tuphoo*. This may seem over-technical to some, but the information *is* essential to those who may wish to trace out the exact meaning of *this* word. There *is* no doubt that *it* means conceited, yet it also has in it the idea of being beclouded or besotted. If we see the emphasis here as being upon conceit, self-importance, or failure to see oneself truly, then we can point to examples by the hundreds. There are the conniving politicians, who think of themselves as statesmen; the physicians who think that they are gods; the self-proclaimed leaders who have done nothing more than anticipate which way the parade is *going*; the avant-garde sociologists who encourage the young to "challenge the existing value structure," but when *it* comes to facts are only seeking to lead them *into* a lot of *boozing* and bedding. Then there are those who smear paint on canvas and think they are artists, who cut twelve inches off a woman's skirt and claim they are designers, who string together vulgarity and think they are writers, who undress *in* public and think they are actresses, who make raucous noises and think they are musicians.

But if we see the emphasis on being beclouded or besotted we can point to the glaring example of the great multitude whose minds have become so beclouded and besotted by sin that they are never able to think clearly in regard to any matter. Indeed the conceited mind, the beclouded mind, the besotted mind are in evidence wherever we look today.

LOVERS OF PLEASURE MORE THAN LOVERS OF GOD. Who could be so blind as to deny this manifest and extraordinary development in our day when mankind is pleasure-loving rather than God-loving? A more accurate description of man's present attitude could not be given. The love of pleasure is a social characteristic of the present time. Never in the history of the world has there been such a predominant and widespread love of pleasure. And while it is true that modern modes of travel and entertainment have added impetus to the universal pursuit of pleasure, yet it is here, a present, predominant, social characteristic of modern man.

HAVING A FORM OF GODLINESS, BUT DENYING THE POWER THEREOF. In all times men have been hypocrites who have put on the forms of godliness. Yet, as a rule, they did not deny the power of godliness, which, of course, is God Himself. However, there is a specific manifestation of this, which exceeds anything that men have witnessed heretofore. I refer to that popular theological movement which is summed up on the words, "God is dead." It is the declared opinion of the leaders of this movement that Christianity can be made relevant to the twentieth century only if God is eliminated. They hold that it is not necessary to believe in a supernatural God in order to be a Christian. These ideas have been given the widest possible publicity, and this has resulted in these ideas being favorably entertained. That "God is dead" is an idea that is not unwelcome by that great mass of men who wish to throw off all feeling of responsibility or accountability to God. In that popular movement which is called "atheistic Christianity" we have a very pertinent example of men having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.

THEY WHICH CREEP INTO HOUSES. The entire sixth verse of 2 Timothy 3 needs to be carefully examined. It sets forth another of the outstanding social characteristics of the time in which we live. In it we are told that "of these", that is, from these considered as a group, are those who are slipping into homes and taking captive the minds of silly women. These women are further described as heaped with sins, dominated by various desires, and, as always learning yet never able to come to the knowledge of truth.

All that is needed to see that this is taking place in a most manifest way today is to read Vance Packard's book on "The Hidden Persuaders." This book reveals how both men and women, but especially women, are being influenced in the pattern of their lives and thinking. Packard uses such terms as "guilt feelings" and "hidden desires", and shows how merchandisers use these in promoting the sales of both products and ideas. He shows how advertising men feel out the hidden weaknesses and frailties of men and women in the hope that they can influence their behavior. By means of television, radio, and the ubiquitous magazines they insinuate themselves into or slip into homes where they even change the thoughts and moral character of those with whom they are dealing.

Packard speaks of the "psycho-seduction" of children by means of radio and television programs, even going so far as to foster the child's resistance to parental authority.

I do not hesitate to say that, beyond all question, Paul predicted what Vance Packard has documented.

The Syndrome

We have considered the twenty-one symptoms or signs given by the Spirit of God, which when taken collectively establish a syndrome that tells us that these are the last days of the dispensation of grace. No other diagnosis is possible. It is useless to say that men have always been this way. That

would be the same as if a doctor would say that since all men always have a temperature of 98.6 it is not significant if it rises to 104. Of course, men have always been wicked. This is the testimony of God's Word. And on the basis of this one might argue that it has always been "the last days." But Paul is not dealing with what man is or what man has been. He has given us twenty-one symptoms which, when they appear concurrently, make a true diagnosis possible - not of man, but of the times in which we live. Beyond all question, the syndrome of the last days is upon us.

What Next?

Going back to the previously quoted cry of the newspaperman who asked when and where all this is going to end, we have an answer in the portion of Scripture we are considering. The time will come when all evil practices will come to a sudden and dramatic end. **"They shall proceed no further" (2 Tim. 3:9)**, is God's declaration concerning this. They are stopped in their tracks. By a divine act, by a word from God in heaven they are unmasked and exposed before all men, even as Paul says "for their folly (**anoia**, translated "madness" in Luke 6:11) shall be obvious to all"

This is a truth that has never been incorporated into the thinking of the dispensational-premillennialists. Their teaching is that the next thing is the removal of all believers from the earth, after which evil men will flourish in an unprecedented manner. But this is not Paul's testimony. He declares that the last days come to an end by all evil being stopped. This is not a new revelation. It is found in many other places in the Word of God. Isaiah declares this same truth:

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

It is to be noted here that this is a work of the Holy Spirit, and it is not the personal return of Jesus Christ to the earth. If there ever were a time when the enemy has come in like a flood, it is the time in which we live.

David speaks of "the insurrection of the workers of iniquity" (Psa. 64:2) and after describing their nefarious acts declares:

But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded. So shall they make their own tongues to fall upon themselves: all that see them shake their heads. And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of His doing. The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and shall trust in Him; and all the upright in heart shall glory. Psalm 64:7-10.

I doubt if any phrase could more aptly describe present conditions than the one David used "the insurrection of the workers of iniquity." He then tells us what God is going to do about it. The picture is one of God assuming sovereignty, of His government appearing upon the earth, of bringing an end to the insurrection of the workers of iniquity. Little wonder that the Psalmist prayed:

Break thou the arm of the wicked and evil man: seek out his wickedness till thou find none. Psa. 10:15.

Again the Psalmist says:

When the lawless bud like herbage, and all the workers of iniquity have blossomed; it leadeth to them being destroyed for ever. Psa. 92:7 (Rotherham)

In another Psalm that is prophetic of the kingdom of God, he says:

The righteous shall see it, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth. Psalm 107:42.

There is no doubt but that the Bible teaches that the kingdom of God bursts upon the earth in a time of great iniquity. Paul gives witness to this, but he is not alone. It is a truth taught by many who spoke as they were moved by the Spirit of God.

The End

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

(Continued from Vol. XVII, No. 1)

There are certain great truths that are so interwoven in the Bible that they become an integral part of the fabric of divine revelation. If these are ignored or neglected, God's revelation becomes a lot of loose threads that cannot be woven into any complete pattern.

One of these great integral truths of the Bible is so fundamental, that our understanding of God's message will always be incomplete if we are without it. This is the revelation that He has definite plans to invade the earth, to intervene in the badly muddled affairs of mankind, to inject Himself into the flow of history, and to reverse that flow which has ever been away from God since the day that sin entered into the world. This is the supreme message of the Bible so far as the future is concerned.

To those who accept the Bible as being an inspired revelation of God's works and ways, it is not difficult to demonstrate that He has intervened on numerous occasions in times past. And, while it cannot be demonstrated, it is my firm belief that He intervenes in secret today. All present interventions of God are acts of grace, and they are untraceable. But this is not what is meant by the great truth of divine intervention. What is meant is that God has explicit plans, and these plans have been made known, to intervene in such manner and to such an extent that no man upon this earth, no nation, and no spot will be left untouched. This intervention will result in the kingdom of God, God's own government, becoming a manifest reality upon the earth.

It would be a very simple matter to show in the Bible fifty or more direct statements wherein God has declared that He is going to do certain things, anyone of which would so change the character of life upon this earth to such an extent that it thrills the mind even to contemplate it. And it is quite evident that these things are simultaneous and concomitant acts, all of them related to His assumption of sovereignty, with the result that the kingdom of God explodes upon and over the earth. We will examine some of these declarations.

He Will Overwhelm Satan

In the first great promise of the Bible it is declared that the One who is the seed of the woman would overwhelm the head of one called "the serpent", and that this one would overwhelm His heel (Gen. 3:15).

We will not digress here to show that the Hebrew word *shuph* means "to overwhelm." See this word in its two other occurrences in Psalm 139:11 (cover) and Job 9:17 (breaketh). Also the closely

related word *shuq* in Psalm 65:9 (waterest), Joel 2:24 (overflow) and Joel 3:13 (overflow). This is the definition given by Dr. James Strong in his concordance. These facts are sufficient for the student to pursue his own investigation.

The word *head* in English, and its equivalents *rosh* in Hebrew and *kephale* in Greek, all have the same basic, root idea of an outflowing source. All other meanings are derived from this, no matter how far they may seem to be removed. It is widely used of many things, but its fundamental meaning is always that of source, beginning, fountain, or spring that is outflowing.

From this we can see that the great promise is that God in Christ will at some point in history overwhelm all iniquity at the point where it has its start, right where the outflow begins. And when God does this, it will mean a divine invasion, a divine intervention, which will cut off all iniquity.

Does any reader want to say this will never be? Does he want to say that iniquity will flow on forever and never come to an end? If so, then let him first cast aside his Bible, for this is what God's Word says shall be. God will not permit Satan to exercise his power in human history forever. We have His promise that He will cut off iniquity at its very source.

In connection with this it will be helpful to note that in the record found in Luke 13:10-16, we see God in Christ intervening to bring health to a miserable woman "whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years." The results of His healing touch were manifest immediately, but it is evident that He was dealing with the effect and not with the cause, with the outflow and not with the source. If He had dealt with the source, He would have brought release to everyone who was in like manner bound upon the earth.

In Acts 5 we read of God in Christ intervening to bring punishment upon Ananias and Sapphira, who had "lied to the Holy Spirit" Here also it was only the effect that was being dealt with and not the cause. These two were overwhelmed by divine indignation against sin among the out-called of God, but Satan who had filled their heart to do this thing (Acts 5:3) remained untouched. It was not yet time for God to overwhelm the source of all iniquity such as this. But that day will surely come. And when it does it will be an act of divine intervention, an act for which the foundation was laid when the Lamb of God died "to take away the sin of the world."

Thus we see in the declaration that "He shall bruise thy head", a promise of God to deal with iniquity where it now starts. By sending forth a flood of light, He will overwhelm all Satanic darkness; by a flood of truth, He will overwhelm all Satanic error; by a flood of health, He will overwhelm all Satanic diseases; by a flood of justice, He will overwhelm all injustice; and by a flood of righteousness, He will overwhelm all iniquity.

Go someday to the ocean's shore when the waves are running high. Notice how the waves going out are overwhelmed by the waves coming in. Those going out have little power behind them, but those coming in are pushed by all the force of the mighty ocean. This will provide an illustration of the overwhelming force of mighty waters. And then, as you walk along the sand, allow the waves to overwhelm your heels. They do no damage. But think what it would be if they overwhelmed your head. Then think again upon God's great initial promise that He who is the seed of the woman will overwhelm the head of the serpent, Satan. And as you do you may feel inclined to cry out in the words of the prophet: **But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." Amos 5:24.**

He Shall Judge the World

In the Old Testament the word *judge* meant to act as a supreme magistrate, exercising sovereignty in all matters. The judge determined, declared, and enforced what was right. This is what it means when we are told:

And He shall judge the world in righteousness, He shall minister judgment to the peoples in uprightness. Psa. 9:8.

This declaration is universal so far as the earth and the men of the earth are concerned. The words *world* and *peoples* do not allow any limitation. This truth is repeated in many places.

0 let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for Thou shalt judge the peoples righteously, and govern the nations upon the earth. Psa. 67:4.

And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many peoples. Isa. 2:4

Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He shall judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance to all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead. Acts 17:31.

Those who believe the Bible should believe that these promises will be fulfilled, and they should live in the expectation that the day will come when God in Christ shall judge the world and govern all nations. However, if these blessed promises are ever fulfilled, it will mean that God must intervene, invade the earth by *His* Spirit, inject Himself into the present flow of history. He must bring human government to an end and replace it with divine government. Jesus Christ must take to Himself *His* great power and govern. He must assume sovereignty over the earth and its inhabitants.

This *is* so sorely needed today that children of God everywhere should be praying the words given us by the Psalmist:

Arise, 0 God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations. Psa. 82:8.

This *is* a prayer for divine intervention. Is there any believer who dares to say that such intervention will never be?

He Maketh Wars to Cease

Will there always be wars? Will conflicts between nations characterize this earth forever? The Bible speaks so emphatically concerning this that it leaves no room for any doubt.

He maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth: He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire. Psa. 46:9.

And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. Isa. 2:4.

Students of history will know that there have been times when great powers have intervened and imposed peace on lesser powers, even while these lesser nations were in the midst of armed conflict. There was that condition of things called "Pax Romana" which was a peace imposed by the Roman Empire. There was also a "Pax Britannica" which was a peace imposed by the British Empire. But these *times* of peace did not last, and at the present there *is* no power among men that is great enough to decree peace.

But our God is able, and there will yet be a "Pax Christus" which will be a peace imposed upon nations by the power of Jesus Christ. The day will come when He will speak from heaven and cause wars to cease to the ends of the earth. This will be so far reaching that every instrument of war will be demolished or turned into peaceful uses. No nation will ever threaten another nation. All schools of war such as West Point and Annapolis will be closed. Every army camp, naval training station, and all such training facilities will be closed and abandoned forever. Little wonder that God's great declaration concerning the cessation of war is prefaced with the words:

Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He hath made in the earth. Psa. 46:8.

These glorious promises are stultified by many. They are bound to an idea that there must be still more terrible wars before God ever causes wars to end. Dr. Alva J. McClain says that, "Interneccine war and chaos will sweep the world", and "at the end of man's long misrule on earth, there will come a special outbreak of war with all the attendant disastrous results." Dr. Billy Graham has declared: "The last war, the nuclear one will be so great that all other wars of history will be as sham battles. There will be no chance of escape as the creeping death of radiation envelopes the earth."

I do not agree with this. It is not the prospect held forth in God's Word. Not one more shot needs to be fired before the establishment of God's peace upon it, before He "breaks the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth" (Hosea 2:18). When He does this, it will be divine intervention.

His Glory Revealed

The day will yet come when God will act to imprint upon the mind of every living man a certain knowledge. This is the promise made through Isaiah when He declared:

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 questions, which were asked by Jesus Christ, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" and, "What think ye of Christ?" might well give rise to two related questions. What does God say concerning the Son of man? and, what does He think of Jesus Christ? If we knew fully the answers to these questions, we would know the esteem in which God holds *Him*, that is, the knowledge of His glory.

This glory is going to be revealed. It is going to shine forth. God is going to make it universally known what the Son *is* in His *sight*. **"I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth"**, *is His* emphatic promise (**Psa. 46:10**). The mouth of the Lord will speak and this will be the result. When it takes place all flesh shall see *it* together, that is, at the same *time* and to the same extent. The word *see* here does not have to do with that organ of physical *sight* called the eye, but with comprehending with the mind. This *is* in harmony with the words of David in **Psalm 22:27**:

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the LORD and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.

An interpretative paraphrase of *this* passage would read as follows:

All men, even those living in the most remote places, shall have a portion of truth imprinted on their minds and will be turned unto Jehovah, and all the different kinds of people who make up the nations shall bow down before Him.

That *this is* connected with His assumption of sovereignty *is* seen in the next verse:

For the government is the LORD'S: and He is the governor among the nations. Psa. 22:28.

The tendency of men to divorce the Old Testament from the New has led to great blindness in regard to this great act of divine intervention on the part of God. These statements all describe the same event.

- The glory of the Lord revealed. 1sa. 40:5
- The exaltation of Jesus Christ among the nations, *His* exaltation in the earth. Psalms 46:10.
- The unveiling of Jesus Christ. 1 Cor. 1:7
- The manifestation of Jesus *Christ*. Col. 3:4, 1 John 3:2
- The shining forth (*epiphaneia*) of the glory of the great God, even our Savior, Jesus Christ. Titus 2:13
- The leading forth of Jesus Christ. 1 Thess. 4:14.

Not one of these have anything to do with the personal return of Jesus Christ to the earth in order to be personally present for a thousand years. They have to do with the "coming of the Son of man *in* His kingdom," not with the Son of man coming in person. The student will be greatly helped here if he sees two distinct events *in* 1 Thess. 4:13 – 17.

The first event is the leading forth (*ago*) of Jesus Christ. This brings to mind the time when Pilate led Him forth (*ago*) and said, "Behold the man!" (John 19:4,5). We now await that day when God will lead Him forth and say, "Behold the man!" This will be the day of His revelation, the day of His manifestation, the day when His glory is revealed. And we give thanks to God for the assurance that when He leads forth Jesus Christ, those which sleep in Jesus will be led forth with Him. This of course, will require resurrection for those who are among the dead. This brings to mind the statement about Him "leading (*ago*) many sons into glory." For, indeed, when Christ who is our life is manifested, then shall we also be manifested with Him in glory. When His glory is revealed, the glory of the believer will be revealed.

The second great event in this portion is the **parousia** of Jesus Christ. It should be divided as follows:

The leading forth of Jesus Christ. 4:13-14.

The parousia of Jesus Christ. 4:15-17.

Between these two events we must place the entire time period of the kingdom of God. The first event has to do with the inauguration of the kingdom of God and the second has to do with the consummation. There is a resurrection related to both. We must not become so wrapped up in the spectacular events that accompany the parousia of Jesus Christ that we miss altogether the great fact of God leading forth Jesus Christ.

If the student will take the word *parousia* which is translated "coming" in 1 Thess. 4:15 and follow it through Matt. 24:3, 27, and 39 he will finish with the conviction that the event described by Paul cannot be an imminent event, but can only take place when the stage is fully set for it.

So, while we wait we will rest assured that God will intervene, that the glory of the Lord will be revealed, that He will be manifested, that God will lead Him forth, and that all this will happen before He returns to be personally present upon the earth.

A Standard Raised

A most emphatic statement in the Word in regard to divine intervention is found in **Isaiah 59:19**, where the effect of divine intervention is first stated, after which the cause is set forth.

So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.

The emphatic nature of this declaration, coupled with failure to see that it speaks of one grand event, that is, divine intervention which will result in a fear of God throughout all of mankind, has led some to question this passage. This may have led to some of the attempts to revise the Hebrew text, making it to say much less than it says as it stands here. This has resulted in a much disputed passage. I have considered the matter as far as I am able, and as a result, I agree with the words of F. C. Jennings: "All things considered, I see no reason to abandon the received version, which is retained in the margin of the Revised, and by Darby, Kelly, and many other conservative commentators." (Studies in Isaiah, page 687).

Those who carefully consider this passage will have to admit that the phrase, which speaks of the enemy coming in like a flood is one that is peculiarly applicable to the present time. As George E. Ladd has well said:

“Our generation has witnessed diabolical evils which the preceding generation would have said were impossible for enlightened, civilized men. The demonic element in history is increasingly manifesting itself.”

It should be carefully noted that when this flood of iniquity occurs, it is "the Spirit of the Lord" that lifts up a standard against the enemy who is responsible for it. It is not God sending His Son in person to put down the insurrection, it is God acting through His Spirit. When this takes place the long awaited battle between the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error will be a reality. The believer has no doubt as to what the outcome of this will be. "They shall proceed no further, for their folly shall be obvious to all" These are Paul's words as to what happens when God intervenes to overwhelm the flood of iniquity. "All iniquity shall stop her mouth" is the word of the Psalmist concerning this great event (Psalm 107:42).

God Pours Out of His Spirit

I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh. Joel 2:28.

There are many who say that what we need more than anything else today is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. I fully agree with this, except I feel that this is what mankind needs and not just "we." Furthermore I feel that we have every right to expect this, since God has explicitly promised to do this very thing. And yet when I declare that this is going to be, I find that those who insist that this is what we need lose all interest in it, do not believe it will ever be, and seem to consider that it would be unrighteous for God to do so. "Upon all flesh, upon sinners as well as saints", they exclaim to me. I answer them in the language of Scripture, "Yea, upon the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." The amount God gives may be limited as to measure, but the extent is unlimited. Hear his words again through the lips of Peter:

It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh. Acts 2:17.

This amazing promise has no place at all in the thinking of most students and interpreters of the Word of God. Some ignore it, some seek to explain it away, while others simply deny that it will ever be. Nevertheless, the Word of God stands sure, and I take my stand upon it and declare that the

hour will come when God will pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh. By "all flesh" I understand it to mean the whole human race, all who are living upon earth at that time.

It may be that the two great stumbling blocks that stand in the road of men accepting this plain declaration of God are (1) they misread the passage, and (2) they misunderstand the work of the Holy Spirit.

The declaration of God is that He will "pour out of His Spirit." This is a measured portion, given for a specific purpose. It is only to Jesus Christ that God gives the Spirit without measure.

There are many who narrowly believe that an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon an individual would result in his salvation and would be followed by him becoming a flaming witness for Jesus Christ. And while this could be true if this were the divine purpose in mind when God gives of His Spirit, we must remember that this will not be His purpose in that day when He pours out of His Spirit upon all flesh.

This act of God will be to enlighten the world, to bring all mankind under a new responsibility, to provide a true basis for God's government in the earth.

If any man has as much as one word direct from God, he has that much of God's Spirit. By a direct word, I do not mean that knowledge that comes to us through the written word. For example, when God "put a word in Balaam's mouth", he had that much of God's Spirit - a very small amount, indeed, but *it* brought him under great responsibility. When the "word of the Lord came unto Jonah, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh", Jonah had that much of God's Spirit, and he was walking *in* the Spirit when he went.

When God pours out of His Spirit upon all flesh, *it* will have to do primarily with a revelation concerning Jesus Christ. From that moment forth every man living upon the earth will know who Jesus Christ *is* and what Jesus Christ *is in* the sight of God. The Christ rejector will then know the One he *is* rejecting, the blasphemer will know the One he *is* blaspheming, and the believer will know the One *in* whom he has believed.

If there are any who still say that these things will never be, that God will never pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh, that Jesus Christ will never be revealed, that He will never be manifested, then his quarrel *is* with the Word of God.

The Assumption of Sovereignty

Up to this point we have considered these acts of God: the overwhelming of Satanic iniquity at its very source, God in Christ taking His place and acting as the Judge of all the earth, His making wars to cease to the ends of the earth, the revelation of the glory of the Lord in such manner and to such an extent that all flesh sees it together, the raising of a divine standard when the enemy comes in like a flood, the complete exposure of those involved in the insurrection of the workers of iniquity, the pouring out of God's Spirit upon all flesh, the revelation of Jesus Christ, and the manifestation of Jesus Christ. These acts of God are concomitant, they are simultaneous, they are different aspects of the same great event. They all have to do with God assuming sovereignty, of God in Christ taking to Himself His great power. They all have to do with the beginning of the manifest and universal kingdom (government) of God upon the earth.

Each one of the things already set forth is based upon and they flow out of that which was accomplished by Jesus Christ in His coming to the earth, His death upon the cross, His resurrection from the dead, and His present session at the right hand of God. Not one of these are the result of His

parousia. When they come to pass, He will see the outcome "of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." When they come to pass, they will fulfill many great prophecies. A sampling of these will be given with a brief comment on each.

Ask of Me, and I shall give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost part of the earth for thy possession. Psalms 2:8.

Jesus Christ will ask and the nations will be given to Him as His portion, the uttermost parts of the earth will become His possession. This leads us to say, **"Arise O God, judge the earth: for Thou shalt inherit all nations. Psalms 82:7.**

For the kingdom (government) is the LORD'S: and He is the governor among the nations. Psalms 22:28.

In the United States we insist that the government is "of the people, by the people, and for the people." All this must change when God assumes sovereignty and becomes the governor among the nations.

Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. Psalms 33:8.

This is a beautiful thought that will never be realized until God acts in such manner as to bring about this universal awe and fear in respect to Himself. This will be brought about by divine action when He causes judgment to be heard from heaven. **Then the earth will fear, and be still (Psalms 76:8).**

But the meek shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace. Psalms 37:11.

The meek are the submissive. To inherit is to enjoy a portion. The abundance of peace will never be until God acts to cause wars to cease to the ends of the earth.

For God is the King over all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding. God reigneth over the nations: God sitteth upon the throne of His holiness. Psalms 47:7,8.

There are those who argue that God is now king over all the earth. And while it is true that He is the Sovereign and the kingdom is His, that sovereignty and government is not now being manifested in the earth. This passage awaits the fulfillment of necessary conditions before it can be a declaration of present truth. These conditions, as Rotherham declares it, are "the assumption of world-wide sovereignty by our God."

Thou shalt judge the peoples righteously, and govern the nations upon the earth. Psalms 67:4.

The future tense is manifest in this passage. It speaks of something God will yet do. All one needs to do is attend an average session of the United Nations and he will come away with the conviction that God is not governing among the nations today.

Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him . . . all nations shall call Him blessed... and let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Psalms 72:11, 17, 18.

This entire Psalm should be read. When all of its statements are examined, one must agree with Rotherham when he says:

"It is a mockery of the down-trodden of earth, to treat this Psalm as if it were now in the course of fulfillment. It is valid, but it is in reserve. It has never yet been fulfilled, but it will be fulfilled in the letter and in the spirit. Why its accomplishment has been so long delayed must be sought elsewhere. Meantime, a comprehensive study of all the Psalms which have a direct bearing on the Kingdom of

God will assist the student to get upon the high-road of correct and successful interpretation.”

The "kings" of this Psalm are literally "those who rule." He is to be King of all who rule. They will fall down before Him. All nations will serve Him, they will call Him blessed, and the whole earth will be filled with His glory. One would be short-sighted, indeed, if he failed to see the connection between this and Isaiah's declaration that "the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together." Furthermore, it is almost willful blindness not to link up both of these with Paul's admonition that we are to live looking for the shining forth (epiphaneia) of the glory of the great God, even our Savior, Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13). Isaiah, the Psalmist, and Paul all speak of the same great event.

Say among the nations that the LORD reigneth: the world also shall be established (founded) that it shall not be moved: He shall judge the peoples righteously. Psa. 96:10.

Not until our God in Christ assumes sovereignty and His government is a reality can we say among the nations that "the LORD reigneth" or "Jehovah has become King." When this becomes a reality, the world will be established or founded. We who now believe can rejoice in the fact that we were chosen (elected) in Him even before He founds the world (Eph. 1:4). To *found* is synonymous with to organize. We will take our proper place in His organization when it becomes a reality.

The LORD hath prepared His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom ruleth over all. Psa. 103:19.

This important passage locates the throne of Jehovah. It is "in the heavens." In Scripture a throne is a seat or center of government. And it needs to be remembered that the Lord can govern just as well from the heavens as He could from the earth. The earth is the sphere to be ruled, the seat or center of that rule is to be in the heavens. In fact the proper place for the divine governor to be is at the right hand of the Father in the heavens. When He leaves this throne in order to be personally present upon the earth, it will not be in order to govern. Government is not the chief purposes of the parousia.

This explains why the Psalmist said, in an inspired reference to the earthly sojourn of Christ, "for their sakes therefore return thou on high" (Psa. 7:8). Only from this location could the Lord "judge the people", only from there can emanate the power that will bring "the wickedness of the wicked" to an end (Psa. 7:8, 9). This is why the Lord said to His disciples, "It is expedient (a good thing) for you that I go away" (John 16:7).

He is the LORD our God, His judgments are in all the earth.

The first part of this passage can be announced today by all who are related to God through Jesus Christ. The second part will not be true until He "sends forth judgment." When His judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the earth will learn righteousness (Isa. 26:9). This statement alone is sufficient to show that His judgments are not in the earth today. And if we ask concerning the process by which they come into the earth, we can answer with Scripture: "Thou didst cause judgments to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still." Psa. 76:8.

They shall not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. Isa. 11:9.

This glorious promise is so wide and so wonderful that many have trouble believing it. They question whether it applies to all the earth or only a part of it. Attempts have been made to limit this to the land of Israel. Other attempts have been made to fasten upon it some different meaning altogether than the one that seems to be obvious.

I am not in sympathy with these efforts. The next statement (11:10) further emphasizes the universality of the conditions set forth there, a fact that becomes still clearer when we recognize that "people" in verse 10 should read "peoples", and "Gentiles" should read "nations."

I can extend no sympathy to those who act as if they are troubled by the question, "How can the waters cover the sea, when the sea is a body of water?" This is a problem created to meet a predetermined solution. The word "sea" in Hebrew can mean the basin that contains the water as well as the water itself. See 2 Kings 25:13, 16 for clear examples of this.

There are no real problems here. We find the same promise in the prophecy of Habakkuk with an important addition. Here it is "the knowledge of the glory of the LORD" (Hab. 2:14). And if any ask how this can be we point them again to Isaiah's declaration that "the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together" (Isa. 40:5). It is accomplished by a revelation of Jesus Christ, the greatest that God will ever give. It is concomitant with and congruous to God pouring out of His Spirit upon all flesh. It is identical with the "shining forth" (epiphaneia) of Jesus Christ. It is this that Paul calls "that blessed hope."

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.

One can hardly conceive of a greater blessing than to enjoy such positive direction by the Spirit of God. This will be the portion of all men in that day when the Spirit of God makes the facts known to the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8). I want, very much, to be alive in that day when this is a reality.

The LORD is exalted; for He dwelleth on high: He hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness. And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the LORD is his treasure.

It is to be noted here that it is while He is dwelling on high that He fills Zion with these things that become her true riches.

Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. Isa. 33:20.

This glorious promise will be fulfilled to the letter in the day when God governs the earth. Apart from divine intervention, it will never be. This promise is the basis of Paul's declaration in 2 Cor. 5:1-4. When it is realized, Israel will have a divine center of all her activities, a tabernacle that shall never be taken down.

For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; He will save us. Isa. 33:22.

All three branches of government will be in the hands of the One whose seat of government is in the heavens. He will be the judicial, the legislative, and the executive. Human governments always swing between the two extremes of regimentation and fragmentation. The former is strong but under it there is no liberty, the latter gives freedom but it has little strength. When God in Christ assumes sovereignty, it will be safe to concentrate all the functions of state under one authority.

And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity. Isa. 33:24.

This speaks of the health that will be the portion of all who live under God's government. God is not going to share His rule over men with either disease or demons. No man will be "under the

weather" for all men will be under God. The "reign of death", whether the death that works in us or its consummation, will end when the reign of Jesus Christ begins. By this I do not mean that none will ever die again. What is meant is that none will ever be sick or be dying because of Adam's sin. By one man sin and death entered into the world, and by one man sin and death are going out. Jesus Christ has finished the work that was essential to this. He was the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of valleys: I will make the wilderness (desert) a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. Isa. 41:19.

This is one of the physical changes that will take place in the earth in the day when He governs. There are many more. **He will utterly destroy the tongue (gulf) of the Egyptian sea (Isa. 11:15).** This will greatly increase the land mass and also unify that which God promised to Abraham. Then shall the earth yield her increase (Psa. 67:6). The productivity of the earth under God's government will be of such nature that there will be no shortages of food.

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. Ezek. 11:17.

This is just one of many great declarations that God has made concerning what He plans to do for the children of Israel. The time will come when everyone of Abraham's seed living upon the earth will have an experience that will be patterned after that of Paul on the Damascus road (Acts 9). This experience should lead them to cry out, "Who art thou Lord?" and if they do, they will have the answer. If this leads them to say, "Lord, what will you have me to do?" the answer will also be forthcoming, "Go to the land that God promised to Abraham, and it will be told you what you must do." This will result in one of the greatest mass migrations the world has ever seen.

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. Ezek. 11:18.20.

It is evident that this presents a picture of God injecting Himself into the life and affairs of every individual Israelite, into the affairs of nations where they are now scattered, and into the affairs of those who now claim the land that He will give to them. This is all a facet of the great divine intervention that brings upon earth the kingdom of God.

This is but a sampling of some of the prophecies that will be fulfilled when God intervenes to establish His government. We could cite many more. Each one quoted will be fulfilled in the day when God speaks from heaven, when He assumes sovereignty, when He imposes His government upon the earth.

The End

THE INTERPRETATION OF EPHESIANS

CHAPTER TWO – INTRODUCTION

As we approach the second chapter of Ephesians we come face to face with such serious problems that an honest, literary interpretation seems impossible. I refuse to ignore these problems. They can

be solved. Most of them are caused by inadequate translations of the Greek, unwarranted additions to the text, and a mass of traditional ideas that are read into this portion. Many have felt inclined to say with Judah of old: "The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is so much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall" (Neh. 4:10). So they repeat the traditional interpretation, one that is supported by inexact translation, and no attempt is made to uncover the truth.

I do not march to the beat of their drums and will, therefore, proceed with the task of removing the overlay of traditional interpretations, correcting the erroneous translations, then seeking to honestly understand what the Spirit of God meant for us to know when He spoke these words through Paul.

By way of introduction it needs to be said that there is an experience, which almost all believers pass through, that could be quite damaging to their spiritual welfare unless they are prepared in advance to meet it. It is the experience that we sum up in the word *salvation*, which seems so wonderful and glorious in the beginning, but as it advances seems to create innumerable problems that never troubled us before. The complexities of living and walking in this present evil eon are so great that it is necessary to warn all who would start out to live for Him that it is not going to be an easy road. They may even get caught up in the present flood of wickedness and find that they are overwhelmed by some besetting sin. Our gracious God knows this and has made provision for it. This, in part, is dealt with in the opening verses of this chapter.

Let it ever be kept in mind, that **if any epistle gives evidence of having been intended for fledgling believers, it is this one that we call "Ephesians."** These cannot be the people that Paul dealt with in Acts 19 and Acts 20:17-38. He knew those people personally. He knows of these only by hearsay (Eph.1:15). They were believers who had been produced by the apostolic ministry and miracle of the Acts period. These are believers produced by the written salvation - bringing message of God.

EPHESIANS 2:1

And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: KJV.

Even you, being dead to your offenses and sins: TRV.

The first thing to be noted here is that in the *King James Version* the words "hath He quickened" are in italics, which means they have been supplied by the translators. To supply words is justifiable when it helps to give the sense, and when the words supplied are indicated by the context. There is no justification for it here. It is not indicated in any statement that precedes it, and it changes the sense of the passage altogether, bringing in an idea that is not there. Then, to make it congruous with this unwarranted insertion, a phrase that patently means "dead to" is made to read "dead in."

It is admitted that this passage, as it reads in the KJV, declares a beautiful sentiment and expresses a beautiful truth. One immediately falls in love with the idea of God doing such a gracious work as quickening someone who is dead in sins. This is a truth that is abundantly set forth in Scripture, but it is not the truth set forth here. Thus it becomes a truth, which the translators have transported from some other place in Scripture and inserted into this passage. In doing this they excluded the truth God intended to reveal.

All students of the Greek text here know that the necessary verb, needed to form a predicate and make a complete sentence, is missing from this verse. In trying to supply this verb, it appears that the KJV translators went down to the fifth verse, picked up the verb *suzoopoieo* (hath quickened) and

carried this idea back to the first verse. This is not right, and most translators since then have not followed them in it. The interpreters have accepted the correction, but have stuck tenaciously with the error in their theology.

In the New Testament where the verb is missing and it is needed to complete the idea or the sentence, it should be supplied from the immediate context. In the statement that immediately precedes "And you", we are told of the working of the might of God's strength, operating in relationship to Jesus Christ when He was among the dead, raising Him selectively from among the dead, and seating Him in His right among the most exalted.

It should be noted that all this happened to Jesus Christ after God had laid upon Him the iniquity of us all, after He had died for our sins, and when He was, therefore, dead to these trespasses and sins. With these things in mind, we will now consider the text.

EVEN YOU-The words *kai humas* from their position and context mean "even you too." This is what is called the ascending use of the word *kai*, which literally means *and*, but is often used in such manner that it not merely adds an item, but greatly emphasizes it. The Greeks could do things with their word *kai* which we cannot do with our word *and*, and this is why I translate it *even* in this place.

The words "even you" appear within a sentence, they do not begin a new one (let alone a new paragraph), and they must not be separated from the words that precede them. Dr. Robert Young feels that this should read, "Even you He is filling or He made alive" (Concise Critical Comments), either of which could be justified by the immediate context. However, neither of these are quite wide enough to express what the Spirit is here saying to those who are believing with that peculiar faith that is based solely on having heard the word of truth, the good news of their salvation.

These, too, will be taken selectively from among the dead, they will be seated in that which is their own right as believers, they will have a position among the most exalted. They will not be "up over every sovereignty, etc." as this is the position of Christ alone. But they will be the complement of the One who will fill them with Himself and for Himself in every possible way. If I were paraphrasing this passage I would say: "**And as it is with Christ so will it be with you who are dead to your offenses and sins.**" This is the portion of all who are now believing. That which is true of us is further set forth in the words that follow.

BEING DEAD TO YOUR OFFENSES AND SINS-Is there any student of the Bible who does not know the vast difference between being "dead IN sins" and "dead TO sins"? Are these two things so much alike that they can be used interchangeably without hesitation? The spiritual sanity of anyone who says these two are the same would need to be questioned.

In examining the various translations of this passage one finds such renderings as "dead by", dead in", dead through", dead because of", and "dead to." When all the facts are considered "dead to" is the simple honest meaning of the Greek here.

When the idea of being dead IN sins is set forth in the New Testament, the simple preposition *en* is used. This is seen in John 8:21, 24 and in 1 Cor. 15:17. When the idea of being dead TO sins (or anything else) is being set forth, the dative case is used. Note this in Rom. 6:2, 10, 11, Gal. 2:19, 1 Pet. 2:24. These words in Eph. 2:1 describe the present state of the believer in Jesus Christ. They do not describe our past condition as sinners. We are no longer dead in sins, we are dead indeed to sin. This is the fact upon which our hope is based.

EPHESIANS 2:2

Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: KJV.

In which, you, at some time or other walk according to the eon of this world, according to the ruler who is the authority of this atmosphere, the spirit now operating in the sons of the disobedience. TRV.

IN WHICH-the words *en ais* (in which) refer to the condition just described. It is as those who are dead TO trespasses and sins that we live and walk in this world.

YOU, AT SOME TIME OR OTHER-The KJV rendering here "in time past" is not good. The word *pote* is indefinite, not past. It is a dependent particle related to time. It is a difficult word to set forth in English. This is seen in the fact that out of 32 occurrences in the New Testament it is translated 12 different ways, and in three occurrences it is not translated at all.

WALK-This is a figurative use of this word. It literally means to move along on foot. Here it means to behave or to conduct one's self.

ACCORDING TO-the word is *kata*, which means down along or parallel with.

THE EON OF THIS WORLD-At this point it becomes necessary for the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who is dead to trespasses and sins, to force himself to see that the Spirit of God is here making the facts known concerning each one of us. There is no value in denying this divine estimate of our walk. These facts are humiliating, and a false pride may lead us to reject them. But facts are stubborn thing and these facts remain. Now and then, at some time or other, we who are believers are caught in the strong currents of the flow of this eon and we walk according to it. Our position is one thing our walk is another. We swim against the current, but now and then we find we have been carried downstream.

The translators came close to the true meaning of *aion* here, when they rendered *ton aiona* "the course:" The *word course* has in *it* the idea of movement along certain lines-as when Berkeley said, "Westward the course of empire takes its way." This is one passage in which the word *aion* is used in its most basic meaning, that of *flow*. It could be so translated in this occurrence.

In being saved from the guilt of sin there is everything to be gained by admitting that we are sinners.

We take the guilty sinners name,

The guilty sinner's Savior claim.

And in seeking deliverance from the power of sin there is much to be gained by admitting that our lives are not what they should be. If we will rid ourselves of all pietistic and perfectionist vagaries, and accept this divine estimate of our walk, it will result in a degree of self-knowledge and self-judgment that could be the prelude of greater victory in our daily lives.

ACCORDING TO THE RULER WHO IS THE AUTHORITY OF THIS ATMOSPHERE-This phrase is parallel to the one we have just considered, but it reaches still deeper. This goes back of the flow and uncovers its source. There is a ruler (*archon*) who is the authority (*exousia*) of this atmosphere (*air*) or environment in which our lives are lived between birth and death. While *air* literally means "air", it should not be taken here to mean the gases that surround the earth. It is used figuratively here of the influences that surround us, the present Satanic atmosphere.

There are very few who realize how much influence our present environment exerts upon our lives. This vile world is no friend of grace to lead us on to God. There is no believer who can honestly say that he is never influenced by his present environment. As James declares it, "For in many things, we all offend" (3:2).

THE SPIRIT NOW OPERATING-This spirit is Satan. The things that make up an eon must have a source or head. As the god of this present eon (2 Cor. 4:5), Satan is its head or source.

IN THE SONS OF THE DISOBEDIENCE-Adam's sin has resulted in a multitude who "second the motion:" **By one man's disobedience many were made sinners (Rom. 5:19)**. Those who continue in this state are the sons of disobedience. The believer is not a "son of the disobedience." He is a child of God who is destined to become a son of God. The Spirit of God dwells within him. Nevertheless, at one time or another he is found walking in harmony with another spirit-the spirit that is now operating in the sons of disobedience. "My brethren, these things ought not so to be", but they are, nevertheless. "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us" (1 John 1:10).

EPHESIANS 2:3

Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. KJV.

Among whom even we all are turned hither and thither at some time or other, in the desires of our flesh, doing the volitions of the flesh and of the mind, and we are, in that which is produced by these forces, children of indignation even as others, TRV.

AMONG WHOM-Namely, among the sons of disobedience. The believer in Jesus Christ lives and works among these. They may even be members of his own household. Some of them make open attempts to upset his walk and witness. Others bring subtle pressure upon him to bring him into conformity with their worldly lives.

EVEN WE ALL-Paul is now careful to include himself. The person of the verb that follows is changed accordingly. This inclusion of himself brings to mind his words in **Rom. 7:15. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.**

ARE TURNED HITHER AND THITHER-The Greek word here is *anastrepho* which means literally, "turned up and down" (Young). It is translated "overthrew" in John 2:15 where it is evident that it means upset or overturned. My version of this is a rather long translation of a single word, but I believe it expresses the truth here.

AT SOME TIME OR OTHER-This is again the word *pote*, same as in verse 2. Probably the best example of a believer who was turned hither and thither at one time or another is Peter.

IN THE DESIRES OF OUR FLESH-These desires are the seeds that spring forth into plants. Previous to this the Apostle had written: **"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would"** (Gal. 5:17).

DOING THE VOLITIONS OF THE FLESH AND OF THE MIND-Even in matters that are manifestly contrary to the Word of God, the believer at times is found doing the things which are the offspring of his own will and desires, rather than the will and desire of God. Later, in this epistle, Paul will say to these same believers: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice." Would he exhort them to allow all these things to

be removed from them if some were not guilty of these things? These sins are still all too common among believers.

AND WE ARE - The Greek here **iskai emetha** (first person, plural, imperfect of *eimi*) which has been translated "we are" in order to avoid giving the impression that it is a past completed action. The thing stated here is true any time a believer follows the volitions of the flesh.

IN THAT WHICH IS PRODUCED BY THESE FORCES-This is a long rendering of the Greek word *phusis*, and it tends to be a paraphrase rather than a translation. This word is translated "nature" in the KJV. It is found 14 times in the New Testament where it is translated "nature" in ten of these occurrences. There can be no sound objection to rendering it *nature*, except that this is one of the most ambiguous, misused, and misunderstood words in the English language. That part of this verse that contains this word is usually quoted as the supreme proof text to show that we are all sinners at birth and by birth, and that even the tiny babe is a child of wrath. We need to come to grips with this word, both in Greek and English.

The basis of this word is *phuo*, which means to sprout, the first stage of growth in plants. This can be seen in Luke 8:6, 8 where *phuo* is translated "sprung up", but it is evident that it means *sprouted*. The word *phusis* is derived from *phuo*. It is an axiom of grammar that derivatives do not have a different meaning than the parent word. In view of this, if *phuo* means to sprout, then *phusis* means a sprouting, the effect.

When a seed or bulb is placed in the soil, certain effects are produced which are caused by forces without and within the bulb or seed. There is a sprouting, and when we see it we call it nature. All this is especially manifest in the spring of the year when all nature joins together to bring forth a magnificent display. At such a time it is evident that forces without and forces within the plants, bulbs, and seeds are combining in producing these effects. Thus one definition of *nature* which will be found in the dictionary is that which is produced by natural forces."

In the passage we are considering, the word *nature* is commonly taken to mean "birth" and then the verse *is* used to support the crude idea that all men are sinners by birth, and that by birth and from birth they are "the children of wrath:"

The error of this is evident. Paul would not say "you walked according to the eon of this world" and "you did the volitions of the flesh and of the mind" and so you were by birth the children of wrath. This is as if one would say "He loved his country, he kept its laws, he served in the army, and so he was an American." He may have been British.

The declaration of Paul in this portion is, that due to outside influences and the hidden desires within certain results are produced that would indicate we are children who deserve indignation.

An illustration of this is found in Heb. 12:15, where Paul warns other believers to exercise diligent care **lest some "root of bitterness should spring up" (*phuo*)**. The "root" must be there before it can sprout, and if it does sprout, then there will be a sprouting. When this happens in the life of a believer, the manifestation is just the same as with the ungodly. And since Paul urged the recipients of this epistle to "let all bitterness be put away from you" (Eph. 4:13), we should have no trouble understanding what he is talking about in Eph. 2:1-3.

THE CHILDREN OF INDIGNATION-This means those to whom God's attitude should be one of indignation. Indignation is the emotion induced by intense displeasure. We are not, however, children of indignation. We are children of God, and children of light (Eph. 5:8). To say otherwise would be to deny the truth of God.

EVEN AS OTHERS-- The contrast here is between the believer who sometimes lives contrary to the will of God, and the sinner that habitually lives contrary to God.

We will profit greatly if we see that in these three verses Paul sets forth some of the forces that work from without and within to defeat us in our avowed purpose to walk worthy of God and to make manifest our position of children of light. Many will hesitate to accept this description of our life and walk. We prefer to think of ourselves as completely obedient children, wonderful saints of whom God is justly proud.

These words of Paul tell us a different story. And honest self - examination will demonstrate that he told the truth. Is there any believer in the Lord Jesus Christ who can say that he never walks according to the influences that surround him on every hand, that he never yields in the least to the subtle pressures that are always present, that he is never caught up in the powerful flow of this present world?

Let us honestly face the facts. The words of Paul in Ephesians 2:1-3 tell us how the believer, the one who is dead to trespasses and sins, may walk at times. And it should be noted that the failures that are described here are not the vile things that are described in Rom. 1: 26-32. The sins described there are the acts of those who have given up God and who in turn have been given up by Him. The sins of Romans 1 are the sins of godless sinners. The sins described in Eph. 2:1-3 are the sins of the saints.

This brings before us the question, "What about the sins of the saints?" Has God made provision for the salvation of sinners, but no provision at all for the salvation of His saints?

The great truth of God's salvation can be summed up *in* three statements. We have been saved! We are being saved! We will yet be saved! This is past, present, and future salvation. It is from the guilt, the power, and the dominion of sin. The portion we will next consider deals with our present salvation.

To Be Continued

WHAT IS AN EON

(Continued from Vol. XVII, No.1)

A noun is the name of a person, place, or thing - we learned in school long ago. The word *eon* is a noun. Therefore, the question, "What is an eon?" is a legitimate one. The idea that it means a period of time, or the longest segment of time known in the Scriptures, are definitions that will not stand the test of usage in the New Testament.

The meaning of this word must come from the Bible. When we go to the Word we find that there is an idea that permeates it from the first to the last. This is the concept of God flowing out and flowing down in order to accomplish His purposes upon the earth. This is first seen in Genesis 1: 3 when the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. If one does not see here the picture of God's Spirit flowing forth from Him and that Spirit moving upon the waters, he is missing the truth that God wishes to reveal. From here on the revelation is such that we are forced to exclaim, "Indeed He is the flowing One." He has flowed, He is now flowing forth in grace, He will yet flow forth in many ways to accomplish all that He has declared concerning the earth in the day that He governs. Consider once again the following declarations:

How excellent is Thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with Thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light. Psa. 36:7-9.

There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. Psa. 46:4.

Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when Thou hast so provided for it. Psa. 65:9.

But there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. Isa 33:21.

For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring. Isa. 44:3.

Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it. Isa. 45:8.

For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like a flowing stream. Isa. 66:12.

The picture presented in these passages is of God as the flowing One. And when all passages are considered it becomes a most apparent fact that the condition of things upon the earth, which is summed up in the phrase "the kingdom of God" is produced upon this earth by God flowing out and flowing down to accomplish His avowed purposes. Notice this in connection with the future blessing of Israel. In regard to their punishment God had said:

Upon the land of My people shall come up thorns and briers; yea, upon all houses of joy in the joyous city: Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks.

Then if we ask how long will this be and what will make the change, we have the answer:

Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. Isa. 32:16.

In view of this it is not strange at all that the result of God's great outflowing should be given the name of that which characterizes it - the eon. It is not called "the eon" because it is a long period of time, it is called that because it comes from God pouring out of Himself. Thus the most prominent use of *eon* in the New Testament is to designate those flowing forces that produce the kingdom of God (the eons of the eons) or to designate the result of all this, "the eon."

With these preliminary remarks out of the way, which answer some of the questions that come to us, we are ready to resume our passage by passage examination of the occurrences of *aion*.

Eph.3:9. Here *apo ton aionon* is translated "from the beginning of the world", another rendering for which no basis can be found in the Greek. It should read "from the eons." This passage has to do with God's secret administration. The truth of this had been concealed in God from the eons. In all previous outflowings of truth there had been no word in regard to this unique administration.

Eph. 3:11. The Greek here is *ton aionon*. It is erroneously translated "eternal". It should read "of the eons." In this passage we are told that the truth declared in the previous statements (Eph. 3:8-10) is "in accord with the purpose of the eons which He makes in Christ Jesus our Lord." From this we learn that the eons are made in Christ, and in Heb. 1:2 we learn that the *eons* are made through Christ. This of course refers to the eons to come.

Eph. 3:21. The Greek here reads *eis pasas tas geneas tou aionos ton aionon*. It is translated "throughout all ages, world without end", which would be amusing if the matter were not so serious. It should read "in respect to all the generations of the eon of the eons." The combination of the singular and plural (eon-eons) should be noted here. In this passage glory is ascribed to God because of what the eon of the eons will generate or produce.

Eph. 6:12. The words *tou aionos* in this passage are deleted by most editors. As they stand here they are translated "of this world." If they are given a place they should read "of this eon", with the larger portion reading "the world-rulers of the darkness of this eon." There is a controlled darkness in this present evil eon. If it should become too dark, men might in despair turn to the One who is the true Light. This, Satan does not want.

Phil. 4:20. This is the double plural, *eis tous aionas ton aionon*. It is translated "for ever and ever", but should read "in respect to the eons of the eons". In it we have an ascription of glory unto God, even our Father, for all that flows forth from Him.

Col. 1:26. Here *ton aionon* is translated "the ages." It should read "the eons." In all previous outflowings of truth, in all the generating work of God that made it possible for men to speak His word, there were no hints of the secret that Paul reveals in his final epistles. Truly the secret had been concealed from the eons and from the generations, yet now through Paul is made manifest to God's saints.

1 Tim. 1:17. There are three occurrences of the word *aion* in this passage. *Ton aionon* is translated "eternal" and *eis tous aionas ton aionon* is translated "for ever and ever." The entire passage should read: "Now to the Sovereign (or, King) of the eons, the incorruptible, invisible, only, and wise God, be honor and glory in respect to the eons of the eons! Amen!" All that ever flows out of God, every channel, every blessing, is governed and controlled by Jesus Christ. "The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King in respect to the eons." Psalm 29:10.

1 Tim. 6:17. Here *en to nun aioni* is translated "in this world." It should read "in the present eon." Wealth in this present eon is no guarantee of wealth in the coming eon.

2 Tim. 4:10. In this passage *ton nun aiona* is translated "this present world." It should read "this present eon."

2 Tim. 4:18. Again we find *eis tous aionas ton aionon* translated "for ever and ever." It should read "in respect to the eons of the eons."

Titus 2:12. The Greek here is *en to nun aioni*. It is translated "in this present world", but should read "in this present eon." The ever-flowing grace of God makes it possible for us to live sensibly, righteously, and devoutly in the current wicked eon.

Heb. 1:2. This is an important passage. In it *tous aionas* is translated "the worlds", but should read "the eons." It is through the Son that He "makes the eons." In Gen. 2:10-14 we see how that the one river that flowed out of Eden became four rivers. And since these four are called "heads" they must have in turn been parted to create other streams. This illustrates the meaning of Heb. 1:2. In that great outflowing which produces and maintains God's government upon the earth, every stream is out of the Father and through the Son. The fullness of God flows into Him, He flows into others, and all blessing will be through Him.

Heb. 1:8. Here *eis ton aionas* is translated "for ever and ever", but should read "in respect to the eon of the eon." This is the only occurrence in the New Testament of the double singular. It is a statement of the relationship of God's throne, not its duration. Remember, "He has prepared (established) His throne in the heavens" (Psa. 103:19) and that His throne is in respect to the eon of the eon.

Heb. 5:6. In this passage *eis ton aiona* is translated "for ever", but should be rendered "in respect to the eon:" The Son of God is a priest, in respect to the eon, after the order of Melchisedec..

Heb. 6:5. In this illuminating passage *aionos* is translated "world". It should read *eon*. The larger portion should read "the powers of the future eon:' This portion is a record of something that took place in the Acts period. They were experiencing a foretaste of the powers that would flow out without limit when the coming eon is a reality.

Heb. 6:20. Here *eis ton aiona* is translated "for ever", but should read "in respect to the eon:' This passage declares that Jesus Christ has been "made an high priest in respect to the eon after the order of Melchisedec.

Heb. 7:17, 21. These two references are the same as Heb. 6:20. It will be well to remember here that Jesus Christ has not been established as a high priest in respect to this administration of God's grace. It is not the function of a priest, as such, to show grace. He will be a high priest in respect to the coming eon.

Heb. 7:24. This is *eis ton aiona*. It is translated "for ever." It should read "in respect to the eon." Priesthood always denotes a degree of estrangement upon the part of those who benefit from its functions. Estrangement will not continue forever, and neither will priesthood. Both of these will come to an end.

Heb. 7:28. This is also *eis ton aiona*. The larger portion should read "perfected in respect to the eon", instead of "consecrated for evermore."

The End (see comments, which follow)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

CONCERNING PSALM 1:5

In this passage we are told that "the ungodly will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." It is said that the word translated "stand" here means "to arise", and that this, therefore, tells us that the ungodly will not be raised-that when they die it will be their end. A number of questions have been received as to the correctness of this interpretation.

In answer I will say that the Hebrew word *qum* is translated *arise* over 200 times. However, I know of no passage where it is so translated that it means resurrection. Consider these occurrences:

Gen. 4:8 - Cain *rose* up against Abel

Gen. 21:32 - then Abimelech *rose* up

Exo. 1:8 - Now there *arose* up a new king

Num. 16:2 - And they *rose* up before Moses

If the student will follow out all the occurrences he will find them to be harmonious with the instances shown above. Furthermore, if he makes such a search, he will finish up with the feeling that in all these *arisings* there is the idea of taking a stand, standing up, or standing firm. In fact, there are occurrences where in order to make sense it is necessary to translate it by some form of the word *stand*. Consider these as examples:

Therefore the children of Israel could not stand (*qum*) before their enemies. Josh. 7:12.

He shall stand (*qum*) at the latter day upon the earth. Job 19:25.

But the word of our God shall stand (*qum*) for ever. Isa. 40:8

Thus *the* true interpretation of Psa. 1:5 is that when *the* ungodly come into judgment *they* will not be able to stand. We have *the* words of our Lord Jesus Christ that "they that have done evil" will come forth from their graves unto a resurrection of judgment (John 5:28, 29). We must not *use the* words of Psa. 1:5 to contradict *the* word of our Lord.

CONCERNING THE JUST AND THE UNJUST

Questions have been received as to *the* meaning of *these* terms. They are so simple that one wonders why such questions would arise. But it *seems* that there is a teaching that *these* two terms in Acts 24:15 are used in reference to believers-that is, that Paul said he believed in a resurrection both of *the* just and unjust believers. It can readily be *seen* that an interpretation such as this would never be attempted if it were not for *the* effort of some to limit *the* resurrection of *the* dead to *one* class, believers. I have *been* asked to comment on this. In answer I will say that the words translated *just* and *unjust* here are part of a large family of Greek words (the *dik* family) for which we need many forms of *the* words *just* and *right* to translate *them*.

The words in Acts 24:15 are *dikaio*s and *adiko*s. *The* second word is *the* same as *the* first except that it has *the* alpha (a) prefix. This prefix, commonly called *the* alpha privative, corresponds exactly to our prefix *un-*. When *un-* is added to verbs it expresses *the* contrary, (unbend, uncoil). It is added to nouns in order to form verbs, which express privation or deprivation of *the* thing (unfrock, unchain). It is also an inseparable prefix, which signifies *not*. Thus the unjust are *those* who are not just.

We must remember here that righteousness, of which man is destitute, is *the* great essential of salvation. *One* thing that believing brings to us is righteousness or justification. To describe a believer as being unjust would be to say that he is a believer without righteousness. It is *the* imputation of righteousness by God that classes us among *the* just. It is *the* lack of this imputed righteousness that classes a man among *the* unjust. **There can be no such thing as an unjust believer.**

When Paul rebuked *the* Corinthian believers for going "to law before *the* unjust" (1 Cor. 6:1) could he have *been* speaking of believers? When Christ died for our *sins*, *the* just for the unjust, was he dying for unjust believers (1 Peter 3: 18). *The* argument that since there was an "*unjust* steward" there can also be an unjust believer is so childish that I will not demean myself to consider it.

THE VERBALLY INSPIRED WORD

In the year 1920 I read a pamphlet entitled "THE BIBLE - THE WORD OF GOD", written by Dr. I. M. Haldeman. Today, I am sure that the Holy Spirit used this message to generate within me a deep and abiding conviction that the Bible is God's inspired word. A few months before this something else had happened which the Spirit of God had used to generate simple faith within me in regard to the person and work of Jesus Christ. This was the simple witness of my father, and the

forceful presentation of Christ by a pastor who made much of Him and the importance of believing in Him. From these two acts of divine generation I became a believer in the personal word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and a believer in the written word of God, the Bible.

In the forty-seven years that have elapsed since then, I have been an assiduous reader, student, translator, interpreter, and teacher of the sacred Scriptures, and now more than ever before I agree with Dr. Haldeman in his great proposition that **the Bible is "not such a book as a man WOULD write if he COULD; nor such a book as a man COULD write if he WOULD."**

Furthermore, today I am convinced that belief in the Bible as being the verbally inspired Word of God is a faith that is generated by the Holy Spirit. Here I would paraphrase the words of Jesus Christ and say, "Except a man be generated from above he cannot believe that the Bible is God's inspired Word." No amount of arguing or debating will ever produce this faith. In fact, these arguments and debates only set men more deeply in their unbelief. I want no part of them. However, if one has even meager faith that the Bible is God's Word, I will do all I can to build this up and establish it more securely. But I cannot build until the foundation has been laid by the Spirit of God.

Divine generation is a truth that is unknown to many professing Christians. This is the outcome of men insisting that *gennao anathen* in John 3: 3 means "born again", when these words literally mean "generated from above."

In order to appreciate the meaning of "divine generation" we must never think of it as being an end in itself. It is never this. It is always with something else in view. If anyone says, "I have been generated from above"; the proper question to ask would be, "In respect to what? What for? What to?" Divine generation in itself is of no avail unless it results in something else. The generation of electricity opens up great possibilities for the use of this power. But if it is not used, the generation becomes a useless thing, a wasted effort.

Apart from divine generation there would be no faith in *Jesus* Christ. It is God who is keeping alive the faith in His Son, in spite of vast efforts to wipe it out. Apart from divine generation there would be no faith in the Bible, but there is much faith today, all of man's efforts to the contrary. Apart from divine generation, no man would be able to comprehend the kingdom of God.

If men *refuse* to believe, if they *reject* faith in the Bible, if they refuse to "see the kingdom of God", the generating work that made all these possible becomes of no avail. However, it is not a wasted effort. It becomes a part of the record of God's gracious acts. Let us continue in the things that God has done for us. Let us not give them up at the request of those who do not know Him.

The End.

THE EDITOR TO HIS FRIENDS

****You will note, I trust, that this issue of THE WORD OF TRUTH is forty-eight pages, twice the number of our usual issue. As you read it, notice all the Scripture passages that are quoted in the first two articles. They are passages such as are seldom, if ever, emphasized in other Bible study magazines, heard used in radio messages, or spoken upon in the churches. These are unfamiliar, unused passages. In the magazines that come to my desk, I look in vain for some recognition that these

passages are known to exist. One wonders how different a man's thinking would be if he were familiar with them, if they were incorporated into his thinking, and were considered to be vital to the whole counsel of God.

****The sixth study of "What Is An Eon" appears in this issue. There will probably be about five more studies before it is finished. There is no simple answer to this question. Studies such as these are intended for the diligent student. They will not appeal to the casual reader.

****Interest in the exact translation of the Bible and its true interpretation is slowly but surely dying out. This statement is made in spite of all the versions and commentaries that are being published. The new versions are afraid to translate if the rendering contradicts established traditions. Yet the only way we can ever come to exact truth is to first make sure we have an accurate translation of the passage being studied, then go from this to an honest interpretation of that which it declares. As long as men insist that *ekklesia* means "church", that *musterion* means "mystery", that *metanoia* means "repentance", and that *aion* means "ever", the truth will always be in a mess. And when they compound the error and build some big idea on such unscriptural phrases as "the church of the mystery" it becomes far worse. This exalts sectarian phrases above the exact truth revealed in the Word. The battle for truth is a long and hard one. There will be many deserters.

****We receive reports of some who are complaining to others (not to us) that we have removed their names from our mailing list. They hear of literature, which we have sent out which they did not receive. In August of 1966 we sent a letter to every name on our United States mailing list asking the recipient to indicate that they desired, at no cost to them, to receive all literature, which we send out. They were also asked to supply us with their Zip code number. The Post Office department insists that every piece mailed under our special mailing permit must have the Zip code as a part of the address. There were many who did not reply, so their names did not go on the new mailing list. As soon as we can find time, we will contact them again and then if there is no response, we will assume that they are no longer interested.

****The new pamphlet *Absent From the Body* was sent to all readers in the U.S.A. This interpretation of 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 flies in the face of all traditional interpretations, cuts through the overlay of error, and makes a serious attempt to get down to the facts of God's Word. It is the fruit of twenty years of study and development. Yet, there are *some* who wonder why they cannot comprehend its message in twenty minutes. Thus, their consideration begins by rejecting it.

****The Editor's ministry in Southern California consists of a Bible study on Sunday morning at 10:45, held in the auditorium of the Women's University Club at 540 So. Catalina in Los Angeles; and a Bible study on Thursday at 7:45 P.M. in the YM.CA., corner Holly and Marengo in Pasadena. These classes are taught by Mr. Sellers when he is in the city and by Herbert Baudistel, John Ribbens, David Hetteema and others when he *is* absent.

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