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The Bible Teaching on Pentecost and the Trinity.

(This article is published by request).

THIS subject is closely connected with the Easter season, and has been selected for examination because of some strange statements having been made in connection with the season of Pentecost

Most of our readers will know that the term Pentecost signifies “fiftieth,” and was used amongst the Jews as the name of one of their most important feasts, or religious celebrations. As their fiftieth Jubilee year followed a cycle of seven times seven years, so Pentecost, as a jubilee day, followed a cycle of seven times seven days, from the time of the gathering of the sheaf of firstfruits, which was presented before the Lord as a “wave offering.”

This sheaf of the firstfruits evidently typified our Lord in His resurrection on the 16th day of Nisan, He having been slain as the Passover Lamb on the 14th day of Nisan. The account given in Leviticus 23, is most enlightening, as follows—“In the fourteenth day of the first month (Nisan) at even is the Lord’s passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord; seven days ye must eat unleavened bread And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest. And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you; on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the Lord.” (Verses 5,6, 9-12.)

As our Lord was crucified on the evening prior to the sabbath, “the morrow after the sabbath” would refer to the first day of the week on which Christ was resurrected; hence, the sheaf of firstfruits was a fitting symbol of our Lord’s resurrection, as stated by the Apostle Paul—“Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.” (1 Cor. 15:20.)

Further verses in Lev. 23 help to explain our subject, as follows — “And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete; even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals; they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto the Lord.” (Verses 15-17.) There can be no doubt that this counting forward of fifty days “from the morrow after the sabbath” even “unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath” was to typify the important Day of Pentecost, fifty days after our Lord’s resurrection.

There is also an important comparison seen in those verses in Lev. 23. In verse 6, in connection with the Passover, the feast is of unleavened bread which pictured Christ’s perfection as the antitypical Passover Lamb, and His resurrection is shown by the “sheaf of firstfruits” being offered on “the morrow after the sabbath,” as we have seen. Then, in verses 15-17, when explaining the procedure to determine the 50th day after the “morrow after the sabbath” — in other words the typical Pentecost — we find that two wave loaves, of fine flour, were to be baked “with leaven.” They were “the firstfruits unto the Lord.” This seems clearly to picture the acceptance of the Church, in the persons of the Apostles, on the Day of Pentecost, fifty days after our Lord’s resurrection, the loaves being baked “with leaven” showing the imperfection of the church in contrast with the perfection of Christ. So, the Apostle Paul refers to the Church as “Christ the firstfruits” in 1 Cor. 15:23, our Lord Himself being the first of the firstfruits unto God. (See also James 1:18.)

How wonderfully, then, did those ceremonies with Israel picture the presentation of the first of the firstfruits to God, in the resurrection of Christ; and the presentation of the Church of the firstfruits to God, fifty days after our Lord’s

resurrection, and ten days after His ascension.

The first occasion that we find the word “spirit” in the New Testament is in Matt. 3:16, at the time of Jesus’ baptism in the River Jordan, where we read—“the spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him.” It would have been much more helpful had this expression “spirit of God” been preserved throughout the Bible when the holy spirit

was mentioned, but in numerous places the expression “holy ghost” is used, and to many people this gives a very wrong impression. When our Authorized Version of the Bible was produced, the translators, believing in a personal holy spirit, conceived the idea of calling it a holy “ghost,” and this term has hindered many from thinking it could be anything else than personal. However, later translations use the word “spirit” wherever the word “ghost” is used in the Authorized Version, and this gives the correct thought to the Greek and Hebrew words which mean power or influence.

We wish to give the translators credit for correct renderings, and one of these is in Luke 11:13—“How much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy spirit to them that ask him.”

As the time drew near to the close of our Lord’s life on earth, and knowing that the blessing of the holy spirit would come upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost, He explained this matter to them rather fully, especially on the evening when He observed the Jewish Passover and afterwards instituted with His Apostles the Memorial of His death. These explanations from our Lord are found in John’s Gospel, chapters 14, 15 and 16.

From John 14:16 we read—“I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.” Verse 17 from the Diaglott translation reads —“The spirit of truth, which the world cannot receive, because it beholds it not, nor knows it; but you know it, because it abides with you, and will be in you.” Also verse 26 from the Diaglott states —“But the helper, the holy spirit, which the Father will send in my name shall teach you all things, and remind you of all things which I said to you.” Here we see that the personal pronoun is not used, and which gives us the correct thought. But even when the pronoun “he” is used in speaking of the holy spirit, it is quite in order when we understand that it is God’s spirit—the masculine pronoun represents God. However, the word “it” is just as correctly used for God’s holy spirit or power.

Knowing how disappointed the disciples would be to hear that their Lord must leave them after only 3½ years of ministry, Jesus tried to break the news gently, and as helpfully as possible. So we read—“I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him (it) unto you.” (John 16:7.) “It is expedient”—it is essential—“that I go away.” Our Lord was impressing the necessity for Him to pay the death penalty that stood against all the disciples, as well as all others of mankind.

How expedient, then, it really was; how essential that Jesus die as the ransom sacrifice, and then be raised for our justification, as Paul states in Rom. 4:20-25.

After our Lord’s death and resurrection, we are informed of this by the Apostle in Heb. 9:24—“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” Why was this necessary? It was necessary, that Christ may present, antitypically, His sacrifice in the Most Holy—heaven itself—on behalf of His Church, to open up the heavenly calling. (See Heb. 10:19, 20.)

If Christ had not died in sacrifice, and appeared on behalf of His Church in heaven, there could have been no pouring out of the holy spirit, and no invitation to any of the human family to participate in the heavenly Kingdom. This helps us to see, also, that previous to our Lord’s ascension, no one could be invited to be the Bride of Christ.

Even such a devoted servant as John the Baptist could not be of the heavenly calling, as shown in Matt. 11:11. But when our Lord was raised from the dead, and appeared to His disciples from time to time during those forty days, He gave them definite instructions, as recorded in Luke 24:44-53.

Again in Acts 1:3-5, 8, 9, these instructions are recorded for our benefit — “Being seen of them forty days.....

He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father Ye shall receive power, after that the holy spirit is come upon you.” We know that the power of the holy spirit was manifest upon the waiting disciples after ten days from our Lord’s ascension to heaven, and that waiting time of ten days is interpreted by Bible students as fulfilling the words of Rev. 8:1—“There was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.”

When those ten days of waiting had passed, the Day of Pentecost came, as we read in Acts 2:1-2 — “And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.” How

appropriate that this mighty wind was associated with the bestowing of the power of God upon the disciples on that wonderful occasion for wind, being invisible, is a fitting symbol for God's holy power. Indeed, both the Hebrew and Greek words from which our word "spirit" is derived, also mean wind, or unseen power.

Strange as it may seem, however, there are a great number of people, some of them holding degrees in theology, who claim that the power which came upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost was a third person in the Godhead, and they go to some lengths to try and defend their teaching of the Trinity, or the Triune God, as they express it. We remember that the Apostles were accused of being drunk with wine, as a result of the "gifts of the spirit" which came upon them on the Day of Pentecost, but Peter explained the matter clearly in Acts 2:14-18. Also in verses 32, 33 he showed how this outpouring of God's spirit came about — "God hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." Did the Father shed forth another God—the third person in a trinity? How strange that would be, if true! Let us note verse 18 of this 2nd chapter of Acts — "I will pour out in those days of MY SPIRIT." Yes, God poured out His own spirit, His own power, His own influence.

Further Scriptures are helpful along the same line—"But if the spirit of him (God) that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. 8:11. See also Rom. 8:14-16; Eph. 1:13, 14; 4:30.)

It may be asked, How are *we* to understand John 10:30,—"I and my Father are one." Comparing John 14:28 we read—"My Father is greater than I." Is this a contradiction? Turning to John 17:20, 21, where Jesus prayed for His Church, we read—"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." Are we to take from this prayer that Christ's Church of thousands of members is to be taken into the heavenly Godhead also, because they are to be one with Christ and the Father? No, indeed! Rather, this oneness is a oneness of mind, of heart, of purpose. So is also the oneness between Jesus and the Father, when He said—"I and my Father are one."

We have a helpful explanation regarding our Lord Jesus in 1 John 4:1-3. Verses 2 and 3 read—"Every spirit (doctrine or teaching) that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God." Our Lord could not have come "in the flesh" if He were one in the trinity; but how important it was that He did come in the flesh, to redeem mankind, otherwise we are not yet redeemed. (See Heb. 2:9.)

The Apostle Paul presents this matter to us very clearly and helpfully also, when, after referring to the many gods worshipped in the heathen world, he declared — "But to us (Christians) there is but one God, the Father, a whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." (1 Cor. 8:6.) If the doctrine of the trinity were correct, how easy it would have been for the Apostle to have stated the matter there and then, when the Father and the Son were contrasted with the many "that are called gods" outside the Christian religion. (See also Diaglott translation of Phil. 2:5, 6, and word for word English and Greek of John 1:1, 2.)

As we meditate upon the blessings and favors of the truth received from on high on that Day of Pentecost, fifty days after our Lord's resurrection, how thankful we are that "the faith once delivered to the saints" has continued all down the Gospel Age to our own day, as God's spirit is received into the hearts and minds of all the true disciples of Christ, and they come under the anointing of the spirit following their full consecration to walk in the steps of the Master. From 2 Cor. 1:21, 22 we read "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the spirit in our hearts." The same Apostle also declares — "God hath shined in our hearts, to give the light 'of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'" (2 Cor. 4:6.) We may be sure that God will continue to shine into the hearts of all devoted disciples, enabling them to finish their course successfully, in His own good time and way, to His praise.

Dead and Buried.

In the fourth century a young earnest disciple sought an interview with the great and good Macarius, and asked him what was meant by being dead to sin. He said, "You remember our brother who died and was buried a short time since. Go to his grave and tell him all the unkind things you ever heard of him. Go, my son, and hear what he will answer." The young man doubted whether he understood; but Macarius only said, "Do as I tell you, my son; and come and tell me what he says." He went, and came back, saying, "I can get no reply; he is dead." "Go again and try him with flattering words—tell him what a great saint he was, what noble work he did, and how *we* miss him; and come again and tell me what he says." He did so, but on his return said, "He answers nothing, father; he is dead and buried." "You know now, my son," said the old father. "what it is to be dead to sin, dead and buried with Christ. Praise and blame are nothing to him who is really dead and buried with Christ." (Rom. 6:3.)—Selected.

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Where the Bible and Jesus are Silent.

PERHAPS most people wonder sometimes why the Bible and the sayings of Jesus are so often silent on so many questions which are perplexing. Why is it, they wonder, that so many things they would have liked to see stated in black and white are simply not mentioned at all? Perhaps you discover that for the special doubt of your soul there is no direct word, and you can find no completely satisfying answer to the special needs of your life.

However, would it have been possible to have given detailed and minute instructions and advice so far ahead that it would have covered all the variety of individual need, and all stages of human development? And even if this had been

possible, would it have been beneficial. Would it have been good for us to live by a huge book of spiritual recipes, or by a great code of ethics, which would supply chapter and verse for every emergency? How many of us could stand that, and where would be our spiritual freedom?

Think of what you possess as a child of God; think of what you see in your hours of vision, even if you cannot always express it articulately; think of that which gives you shelter in the assaults and storms of life, and light in the doubts of your soul! It is not this or that particular word or saying, it is not any special command, but it is the deliberate turning of your spirit towards God: the sense of truth, the spirit of reverence for all that is holy, and an ever renewed aspiration—even though it may often be hindered — of desire after a life whose power is not of this world. This is the spirit of God, which you have received, and it will lead you far more clearly into the truth, that is, into the reality of a higher life, than a single word or command could ever do, because as the brook issues from the mountain spring, so the spirit issues from God.

From this spirit, in increasing measure, you yourself will be able to decide what is true for you, and what you ought to do in your necessities and difficulties and doubts. And it is precisely this feeling of freedom which will give you strength.—Selected.

In the Night Watches.

“My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips; when I remember Thee upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches.”—Psa. 63:5,6.

PSALM 92:1 declares that it is “a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord,” also to “sing praises” unto the Most High. The more we learn about our God through an increasing understanding of His Word, the greater will be our desire to sing His praises. As our knowledge of Him deepens into a personal acquaintance with Him, through the outworking of His providences in our lives and the fulfilment of His promises of grace to help in every time of need, our lives should flow on in endless songs of praise to the God of our salvation.

The Lord referred to David as a man after His own heart, and in many of his psalms the sweet singer of Israel declares his love for the Lord and his delight in the law of his God. In one of them he writes — “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.” — Psa. 19:7-10.

David speaks of meditating upon the Lord in the “night watches.” It was these meditations that enabled him to write “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” (Psa. 8:3,4.) And again, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.”—Psa. 19:1,2.

The hours from sundown to sunrise in David’s time presented a somewhat different situation than they do today. Now the electric light and other means of artificial illumination very nearly turn night into day, with the result that the vast majority of the people keep active, either in work or in pleasure for such long hours that there is scarcely time left for the proper amount of sleep, and seldom is there any opportunity for quiet meditation.

‘But this was not the case in David’s time. With the flicker of a dim flame from the burning of olive oil almost the only means of securing light after the sun went down, probably most people spent much more time in bed than is the custom now. And since the body requires only a certain amount of sleep, there were doubtless many sleepless hours during the night.

In the case of David, while he was a shepherd boy, and later as leader of Israel’s army, he no doubt spent many of his nights under the canopy of heaven. It was under these conditions that he rejoiced as he meditated upon the goodness of the Lord, and marvelled at the wonders of creation. It would not be unreasonable to suppose that the subject matter of many of David’s beautiful psalms took shape in his mind as he thus meditated during the night watches. How wonderfully such surroundings would prepare him for the influence of the holy spirit which guided him in his inspired writings.

Truly David was a man of God, and the spirit of devotion and praise found in his writings is a sincere expression of his own heart, a heart that had been given to the Lord. When he wrote, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want,” he was expressing his own feelings in the matter, giving utterance to his own confidence in the keeping power of his God.

But beyond the expression of his own delight in the Lord, David was inspired by the holy spirit to pen messages peculiarly fitting to the needs of the people of God during the present age. Indeed, in the divine providence, this is the chief purpose of his writings, even as it is of the writings of all the Old Testament prophets; for, as the apostle declares, not unto themselves, but unto us did they minister. They wrote for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages have come.—Rom. 15:4, 1 Cor. 10; 6, 11; 1 Pet. 1:12.

This being true, we might think of David’s experience of meditation upon the goodness of the Lord upon his bed during the night watches as having a counterpart even more blessed in our own experiences. We are not suggesting the making of a type of his experiences, but merely that they remind us of something greater in the divine arrangement than literally lying upon a bed meditating upon the goodness of the Lord during the dark hours of a night.

In God’s creative design there are seven “days,” six of them having been completed about the time our first parents were created. Each of these days began with an “evening” and closed with a “morning.” There is reason to believe that each of these creative days was a period of seven thousand years in length, with the seventh, or last “day,” beginning with the creation and fall of man, and ending in the “morning,” a morning which will become fully bright at the close of

the thousand-year reign of Christ.

In each case the “evening” of the creative days marked an obscure beginning, with darkness settling down into a night, until the “morning” marked the close of each period. And so it was when sin and death came upon the scene at the beginning of the seventh creative “day.” From then until now, the world has been passing through the long hours of a night of darkness. “Weeping” has continued throughout this night, David tells us, “but joy cometh in the morning.”—Psa. 30:5.

During this long night of weeping the world has been greatly distraught and unsettled. But those who have had faith in the promises of God have enjoyed rest of mind and heart. This has been particularly true of Jesus’ followers during the Gospel Age. Paul wrote concerning these, saying, “For we which have believed do enter into rest.” (Heb. 4:3.) We are keenly aware of the evil with which we are surrounded, and of the motions of sin in our flesh, but *we* place our faith in the finished work of Christ on our behalf and know that through Him and His kingdom all evil will eventually come to an end, and that even death itself will be destroyed.

Thus *we* are at rest. It is a rest “by” faith, and a rest “in” faith; that is, in the “most holy faith,” the foundation of which is the meritorious sacrifice of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Based upon the merit of the shed blood are all the various features of the divine plan of salvation — its times and seasons; its heavenly calling for the church, and the hope of restitution for the world; its prophecies pertaining to the end of the age, and its promises concerning the new age at hand; its explanation of the divine permission of evil, and its assurance that evil will not rise up the second time.

Yes, all this, and more, is contained in our “most holy faith,” that wonderful outline of the divine plan in which we find peace of mind and rest of heart. No matter how dark the night, or how far distant the morning hours at times may seem, we can continue to rest in this “bed” of divine promises, and while we rest, continue to sing the praises of our Lord.

In Isaiah 28:20 we read about a bed which “is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it; and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.” Two verses previous to this we are told of some who make a “covenant with death,” and an “agreement with hell.” The Hebrew word here translated “hell” is *Sheol*, meaning simply the death condition. Contrary to this plain Scriptural statement, it has been agreed by the molders of religious thought throughout Christendom that there is no death.

Upon this false premise the creeds of the nominal church have been built—creeds, or confessions of faith, which have been designed to give “rest” to believers, but which, when they are put to the test, fail to do so. These creed “beds” are too short. One who endeavours to find satisfaction in them upon the basis of reason discovers that they are too short. Nor do they provide adequate covering to protect one from the chilling drafts of doubt and fear which plague the soul.

These, apparently, are the beds referred to by Jesus in His great prophecy pertaining to the end of the age when He said that two would be lying in a “bed,” that one would be taken, and the other left (Luke 17:34-37.) And such was the position of some of us. We have experienced the shortness of these creed beds of Christendom, and have been most uncomfortable under their limited conceptions of the love and grace of God. But the Lord has favored us in that we have been lifted out of these beds and given rest upon the bed of present truth.

This is not because we are wiser than others, nor more worthy, but simply because of God’s grace in permitting us to know “the mystery of the kingdom of God.” (Mark 4:11.) Surely this is great cause for rejoicing, and for praising our God, as now, while it is still dark, we are privileged to rest upon this soul-satisfying “bed” which the Lord has provided for us.

Our rest of faith in Christ, and in the great plan of God of which He is the centre, is not designed to induce sleep. While we are resting upon this bed of present truth during the world’s dark night of sin, sorrow, and death, we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Concerning this Paul wrote, “Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness.. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.”-1 Thes. 5:5,6.

“Let us watch and be sober.” In our text David speaks of the “night watches.” In order to participate in a “night watch” one has to be awake and alert. Night watching is a very old institution, made necessary because of the sin and selfishness of fallen man. Darkness serves as a sort of natural protection for prowlers, thieves, opposing armies, or whoever would rob another or inflict damage upon him or his property. As an offset to this, watchmen are stationed to detect the approach or presence of enemies, and to sound an alarm.

Obviously, a watchman would fail of his •duty if he fell asleep. It is not his privilege, during the night, to “sleep as do others.” Rather, he is to “watch and be sober.” And, as Christians, this is our position during the night time of sin and death. We are “watchmen” in Zion, as it were, and we should keep alert and be on guard against the approach of

“enemies” of whatever nature they might be which would rob us, or others of the Lord’s people, of their heritage in Christ Jesus.

Paul continues: “They that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.” (1 Thes. 5:7,8.) This, of course, *is* all symbolic language. To “sleep” suggests spiritual lethargy, and to be “drunken” indicates an intoxication by false theories, doctrines, and hobbies.

We can avoid these conditions, Paul reveals, by “putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.” In his letter to the Church at Ephesus, he admonishes us to “put on the whole armor of God,” that we may be able to stand against the “wiles of the devil.”—Eph. 6:11.

The truth, in its many aspects, and in its various applications in our lives, is the Christian’s armor. The very truths in which we find peace and joy and rest are also our protection against the insidious attacks of the Adversary during these dark hours of the night. It is for this purpose that the Lord gave us the truth.

Among the very important truths which guard the Christian’s heart and life today is a proper knowledge of the times in which we are living. It is this that Paul speaks of particularly when reminding us of our privileges as watchmen.

We quote — “Of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you; for yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.” — 1 Thes. 5:1-4.

The reason the “day of the Lord” does not overtake the “brethren” as a “thief in the night” is because they are “awake” and faithfully watching. In this lesson Paul is closely following the thoughts presented by Jesus concerning the time of His second presence and the end of the age. Jesus said, referring to a possible advanced knowledge of His coming, “Of that day and hour knoweth no man.” (Mark 13:32.) For this reason he admonished His disciples to “watch.”

Paul says, “Of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.” Jesus said that no one would know in advance, and Paul was not assuming that he did know, but he added, “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.” The Thessalonian brethren knew this “perfectly” because they had confidence in what Jesus had said on the point.

But the thief-like coming of the day of the Lord was to be true only so far as the outside world and drowsy professed Christians were concerned. “Ye, brethren, are not in darkness,” Paul insisted, “that that day should overtake you as a thief.” When Jesus gave His great lesson pertaining to the time of His second presence, admonishing His disciples to watch because they did not know the day nor the hour, He did not say in so many words that their faithful watching would be rewarded by a discernment of His presence and the beginning of the day of the Lord. But this is how Paul understood what the Master had said. That is why he wrote, “Ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief.”

But this can be true only of those who are awake. “Let us not sleep, as do others,” Paul wrote. And oh, the joy with which the faithful watchers are rewarded! Concerning the saints who would be living in this time, and to whom, because of their faithfulness, the Lord would reveal His presence, Daniel wrote, “Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.”—Dan. 12:12.

Yes, “blessed” indeed is the David class in this most wonderful time during which we are now living! From the human outlook it is the darkest period of all time. In this darkness there is fear and apprehension. So frustrated is human wisdom that peace is feared almost as much as war. It is the time referred to in Psalm 46:2,3, when the symbolic “earth” is being “removed,” and when the “mountains” are being “carried into the midst of the sea.”

But “we will not fear” wrote David. No, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in (this time of) trouble.” He is helping in every needed way, and especially by having favored us with a knowledge of the • truth. When on every hand there is unrest, nervous apprehension, chaos, and distress, we have a “bed” upon which we can recline and “rest.”

And if we keep properly “awake” during these dark hours, watching the on-moving events in the great plan of God, the very things which increase the world’s fears, make our rest more complete. For among the things we see as watchers in Zion is the near approach of morning. Indeed, the Morning Star has already appeared, and through the din and confusion incident to the death of Satan’s world we discern the first gray streaks of dawn!

Surely, as David wrote, our souls are “satisfied with marrow and fatness.” The rich feast of truth, the “meat in due season” served to the household of faith by our returned Lord, satisfies our longings as nothing else could do. It is as manna from heaven, sweet, nourishing, and soul-satisfying.

And when we think of the many blessings which the Lord has so abundantly bestowed upon us, we cannot help, while resting upon our “beds” during the night watches, to sing aloud the praises of our God. David makes six al mention of this in Psalm 149:5, where we read, “Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.” Yes, we are “resting” but not “sleeping,” and while we rest, we “sing the song of Moses and the Lamb.”

“Let the high praises of God be in their mouth,” David continues, “and a two-edged sword in their hand.” In Psalm 92, where David says that “it is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord,” he also speaks of showing forth His loving-kindness. We give thanks to God in our personal and collective prayers to Him, but we show forth His praises when we speak of His loving-kindness to others. So, to sing aloud upon our beds, and for the high praises of God to be in our mouths, call for activity in making known the glorious Gospel of the kingdom.

This is the great privilege of all who have been called out of darkness into the marvellous light of the divine plan.

We rejoice in the fatness, the richness of the “meat in due season” upon which it is our privilege to feed. Resting upon our “bed” in the “night watches” we delight to meditate upon the goodness of the Lord, and to give thanks to Him for His boundless grace.

But this should not be all. The result of our meditations should be a bursting forth in song, even the “new song” which the Lord has given us to sing. And when we take into consideration all that the Lord is doing for us, how can we keep from singing? Surely we will want to praise the Lord with joyful lips!

In Psalm 92:3 David speaks of praising the Lord upon an “instrument of ten strings.” We might think of these “ten strings” as representing the various fundamental doctrines of the divine plan. It is the beautiful harmony of these doctrines, when these “strings” are played upon by those who have learned the “new song,” that really brings praise to our God.

These doctrines reveal the wisdom, justice, love, and power of our God which, blended in perfect harmony and unison, make up His glory. It is our privilege now to show forth this glory, while, resting upon our “beds,” we joyfully contemplate the time now nearing when a knowledge of His glory will fill the whole earth as the waters cover the sea. Praise ye the Lord! (From “The Dawn.”)

Discord Precedes Harmony

It seems to me the trials and the temptations of this life are all making us fit for the life to come—building up a character for eternity. You have been in a piano manufactory; did you ever go there for the sake of music? Go into the tuning room and you will say, “My dear sir, this is a dreadful place to be in; I cannot bear it; I thought you made music here.” They say, “No; we do not produce music here; we make the instruments and tune them here, and in the process much discord is forthcoming.” Such is the church of God on earth. The Lord makes the instruments down here, and tunes them, and a great deal of discord is perceptible, but it is all necessary to prepare us for the everlasting harmonies up yonder.—Spurgeon.

“Israel in History and Prophecy” is the title of a very interesting and informative 64-page booklet now in stock, priced at 1/- per copy, 1/3 post paid.

FRANK & ERNEST TALKS

Geelong, 3GL, 222 M. Sundays 10 a.m.

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Brisbane, 4KQ, 435 M. ,, 9 a.m.

Perth, 6KY, 227 M. ,, 4.45 p.m.