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# Major Aspects of Pauline Eschatology

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MAJOR ASPECTS OF PAULINE ESCHATOLOGY

by

Martin J. Bohn

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Division of Graduate Instruction  
Butler University  
Indianapolis

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CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE . . . . .	ii
INTRODUCTION. . . . .	1
Chapter	
I. THE COMING OF THE LORD ACCORDING TO PAUL	11
II. THE MAN OF SIN ACCORDING TO PAUL. . . . .	47
III. THE LAST DAYS ACCORDING TO PAUL . . . . .	72
IV. THE RESURRECTION ACCORDING TO PAUL. . . . .	108
V. THE JUDGMENT ACCORDING TO PAUL. . . . .	121
CONCLUSION. . . . .	136
Bibliography. . . . .	140

## PREFACE

It is our purpose in this dissertation to discuss some of the major phases of St. Paul's teaching concerning the consummation of the ages of history. So far as we can understand his thinking on the subject, he held to the Biblical presentation of history as constituting basically two ages: the present age and the age to come.

It should be noted that the treatment of the subject will not include a number of matters which would require consideration if this were a comprehensive survey of Paul's eschatology. For example, the questions of the intermediate state of the dead, the kingdom of God as Paul refers to it, the millennium, and the final state of mankind (except as it relates to the judgment) will be omitted entirely.

I am indebted to my major professor, Professor S. Marion Smith, for his constant and helpful guidance during the preparation of this work.

Where the American Revised Version or some other modern version of the Bible has been used, acknowledgement has been duly made. Otherwise, the translations are original.

## INTRODUCTION

In beginning our study of Paul's teaching concerning things to come, it is most fitting to refer to the background of his thinking which in the nature of the case had such a profound influence upon his view of life.

We are faced at once with various views as to how much one particular type of literature, the Jewish apocalyptic writings, molded his outlook. There is on the one hand the view that apocalyptic, which had its inception about 200 years before Christ, and which continued to make its appearance long after Paul's death - until the year A. D. 200, provided some of the most powerful influences upon the great Apostle to the Gentiles. Thus Thomson maintains that "there are many points in which the theology of the Apocalyptic prepared the way for that of Christianity."<sup>1</sup> Among other features of this class of literature he shows that

with these writers the doctrine of the Last Things is always brought into close relationship to that of the Messiah. His coming is the signal for the end of the world, the last judgment, the punishment of the wicked and the reward of the righteous.<sup>2</sup>

Then, in a recent work on the study of the Bible,

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<sup>1</sup>J. E. H. Thomson, "Apocalyptic Literature," The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, ed. James Orr, Vol. I (1930), p. 178.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 178.

Davies devotes a chapter to the "Relevance of Apocalyptic for Ancient and Modern Situations," in which he discusses the place of apocalyptic in relation to prophecy, to general and specific historical study, to religion, to early Judaism, to Christian origins, and to the life of today.<sup>1</sup> He shows that "apocalyptic in its proper sense cannot be adequately defined apart from its genesis in prophecy,"<sup>2</sup> a consideration which some scholars apparently completely ignore, for "millenarians in the face of nonfulfilment have reinterpreted these predictions with reference to modern history and with little or no regard to the original meanings."<sup>3</sup> Moreover, since these works "were written out of the pressure of a real situation; and they are of aid to the historian in the reconstruction of that situation, particularly on the inner side of the feelings and emotions involved,"<sup>4</sup> and since "There is not a single book of any size in the New Testament except John which is not written against the background of this apocalyptic framework,"<sup>5</sup> it would appear evident that the vast store of literature which Jewish apocalyptic represents would of necessity have to be studied thoroughly before one could truly understand the eschatological allusions in Paul's writings. If Davies

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<sup>1</sup>The Study of the Bible Today and Tomorrow, ed. H. R. Willoughby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 280.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 280.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 284.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 283.

presents a correct picture, then

the coming of the messianic age was a part of the apostolic preaching, and the glow of that expectation suffused the life of the early church. Paul's letters are witness to the apocalyptic hope from the Thessalonian correspondence to Philippians.<sup>1</sup>

In our evaluation of the Pauline eschatological tenets we are most ready to concede that Jewish apocalyptic did have a bearing on Paul's philosophy of life. After all, Paul was a Jew, a most conservative Jew in fact, as he himself said.<sup>2</sup> And surely, when he turned his attention to the various kinds of doctrines which came up in his training and in his life work, it seems most likely that he would have become well acquainted with the literatures which were occupying the thinking of the Jews of his day.

However, there are two other aspects to be considered in this connection. The first of these is the fact that Paul became what he had not been previously, namely, a Christian. He received by revelation<sup>2</sup> the gospel which he preached from city to city throughout the Roman world. By revelation we understand direct revelation. It was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ himself who instructed Paul in the way of God. Now, no doubt the Savior enlightened Paul on his own first coming into the world, as the Apostle himself abundantly shows,<sup>4</sup> so that the great missionary could declare in no uncertain terms that God sent his Son for the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 295.   <sup>2</sup>Phil. iii. 4-6.   <sup>3</sup>Gal. i. 11-12.

<sup>4</sup>Cf., for example, 1 Cor. xv. 3-4; 1 Tim. i. 15.



redemption of his people.<sup>1</sup> But there is also no doubt that the Savior instructed Paul with respect to his own second coming into the world. The Jewish Messianic hopes were certainly a part of Paul's religious heritage. Yet, once the mind of Paul had become subjected to the mind of Christ, the thoughts of Paul would likewise conform to the thoughts of Christ (within human limits, of course). Paul could say, "We have the mind of Christ."<sup>2</sup> That would be the equivalent to saying, "What Christ thinks, we think. What he regards with favor we delight in. What is reprehensible to him is an abomination to us. What he teaches we accept as true." This is therefore another way of saying that Paul's system of doctrine was molded by his instruction received from the Son of God himself. It would include what Christ was ready to reveal to his chosen vessel with regard to the future.

We shall not go into a discussion of the question of the Jewish expectation about the restoration of the kingdom to Israel.<sup>3</sup> Even the disciples of the Lord were badly mistaken about the hopes of God's people, in spite of the fact that Christ had carefully and repeatedly made clear that the true understanding about the kingdom of God would emphasize first the spiritual character of the members of that kingdom and of the King who would reign.<sup>4</sup> On the face of the Gospel

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Eph. i. 7, Col. i. 14, and other places.

<sup>2</sup>1 Cor. ii. 16.      <sup>3</sup>Acts i. 6-8.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. John xviii. 36-7; Mark i. 14-5.

account of the early Church, it is evident that the earthly visions of Jewish supremacy and Jewish glory still were uppermost in the minds of the sons of Abraham. Those visions were not founded on fact; or, if we will, on a correct understanding of the prophecies of the Old Testament. The Jewish desire for the coming of the Messiah was not founded on a desire to be faithful and obedient to the Lord, as Christ plainly taught, especially in the parables. God had sent his prophets to them; but these they rejected. When at last he sent his Son, they took him and killed him.<sup>1</sup>

Apparently what teachings of value the apocalypses did contain were not particularly palatable to a good percentage of the Jews. At least, we find an amazing situation with respect to the use of apocalyptic in the writings of the rabbins of the early Christian centuries, for

according to Ginzberg, the Jewish schools of Jabneh and Tiberias did not directly oppose and reject these writings, but deliberately ignored them; and he (that is, Ginzberg) is able to state that 'in the entire Rabbinic literature of the first six centuries of the Common Era there is not one quotation from the now extant apocalyptic literature. (underscoring ours).'<sup>2</sup>

According to Ginzberg's statement it would seem that apocalyptic literature did not have nearly so great an influence on the mind of Paul as scholars have usually believed that it did. Paul must surely have been well acquainted with

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<sup>1</sup>Matt. xxi. 33-46.

<sup>2</sup>Davies, op. cit., p. 291. The quotation from Ginzberg is from "Some Observations on the Attitude of the Synagogue towards the Apocalyptic-Eschatological Writings," Journal of Biblical Literature XLI (1922), 115-36.

the Rabbinic writings immediately preceding that of the Common Era. If no traces of apocalyptic thought could be found in the works of the first six centuries of the Christian era, it may well be that the influence of apocalyptic concepts was not nearly so great just at Paul's time as has been commonly supposed hitherto. It would then not be a far-fetched contention to say that Gamaliel who had taught<sup>1</sup> the astute disciple had followed the general trend of Judaism which

turned its back upon the rest of these apocalypses and centered upon the study of the Law. Johanan ben Zakkai said that God revealed to Abraham this world, but he did not reveal the world to come. F. C. Burkitt is convinced that this saying<sup>2</sup> implies the Jewish rejection of an apocalyptic kingdom.

Thus, we come to our second aspect in this connection, which is at the same time the second view regarding the place of apocalyptic in Paul's heritage.

In line with the foregoing citation, and by way of contrast with the first reconstruction of Paul's background, it is well to observe that Porter adheres to a conclusion different from the more widely accepted view. In his contribution to A Symposium on Eschatology, the chapter on "The Place of Apocalyptical Conceptions in the Thought of Paul," he maintains that

to Paul, on account of the life, death and resurrection of Christ, all things had become new, including his fundamental conceptions of the other world itself, and of the nature of the dualism which in one sense or another

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<sup>1</sup>Acts xxii. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Davies, op. cit., p. 291.

is at the foundation of the apocalyptic view of the world.<sup>1</sup>

There is thus in Porter's work a central argument that Paul was not influenced so much by the future of world history as by the recent past. It was Christ's redeeming work on Calvary which, according to Porter, furnished the great determining principle of Paul's philosophy. This author continues in that vein all through his chapter, citing a number of facts which he feels all substantiate his position.

For example, he refers to Paul's use of the Old Testament. A careful investigation leads him to say that

If Jewish apocalyptic conceptions lie at the foundation of Paul's Christian thought we should expect evidence of it in his use of literature. As a matter of fact his use of the Old Testament shows no interest (underscoring ours) in the more apocalyptic types of prophecy.<sup>2</sup>

As an example of Paul's lack of dependence upon Old Testament apocalyptic sections he points out that

It is certainly an extraordinary fact that the Book of Daniel, which has so important a place in the Gospels and Revelation, has practically no value to Paul in his search through the Old Testament for Christ. That he does not use it or reflect upon it seems to bear upon the obscure question of his knowledge of the title 'Son of Man', and the special conceptions of the Messiahship and the parousia which belong to that title. Considering the frequency of Paul's references to the parousia and the closeness of the connection of this expectation in the Gospels with Daniel 7:13 and the name 'Son of Man', the absence of the title in Paul's

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<sup>1</sup>A Symposium on Eschatology By Members of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis, (New Haven: Published for the Society by the Yale University Press, 1928) p.184.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 187.

letters and his complete indifference to the Book of Daniel are surely significant. We are left then with this result, that the apocalyptic literature which was certainly within Paul's reach and had the undoubted character of canonicity he did not care for; and that he was practically content, so far as literary helps were concerned, to argue for the truth of Christianity against Judaism from the Pentateuch, and to find Christian faith and experience in the language of Isaiah and the Psalms.<sup>1</sup>

The view that Christianity is important to Paul because it had already brought into history the fulfilment of God's plan of redemption (in principle, even if not in the fulness which must perforce await the consummation of the ages determined from all eternity in the counsels of the Almighty) is presented by Porter from various angles. He mentions the Colossian letter and indicates that Paul says "that the Christian's life is there (in heaven)-already . . . .; and that to seek it, to set one's mind upon it, means to put away earthly passions and unloving tempers and to put on the new man."<sup>2</sup> Then, while Paul has a two-world view of life, and can speak of this world and its rulers, he

scarcely ever speaks of the world to come (see only Eph. 1:21 where its use is rhetorical). In fact the age to come has already dawned for the Christian. Its powers are already experienced, and its glories possessed. Already 'all things are yours . . . . whether things present or things to come'. The dualism which is the key to Paul's thought is not expressed in the words of Ezra, 'The Most High has made not one world, but two' (Ezra 7:40), but rather in the contrast between flesh and spirit, flesh being essentially Paul's word for human nature apart from the Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of Christ, or simply Christ. (Rom. 8:1-11).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 188-9.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 192.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 193.

Concerning the value of the apocalypse, Porter concedes that it does advance "toward a cosmic and universal range and scope," but that

nevertheless it remains true that rational soundness and ethical strength are lacking in the apocalypses in comparison with the older prophecy. Paul's account of the newly revealed wisdom of God in I Cor. 1-3 is altogether in the direction of a return to inwardness and reality. (underscoring ours).<sup>1</sup>

Further:

The coming of God, which was the hope of Paul's favorite Old Testament books, Isaiah and the Psalms, is in the most real sense a historical fact of the immediate past. With the resurrection of Christ the age to come has already begun (underscoring ours). There is surely reason enough in this alone to account for the fact that Paul has little interest in the apocalypses, which have to do only with the future manifestation of a God who is now hidden or withdrawn. The difference involved in this conception of Paul is much more than a difference in time between a future and a past event. It involves a fundamental difference in kind (underscoring ours).<sup>2</sup>

Enough material has been presented to show the general direction of Porter's line of reasoning. In our dissertation we are not prepared to agree fully with Porter. His contention in the light of his findings seems reasonable enough. Yet Jewish apocalyptic did exert some influence in the teaching of the Jewish traditions of the first Christian century. We need only recall the New Testament references to the Messianic expectations in relation to John to realize this.<sup>3</sup> But we are certain beyond a doubt that when Paul referred to

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 196.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 197.

<sup>3</sup>E. g. Jn. i. 23.

the end of the age in one way or another throughout his letters he was giving to his fellow Christians the benefit of his own learning under the tutorship of Christ himself. It is for that reason that we would point out in this Introduction that it is essential to a correct understanding of Pauline eschatology to keep in mind that Christ and his wisdom concerning things to come play a much more important part in the thought of Paul than does the strict Jewish rearing which Paul received in his youth. We think of his early training as preparatory to his Christian life and service, but not as explanatory of his specifically Christian ideas in his views of the last days of world history. We shall proceed on the above basis to deal with the coming of the Lord, the Antichrist, the last days, and the resurrection and judgment as we find them presented in the Pauline epistles.

## CHAPTER I

### THE COMING OF THE LORD ACCORDING TO PAUL

"The two overtowering final events in the drama of eschatology are the Resurrection and the Judgment . . . they are the points where the rivers of history issue into the ocean."<sup>1</sup> Thus does Vos begin his chapter entitled "The Coming of the Lord and Its Precursors" in his work on The Pauline Eschatology. It is to Vos that we are indebted for the general development of the present phase of our dissertation.

One cannot properly understand the background of Paul's views about the end of time unless he keeps in mind that Paul was a thorough-going Jew in his religious thinking. To be sure, there are a number of learned scholars who contend that much of Paul's philosophy of life was derived from his contact with the mystery religions, as Machen shows in his The Origin of Paul's Religion.<sup>2</sup> With characteristic thoroughness Machen discusses the views of R. Reitzenstein as the latter presents them in his Poimandres, Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen, and in his article "Religionsgeschichte

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<sup>1</sup>Geerhardus Vos, The Pauline Eschatology (Published by the Author, 1930), p. 72.

<sup>2</sup>J. Gresham Machen, The Origin of Paul's Religion (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1928), pp. 255-290.



und Eschatologie" in Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, xiii, 1912, pp. 1-28. W. Bousset is likewise carefully discussed; the treatment centers on his theory of pagan influence on Paul as he presented his theory in his Jesus der Herr. We believe that Machen makes out a much better case when he contends in his work that Paul's religion had its origin in the mind and love of God in Christ, than do Reitzenstein, Bousset, and others when they claim that Paul was profoundly influenced by his pagan surroundings. In other words, it seems much more in keeping with the facts to say that Paul was first and foremost a devout Jew as Machen describes him.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the teaching of the great apostle to the Gentiles must be viewed in the light of Paul's Jewish heritage. That background is described in part by W. Adams Brown, when he says,

The Doctrine of the Parousia is a New Testament doctrine. . . . It is not without preparation in the past. It has its parallel within the OT in the prophetic anticipation of the Day of the Lord (e. g. Am 5:18, Is 2:12, 13:6, Jl 1:15, 2:1, Zeph 3:8), - that great crisis of human history when J<sup>n</sup> (Jehovah) shall be manifested as the Judge and Saviour of Israel, and His kingdom shall be set up among men.<sup>2</sup>

Vos begins his chapter by saying that often in the Old Testament the conclusion of things (that is, the conclusion of world history) "is connected with the ephiphany of Jehovah without Messianic assistance."<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the Judg-

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<sup>1</sup>Machen, op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>2</sup>W. Adams Brown, "Parousia," Dictionary of the Bible, ed. James Hastings, Vol. III, p. 675.

<sup>3</sup>Vos, op. cit., pp. 72-3.

ment and the Resurrection - "the great double event"<sup>1</sup> - is rarely a "coming" of the Messiah. However,

in the teaching of Jesus and particularly with Paul the terminology undergoes a deep change in this respect . . . Now this whole complex was shifted bodily from Jehovah-God to the Messianic circle of thought. The great and uniformly expected 'coming' is henceforth a coming of the Messiah.<sup>2</sup>

The lists of citations which are given in the footnote of page 73 show how the above statements are substantiated on the basis of Old Testament passages.

Our subject may conveniently be discussed under the following headings: the terms used to refer to the coming again of Christ, and the attendant circumstances of the coming.

#### I. The Pauline Terms for the Coming of Christ

The terms for the coming of the Lord (in the sense of his coming again) may be conveniently considered under five categories.

##### 1. Παρουσία - parousia

Παρουσία (hereafter transliterated parousia, except in some quotations) is a term used in a number of different ways by Paul: (a) "coming" of someone other than the Lord Jesus, as, for example, the coming of Satan (2 Thess. ii. 9); the coming of Titus (2 Cor. vii. 6, 7); (b) "coming" of Christ, as seen in 1 Cor. xv. 23; 1 Thess. ii. 19; iii. 13; iv. 15; v. 23; 2 Thess. ii. 1, 8; (c) "presence" as opposed

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 73.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 73

to "absence" (ἀπουσία), as in Phil. ii. 12.

Now parousia in the technical sense as applied to Christ denotes a definite event in time. To Paul and the early Christians of the first century it was the equivalent of the last great occurrence before all would appear before the judgment seat of Christ. In the ancient times, the parousia of a king was his arrival at a certain place as the potentate. For example, Deissmann mentions a case where the parousia of a representative of the State and the parousia of Christ were clearly parallel in the minds of the early Christians. This parallelism, he says,

is shown by a remarkable petition of the small proprietors of the village of Aphrodite in Egypt to the Dux of the Thebaid in the year 537-538 A. D., a papyrus which at the same time is an interesting memorial of Christian popular religion in the Age of Justinian. 'It is a subject of prayer with us night and day, to be held worthy of your welcome parousia!'<sup>1</sup>

The foregoing case may be compared to the coming of Christ as it is depicted in prophecy (Zech. ix. 9 and Mal. iii. 1) and in actual history (Matt. xxi. 5).

Robertson also observes that parousia in its technical sense stands "for the arrival of a king or ruler who expects to receive his 'crown of coming.' The Thessalonians, Paul says, will be his crown, glory, joy when Jesus comes."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Adolf Deissmann, Light from the Ancient East, trans. Lionel R. M. Strachan (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1927) pp. 372-3.

<sup>2</sup>Archibald T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol. IV. (6 vols.; New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1931), p. 24.

The parousia as found in 1 Thess. ii. 19 is one of the earliest uses of the word. However, James also mentioned it in his letter,<sup>1</sup> and today we are in no position to state with finality whether James was written before 1 Thessalonians or vice versa. But if the word of a scholar like James Moffatt may be accepted, parousia was "evidently familiar to the readers. Later on, possibly through Paul's influence, it became an accepted word for the second advent in early Christianity."<sup>2</sup>

We think of the parousia of Christ as the arrival of Christ on the scene of history, when "every eye shall see him."<sup>3</sup> The scriptural usage never employs the term "second," even though the first Christians were aware of the fact that actually the parousia would be the second coming of the Saviour. Vos maintains that the word "second" may be explained only

from the intensively prospective outlook of the early Church. So many things and such absolutely consummating things had become associated with the parousia of the Messiah, that only the catastrophe of the last days seemed capable of attracting and retaining the word for itself.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, the basic idea of parousia as

<sup>1</sup>James 5:7-8.

<sup>2</sup>James Moffatt, The First and Second Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians, Vol. IV of The Expositor's Greek Testament, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (5 vols.; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., n. d.), p.31.

<sup>3</sup>Rev. i. 7.

<sup>4</sup>Vos, op. cit., pp. 75-6.

"being present," not merely as "becoming present," cannot be placed too much in the background. In the minds of the early Christians, the coming advent of Christ would be the fulfillment of this great hope of theirs when the Son of God would come to take his people unto himself. We need only recall John xiv. 1-3 in this connection. Yet the "being present" was also inextricably bound up with their thoughts on the subject. Parousia was a most suitable term indeed. Thus Milligan points out:

It is impossible not to notice how appropriate the word was to emphasize the nearness and the certainty of that 'coming.' So near it was that it was not so much a 'coming' as already a 'presence' of the Lord with His people, a permanent presence moreover, which not even absence from sight for a little while could really interrupt, and which when fully re-established, would last for ever.<sup>1</sup>

In substantiation of the preceding exposition of parousia Milligan cites a quotation which ought also to be given here.

Cf. Ewald Die drei ersten Evangelien p. 333 (though it should be noted that the actual expression Shekinah never occurs in the O. T.): 'The παρουσία Χριστοῦ perfectly corresponds with the Shekinah קִיּוּן of God in the O. T. - the permanent dwelling of the King, where His people ever behold Him, and are ever shielded by Him. During the present imperfect state He is not so actually and fully present as His people hope and long for; . . . . even when the expression more immediately denotes the advent, it still always includes the idea of a permanent dwelling from that coming onwards' (quoted by Cramer p. 238).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>George Milligan, St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians, (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1908), p. 147.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 147.

One concluding idea should be brought out before we turn our attention to the next term. The parousia as Paul uses it is said by Vos to be catastrophic.<sup>1</sup> Vos further contends that "of a development within the limits of the concept, or a duplication or triplication of the event there is nowhere any trace. It is a point of eventuation, not a series of successive events. (underscoring ours)."<sup>2</sup> Since the parousia would be a final event, "the momentous event,"<sup>3</sup> to use Vos's phrase, the greatness of its importance can be set forth as bearing "a supreme, absolute weight to the religious consciousness."<sup>4</sup> Thus we need not be surprised at the attitude which Paul maintained toward his unsaved fellowmen, as he thought of the course of history which would be consummated at the time when "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."<sup>5</sup> Such a vision of coming events imposed upon God's chosen vessel the imperative demand that he be a proselyter of the most zealous kind. We can see what his feeling in the matter was when he says, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men (underscoring ours)."<sup>6</sup>

## 2. Ἀποκάλυψις - apocalyse

The second term to designate the coming of the Lord

<sup>1</sup>Vos, op. cit., p. 76.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 76

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 76.    <sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 76

<sup>5</sup>2 Cor. v. 10.    <sup>6</sup>2 Cor. v. 11a.

Jesus is ἀποκάλυψις, hereafter transliterated apocalypse. It comes from ἀπό, from, and καλύπτω to cover. "Hence, to remove the cover from anything; to unveil."<sup>1</sup> One instance of the verbal use in the Old Testament is in Num. xxii. 31: ἀπεκάλυψεν δὲ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς Βαλαάμ - "God opened (or unveiled) the eyes of Balaam."<sup>2</sup>

Apocalypse is a word dealing with the revealing of knowledge as granted by God or Christ. According to Milligan, the Septuagint passages where the word occurs,

combined with our Lord's own words Lk. xvii. 30 give the key to the use of the subst. in the N. T., where it is applied exclusively to communications that proceed from God or Christ, or to the Divine unveiling of truths that have been previously hidden.<sup>3</sup>

Milligan shows further that the word is outstandingly a Pauline one, citing various ways in which Paul uses it (for example, his receiving the Gospel from Christ - Gal. i. 12). In fact, the whole of Christianity is a revelation; but in this world it is merely a partial revelation, and it is only when Christ is revealed in his full glory at his return that men will know more fully the true meaning of Christianity. Let us note his own statement of the case:

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<sup>1</sup>Marvin R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament, Vol. II (4 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), p. 406.

<sup>2</sup>Alfred Rahlfs (ed.) Septuaginta Id Est Vetus Testamentum Graece Luxta LXX Interpretes (Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1935), p. 256.

<sup>3</sup>Milligan, op. cit., p. 150

Then, in accordance with the 'revelation of the righteous judgment of God (Rom. ii. 5 ἀποκάλυψεως δικαιοκρίσις τ. Θεοῦ), justice will be meted out to all (2 Thess. i. 7), and the whole creation will rejoice in 'the revelation of the sons of God' (Rom. viii. 19 ἀποκάλυψιν τ. υἱῶν τ. Θεοῦ).<sup>1</sup>

His concluding remark on the distinction between "parousia," "epiphaneia," and "apokalypsis" is

The third, ἀποκάλυψις, reminds us that the 'manifestation' is also a 'revelation of the Divine plan and purpose which has run through all the ages, to find its consummation at length in the 'one far-off divine event,' to which the whole Creation is slowly moving.<sup>2</sup>

It seems strange that Frame in his Commentary on 2 Thess. i. 7, has described Milligan as saying that ἐπιφάνεια is the revelation of the divine plan referred to in the above quotation. While it is true that Milligan does say that the apocalypse is a "manifestation," yet it would seem better to retain Milligan's expression in the matter, for obviously it is the apocalypse which is the revelation of the Divine plan and purpose which will consummate in the "one far-off divine event."

We shall do well to keep in mind, however, the suggestion of Frame regarding our present term:

In Paul, it (apocalypse) denotes regularly a prophetic revelation in the Spirit; here, however, and in 1 Cor. i. 7, it is equivalent to παρουσία. Underlying this use of ἀποκάλυψις may be the idea that the Son of Man is hidden before God and that the elect, though they know him in the Spirit, do not behold him visibly until he comes to function as Messiah (cf. Eth. En. xlvi. 6, lxii. 7; also revelabitur of the Messiah

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 151.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 151



in 4 Ezra xiii. 32, Apoc. Bar. xxxix. 7, etc.; see J. Weiss in Meyer on 1 Cor. i. 7).<sup>1</sup>

### 3. ἡ ἡμέρα - the day

Pauline usage of the present term is varied in character. Twice it is used without any qualifying element: 1 Thess. v. 4; 1 Cor. iii. 13 (possibly also Rom. xiii. 12). Then, different limitations are affixed to the word which we shall survey briefly.

In the two passages where the day is used alone, the context plainly shows what day is meant. In 1 Corinthians,<sup>2</sup> for example, Paul is talking about the one foundation for eternity upon which a man may safely build. No other foundation for eternity is acceptable to the Creator. Now, upon that one foundation, Jesus Christ, men may build various kinds of structure, using durable materials (gold, silver, precious stones) or worthless building materials (wood, hay, stubble). But a testing time will come. Every work of every man will be subjected to the purifying or destructive (an alternative here) agency of fire on a particular day. The day the apostle calls it. Obviously it is nothing other than the judgment day. As Parry remarks: "here and in Heb. (Heb. x. 25) the word enforces its own

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<sup>1</sup>J. E. Frame, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, The International Critical Commentary, eds. C. A. Briggs, S. R. Driver, and A. Plummer (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), p. 231.

<sup>2</sup>1 Cor. iii. 11.

meaning."<sup>1</sup> Moffatt assents to this when he says, "The imminent Day of judgment (this is implied in the very word, i. 8 and iv. 3), when God tests the work done on his House, will show the value of this or that builder's contribution."<sup>2</sup> Similarly Robertson and Plummer identify it, pointing out that

'The Day' (as in 1 Thess. v. 4; Rom. xiii. 12; Heb. x. 25), without the addition of Κυρίου (1 Thess. v. 2) or of κρίσεως (Matt. xii. 36) or of ἐκείνη (2 Thess. i. 10; 2 Tim. i. 1, 18; iv. 8), means the Day of Judgment. This is clear from iv. 3, 5, ubi ex intervallo, ut solet, clarius loquitur (Beng.).<sup>3</sup>

Findlay is of the same mind.<sup>4</sup> A far fetched interpretation, based of course upon the Romish system of faith, makes out the day to be the day of death.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>R. St John Parry, The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians, The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, ed. R. St John Parry (Cambridge: at the University Press, 1937), p. 66.

<sup>2</sup>James Moffatt, The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, n.d.), p. 41.

<sup>3</sup>A. Robertson and A. Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, The International Critical Commentary, eds. C.A. Briggs, S.R. Driver, A. Plummer. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), p. 63.

<sup>4</sup>G. G. Findlay, St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, Vol. II of The Expositor's Greek Testament, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (5 vols.; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 791.

<sup>5</sup>H. A. W. Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Hand-Book to the Epistles to the Corinthians, translated, D. Douglas Bannerman (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1890), p. 74.

In 1 Thess. v. 4 the day is obviously the day mentioned in verse 2, especially since the idea of "robbers" is prominent in both expressions. Several readings are possible with respect to the word κλέπτῃς. If the plural form is used, we may adopt the meaning brought out by Bicknell:

So in verse 4 he (Paul) rapidly readapts his metaphors, according to the more probable text. Christians are now contrasted with thieves (R. V. mg.), who are essentially lovers of darkness and are in no way prepared to welcome the dawn of day which will betray their activities.<sup>1</sup>

Milligan phrases it in somewhat different fashion. He says

By an inversion of metaphor by no means uncommon in the Pauline writings (cf. ii. 7b note), the figure of the 'thief' is now transferred from the cause of the surprise (v. 2) to its object, the idea being that as the 'day' unpleasantly surprises the thief who has failed in carrying through his operations, so 'the day' will 'overtake' those who are not prepared for it.<sup>2</sup>

However, Milligan does state that the reading of κλέπτῃς is by no means certain, even though well attested, and κλέπτῃς is preferred by most commentators, being "numerically better attested."<sup>2</sup> Where the singular noun is used, the comparison is the same as in v. 2, but "the point is not 'suddenness' but 'surprise.'"<sup>3</sup>

The use of the day in the present citation naturally leads us to the first variant found in 1 Thess. v. 2. There

<sup>1</sup>E. J. Bicknell, The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, Westminster Commentaries, eds. Walter Lock and D. C. Simpson (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1932), p. 55.

<sup>2</sup>Milligan, op. cit., p. 66.

<sup>3</sup>Frame, op. cit., p. 184.

we have ἡμέρα Χριστοῦ without the articles, while 2 Thess. ii. 2 has the article with both nouns, as does 1 Cor. v. 5. Here we have a definiteness which points us directly to the kind of day intended. The expression is often used by the prophets of the Old Testament and it is from that source that Paul gets his meaning. To his mind the day of the Lord was simply the day with a particular quality or characteristic. As Davidson depicts it thus: It "belongs to Him, is His time for working, for manifesting Himself, for displaying His character, for performing His work - His strange work upon the earth."<sup>1</sup>

The fullest form of the expression for the day is in 1 Cor. i. 8: "Who (i. e. Christ) will establish you unto the end blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is found in a section of Paul's writings which is unique in that "Christ's name is repeated ten times in the first ten verses - six times, as here, in full style - with sustained solemnity of emphasis."<sup>2</sup> One might almost be tempted to think that Paul had just resorted to a stereotyped phrase in his use of this full name; rather, that name is reiterated (compare "the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ"),<sup>3</sup> "for repeated emphasis on the authority and person of our Lord."<sup>4</sup> Strange-

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<sup>1</sup>A. B. Davidson, *Theology of the Old Testament* (1904) p. 375. Quoted by Milligan, *op. cit.*, p. 64

<sup>2</sup>Findlay, *op. cit.*, p. 761.

<sup>3</sup>1 Cor. i. 7. <sup>4</sup>Parry, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

ly enough, the second fullest expression for the day is in 2 Cor. i. 14: ". . . we are your rejoicing as you also are ours in the day of our Lord Jesus." "The Day . . . is mentioned here in confirmation of the Apostle's claim to perfect sincerity. He is not afraid of what will then be revealed about his heart."<sup>1</sup>

The letter to the Philippians has three instances of the day. Phil. i. 6: ". . . he who has begun a good work in you will complete it (or 'go on completing it')<sup>2</sup> until the day of Jesus Christ." Phil. i. 10: ". . . that you may be transparent and no harm to anyone in view of the day of Christ."<sup>3</sup> Phil. ii. 16: "Holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice against the day of Christ."

The Philippian passages are the only ones which use "day of Christ" or "day of Jesus Christ." They refer to the Parousia of the Son of God,

a definite point of time when the Lord will appear, and Paul expects this appearance soon. Attempts to evade this by referring his expressions to the day of death, or to the advance toward perfection after death until the final judgment, are forced and shaped

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<sup>1</sup>Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, The International Critical Commentary, eds. F. Brown, A. Plummer. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915) p. 29.

<sup>2</sup>J. High Michael, The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary, ed. James Moffatt (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1928), p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

by dogmatic preconceptions of the nature of inspiration.<sup>1</sup>

The present writer has given considerable attention to the very matter of Paul's expectation of Christ's coming within his lifetime. On the surface of his writings it seems particularly plain at times that he did confidently hold that he might live to see the Lord come in power with all his holy angels. The various utterances in which he speaks in the first person, as in "so shall we ever be with the Lord,"<sup>2</sup> and "we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,"<sup>3</sup> his discussion of the day of the Lord in his first letter to the Thessalonians, and other usages of the doctrine, seem to indicate that he did at one time at least feel that he might quite probably be living at the time of Christ's full revelation.

Michael expresses a common view of Paul's outlook on this question with these words:

It is difficult not to find in this verse (Phil. i.6) ground for the inference that the Apostle expected the Parousia to come in the lifetime of his readers, for it is of their progress that he speaks. The thought of the progress of the Church at Philippi after the present generation had passed away does not seem to be in his mind; nor yet the thought of the progress of his readers after their death.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Marvin R. Vincent, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon, The International Critical Commentary, eds. C. A. Briggs, S. R. Driver, A. Plummer (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>1 Thess. iv. 17.      <sup>3</sup>1 Cor. xv. 51.

<sup>4</sup>Michael, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

So the question comes up, Was Paul right in expecting the return of Christ in his day? The best answer that the present writer can give is a yes-and-no reply. If Paul really believed that Christ would be revealed either in his own lifetime or in the lifetime of his generation, then he certainly did not believe what was true. For it is plain that Christ has not come again to receive his people unto himself. The contentions of such groups as Jehovah's Witnesses and others that he has returned in 1914, 1918 or some other year but has returned secretly, so that only a select few knew about it, need not delay us. We simply do not think that they are right in claiming that the return of the Lord is a thing of the past. The Biblical presentation of eschatology, to our mind, clearly includes a return of the Messiah from heaven which will be so awe-inspiring and so inescapable that all men, living and dead, must stand before the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.<sup>1</sup> The mountains and the hills will not hide them from his presence.<sup>2</sup> So much for the negative part of the answer.

On the other hand, if Paul faithfully looked for the Lord Jesus from heaven because he did not know when Christ would come, he surely was right in having such an outlook, for the Saviour said in so many words that his followers should ever be expecting and looking for his return. "Watch therefore: for you know not what hour your Lord doth come."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Rev. xiii. 8.   <sup>2</sup>Rev. vi. 15-17.   <sup>3</sup>Matt. xxiv. 42.

"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."<sup>1</sup> "And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."<sup>2</sup> The instances could be multiplied. The plain meaning of the Lord's commands is that his followers - all his followers - should hasten unto the day of God,<sup>3</sup> that is, earnestly desire the day of God.<sup>4</sup>

For nearly two thousand years devout Christians have done that very thing. Still they must wait. The unhealthy desire of some to identify certain events or developments of the present age as sure signs that Christ will soon return is altogether out of place in the religious life of the Christian. But to expect the Lord Jesus to come at any time, or at least suddenly, is definitely in keeping with the injunctions of that Prophet unto whom God's people were to hearken,<sup>5</sup> once he appeared on the scene of history.

#### 4. Ἐπιφάνεια - epiphany

The appearing or manifestation or epiphany of Christ is used in a twofold sense in the Pastoral Epistles. In 2 Tim. i. 10 the grace of God is manifested by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ. This is the showing forth of Christ as the public servant of God, when his glory was seen by the early disciples.<sup>6</sup> According to Falconer, the use of ἐπιφάνεια

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<sup>1</sup>Matt. xxv. 13.    <sup>2</sup>Mk. xiii. 37.    <sup>3</sup>2 Pet. iii. 12.

<sup>4</sup>J. H. Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: American Book Company, 1889), p. 584.

<sup>5</sup>Acts. iii. 22.    <sup>6</sup>John i. 14 cf. 1 John i. 1-2.



with σωτήρ is noteworthy at this point, for "these words occur together often in Hellenistic religious phraseology to denote the presence of the deity in his saving power in any manner or on any special occasion."<sup>1</sup> White mentions the same thought.<sup>2</sup> However, the word is used also in 2 and 3 Maccabees with reference to God's supernatural interpositions τὰς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ γενομένας ἐπιφανείας (2 Macc. ii. 21) on behalf of His people."<sup>3</sup> Further, "in xiv. 15 the Jews are represented as making solemn supplication to Him Who, always 'making manifest His presence, upholdeth them that are His own portion' (μετ' ἐπιφανείας ἀντιλαμβανόμενος τῆς ἑαυτοῦ μερίδος)."<sup>4</sup>

The other instances of epiphany all have reference to the parousia. They are 1 Tim. vi. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 1, 8; and Titus ii. 13. There is in addition one unusual citation, 2 Thess. ii. 8, where epiphany is joined to parousia. The A.V. translates it "brightness," while the Revisers have "substituted 'manifestation.' This last is probably as accurate a rendering as we can get for the word in English, involving as it does the idea of something striking - a conspicuous intervention from above."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Falconer, The Pastoral Epistles Introduction, Translation and Notes, (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1937), p. 76.

<sup>2</sup>N. J. D. White, The First and Second Epistles to Timothy and The Epistle to Titus, Vol. IV of The Expositor's Greek Testament (5 vols.; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 147.

<sup>3</sup>Milligan, op. cit., p. 148

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p.148

<sup>5</sup>Ibid. p.149.

And Vincent would have it that

It is quite possible that the word  $\xi\pi\iota\phi\acute{\alpha}\nu\epsilon\iota\alpha$ , so characteristic of these Epistles, grew out of the Gnostic vocabulary, in which it was used of the sudden appearing of the hitherto concealed heavenly aeon, Christ. This they compared to a sudden light from heaven; and Christ, who thus appeared, though only docetically, without an actual fleshly body, was styled  $\sigma\omega\tau\acute{\eta}\rho$  saviour, although his oneness with the God of creation was denied. The Creator and the Redeemer were not the same, but were rather opposed. Christ was only a factor of a great cosmological process of development. As Neander observes: 'The distinctive aim of the Gnostics was to apprehend the appearance of Christ and the new creation proceeding from him in their connection with the evolution of the whole universe.'<sup>1</sup>

The momentous character of the epiphany was good reason for Paul to urge upon Timothy that he carefully guard the commandment entrusted to him. That commandment was "not (a) the special commands of vv. 11, 12" nor "(b) vaguely, the Gospel considered as a rule of life," but "(c) the baptismal charge, to which allusion was made in v. 12."<sup>2</sup> So Bernard affirms. However, that is only one interpretation and since Lock concedes that the charge might be "the whole Christian commands"<sup>3</sup> and with others (for example, Vincent) suggests that the  $\xi\nu\tau\omicron\lambda\acute{\iota}$  might be the thought incorporated in  $\acute{\iota}$  παραγγελία of i. 5, "meaning the gospel as the divine standard of conduct and faith,"<sup>4</sup> we incline to

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<sup>1</sup>Vincent, Word Studies, Vol. IV., p. 280.

<sup>2</sup>J. H. Bernard, The Pastoral Epistles Edited with Introduction and Notes, Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges, ed. R. St John Parry (Cambridge: at the University Press, 1922) p. 99.

<sup>3</sup>Lock, op.cit., p. 72.

<sup>4</sup>Vincent, Word Studies, Vol. IV., P. 278.

the latter explanation. In support of it, Lenski has shown that Jesus used the verb τηρεῖν with ἐντολή in John 14 and 15 and in the great commission at the end of the Gospel of Matthew it is τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην 'to guard all things whatsoever I did command you,' here the whole relative phrase equals ἡ ἐντολή."<sup>1</sup> He continues:

The sense is that Timothy is to guard, protect, preserve all the teaching enjoined upon him, so that it will ever remain as spotless and faultless as when he received it. He is to keep the reine Lehre rein.<sup>2</sup>

The great importance of the epiphany is therefore manifest in that Timothy's diligence with which he guarded the Gospel entrusted to him will become apparent, in that Christ will judge the living and the dead at that time, in that the King of kings will grant the reward to all those who loved his appearing.<sup>3</sup>

5. Φανερώω - to appear.

A final term takes us to Paul's letter to the Colossians. In chapter iii. 4 Christ is said to appear at some future time. To appear in the original signification is "to make manifest or visible or known what has been hidden or unknown, to manifest, whether by words, or deeds, or in any

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<sup>1</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon, (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1937), p. 732.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 732

<sup>3</sup>2 Tim. iv. 8.

other way."<sup>1</sup> At the present time Christ is hidden from the view of the world. Those who believe on him do indeed behold him with the eyes of the understanding<sup>2</sup> now. But the unbelievers in general are not conscious of his position in the universe and therefore pay little attention to him or his claims. But "a day is coming when Christ will be made known in His true character and power, i.e. His glory."<sup>3</sup> It is at that time that the Christians whose life is Christ, but whose connection with Christ in its most fundamental meaning, is, like Christ, unknown to the world, will be manifested in glory with him. "As surely as your life is hidden, so shall you be manifested with Him when He is manifested."<sup>4</sup>

## II. The Attendant Circumstances of the Coming of the Lord

The order of events which will take place when Christ appears is not particularly easy to determine with complete exactness. What happens and when is dependent upon one's own views of eschatology to a large extent. Basically there are three types of interpretation of Biblical eschatology in general. The Premillenarian holds to a return of Christ before

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<sup>1</sup>Thayer, op. cit., p. 648.   <sup>2</sup>Eph. i. 18.

<sup>3</sup>A. Lukyn Williams, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and to Philemon, Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges, ed. A. Nairne (Cambridge: at the University Press, 1928), p. 123.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

the commencement of a literal 1000 years when Christ will reign on earth.<sup>1</sup> The Postmillenarian believes that the earth will see 1000 years of peace and happiness, at the end of which Christ will return.<sup>2</sup> The Amillenarian contends that the 1000 years, mentioned as such only in one short passage in Revelation xx, are not a literal period of 1000 years, but merely a symbol indicative of the reign of Christ with his people.<sup>3</sup>

There are numerous variations of reconstructions on the doctrine of the last things. We shall present in this part of our dissertation the general outline of events which take place at the parousia of Christ as we understand the scriptural plan. We adopt the following outline:

1. The descent of Christ with
  - a. All his saints;
  - b. With a shout;
  - c. With the voice of an archangel;
  - d. With the trumpet of God;
  - e. In flaming fire.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Charles R. Erdman's article on the "Premillennial View" of the "Parousia" in the International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, published in Chicago by the Howard-Severance Company in 1930, pp. 2251B--2251F. Also W. G. Moorehead's article "Millenium (Premillennial View)" ISBE, Vol. III pp. 2052-2055.

<sup>2</sup>See John T. Mueller's article on the "Postmillennial View" on the "Parousia" in the above encyclopaedia, pp.2249-2251.

<sup>3</sup>Geerhardus Vos is the author of "Eschatology of the New Testament" in the ISBE, Vol. II, pp. 979-993. This article is designated as "postmillennial" in the Encyclopaedia but gives a good presentation of the amillennial position.

2. In a moment, the resurrection of the dead and the change of the living.
1. The descent of Christ

The eschatological passage of 1 Thess. iv. 13-v. 8 is really in two parts, each of which is indicated by a *περὶ* clause; it deals with the return of Christ from two viewpoints: the position which the dead in Christ will have at the descent of Jesus in relation to the living Christians; the second section, chap. v. 1-11, discusses the manner of the coming of the day of the Lord.

The first of these citations is unique in Paul's writings, for he tells the Thessalonians that he is giving them the information in question "by the word of the Lord." No other place can be found which is quite the same in signification. In Acts xx. 35 we have an utterance which is not given in so many words elsewhere, but which was apparently commonly accepted as a genuine utterance of Jesus. Its importance may be seen in the light of the following observations from Knowling:

From what source St. Paul obtained this, the only saying of our Lord, definitely so described, outside the four Gospels which the N. T. contains, we cannot tell, but the command to 'remember' shows that the words must have been familiar words like those from St. Clement and St. Polycarp . . . . From whatever source they were derived the references given by Resch, Agrapha, pp. 100, 150, show how deep an impression they made upon the Church . . . . In thus appealing to the words of the Lord Jesus, St. Paul's manner in his address is very similar to that employed in his Epistles, where he is apparently able to quote the words of the Lord in support of his judgment on some religious and moral question, cf. 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11, 12, 25, and the distinction between his own

opinion, γνώμη, and the command of Christ, <sup>2</sup>ἐπιταγή.<sup>1</sup>

The Thessalonian excerpt compares with the Acts reference since it is also an agraph, but differs from it, in that we cannot tell just exactly where the word begins and ends. Moffatt holds that

ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου may mean either (a) a quotation (like Acts xx. 35) from the sayings of Jesus, or (b) a prophetic revelation vouchsafed to Paul himself, or to Silvanus (cf. Acts xv. 32.). In the former case (so, among modern editors, Schott, Ewald, Drummond, Wohl.), an <sup>2</sup>ἔγραφον is cited . . . . but it is evidently given in free form, and the precise words cannot (even in ver. 16) be disentangled. Besides we should expect τινι to be added. Unless, therefore, we are to think of a primitive collection <sup>2</sup> . . . or of some oral tradition, (b) is preferable.<sup>2</sup>

So we have in this first discussion a particular kind of revelation which enables the Christians in Thessalonica to understand better an important doctrine of their new-found faith. Findlay may have a correct explanation of the word in question in stating that it "leads us to suppose that the writers are speaking out of their own inspiration; they seem to be giving a message from the Lord received at the time and to meet this specific case (underscoring ours)."<sup>3</sup>

"The Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an arch-angel, and with a trumpet

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<sup>1</sup>R. J. Knowling, The Acts of the Apostles, Vol. II of The Expositor's Greek Testament, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll, (5 vols.; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 440.

<sup>2</sup>Moffatt, Thessalonians, p. 37, cf. also Vincent

<sup>3</sup>Findlay, Thessalonians, p. 98.

of God."<sup>1</sup> What we have here is an awe-inspiring scene. The component parts all contribute to make it most arresting in its effect on the mind. We are not merely told that the Lord would descend; rather it is the Lord himself who will descend.

The point of the Pauline phrase αὐτὸς ὁ κύριος (cf. 3:11) is apparently that the very Jesus under whose control the believers stand in life, at death (τοὺς κοιμῶν θέντας δία v. 14), and from death to resurrection (ὅτι νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ), and whose indwelling spiritually guarantees their resurrection, is the Lord who at the resurrection functions as the apocalyptic Messiah.<sup>2</sup>

In other words, the Lord himself is the one who also ascended from the Mount of Olives as he disappeared into heaven.<sup>3</sup>

There are three expressions which bring into bold relief the lines of the picture. These all begin with ἐν, and seemingly have one central idea. Some students of scripture would take the phrases substantially as they stand; others tell us we should think of them as figures. So Milligan reminds us that

In any case it must be kept in view that we are dealing here not with literal details, but with figures derived from the O. T. and contemporary Jewish writings, and that the whole is coloured by the imagery of our Lord's eschatological discourses, especially Matt. xxiv. 30 f.<sup>4</sup>

Findlay continues in the same vein: "We must not look for literal exactness where realities are described be-

<sup>1</sup>Thess. iv. 16.      <sup>2</sup>Frame, op. cit., p. 174.

<sup>3</sup>Acts i. 11.      <sup>4</sup>Milligan, op. cit., p. 60.



yond the reach of sense."<sup>1</sup>

In respect to the great and final appearance of Christ on earth, we readily concede that much figurative language, the language of apocalyptic, is used. Some of it is to give vivid effect to the picture that is drawn for this or that aspect of the future. But when we stop to think that Christ himself said that all that are in the graves shall hear his voice (the voice of the Son of man),<sup>2</sup> that surely includes the sense of hearing. Likewise the voice of an archangel has no point unless it is heard; the same is true of a shout or more precisely a military order. If it is true that every eye shall see him,<sup>3</sup> such a situation surely calls for a use of the sense of vision, whether that sense is thought of as it is known to us in the present life, or is merely indicative of a similar activity of the self-conscious person in the resurrection life.

Κέλευσμα is used only here in the New Testament. It comes from κελεύω "to order, command (military command). Christ will come as Conqueror."<sup>4</sup> Κέλευσμα is

frequently used in class. Gk. with reference to the 'word of command' in battle (Hdt. iv. 141) or the 'call' of the κελευστῆς to the rowers (Eur. Iph. in T. 1405): cf. also for a close parallel to the passage before us Philo de praem. et poen. #19 . . . . It is not stated by whom the κέλευσμα in the present instance is uttered, perhaps by an archangel, more probably by the Lord Himself as the principle

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<sup>1</sup>Findlay, Thessalonians, p. 100.    <sup>2</sup>John v. 28.

<sup>3</sup>Rev. i. 7.    <sup>4</sup>Robertson, op. cit., p. 32.

subject of the whole sentence.<sup>1</sup>

Along with the military command the other two "en" clauses should be considered. They refer to the archangel and the trumpet. Since there is no article with any of the nouns at this point, the first of the two phrases

may simply mean 'with a voice such as an archangel uses'. The trumpet is the natural symbol for a summons that is sudden, unescapable, and full of meaning. It had become a regular detail in imaginary pictures of the Last day.<sup>2</sup>

Paul appears to be creating a total impression by a piling up of detail. According to well recognized scholars of Scripture, the last two clauses help to fill out the picture and to emphasize the majesty of the summons. Frame has it that

Unlike the three disconnected clauses with 'en' in 1 Cor. xv. 52, the second and third are here joined by *καί*, a fact suggesting that these two clauses are in some sense an epexegetis of the first. 'At a command, namely, at an archangel's voice and at a trumpet of God.' . . . . It is conceivable that God who raised the dead (v. 14), or Christ the agent in resurrection, commands the archangel Michael to arouse the dead; and that this command is executed at once by the voice of the archangel who speaks to the dead (cf. 1 Cor. xv. 52) through a divine trumpet.<sup>3</sup>

The archangel mentioned in the passage is left quite completely unidentified. The translations best known in the English speaking world, the King James Version and the American Revised Version, both render the phrase with definite articles, as though some particular angel were in view. But

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<sup>1</sup>Milligan, op. cit., p. 60.    <sup>2</sup>Bicknell, op.cit., p.46.

<sup>3</sup>Frame, op. cit., p. 174.

the fact of the matter is that while most commentators think Michael was probably referred to, he being the only one who is named specifically in the New Testament,<sup>1</sup> yet the arch-angel is merely an archangel. The voice is a voice. To say that "Scripture mentions only one archangel, namely Michael. We take it that only this one exists,"<sup>2</sup> may be a permissible deduction, but it certainly is not substantiated at this juncture.

The Lord will come with all his saints, but also with the angels of his power, Paul says.<sup>3</sup> A comparison of the two passages confronts us immediately with the question of what Paul meant when he spoke of saints. The word of course means the holy ones. Scholars like Bicknell confidently affirm that although the term in Paul ordinarily means Christians, yet because it is used frequently in the Old Testament and in later Jewish literature of angels, "the Holy Ones" may here mean angels.<sup>4</sup> But Vincent opposes this, since the passage most confidently appealed to by the proponents of the foregoing interpretation, namely, Zech. xiv. 5, is used by the Didache (xvi. &) "clearly with the sense of glorified believers."<sup>5</sup> Zechariah says, καὶ ἕξαι

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<sup>1</sup>Jude 9

<sup>2</sup>Lenski, op. cit., p. 341; cf. also Moffatt, Thessalonians, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup>1 Thess. iii. 13; 2 Thess. i. 7.

<sup>4</sup>Bicknell, op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>5</sup>Vincent, Word Studies, IV, p. 34.

κύριος ὁ θεός μου καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγιοι μετ' αὐτοῦ .<sup>1</sup>

Vincent's idea is that since Paul nowhere else uses saints or holy ones of angels, he did not do so here. But in 2 Thess. i. 7, the Apostle does speak of the angels of his power. Moreover, the Zechariah declaration sounds very much indeed like Paul's prayer. (Further, the adjective all, could conceivably include angels, even though such a scholar as Moffatt says it "must not be pressed to support (c),"<sup>2</sup> which he designates both "saints" and "angels.") We therefore definitely favor the view held by a number of leading scholars, including Bicknell, Lightfoot, Ellicott and others. Milligan gives us that view in this way:

On the whole therefore the term is best taken in its widest sense as including all (note πάντες), whether glorified men or angels, who will swell the triumph of Christ's Parousia. As further illustrating the vague use of the term, it is of interest to notice that in Didache Xvi. 7 its original reference to 'angels' in Zech. xiv. 5 (cited above) is lost sight of, and the passage is applied to risen Christian believers.<sup>3</sup>

The Lord Jesus will come with a grandeur of awful vividness from heaven, in flaming fire. At the ascension scene the angels said to Christ's followers that he would come in the same way as they had seen him go.<sup>4</sup> They meant of course in a visible manner. But comparatively few people saw him depart. On his return, he would be revealed from

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<sup>1</sup>Rahlfs, op. cit., p. 559.

<sup>2</sup>Moffatt, Thessalonians, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup>Milligan, op. cit., p. 45.      <sup>4</sup>Acts. i. 11.

a definite place - heaven; with an attendant retinue - the angels of his power; in a specific manner - in a flame of fire. Frame understands the first prepositional phrase thus:

The ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ seems to imply that the Messiah is hidden in heaven, concealed from the sight of men, though he operates in the souls of believers; hence he must be revealed 'from heaven' (cf. Rom. 1:18), namely, by coming down from heaven I 4:16) either toward the earth and within the range of human vision, or to the earth.<sup>1</sup>

The flaming fire is intended to describe how Christ will come, rather than how he will mete out justice on those who know not God, although a number of commentators say that it may be taken with both. We need not press for the latter view inasmuch as "the revelation is itself an intolerable torment to the wicked,"<sup>2</sup> so that whether the phrase qualifies verse 8 as well as verse 7 does not matter. Some manuscripts read "in a fire of flame" while others read "in a flame of fire." Here again it matters not which is accepted, for the sense is practically the same. The difference between the two nouns has been neatly phrased by Findlay: "'Fire' symbolizes Divine anger and majesty; 'flame' is fire in motion, leaping and blazing."<sup>3</sup> The thought of the coming of God's Son under the foregoing circumstances, even if considered figuratively, is enough to give pause to any serious individual.

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<sup>1</sup>Frame, op.cit., p. 232.    <sup>2</sup>Bicknell, op.cit., p.69.

<sup>3</sup>Findlay, Thessalonians, p. 147.

A final element in 2 Thess. i. calls attention to the fact that Christ will render justice. A misleading impression is created by the King James Version, for "vengeance is an unfortunate rendering, as implying, in popular usage, personal vindictiveness. See on 2 Cor. vii. 11. It is the full awarding of justice to all parties."<sup>1</sup> This interpretation certainly changes the whole aspect of that part of the Lord's return, for it shows that "God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil,"<sup>2</sup> not merely to gratify his desire for revenge, but to give to each man according to his works.

2. The Resurrection of the Dead and the Change of the Living.

In a later chapter we propose to discuss more fully the matter of the resurrection. At this stage we merely wish to indicate its relationship to the appearance of Christ on the clouds of heaven with great glory.<sup>3</sup> Since Paul seems to make the resurrection of the dead and the change of the living practically synonymous and practically instantaneous, we shall consider these two features together. We are aware of the fact that Paul says "The dead in Christ shall rise first."<sup>4</sup> Yet by gathering together the various pertinent passages in his writings, it will become apparent, we believe,

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<sup>1</sup>Vincent, Word Studies, IV, p. 55.   <sup>2</sup>Eccl. xii. 14.

<sup>3</sup>Matt. xxiv. 30.   <sup>4</sup>1 Thess. iv. 16.

that it is a wise procedure to take up both ideas at the same time.

The doctrine of the resurrection as mentioned in Paul has been expounded in essentially two different ways. Some scholars have said that Paul like many Pharisees believed in the resurrection of believers only. Others are certain that such an interpretation is wrong, for, they say, he held that all men will rise from the dead. The key passage in the New Testament which bears most directly and most clearly on the subject is in the speech of Paul before Felix in his own defense and in reply to Tertullus' accusations. In the presence of Jews he confessed to having the hope which Jews as a class held, that "there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust."<sup>1</sup>

The preceding words are plain enough. Gardner, cited by Robertson,<sup>2</sup> in company with others says that Luke does not correctly represent Paul since the man of Tarsus believed that only those "in Christ" would rise again. Knowling<sup>3</sup> shows that Daniel "plainly implies a resurrection of the just and the unjust, xii. 2, but we cannot say that this became the prevailing belief." The same writer says that "Josephus, in giving an account of the ordinary Pharisaic doctrine,

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<sup>1</sup>Acts xxiv. 15 ARV.

<sup>2</sup>Robertson, op. cit., III, p. 418.

<sup>3</sup>R. J. Knowling, The Acts of the Apostles, Vol. II of The Expositor's Greek Testament, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (5 vols.; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 483.

speaks only of the virtuous reviving and living again, Ant., xviii., 1, 3."<sup>1</sup> He also adds that "in the Talmudic literature the resurrection of the dead is a privilege of Israel, and of the righteous Israelites only - there is no resurrection of the heathen."<sup>2</sup>

We believe this type of reasoning would have considerable weight, were it not for one important fact: the conversion of Saul. Perhaps Knowling and others who incline to the view that the Jews held only to a resurrection of godly Jews are right in their contention. Yet, we would be going astray if we maintained that Paul's views did not change to conform to the truth of the Gospel. He believed most firmly that Christians are "foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son,"<sup>3</sup> which would include, of course, conformation to the thinking processes of the Son of God. We need not feel that the resurrection of all the dead must perforce be excluded from Paul's thinking, especially in the light of the Daniel prophecy,<sup>4</sup> as well as in the light of Christ's prediction of the resurrection.<sup>5</sup> Rather, we would agree with Lumby when he says: "Speaking in the presence of Felix, the Apostle seems to have chosen words which might touch the conscience of the Procurator."<sup>6</sup> This explanation of Paul's use

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 483.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 483.    <sup>3</sup>Rom. 8:29.

<sup>4</sup>Dan. xii. 2.    <sup>5</sup>Jn. v. 28-9, and some parables.

<sup>6</sup>J. R. Lumby, The Acts of the Apostles, Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges, ed. F. H. Chase, (Cambridge: at the University Press, 1937), p. 411.



of both the just and the unjust fits in very well with the sequel to the story where we are informed that Felix was terrified because of Paul's discussing righteousness, self-control, and judgment to come (underscoring ours).<sup>1</sup>

The two great changes, the one or the other of which will affect every man at the last day, are the rising of the dead and the transforming of the living so that both classes of men will have the same kind of body. Another chapter will deal with the resurrection, but we shall refer to it as a conclusion to this chapter.

"The dead in Christ shall rise first."<sup>2</sup> Were we to press the adverbial  $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\nu$ , we would have to insist on strict chronological order. There is some value upon such emphasis, since Paul was setting the Thessalonians right on the relationship between the Christians living at the parousia and those who are asleep in Christ at that time. The dead in Christ are "not 'those who died in Christ' (1 Cor. 15:18) but 'the dead who are in Christ'; . . . as in life and at death so from death to the Parousia, the believer is under the control of the indwelling Christ or Spirit."<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the fact that they arise first "removes their disadvantage by putting them on a level with the living."<sup>4</sup> While some value attaches to the singling out of  $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\nu$  yet we would be grossly misunderstanding the passage if we

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<sup>1</sup>Acts xxiv. 25.    <sup>2</sup>1 Thess. iv. 16.

<sup>3</sup>Frame, op. cit., p. 175.    <sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 175.

did not definitely interpret it as referring strictly to godly people, and not to be contrasted with the wicked dead, but rather to be contrasted with the godly living ones at that time. There are many who insist that in 1 Thessalonians we have the rapture as the Premillenarians conceive it; they also demand that the first be defined as referring to the saved who had passed on and that the second would then be the wicked who had passed on; whereas Paul plainly indicates that the first applies to the godly people who had died and the next clause begins with "then we . . . ." meaning of course the Christians on the earth at the time of the parousia. With that in mind, let us note Robertson's interpretation which is the correct one, so far as we can determine. He says, "First here refers plainly to the fact that, so far from the dead in Christ having no share in the Parousia, they will rise before those still alive are changed."<sup>1</sup>

In both 1 Cor. xv. and 1 Thess. iv. Paul speaks of we. That seems clearly to have primary reference to Christians. The resurrection of the wicked, if it is present here at all, is present only in background. The we may mean all those living at the parousia, but such an interpretation does not make the best sense. Moffatt in his Commentary maintains that the text here has been emended, and concludes his discussion by giving the gist of Paul's thought, thus:

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<sup>1</sup>Robertson, op. cit., IV, p. 32.

. . . . scholars from Augustine to Aquinas failed to recognize that Paul really wrote: not all of us (Christians) are to die (i. e. some of us will be awake in life when the End arrives), but all of us (whether dead then or alive) are to be changed. He is expanding what he had already said in 22, 23: all who belong to Christ shall be made alive at his arrival.<sup>1</sup>

A final word should be included concerning the change of the living. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump" indicates instantaneous effect. The derivation of the first noun is a most interesting one. Since the development of scientific research in the field of atomic energy it is particularly pertinent. Moment, ἀτόμω, is an "old word, from a privative and τέμνω, to cut, indivisible: Scientific word for atom which was considered indivisible, but that was before the day of electrons and protons."<sup>2</sup> To all practical purposes when we say the twinkling of an eye we say immediately. Findlay suggests that Paul used such an expression to "preclude the fear of a slow painful process."<sup>3</sup>

"At the last trump." Here we have "the solemn finality of the transformation."<sup>4</sup> It simply means that once this particular trumpet is blown, history as we think of it will have come to an end, and the final assize before the judgment seat of God will see the everlasting separation of the wheat from the chaff, of the sheep from the goats.

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<sup>1</sup>Moffatt, Thessalonians, p. 266.

<sup>2</sup>Robertson, op. cit., IV, p. 198.

<sup>3</sup>Findlay, 1 Corinthians, p. 941. <sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 941.

## CHAPTER II

### THE MAN OF SIN ACCORDING TO PAUL

When the apostle Paul wrote the second time to the Thessalonians, one of the major subjects which occupied him was the second coming of Christ. Many of the things which he mentions in that letter revolved around that subject. The comfort of the persecuted Christians, the admonition not to be easily shaken in mind, the emphasis on waiting for Christ and the manner of conduct which should characterize the followers of Christ in the interval - these and other subjects are given with a prominent permeation of the thought of Christ's return.

In 2 Thessalonians ii. we have what has been "well named 'The Pauline Apocalypse.'"<sup>1</sup> It is one of the most extended discussions which Paul presented in his writings on the question of eschatology. He had spoken often about the Lord's return in his first letter, and to correct certain false impressions which the Thessalonians entertained, he wrote again on the matter. One of the strange features about this section is that even though there is about as full a treatment of one phase of the second coming as one might

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<sup>1</sup>G. B. Stevens, Pauline Theology, A Study of the Origin and Correlation of the Doctrinal Teachings of the Apostle Paul (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895), p. 347.

find anywhere, yet because of the casual character of certain statements in the section, and because of the incompleteness of some of his references, we find a great variety of opinion as to what the various teachings are. The literature on the subject is legion. The question is one of those subjects which never cease to occupy the thought of scholars, and so the several types of interpretation in their turn come to prominence in the thinking of those who look into the scriptures.

It will be convenient to consider the unique person here called the man of sin (or the man of lawlessness, depending on which reading one accepts, for both delineations are found in the original), and the son of perdition, by referring to his relation to history, the character of his person, the restraining influence on his activity, the opponent who will destroy him with the breath of his mouth, and his devotees. In our discussion we shall designate the same individual by various names: man of sin, son of perdition, Antichrist, man of lawlessness.

#### I. Relation of Antichrist to history

Paul, along with Silas and Timothy, had just spoken of the righteousness of God in recompensing evil to evil men (for that is the force of the descriptive phrase "to those that trouble you" - the latter being God's people), showing that the ungodly would be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power. He had just prayed that God would make his readers

worthy of the Christian calling. Then he passes on to the correction of wrong deductions concerning his teaching about the end of the age. The Thessalonians were a people who had become unsettled in their minds about the second coming, and so the founder of the Christian church in their city - the human founder - proceeded to set them right on two subjects: the parousia of Christ and the gathering of his people unto him.

In earnest tones he requested them not to be shaken in any way - by spirit, or by word, or by letter. Scholars differ on the question whether Paul grouped these three agencies together or used only the idea of "letter" as coming more directly from himself and his companions. Moffatt says, "ὡς δι' ἡμῶν" 'purporting to come from us,' goes with ἔπιστολῆς alone, for, while λόγος (Luenemann) might be grouped under it, πνεῦμα cannot."<sup>1</sup> However, it seems more natural to us to think of the three means as a group. Apparently the three collaborators of 1 Thessalonians could not determine exactly where the false report came from, which had been circulated to the effect that Christ had already returned. They obviously regarded three possible sources as plausible for explaining the origin of the report: "spirit" which "applies to the ecstatic or prophetic utterances of supernaturally inspired persons,"<sup>2</sup> "word," logical

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<sup>1</sup>Moffatt, Thessalonians, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup>Findlay, Thessalonians, p. 165.

discourse based upon revelation already given, and "letter" - some writing that apparently might have been circulated as a Pauline document.

By exhorting the Thessalonians not to be shaken in mind, Paul and his companions made it plain that the Thessalonians were not to think what was not true, namely, that the day of Christ had already arrived. It had not done that. To hold such a view was to hold false teaching. They who knew that it was man's highest duty to love God with the whole heart, soul, strength, and mind were at the same time insistent that the followers of Christ should not be shaken in mind or deceived by any means. They should think the truth; they should make their view of the Lord's coming again conform to the pattern of world history which must be completed before they would be gathered unto him.

For that reason the writers point out two developments which must take place before the end of the age. In the elliptical sentence of verse three, there is no difficulty in supplying the conclusion from the context. "The day of the Lord shall not come" except an apostasy come first. An apostasy is a falling away from the faith - the idea being that of general change in the course of history: men, even professing Christians, will be drawn away from the Lord Jesus Christ to follow another individual who will appropriate unto himself the prerogatives of the Almighty. Men who love not the truth, who believe not the truth will be enslaved by his power, or in other words by the cruel tyranny

of their own sin, and give themselves to the service of evil as Faust did in the ancient myth.

As a result of the apostasy and as a climax to that condition the man of sin will be revealed. He is called the son of perdition. Ruin is the essential character of his life.

ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας = ὁ ἀπολλύμενος,  
 a Hebraism indicating the one who belongs to the class  
 destined to destruction (v. 10 οἱ ἀπολλύμενοι )  
 as opposed to the class destined to salvation (1 Cor.  
 i. 18 οἱ σωζόμενοι )."<sup>1</sup>

Although men will worship him and although he will appear as worthy of unconditional dedication of heart and unreserved

surrender of life, yet he is the son of perdition; he is

ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας. Ἀπώλεια

comes from ἀπόλλυμι , which means to destroy, to put out of the way entirely, to ruin.<sup>2</sup> Thayer says that the ex-

pression indicates "a man doomed to eternal misery (a Hebraism, see υἱός ),"<sup>3</sup> and shows that υἱός with the

genitive of a thing means "one who is connected with or belongs to a thing by any kind of close relationship."<sup>4</sup> It

is that phase of his existence which his followers will either fail to understand or perhaps obstinately refuse to believe about him and with him their end will consummate. That means

<sup>1</sup>Frame, op. cit., p. 254.

<sup>2</sup>Thayer, op. cit., p. 64.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 71. <sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 635.



that they will not at the last enjoy the fellowship of their Creator; they will have companionship rather with him whom they exalted as their god by displacing the true Creator from his rightful position.

So, according to Paul, Silas and Timothy, there is a definite kind of progress in the ages of time. The apostasy will precede the return of Christ; so will the revelation of the son of perdition precede the revelation of the Son of God.

## II. The Character of the Man of Sin.

The character of the Antichrist is a literally awful one. When we tabulate the various elements in that character and combine them into one whole, as Paul did, we can simply say that the antichrist is nothing else than a being who inspires, or produces, awe, including terror and wonder, in the hearts of men. The Christian will not so much fear the man of sin, as he will marvel at the amazing combination of qualities of his being. The unsaved individual will both marvel and fear.

The Antichrist is called the man of sin (or of lawlessness). The very essence of his inner life is rebellion against God. John tells us that sin is lawlessness.<sup>1</sup> The warp and woof of the nature of the Antichrist is refusal of submission to the God of heaven and earth. What he does he does out of a heart that recognizes no law but his own desires, no standard of conduct but his own wishes and views

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<sup>1</sup> John iii. 4b.

of what ought to be.

The Antichrist is the son of perdition. "The first epithet refers to the nature, the second to the doom of Antichrist."<sup>1</sup> The perdition is the opposite state of σωτηρία.

The son of perdition is he on whom perdition falls as his due and his heritage, who is so indissolubly related to it, and so bound up with it, that he cannot escape it. Being the Man of Sin, he must be in God's righteous government the Son of Perdition."<sup>2</sup>

So writes Eadie. And Lenski adds another thought: "ὁ

ἄνθρωπος states that the antichrist is not Satan, but a human being, and thus ὁ υἱός, 'the son of perdition!'"<sup>3</sup>

We should also note, as we have already intimated from Frame's observation mentioned previously, that those who know the meaning of salvation - σωτηρία - are those who do not follow this son, and are therefore not the perishing ones (τοῖς ἀπολυμένοις) of verse 10, but belong to the group whom Paul describes as the saved ones, οἱ σωζόμενοι.<sup>4</sup>

Again, the Antichrist assumes God's place in human history. We are told that "he opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."<sup>5</sup> At this point the question arises as to whether

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<sup>1</sup>Findlay, op. cit., p. 168

<sup>2</sup>John Eadie, A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle to the Thessalonians. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1877) p. 267.

<sup>3</sup>Lenski, op. cit., p. 416. <sup>4</sup>1 Cor. i.18 <sup>5</sup>2 Thess.ii.4

the Antichrist is to be a Jew or a Gentile. Lenski says,

The fact that this apostasy will occur in the Christian Church is beyond question; otherwise it would not be an 'apostasy.' The man of lawlessness will be its head. Yet some have thought of a Jewish apostasy, the Jewish national rejection of Christ, and also of the Jewish political apostasy from imperial Rome.<sup>1</sup>

If the apostasy is within the Christian church, a view which seems reasonable enough, then the Antichrist may or may not be a Jew. He would simply be some person who would arrogate to himself the prerogatives of God. Yet, some scholars insist that the man of sin must be a Jew. For example, Charles points out the argument of Weiss in the latter's Theology of the New Testament, "that an apostasy was strictly speaking impossible in heathenism," and adds the observations that the Jews in Paul's day had shown themselves "unreasonable and evil men" (2 Thess. iii. 2), and that the false Messiah would regard the temple at Jerusalem as the dwelling place of God. He describes the theory of the Jewish origin of the Antichrist as "in a very high degree probable."<sup>2</sup> Other thinkers would quickly point out counter-arguments. Charles further singles out Sabatier who felt that Paul left the person of the Antichrist indefinite; he also mentions Holtzmann who contended that the Jews would under no circumstances have regarded a mere man as the Messiah.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Lenski, op. cit., p. 416.

<sup>2</sup>R. H. Charles, A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life, 2d ed., (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1913) p. 439, note 1.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 440

One can go in circles trying to settle the matter. He can think up rebuttals against the various theories which have been proposed. It seems to the present writer that there is not enough information in the section under discussion for anyone to determine in conclusive fashion what the man of sin will be, although he inclines to the view that the son of perdition will be an apostate professor of faith in Christ.

Several participles add to the picture of this awful person. The first may be a participial substantive (so Milligan, in loco).<sup>1</sup> But if so, we must be careful not to equate that person with Satan, who also is an opposer of God. For verse 9<sup>2</sup> tells us that the Antichrist is not Satan himself, but his tool. The second participle brings into sharpest focus the attitude of the man of sin concerning himself: he claims to be God by "setting himself forth above all that is called God or that is worshipped."<sup>3</sup> The word used here has the idea of nominating or proclaiming to an office. As Bicknell puts it, "It includes a public and, as it were, an official claim to be God."<sup>4</sup>

There seems to be little doubt that Paul was thinking about the saying in Daniel xi. 36, where we note that "he (the king commonly regarded by many scholars to be Antiochus Epiphanes) shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against

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<sup>1</sup>Milligan, op. cit., p. 99.    <sup>2</sup>2 Thess. ii. 9.

<sup>3</sup>2 Thess. ii. 4.    <sup>4</sup>Bicknell, op. cit., p. 76.

the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished . . . he shall magnify himself above all."

The blasphemous claim of Antichrist is the climax of the self-deification. It is preceded by a carefully worded infinitive clause emphasizing the preposterousness of the wicked one. "By their several positions  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\nu$  and  $\kappa\alpha\theta\acute{\iota}\sigma\alpha\iota$  are both emphasized: 'He in the temple of God takes his seat, as though that throne were his.'<sup>1</sup> The Temple is not the entire temple area, but the innermost sanctuary where God himself is said to be - where he sits, a symbol of authority. We may think of his claim thus: "he proclaims that he himself is ( $\xi\sigma\tau\iota\nu$ ) really God."<sup>2</sup>

An excellent summary of the whole proceeding is given by Eadie :

This is the crowning act of impiety - not putting his statue in the temple, but sitting in state in it himself; not multiplying false gods, or setting up many idols, but himself claiming godhead, either as a rival, or to the exclusion of the one true God. For a creature, for a man, to venture upon this divine treason, and, from pride and insolent ambition and antipathy, to take God's seat and claim His honour, is surely the most awful consummation of wickedness and blasphemy that can be imagined, and he who rises to the height of such flagrant, 'damnable' enormity, is truly named the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition. One can scarcely imagine the possibility of such God-defying and God-personating rebellion, and we must surely wonder why it is tolerated at all, not why vengeance is flashed upon it in God's time at the Second Advent.<sup>3</sup>

The Antichrist is a revealed person. One of the

<sup>1</sup>Findlay, op. cit., p. 169      <sup>2</sup>Frame, op. cit., p. 256.

<sup>3</sup>Eadie, op. cit., pp. 273-4.

characteristic truths about the Lord Jesus is that he will be revealed to the sight of men. Every age of history has had its share of people who did not know of him, or if they did, would not recognize him as God's Son. Unable to see him with the physical eye, the unbelievers are likewise unable to see him with the eye of the mind,<sup>1</sup> for they are blind. But the time is coming when he will be revealed. Every eye shall see him;<sup>2</sup> every tongue shall confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father; every knee shall bow before him.<sup>3</sup>

So also the man of lawlessness will be revealed.

It may be that every age of history has its share of people who do not recognize the existence of Satan as a fact, nor the existence of his cohorts as a fact. To such the idea of Satan reflects only a primitive view of life such as ignorant people in ancient times held. To them sin is not disobedience against Almighty God, but an error of judgment or an indiscretion of one kind or another. But to Paul evil was a very terrible power, working in the lives of men, and Satan was a very real individual, going about as an angel of light at times, engaged in his work of deceiving people. Now, the outstanding servant of Satan, he says, is the son of perdition. He is already doing the bidding of his master in the affairs of men. "The mystery of iniquity is already at work."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Eph. i. 18.    <sup>2</sup>Rev. i. 7.    <sup>3</sup>Phil. ii. 10, 11.

<sup>4</sup>2 Thess. ii. 7.

It would seem that an analysis of life would lead men to admit that the world is a place where evil is rampant. Any popular newspaper or magazine could show the prevalence of religious indifference, unbelief, hatred, idolatry, adultery, murder, lying, stealing, disregard for parents and the like. Yet men remain oblivious of the true import of this prevalence of evil. But, Paul says, the time is coming when the Antichrist will be revealed. He says it repeatedly (verses 3, 6, 8). For the time being he has not been made manifest; that time is coming. Then the mystery of iniquity will be no more a mystery, but will be fully known by all.

The Antichrist is called lawless (AV "wicked"). We should not think that the man of perdition will be destroyed as soon as he is revealed. Rather, a certain amount of time must elapse to enable him to perform his miracles and signs and lying wonders according to the working of Satan, for "as the Lord Jesus has His Parousia, the lawless one has his (cf. Rev. xvii. 8 τὸ θηριον...πάρεσται), in which he shows himself the representative and instrument of Satan."<sup>1</sup> We simply have the logical order here, not the time length within which Christ will destroy him. It is over a period of time (seven years or three and a half years as some might claim from a comparison of the book of Revelation) that the wicked slave of the devil will bring out his rebelliousness.

The Antichrist will come to perform the kinds of

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<sup>1</sup>Milligan, op. cit., p. 104.

things which Satan delights to do: his "coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish."<sup>1</sup> The most natural understanding of the three types of activity would be to say that this unique person will engage in works calling forth the wonder of those who may behold them. Let us note how Eadie explains this group:

The genitive ψεύδους is probably that of characterizing qualities. But Luenemann and De Wette take it as the genitive of purpose - 'der Genitivus des Gesichtspunktes' - 'wonders whose aim is lying.' Winer, #30, 2 b . . . . But the characterization of these miracles would seem to be a more immediate necessity than a statement of their purpose; and if they were false themselves, they could not but lead to falsehood, and they must have had their origin in it . . . . Theodoret's illustration is, they show gold which is not gold,<sup>2</sup> χρυσὸν οὐκ ἀληθῶς ὄντα χρυσόν.

And Frame in the International Critical Commentary says,

Paul co-ordinates δύναμις, the abstract potential power, with σημεῖα and τέρατα, the concrete signs and portents, intending no doubt by δύναμις the specific power to perform miracles. Since he seems to feel no difficulty with this co-ordination, we need not hesitate to construe πᾶση both with δυνάμει and (by zeugma) with σημείοις καὶ τέρασιν (a common phrase in the Gk. Bib.). It follows that ψεύδους is likewise to be taken with all three substantives (cf. v. 2 ὡς δι' ἡμῶν). The reality of the capacity and of its expression in outward forms is not denied; but the origin is stigmatised as falsehood.<sup>3</sup>

In other words, as we think of the conflict between good and bad, we may rightfully conclude that Satan will by

<sup>1</sup>2 Thess. ii. 9-10. <sup>2</sup>Eadie, op. cit., pp. 284-5.

<sup>3</sup>Frame, op. cit., p. 269.



means of the person of his chosen vessel namely, the man of sin, the kinds of ruses that include optical illusions in all probability, but also real works which will require greater power than the mere laws of nature to gain his end of opposition against God and to enslave those who are being lost. Findlay distinguishes the kinds of actions of the man of sin in showing that

Δύναμις names the miracle from its cause, the supernatural force acting in it; σημείον from its meaning, its significance; τέρας, portentum, prodigium, miraculum, from its abnormal nature, and the astonishment it arouses. . . . The three terms might constitute a collective idea, with πάση at the beginning indicating the number and variety of Antichrist's 'signs,' and ψεύδους at the end qualifying them unitedly (Lightfoot); but - since δύναμις is singular, and rarely has this concrete sense except in the plural - we may better render the phrase: in all power - both signs and wonders of falsehood. . . .<sup>1</sup>

The description as continued in verse 10 gives us the subjective effect of the lawless one's working, as the phrase in verse 9 tells of the objective nature.

Πάση indicates a manifoldness of deception corresponding to the manifold forms of the deceiving agency, πάση δυνάμει κ.τ.λ. Ἀπάτη ἀδικίας construed similarly to εὐδοκία ἀγαθωσύνης in i. 11 (see note) means such 'deceit as belongs to 'unrighteousness,' as it is wont to employ - subjective genitive not unlike σημεία . . . ψεύδους above. Ἀπάτη is the active and concrete 'deceit,' not 'deceivableness' (A.V.), nor 'deceitfulness' (elsewhere in A.V.).<sup>2</sup>

It is not to be wondered at that he whose coming is after the manner of Satan should be characterized by all manner of power and all manner of signs and all manner of wonders, which in turn again are lying in their intent.

<sup>1</sup>Findlay, op. cit., p. 182    <sup>2</sup>Ibid., op. cit., pp.182-3.

For Christ himself said to the Jews in one of his discourses concerning the devil that "he abode not in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."<sup>1</sup>

The prediction of Christ most exactly conforms to Paul's description of the time of apostasy, for the Son of God plainly told his followers that there would be false Christs and false prophets who would show great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, the elect themselves.<sup>2</sup> Again we have the idea of deceit. Which is only another way of saying that those who live in an atmosphere of spiritual darkness manifest the nature of their surroundings in their attitudes and actions.

The description of the Antichrist in the Pauline Apocalypse is unique in this way, that it shows forth a creature of whom only negative epithets may be made. There is simply nothing in any part of his nature which is commendable. Even the fact that he can work miracles is not in itself a good quality, for in the Bible miracles are not to be evaluated only or even chiefly on the basis of the power they reveal, but only in the light of their purpose. Christ performed miracles to convince his followers that he was the Christ, and to give expression to the sympathy with those who were under the power of Satan in one way or another. His purpose was a good purpose. When the Antichrist works

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<sup>1</sup>John viii. 44    <sup>2</sup>Mat. xxiv. 24.

(or perhaps better, will work) miracles, his purpose will be evil. The man of sin therefore is a person from whom all men should shy away, with whom none should have fellowship. He is bad, wholly bad; his end is destruction; his followers will likewise perish; and he is therefore to be entirely avoided, condemned, opposed, as James said of Satan: "Resist the devil and he will flee from you."<sup>1</sup>

### III. The Restraining Influence on the Activity of Antichrist

The greatest problem of exegesis which arises in the consideration of the son of perdition is the difficulty in identifying the power or the person of whom Paul said, "And now you know what withholds (or restrains) that he might be revealed in his time (vs. 6)." Or again, "Only he who withholds (or restrains) withholds (or will withhold or restrain) until he is out of the way." Thayer translates the last phrase, "until he disappears."<sup>2</sup>

A part of the problem lies in the fact that Paul here shows in an off-hand manner something of the knowledge which the Thessalonians had of the subject at hand. "Do you not remember that when I was yet with you I told you these things? And now that (force or influence) which restrains you know." (verses 5-6a). The fact that we have no hint whatever in the account of Acts about such impartation of information as Paul here mentions, the easy manner with which he merely alludes

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<sup>1</sup>James iv. 7    <sup>2</sup>Thayer, op. cit., p. 402.

to it at this point, the omission of a more explicit defining of terms in other parts of Paul's letter - all these considerations impose upon us the task of basing our exposition of the passage on the basis of inferences drawn from certain details and from the general background of Paul's thinking to particular conclusions rather than on a full presentation of the subject by Paul himself.

The restraining influence is used both as neuter and masculine and in that order. Such a difference in gender suggests that it may be either a force or a person or perchance both. Frame differentiates the various possible renderings by pointing out that *κατέχον* may be "restrains" if the reference is to the Roman Empire, or "detains" if it is to a supernatural being that keeps the Anomos in detention, or "is holding sway" if the reference is to Satan.<sup>1</sup>

We shall list the various interpretations about the withholding power or person which might explain Paul's allusion:

1. The Roman Empire.

Some scholars hold that the apostle judiciously refrained from mentioning by name the ruling government of the time, since the letter might fall into hostile hands. He had apparently discussed rather fully the whole subject during his stay in the city. He could therefore have had the Roman power in mind and when he mentioned the restraining force in

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<sup>1</sup>Frame, op. cit., p. 263.

the letter the Thessalonians would know very well what he meant. There are some good reasons for holding to this view. For Paul looked upon human government as ordained of God. He would surely have agreed with Peter in obeying God rather than men where men demanded what God forbade. But ordinarily he would accept the circumstances of life as he found them and believed in submission to the authorities of the land. In fact, Paul had been protected at various times in his life because of his Roman citizenship, as when his nephew discovered the plot of the Jews to kill him, binding themselves by an oath not to eat nor drink until they had accomplished their murderous purpose.<sup>1</sup>

We might state this same view in slightly different form: the restraining influence could be the Roman government not in the abstract, but "as embodied in Claudius."<sup>2</sup> The name Claudius comes from the Latin claudo, and means to restrain, and could have been a play on words. However, since Caligula had been so sacrilegious in his conduct just before Claudius, the Christians in those days may well have been chary of placing too much confidence in the heads of the Empire.

## 2. A Supernatural Agency

Other scholars regard the restraining influence as being a supernatural power. For example, one suggestion is that the Holy Spirit is the withholding power. Yet we must

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<sup>1</sup>Acts xxiii. 12-35.   <sup>2</sup>Bicknell, op. cit., p. 76.

remember that the restraining one in verse 7 is presumably the same as the influence of verse 6, and since the restrainer will be taken away, it does not appear satisfactory to make the Holy Spirit the checking force.

Another suggestion is that a great spirit or an angel like Michael or Moses will be the restraining power. So compare, for example, the individual who appeared as man to Daniel and said to him, "But I show thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince."<sup>1</sup>

### 3. That Which Holds Sway.

Another view is that Satan himself as a ruling power is holding back the man of sin, for the devil is pictured as the prince of the power of the air,<sup>2</sup> while Christ in his time called him the prince of this world.<sup>3</sup> The present view would be acceptable, but it has a strong counter argument within the next verse, for there the withholder is said to disappear or be taken out of the way. The devil could hardly be thought of as absent when evil at its worst will make its appearance among men. The book of Revelation in its various delineations of the accuser (Satan) makes it abundantly plain that the devil will expend all his energies to wage war against the seed of the woman, the people of God, that is, against anyone and everyone who is on Christ's side.<sup>4</sup> So, we would

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<sup>1</sup>Dan. x. 21.   <sup>2</sup>Eph. ii. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Jn. xii. 31; xiv. 30; xvi. 11.   <sup>4</sup>Rev. xii.

hold that Satan will be present to insure insofar as he can the most effective opposition to the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and to those who have his name written on their foreheads.<sup>1</sup>

One more point: we should also observe that the mystery of lawlessness is not exactly the same as the apostasy mentioned earlier. Paul's presentation of the future is that the powers of evil (most properly conceived of as lawlessness or rebellion) will be at work for some time before the full effect of their energy is seen among the children of men. The apostasy will be the natural outcome of the lawlessness which will work its way insidiously in the affairs of the human family. The apostasy will be the culmination of that development of evil. But that evil is working steadily, was working then, will continue to work until the restrainer is removed.

#### IV. The Opponent of the Man of Sin

The son of perdition will be one who in the nature of the case must evoke the wonder of people when he comes upon the stage of history with his lying signs and wonders. But his popularity and power will be an honor which must come to a sorry end. The Lord (some manuscripts add Jesus) will also be revealed and he will destroy the wicked servant of Satan. Ἀναιρέω is the word used, found commonly in Acts, only here in Paul, and once in Hebrews x. 9 where

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<sup>1</sup>Rev. vii. 3.

it means to "remove" or "do away with." The picture which we have of the doom of Antichrist is a scene which presents striking contrast and sudden destruction. Moreover, while the favorite tool of the devil would succeed in deluding many sons of men, yet his helplessness in the presence of the Son of God would be such that "the mere 'breath' of the Lord's mouth will be sufficient for his destruction."<sup>1</sup>

The imagery is the same that we find in Isa. xi. 4: πατάξει  
 γῆν τῷ λόγῳ στόματος αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν  
 πνεύματι διὰ χειλέων ἀνελεῖ ἀσβεστῆ.

The Lord Jesus would render his enemy inactive or inoperative rather than annihilate. And so bring to naught or do away with his enemy. The word is a favorite of Paul's being used by him twenty-five times, once by Luke and once by the writer to the Hebrews. Then the wonders of the Antichrist will fade into insignificance. Olshausen puts it this way, "Christ merely by his word and his appearing, thus by the smallest means and the slightest trouble, will destroy the whole threatening power of Antichrist, which no earthly power could conquer."<sup>2</sup> And that in turn calls to mind the universal claim of the Son of God when he ascended into heaven, "All authority has been given unto me in heaven and in earth."<sup>3</sup> If the sacred scriptures can be taken at

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<sup>1</sup>Milligan, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

<sup>2</sup>Hermann Olshausen, *Biblical Commentary on the N.T.* Vol. V (New York: Sheldon, Blackeman & Co., 1858), pp.329-30.

<sup>3</sup>Matt. xxviii. 18.



their face value at all, the Lord Jesus is omnipotent. It is the omnipotent Saviour who will destroy the Antichrist.

#### V. The Devotees of the Antichrist

A fearful thing is to happen to those who follow the Antichrist. "Because of this" - the fact that the followers of the man of sin did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved - "God is sending them a working of error that they should believe the lie."<sup>1</sup> There is an amazing recurrence of features which have counterparts in the opposing leaders. The son of perdition is said to have his coming according to the working of Satan. Very well; God permits the natural law of life to work: Do the bidding of Christ and of God, and you are blessed. Disobey His word, and the natural result will be your own curse. One cannot continually tell oneself that a false thing is true and not reach the state of mind in which he really holds that the false is true. Repeated suggestion has its effect upon the heart and mind of man. Now God sends to them - the Antichrist and his followers - a working of error. As Lenski phrases it, "Whereby men sin, thereby they are punished."<sup>2</sup> If one rejects the truth, and with it necessarily the love of the truth, that is, the love of the Gospel, he must set his affection on something else. Basically, the only other alternative to truth is falsehood. The natural consequence is unavoidable. And lest anyone should think that error is

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<sup>1</sup>2 Thess. ii. 11.    <sup>2</sup>Lenski, op. cit., p. 439.

a trivial matter, let him note the awful effect of yielding to error. There comes a time when one cannot be convinced that a true idea is true; the capacity to accept the truth has vanished. Error then has more appeal; "it is so satisfying," as devotees of heathen religions so often assert. Error, then, tends to soothe the conscience - it is so much more pleasant not to be disturbed in mind. The result is that error and falsehood appear to be superior to the truth.

A superficial reading of this Pauline Apocalypse might lead many to think that the followers of Antichrist were just poor, deceived people without any fair chance to know the truth. The last phrase of the passage should offset any such idea. For there it is clearly shown that all who believe the lie, not a lie, are of a particular bent of mind. They do not believe, "have not believed," as Paul puts it here, but have pleasure in unrighteousness. The desires of their hearts are open to view here. They would not accept God's testimony; on the contrary, they thought it was untrustworthy, and a lie. Therefore they made the unrighteousness of the Antichrist their delight. So we have not just the kind of people who could not help themselves out of a pitiful predicament, but the kind who find satisfaction and pleasure in the allurements of the evil one. Denney has put it very well:

Nothing is more certain, however we may choose to express it, than the word of the wise man: 'His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sin.' He chooses his own way, and he gets his fill of it. He loves the deceit

of unrighteousness, the falsehood which delivers him from God and from His law; and by God's righteous judgment, acting through the constitution of our nature, he comes continually more and more under its power. . . . It is true he has been deluded, but his delusion is due to this, that he had pleasure in unrighteousness.<sup>1</sup>

In conclusion, let us observe that the question of whether the world will get worse or better as time goes on is inextricably interwoven with the view of world history which incorporates a period of time in which an Antichrist will appear. There have been ardent devotees of the view that the world must come to better times. Especially now, with the advancements of science in many fields of learning, and with the evolutionary philosophy so popular, many people are of the mind that constant improvement will mark the life - the social, mental, spiritual life - of man, just as in the world of the material we shall improve our automobiles, airplanes, homes, living conditions and the like.

Others say that the world will get worse and worse - and only that. They point to the predictions of Paul and Christ and John and others, singling out the "last days" passages of Paul, and say that there is only one true interpretation about the future of the world and that that is steady degeneration until the end.

To our way of thinking, neither view is right. Rather, we regard that view as the best interpretation which Denney gives in the following words:

The question is sometimes discussed whether the world

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<sup>1</sup> James Denney, The Epistles to the Thessalonians, The Expositor's Bible, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (25 vols.; New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1903), pp. 335-6.

gets better or worse as it grows older, and optimists and pessimists take opposite sides upon it. Both, this law informs us, are wrong. It does not get better only, nor worse only, but both. Its progress is not simply a progress in good, evil being gradually driven from the field; nor is it simply a progress in evil, before which good continually disappears; it is a progress in which good and evil alike come to maturity, bearing their ripest fruit, showing all that they can do, proving their strength to the utmost against each other. . . . .  
In the time of harvest: not till all is ripe for judgment, not till the wheat and the tares alike have shown all that is in them, will the judgment come.<sup>1</sup>

And so, according to the prediction of that man who knew the mind of God, if ever there was such a man, the world will see a fearful person some day. He will work wonders; he will evoke wonder; yet at the end the Lord will dispose of him in a wonderful way: by the mere breath of his mouth. The terrors he will arouse in the hearts of men need not disturb the child of God, for he says of his own: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any one (not even Satan) pluck them out of my hand."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 313-14.      <sup>2</sup> John x. 27-8.

## CHAPTER III

### THE LAST DAYS ACCORDING TO PAUL

In this thesis we accept as the best reconstruction of Paul's life that outline which holds to the two imprisonments, according to which Paul went the first time to Rome, as the journey is reported by Luke in Acts 27-8, and according to which Paul thought he would most probably be freed. He himself expresses his hope of release in his letter to the Philippians. "I trust," he says, in ii. 19, 23-4, "in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. . . . Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly."<sup>1</sup>

Another element of this outline is the view that some years after this first imprisonment Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy, in which he gives voice to a resigned frame of mind. He is again a prisoner, but now expects to give his life for Christ. "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand," he tells Timothy.<sup>2</sup> Apparently he had no hope of regaining freedom.

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<sup>1</sup>Phil. ii. 19, 23-4.   <sup>2</sup>2 Tim. iv. 6.

We recognize at once that there is no infallible outline of the life of the great missionary, since we do not have all the pieces of the puzzle which are necessary to make the picture complete. On the other hand, in the light of all the pertinent information given in the New Testament about his life, it seems best to think of Paul as having been imprisoned, released, perhaps making a journey to Spain as he wrote to the Romans,<sup>1</sup> then during the second incarceration looking forward to martyrdom.

The foregoing basis of our discussion as given above does not conform to the view of many scholars who regard Paul as having been a prisoner over an extended period of time in Ephesus as well as at Rome. Nor does it fit the views of those who say the Pastoral Epistles were not written by Paul at all.

As an instance of the latter, we will just mention the able work of P. N. Harrison, who wrote The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles. He posits the thesis that the Pastorals were written long after Paul died. He phrases his position thus: "The real author of the Pastorals was a devout, sincere, and earnest Paulinist, who lived at Rome or Ephesus, and wrote during the later years of Trajan or (? and) the earlier years of Hadrian's reign."<sup>2</sup> What he maintains is that the characteristics of the letters indicate clearly that all the considerations which might be made in

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<sup>1</sup>Rom. xv. 28.

<sup>2</sup>P.N. Harrison, The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles (Oxford University Press: Humphrey Milford, 1921), p. 8.

relation to them point away from Pauline authorship. The condition of the Christian churches, their need of the reviving of the joy of their first love to Christ, the advanced character of church organization, the different vocabulary, and other matters are brought into close review.

Harrison gives a careful description of the real author of these works. He tells how he used Pauline sources, but as he continued his writing he fell "inevitably out of the Pauline style and phraseology into his own looser, less nervous, and less rugged style, and into the current vocabulary of his own day."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, even though the real author sets forth his work as coming from Paul and not from himself, "in all this he was not conscious of misrepresenting the Apostle in any way; he was not consciously deceiving anybody; it is not, indeed necessary to suppose that he did deceive anybody."<sup>2</sup>

So we turn to two letters written in the last period of Paul's life to examine what Paul had to say about the last days. There are two definite sections which must be considered in detail, also two briefer references which will enable us to understand the larger excerpts.

In 1 Tim. iv. 1-6 Paul speaks about the "later times." In 2 Tim. iii. 1-9 he describes the "last days." We propose to make a synthetic-analytic study of these sections along with 2 Tim. iii. 13, and 2 Tim. iv. 3-4. Four main ideas

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 11-12.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 12

will be discussed seriatim. They are: the last days predicted, the last days described, the last days as related to Paul, the last days as related to the Christian ministry.

### I. The Last Days Predicted

In 1 Tim. iv. 1 we are told, "Now (or but) the Spirit expressly says that in later times some shall depart from (or apostatize from) the faith, giving heed to deceitful spirits and teaching of demons." According to Paul, there would be periods of history when certain types of thought and certain kinds of movements would be prominent. These periods are "expressly" singled out by the Holy Spirit. "In set terms" the Spirit of the Lord made known what should come to pass. The essence of the Spirit's message "is stated in actual, not merely in symbolical terms."<sup>1</sup>

Another way in which Paul's idea might be presented is suggested by Vos. He would explain it thus:

This forecast is introduced by: 'the Spirit says expressly' ( $\rho\acute{\nu}\tau\omega\varsigma$  'in so many words'), a formal statement indicating that the low appraisal put upon the character of the times was by no means the opinion of single, pessimistically inclined, persons, but a piece of actual prophetic revelation once expressed with great emphasis.<sup>2</sup>

Still another possibility exists. Perhaps Paul was quoting some prophecy current in his day; on the other hand, the Spirit could have used Paul himself to convey this particular utterance to Timothy as his fellow-Christians. In

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<sup>1</sup>Lenski, op.cit., p. 627.      <sup>2</sup>Vos, op. cit., p. 93.



the words of Lock, ". . . . we may paraphrase 'there is a past prophecy about a later crisis, which is now being fulfilled'."<sup>1</sup> That would make the "later times" to be the age of Paul. While there is no particular reason why that cannot be considered a correct interpretation, yet we would hold that to limit the later times to Paul's age would be to confine the prophecy within too narrow a period of time. It would not accurately convey Paul's thought. As White said,

'The latter times,' of course, may be said to come before 'the last days' . . . . But a comparison with 2 Tim. iii. 1, a passage very similar in tone to this, favours the opinion that the terms were not so distinguished by the writers of the N.T.<sup>2</sup>

The word  $\delta\epsilon\iota$  at the beginning of the present prophecy is curiously described as both strongly adversative (so Spence<sup>3</sup>) and as only slightly adversative (so Lock, White,<sup>4</sup> et. al.). By comparing what Paul had just finished saying in chapter 3 with what he mentions at the beginning of chapter 4, we would regard it as presenting a strong contrast. The church, said Paul, is the pillar and ground of the truth; and great is the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of

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<sup>1</sup>Lock, op.cit., p.

<sup>2</sup>N.J.D. White, op.cit., p.120.

<sup>3</sup>H.D.M. Spence, The Epistles to Timothy and Titus, Vol. III of A New Testament Commentary for English Readers, By Various Writers, ed. C.J. Ellicott, (3 vols.; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., n.d.), p. 195.

<sup>4</sup>In their commentaries cited previously, in loco.

God, who was manifested in the flesh, justified, seen, preached, believed on, received up in glory. The sense of the passage is correctly interpreted by Bernard, "The Church is a pillar and ground of the Truth, and yet even in her bosom error arises (underscoring ours). This is the force of the adversative  $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$  in iv. 1; it refers back to iii. 15."<sup>1</sup>

With respect to the citation in 2 Tim. iii. 1-9, we accept it as referring to the same era of history, even though there is a different designation in the 2 Timothy passage. Perhaps Vincent is correct in holding that the "later times" are merely future to Paul,<sup>2</sup> but not indicating the period closing the present dispensation. Yet it seems better to interpret the two passages as describing moral and religious conditions of the same period, with these differences that in 2 Timothy the picture deals with some elements not found in 1 Timothy, and 2 Timothy gives a much fuller account than does 1 Timothy.

We would miss a good deal of the value of the selections in 2 Timothy if we failed to incorporate into our interpretation the truth of the classic passage of 2 Tim. iii. 16: "Every scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness." If every scripture is God-breathed,

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<sup>1</sup>Bernard, Pastoral Epistles, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup>Vincent, Word Studies, p.

then such predictions as we have in the letters to Timothy present no difficulty to us either so far as foretelling the future is concerned or so far as forthtelling is involved. And every scripture will be eminently profitable for Christians as they grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## II. The Last Days Described

When taken together, the two passages under discussion give quite a lengthy list of characteristics for the future. Paul begins with apostasy. Some shall fall away from the faith. The faith of course is the faith once for all delivered unto the saints.<sup>1</sup> It is the true faith, the faith that saves, that very faith, the lack of which makes it impossible for one to please God.<sup>2</sup> And when God is displeased, He is not so minded as to clear the guilty,<sup>3</sup> the carefree, the indifferent, the irreverent and others who are unaware of the imperative need of obedience to faith in Christ.<sup>4</sup>

The last days will find men seeking satisfaction for the needs of their spirit in the occult, mysterious, fascinating and enslaving power of Satan in one way or another. The simple plan of redemption as given in scripture will no longer "meet one's needs" as devotees of doctrines of demons are

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<sup>1</sup>Jude 3.   <sup>2</sup>Heb. xi. 6.

<sup>3</sup>cf. Ex. xxxiv. 7 with Heb. xii. 29.

<sup>4</sup>Rom. i. 5.

wont to express it. So, instead of serving the living God through the living Christ, men will dedicate their lives and energies to religions of one kind or another in which no doubt they are sincere, in which indeed they are often far more sincere than professing Christians, but in which they are being deceived and therefore heading for ruin.

By seducing spirits we understand those evil spirits who are under the leadership of Satan himself. In the mind of Paul, life could be explained basically by thinking of the sovereign, covenant God, who did everything according to the good pleasure of his will.<sup>1</sup> He could and did make vessels unto honor and unto dishonor;<sup>2</sup> as Nebuchadnezzar said, "He does according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the children of men."<sup>3</sup> Now, opposed to God is Satan. As God has his angels who are ministering spirits sent forth to promote the welfare of the inheritors of eternal life, to do God's bidding,<sup>4</sup> so Satan has his evil spirits of demons who are sent forth to do the devil's bidding. It is the unclean spirits, whose basic nature is devoted to falsehood, that will influence and to a great extent determine the conduct of all such who submit to their leading. The prince of this world who has already in principle been defeated is also the father of lies.<sup>6</sup> It is no wonder that the slaves of the

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<sup>1</sup>Eph. i.5.   <sup>2</sup>Cf. Rom. ix. 19-24

<sup>3</sup>Dan. iv. 35.   <sup>4</sup>Heb. i. 14.   <sup>5</sup>Jn. xii. 31.

<sup>6</sup>Jn. viii. 44.

old serpent would be given to the destruction of human life and happiness. These demons will not seek the good of men, but their curse. They will be misleading in character; they will draw men away from the truth. Yet, we should ever keep in mind that people will submit themselves to such spirits; they will be pleased to give their attention to teachings of demons and accept them as the truth. Turning their backs to him who said, "Because I say the truth, you do not believe me,"<sup>1</sup> they must turn somewhere and they turn to falsehood in the form of doctrines of demons.

The word for "seduce" -  $\pi\chi\alpha\nu\acute{\alpha}\omega$  - comes from the word which gives us the root for our "planet," and originally meant to wander or to rove. Thus the spirits are those which incite people to depart from the way of uprightness and go first to the right, then to the left. Bernard in his Commentary explains it very well:

St. Paul had an ever present sense of the power and the activity of evil spirits (Eph. vi. 12, &c.). They are the ultimate, the false teachers of the next verse being the proximate, cause of the errors about to appear in the Church.<sup>2</sup>

The apostasy will come about through a number of contributing factors. One of them is the hypocrisy of lying men. A new group is introduced at this point: such who are the instruments of evil spirits; they are "insincere, because their own lives are inconsistent."<sup>3</sup> Their sin is the sin

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<sup>1</sup>John 8:45.    <sup>2</sup>Bernard, Timothy, p. 65.

<sup>3</sup>Lock, op. cit., p. 48.

of pretension. Hypocrisy is that evil which is seen in those who would have people think well of them, when in reality they are wicked. To use common parlance, hypocrisy is usually the act of putting one's best foot forward with the conscious intent to deceive. Now, in the last days there will be lying men who will make it easy for people who neither know nor love the truth to follow lies. The liars will use their energies to make people think that what they say is truth, that what they intend is the good of all concerned, that their highest concern in life is to do the right by everyone involved. Those who follow such leaders will go blindly along, feeling secure in the guidance which the liars will furnish, and quite content to let come what may.

The deceitful people just mentioned have another quality which Paul describes as having been cauterized as to their conscience.<sup>1</sup> Two meanings may be given this last expression. Some say it is a case of a conscience seared so as no longer to function properly - all feeling and natural response to good and evil would be gone. Others say it means to have the conscience burned as with a branding iron, thus leaving an indelible mark of the owner of the conscience, much as cattle upon our western plains are branded. The latter is accepted by Thayer and others (for example, Bernard and Lock who phrases it thus: Not 'rendered callous as by medical treatment,' of. Eph. iv. 16, but rather 'branded with the brand of slavery to their true master Satan,'

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<sup>1</sup>1 Tim. iv. 2.

cf. 2 Ti 2:26, and contrast Gal 6:17 τὰ στίγματα τοῦ  
 Ἰησοῦ .")<sup>1</sup> And the use of ἰδέαν would suggest that if  
 the branding view be right the brand mark would be known not  
 primarily by the outside world, but by the man himself. It  
 is the conscience that is affected. The conscience in its  
 true state is known to God alone.

A further graphic touch which embellishes the pic-  
 ture of the last days is observable in 2 Tim. iv. 3-4, where  
 Paul again mentions the kinds of people whom he no doubt con-  
 tacted during his lifetime. "The time will come," he says,  
 "when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their  
 own lusts they shall heap unto (or for) themselves teachers,  
 having itching ears (literally, being tickled as to the ear),  
 and from the truth shall they turn their ear, and to myths  
 shall they turn."

The world is full of such people today. It was full  
 of them in Paul's time. In Athens there were some who did  
 nothing else but either tell or hear some new thing.<sup>2</sup> It  
 was not the truth which they wanted. They merely desired to  
 be entertained with fanciful theories of religion and life,  
 of metaphysics and epistemology, of the world of nature and  
 the nature of God. The teaching of the Church would lack  
 appeal; what they wanted to hear was the sensational and  
 bizarre.

As Paul pointed out to the Thessalonians, so here he

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<sup>1</sup>Lock, op.cit., p. 48.    <sup>2</sup>Acts xvii. 21, ARV.

makes it clear that a very definite factor in the religious (or irreligious) development of the people referred to would depend to a great extent on their own natural desires. It is according to their own lusts,  $\kappa\alpha\tau\grave{\alpha}\ \tau\acute{\alpha}\varsigma\ \beta\iota\beta\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma\ \beta\acute{\epsilon}\pi\iota\text{-}$   
 $\theta\upsilon\mu\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$ , that they will pile up the kinds of teachers who will please them. They will heap them up for themselves -  $\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\upsilon\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$ . They are clearly desirous of the kind of men and women who would make them feel good and help them to forget their own sins and shortcomings. The truth will then be most distasteful and myths will be much more pleasing.

Twice before (1 Tim. i. 4, iv. 7) myths had been mentioned, each time in a command of Paul to Timothy not to pay any attention to them. "Do not give heed to fables"; rather, "refuse fables." And so, when we find myths mentioned again, we may rightly assume that they are the stories which Paul had in mind on a previous occasion (assuming, of course, that Paul wrote 1 Timothy first and then 2 Timothy at the end of his life).

"The time will come," said Paul. To some extent it had come already. If one may use as a standard of judgment the rise of so many kinds of religions in our own country alone within the last century, he may feel most confident that such a time is upon us now. We are living in an era when men feel insecure; the spectre of war haunts the minds of millions throughout the world, especially in relation to the power politics which is so prominent in international relations.



It is such times that people's ears will be itching, desiring whatever will soothe the restless mind and heart. As Vincent portrays it:

In periods of unsettled faith, scepticism, and mere curious speculation in matters of religion, teachers of all kinds swarm like the flies in Egypt. The demand creates the supply. The hearers invite and shape their own preachers. If the people desire a calf to worship, a ministerial calf-maker is readily found. 'The mast of superstition is the people, and in all superstition wise men follow fools' (Bacon, Ess. xvii).<sup>1</sup>

Returning now to the larger citation in 1 Timothy, let us note the various ways in which the doctrines of demons make themselves manifest. The hypocrisy of those who speak lies is seen in their command not to marry. The condition of life called celibacy is supposedly a holier state. The early generations of the Christian era were acquainted with such sects as the Essenes and the Therapeutae who forbade marriage. The false asceticism of such groups was denounced in no uncertain terms by Paul especially. Such a restriction on marriage, however, was not characteristic only of the first or second Christian century. We have the same sort of heresy today. It is not thousands but millions of Romanists today who are firmly convinced that the clergy in their communion are of a holier order than themselves and others because they do not marry. Here the Apostle Paul simply passes over the preposterous falsehood as not even meriting an extended refutation because the idea is so contrary to

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<sup>1</sup>Vincent, Word Studies, IV, p. 321.

nature that he felt confident that God's people would not be led away by such reasoning.

A second kind of falsehood was that it was wrong to eat meat. Here again some of the ancient sects (that is, of the early Christian centuries) came to the fore in forbidding various items of food. This time Paul goes into greater detail. He himself had received the most rigid kind of religious training, being a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees,<sup>1</sup> and having become accustomed to the strictness of that sect. In Timothy's day the work of spreading Christianity still was carried on very largely among Jewish people. Jews could be found then as now in the great centers of population and the question of what to do with food once called unclean would come up more than once. Paul refutes the lies of these deceitful people by saying that every creature of God is good and not at all to be refused, when it is received with thanksgiving. "These 'meats' are the creation of God (not of the Demiurge, as a later Gnosticism, with its dualistic view of the impurity of matter, taught), and were created that they might be received (εἰς μετάληψιν) with thanksgiving."<sup>2</sup> Thus the Essenes and others long ago as well as those in modern times have no real case for restricting food for religious reasons. The Seventh Day Adventists who forbid pork and other meats, the Romanists who say Christians may not eat meat on Fridays, and others who claim to have

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<sup>1</sup>Acts xxiii 6.    <sup>2</sup>Bernard, Timothy, p. 66.

the truth in saying it is sinful to eat food either of certain kinds or at certain times for religious reasons have not reckoned with one of the greatest servants whom the God of heaven and earth has used in times past. Falconer in The Pastoral Epistles puts it this way:

Th. Mops. (Theodore of Mopsuestia) sees a close connexion between the denial of the Incarnation and this false asceticism, and followed by Chrys., finds here a prophecy of the Manichean, Encratite, Marcionite, and Valentinian heresies, which denied that Christ was born, prohibited marriage, and enjoined abstinence from foods (Swete); but the phenomenon may easily be accounted for in the first century: which God created; the Christian reply is based on the fact that what God created is good (Gen. i. 31, cf. 1 Tim. vi. 17); this is a fundamental reason against asceticism; foods are to be differentiated on healthful, not on ritual grounds.<sup>1</sup>

One cannot help wondering just how far one may press Paul's statement that "every creature of God is good"; for some devout people are very certain that some kinds of things used by men are not healthful, and should be rigidly excluded from the human diet because of their effect upon the body. For example, today people freely use coffee and tea, both of which contain drugs (unless, of course, such products as decaffeinated coffee are used); others customarily drink wine, beer, or some other alcoholic beverage. In ancient times wine was regularly a part of the bill of fare. Now some scientists today insist that any drink with any amount of alcohol is harmful to the body. There are doctors and health fadists who say coffee and similar drinks should be avoided.

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<sup>1</sup>R. Falconer, op. cit., 140.

We know that Paul advocated the use of wine for the sake of health. But would he also countenance the use of wine as a regular beverage for human consumption? Would he say that wine could be consecrated by the word of God and prayer? Apparently he did, since there is no record of his having said otherwise. The correct answer to this problem is no doubt to be had in Paul's insistence upon temperance in all things.<sup>1</sup>

The second letter to Timothy gives a much longer list of characteristics to determine the last days. Perilous times, dangerous, perhaps annoying, times would be the order of the day. Could it be that Paul thought especially of Christ's picture when the Saviour said that "men's hearts would be failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken"?<sup>2</sup> Certainly this much can be said without fear of contradiction, that when the world as a whole has a combination of the various disturbing passions in men all at the same time, there can be no feeling of security in the hearts of the ungodly. Where a traitorous spirit, a beclouded view of life, suspicion of both an individual and a national kind, are the order of the day, the individuals of society who rely upon the arm of flesh ultimately find, and in some instances become aware beforehand, of their helpless support indeed.

Dangerous times have been known in bygone centuries.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. 1 Cor. ix. 24-7.    <sup>2</sup>Lk. xxi. 26.

It requires no stretch of the imagination to believe that we are in an age of fear today. To the present writer it seems that the fears of men become more intense with the passing of the centuries and particularly within the last 100 years, because of the "shrinking" of the world, due to modern methods of communication (radio, newspaper, air travel and the like) and because of the comparatively greater concentration of power as has been manifested in the discovery of atomic energy. The recent war, for example, was termed "global" because it involved more of the entire globe than any previous war had done. It was the first use of "global" in historical annals.

While we do not hear so much about the fearful aspects of atomic power now as we did immediately after the atomic bombings in the recent war, yet thinking people realize that mankind is in possession of a powder keg which it did not have before. All methods of warfare and destruction used previously to the ruination of Hiroshima and Nagasaki appear quite tame by comparison. So the attitude of people toward the trend of world developments does not disprove Christ's prophecy; rather, it fits in better than ever with such prediction. It does not give the lie to Paul's claim about the last days; instead, it supports his contentions.

In II Timothy Paul was writing as one whose days for this world were numbered (cf. i. 6); yet he dwelt upon the future course of the world so that Timothy might know what to

expect in the days to come. More than one commentator refers to the change of mind in Paul. White remarks: "Although St. Paul had abandoned his once confident expectation that the Lord would come again during his own lifetime, it is plain that here, as in 1 Tim. iv. 1, he regards the time now present as part of the last days."<sup>1</sup> Easton likewise says that Timothy must face "the inevitable moral degeneration that precedes it (the end of all things)."<sup>2</sup> And Bernard observes that "the prospect of the Second Advent of Christ was a vivid reality to St. Paul; he seems at times to have expected it soon (esp. see 1 Thess. i. 10, 2 Thess. ii.)."<sup>3</sup>

A cursory reading of the present description would lead one to think that Paul is giving a picture by means of which we might identify the last days. There are some expressions which do indeed enable us to know that Paul was speaking of the end of the age. However, while there is some truth to the observation of Easton that the descriptive "terms are chosen more or less at random and chiefly because of their assonance; precise definitions, therefore, are hardly essential for the interpreter of 2 Timothy,"<sup>4</sup> yet we hold

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<sup>1</sup>White, op. cit., p. 169.

<sup>2</sup>B.S. Easton, The Pastoral Epistles - Introduction, Translation, Commentary, and Word Studies, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947) p. 62.

<sup>3</sup>Bernard, Pastoral Epistles, p. 129.

<sup>4</sup>Easton, op. cit., p. 62.

that to some degree a preciseness of understanding the details of the various qualities listed is definitely better than simply to lump them all together and call the people bad.

Men, says Paul in using a term which is better expressed by the word "mankind," will have certain features which will bring about troublous times, times of fierce attitudes (cf. Matt. viii. 28). They shall be φίλαυτοι. The word is used only here in the New Testament. In earlier Greek thought, it was used to convey the idea of self-respect which an upright person had for himself - thus Aristotle uses it in his Nikomean Ethics ix. 8. 7.<sup>1</sup> But Paul uses it in a bad sense and points to self-centeredness which is at the basis of so much sin in the world. "The true centre of life is changed. Self has taken the place of God, so all sense of the duty to others, whether man or God, disappears."<sup>2</sup> In this latter sense to be a lover of self is to be virtually an idolater, whereby one worships himself rather than the Creator. To be an idolater is incompatible with the Christian life.

Men shall be covetous - φιλάργυροι. Strictly speaking, this is "lovers of money," while a covetous person is πλεονέκτης. Only in one other place is the adjective found. When Christ spoke to the Pharisees who were "lovers

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<sup>1</sup>Bernard, Pastoral Epistles, p. 129.

<sup>2</sup>Lock, op. cit., p. 105.

of money," he said in effect, "You cannot serve God and love money as your greatest object of devotion at the same time."<sup>1</sup> Paul told Timothy in his first letter that "the love of money is the root of all evil."<sup>2</sup> This love of money "is a passive vice, as contrasted with the active grasping of πλεονεξία . . . . The latter might co-exist with prodigal expenditure; not so φιλαργυρία, which is the miser's sin, the auri sacra fames of Virgil (Aen. III. 56).<sup>3</sup>

Men will be boastful-ἀλάστορες, haughty-ὑπερήφανος, and railers (or abusive - βλάσφημος ). The first of these is manifested by a person's words, the second by his actions and expressions, as for example scorn, arrogance, while the third indicates evil speech. Some interpret the last as abusive toward men, but Lock says the word refers to God as well; so also Lenski.

The next grouping is : disobedient to parents-γυνεῦσιν ἄπειθεῖς, and ungrateful-ἀχάριστος, and impious-ἀνόσιοι . Most writers say that the first of these arises out of the second. When a child (or even a grown son or daughter) is disobedient, it is very apparent that they do not appreciate the many advantages which are afforded to them through their parents. Bernard even calls this ingratitude the blackest form of this sin. "The blackest form of ingratitude is that which repudiates the claim of parents

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Lk. xvi. 14.    <sup>2</sup>1 Tim. vi. 10

<sup>3</sup>Bernard, Pastoral Epistles, p. 96.



to respect and obedience."<sup>1</sup> Christ uses ἀχάριστος as recorded by Luke, where it is said that God is kind to the unthankful and evil.

Those without natural affection - ἀστοργοι - are those who have lost the sense of normal attachment. The normal attitudes of attraction to various members of one's social circles (for example, the love of a parent for a child, or of a man for his wife, and the like) are absent.

The implacable ones ἀσπικτοῦσος - are such who will make no truce when they have been offended - so Trench explains it. "The ἀσπικτοῦσος refuses to treat with his foe at all."<sup>2</sup>

Slanderers are διαβολοι, false accusers, copying after that old serpent, who in ages past accused the brethren before God. The word may also have the suggestion of setting people at variance. Falconer uses the phrase of Theodore of Mopsuestia: "carrying sayings from one to the other to make strife."<sup>3</sup>

Those who are without self-control - ἀκρατεῖς - are they who give full vent to their bodily desires - not just to their sexual desires but any functions (like eating and drinking) of the body. Chrysostom gives this apt description: the ἀκρατεῖς are without self-control "with

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 130.

<sup>2</sup>White, op. cit., p. 170

<sup>3</sup>Falconer, op. cit., p. 89.

respect to their tongue, and their appetite, and everything else."<sup>1</sup> Bernard defines the idea by contrasting a deliberate profligate (ἀκόλαστος) with one having no self-control by saying that the ἀκρατής "would like to do what is right but finds temptation too strong for him. He is weak and easily led."<sup>2</sup>

The fierce ones - ἀνήμενοι - those characterized by savagery. This is used just once in the New Testament.

Without love for the good - ἀφιλάγαθος - are those who have no regard for virtue or for others who are good and are the opposite of those whom Paul calls "lovers of good" - φιλάγαθος, as he uses the term in Titus i. 8. Perhaps a good way of thinking about these persons is to class them with those who do not pay attention to "whatsoever things are true, . . . honorable, . . . just, . . . pure, . . . lovely, . . . and of good report," as Paul exhorts the Philip-pians to "think on these things."<sup>3</sup>

Traitors - προδοῦναι - are those who are treacherous in their dealings with their fellowmen. The word is used of Judas Iscariot and has the idea of delivering up to the enemy.

Headstrong - προπετειῖς - are such "in pursuit of a bad end under the influence of passion."<sup>4</sup> The word is

<sup>1</sup>White, op. cit., p. 170.

<sup>2</sup>Bernard, Pastoral Epistles, p. 130. <sup>3</sup>Phil. ii. 8

<sup>4</sup>Vincent, op. cit., p. 311.

used in the LXX in the sense of foolish, as in Prov. x. 14; also of one who opens his lips to speak thoughtlessly, Prov. xiii. 3.

The besotted ones (or clouded with pride, from τετυφωμένοι) are people who have a bewildered view of themselves, arising from the confusing effect of self-conceit - so Bernard explains it in his comment on 1 Tim. iii. 6.<sup>1</sup>

Τύφος means smoke or vapour, then conceit or vanity. Puffed up with haughtiness or pride is an old but good description of one who is besotted, or beclouded, or rendered stupid through conceit,<sup>2</sup>

Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God - φιλήδονοι μᾶλλον ἢ φιλόθεοι - are people who have no difficulty and usually no hesitation in showing where their first love is. Perhaps it is correct to say that lovers of pleasure are basically lovers of self. They in turn are not lovers of God as God wants them to love him. His position in their affections is clearly indicated in the first and great commandment.<sup>3</sup>

Having a form of godliness, but denying its power - ἔχουτες μόρφωσιν εὐσεβείας τὴν δὲ δύναμιν αὐτῆς ἠρνημένοι - are people who do not possess the real essence or inward nature of godliness. Μόρφωσιν comes from μορφή, which

<sup>1</sup>Bernard, Pastoral Epistles, p.

<sup>2</sup>Thayer, op. cit., p. 633.

<sup>3</sup>Matt. xxii. 37-8.

is the opposite of σχῆμα, which in turn refers to the outward form or bearing of a thing. They who have the form of godliness are "they of whom St. Paul is speaking (who) had a purely theoretical, academic apprehension of practical Christianity (εὐσέβεια, see 1 Tim. ii.2), but a positive disbelief in the Gospel as a regenerating force."<sup>1</sup> They will have the outward appearance but not the real thing.

A peculiar trait of the religionists of the last days is their ability to appeal to women to build up their following. Being exceedingly zealous for their faith, and in all cases where they do not love the Lord Jesus Christ, being extremely eager to cultivate the good will of the wealthy, they insinuate themselves into, or creep into houses, οἱ ἐνδύοντες εἰς τὰς οἰκίας. The rule of their procedure is not to let anything stand in their way. Then they make these silly women captive; the diminutive form is used—γυναικάρια— and thus the contempt is expressed for these followers. So, once these wicked men gain a hearing, they lead the women captive; they make them their dupes. The women, being heavily laden with a sense of their sins, and not willing to accept the truth of the gospel, readily yield themselves to one or another leader who offers relief from their troubles. Jerome pointed out the help which women give to wicked men in their religious endeavors:

Simon Magus founded his heresy aided by the help of the

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<sup>1</sup>White, op. cit., p. 171.

strumpet Helena; Nicolaus Antiochenus, founder of all impurities, led a feminine bevy; Marcion also sent a woman ahead for greater excess; Appelles had Philomone as a companion; Montanus corrupted Prisca and Maximilla at first with gold, then polluted them with heresy; Arius, when he deceived the world, first deceived the sister of the ruler; Donatus was aided by the resources of Lucilla; blind Agape led blind Elpidius; Priscillianus was joined by Galla.<sup>1</sup>

What Jerome could predicate of his day could be repeated down through the ages. The twentieth century is full of the same sort of thing. Religions of varying descriptions are making great strides in gaining adherents throughout the world. In our own country we have no lack of new faiths (which are basically old faiths in new forms). For example, in the nineteenth century, Mary Baker Eddy began Christian Science; the Fox sisters started the Spiritist movement; and a number of cults are popular in our nation today which have had strong support by women.<sup>2</sup> Paul's description of Eve as having been deceived or beguiled, while the man was not deceived (1 Tim. ii. 14) points in the same direction. There seems to be something in the nature of womankind which is absent - at least relatively absent - in the nature of man, which makes them a ready prey to these false religious leaders and which enables them to surrender body and soul to the various kinds of paganism. They are led (ἀγόμενα) by

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted by Lenski, op. cit., pp. 836-7.

<sup>2</sup>For the rise of modern cults, cf. C. W. Ferguson, The Confusion of Tongues, A Review of Modern Isms (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., 1928). Ferguson takes in 20 chapters, 19 of them on definite religions.

various kinds of passions or lusts, "including not only the desires of the flesh, but the wandering and undisciplined movements of the spirit."<sup>1</sup>

The women are described as overladen, as led on by various kinds of passions, as ever learning but never able to come unto a knowledge of the truth. They have a voracious hunger for the fascinating, the ear-tickling sort of teaching which will please their vanities. The mysterious, the occult, the spirit world, the future, other similar subjects engage their thought continually. But because they have impure motives (so Vincent), and because they look to false teachers, the time comes when they cannot think or accept the truth, even when it is presented to them in simple form. God gives them over to believe the lie. Examples of this sort of thing are seen in the people (men as well as women) who are taught that there is no sin, and therefore no need of a Saviour, nor of repentance, nor of conversion. "Error," "mistake," "misjudgment," - these are the views they have of sin. They keep thinking along those lines, and at last are fully convinced that there is no sin. They learn and learn. Yet, in a very real sense they never learn. Nor will they learn until they appear before their Maker to give account of their deeds and stewardship.

The wicked men referred to are compared with Jannes and Jambres.<sup>2</sup> Nothing of a definite sort has been discovered

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<sup>1</sup>Bernard, Pastoral Epistles, p. 132.    <sup>2</sup>2 Tim. iii. 8.

to determine with certainty how Paul knew these names. Perhaps he found them in some book now lost. It may have been oral tradition which supplied the information. At any rate, they are regarded as the chief magicians who resisted Moses in the court of Pharaoh. Their crime was very great because they withstood the truth which Moses, the servant of God, proclaimed; they helped to harden Pharaoh's heart. And the false religious leaders of the last days likewise help to harden "the hearts of their perverts against the blessed saving truth."<sup>1</sup> They are corrupted as to their minds, yet in the last analysis they can make no progress, since their true nature will be revealed in time. "Their folly shall be fully manifest,"<sup>2</sup> so Paul phrases it. Jannes and Jambres could deceive for a time. At the end they were discovered as imposters. Even though the magic arts fascinated the king and other members of the court, they found out to their sorrow that these leaders were basically *ἄδύκμοι* - a word with "an active force, of no judgment, void of judgment."<sup>3</sup> Since they resisted the truth, they were reprobate. Their later successors would be of the same stripe.

Thus we have a picture of the last days - perilous, with bad people of every description, an abundance of religion which in the sight of God will be most reprehensible, with evil men waxing worse and worse.<sup>4</sup> Taken by itself, the

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<sup>1</sup>Lenski, op. cit., p. 838.   <sup>2</sup>2 Tim. iii. 9.

<sup>3</sup>White, op. cit., p. 172.   <sup>4</sup>2 Tim. iii. 13.

view of the future which Paul gives here is not pleasant. But for the people of God, the scene holds no terrors, for we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.<sup>1</sup>

### III. Questions Concerning the Last Days

#### 1. Was Paul living in the last days?

A great deal of discussion has been carried on concerning Paul's attitude toward his own relationship to the end of the world. Many scholars have maintained that Paul definitely believed that the second coming of Christ was so near that he himself was most likely to witness the revelation of the Son of God during his lifetime. There are a limited number of passages to which one might appeal in support of this view. Schweitzer states very simply, "From his first letter to his last Paul's thought is always uniformly dominated by the expectation of the immediate return of Jesus, of the Judgment, and the Messianic glory."<sup>2</sup> It cannot be denied that the glorious hope of Christ's return molded the thought of Paul to a considerable degree. Even his section on marriage<sup>3</sup> seems to allude to the brief span of time remaining, for he says, "The time is shortened, that henceforth both those that have wives may be as though they had none; and those that weep, as though they wept not, . . . for the fash-

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<sup>1</sup>Rom. viii. 37.

<sup>2</sup>Albert Schweitzer, The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, trans. William Montgomery (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1931) p. 52.

<sup>3</sup>1 Cor. vii.



ion of this world passeth away."<sup>1</sup> In another place he says, "The Lord is at hand."<sup>2</sup>

Now Paul intimated to Timothy that perilous times should come. Then he says: "From such turn away."<sup>3</sup> Obviously Timothy could not turn away from boastful, unholy, unthankful people if there were none of that kind present. They were. Their errors were already creeping into Christian circles. To the Ephesian elders he said that grievous wolves would enter into the church, that men speaking perverse things would seek to gain a following. Surely Paul was aware of the religious conditions of his time. He knew full well of that environment in which certain women would learn and learn and yet never come to a knowledge of the truth.<sup>4</sup> "From such turn away." "The injunction shews that these corruptions of the Gospel were not merely contemplated as about to arise in the future, but as already a present danger. This is clearly brought out by the next clause  $\xi\kappa$  τούτων γὰρ εἰσὶν κ.τ.λ."<sup>5</sup>

When we further call to mind Paul's treatment of the apostasy as found in 2 Thessalonians, especially the fact that the mystery of iniquity was already working, we see at once that the whole eschatological complex of events was shaping up for the grand finale even then.

The correct answer then to the question, Was Paul

<sup>1</sup>1 Cor. vii. 29-31.    <sup>2</sup>Phil. v. 4.    <sup>3</sup>2 Tim. iii. 5.

<sup>4</sup>2 Tim. iii. 7.    <sup>5</sup>Bernard, Pastoral Epistles, p.131.

living in the last days? is yes.

2. Did Paul hold to a heightening of evil immediately before the end of the world?

The answer to the present query must be obtained chiefly by deduction. Yet a careful reading of the eschatological passages throughout the Pauline epistles warrants us in thinking that he did believe in the increasing activity of evil powers at the end of time.

An honest review of history will show that the world has always been plagued with people who would not endure sound doctrine, who would turn away from the truth, who would deny to themselves and others the liberty to marry, and to eat meat, who would be full of lust, pride, love of pleasure, love of money, and other reprehensible qualities. Our age is no different from any other in that respect.

However, the total impression which the sections under discussion leave is that there will be progress in the course of evil. As we intimated in the chapter on the man of sin, the moral conditions must be prepared for the coming of the Antichrist. He cannot appear just when it suits his fancy; rather, men must be accustomed to thinking in evil terms, so that his blasphemous activities will not unduly jolt the thinking of those who do his bidding.

To be sure, men will give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, they will have their consciences seared (or branded, whichever interpretation is held), they

will deceive and be deceived. But in the very last days, all these developments will be carried to the n-th degree, so to speak.

If we understand the great Apostle to the Gentiles, we would say that the answer to the second question is likewise yes.

#### IV. The Christian Minister and the Last Days

Since Paul had no mere intellectual interest in the truth which he taught, he frequently related his doctrines to daily life. It made all the difference in the world to him not merely that a man believed, but how he believed and also what he believed. To the Thessalonians he said that those who received not the love of the truth would be subject to a working of error,<sup>1</sup> with the result that they would believe the lie and ultimately be judged (or condemned) for not believing the truth. Thus, the truth (more particularly, the truth as it is in Jesus) was all important.

In the light of the foregoing, we need not be surprised to find in the eschatological sections many intimations as to the bearing of doctrine upon life. He wanted people to live in certain ways because they believed certain things. And so, Timothy can readily understand his relationship to the Christian church in the light of eschatological doctrine of the Christian kind. "If thou put the brethren

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<sup>1</sup>2 Thess. ii. 10, 11.

in mind of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Christ Jesus."<sup>1</sup>

The teaching about the last days was to be for Timothy a definite mold of his thinking. Olshausen presents an odd argument in regard to "these things." After explaining that ὑποτιθέμενος may mean to put something under foot or into the hand of another, to advise, to instruct generally, he says:

So much only can be determined, that it (i. e. ταῦτα) cannot refer to anything already known, consequently not to ver. 16, confessedly great is the mystery, etc., as Heinrich thinks, who arbitrarily makes iv. 1-5 to be parenthetical. But neither can ταῦτα refer to iii. 16; iv. 5; or to iv. 1-5, not so much because iv. 1, sec., does not stand in direct opposition to iii. 16, as De Wette has observed with respect to the former, comp. above; but rather on account of the clause that follows, namely, thou shalt be a good servant, etc., and on account of the connexion as traced above, according to which the mention and description of the future falling away is the basis of the admonitions which follow."<sup>2</sup>

It seems much more natural to understand Paul as Lenski explains it when he says, "this verb (ὑποτιθέμενος) fits v. 1-5 exactly."<sup>3</sup> To make out verses 1-5 as a parenthesis does not do justice to the passage. The mystery of godliness is contrasted with another mystery or perhaps a series of mysteries, namely, those dealing with the change of heart of those people who will submit themselves to doc-

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<sup>1</sup>1 Tim. iv. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Hermann Olshausen; Biblical Commentary on the New Testament, Revised by A. C. Kendrick (New York: Sheldon, Balkeman & Co., 1858) VI, p. 105.

<sup>3</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, op. cit., p. 637.

trines of demons. As one reads along in this section, it would seem to be far simpler to refer ταῦτα to what Paul has already said than to refer them to what he is about to say.

Now Paul wanted Timothy to think correctly but also to live in accordance with his profession of faith in Christ. Therefore, he instructed him to keep on "suggesting"-ὑποτι-  
θέμενος (for that is the basic meaning of the word in this connection), not merely teach the subject once and drop it. Timothy was to be nourished in the words of the faith - not "the words in which faith expresses itself" as Bernard explains the Authorized Version but, as Bernard continues:

The R. V. (more correctly) lays stress on the article, in the words of the faith, understanding πίστεις objectively of the Christian creed, rather than subjectively of the belief of the individuals (see note on i. 19). Τῆς πίστεως in any case must be taken in close connection with καὶ τῆς καλῆς διδασκαλίας; and the words of the faith and the good doctrine have reference to formal doctrinal statements in which Timothy had been instructed and to which he could continually appeal. It is natural to think at once of the "Faithful Sayings" of the Pastoral Epistles (see above on i. 15).<sup>1</sup>

Lenski adds the good observation that we should not regard Timothy as having failed up till then to be a good minister and only at the time of his receiving Paul's communication would he begin to be a good minister. For Paul uses "the perfect stating that throughout the past Timothy has adhered to the true doctrine of the faith, and that he

<sup>1</sup>Bernard, Pastoral Epistles, p. 68.

is now doing this,"<sup>1</sup> which, as he points out, is high praise for Timothy.

Along with the duty to instruct the Lord's people in this subject of apostasy, Paul couples the injunction that the Christian minister should shun old wives' fables. That means a definite rejection of such stories on his part. The argument amounts to this: you cannot have sound doctrine and a wholesome, godly view of life and redemption and at the same time hold to false fairy tales. Where there is a temptation to give credence to the latter, Paul says, disdain to be bothered with them. We should note a change of tense from the future to the present. It almost seems as if Paul would convince Timothy that a good way to be prepared for the future deviation from the true faith is to be faithful in avoiding fables which already were running rampant through the minds of some who lived in his own day. The old wives' tales are "such as old women tell to children, quite unfit for strong young men who have to be trained to discipline themselves."<sup>2</sup> They are not the same as doctrines of demons, but have the same kind of effect in weakening one's faith in sound teaching and one's habit of godly living. Hence the Pauline admonition: "Exercise thyself unto godliness."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Lenski, op. cit., p. 638.

<sup>2</sup>Lock, op. cit., pp. 50-1.      <sup>3</sup>1 Tim. iv. 7.

Lenski observes that

Paul's advice is sound psychology. People who are fanatical in regard to some silly religious matter desire nothing more than to have you argue with them. To do so is to leave the wrong impression, as though that matter is worth discussion."<sup>1</sup>

Now, while the two kinds of evil thought (tales and demon doctrines) are not the same, yet the sound advice applies to the latter group as well. To permit the mind to dwell on that which is plainly false is likewise to live under the impression that untrue tenets are worth discussion. They are not, except one be desirous of learning to cope the better with them and to make manifest the falsity of their content. So, the Christian minister, any Christian minister, should refuse to have anything to do with old wives' tales and myths.

The second injunction relating to the Christian minister has been treated under section III. Suffice it to say that Paul's command to Timothy, that he turn away from lovers of self, and the like, presupposes that Timothy would carefully try the spirits, whether they were of God.<sup>2</sup> The scriptural demands for purity of doctrine and faithful examination of people's views sound strange to the modern ear. It seems as if the prevailing attitude of many people is that if a person has the name of God or of Christ on his lips, using the name reverently, he must surely be all right. Yet Paul would have the followers of Christ know who it is that

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<sup>1</sup>Lenski, op. cit., p. 640.   <sup>2</sup>1 John iv. 2.

has only the form of godliness, while at the same time denying the power thereof. Christians should likewise be diligent to turn away from that type of people. "From such turn away." "Come out from among them and be separate."<sup>1</sup> Separation is the path of blessing.

#### CONCLUSION

The picture of the last days is no bright picture. Yet with it all it is not the unpleasant features which the Christian need stress the most; instead he can emphasize the sovereign power of the Saviour in his own thinking and be ever assured that all authority in heaven and upon earth has already been given into the hands of Christ,<sup>2</sup> and that the Son of God has already overcome the world.<sup>3</sup> Nothing, not even the dangerous periods of the last days, shall be able to separate the Christian from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus his Lord.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>2 Cor. vi. 17.      <sup>2</sup>Matt. xii. 27; xxviii. 28.

<sup>3</sup>John xvi. 33.      <sup>4</sup>Rom. viii. 38, 39.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE RESURRECTION ACCORDING TO PAUL

"Resurrection and Judgment are the two correlated acts of the final consummation of things," says Vos, in introducing the subject of "The Judgment." And he continues:

They are like twin woes in the travail by which the age to come is brought to birth. But they are not clearly separated even at their eschatological emergence. In the resurrection there is already wrapped up a judging process, at least for believers: The raising act in their case, together with the attending change, plainly involves a pronouncement of vindication.<sup>1</sup>

It is with the resurrection of the dead that we must deal in this chapter. One consideration regarding it that is frequently brought to the fore is its position in the total picture of eschatological developments. We have previously cited the three most commonly held systems of doctrine dealing with the subject.<sup>2</sup> Here it should simply be repeated that what order of events one accepts is dependent upon the system he adopts. In this chapter we hold to the order suggested by Stevens, a very simple system, yet definitely Biblical in the best sense of the term.

Wilson has given a much more detailed plan which

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<sup>1</sup>Vos, op. cit., p. 261.

<sup>2</sup>See p. 32.

agrees with the Stevens arrangement. Stevens says that "the order of events evidently is, - the advent, the resurrection, the judgment."<sup>1</sup> Wilson says:

The following seems to be the most likely sequence of events: the sudden return of the Lord Jesus Christ; a destructive fire; everything exposed in an all-penetrating light; the complete and final destruction of all resistance to God; the dead awake in response to the trumpet-call; the faithful dead who are still in the grave undergo a complete change and rise; Christ appears as Judge; the wicked, alike those still alive at the Parousia and those long dead, are tried and condemned; the wicked angels are at the same time condemned; the saints of God go with Christ to live and reign with Him through eternal years.<sup>2</sup>

A different scheme of events is given by Morgan:

. . . . we submit the following programme as perhaps open to fewest objections: The Messianic birthpangs; the Parousia and the Messianic war; the resurrection of believers who have died and the transformation of those remaining alive; the millennial reign and the final destruction of the demonic powers; the general resurrection and the Judgment; the destruction of the wicked and the coming of the eternal Kingdom.<sup>3</sup>

The third of these plans is commonly held by Pre-millenarians. We reject that view, for it seems as though one must stretch the truth beyond the breaking point to make it fit into the simple predictions of the New Testament particularly. Morgan appeals to the brief passage of Revelation<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Stevens, op. cit., p. 350.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas Wilson, St. Paul and Paganism (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1927), p. 185, note 2.

<sup>3</sup>W. Morgan, The Religion and Theology of Paul (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1917), p. 229.

<sup>4</sup>Rev. xx. 1-8.

where reference to the millenium is made to

light up obscure tracks in the Apostle's scheme. The millennial reign . . . . he (Paul) nowhere mentions by name, nowhere indeed makes any quite unambiguous reference to it. But that it forms part of his program a study of 1 Cor. xv. 22-26, in the light of the passage from the book of Revelation, will make in the highest degree probable."<sup>1</sup>

Much theological argument has been engaged in over this very question of the millenium. We disagree with Morgan and believe that Paul nowhere evidences any trace of a tenet which calls for the resurrection of the good before the millenium and the resurrection of the evil at the end of it. Snowden, in his discussion of the coming of the Lord, sets forth the view that at Christ's return "the general resurrection and judgment that mark the end of the world" will take place.<sup>2</sup> He shows that

This fact in Scripture teaching would never have been doubted and no other theory would ever have been dreamed of if it were not for one highly symbolical passage of Scripture (Rev. 20: 4-6).<sup>3</sup>

His statement of the Premillenarian theory is

. . . . that the righteous dead will be raised up at the coming of Christ to inaugurate the millennial kingdom and that a thousand years afterward the wicked dead will be raised up and judged, and thus there are to be two resurrections a thousand years and more apart. (under-scoring ours).<sup>4</sup>

A bit further on he maintains that Paul "knows only one

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<sup>1</sup>Morgan, op. cit., p. 235.

<sup>2</sup>J. H. Snowden, The Coming of the Lord: Will it be Premillennial? (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), p.143.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 143.      <sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 144.

general resurrection and judgment, which is in immediate connection with the eternal state."<sup>1</sup>

The question of the resurrection, no matter how conceived, is involved most intimately with the doctrine of the judgment, especially as it applied to the unredeemed. While Paul did clearly set forth a belief in a general resurrection, yet we recognize at once that there is no clear instance of his mentioning the resurrection of the wicked, except in his defense before Governor Felix,<sup>2</sup> a passage we have already discussed. Charles represents a number of scholars when he flatly denies that the wicked dead will rise again. He expresses it in this fashion:

Indeed, as we shall discover later, there could be no resurrection of the wicked according to St. Paul's views. Hence we cannot regard the statement attributed to St. Paul in Acts xxiv. 15, that 'there shall be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust,' as an accurate report. To share in the resurrection according to the all but universal teaching of the New Testament, is the privilege only of those who are spiritually one with Christ and quickened by the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup>

It is surprising indeed to find that so many writers who deal with the teachings of Paul maintain that the great Apostle left the wicked dead out of the picture in his eschatological utterances. This discovery is the sort of thing which becomes apparent when one has taken certain interpreta-

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 145.    <sup>2</sup>Acts xxiv. 15.

<sup>3</sup>Charles, p. 444, note 1. But cf. R. H. Charles, A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life in Israel, in Judaism, and in Christianity (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1913), p. 444.

tions of the Bible for granted, only to find on closer study that the traditional views do not give the proper slant to the truth as it actually is in the Bible.

Going along in the same general vein with Charles are such men as Stevens, Garvie, Wilson and others. Garvie puts it this way:

That God should restore to fuller vitality in the resurrection the wicked only that they might suffer the penalty of sin, is for Christian love an intolerable thought. If Paul did affirm the resurrection of the wicked for judgment, we need not follow him in this opinion; for it is not bound up with the hope our faith in Christ inspires, and lays a burden on Christian love grievous to be borne.<sup>1</sup>

Wilson casts doubt on the reliability of the Acts account of Paul's positing a resurrection of the wicked. He says: "If we accept the evidence of Acts as giving words actually spoken by St. Paul, he clearly affirms 'a resurrection both of the just and the unjust.'<sup>2</sup>

Stevens is similarly impressed:

If we could assume with confidence that the report of Paul's speech before Felix accurately reproduces his language in detail, the apostle's belief in 'a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust' would be securely established; but in view of the silence of his epistles this assumption becomes a precarious one.<sup>3</sup>

Robertson refers to Gardner, but also presents a

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<sup>1</sup>A. E. Garvie, Studies of Paul and His Gospel (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911), p. 234.

<sup>2</sup>Wilson, op. cit., p. 219.

<sup>3</sup>Stevens, op. cit., p. 357, note 1.

trenchant criticism of Gardner's position:

Gardner thinks that Luke here misrepresents Paul who held to no resurrection save for those 'in Christ,' a mistaken interpretation of Paul in my opinion. The Talmud teaches the resurrection of Israelites only, but Paul was more than a Pharisee (underscoring ours).<sup>1</sup>

Not all scholars hold to such an interpretation as the majority of the previous writers champion. Salmond gives it as his judgment that Paul's eschatology reaches its climax in the resurrection doctrine, which is both consistent and lofty. He adds:

It does not limit itself to a resurrection of the just, but has its place also for that of the unjust. Neither does it regard the resurrection of the just and that of the unjust as two successive acts, separated by a millennial period, the passage (1 Cor. xv. 20-28) chiefly relied on for that being insufficient to sustain it."<sup>2</sup>

Dewick is uncertain about the matter, but appears to lean to the view that the wicked dead will be revived. Here are his words:

Whether St. Paul believed in a general resurrection of all men seems doubtful; some passages (e.g. Ro 8:11) suggest that the resurrection is conditional upon the possession of the Spirit of Christ; but since he taught that the judgment is to be universal, we may perhaps infer that the scope of the resurrection will be co-extensive.<sup>3</sup>

The resurrection of the righteous appears to be a most acceptable doctrine to all scholars, acceptable in the

<sup>1</sup>Robertson, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 418.

<sup>2</sup>S. D. F. Salmond, "Eschatology," HDB, Vol. I, p. 756.

<sup>3</sup>E. C. Dewick, "Eschatology," Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, ed. James Hastings, (2 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), Vol. I, p. 363.

sense that they quite uniformly hold that the New Testament clearly teaches the doctrine. Of course, Paul presents the matter from a number of different angles. In 1 Corinthians xv. he has given the classic argument for the resurrection of the dead. We cannot examine the passage in detail, but would just point out that he bases the doctrine on Christ's coming out of the grave. In the paraphrase of Robertson and Plummer, it may be put like this:

If Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation of the Gospel is empty verbiage, and your faith in it is empty credulity. And, what is more, we are found guilty of misrepresenting God, because we have represented Him as having raised the Christ, whereas He did nothing of the kind, if as a matter of fact dead people are never raised.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, there is definite order among the revived holy ones of God. In verse 23 we read: "But each in his own rank: Christ as firstfruits; then those who are Christ's at his coming."<sup>2</sup> The word "firstfruits" "implies difference in agreement, distinction in order along with unity in nature and determining principle."<sup>3</sup> The two orders, or ranks, of the resurrection host are "the Captain. . . . in His solitary glory; and the rest of the army now sleeping, to rise at His trumpet's sound. . . ."<sup>4</sup> In our opinion Findlay adds a further thought worthy of mention; that "there is nothing to exclude O. T. saints. . . . nor even the righteous heathen

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<sup>1</sup>Robertson and Plummer, op. cit., p. 344.

<sup>2</sup>1 Cor. xv. 23.   <sup>3</sup>Findlay, 1 Corinthians, p. 926.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 926.

(Acts x. 35, Matt. xxv. 32, 34, John x. 16), from the of 'those who are Christ's.'<sup>1</sup>

If one had access only to Meyer's Commentary at this point, he might be inclined to agree with that great scholar on the following phrase: "Then comes the end."<sup>2</sup> He presents an explanation of "the end" in this way:

Then shall the end be, namely, as is clear from the whole context, the end of the resurrection. . . . According to Paul, therefore, the order of the resurrection is this: (1) it has begun already with Christ Himself; (2) at Christ's return to establish His Kingdom the Christians shall be raised up; (3) thereafter - how soon, however, or how long after the Parousia, is not said - sets in the last act of the resurrection, its close, which, as is now self-evident after what has gone before, applies to the non-Christians. . . . Paul has thus conjoined the doctrine of Judaism regarding a twofold resurrection . . . with the Christian faith, in accordance with the example of Christ Himself.<sup>3</sup>

But Moffatt singles out two possibilities on the true meaning of the end. The first usage of the phrase would be adverbial, giving this sense, "Then, finally, when he hands over his royal power to God the Father, . . . . Death is put down as the last enemy."<sup>4</sup> The second alternative brings in the idea of universal restoration of mankind, thus:

Does it mean 'the rest' or 'the remnant' of mankind, redeemed from the powers of death and evil and made alive in Christ, so that all men are finally alive in him to God as once they were all brought under death and separated from God by having Adam as their ancestor? The attraction of this view is twofold: it supplies a third division (two classes of mankind after Christ) instead of merely two (Christ and his saints), and it provides a

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 927.    <sup>2</sup>1 Cor. xv. 24.

<sup>3</sup>Meyer, op. cit., p.

<sup>4</sup>Moffatt, 1 Corinthians, p. 247.



arisen from the dead. Here and there, of course, were people like Hymenaeus and Philetus,<sup>1</sup> who had a definitely erroneous concept of the resurrection. Nevertheless, the early Christians thought of their religious faith as embracing one who rose the third day according to the scriptures.<sup>2</sup> So long as the believers could be certain of Jesus' resurrection, so long could they be assured of their own.

A first-hand impression of the thrust of Rom. viii. 11 would lead one to suppose that Paul was speaking of the rising from the dead of the body. So Denney explains the verse: "The indwelling spirit is that of Him who raised Jesus from the dead, and as such it is the guarantee that our mortal bodies also (as well as our spirits) shall share in immortality."<sup>3</sup> His exposition appears most reasonable.

But Parry gives quite a different meaning to the verse. He holds that "the reference is not to the final resurrection, but to the present spiritual quickening of the whole man, the foretaste of that. The future is used, because a condition has to be fulfilled by man,  $\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$  ." <sup>4</sup> A little later he says: "the future resurrection is not referred to; but it is of course implied as a consequence

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<sup>1</sup>2 Tim. ii. 17-8.    <sup>2</sup>1 Cor. xv. 4.

<sup>3</sup>James Denney, St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, Vol. II of The Expositor's Greek Testament, ed. W.R. Nicoll (5 vols.; Grand Rapids, Mich., Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ.Co., n.d.) p. 647.

<sup>4</sup>R. St John Parry, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Romans, Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges, ed. R. St John Parry (Cambridge: University Press, 1921)p.113.

of the whole relation thus described between God and man."<sup>1</sup>  
 Again, ". . . . viii. 1-11 argues that if God had power and  
 will to raise Jesus from the dead, He must have power and  
 will to raise us in and through His Son from the death of  
sin (underscoring ours)."<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps Parry's explanation of the verse was suggested to him by de Wette as Meyer quotes him:

'This death-overcoming Spirit of God shall destroy more and more the principle of sin and death in your bodies, and instead of it introduce the principle of the life-bringing Spirit into your whole personality, even into the body itself,' - a thought which opens up the prospect of the future resurrection or change of the body.<sup>3</sup>

Of the two views given above, each of which guarantees the resurrection of the body, so far as we are able to comprehend it, the present writer would favor the first interpretation, for Paul is speaking about mortal bodies, not mortal souls, at this point. Yet, "the link which connects the believer with Christ, and makes him participate in Christ's resurrection, is the possession of His Spirit."<sup>4</sup> What Paul is contending is that if we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts here, we shall surely rise again at the last day, or be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 113.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>3</sup>H. A. W. Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Hand-Book to the Epistle to the Romans, trans. J. C. Moore and E. Johnson (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, Publishers, 1889), 312.

<sup>4</sup>Sanday and Headlam, op.cit., p. 198.

<sup>5</sup>1 Cor. xv. 51-52.

A final word on the change of the body at the end of time. To the Philippians Paul wrote: "who (Christ) will transform the body that belongs to our low estate till it resembles the body of his Glory, by the same power that enables him to make everything subject to himself."<sup>1</sup> The question of how a human body that has decayed and disintegrated into dust, or perhaps disappeared as in the case of people who have drowned has ever been a source of wonder to men. It just does not seem possible to many that once our life is snuffed out and the body deteriorates we can ever be a whole personality again (that is, with body reunited to the soul).

For the Christian that is no problem. He readily concedes that he does not understand the teaching of the Bible about the resurrection any more than does an unbeliever. But he knows just as well that the unbeliever cannot explain what is visible to the human eye, namely the human body as it is constituted at present. In other words, there is mystery on every hand, even in regard to the things of life which we all take for granted.

Paul plainly taught that Christ would remake or re-fashion our bodies, so as to make it conform to the new type of life it will have in the resurrection. What we have now is a body of humiliation - not a body to be despised as the Stoics did, for our bodies have been entrusted to us by our Creator; but nevertheless a body

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<sup>1</sup>Phil. iii. 21, Moffatt Translation.

in which our mortal state of humiliation is clothed . . . with a subordinate reference to its weakness, its subjection to vanity, corruption, and death, - its sufferings, and the hindrances which it offers to Christian striving and spiritual attainment.<sup>1</sup>

Paul also taught that the resurrection body would be the result of Christ's working in the believer. The word for power-ἐνέργεια-"is used only of superhuman power in the New Testament."<sup>2</sup> Michael points out that

the transforming of the believer's body will be in keeping with his (Christ's) mighty power. There is a suggestion in the clause that Great power will be needed to effect the transformation; but the task will not be beyond the Saviour's power. Calvin remarks that the object of the clause is to remove every possible doubt.<sup>3</sup>

There is a nice use of καί here which marks the measure of the power in question, for it emphasizes that Christ is able "not only to transform the body but also to subject all things to himself."<sup>4</sup> It is the also which makes our Saviour glorious, which points to his ability to make our new bodies conform to the body of his glory, which assures the child of God that for him the resurrection of the dead will be a time of joyful union with him who has gone to prepare a place for his own,<sup>5</sup> that they might be with him forever.

<sup>1</sup>Vincent, Philippians, p. 120.

<sup>2</sup>Michael, op. cit., p. 186. <sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 185.

<sup>4</sup>Vincent, Philippians, p. 122. <sup>5</sup>John xiv. 3.

## CHAPTER V

### THE JUDGMENT ACCORDING TO PAUL

The last subject which engages our attention in this dissertation is one of the "twin-woes in the travail by which the age to come is brought to birth," but which "is not cleanly separated" from its twin "even at their eschatological emergence."<sup>1</sup> The former "twin" in this case is the final judgment; the latter, the resurrection of the dead,

The doctrine of the last judgment has been accepted in a number of ways, of which some have been poles apart. In the writings of Paul it may be plainly seen, we think, that the Apostle to the Gentiles believed in a future event to come at the end of time, when all men would appear before the Judge of the living and the dead, there to receive a just treatment for the things done in the body, whether good or bad.<sup>2</sup> In other words, when our life is over in its present condition, it is not yet complete. More is coming: it consists, at least in part, in the final disposition of our record of life. In the words of Denney - and they are wise words - the truth is that "in this world, we have not seen the last of anything."<sup>3</sup> Although untold numbers throughout the ages have lived according to that easy-going philo-

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<sup>1</sup>Vos, op. cit., p. 261.      <sup>2</sup>2 Cor. v. 10.

<sup>3</sup>James Denney, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, The Expositor's Bible, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (25 vols.; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1900), p. 185.

sophy of life which says, "A man has no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be joyful"<sup>1</sup> (some would add, "for tomorrow we die"), yet there still lingers in the human heart the feeling "That for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."<sup>2</sup> The families of humanity in countless ways have manifested this latter conviction, as may be seen in the varied funeral rites, in the different religious customs, in the prevalence of the subject in the literatures of the races.

It is Morgan's contention that

the pessimism and dualism of the apocalyptic world-view (of the Old Testament era) . . . its conception of a resurrection from the dead and a Final Judgment, can be accounted for only on the hypothesis of Persian influence,<sup>3</sup>

although he is also willing to grant that "belief in a resurrection of the dead and a universal judgment forms a landmark in the history of Hebrew religion."<sup>3</sup>

Now, we would say that if by "Hebrew religion" is meant the faith expressed in the Old Testament writings, then the landmark would be due to God's revealing his truth to his several prophets; if it means the faith which the Jews as a class had, then Morgan may be right. In the case of Paul, who insisted that every scripture is God-breathed,<sup>4</sup> who also enjoyed a privilege experienced by so few in Chris-

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<sup>1</sup>Eccl. viii. 15, ARV.    <sup>2</sup>Eccl. xi. 9, ARV.

<sup>3</sup>W. Morgan, "Judgment, Damnation," HDB, Vol. I, p. 662.

<sup>4</sup>2 Tim. iii. 16.

tian history, the privilege of receiving by revelation the truth of Christ,<sup>1</sup> we feel not only that he did derive much of his religious faith (which includes the judgment) from the Old Testament era, but also that his strict Jewish training was basically influenced by his realization that what God had made known to Moses, David, and other Old Testament writers found its fulfilment in the work of redemption as seen in God's Son, who died, was buried, and rose again the third day to purchase redemption for his people.<sup>2</sup>

In this chapter we shall consider the judgment from the viewpoint of the administrators of the judgment, the subjects of the judgment, and the character of the judgment.

## I. The Administrators of the Judgment.

### 1. God

As clear an instance of the truth that God will be judge is this: "For we must all stand before the judgment seat of God."<sup>3</sup> With this we may cite the following: "And reckonest thou this, . . . that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?"<sup>4</sup> In his letter to the Romans Paul is particularly incisive in his analysis of man's responsibility to God. With masterful development of thought he lays down the great Old Testament truth that "there is none righteous, no, not one."<sup>5</sup> Men have sinned. They must be judged. They

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<sup>1</sup>Gal. i. 11-12.      <sup>2</sup>1 Cor. xv. 3-4.

<sup>3</sup>Rom. xiv. 10, ARV.      <sup>4</sup>Rom. ii. 3, ARV; cf. vv.4-5.

<sup>5</sup>Rom. iii. 10; cf. Ps. xiv. 1-3.

had offended a righteous God. He may have been thinking of the Preacher in his sweeping and universal conclusion to his strange book: "God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."<sup>1</sup> At any rate, Paul understood the point of the Preacher's contention, for he speaks of God's righteous judgment, of God's judgment seat, of our giving account to God, and the like.<sup>2</sup>

In Romans x. the various texts differ in the reading of the last phrase. Some manuscripts have "judgment seat of Christ." Sanday ventures a good suggestion in favor of the reading "of God." He says:

God is here mentioned as Judge because (see ii. 16) he judges the world through Christ. . . . It is quite impossible to follow Liddon in taking Θεός of Christ in his Divine nature; that would be contrary to all Pauline usage. But it is important to notice how easily St. Paul passes from Χριστός to Θεός.<sup>3</sup>

Lenski presents much the same thought from a different angle:

The correct reading is 'the judgment-seat of God,' changed by a few texts to 'of Christ' (A. V.), needlessly, for the constant teaching of the Scripture is that God shall execute the judgment through Christ (John 5, 22).<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Christ

In his second letter to the Corinthians Paul wrote: "For we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat

<sup>1</sup> Eccl. xii. 14, ARV.      <sup>2</sup> Rom. ii. 5; xiv. 10, 12.

<sup>3</sup> Sanday, op. cit., p. 389.

<sup>4</sup> R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1936), p. 832.



of Christ, that each one may receive the things which he has done through his body, whether good or bad."<sup>1</sup>

The picture here is of Christ in authority, for he will be sitting, while men will stand. "In the N. T. (see reff.) βῆμα is always used (except in the quotation Acts. vii. 5) of the official seat of a judge."<sup>2</sup>

To speak of the judgment seat of God and of the judgment seat of Christ in these passages as though both the Father and Son were occupying the same seat at once seems to make Paul contradict himself. For obviously, no matter how we conceive of God, yet ordinarily we do not think of the first and second Persons of the Trinity as occupying in a visible manner the same place at the same time. An excellent way to resolve the difficulty is given by Denney in his exposition of Rom. xiv. 10:

In 2 Cor. v. 10 we have τῷ βῆματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ but here τοῦ Θεοῦ is the correct reading. We cannot suppose that by τοῦ Θεοῦ here Paul means Christ in His Divine nature; the true way to mediate between the two expressions is seen in chap. ii. 16, Acts xvii. 31.

The translation of the AV is defective, in creating an impression which might be rather harmless or weak. When it renders "we must all appear" it uses a term that "is not strong enough, since it implies only presence at the judg-

<sup>1</sup>2 Cor. v. 10.

<sup>2</sup>J. H. Bernard, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians Vol. III of The Expositor's Greek Testament, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (5 vols.; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n. d.), p. 68.

<sup>3</sup>Vincent, Word Studies, III, p. 319.

ment-seat. The important fact is our being revealed as we are."<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Saints

The weaknesses of the Corinthian Christians in Paul's day were many and significant. One need only analyze carefully what he wrote about in his extant letters to that group to be convinced of that. One of these shortcomings pertained to a characteristic peculiar to some Greeks. Dods informs us that

the Greeks, in general, were fond of going to law. They were not only quarrelsome, but they seemed to derive an excitement pleasant to their frivolous nature in the suspense and uncertainty of cases before the courts. The converts to Christianity seemed not to have discarded this taste, and as a habit of going to law not merely involved great loss of time, but was also dangerous to the feeling of brotherhood which should exist among Christians, St. Paul takes the opportunity to throw in some advice on the subject.<sup>2</sup>

In other words, when the church constituency began to quarrel among themselves, they resorted to heathen courts for a settlement of their disputes. In 1 Corinthians vi. the Apostle asks a number of rhetorical questions: "Or know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world is judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels?"<sup>3</sup> The passage is "one of those broad widely-suggestive statements with which St. Paul from time to time surprises us,

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<sup>1</sup>Vincent, Word Studies, III, p. 319.

<sup>2</sup>Marcus Dods, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, The Expositor's Bible, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (25 vols.; New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1903), p. 131.

<sup>3</sup>1 Cor. vi. 2-3, ARV.

making them casually, as if he had many more equally astounding facts in his knowledge which he might also reveal if he had leisure."<sup>1</sup>

In bold relief Paul sketches the flaw in the conduct of the Christians towards each other. He reminds them "of a truth they should have known, since it belongs to the nature of 'the kingdom of God . . . . and to the glory they look for at the unveiling of Christ'. . . ." <sup>2</sup> Further, "on the throne of world-judgment Christ will sit (Acts xvii. 31, Matt. xxv. 31f.), and the saints - sc. after their own acquittal - as His assessors."<sup>3</sup>

The sense of the passage is graphically presented by Lenski:

What a tremendous act - to judge the world! What lofty dignity for those to whom such judgment is committed! Paul always hurls the full power of fact against wrong thought and wrong action; he overwhelms and never merely moves a little. And now some foolish church member in Corinth presumes to think that the saints who judge the world are 'unworthy' to adjudicate in some trivial affair between himself and a brother? The very idea is ridiculous.<sup>4</sup>

This thought of judging might well give pause to any serious individual. For servants of Christ to "have the responsibility of pronouncing judgment on character, and of allotting destiny, reward or punishment" may well cause one to say, "We shrink from such a thought."<sup>5</sup> Yet that feeling

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<sup>1</sup>Dods, op. cit., p. 132.      <sup>2</sup>Findlay, I Cor., p. 814.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 814.

<sup>4</sup>R. Cl H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians (Lutheran Book Concern, Columbus, Ohio, 1935), pp. 240-1.

<sup>5</sup>Dods, op. cit., p. 132.

need not be unmixed by another consideration which has likewise been suggested by Dods:

If we, in this present world, submit ourselves to those who have knowledge of law and ordinary justice, we may well be content to be judged in the world to come by those whose holiness has been matured by personal strife against evil, by sustained efforts to cleanse their souls from bias, from envy, from haste, from harshness, from all that hinders them from seeing and loving the truth.<sup>1</sup>

## II. The Subjects of the Judgment

### 1. Christians

As in the case of the resurrection doctrine, so in the case of the judgment, scholars of varying theologies are fairly well agreed that the scriptures teach that God's people will be judged. They point out that Paul, for example, speaks of God's people in such passages where he says, "We shall do this," or "We shall do that." This attitude is reflected in some of the outstanding judgment verses. As one instance, let us note that when he gives expression to the judgment of Christians, he says, "we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto him."<sup>2</sup>

Obviously it cannot be said of the ungodly that he tries to be well-pleasing unto Christ. That may be predicated of Christians. Plummer interprets the opening phrase by showing that

in late Greek, *φιλοτιμῆσαι*, loses its definiteness, and need mean no more than 'strive earnestly': so that 'labour' (A. V.) and 'make it our aim' (R. V.) represent it fairly well. . . . This aim of the Apostle is his legitimate ambition: whatever his personal wishes might

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 133. <sup>2</sup>2 Cor. v. 9, ARV.

be, this is a point of honour with him.<sup>1</sup>

In another work Plummer says: "All Christians, without exception, are summed up under τοὺς πάντας ἡμᾶς."<sup>2</sup> Bernard likewise points out the emphatic character of the use of "we."<sup>3</sup>

## 2. The Wicked

In turning our attention to the question of the unrepentant sinners at the end of the world, we find a number of writers who either declare that Paul did not teach a judgment of the wicked or say that we cannot tell from his writings whether he held to such a judgment. Morgan, for example, refers to the book of Revelation and its two pictures, the one of the redeemed in heaven, the other of devils and the condemned in the lake of fire. "Of the second," he states, "there is not a single trace in the Pauline Epistles. The wicked simply disappear from the scene, the nature and term of their punishment being left shrouded in obscurity."<sup>4</sup> But is it? We think not. A candid reading of such passages as Rom. ii. and 2 Thess. i. in particular would show that the wicked will be present at the great Assize. In Rom. ii. 1-16, especially verses 3-5 and 16, Paul inquires whether he who does things against which God makes a judgment (cf. verse 2) thinks he can flee from God's judgment (verse 3). Why flee? Because all is not well between the soul and God. Moreover, the self-righteous moral-

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<sup>1</sup>A. Plummer, 2 Corinthians (Cambridge), p. 88.

<sup>2</sup>A. Plummer, 2 Corinthians (ICC), p. 154.

<sup>3</sup>Bernard, 1 Corinthians, p. 67.

<sup>4</sup>Morgan, "Judgment, Damnation," ERE, Vol. I, p. 663.

ist is plainly told what is his due if he continues unrepentant. He feels secure, yet is doomed. Let Lenski speak here:

The irony is crushing. For the whole idea of accumulating more and more treasure is suggested by the moralistic zealotry of this man, who thinks that the more he judges others and tries to reform them the more he is accumulating a great moral treasure of merit with God, for which God will let him escape any judgment of wrath (v. 3). 'Well,' says Paul, 'treasure indeed thou art accumulating, piling it up more and more - treasure of wrath!'<sup>1</sup>

To the Thessalonians Paul said that they should rest with himself and others, because in time Christ would come with the angels of his power to give a just return to those who knew not God and to those who obeyed not the gospel of Christ.<sup>2</sup> Commentators generally designate the first group as representing Gentiles (who to the Jews were ignorant of the true God) and the second group as pointing to Jews who did not receive the Savior. But we feel that Findlay gives a better exposition in showing that as "Paul taxes rejecters of Christ indiscriminately in Rom. x. 12-16, and even Gentiles specifically in Rom. xi. 30"<sup>3</sup> so here he makes no artificial distinction between the nations, but speaks of unbelievers generally.

The end of the unredeemed is "eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power."<sup>4</sup> Certainly such a prospect - and terrible it is - does not suit those whom the Lord calls his own. Therefore, our

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<sup>1</sup>Lenski, Romans, p. 144.   <sup>2</sup>2 Thess. i. 7-8.

<sup>3</sup>Findlay, 2 Thessalonians, p. 148.   <sup>4</sup>2 Thess. i. 9.

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<sup>1</sup>Lenski, Romans, p. 144.      <sup>2</sup>2 Thess. i. 7-8.

<sup>3</sup>Findlay, 2 Thessalonians, p. 148.      <sup>4</sup>2 Thess. i. 9.

thought is that the wicked are also arraigned before the bar of him who reads the heart and knows the innermost thoughts of men. It seems most natural that when Paul told Timothy that Christ would judge the living and the dead,<sup>1</sup> that spiritual son would understand all the living and all those who had died. The distinction there is not a moral differentiation: no hint is suggested about the good and the bad as such. The difference is between those who will be alive when Christ returns and those who have passed on.

### III. The Character of the Judgment

#### 1. Righteous

On that memorable day in Athens when the Jewish evangelist spoke to the citizens about their altar to the Unknown God, the proud Greeks were amazed to hear a keen thinker speak about some arresting ideas of life. Among others, his subjects included a resurrection of the dead - a bodily resurrection - and a judgment for all men, inasmuch as God commanded everyone to repent. The judgment would be "in righteousness," said Paul. Lumby suggests that "it may be that at this point the Apostle's speech was stopped. Neither party among the hearers would have any sympathy with the doctrine of a resurrection and a final judgment."<sup>2</sup> But whether they listened further or not, Paul told them God's judgment would be in righteousness, that is, according to that which is right.

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<sup>1</sup>2 Tim. iv. 1.    <sup>2</sup>Lumby, op. cit., p. 314.



The idea conveyed by the Apostle can be expressed in his phrase in Romans ii. 6, "God . . shall give to each one according to his works." What was bad in the lives of men will receive punishment, what was good will receive reward. Verses 7-10 of the same chapter set forth the two types of decision made. "The judgment will correspond to the man's real character as shown by the works he produces, not as merits that earn but as evidence of character."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, "the principle underlies the judgment for Jew and Gentile. . . . Men are judged according to their works, whether they have or have not had such a special revelation of the Divine will as was given to Israel."<sup>2</sup>

We do not propose to deal with the eternal state. But in passing it will be worth our while to notice the reasoning of A. S. Johnson, the founder of the Johnson Bible College. Concerning the judgment against the wicked and the consequent punishment he uses Napoleon as an example. He says:

Look at Napoleon Bonaparte, the arch-criminal of the modern world. Who can adequately enumerate his crimes against human society? . . . Think of the sum total - it is unthinkable, inestimable! - of human woe fed into the vortex of this man's damnable ambition. Did England adequately punish him? . . . A thousand times no! No human court could have adequately punished such a man. . . . Suppose Bonapart had to suffer as much as he caused others to suffer; to die once for every death he caused, whether from disease or by the implements of war on the battlefield; . . . how long, think you, would it take? There is only one word in the English language that will give any conception of it: 'eternity', - or its equivalent, 'everlasting', and the only definition of these words that convey anything at

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<sup>1</sup>Parry, Romans, p. 50.    <sup>2</sup>Denney, Romans, p. 597.

all is the 'ages of ages'!<sup>1</sup>

2. Incisive

"God shall judge the secrets of men."<sup>2</sup> How little men realize that there is one before whom all things are naked and opened and unconcealed.<sup>3</sup> How calmly and indifferently men dismiss the idea of a final accounting of their inner life. Yet Paul, who knew that man perforce looks on the outward appearance while God looks upon the heart,<sup>4</sup> touched the heart of the matter when he said God would judge the secrets of men. Some secrets are quite innocent. Nothing may be condemned simply because it is not broadcast from the housetops, or, to use a more applicable figure for today, over the radio. Yet men know that their secrets are such that they do not reveal them to others in their fulness.

When the Lord gathers all people before him, he will decide the destinies of men not on the basis of what they appeared to be, but on the basis of what they actually were. An older, but capable, commentator puts it this way: "The secrets of men, not their works of parade, done to be seen and admired, but those hidden secrets of the heart and life, which form the true criterion of character."<sup>5</sup> The ease with which people deceive their fellowmen by word of mouth, by expression of face, by outward action, will then be a thing

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<sup>1</sup>A. S. Johnson, The Resurrection and the Future Life, (Knoxville: Knoxville Lithographing Co., 1913), pp. 325-6.

<sup>2</sup>Rom. ii. 16.    <sup>3</sup>Heb. iv. 13.    <sup>4</sup>1 Sam. xvi. 7.

<sup>5</sup>Charles Hodge: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (Philadelphia: Alfred Martien, 1870), p. 321.

of the past. According to Paul, the judgment of God will be incisive, just as the word of God, living and active, pierces to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.<sup>1</sup> In terms of common parlance, there will be no fooling then.

### 3. Individual

An old saying goes like this: "Death is not a factory gate through which men go by thousands, but a turnstile through which men go one by one."<sup>2</sup> So it is with the judgment. People may and do wish that they would not have to give account of the things which they have done in the body. They would prefer to have annihilation of the soul, to be blotted out of existence forever.

Yet, if the word of God be true, there is little sense in wishing for such a condition. For the scripture says that each one of us shall give account of himself to God."<sup>3</sup> Again, "we must all be made manifest . . . that each one may receive the things which he has done through his body, whether good or bad."<sup>4</sup> Moule points out that in "all three passages (2 Cor. v. 10, 1 Cor. iii. 11-15, Rom. xiv. 12) . . . the language, though it lends itself freely to the universal Assize, is limited by context, as to its direct import, to the Master's scrutiny of His own servants as such."<sup>5</sup> We concede that the primary reference of "each

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<sup>1</sup>Heb. xiv. 12.      <sup>2</sup>Source unknown.      <sup>3</sup>Rom. xiv. 12.

<sup>4</sup>2 Cor. v. 10.      <sup>5</sup>Moule, op. cit., p. 386.

one" may be to the godly, but at the same time would submit that the unsaved cannot ignore the same requirement. In the light of Paul's declaration that God will give to each man according to his works, the wicked will likewise receive sentence; only, their sentence will correspond to the works of their father which they did. To those on his left hand Christ will say, "I was thirsty, hungry, naked, sick, and you did not help me; therefore, depart."<sup>1</sup> To those on his right he will say, "I was sick, hungry, in prison, and you visited me and ministered to my needs; therefore, come unto me."<sup>2</sup> To each according to his works.

The judgment concept is a sobering thought. It ought to make men determine with all the power of their being to live as in the realization of their responsibility. For the Christian, it is enough when he remembers that even though he must give account of himself to God, yet "there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus."<sup>3</sup> For the Christian, it is even better if he can say whole-heartedly, "But let us, since we are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Matt. xxv. 41-46.      <sup>2</sup>Cf. Matt. xxv. 31-40, 46a.

<sup>3</sup>Rom. viii. 1.      <sup>4</sup>1 Thess. v. 8.

## CONCLUSION

In concluding this dissertation, let us reconsider the picture of the end-time as Paul brings it out here and there throughout his utterances, whether by letter or by sermon.

To appreciate the great Apostle's teaching of eschatology, we should keep in mind his training. We have tried to show that while Paul was reared under the rigid religious discipline of the Pharisees, and therefore knew many of the writings used by the Jews of his day, nevertheless the most important influences to bear upon his thought - and that includes his eschatology - was the Christian influence, or, in other words, his relationship with the living Christ. His failure to appeal to apocalyptic literature in his references to the future shows, as Porter has pointed out, that his basic dependence cannot rest upon that ground. The gospel which Paul preached was "not after man," nor did Paul receive "it of man, . . . . but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."<sup>1</sup> That gospel included not merely the teaching about Christ's first coming, but also centered upon the future, since "Jesus . . . . delivered us from the wrath to come."<sup>2</sup> That is, Paul's message, coming from Christ, was

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<sup>1</sup>Gal. i. 11-12.    <sup>2</sup>1 Thess. i. 10.

inextricably interwoven not merely with the past but also with the future, and definitely did not leave out the end-time.

The coming of Christ is brought to our attention by the use of various terms, each of which helps to fill in a picture which is given mostly in outline. The parousia emphasizes the fact that Christ is coming so that his people will be in his presence, and that indefinitely. The apocalypse stresses the truth that the universal Sovereign will some day be made outwardly manifest to the world, as he has already been made spiritually manifest to his people. The day, whether alone or in its variant forms, brings out the thought of the closing of time as we know it now, once the Savior returns in power and great glory. The epiphany of Christ is much like the unveiling of Christ's glory (so the term revelation intimates), an event of great moment, since Christ would mete out the final judgment at that time.

The parousia in Paul's thinking was that future event when arresting circumstances would force themselves upon the attention of men of all ages. It would include the attendance of Christ by all his saints, the command (or shout) which all must obey, the destructive power of God's Son over Satan and his servants, and the resurrection of all in the graves and the sudden change of the living.

Perhaps the most amazing single event of human history preceding the return of Christ is the appearance of the

man of sin. At least, the Antichrist would demand worship of the members of the human family, and would have power to work miracles to deceive the ungodly. His end, however, would be destruction which would come by the mere breath of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The appearing of the Antichrist, however, could not readily take place without a preparation for his coming. For that reason Paul showed that already the forces were at work which would make it natural for unbelievers to submit themselves to him, once he came. Moreover, Paul pointed out that the preparation would include the fearful times when evil men would get worse and worse, and the people of the world would turn their minds to the teachings of demons, to those things which would please them but which would nevertheless end in their ruin. They would believe the lie; they would follow the leading of evil men. Perilous or grievous times would characterize the time preceding the end.

The study of the doctrine of the resurrection as given in Paul shows that he did not actually say much about the rising again of the wicked. In 1 Corinthians xv. and 1 Thessalonians iv. and other places (for example, Rom. viii. 11 and Phil. iii.20-21) he does speak most definitely about the resurrection of the Lord's people. Only one clear instance of a mentioning of the wicked may be given: Acts xxiv. 15. We readily concede that there is not much of an explicit treatment of the rising of the unsaved. At the

same time we would emphasize the power of Christ in fashioning us anew, so that we shall be made like unto his own glorious body.

When we turn to the matter of the judgment, the situation is quite different. In no uncertain terms Paul insists that all people will stand before Christ. If we limit ourselves merely to Romans ii., it becomes very plain indeed that some who are made manifest before God will hear an indictment against themselves. There will be "anguish and calamity for every human soul that perpetrates evil, for the Jew first and for the Greek as well."<sup>1</sup> Not only will God judge, not only will Christ judge, but also saints shall judge the world. The final reckoning day is coming. For the unredeemed it is a thought grievous to be borne; for those who love the Lord Jesus, it will be a time of glorious protection of the soul by him who alone was "raised for our justification"<sup>2</sup> and who alone will give out the crowns of righteousness to those who have loved his appearing.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Rom. ii. 9. (Moffatt translation).

<sup>2</sup>Rom. iv. 25.   <sup>3</sup>2 Tim. iv. 8.



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