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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question. Please explain Mark 16:15-20.

Answer. It is very important to observe the times and seasons indicated in the Scriptures. This commission was given in the spring-time of the Gospel Age, when the all-important work of the Church was seed sowing. The commission, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," indicated that it was no longer confined to the Jew.

But seed sowing was not the only work of the Church. They had something to do in the way of cultivating the tender plants which spring up from the sown seed.

The spring-time and the summer of the Gospel Age are both past, and the autumn with its harvest work is here. "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that *soweth* and he that *reapeth* may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth and another reapeth," etc.

Jesus spoke these words with reference to the harvest of the Jewish Age, but since that age was a pattern of this, it is as emphatically true here. The principal part of the sowing of this age was done by the early church, while all the reaping is *our* special privilege. But when the golden grain is all gathered in the faithful sower and the faithful reaper, who diligently observed the times and seasons, shall rejoice together.

Paul's counsel, "Do good to all men as you have opportunity, especially to the household of faith," should be continually borne in mind. While about our special business of reaping in presenting advanced truth to consecrated saints, we should improve every opportunity for dropping some seeds of truth among others with whom we come in contact.

But we should not make the mistake of expecting this new seed to flourish and come to maturity in this age. There are a thousand years ahead of us for this work, and it will be the *special* work after this harvest is ended. But it is consecrated believers only who may be developed and perfected now. He that believeth and is baptized with the baptism that Christ was baptized with—into death—shall be saved now to the high calling offered in this age. But he that believeth

not shall be damned (condemned) as utterly unfit for the high office to which those saved in this age are called. But though thus condemned now, they will have abundant evidence for faith, and ample opportunity to be saved and brought to human perfection in the coming age, when the blind eyes shall be opened and the deaf ears shall be unstopped.

Verses 17 and 18 mention certain signs which should accompany believers, and verse 20 shows that the Lord did thus work with the early Church, confirming their word with the promised signs. But Paul shows us (1 Cor. 13:8-10) that when the necessity for such signs is done away they will no longer continue. They were a necessity in the introduction of Christianity, but we have now abundant and substantial evidence on which to rest our faith without them.

Q. Does Matt. 24:6 teach that "wars and rumors of wars" are a sign of the end of the Gospel Age?

A. No; we think not. Wars and rumors of wars have characterized earth's history, with varying frequency and cruelty, ever since the fall of man. But the Scriptures assure us that the time of the end of the Gospel Age, or end of the dominion of the "prince of this world," will witness a more general and wide-spread warfare than was ever known before, involving all the powers of earth. The indications of such an uprising we now see in the rapid and world-wide development of the principles of Communism. Already men's hearts are beginning to fail them for fear of those things that are coming on the earth, and the cloud, which continues to grow darker, is fast overspreading the whole heavens. Before many years the storm will burst in all its fury, "and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." Dan. 12:1.

Jesus tells his disciples that they will hear of many wars and rumors of wars, but tells them not to be troubled about it, for all these things must come to pass. As long as Satan rules the world strife and war and confusion must reign, and you shall be hated and afflicted and killed for my name's sake. But amid all these troubles the saints, knowing that these things *must be so* for a time, and that "*the end is not yet,*" must patiently endure until "he comes whose right it is" to take the kingdom from the usurper and reward his faithful saints.

So also famines and pestilences and earthquakes are not to be regarded specially as signs of the end. Though they will doubtless be frequent, and perhaps more so in the time of the end, like wars they have been a part of Satan's policy from the first. It is not to be presumed that the prince of darkness will suffer the binding influences of the new Prince, which are now at work to fetter his power without a struggle. Without a doubt his rage will spend its force in distressing mankind in various ways, for he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

Q. If the punishment of the wicked is merely a blotting out of existence, how do you understand

that the punishment of the wicked is equal to the reward of the righteous?

A. The Scriptures nowhere state that there will be such equality. They do not teach that the misery of the wicked must tally with the glory and blessedness of the saints. That idea was promulgated by the adversary through Papacy, but has no existence in the Word of God. All other punishments except that of the second death are designed as corrective, and this final punishment shows that God in mercy takes away the being which could only be a source of misery to itself and others. In mercy God will blot such out of existence. But, "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no *pleasure* in the death of the wicked." (Ezek. 33:11.)

Q. Please explain 1 Pet. 4:17,18—"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

A. The term judgment may be properly applied to the process of trial, or to the result of trial—the decision or verdict. In the former sense the judgment of the Church began over eighteen hundred years ago, and has been progressing ever since. But in the latter sense, it is due in the end or harvest of the Gospel Age. Hence the separating of wheat and tares, and also of the ripe and unripe wheat, now going on.

And if the judgment of the Church, as to who is fit or unfit to receive the Gospel prize offered to us, has begun, what shall the end or decision of this judgment be concerning them that obey not the Gospel of God?—not concerning them that never heard, or that had no ears to hear it (Rev. 2:11), but concerning them that had a hearing ear, that did once hear with gladness and appreciate the Gospel, and then, for various reasons, did not obey it—the ungodly, not necessarily vicious and in direct opposition and defiance of God, but those claiming to be his and yet not fully obedient. There are very many such. What shall the end of this judgment be to them?

Let the Psalmist answer: "They are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not *stand* in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." (Psa. 1:4,5.) Like the chaff they will be carried away by the winds of false doctrine, or the storms of opposition;

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they will not be able to stand the test, or counted worthy to be gathered with the faithful. But, "blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of [such unfaithful ones] the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of [these] sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." Though in this judgment a

thousand unfaithful shall fall at his side, and ten thousand at his right hand, he shall stand, and in due time will receive the great reward.

Verse 18 shows that the righteous, or those who pass the judgment of this age and win the prize of the high calling, will scarcely, or merely, be saved—that is, with difficulty. It will require all their faith, and all their effort: those who do not exercise faith and put forth all their effort will not be *able* to stand.

Q. Please compare Luke 6:29,30, with 1 Tim. 5:8, and tell me how both these principles can be carried out. There is a miserly and idle class who would completely strip the frugal and industrious if they would literally obey Luke 6:29,30; and before long we would find the command of 1 Tim. 5:8 impossible, while the class referred to would be encouraged in indolence and improvidence. What is duty?

A. This is a very practical question, and one not unfrequently forced upon many. We think, however, that Luke 6:31 settles the difficulty. It reads: “And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.” Mark, it does not say, as they would have you do to them, but, as you would have them do to you. This makes quite a difference. You, as a true child of God, are controlled by the highest principles of love and justice, and would therefore only desire the same of your neighbor. Love and justice would, if possible, feed and clothe your neighbor if he is unable by industry and economy to do it for himself. But neither love nor justice to him or to yourself would encourage indolence, prodigality or meanness.

Verses 27 to 30 are not in opposition to the principle expressed in the golden rule, but teach what should be our attitude towards our enemies who hate and despitefully use us. Their simple teaching is, Don't strike back or try to get even with them. Show them that you are willing to endure hardness, and even to suffer violence and injustice if need be. Verses 30-36 teach us to show a spirit of liberality that will shame their meanness, and a love and mercy that will win their secret respect even while they openly oppose us. The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence now, but in due time the reward will be realized.

Q. Please explain the following texts: (1) John 3:36—“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

A. It is proper to say that we have a thing either when we are in actual possession of it, or when we have a clear deed or title to it. Thus you might say you *have* a piece of property in Europe, though you are not there to possess it, but you hold the deed signed and sealed and made out in your name. Just so he that now believeth on the Son of God, the Redeemer who purchased us with

his own precious blood, has *now* everlasting life; not that he is in actual possession of it, but he holds a clear title to it, signed by Jehovah himself and sealed with the precious blood of Christ.

In the next age, when brought to a knowledge of the truth, all the world must likewise recognize Christ as their Redeemer and Lord and trust in and submit to his authority, else they shall never see life in its fullness and perfection; and God does not recognize as *life* anything short of perfection. The wrath or condemnation of God abideth on all others, and will end in final destruction, if not removed, either in this age or the next. Only a few are yet free from condemnation (1 John 5:19), and many blind eyes must be opened and deaf ears unstopped before the mass of the world can believe, come into harmony with God, and have life everlasting.

Q. (2) "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Mark 16:16.

A. He that believeth and is baptized in the likeness of Christ's death shall be of the special class saved during this age. The advantage to the class saved during this age is the high exaltation to a new nature—the spiritual. But he that believeth not shall be damned, or condemned, as entirely unfit to receive the favor offered during this age. Nearly all the world is so damned, or condemned, but they are not irrecoverably damned as unfit for any service; for we have seen that God has glorious favors in store for them when they shall have been brought to knowledge, faith and obedience—even restitution.

Q. (3) "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thes. 2:11,12.)

A. The preceding verses show that the reference here is to the development of the "Man of Sin"—Papacy. But, all who have been deceived by the great Papal system were not of the class who *had pleasure in unrighteousness*. The deceptions and errors of Papacy, still promulgated through Protestantism, even to-day continue to fetter many of God's children to some extent. But, however sincere were many of the ignorant and deceived ones who afterward formed a part of the Papal system, its "COMING was *after the working of Satan*, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." That is, those who were instrumental in introducing this system were men who, though they knew the truth, received it not in the love of it, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. They sought to pervert the truth for their own selfish ends, and in so doing they found able support in Satan, "the God of this world."

For this cause God left such, as he always does, where they placed themselves, in the hands of the

enemy, who strongly deluded them into believing the lies they sought to propagate, that they all might be condemned who had pleasure in unrighteousness. We have often heard it lightly remarked that if one tells an untruth several times he begins to believe it himself. This is indeed a fearful fact, and an evidence of the increasing power of Satan over such. What a fearful condition to be in, especially for any whose judgment is in the present age, and whose trial must be completed in this life. [See article, "The Judgment," in December issue.] Perilous indeed is the condition of those who at any time pervert the truth of God for selfish ends; though they do it

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at first with trembling and fear, they will shortly do it with boldness, and with a degree of sincerity which gives evidence of their strong and awful delusion.

Q. (4) "Thou believest that there is one God: thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble." James 2:19.

A. Though it is true that "without faith it is impossible to please God," Paul here shows that faith is not the only thing necessary to please him. To believe that there is a God is well; that is a step in the right direction, but that is not enough. There is no special virtue in believing an evident truth; but it is lying and self-deception to disbelieve any truth of which we have clear evidence. The devils also believe and tremble at the word of the Lord because they *know* his power. Faith must be accompanied by obedience to God in so far as the imperfect earthen vessel is able to render it. The daily life must give evidence of faith in all God's promises, and of a love and gratitude which humbly and gratefully accepts his favors.

One other thought might be noted here, viz: that the faith of devils can only inspire trembling, dread and fear, for having presumptuously sinned against God in the face of truth and knowledge, so manifest to those dwelling in his actual presence, there remaineth no more opportunity for them. That was *their judgment day*, and in it they decided their final destiny, which is destruction. And knowing it, they tremble as the time draws near. (Luke 4:34; Matt. 8:29.)

But because of God's gracious promises our faith inspires us with hope and joy; for our *judgment day* is not yet past. But it is a solemn thought that it *is passing* with those who have been brought to a knowledge of the truth. And therefore it becomes us, while rejoicing in hope, to "take heed lest we fall."

Q. (5) "Then he [Jesus] said unto them [the disputing Pharisees], I go my way, and ye shall seek me and shall die in your sins: whither I go ye cannot come."

A. Jesus was going away to the Father, to a higher condition, the divine nature. Had these Pharisees acted differently, they might have followed him to that high exaltation. The privilege of following him was soon to be offered to the meek and lowly of heart. And as a mark of special favor it was to be offered to the Jew first; but these Pharisees, in their pride and unbelief, lost their opportunity. Not having faith in Christ, they were not even justified, and therefore they died in their sins.

But being blinded—at least partially so, as Jesus said they were (Matt. 15:14)—in the coming age their blindness shall be taken away, their pride will be humbled, and then will they seek Him whom they with wicked hands had crucified and slain, and will humbly acknowledge him as both Lord and Christ. And the forgiveness sought in Jesus' dying prayer will be granted; but the opportunity of following Jesus to the divine nature will have forever passed.

Q. (6) "And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Acts 13:48.

A. To ordain means "to set in order," "to arrange according to rule." (See

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Webster.) To ordain, or set in order, for eternal life, is partly our work and partly God's work. God's part of the work was to provide the necessary sacrifice for sin, and to make known to us its efficacy and our privilege of sharing its benefits. Our part of the work is to believe God, to accept these benefits, and act accordingly.

If, when men hear, they are not disposed to be sincere and honest with themselves, but rather love darkness than light because their deeds are evil, they have not taken the first step toward the setting in order for eternal life. If they are not even disposed in favor of truth and righteousness, how can they believe? The sense of the passage, then, is that as many as were disposed, or inclined, toward truth and righteousness, believed. The idea is clearly expressed in Rotherham's translation—"As many as had become disposed for age-abiding life, believed."

Q. Was the promise to Abram, Gen. 13:14-17, ever fulfilled? If so, when—if not, when will it be, and how?

A. In Acts 7:5, we read that God gave to Abram none inheritance in the land of promise; no, *not so much as to set his foot on*, yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him. And in Heb. 11:13, we read: "These all (Abram and others mentioned) died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." As

heretofore shown, the promise will be literally fulfilled to Abram in the incoming Millennial Age, and will soon be realized; for already the fig-tree begins to put forth whereby we know, even if we had no other evidence, that summer is nigh.

Q. I have read in "FOOD," page 98, the answer to part of a query which arose in my mind while learning of the coming *restitution*, viz.: Would there be room for them on the earth if the billions of the dead were resurrected? But while that is fully answered, I still query, How would so large a population *subsist*?

A. Even if we could *think of no way*, it should be no obstacle to reposing faith in the positive promise of God. Remember Abraham, God's promise to him was most improbable (Gen. 18:10, and 22:2; 17:21), yet he "staggered not" at that, but *believed God*—so should we. But foreseeing this query on our part, our Father has explained how it shall be accomplished, saying, "The earth shall yield her increase"; "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." "In the wilderness shall waters break out and streams in the desert." (Isa. 35:1-6.) Thus we see that the changes which God has in contemplation, indicate that he has foreseen all the necessities of his plan, and will make provision for the needs of his creatures in what is termed a *natural* way, and at the same time let us remember that He shall be there to superintend who turned water into wine, and with two loaves fed five thousand.

Q. Since we read that God can "by *no means* clear the guilty," how shall we harmonize that with other statements of Scripture which show that our sins were *imputed* to Jesus and he died for them; while his righteousness was imputed to us, and we shall live on that account, or as elsewhere stated by His (Jesus') stripes we are healed?

A. Suppose a man found guilty of some crime is condemned to imprisonment or \$1,000 fine. He has no money, and is imprisoned. His friends go to the Governor asking his pardon, and get his reply thus: I cannot and will not pardon any man who is really guilty. If you can show that the law was bad, or that the decision of the court was unjust, that would be a reason why I should do him justice by pardoning him, and setting aside the penalty. But if it is admitted that the "law is good," and the decision and penalty just, then I can by no means *clear* the guilty—I cannot *pardon* him.

Suppose, then, that you sold your property, and securing the amount of the fine, went and *paid it FOR* the guilty one. Would not this illustrate the sinners case? Jehovah does not *clear* or pardon them, but redeems them by providing the ransom for sin.

Q. When the Millennium begins, what becomes of those who are not Christians? Are all to die and then to have a resurrection, to be brought to Adamic perfection?

A. As you are doubtless aware we understand Scripture to hold out very different promises to the true Church of this age, from those to the world to be fulfilled in the Millennial Age. Hence we answer, your question supposes that you ask concerning the world, which, however, includes many *nominal* Christians who are in a general way believers in Christ, but who never have sanctified themselves, never *consecrated*, and who, therefore, are not *new* creatures, but still of the *human* nature and heirs with the world of those promises of restitution and blessing which shall flow to the natural man.

Among all these, light, knowledge, truth shall increase and bring attendant blessings and happiness. For a further answer to your first question, we refer you to article entitled "Sanctifying the World," in the TOWER for Feb., 1883.

From your second question we judge that you do not *fully* appreciate DEATH. Death *has* passed upon all humanity, and all are *in death* and under its control, even before the last spark of life becomes extinct. Strictly speaking, everything is *in death* which is perishing; hence only two men ever were fully alive—Adam through sin brought death. The sentence against him was, "Dying, thou shalt die" (Margin), and as soon as the sin had been committed the penalty *began* to take effect. And Jesus when he became a man, like Adam before the fall, had neither death nor *cause* of death (sin) in him, but "in him was *life*" which he gave as a ransom for ours. All others have been in the dead or dying condition.

Likewise we have seen that *resurrection* does not merely mean to lift men from the tomb with only a spark of life, but includes this and all the process following it, which brings them up entirely out of the dying condition to the *perfection* of their *human* nature.

Thus seen, there will be no occasion for others to enter the tomb when the kingdom of heaven has been fully established in the earth. [Which we understand will be about 1914 A.D.] The Great Physician—the Christ—will then be among men in power and the work of healing and restoring all things, but faintly foreshadowed by Jesus' earthly miracles, will commence. The resurrection work will progress both with those who are in their graves and also those *not so far down* in the dark "valley of the shadow of death," and all will have the strength and help provided, by which they may regain the mountain top of human perfection and life which Adam lost the right to through sin, but which *right* was redeemed for all by Christ.

Q. What am I to do? I am a Baptist. I cannot now agree with them, and cannot see how I can consistently remain in the Baptist Church—giving my influence and support to what I now see to be error, even though there are good people in it, and some seeming good moral influence is being exerted by it. Yet there is no Church here holding the views which the WATCH TOWER

maintains. Should I withdraw?

A. We can only repeat to you the word of the Lord, quoted and expounded in other issues of the TOWER. If his command, "Come out of her (Babylon) my people," be not sufficient for you, what could we say that would have *more* weight with you?

We believe the "Baptists" to have as little error as perhaps any of the sects. Back in the days of Bunyan they were evidently very near the Apostolic arrangement of the Church, but it has drifted into the popular sectarian channel with the others—it now has its creed, boundaries and its titled ministry, and ignores the teachings of the Scriptures to teach human tradition, and is now as much a member of the "Image" (Rev. 13:14-17) as any other sect. We can see no other way for you to do than to withdraw your name, influence and support from the institution.

You are probably mistaken about there being no members of the Church of Christ [whose names are written in heaven] in your place; and as a member of that Church to whom God has given greater light, it is your duty, as it should be your joy, to let your light shine, and thereby bless the other members. There may be some of them with you in the Baptist Church, some in the Methodist, Presbyterian, and other sects, who, while really consecrated to the Lord, have been deceived as you were into rendering to sectarianism the service *meant* for God. Remember that Elijah once thought himself alone, and supposed that all Israel was worshipping Baal's image, but God informed him that there were seven thousand who had not. So it is to-day, the truth is daily seeking out those who are faithful and feeding them. All such will heed God's word, and are willing to face the frown of the popular sentiment of the nominal Church, and confess Christ and his teachings.

It should be our constant endeavor to seek out such. You know not how many starving saints may be hungering for the bread which you can supply. Don't expect to find them among the most popular Christians—the *eminently* pious—though there may be some such, but as a general thing it is now as it was in Jesus' day, that the poor of this world are the rich in faith. May God bless the humble messengers and receivers of his glorious truth.

Q. In the July issue you say "the Jew ... could not keep the Law. Please tell us what portion of it they could not keep? You also mention "the life promised under that Law covenant—but *what* life was promised under that Law?

A. The Law is *one whole* law with ten divisions. To keep the Law was to meet the requirements of each of the ten items. The promise of life was to any who could keep the *whole* perfectly, and he who offended or violated *one* part was a violator of the Law, and had no claim on the *life* promised

to the obedient. (Jam. 2:10.) The Apostles and Jesus assure us that none but Jesus ever *kept* that law inviolate, therefore he was the only one who had a right to life, hence it is that the Law did not demand his death, but when he died it was willingly a sacrifice for *our* sins. (See 1 Pet. 3:18; 1 John 3:5; John 6:51; 10:18.)

The *life* promised was a right to continue to *live*—human life.

Q. Please explain Rom. 8:14-17. You teach that the *Spirit* is not received by any until sanctification, but these brethren here addressed were seemingly unsanctified as shown by Rom. 6:19.

A. These two Scriptures are in harmony with our teaching, and with each other. Rom. 6:4,8,11,12,18, and 22, show that the persons addressed were truly consecrated in heart and mind to the Lord. The "*presenting*" vs. 13 and 19, refers not to consecration, but to the carrying out or fulfilling of the covenant already made. They *had* covenanted to render, or had presented their minds to the Lord, now they must not forget to *spend* the life and strength of every member of their bodies in his service.

Q. What became of Jesus' *flesh* when he as a *spiritual* being ascended to heaven?

A. See "Food for Thinking Christians," pages 61 and 62. If you have none you can get a copy free by addressing this office.

Q. Please explain Isa. 11:11. "And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set his hand again, the second time, to recover the remnant of his people which shall be left from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathos, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea."

A. This prophecy of Isaiah seems parallel to that of Jeremiah 16:14-17. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north (Russia, north of Palestine, where the greatest number of that people are now found, and from which they are now being driven by fierce persecution), and from all the lands whither he had driven them; and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers." Yes, the deliverance from Egypt of the remnant of Israel, who lived to see it, was a deliverance they never forgot, but that deliverance will seem insignificant when compared to the great deliverance which the Lord will accomplish when he sets his hand *again, the second time*, to recover the remnant of that people living in the day of the Lord, here referred to. For proof that the day of the Lord is now

upon us, see “Food for Thinking Christians,” and note that these things are already beginning to come to pass. *This day* is this Scripture being fulfilled in your ears—whosoever hath an ear, let him hear.

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— March, 1884 —



Jeżeli zauważyłeś błąd w pisowni, powiadom nas poprzez zaznaczenie tego fragmentu tekstu i przyciśnięcie *Ctrl+Enter*.