TIMELY GREETINGS

— The Only Peace of Mind —

Vol. 2 Nos 27,28

CHRONICALLY ILL WITH TOO MUCH KNOWLEDGE AND TOO LITTLE UNDERSTANDING.

THE SPIRIT THAT ORIGINATED EVIL, AND ITS MANIFESTATION TODAY.

TEXT FOR PRAYER

The Good-Ground Hearer

I shall read from "Christ's Object Lessons," beginning on page 60, third paragraph.

"The word of God often comes in collision with man's hereditary and cultivated traits of character and his habits of life. But the good-ground hearer, in receiving the word, accepts all its conditions and requirements....

"And he brings forth fruit 'with patience.' None who receive God's word are exempt from difficulty and trial; but when affliction comes, the true Christian does not become restless, distrustful, or despondent. Though we can not see the definite outcome of affairs, or discern the purpose of God's providence, we are not to cast away our confidence. Remembering the tender mercies of the Lord, we should cast our care upon Him, and with patience wait for His salvation.

"Through conflict the spiritual life is strengthened. Trials well borne will develop steadfastness of character, and precious spiritual graces. The perfect fruit of faith, meekness, and love often matures best amid storm-clouds and darkness."

Let us pray that our spiritual perceptions be quickened so that we shall more readily understand God's dealings in answer to our prayers; that through conflict the spiritual life is strengthened; that we throw not away our confidence when afflictions arise, but that like Paul we rejoice for having been accounted worthy to suffer in patience.

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V. T. Houteff

CHRONICALLY ILL WITH TOO MUCH KNOWLEDGE AND TOO LITTLE UNDERSTANDING

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF
MINISTER OF DAVIDIAN 7TH-DAY ADVENTISTS
SABBATH, FEBUARY 14, 1948
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To illustrate the subject of our study this afternoon, let us take for example the book which the Denomination has put out on Daniel and The Revelation, the two most invalued books of the Bible. The book which I have in mind was originally entitled *Thoughts on Daniel and The Revelation*. It is written in scholarly fashion, and so convincing are its contents that thousands of copies have been sold all over the world in a number of languages. Anyone that can write a book like it, evidently has great knowledge. We should, however, examine to see how much understanding is there on the books of Daniel and of The Revelation themselves.

Take for example Revelation chapter 12, where it speaks of the 12-star-crowned woman. The Denomination in the book I mentioned explains that this woman is a symbol of the Christian church, that her sun-clothing is the Gospel of Christ, and the public seems to take it in very nicely.

But if the brethren were asked the question: "How could the woman be a symbol of the Christian church, and at the same time be Christ's

mother?" They will have a time answering, for Christ Himself brought the Christian church into being thirty or more years after He was born. Consequently she could not be His mother.

And if they were asked, "How could the woman's sun-clothing symbolize the Christian church clothed with the Gospel of Christ, as you contend?" they would have a hard time answering for she was clothed with the sun before Christ was born, and before the Gospel even came into being.

Were these questions put to the brethren, I am sure they would become profoundly confused in trying to answer. But the fact that no one asks these questions, shows that there is altogether too little understanding throughout Christendom.

Again you cannot deny the fact that the Denomination has made a very scholarly exposition of The Seven Trumpets, of plowing through such an intricate symbolism, propping their explanations of it with commentaries and history and making the people take it as nicely as they do. By their scholarly methods, though, they contend that the locusts which were released as soon as the Heavenly Star unlocked "the bottomless pit" at the sounding of the fifth trumpet (Rev. 9:1-3), are symbolical of the armies of the Mohammedans. This they do in spite of the fact that the locusts were not to kill anybody, but only to torment those who had not the seal of God in their foreheads, whereas the Mohammedans killed everybody that stood against them, especially the Christians, those who had the seal.

Moreover, the brethren explain that the 200,000,000 horses and horsemen that were to kill

a third part of men (Rev. 9:18), are symbolical of a Mohammedan cavalry, although the Mohammedans never had such a large cavalry in all their existence.

Furthermore, John the Revelator plainly tells that the horses' tails were like serpents, and their heads the heads of lions belching fire, smoke, and brimstone. Contrary to these facts, the brethren say that the horses were common Arabian horses, that Turks armed with guns were riding them, that John failed to detect that the fire, smoke and brimstone came from the guns, not from the horses' mouths.

I say for one to so garble the Scriptures and yet make people believe that he is thus unfolding Truth, he must have great ability, but too little understanding of the fact that if John was left to blunder in this part of his vision, he could have been left to blunder all through The Revelation, and that for anyone who thus voices his opinion of the Scriptures is not building but tearing down faith in all the prophets, causing one to say that if the Scriptures be so imperfect as they make them appear to be, then what good are they? And how can we find the Truth and be saved by It, for if the prophets themselves could not tell the facts, then how can any of us do so thousands of years after their time?

Since the brethren have not been able to see this, and since no one who has studied their expositions of them been able to either, then does it not appear to you that although there is much knowledge everywhere, there is very little understanding anywhere?

Dealing with a situation similar to this, Paul declared:

1 Cor. 3:1 – *"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ."*

Here Paul reproved those whose knowledge seemed to be great, but their understanding dull, those who had not spiritually advanced commensurate with the time, who could not stick strictly to what the Word says, were not developed into full-grown Christians. He was, therefore urged to say:

Verse 2 – *"I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able."*

Paul was disappointed with the progress which the Corinthians had made: They were still unable to take strong meat. Concretely speaking, he said–

Verses 3, 4 – *"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?"*

By taking sides, some for Paul and some for Apollos, they were actually accepting what God had sent through one messenger, and rejecting what He had sent through the other messenger. This you will see even more vividly in the verses which follow:

Verses 5-7 – *"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the*

Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."

God is everything, and the men of His appointment are only His mouthpiece.

Verses 8, 9 – *"Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."*

This side-choosing was ruining the Christians in Paul's day, and it is ruining them in our day; that is, people are setting their affections on men who bring them the knowledge of the Gospel rather than on the One Who sends them with the Gospel. And worse than this is the fact that multitudes are setting their affection even on men who have not a spark of Inspiration, men who are not sent by God at all, but who are running loose of their own accord.

Verse 10 – *"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon."*

The Christian's life is, as it were, a building under construction. One messenger of God lays the foundation, another builds thereupon. Thus to no one messenger is given all the material with which to build.

Consequently, if anyone should choose to give heed to this or to that messenger instead of to

God and to all His servants as He Himself sends them one after another, that one will certainly be left with insufficient building material, and consequently without the acquirement which he needs to have at the coming of the Lord.

Verses 11-18 – *"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise."*

Here we are told that the theories – wood, hay, stubble – brought in by men whom God has not sent, not inspired, such as I called your attention to at the beginning, theories which appear to arise from a great store of knowledge, but which are devoid of the Spirit, are as you already see rubbish on which the fire of God thrives and the souls of men starve.

And again we are told that worldly wisdom is foolishness with God, and that if we wish our structure of Truth to withstand the storm, we need to throw out the rubbish and take all the

God-sent materials as we continue building.

Verses 19, 20 – *"For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain."*

Since the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, we had better have nothing to do with it, and quit taking sides – one for Luther, another for Wesley, still another for Campbell, or White – but we had better stand with the Lord, and accept all the Truths from all His servants He chooses to send. Otherwise when we arrive at the door He will have to say to us, "Depart from Me, I never knew you."

Verses 21, 22 – *"Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are your's; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are your's."*

To glory in man, whether it be in self or in another, is to cheat yourself of everything. Take for example the Jews: They were determined to "be of Moses," and as they saw it, to accept the prophets, or even Christ, to them it meant to give up Moses! As a result, rather than all things being theirs, they lost everything, even Moses, and where are they today? The wood, hay, and stubble which they piled upon the structure of Truth after Moses left them, has long been swept away by the Fire of Truth, the Holy Spirit.

The only safe way to build is with Truth sent from the throne of God. This is how

Moses, the prophets, and the apostles built, and this is how we must build. Moses, for example, founded his structure of Truth on the solid rock of creation, the Genesis, on the work of Him Who created the worlds (Heb. 1:1). The prophets after him, also the apostles, continued building on the same foundation, not on the theories of the priests and rabbis, the so-called religious educators of that day. And that is why their structure of Truth stands today firmer than ever before.

Knowledge, you see, devoid of Divine understanding is as devastating to the soul as is fire let loose in a house that is built of wood and hay. Let us therefore no longer be side-choosers, but come to the table which God has spread so abundantly with spiritual food, and unbiasedly and free from prejudice feast to the full, refresh our souls and strengthen our backbones with good understanding so that we may be able to stand against the chronic ills of worldly knowledge; that we overcome temptation in the strength of the Mighty One, and be permitted to have a part in proclaiming the message when it shall swell into the Loud Cry.

Soon He Comes

Long upon the mountain, weary,
Have the scattered flock been torn;
Dark the desert paths, and dreary;
Grievous trials have they borne.
Now the gathering call is sounding,
Solemn in its warning voice;
Union, faith, and love, abounding,
Bid the little flock rejoice.

Now the light of truth they're seeking,
In its onward track pursue;
All the ten commandments keeping,
They are holy, just, and true.
On the words of life they're feeding,
Precious to their taste, so sweet;
All their Master's precepts heeding,
Bowing humbly at His feet.

In that world of light and beauty,
In that golden city fair,
Soon its pearly gates they'll enter,
And of all its glories share.
There, divine the soul's expansions;
Free from sin, and death, and pain;
Tears will never dim those mansions
Where the saints immortal reign.

Soon He comes! with clouds descending;
All His saints, entombed, arise;
The redeemed, in anthems blending,
Shout their victory through the skies.
O, we long for Thine appearing;
Come, O Saviour, quickly come!
Blessed hope! our spirits cheering,
Take Thy ransomed children home.

--Annie R. Smith.

THE SPIRIT THAT ORIGINATED EVIL,

AND ITS MANIFESTATION TODAY

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF,
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SABBATH, FEBUARY 21, 1948
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Our text is found in Isaiah, chapter 2, verse 22.

Isa. 2:22 – *"Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?"*

In this verse of Scripture God recommends that we cease from man. And the reason given is that man's breath is in his nostrils; because without breath he is but a lump of dirt, and therefore of no account. He is no God.

The plea would not have been made if the people were not putting their trust in man rather than in God for their salvation; that is, rather than doing what the noble Bereans did, studying to know whether "these things be so," God's people are giving heed to what others think or say. They are today doing what hundreds of thousands were doing in Jesus' day: trusting in the opinions of their learned priests, scribes, and rabbis. The Jews' giving heed to hearsay instead of engaging in personal investigation and experience of their own with the source of truth is, therefore, the very

thing that crucified the Lord.

And where do you suppose such confidence in man originated? – We often think that evil originated with Eve when she reached for the forbidden fruit. But the fact is that evil already existed before Eve came in contact with it. Let us read this from the prophet Isaiah:

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." – Isa. 14:12-15.

We understand that Satan's name before he sinned was Lucifer, and that he sinned before Eve sinned, that he was impersonated in the serpent that deceived Eve. We shall therefore consider the sin in heaven before we further consider sin on earth.

Satan, we are told, was not the only sinner in Heaven, for with him were cast out of Heaven a third of the angelic host (Rev. 12:4). These were cast out of Heaven because they gave heed to the words of Lucifer, to a man in Heaven, rather than giving heed to the word of God. This was the angels' downfall. Lucifer himself fell when he aspired to be as God.

These two sins – trust in man, and desire to exalt self – are still the leading sin elements

now here on earth. This was Eve's stumbling block and to many even today it is still the stumbling block. No, appetite alone was not the cause of Eve's downfall. The serpent did not say, "Thou shouldst eat of this fruit for it is wonderful, more delicious than any other fruit in the garden of God." But he said: "God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be *as gods*, knowing good and evil." Gen. 3:5.

The fruit, of course, appealed to her, but she was tempted by the idea of having the opportunity to be exalted to the throne of God, to be exalted to the same position to which Lucifer himself aspired. Lucifer must have honestly believed that he would be as God if the angels in Heaven and the men on earth would but take orders from him.

And so we see that the Devil deceived Eve on the same grounds he deceived himself and his angels, the only difference being that he caused Eve to eat of the fruit which he himself and his angels would not eat. Consequently, Eve sinned against her physical being, too, by taking into it something that was not created for food, and consequently she died. But Satan and his angels still live.

This same stumbling block, the desire to exalt self, has predominated throughout the ages, and it predominates today. No, I am not making rash and empty statements. I have the facts to back up my words. For example, in the days of the Exodus Movement, there were Korah, Dathan, and Abiram who aspired to the office of Moses and Aaron as Lucifer aspired to the throne of God, the highest offices they could have longed

for. And did not Lucifer fall because of wanting to be above all others for nothing more than to exalt self? And was not the same true of the fall of Korah, Dathan and Abiram?

Today we see the same clamoring for position even in our own churches. The offices of Church Elders, Sabbath School Superintendents, Secretaries, Pianists, and other such church offices, let us remember, hold no monetary compensation. But in spite of it, every year in most of the churches, as far as I have been able to observe, there is a clamor and a quarrel by men and women for one or more of these offices. Since there is no monetary remuneration for such services, then what is the fuss about if not purely for self-exaltation, if not for the purpose of being looked up to as somebody?

You see, then, that the same clamor for self-promotion that existed with Lucifer, with Eve, with others down through the ages, exists today. My statement, you see, is backed up by actual facts. Moreover, if such be the case with those who receive no monetary consideration for their services, then what could be the case with those who are well paid? This question you can answer for yourself to your own satisfaction.

Plainly, one who aspires to position simply for self-exaltation, especially when such an office holds out spiritual responsibilities as does a church office, such a one should not be given any consideration whatsoever. And if he already has any station of responsibility, he should be relieved of it, for such high-minded leaders are spiritually blind, and they draw the multitude to themselves as did Lucifer draw the angels to himself and to doom.

Moreover, this class of leaders, dead to Christ and alive to themselves, as a rule love to parade, and even to exaggerate their religious deeds. Such should therefore be branded as Satan-inspired disciple-seekers. This class of men are naturally clever. They manage to gain the confidence of the people by the same method with which the priests and rabbis in Jesus' time deceived the nation: They prayed where they could be seen; they marred their faces to appear to be fasting; they made it their business to air far and wide whatever good they did; they were adept at making themselves appear very religious, pious, philanthropic, and righteous.

Multitudes are still charmed by such so-called good men, and multitudes unquestionably accept their decisions as it they were God's decisions. Against such, remember Inspiration warns: "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" Isa. 2:22.

That these man worshipers be seen even more realistically, let me tell you something: Thousands have advised us to recant if the president of the General Conference sees no light in our teaching, if he sees no light in our revival and reformation among God's people. They seem to be just as sincere in this as were the Jews who confidently took sides against Jesus by making the high priest's decisions their own decisions!

Their wish for us to recant "if the president sees no light," shows that they are copying the Jews of old, rather than looking into the matter themselves, with confidence in the Spirit

of God to show them personally what Truth is; they have absolute confidence in what man, "the president" tells them!

Was not this very spirit in the hearts of the men that rejected and crucified the Lord? Obviously this class of persons is not led by Truth, but by men of position. Such ones never ask, "Is it Truth?" but "By whom is it advocated?" And if it does not come from the channel through which they would have it to come, then, of course, Truth is rejected.

They never stop to think that God is not taking orders from them; that they are not choosing God's servants for Him, and that the General Conference president was elected by men, not because of his authority on the Scriptures, but because of his ability to command; that Truth has never yet originated through him, that whatever Bible truth he himself has ever learned is only that which inspired men of God have taught him. The laity, therefore, have never had greater need to cease from men as they have this day. And if they do not reform, God have pity on them.

It is to be remembered, though, that they are doing this foolish thing only because the ministry has so trained them, only because some ministers are in league with the spirit that was in Korah, Dathan, and Abiram when they aspired to the position of the prophets, although God has not delegated them as such.

Then, too, when a preacher begins broadcasting his good deeds and accomplishments, along with his religious experiences; also when a preacher rubs his eyes and blows his nose

unnecessarily as he preaches and endeavors to make his audience start crying; – when you see these things in a preacher, know for certain that he is pulling the wool over the eyes of his listeners, that there is something up his sleeve. I say, when you see a preacher doing these things, he is aiming to enlist your endorsement to something of his own. Beware!

You may peruse the entire Bible, and I assure you that you will not find one of these things practiced by any of the prophets. They never aimed to make God's people sad, but always to rejoice in the Lord.

Take for example Jesus Christ. His work, His mission, was greater and more important than any before Him or after Him. He had religious experience that was worth telling, and if such a procedure would have been beneficial in the work of salvation, He certainly would have taken advantage of it. Instead of preaching Himself, though, He preached the Truth. He never tried to persuade anyone by talking of Himself. He simply spoke of Bible truth, and gave God, not Himself, the credit. And if anyone can preach repentance and love, He could, but He never tried to play on the emotions of His audience, never tried to set them crying over anything.

No one, moreover, including ourselves, has ever accepted the writing of the prophets on the merits of their goodness, their education, or their personal religious experience. They wrote nothing concerning themselves, and nothing to bolster their office. All who have accepted them, have done so on the merits of their own writings. That is all. They never tried to

win converts by what they themselves were or were not. Are they not to this day having success? And is it not the Truth of God that we must be after? The Jews asked for a sign, and the Greeks for wisdom, but God's people of today are asking for both sign and wisdom, rather than for Truth.

Let us, therefore, never forget that the spirit of self-exaltation originated all the evil which we see today, and which is harder at work than ever before. We should not give the Dragon a chance to trap us, and dump us into doom with the "third part of the angels" who took hold of his tail and could not let loose of it. Let us ever remember that–

"The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." Isa. 2:11.

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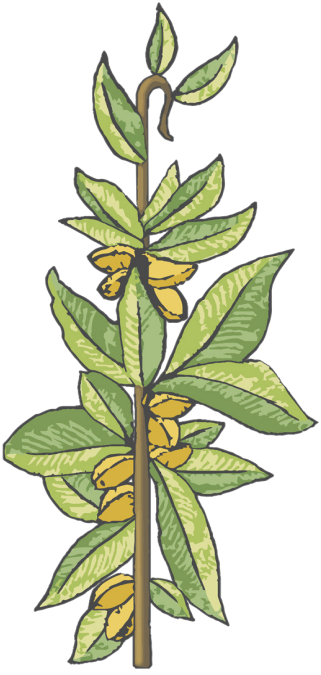

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