

DARKNESS COVERS THE EARTH.

"Behold the darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon *thee* and His glory shall be seen upon *thee*. And the Gentiles (heathen) *shall come* to thy light."--[Isa. 60:2](#).

The above diagram is powerfully suggestive of the statement of the prophet: "Darkness shall cover the earth." It was published here by the "WOMEN'S PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF MISSIONS" and is termed "A Mute Appeal" on behalf of foreign missions, and was first issued by the "LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY."

Each square of this diagram represents *ten hundred thousand* human beings. The lights, shades and blackness tell of the darkness and blindness which has overspread the earth, while sin and evil have ruled mankind, and cause us to look longingly for the bright Millennial Day when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings, causing the knowledge of the Lord to fill the whole earth and to bless all mankind.

The Watchman--the "Y.M.C.A." journal of Chicago--published this same diagram, and commenting on it, says: "The ideas of some are very misty and indefinite in regard to the world's spiritual condition. We hear of glorious revival work at home and abroad, of fresh missionary efforts in various directions, of one country after another opening to the gospel, and of large sums being devoted to its spread; and we get the idea that adequate efforts are being made for the evangelization of the nations of the earth. It is estimated to-day that the world's population is 1,424,000,000, and by studying the diagram we will see that considerably more than one-half--nearly two-thirds--are still *total heathen*, and the remainder are *mostly* either followers of Mohammed or members of those great apostate churches whose religion is practically a Christianized idolatry, and who can scarcely be said to hold or teach the gospel of Christ. Even as to the 116 millions of nominal Protestants, we must remember how large a proportion in Germany, England and this country have lapsed into infidelity--a darkness, if possible, deeper even than that of heathenism, and how many are blinded by superstition or buried in extreme ignorance. So that while eight millions of Jews still reject Jesus of Nazareth, and while more than 300 millions who hear His *name* have apostatized from His *faith*, 170 millions more bow before Mahomet; and the vast remainder of mankind are to this day worshipers of stocks and stones, of their own ancestors, of dead heroes, or of the devil himself; all in one way or other worshiping and serving the *creature* instead of the Creator, who is God over all, blessed forever. Is there not enough here to sadden the heart of thoughtful Christians?"

Some might suppose at first that the view is too dark and rather *overdrawn*, but we think the reverse of this. It shows nominal Christianity in the brightest colors possible. For instance, the 116,000,000 put down as Protestant is far in excess of the true number. Sixteen millions would be fully sufficient, we believe, to include every *professing church member*, and ONE MILLION would, we fear, be far too liberal an estimate for the "*sanctified* in Christ Jesus," who "walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."

It is, indeed, a sorrowful picture of ignorance and darkness and sin from any standpoint; but, viewed from the so-called "ORTHODOX" standpoint, it is truly

AN AWFUL PICTURE.

If we hold "*Orthodoxy*" to its own creeds, it believes that all of these billions of humanity, ignorant of the *only name* under heaven by which we must be saved, are on the straight road to *everlasting torment*. And not only so, but all of those 116,000,000 Protestants, except the very few saints, are sure of the same fate. No wonder, then, that those who *believe* such awful things of Jehovah's plans and purposes should be zealous in

forwarding missionary enterprises--the wonder is that they are not frenzied by it. If we believed such things it would rob life of every pleasure and shroud in gloom every bright prospect of nature.

That we have not misstated "*Orthodoxy*" on the subject of the fate of the heathen, we quote from their pamphlet --"A mute appeal on behalf of Foreign Missions"--in which the diagram was published. Its concluding sentence is: "*Evangelize the mighty generations abroad--the ONE THOUSAND MILLION SOULS who are dying in CHRISTLESS DESPAIR at the rate of 100,000 a day.*"

But another peculiar thing is, that the "*Mute Appeal*" on behalf of Foreign Missions is issued by the WOMEN'S PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF MISSIONS." The *peculiarity* is that a denomination which in its creed declares its faith to be, that God did from all eternity *predestinate* some to knowledge and salvation, and all others to *ignorance and damnation*, should so disregard their "old landmarks" and prejudices as to attempt to *change* the arrangement which they declare was *predestinated*.

But, really, we rejoice at this as an evidence that creeds of the darker centuries are losing their power over thinking people of every sect. We are glad, too, that their hearts are better than their creeds, and that they are superior to *their estimate* of God; for while they think that God looks calmly and unmoved upon this mass of humanity going down to hell at the rate of 100,000 a day, and never exercising His *power* to give them the needed knowledge, they are *superior* in that they are moved to pity and to benevolent action by the sight.

The great difficulty with "Orthodoxy" is, that they fail to recognize *plan* and method in God's word and dealings. Such will, perhaps, gather from our foregoing criticism, that we have no care for, nor interest in the heathen; but we can most heartily assure them that this is not the case. The reason why they would thus judge us, would be the same if they applied their judgment to the actions and teachings of Jesus. He went *not* to the Gentiles (heathen), and commanded the disciples likewise. ([Matt. 10:5](#).) He did not cry aloud nor "lift up his voice in the streets," shouting to and exhorting sinners or heathens to beware of *eternal torture*; neither did any of the apostles.

In his preaching, Jesus said of some, "No man can come unto me except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him." ([John 6:44](#).) The disciples he [R536 : page 1] taught specially, saying, "Unto *you* it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but, unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables, that seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand, lest at any time [R536 : page 2] they should be converted." ([Mark 4:11,12](#).) But when we

RECOGNIZE THE PLAN AND ORDER

revealed in God's word all is clear, beautiful, reasonable and harmonious.

We claim that, as Jesus said, the Gospel in *this age* is a WITNESS to the world and not designed to now *convert* all. All must agree with us that if God intended it to be a *converting power* to the world in this age, his plans have most signally failed, as the above diagram proves. But let us take God's plan as he presents it, viz: to elect or *select* a church--a "little flock"--who shall be taught, tried, tested, polished and made ready for his service in an age to *follow this*; when through this spiritual seed of Abraham, all the families of the earth shall be blessed and enlightened. ([Gal. 3:29](#).)

How strange it does seem that these dear Christian brethren and sisters who issue the "MUTE APPEAL," and others who seem so zealous and anxious for the salvation of men and the spread of the knowledge of the "*only name*" as a means to that end, should feel such an opposition to the teaching of the Apostles concerning the coming TIMES OF RESTITUTION of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets.

Can they not see that God's missionary enterprise is much grander and *more comprehensive* than theirs? Theirs, even if their prayers and desires were to be answered this very year, by the conversion of every living

being on earth to the love and service of our Lord; this surely would not answer the cravings of sympathizing, loving hearts, and they would still pray: O, Lord, extend thy mercy and thy love to those in everlasting torment; and they would plead that those billions of the dead far outnumbered the millions of the living.

How strange that they *will not* allow the Lord to tell them of HIS WAY of carrying on mission work, and how much comfort and peace they lose, and how many burdens they bear, because they have no ear to hear when He speaks through his word.

God's plan is to first select a "Royal Priesthood" during this age and have that priesthood teach and rule and bless the world in the next age.

Now we are just at the threshold of the age of glory. The midnight shadows of the diagram are just beginning to flee before the "Sun of Righteousness," and the printing and scattering of millions of Bibles in the past 87 years is one means toward the great work. In a word, then, these dear friends stand at our side in hope of the spread of truth, the *great difference* being that they expect to do it in their present weak, humble, mortal condition; and we expect to be *glorified* and clothed upon with heavenly form and power, as a means to the desired end.

One of the great stumbling blocks which hinders "*Orthodoxy's*" reception of God's grand missionary plan, of a special age in which the world (including those in their graves) will be taught and blessed by the knowledge and merit of the *ransom*, is their *false* idea of what constitutes DEATH. They have accepted Satan's first lie, "Thou shalt *not* surely *die*," instead of God's statement that men *do die*; hence they do all in their power to convince themselves that Satan was the truth-teller, and will not believe that when men die they *lose life*. They will not believe the Scriptural testimony. ([Rom. 6:23](#); [Eccl. 9:10](#); [Psa. 6:5](#); [Job 14: specially vs. 1,10 and 21](#); [2 Tim. 4:8](#).) Hence they are forced by their adherence to Satan's theory, to claim that when men die they go to a place of *woe* or happiness and continue really to live, though they admit they seemed to die.

If they would take God's word simply and lay aside traditions, they would see that all men go to ("*sheol*," "*hades*") the *condition of death*, and that the power is with God to bring them to life again, to bring them up *out of their GRAVES*. ([Ezek. 37:12](#).) Then they would see the reasonableness of death as the penalty of sin and of the RANSOM from it, by the death of our *Redeemer*, who substituted his life for ours and died the just for the unjust. Thus he bought for all the right to a return to life (resurrection--restitution) when at the hands of the Royal Priesthood it shall be *testified to every man* that Christ died for ALL. ([1 Tim. 2:6](#).)

While God has foretold the gross darkness now covering the world, let none overlook the fact that he also foretells by the same prophet that when the government shall be upon the shoulders of Him called "Wonderful," the rod of the oppressor (Satan) shall be broken, and the people who walked in darkness shall see a GREAT LIGHT. ([Isa. 9:2,4,6](#).)

By the same prophet the Lord again says of Christ (head and body), "I will preserve thee and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish (order, rule) the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; that thou mayest say to the prisoners (in death--in *hades*) Go forth; to them that are in *darkness*, *show yourselves*." (Come to the light--the truth.) ([Isa. 49:8,9](#).)

Soon it shall be manifested that not in name only, but in deed and in truth, Jesus is "the true light which lighteth *every man* that cometh into the world." ([John 1:9](#).) "And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the Book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness. The *meek* also shall increase their joy in the Lord." ([Isa. 29:18](#).) Surely we are now entering "that day," and for it thank God.

=====