

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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## World Shaking Events

*A meditation in Psalm 46.*

THERE is a growing conviction in the minds of thoughtful people that the days in which we live are marked by an atmosphere of finality. For some time we have been living in a new era -- one distinct, not only from pre-1914, but from pre-1938 days; an era which might well be called the atomic era.

In his remarkable forecast of the conditions which would obtain at the close of the Gospel Age, our Lord Jesus predicted that there would be "upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." (Luke 21:25, 26.) And surely there has never been a time when conditions resembled his forecast more accurately than today.

Christians in these days, however, need not be in darkness as to the meaning of the past fifty or sixty eventful years, but, through a knowledge of The Divine Plan, and a daily renewal of their consecration vows, are permitted to occupy an enlightened, privileged position. Such was the Psalmist's calm confidence, as, under inspiration of God's holy spirit, he penned the forty-sixth psalm. Though written, in all probability, to celebrate the deliverance of Jerusalem from the invasion planned by Sennacherib in the days of Hezekiah (Isaiah 37) there is little doubt that it has a prophetic significance -- meeting its larger fulfillment in our day. On this psalm, Luther based his famous hymn, "A mighty fortress is our God." Let us study it carefully and prayerfully, that the reassurance the Lord intends us to obtain therefrom may be ours.

Scholars have pointed out that it consists of three strophes, the conclusion of each being marked by the Selah, and that of the last two by the refrain.

### STROPHE No. 1

*God is our refuge and strength,  
A very present help in trouble.*

*Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed,  
And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;  
Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled,  
Though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.*

In his *Studies in the Psalms*, the spirit of Psalm 46 is summed up by *Rotherham* as being "that of stouthearted trust in God. God is nearer than any enemy, and more powerful to relieve from danger than the enemy to inflict it. The images employed in the psalm are bold, being formed by depicting such convulsions of nature as are seldom or never witnessed, yet are easily conceived. The terrible *roar* of the *land* in an earthquake, when the *moun.tains* are seen *staggering into the midst of the sea*, and the resentful sea is witnessed dashing its mighty waves on the *mountains* that overhang the shore: such is the scene which the poet's art presents as a figure of disturbed nations."

Another writer of note, *J. J. Stewart Perowne*, commenting on its *primary* application, submits the following interesting and instructive paragraph:

This and the two following Psalms are hymns of triumph, composed on the occasion of some great deliverance. I am inclined to think that they all celebrate the same event, the sudden and miraculous destruction of the army of Sennacherib under the walls of Jerusalem. That proud host had swept the land. City after city had fallen into the power of the conqueror. The career of Sennacherib and his captains had been one uninterrupted success. The capital itself alone held out, and even there the enfeebled garrison seemed little likely to make a successful resistance. The swollen river had, in the language of the prophet, overflowed all his channels, and risen even to the neck. It was at this crisis that deliverance came. When there were no succours to be expected, when neither king nor army could help the city, God helped her. He, the Lord of Hosts, was in the midst of her, keeping watch over her walls and defending her towers. His Angel went forth at dead of night and smote the host of the Assyrians, and when men awoke in the morning, there reigned in that vast camp the silence and the stillness of death. Such a deliverance must have filled the whole nation with wonder and joy. The old days of Moses and David would seem to have returned. The hopes of Prophets, so great and so glowing, yet so often apparently defeated, seemed now nearer to their accomplishment. The times were at hand when Jerusalem should be indeed the joy of the whole earth, when all nations should acknowledge Jehovah as their King. Her towers, her palaces, the temple of her God, stood in all their beauty, saved by a miracle from the spoiler's hand. God had made Himself known there as a sure refuge, and henceforth His Name would be acknowledged in the earth.

As we come to study the psalm ourselves, it is easy to see that much of its language is figurative. In Bible symbology the word "earth" denotes an "order of society." The psalmist sees such an order of society "removed," (or "changed," RSV). Evidently the scene which the inspired poet seeks to convey to our minds is that of an earthquake, (though the "*land*" should "*roar*" - *Rotherham*) as the result of which, a great change takes place in the form of society. The present heavens and earth are envisioned as being replaced by a new heavens and earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. (Isa. 65:17; 2 Pet. 3:13.) Moreover the new earth, according to Hab. 2:14, is to be filled with the knowledge of God.

Again, the word "mountains" represents kingdoms. In Isa. 2:2 the prophet informs us

"It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills," evidently a reference to the time when Christ shall reign. (See also Micah 4:1.) Again, as illustrating the use of figurative language

to describe *the changes now taking place in every strata of society, throughout the world*, note the words of Isaiah in 40:4:

"Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low."

This great leveling process, thus predicted by Isaiah, is the very theme portrayed in our psalm.

## **STROPHE No. 2**

*There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God,*

*The holy places of the tabernacles of the Most High.*

*God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved:*

*God shall help her, and that right early.*

*The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved:*

*He uttered his voice, the earth melted.*

*The Lord of hosts is with us;*

*The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.*

In the first strophe, the fact that these catastrophes of nature are intended as symbols is not specifically stated. The psalmist doubtless assumes that his readers will understand such an elementary matter. But in the second strophe he applies these natural catastrophes. (Psa. 46:6.) He shows them to be symbols of nations. And his point may easily be that, if we are able to trust in God, who is able to control the mighty forces of nature, should we not also be able to trust in him, as he deals with the mighty forces of kings and peoples? He is just as able to control them. They may, and doubtless do, seem powerful enough to us, but to him they are but as "the small dust of the balance . . . all nations before him are as nothing." - Isa. 40:15-17. Remembering this, we shall be able to repose in him, and be at peace in our hearts.

However, before reaching Psa. 45:6, the psalmist has a word of peace to speak to the Lord's true followers in Psa. 46:4 and Psa. 46:5. His first word concerns a river-the river of truth and grace, the streams of which bring rest, peace, comfort. To those who, by faith and consecration, have entered into covenant relationship with God, and have been given the spirit of sonship-to such is granted the peace of God, which passeth understanding. (Phil. 4:7.) In the Millennial Age, at the threshold of which we stand today, these streams will flow out as a river. Meantime, as rivulets they refresh and stimulate all those who are walking in the narrow way.

Such refreshment of spirit comes to us particularly in connection with increased understanding of our Father's word -- and conscious determination, by his grace, to bring our lives ever more completely into line with his will for us. Thus, understanding his plans, and watching them mature, even granted the privilege of being co-laborers with him in some small measure, we find ourselves realizing the "help" promised in verse 5; which help we confidently expect to have continued to us, until our resurrection change, "*right early*," or, as *Rotherham* translates: "*at the approach of the morning*."

The word "tabernacles," in Psa. 46:4, is in the plural, which is puzzling, until one learns that it is an instance where the figure of speech known as the *plural of majesty* is employed. This plural, whenever it occurs, simply means that "great" or "much" or some similar adjective is to be understood as added to the noun. In this case, not two or more tabernacles, but one very great tabernacle is the thought; not great in size, but in glory or importance.

In our study of *Tabernacle Shadows*, we have learned, not only that God dwelleth between the cherubims (Isa. 37:16; Psa. 80:1), but that during our time here we are to live in a condition represented by the "holy" of the tabernacle. There it is that we find ourselves enjoying the light which comes from the golden candlestick; being nourished by the bread of presence; and worshipping daily at the golden altar. Here is the source of our strength, the source of our growth and development as new creatures in Christ Jesus; and so long as we continue in the holy we are immune to the fears of the world. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High [i.e., in the holy, in the condition of consecration], shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." (Psa. 91:1.)

The further word of Psa. 46:5, that "God is in the midst of her," is surely one that brings a sense of strength and security. It suggests, too, the true basis of Christian unity. As with the nation of Israel under Moses, Jehovah was in the center of each encampment, directing its affairs and resolving differences, so, only in a much higher and grander sense, is he the center of affairs in connection with spiritual Israel, leading them onward to final victory. The thought that our Father directs the experiences of us each, and that nothing occurs in our lives without his knowledge and permission - and without him being alongside to help - is very precious to us; surely one which proves most heartening to us, as we recall it from time to time during the days of our pilgrimage.

Moreover, the psalmist's additional assurance in this verse (Psa. 46:5) ought not to be allowed to pass unnoticed. He says that, because God is in the midst of her -- the Church -- "she shall not be moved." Other kingdoms great and small shall be, but not her. We, the church, are on our way to receive "a kingdom which *cannot be moved*." (Heb. 12:28.) Early in the morning of the Millennial Day we have been helped and strengthened by our Father, guided through the complexities of this life, shown his plan, and preserved from the snares and pitfalls of the Adversary. And soon the journey will have ended! How delighted are we at the prospect! -- not alone because it will bring our own deliverance, but also because the opportunity will be extended to all mankind to be set free from the thralldom of sin and death. Surely this kingdom for which we have so long prayed: "Thy Kingdom Come," is the "desire of all nations" spoken of by Haggai (Hag. 2:7), although the nations do not now realize it.

In Psa. 46:6 the psalmist reminds us that, whereas the nations have roared, and the kingdoms have staggered, nevertheless, when *God* speaks, his voice is bound to be heard and obeyed. Louder than the roar of nations is the voice of God. At the sound of *his* voice, the earth (the order of society) melts. The words of the psalmist here find an echo in 2 Pet. 3:10:

"The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

But Peter does not stop there. He has an encouraging word a little further on, in Psa. 46:13 "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. "

### STROPHE No. 3

*Come, behold the works of the Lord,  
What desolations he hath made in the earth.  
He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth;  
He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder;*

*He burneth the chariot in the fire.  
Be still, and know that I am God:  
I will be exalted among the nations;  
I will be exalted in the earth.  
The Lord of hosts is with us;  
The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.*

*Are Wars to Cease?* -- One of our free booklets bears this title. In it the position is developed, from the scriptures, that wars *will cease*. Psalm 46:9 of our psalm declares that they are to cease. They will cease, because God will make them cease. They will cease, when God has permitted such desolation and horrors that those who wage wars will be compelled to stay the carnage. Just

how and when he will put an end to war, we are not wise enough to say. It surely must be very soon, or the entire race of mankind will be destroyed. When he *does* say "Cease," he will do so in such manner that all *will know* that the one speaking is God, and that he must be obeyed. Then will he be *exalted among the nations*.

Something of these sentiments must have been in the mind of the poet (Lord Byron) when he penned those famous lines on "The Destruction of Sennacherib," reprinted below.

The psalmist concludes with the familiar benediction: "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah." Here, once again, we are reminded of the infinite power whereby God can subdue the entire universe unto himself; reminded also of the fatherly love revealed in his word. Knowing that both his power and love are ever combined on our behalf, our hearts may well respond in those noble lines of Luther

"A mighty fortress is our God, A bulwark never failing; Our helper he amid the flood Of mortal ills prevailing."

- A. L. Muir.

## **The Destruction of Sennacherib**

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold  
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold ;  
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,  
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,  
That host with their banners at sunset were seen  
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn bath blown,  
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,  
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;  
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,  
And their hearts but once heaved, and forever grew still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,  
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride  
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,  
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,

With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail;  
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,  
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,  
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;  
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,  
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

## Joses, Surnamed Barnabas

*"He was a good man, and full of the holy spirit and of faith and much people was added unto the Lord."-Acts 11:24.*

AMONG all the characters delineated in the New Testament, Joses, surnamed Barnabas, the Levite from Cyprus, is one of the most attractive. The high esteem in which he was held by the Apostles is witnessed by this surname they gave to him. Barnabas means *the son of consolation*. Introduced to us in Acts 4:36, 37, has wholehearted zeal for the Lord is attested by the sale of the land he possessed and his gift of the proceeds to the Apostles for the common good. When he next appears on the scene we get a glimpse of why Joses got this new name, and our hearts are drawn to him. There are times when we all feel badly the need of a friend. When things go wrong and we are depressed and discouraged, how very precious then, is the sympathy, understanding, and encouragement of a friend. Paul was just in that position when Barnabas first met him. The circumstances are related in Acts 9:26, 27.

Saul of Tarsus, breathing out threatenings and slaughter, had been halted on the way to Damascus and made a bond slave of Jesus Christ. Rejected by the Jews in Damascus and forced to flee ignominiously, he had spent three years in Arabia thinking things out. As the way became clear to him he returned to Jerusalem, looking forward doubtless to that fellowship with the brethren in the Lord, which we know he relied upon so much afterwards and valued so highly. But what a disappointment! Acts 9:26 reads: "And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples, but they were all afraid of him and believed not that he was a disciple." After all he had experienced! After all he had sacrificed! How lonely he must have felt at that moment! Cast off by his old associates and rejected by those whom he had counted on as his new friends.

But the Lord who comforts those who are cast down had a comforter ready. "But Barnabas took him." Yes, though all others were afraid of him, had looked at him coldly and turned away, Barnabas went forward and gave him, we may be sure, a right cordial brotherly welcome, "and brought him to the Apostles and declared' unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus." Thank God for the Barnabases he has brought to us so often in our times of need.

The next time Barnabas appears is in Acts 11 where he is a prominent figure in one of the great crises in Church history. This is one of the most important chapters in the Bible. It recounts the inauguration of the worldwide witness foretold by Jesus. In Acts 1:8 the Lord gave a royal commission to his Church couched in these terms: "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." This program was carried out exactly in the order given, as reported in the book of Acts. The first seven chapters record the witness in Jerusalem which had for its object the consolidation of the Church at headquarters in the capital. Great success attended the labors of the Apostles and brethren. At Pentecost *no less than 3000* were baptized. After Peter and John had cured the man lame from his birth at the Gate Beautiful of the temple, *about 5000* believed, as recorded in Acts 4:4. In chapter 5 we read that multitudes both of men and women were added to the Lord, and in chapter 6 that the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

After Stephen's martyrdom related in Acts 7, we are told in chapter 8 that there arose a great persecution against the Church which was at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad

throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria. Note how exactly this fits in with the terms of the commission -- first Jerusalem, and then all Judea and Samaria. Note also how in verse 4 of chapter 8 we are told that "they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word." Chapters 8 to 11 are taken up with this second phase of the witness which lasted probably for about a year and a half, until the conversion of Cornelius, which is related in chapter 10.

The stage was now set for the wider witness and so we read in Acts 11:19, "Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phoenice (Phoenicia, a strip of coast north of Galilee, running up towards Antioch in Asia Minor) and Cyprus and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only." Now observe the bombshell in the next verse: "And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene (Cirenaica on the south Mediterranean coast, west of Egypt), which, when they were come to Antioch, spoke unto the Grecians (pure Gentiles), preaching the Lord Jesus." Greek being the language of Cyprus and Cyrene, these Jewish brethren would be accustomed to speaking in Greek. It is most unlikely that they would have taken such an important step unless tidings of Cornelius' acceptance had reached them. They probably lost no time about it, but it must have seemed strange to them at first and they would require great faith, courage and love. The Lord richly blessed their witness for we are told in verse 21: "*And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord.*"

Antioch was a great city, ranking Third in the Roman Empire, with a population of about half a million, and situated about 300 miles north of Jerusalem. No details are given regarding his epoch making event. When preaching to the Jews they contacted them in the synagogues, but how about the Gentiles? Did they preach in the open air at first and then find afterwards some place like the School of Tyrannus to meet in, as Paul did at Ephesus? It must have been a large hall to accommodate the great number who believed. In due course, tidings of these things reached the ears of the Church which was in Jerusalem. Probably at least a fortnight would elapse before the news arrived, and judging by later happenings, the tidings must have created no small stir. It was one thing for *one man and his household* to come in-that was authorized by God unmistakably; but this wholesale conversion of Gentiles with apparently no special sign from God, was a different matter. Probably the news had a mixed reception, but the Church acted very wisely. They decided to investigate and chose for the purpose -- doubtless guided by the Lord -- the very best possible agent. "They sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch." Acts 11:22.

Circumstances make manifest our inward qualities, and this momentous visit to Antioch revealed that the Apostles had judged soundly when they gave the surname of Barnabas to Joses of Cyprus. The next few verses furnish a character sketch of Barnabas, telling us what he *saw*, what he *said*, and what he *did*. Let us consider these in order:

### **WHAT BARNABAS SAW**

First, what he *saw*. Probably one reason why Barnabas was sent to investigate and report was because being of Cyprus he would be accustomed to a Gentile environment and able to speak the Greek language, and thus would be fitted in these respects even better than the Apostles themselves for the task. Verse 23: "Who, when he came and had seen the grace of God, was glad." Barnabas saw and rejoiced. Was it to be expected that this would be the natural reaction of the Jewish believer to the Gentile believer in those early days? Judging from after events many brethren in Jerusalem would have reacted very differently had they been sent. *A year or so after this*, when Paul and Barnabas had returned to Antioch after their first missionary journey, "certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren and said, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.'" (Acts 15:1.) At the conference held in Jerusalem on



the subject, we are told in Acts 15:5: "But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, 'That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.'" It was only after considerable discussion that the matter was settled by the Apostles and Elders. Later still, at this same Antioch, while Paul and Barnabas were there fellowshipping with and ministering to the brethren, the Apostle Peter arrived and worshipped freely with the Gentiles, just as Paul and Barnabas did, making no difference. But certain brethren came from James with other ideas about the status of Jew and Gentile in the assembly, and who felt the line of distinction must be drawn somewhere. To them, it was obvious that circumcised Jews should not *eat* with uncircumcised Gentiles; that that was the limit. Peter was afraid of them, and separated himself from the Gentiles, his example being followed by other Jewish brethren, and Paul says even Barnabas himself was carried away with them. How much we owe under God to the great Apostle of the Gentiles! The incident is related in Galatians 2:11 where Paul tells how he had to withstand Peter to the face and save the situation. What a fatal effect this would have had upon the Gentile brethren had it been allowed to continue!

*It was thus anything but a matter of course* that a delegate from Jerusalem should "*see the grace of God and be glad.*" He might have seen a situation preposterous in the extreme: that pure Gentiles, aliens, strangers and foreigners, outside the commonwealth of Israel for fifteen hundred years, were being treated exactly the same as if they were Jews! What right had these obscure brethren to take such an important step without the sanction of the Apostles? Was it not intolerable that circumcision enjoined *by God himself* on Abraham, that the Law given by God himself at Sinai should be so presumptuously set aside? And as if they had not gone far enough, matters did not end in their hours of worship -- they were actually eating together in each others' houses with no distinction whatever!

How far otherwise was it with Barnabas! He *saw the grace of God and was glad!* Oh, how glad! He had been accustomed to seeing the "sinner of the Gentiles" justifying this epithet of the Jews, by wallowing in the moral filth of paganism and pagan worship, without God and without hope. Now what a transformation! It was like the change in the possessed man who, being freed from the legion of demons was found sitting at the feet of Jesus clothed and in his right mind. Can we appreciate the feelings with which Barnabas gazed around that concourse of purely Gentile believers, mingled here and there with their Jewish brethren-that epochmaking assembly-that Church because of whom a new name was coined for the people of God-a name which has been in general use for nineteen hundred years! For, "the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." (Acts 11:26.)

As Barnabas gazed upon the faces of that multitude of his new Gentile brethren, transfigured by the spirit of the Lord, can we doubt that his heart would well up in love and gratitude to God; that his eyes would be moist with tears of joy and that his voice would tremble with emotion? Would there not be suggested to his mind the vision Jesus saw, when at the close of his ministry the Greeks came seeking him, saying, "We would see Jesus." Did he too, not get a glimpse of the coming glory of the King in His Kingdom, when, being lifted up from the earth by the cross, and from the cross to the throne, the Lord should draw all men unto Himself? "Thou shalt call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins." And before him, in this mixed congregation of Jew and Gentile was there not a gathering of the "first-fruits" hereafter to be known, not as Jew and Gentile but as "Christians" -- Christ's ones? No longer dissolute, degraded and defiled, with mind and understanding darkened through the ignorance that was in them, Barnabas saw before him a people washed, sanctified and illuminated, their faces radiant, shining with the light of faith and hope and love.

*(To be concluded in next issue)*

- A. D. Kirkwood, Scot.

## Signs of the Master's Parousia

*"What will be the sign of Thy presence, and of the consummation of the Age?" - Matt. 24:3, Diaglott.*

IN our July-August issue, we grouped the "signs and groanings promised to precede a second birth" under five main captions, and briefly considered the first of these, namely, Gentile Times. Here we discuss the second, or signs in the ecclesiastical heavens.

### ECCLESIASTICAL HEAVENS

One of the signs for which the disciples were to be on the watch, as indicating the nearness of his return, is stated by our Lord in Luke 21:26, as follows: "The powers of heaven shall be shaken. " What do these words mean and, furthermore, has this sign been seen yet?

We answer: In our view the main reference is to the symbolic heavens -- the ecclesiastical heavens - the powers of spiritual control, to which also St. Peter referred. (2 Pet. 3: 12, 13.) Has the shaking taken place? We think so-we think the shaking has been in progress for years and will continue until only those things which cannot be shaken remain. (Heb. 12:26-29.) Let us compare Scripture with Scripture and prophecy with history and see if these things be so.

We turn first to the Book of Revelation, that wonderful prophecy sent and signified (told in signs and symbols) by our risen Lord, some sixty years after his ascension. Its theme, as we understand it, while largely future from the date John received the vision, was not a revelation of remote events in which the Church, from the days of the Apostles until now, has had no practical interest, but of events which, nineteen hundred years ago, were, as to the *commencement* of their fulfilment, near at hand. It was of "things which must shortly come to pass." The *commencement* of their fulfilment was *then*, in the first century of the Gospel Age. The time was then "at hand." - Rev. 1:1; Rev. 1:3; Rev. 22:6.

In this Book two of the Bible's seven key prophecies are given. One of the two is that of the Seven Candlesticks. (Chap. 1.) The other is given in chapter 17, and is the interpretation of the Woman, Babylon the Great, and of the seven-headed, ten-horned Beast that carried her.

The Candlesticks are interpreted by our Lord himself and declared to be the seven Churches. (Rev. 1:20.) Doubtless the vision was intended to show the wise and loving watch-care which he himself would exercise over the one true Church throughout the seven successive periods of its history, from the days of the Apostles until now.

Contrasted with the history of the true Church is the history of the false. In the seventeenth and following chapters both are doubly symbolized, as women and as cities. The Harlot City is arrayed in purple and scarlet color, decked with gold and precious stones and pearls; while the Bride, the New Jerusalem, is arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints, and has the glory of God. The one is the associate of the Beast, the other of the Lamb. The one is drunken with the blood of saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; the other consists, of saints and includes many of the martyrs. The one is punished with temporal and eternal judgments; the other is rewarded with everlasting honor and felicity.

## THE POWER OF ANTICHRIST SHAKEN

Daniel, centuries before, in his vision of Gentile dominion symbolized by four wild beasts, had drawn attention to a little horn on the head of the fourth beast -- a horn before whom three of the previous ten horns were plucked up by the roots; a horn, moreover, which had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth speaking great things (Dan. 7:8); a power, apparently, which should arise from within the very Church itself, and while retaining the name of Christ, become a mighty anti-Christian system and, succeeding the Pagan Caesars, rule over all the nations of the world. This apostate church system, which from the Book of Revelation we note is destined to be destroyed at the end of the Age (Rev. 18:8), when the marriage of the true Church is consummated (Rev. 19:7), is shown by Daniel also to meet its destruction then. (Dan. 7:11, 26.) St. Paul likewise joins in this prediction. - 2 Thess. 2:9, 10.

Turning to the pages of history, what do we find? The very thing predicted *has occurred*. Gross corruption, worldly ambition, and carnal strife did rapidly develop in the Church after Christianity was embraced by Constantine. A ruling ecclesiastical system did arise at Rome on the fall of the old Roman Empire in the fifth and sixth centuries. This system, the great Papal dynasty, corrupted the Gospel, opposed the truth, and wore out the saints, as had been predicted. (Dan. 7:25.) At long last came the Reformation, liberating many members of the true Church. (Incidentally, millions of others, including great numbers of the irreligious element of mankind, at that time began to throw off the Roman yoke.) This departure from Rome has continued since then, and in recent times has been accelerated. How little power and influence does this system possess in Europe today, compared with its former might! The power of this part of the Ecclesiastical Heavens has been shaken indeed.

As we ponder these things, the question must naturally arise: What next? If the great apostasy has thus arisen, as was predicted, and if, after reaching the zenith of its power, it has been on the decline since the Reformation, what is the next thing in order? According to our understanding of the matter there is but one more thing to occur. The apostasy of this false religious system has run its course. Its complete destruction is due. According to the prediction in Daniel, "They shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it *unto the end*." From St. Paul we learn that the Lord Jesus will paralyze the Lawless one "with the forthshining of his presence." (2 Thess. 2:9, 10, *Rotherham*.) Effects are produced only by causes. They do not "just happen." We can see the paralyzing effect. Our conviction is strong that the cause which produced it was none other than the one predicted the forthshining of our Lord's presence. What other cause would have been adequate? Could anything less than the "spirit of his mouth" and the "forthshining of his presence" have done it?

## MOTHER OF HARLOTS

Moreover, if we turn from Papacy, the Antichrist, to the Church over which Antichrist ruled so long, we reach the same conclusions. That Church, to our understanding, is represented in the Book of Revelation as a Woman riding the Beast (Rev. 17); that is to say, an ecclesiastical system is identified with the state power of Rome, influencing and guiding the tenfold commonwealth of nations on the one hand and, from another point of view, being upheld by it. (Rev. 17:12-14, 17.) But in "the time of the end" the ten kingdoms rebel against their would-be guide, throw off her yoke, hate her, spoil her, and consume her. - Rev. 17:16.

Again we turn to history to learn from its pages what, if any part, of this prediction has been fulfilled. Here we find that the kingdoms of Europe that arose on the fall of the old Roman Empire, voluntarily lent their support and gave their allegiance to the Church of Rome for about a

thousand years—a false millennium, if you please. But history also records how, as the result of her gross corruptions these self-same kingdoms came to loathe, despise, and reject her teachings, her government, and her guidance; how, for the past more than four hundred years they have thrown off her control, denied her claims for support and forsaken her company. Reviewing carefully the history of Roman Catholicism, as foretold by inspired writers, we inquire: "What next?" The answer comes again, as clearly as before—only her final fall under divine judgment that final fall of Babylon which immediately precedes the marriage of the Lamb. - Rev. 18:8; 19:7.

## **DAUGHTERS OF THE MOTHER**

Foregoing we have identified the "Mother of Harlots" as the Roman Catholic Church in its various aspects. Most Protestant commentators do likewise. However, they fail to see, what to us is all too apparent, that this symbol includes also the Protestant Church systems *and all who partake of the sectarian spirit*. In this connection the following comment from the pen of Brother Russell is most instructive

"Names were formerly given as expressions of character or work. ... The name Babylon, applied by the Spirit to the Church of Rome expresses her character, for Babylon means mixture-confusion. This union of the Woman (church) with the Beast (empire) constitutes the spiritual harlotry of which she is guilty.

"But the name (Babylon) applies to her entire family; her daughters inherit both her nature and name, for she is a 'mother of harlots' and her works they do."

Elsewhere he wrote: "All fallen sects, from which the inward spirit of vital religion has departed (or is departing) bear upon their foreheads the likeness or semblance of the 'Mother of Harlots' and of all abominations. "

Have the powers of the Protestant part of the ecclesiastical heavens been shaken? To us it seems so. In the Reformation days the central theme was the Gospel-faith in the redemption accomplished by our Lord. With little or no understanding of the philosophy underlying it, the faithful few nevertheless trusted for salvation in the ransom sacrifice of Christ -- they realized their need of a Savior, of one who would save them from sin and death, not merely their need of a teacher or noble example. In our time, however, the day of Protestantism's decline, not only has the Gospel sunlight become largely darkened, and the moon (the Mosaic foreshadowings of the Gospel) become turned into blood (the typical sacrifices of Israel being considered a form of barbarism); not only have the true stars (the Apostles) withdrawn their shining (their teachings being no longer held as authoritative), but the man-ordained luminaries of the present ecclesiastical heavens have been shaken from the spiritual leadership formerly claimed, to the level of earthly moralists. (Matt. 24:29; Isa. 13:1-10; Joel 2:10.) They have not repudiated the blasphemous doctrines of "hell," "non-elect infants," etc., but they are no longer able to preach them if they would, for their congregations today are, for the most part, too enlightened to listen to such monstrous absurdities. The necessity is thus laid upon them to find another Gospel (?) . However, they are without knowledge of God's true Plan for the future of our race. Consequently they turn to the Gospel (?) of "good works," "moral uplift," anti-slum endeavors, Christian-citizenship movements, etc. We have no quarrel with such attempts to ameliorate the condition of our race. Quite to the contrary. We have every sympathy with them and, in compliance with the Apostolic admonition to do good unto all men as we have opportunity (Gal. 6:10), are pleased to cooperate with them in all reasonable ways, as we are able. But such Gospels (?) have hope for this life only. They are poor substitutes for the "everlasting Gospel" of "life everlasting" to be enjoyed by the faithful in "the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. " (Rev.

14:6; 1 Tim. 1:16; 2 Pet. 1:11.) Indeed, if offered as "substitutes," they are harmful; *thus* offered they are antiChristian. By descending thus to this lower level of teaching, do not these Protestant luminaries themselves furnish the evidence that they have been shaken from their former exalted position as "stars" in the ecclesiastical heaven? And if so, are we not right in recognizing this as one of the signs predicted?

### **WHAT SHOULD BE OUR ATTITUDE?**

Before closing this article, there is a most important observation we should not fail to make. While, in the foregoing paragraphs, we have interpreted the "Mother of Harlots" symbol as finding its fulfilment in the Catholic and Protestant Ecclesiastical systems, we are not to be understood as speaking anything whatever against godly Christians within these systems, now or throughout their history. Even at this late date there are doubtless still some consecrated children of God in their midst. Our remarks have to do solely with the church systems themselves, not with the individuals of which they are composed. In all the various church associations of Christendom today there are doubtless some dear people whose hearts are very much in advance of their heads, and who, up to the light they possess are seeking to do the will of God. Some have raised the question: Is it possible that any of the "little flock" could today make their "calling and election" sure, while continuing their membership in the various church systems, such as Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran, etc. ? Our reply has been that this is a question which it is not for us to answer. It is a matter for the individual's own conscience. As the Apostle exhorts: "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." (Rom. 14:5.) It would be a violation of our own conscience for us to hold membership in any of the church systems, but we would not presume to judge others. To his own Master each must stand or fall. In due time the Lord will render a decision in every case and his judgment will be unerring. He would have us, we think, very lenient in our attitude towards any with whom we may come in touch, who, though continuing membership in a church system, manifest a Christian spirit, and who are disposed to fellowship with us to any extent. As systems, all denominations have been cast off, we think; the individuals within the systems, however, are considered apart from the denomination concerned, and only the Lord can read the heart. A great deal will depend, in each case, upon the degree of light possessed. We, ourselves, have been highly favored; *it is for us to be on guard lest the spirit of sectarianism creep upon us unawares*. We counsel all to stand free, not only from church systems, but from all parties, sects, and creeds of men from all "confessions of faith," as Brother Russell once put it. As for others, if in the Lord's providence it seems best to him to permit some to complete their calling and election without leaving Babylon, or without entirely abandoning all creeds of men or confessions of faith, that would be our will for *them*. Generally, however, we would expect, at this late hour in the Gospel Age, that not many who, failing to perceive Babylon's true condition, or for other reasons, remain in her, will be amongst those who one day will hear the Master's "Well done."

- P. L. Read.

## The New Heavens and the New Earth

And I beheld new heavens and earth,  
All radiant as the morning sun,  
Rejoicing on their day of birth;  
For the first heaven and earth were gone.  
And Eden spread o'er hill and lea  
Its peace; and there was no more sea.

And I beheld afar in air,  
Descending out of heaven from God,  
As a chaste bride adorned and fair,  
A city mortal never trod,  
Shining with many a peerless gem, -  
The pure, the new Jerusalem.

And a great voice from heaven I heard  
Which said, "Behold, the dwelling-place  
Of God, the house His hands have reared;  
That in His glory and His grace  
He may with men for ever dwell,  
As God with us, Immanuel.

"For His own hand from every eye  
Shall wipe away the tears of grief;  
And none shall languish, none shall die,  
And perish like the autumn leaf;  
And pain be at an end for aye,  
For former things are passed away."

And He that sat upon the throne  
Spake thus: "Lo, all things I renew !"  
And bid me write in joyful tone,  
For faithful are the words and true;  
And said unto me: "It is done!  
The First, the Last, am I alone.

"To him that is athirst I give  
The fountain infinite and free,  
The flowing spring whose waters live;  
And his for ever shall it be.  
Who overcomes hath all things won;  
I am his God, and he My son.

"But unbelievers, the unclean,  
The murderer, and man of lust,  
Unsuited for that holy scene, -  
The foul, the false, and the unjust, -  
Are sentenced to that lake of flame  
Which heaven 'the second death' doth name.

And, lo! an angel, of the seven  
Whose holy hands the vials bare  
Of the last judgment acts of heaven,  
Drew near, and talking with me there,  
"Come hither," said he, "to my side,  
And I will show thee the Lamb's bride."

And he upbore me to the brow  
Of a majestic mountain high,  
Whence, while the world lay far below,  
He turned my glances to the sky,  
And made me see a city fair  
Descending in the ambient air.

She had the glory of her God,  
Her light was crystalline and clear  
As shining jasper; round her stood  
A wall with gates, and angels near  
Guarded those glistening gates full well,  
Named from the tribes of Israel.

Three several gates on every side,  
On east and north, and south and west  
Her wall had twelve foundations wide,  
With names inscribed for ever blest;  
On each foundation was the name  
Of an apostle of the Lamb.

A golden reed the angel bare  
To measure the celestial frame;  
The city formed a mighty square,  
Its length and breadth and height the same;  
Twelve thousand furlongs every way  
The bright and beauteous city lay.

And twelve times twelve he measured more,  
The stature of the jasper wall;  
The measure of the reed he bore  
Was human, yet angelical;  
The city was of worth untold,  
All crystal and transparent gold.

How rich were its foundations fair!  
Chalcedony and chrysolite,  
And jasper, sapphire, sardius there,  
And topaz, each with different light,  
And amethyst, and many a gem  
Shone in the new Jerusalem.

Its gates were twelve, of lustre white,  
A single pearl was every gate;  
Its street was golden, crystal bright;  
No temple rose in sculptured state;  
For God Himself, the great I AM,  
Is all its temple, and the Lamb.

Its light was not the summer sun,  
The waning moon, the starry sky;  
The glory of Jehovah shone  
And streamed through its transparency;  
His presence made eternal day,  
The Lamb enlightened it for aye.

The nations of the ransomed earth  
Shall walk in its transcendent light;  
And kings shall bring to it their worth,  
The tribute of their treasures bright;  
Its gates, for ever open wide,  
Shall welcome the rejoicing tide.

No falling night or fleeting shade  
Shall o'er its beauty ever come;  
Nought that defiles or could degrade  
Shall enter that celestial home;  
But those who, like the Lamb's true wife,  
Are written in the book of life.

He showed me then a river clear,  
Untroubled by a warring wave;  
As crystal did its depths appear,  
A living flood whose waters lave  
The city, flowing from the throne  
Of God and of the Lamb alone.

And by its bank on either side  
The wondrous tree of life did grow,  
All central in the city wide,  
And yielded fruit on every bough;  
And every month its branches bore  
Of fruit a different sort and store.

And of the tree of life the leaves  
Were for the healing of mankind;  
And not a sin or curse which grieves  
The earth shall then remain behind:  
For there the throne of the I AM  
Shall ever be, and of the Lamb.

And Him in love and liberty  
They then shall serve, and see His face;  
His name upon their brows shall be  
In living characters of grace;  
His presence there shall banish night;  
And they shall reign in endless light.

- H. Grattan Guinness in "Light for the Last Days" (written in 1886)



## Israel Today

*"I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you. And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed. And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God, and none else and my people shall never be ashamed. And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream, dreams, your young men shall see visions.... And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered; for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call." - Joel 2:25-23; 32.*

IN these days of distress among nations, with the hearts of men failing them for fear and the minds of the statesmen of the world sorely perplexed, it is most refreshing to read the recent speeches of David Ben-Gurion, the Prime Minister of Israel. Here is a giant of a man, though small in physical stature—a courageous leader of his people in our time. Though in his seventies, he is vigorous in his thinking, and while many Israeli refer to him affectionately as "the old man," in his case age has not dimmed his vision of the future. Yet he is not a dreamer or a visionary, being a very practical and down-to-earth man who, on the other hand, looks to the future through the eyes of prophecy. Here is one of his latest statements:

"The Messianic vision of redemption for the Jewish people and all mankind is not something that has been created by European Jewry in recent times; it is the soul of prophetic Jewry, in all its forms and metamorphoses until this day, and it is the secret of the open and hidden devotion of world Jewry to the State of Israel. While before the rise of the State, the Messianic vision was reinforced by the pressure of Jewish distress in the Diaspora, in our days it is strengthened by the attractive force of the State itself, as it is today and as it ought to be, namely by the reality of the State and by its historic mission in the realization of the Messianic vision.

"This vision is not the outcome of any local or temporary conditions; it was created by the prophetic concept of the universe, the destiny of man on earth and the millennial era. It does not recognize idols of gold and silver; it does not accept the robbery of the poor, the oppression of peoples, the lifting up of swords by nation against nation or the study of war; it foretells the coming of the Redeemer whose loins are girt with righteousness; it looks forward to the day when the nations will cease to do' evil. This Messianic vision depends on the redemption of Israel, which will assume two forms: the ingathering of the exiles and the creation of a model nation, as Isaiah, the son of Amos, prophesied: 'Fear not, for I have redeemed thee. I will say to the North: Give, and to the South: Hold not back, bring my sons from far and my daughters from the end of the earth' (Isa. 43:5, 6). And he also said: 'And I will hold thee by the hand, and I will form thee, and I will make thee a covenant of the people, a light to the nations' (Isa. 42:6).

"These are no empty figures of speech—in our own day we are seeing the first signs of their realization.

## **BEAMED TO THE ISRAELI IN HEBREW**

As a result of our three lengthy stays in Israel during the past ten years we have become acquainted with various missionaries there. One who always impressed us is Jacob Blum of Jerusalem. His methods have been unusual. For instance, he seemingly has never endeavored to get those whom he has persuaded regarding Jesus' Messiahship to attend any meetings or join any church. He has carried on what might be termed a spiritual educational effort.

While Jacob Blum, as many other Protestant missionaries in Israel, does not have what we believe' to be the correct conception of the broad plan of God regarding the children of men, yet he is an astute thinker and very well versed in the traditions of his people, having studied at the feet of the famous Rabbi Kook. To the extent that this earnest Jew sees the truth of the Scriptures, he has zealously endeavored to impart it to his kinsmen. Frequently Jacob Blum gets involved in discussions with rabbis and intellectuals in Jerusalem and he is able to hold his ground with them.

Not so long ago Mr. Blum started to broadcast to the Israeli in modern Hebrew on tape-recorded messages beamed over the Trans World radio station's 100,000 watt short-wave transmitter in Monte Carlo. Every evening at 8:30 P.M. Israeli time he may be heard clearly in the Land of Promise. His radio discussions regarding Jesus' Messiahship have provoked comment in the Israeli press. Several newspapers have reported the nature of his programs in a fair way.

What we would like to emphasize here is the following brief statement from Jacob Blum which appeared in the American Messianic Fellowship Monthly. He writes:

"We receive most letters from young students in university and in high school. This confirms what I have told you before, that we are in a spiritual revival and a seeking after the truth in Israel.

Many rabbis have deplored the seeming irreligiousness of Israel youth, but what has been evident to us for a long time, and to Jacob Blum as well, is that the young people in the Jewish State are looking for a belief that appeals to their hearts and minds and they are beginning to weigh the claims of Christianity and to look into the merits of the New Testament.

Of the letters that Jacob Blum quotes in his report we would like to share the following one with you:

"To the representative of 'Kol Tikvah' ('Voice of Hope' radio program): Shalom. I congratulate you on the opening of the broadcast. I became an enthusiastic listener, especially because I am now finishing High School and wanted to solve for myself some religious problems. I have many questions that I would like to present personally and by writing. Would you be able to send me a Hebrew New Testament, if possible with the Old Testament, and some Hebrew literature that would guide me to become familiar with the New Testament? I am very interested to have a talk with one of your teachers, but God forbid that you visit me. My parents are very orthodox and if one of your people should visit me I would be forced to break my contact with you."

Dr. Blum adds, " I have sent him a Bible and some tracts, and hope to visit him some place in Tel Aviv."

Jacob Blum claims that his radio broadcast is the only Hebrew broadcast of the Gospel.

## **SCREENED ON THE SCENE**

The film epic *Ben Hur* was premiered in Israel a few months ago and since then has been shown for weeks in the principal cities of the country to packed houses. This lengthy and skillfully executed motion picture production has had its Israel run concurrently with the Eichmann trial. This is most significant as the *Ben Hur* film does go into the trial and crucifixion of Christ. The *Mount Zion Reporter*, published in Jerusalem by some members of the *Church of God Seventh Day*, has this to say, "We believe it *is* providential, a definite leading of the mighty Intervening Hand, that this goes on here at the same time of the Eichmann trial. There are many tears being shed now in Israel, and it is a time of weeping in many quarters, because of the horrors described at the Eichmann trial, as well as because of viewing the scene of the crucifixion in *Ben Hur*. We definitely know of one orthodox family, of which the mother went to see the film *Ben Hur* and after running home cried for two hours. It makes us think of the 12th chapter of Zechariah which describes a time of weeping in Israel, when they look upon him whom they pierced."

## **PILATE DID EXIST, ARCHAEOLOGISTS SAY**

Jerusalem -- Pontius Pilate, the Roman Procurator of Judea, who ordered the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, might have really existed, archaeological discovery points out. The engraved name of the Roman Procurator was found on a stone 31 by 29 inches in size, ten miles south of Haifa. Previous evidence of Pilate's existence was known *only* through the Christian Gospels and the writing of the Jewish historian, Josephus Flavius. Discovery was made by a University of Milan archaeological expedition. - *The Jewish Western Bulletin*

## **ISRAEL LOFTS SPACE ROCKET**

"Israel scored heavily over its hostile Arab neighbors *on* July 5th when an Israeli-made solid fuel, multi-stage weather rocket was sent soaring more than 50 miles into space," writes Alvin Rosenfeld of the *New York Herald Tribune*.

The first rocket known to have been launched successfully by *a* Middle Eastern country, the 550-pound "Shavit Shtayim" (Hebrew for Comet II) spread a glowing sodium cloud in the dawn sky. No explanation was given as to why the rocket was called Comet II.

The rocket, launched at a secret site on the Mediterranean seacoast, was "planned, constructed and fired by Israeli scientists and technicians ... the purpose of the test was fully achieved," an official defense ministry statement said.

A government background paper noted that Israel, according to available published information, was the seventh country to have fired such a rocket. Similar rockets have been launched by the United States, Soviet Russia, France, Britain, Italy and Japan, all large nations. This fact attests Israel's tremendous scientific strides in its brief thirteen years *as* a nation.

The solid fuel propelling the rocket was developed by Israeli scientists, the paper said, and was based almost entirely on local raw materials. Its formula is secret.

The paper said the rocket was not guided and stressed the peaceful research goals of the rocket program.

The firing was viewed *as a* victory for Israel in the constant struggle with the Arab states for power and prestige, according to news commentators.

It is evident that the Arabs now fear that possibly Israel will soon have an atomic bomb developed. Israel has never revealed the nature of a secretive plant that has been spotted in the Negev.

After the successful launching of Comet II Israeli officials indicated that more launchings of bigger and better rockets are in the offing.

### **THE GREATEST SCIENTIFIC BREAKTHROUGH**

The ground-breaking ceremony for the first industrial-sized plant for water desalination using the process invented by Alexander Zarchin, an Israeli engineer, was held in Eilat on the shores of the Red Sea. The installation has been developed jointly by Fairbanks Morse Co. of the U. S. and the Israel Ministry of Development. It is expected to start production by the beginning of 1962.

The process, which has been tested experimentally with complete success under the auspices of the Ministry of Development, is expected to produce water at a cost of less than a dollar per thousand gallons, which *is* appreciably cheaper than any other existing process. Its capacity will be 220,000 gallons of fresh water daily. The President of the Fairbanks-Whitney Corporation, Mr. David Karr, has described the process as "a new dimension in science" and "one of the great scientific breakthroughs mankind has been waiting for since time immemorial." The general principle of the Zarchin process involves the freezing of water at low pressures.

Israel's Minister of Development, Mr. Mordecai Bentov, stated at the ceremony that it had been decided to set up a plant in Israel within the coming three years to supply water desalination equipment to customers in Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia.

Fairbanks-Morse, an affiliate of Fairbanks-Whitney, took a full page advertisement in the *Wall Street Journal* to present the first picture of the de-salting unit which, it said, was "designed to turn sea water into fresh water at the lowest cost on earth."

"The first country that's able to do that (de-salt sea water economically) will earn far more prestige than we lost by being second in outer space," said U. S. President John F. Kennedy.

"The desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." - Isaiah 35:1.

- *Casimir Lanowick.*

## **The Question Box**

### **Hebrews 4:9-11.**

THE Scripture to which our question refers reads as follows:

Heb. 4:9 - "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."

Heb. 4:10 - "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his."

Heb. 4:11 - "Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

#### *Question:*

Who are "the people of God"? What is the "rest" that "remaineth" for them (Heb. 4:9)? And when do they "enter into that rest" (Heb. 4:11)? In your reply please include a discussion of Heb. 4:10. What connection, if any, does it have with Heb. 4:9?

#### *Answer:*

The "people of God" are the overcomers of this Gospel Age. The "rest" that "remaineth" for them, is that complete satisfaction of heart and mind which awaits them when they enter the joys of their Lord on the other side the veil. By faith and consecration, however, this rest is entered by them here and now, in this present life. Heb. 4:10, although apparently offering no logical support to Heb. 4:9, is vitally connected therewith, as we will endeavor to show in a later paragraph.

#### TWO ASPECTS OF REST

Rest may be understood in two senses: (1) rest *from* work and (2) rest *in* work. With us both forms of rest are experienced. In various ways, with brain or hand or both, we work. When the labor has been especially hard, we become rested and refreshed by ceasing from it. We are enabled to return to it, whatever it is, and to do it better, because we left it for a season. This is rest *from* work, a most true and refreshing rest.

But is mere cessation from toil our best and most welcome refreshment, our truest rest? By no means! To see our work well done; to search into it and find no flaw; to feel that it comes up to that conception, that ideal, of it, which we had framed in our *mind -- this*, when we get it (which is not often, we fear) gives us a far more perfect and restful satisfaction than mere sitting or lying still. This is rest *in* our work as distinguished from rest *from* our work; and the one is immeasurably higher than the other.

#### **GOD'S REST**

Thus, only very much more so, must it have been, always, with the Eternal God. Thus must it have been with him in the period we call "creation." Day by *day*, *this* consummate Artist, this master Musician, this peerless Poet, may be seen at work (in the first two chapters of Genesis). The work proceeds happily. Day by day God sees that the work of the day is good. "And God saw that it was good," is the familiar refrain appended to the story of each day's toil. At last the six days come to an end, and with them the work. And now God surveys all that his hands have made—the heaven and the earth, land and sea, day and night; sun, moon and stars; fish birds,

beasts; man and woman. As he surveys them he rejoices in his finished work, and pronounces them not "good" only, but "very good." They answer to his thought. They are *his* thought, in varied and beautiful forms. He takes delight in them and blesses them. *This is his picture*; and it is a finished and triumphant work of art. This is his *music*; and it is perfect harmony, perfectly rendered. This is his *poem*; and it is without flaw. He rests *in* it and is refreshed.

It is true, of course, as the Scriptures record, that (the works of creation being finished, Gen. 2:1, 2; Heb. 4:3, 4) God rested *from* them; but it is also true that his is a rest (a sense of refreshment, Exod. 31:17) *in* them. Indeed, the idea of rest, in his case, as mere relief from weariness, is repugnant to us, as it is to the whole tenor of Scripture. "Hast thou not known? has thou not heard, that the Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?" - Isa. 40:28.

Moreover, the term "rest" as applied to God, not only could not imply relief from weariness, but also could contain no suggestion of inaction. Indeed, no less an authority than our Lord Jesus himself, affirmed: "My Father worketh *hitherto*" -- *that* is to say, up to that very hour in which Jesus made the statement. (John 5:17.) Having ceased *from* the works of creation, and while resting *in* them, God proceeded to work on a higher plane. Rising from the works of creation, he commenced the work of sustaining and providentially administering them. And rising yet higher, he proceeded to the work of redemption, including his "New Creation." And who can doubt but that *these* works of providence and redemption (which he is accomplishing during his day of rest from his works of creation -- a day which, so far as we have been able to ascertain from the Scriptures, *will never end*) who can doubt but that *these* works do but heighten and intensify his "rest." \*

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\* Foregoing we have ascribed the works of (1) creation, (2) providence, and (3) redemption to God. However, there is a school of thought which ascribes only the works of creation and providence to the Father, that of redemption being ascribed to the Son. The truth is that all three are works of God (the Father, the Great Jehovah). In all three, however, his Only-begotten Son has been and will continue to be his honored Agent. - John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16, 17; 1 Cor. 8:6.

## **GOD'S REST OFFERED TO MANKIND**

Rest *from* work may be considered as the negative, and rest *in* work the positive form of God's rest. In God's rest man was destined to share. But he failed to attain it at the creation, for after that, all too soon, came the fall.

When God began dealing with the typical people, Israel, his offer of rest was first presented in the negative form. Even God himself condescended *thus* to rest, although, as we have seen, this was far from realizing his idea of rest, either for himself or for man. *It was, however, the only idea of rest which Israel could grasp.* The Pharisees, at the time of our Lord's first advent, do not appear to have understood in any degree the significance of his words when he insisted that his sabbath-keeping should be like that of his Father, who "worketh until now"; that the sabbath *he* regarded, was one in which *works* (good works, of course) were appropriate -- a sabbath made *for* man, not one for which man had been made. The Jewish sabbath, therefore, was God's offer of rest in its most elementary (its negative) form, of rest from work.

## CANAAN REST TYPICAL

The offer of rest in Canaan went beyond this negative aspect. While falling short of the perfect rest which remained for "us" (the Gospel Age Church), it was nevertheless a development in that direction. Israel, however, that is to say, all those who came out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses, so provoked God by their disobedience-their lack of faith and lack of fidelity-that he would not permit them even to enter the Land of Promise, much less would he allow them to enter *his rest*. (Heb. 3:1-19.) Joshua *did* take their *children* into Canaan, but even they did not realize the true rest there, for (as our Author points out in 4:8, where the word "Jesus" should be "Joshua") if Joshua *had* given them rest, there would have been no occasion for God, by his holy spirit, to have extended the invitation once again, as he does in Psalm 95: "*Today*, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." The fact that this gracious invitation was once again made *then*, "after so long a time" (Heb. 4:7), (that is to say, after so long a time as the interval between the entrance into Canaan and the date of Psalm 95) shows that the promised rest had not yet become their portion.

In view of all this failure on the part of mankind in general and of Israel in particular, to obtain the rest promised, what shall we conclude? Obviously -- so reasons *unbelief* -- *we* must conclude that the promised rest will never be possessed; it is nothing but a beautiful mirage!

This, however, is not the conclusion of our Author. Instead, he exclaims: "Not so! I happen to be acquainted with God. He is my Father. Perhaps the most wonderful thing about him is that he has a craving to share this rest of his with his intelligent creatures. Moreover

In support of the second view a number of reasons have been advanced, which may be summarized as follows:

- (a) The definite phrase, "he who entered"; (not as R.V. "he that is entered").
- (b) The emphatic pronoun, "himself."
- (c) The historic tense "entered upon rest"; (not as R.V. "hath rested").
- (d) The implied contrast with Joshua (Joshua 4:8).
- (e) That otherwise there is no mention of Jesus' experience or achievements between Heb. 2:1, and Heb. 4:13.
- (f) That otherwise read, the verse offers no logical support to verse 9, but interpreted thus supplies the ground on which the sabbath-rest is offered to Christ's followers.

While at first sight this second view may be surprising, it gains in beauty, the more it is considered. God's rest which is set before us, our Forerunner (our Joshua) has already entered. He who once said, "I must work while it is called Today" (John 9:4), on entering into God's rest, ceased from his own works, as God did from his. He said, "It is finished." (John 5:36; 17:4; 19:30.) Joshua gave Israel no deep and satisfying rest; but Jesus (our Joshua) Son of God, has entered into rest on our behalf, and by him, we too, may enter. He it is, whom Heb. 4:10 represents, with a marked and isolating emphasis, as having "himself entered into rest." Thus understood, the verse does not stand alone and unconnected, but prepares the reader to return, after having seen the supremacy of Jesus over Moses and Joshua, to the consideration of his rep-



representative character, his high priesthood, already mentioned at the end of Heb. 2 and the beginning of Heb. 3.

In our consideration of Heb. 4:10 foregoing, we have endeavored to distinguish the two main viewpoints of scholars, and we confess that if we had to choose between them, we should take the second. But why not combine them? Since the rest that Jesus realized was not for himself alone, but for all who share his fellowship; since he could and did offer the rest of salvation to all who came to him ("Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" - Matt. 11:28); and even the deeper rest of consecration to those who would take his yoke and learn of him (Matt. 11:29, 30); - since these things are so, may we not understand from Hebrews 4:10 that *Christ first, and we after him*, are to cease from our own works as God did from his? It would surely seem so.

### **THE REST OF FAITH**

At the outset we said that by faith and consecration, God's rest is entered by us here and now, in this present life. This thought has been beautifully expressed by the poet in the following lines:

"Canst thou not see  
That there remains another rest for thee?  
"There is a rest which still he waits to give  
A rest wherein we all may daily live --  
The rest whereby,  
As in his death, by faith, we die,  
So he will live in us,  
And living thus  
Will change our death to life -- a life no longer ours,  
But his, renewed with resurrection powers.

"O now receive  
The calm, deep peace which comes as we believe  
That all the works, and zeal, and strife,  
With which we sometimes sought to fill our life,  
Are vain and dead, at best:  
Thus shalt thou understand, and enter into rest."

In the Manna for May 18 we have a choice paragraph bearing directly on the passage. We quote it here as a fitting close to the foregoing discussion.

"Our rest in the Lord is as complete as is our belief in him. He who believes fully *rests* fully; he who believes only partially *rests* but partially. The ideal condition of the spiritual Israelite is the attainment of a perfect rest, a perfect Sabbath-keeping, in his present experience, and a waiting and laboring for another and still more complete rest -- the actual rest of the perfected condition -- the rest that remains for the people of God."

- P. L. Read.



## Recently Deceased

Bro, Gordon Bannister, Providence, R. I. (July)  
Sr. H. M. Bunnell, West Lafayette, Ind. (April)  
Bro. Sylvan M. Cave, Brooklyn, N. Y. (June)  
Bro Theodore Conard, Miami, Fla. (June)  
Bro. C. T. Davey, Aylesbury, England (July)  
Sr. Ethel S. Eidson, Mexico, Mo. (July)  
Sr. Irma Prey, Baltimore, Md. (June)  
Bro. H. H. Harvey, Baltimore, Md. (June)  
Bro. Charles G. Joseph, Harvey, Ill. (July)  
Bro. Philip Lemmert, Baltimore, Md.(May)  
Bro. Henry Muntzer, San Gabriel, Calif. (July)  
Sr. A. Nutt, Dewsbury, England (April)  
Bro. William Peck, Buffalo, N.Y. (July)  
Sr. Lena Thomas, Marshfield, Wis.(July)