

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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## "Even at the Doors"

*"What will be the sign of thy presence, and of the consummation of the age?" - Matthew 24:3 (Diaglott).*

*"When ye shall see all these things, know that he is near." -Matthew 24:33 (margin).*

OF ALL the gracious words which proceeded out of the mouth of him who spake as never man spake, perhaps none have had a more powerful influence in the history of the Church than those uttered by the Master just as his earthly career was ending: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2, 3). Nor can we think of any more calculated to inspire hope in his waiting followers today, or more calculated to renew their courage. How much this promise means to us can be best estimated by contrasting the poverty of spirit which would be ours if it had never been vouchsafed to us, or if there were a question as to its fulfillment. How dark our gloom would then be, how forlorn our state, how void of all good cheer our prospects! Thank God for "that blessed hope" and for the purifying effect it has had, and, please God, yet will have, in our lives (Titus 2:13; 1 John 3:3).

## OCCUPY TILL I COME

Since the fruition of all our hopes, both for the Church and for the world, is intimately associated with the return of our Lord, it would be strange indeed if we were not possessed of an eagerness to learn the time when this long-looked-for event might be expected. If the inquiry of the Apostles, "What will be the sign of thy presence?" was a proper one then, it would seem to be still more appropriate today when the evidences that we have reached "the consummation of the Age" are multiplied. Indeed, far from rebuking this spirit of inquiry, our Lord, both by parable and direct exhortation, sought to encourage it. True, they were to be occupied, not idle, during his absence, but it was to be only "till he come." Till then they were to be diligently engaged in his business, each occupied with the special task to which he had been assigned. But while thus occupied, their whole attitude was to be one of joyful expectancy, of eager watchfulness for his return. "Watch, therefore, for ye know not when the Lord of the house cometh." And it is not

difficult to see that this attitude of joyful expectancy would indicate at once the method and the spirit of their service. They were not to be as drudges, who have no pleasure in their labor, nor as hirelings, who care only for their wages, On the contrary, their labor was to be bright with hope, with the hope of a great happiness to come. They were to do all they did as in the sight of a Master who, though absent from them for a time, was sure to return, and who, meanwhile, would be present with them in spirit, and much concerned in the success of their labors (Luke 19:13; Mark 13:33-37).

## THE GLORIOUS HOPE OBSCURED

Those of our readers who are at all acquainted with the pages of history are aware that after the Apostles fell asleep the Adversary succeeded in obscuring this glorious hope. The effect on the life and health of the Church, as might have been expected, was most disastrous, and it was not until the doctrine of our Lord's Second Advent was restored to a foremost place in its preaching and teaching that the Church began to recover from the state of apostasy into which, except for a few devout souls, it fell. As we ponder the record of those times we may see that the Adversary did not accomplish this beclouding of the Church's brightest hope by means of a direct attack -- an open denial of the fact that our Lord would return -- but rather by an indirect method, by an undermining of the doctrine. He allowed the doctrine to remain, but twisted its import and so corrupted its meaning as to rob it of its power. Under his leadership, questions were raised as to the *object* of our Lord's return, and after awhile the glorious hope was changed into a dreadful fear. Instead of a joyful, longing, expectancy for her beloved Bridegroom to return to claim her for his own, and thereafter to introduce "times of refreshing," those times of restitution" spoken by the mouth of all God's holy Prophets since the world began, the Church was filled with grave forebodings. Symbolic Scriptures were so wrested and misapplied that the precious promise seemed to take on the character of a dire threat. Under the circumstances we do not wonder that instead of cherishing it in their hearts, men did their best to forget it. Thank God for the light now shining which enables us to look for the return of the Lord with the same exultation of spirit that is manifest in the prophetic utterance of David:

"Let the heavens be glad,  
And let the earth rejoice;  
And let men say among the nations,  
Jehovah reigneth.  
Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; Let the fields rejoice, and all that is therein.  
Then shall the trees of the wood sing aloud  
At the presence of Jehovah,  
Because he cometh to judge the earth.  
O give thanks unto Jehovah, for he is good;  
For his mercy endureth forever."  
- 1 Chronicles 16:31-34.

If there is any lingering doubt in the mind of any of our readers as to the magnificent *object* of our Lord's return we suggest a re-reading of the sixth chapter of "*The Divine Plan of the Ages.*" Indeed, we believe that all who have not read that chapter in recent months would be advantaged in doing so now, in connection with this article. There the evidence is conclusively shown that our Lord's return is "manifestly the hope of the Church and the world."

## THE GLORIOUS HOPE RESTORED

Once the truth concerning the object of our Lord's Second Advent was regained by the Church, the old fervency of desire for its speedy accomplishment was restored. St. John's plea, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," well expressed the sentiment which again prevailed, and the old spirit of inquiry as to *how* and *when* was revived. Much searching of the Scriptures ensued, and light was granted on various matters. The whole story of those thrilling days cannot be told here. Those who would learn it, or those who would refresh their memory concerning it, are referred to Brother Russell's luminous expositions in the six volumes of *Scripture Studies* and the *Reprints*. Here we must content ourselves with noting three outstanding convictions resulting from those Bible studies.

One of these was the realization that our Lord is no longer a man; that while he had been put to death flesh (a flesh being) he had been raised spirit (a spirit being), and it was therefore not as a man but as a spirit being, a spirit being, moreover, of the highest order, the divine, that we should look for him (1 Pet. 3:18; 1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:17; Heb. 9:28; Phil. 2:9; 1 Tim. 6:16). A natural corollary to this thought was that he would be invisible to our physical eyes, since as human beings we could not look on a spirit being except by a miracle.

Another conviction reached was in regard to the sign which would acquaint the watchers of the Lord's presence. Whatever that sign should prove to be they became convinced that its signification would be twofold: it would indicate both that the Lord had returned and that the consummation of the Age had been reached. In other words, they were not to look for one sign or series of signs to indicate the Lord's presence and another sign or series of signs to tell them that the end of the Age had been reached, but that the two events (or, as they later came to understand them, the two eras) would synchronize, and one sign or series of signs announce them both. If, therefore, they should recognize a sign or signs that the Lord was present, they might understand also that the end of the Age had been reached, and conversely, and most important to notice here, if they should become aware of signs pointing unmistakably to the fact that the end of the Age had been reached, they might know also that the Lord was present.

A third conviction, closely related to the other two above mentioned, was that there were already signs sufficient to satisfy them that these two long-looked-for events (eras) had arrived -- the consummation of the Age had been reached, and they were living in the days of the second presence of the Son of Man. True to these convictions the *Watch Tower* carried as its subtitle:

### **HERALD OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE**

As time went on and studies progressed, the thought did not seem unreasonable that the Scriptures might contain sufficient data to enable the watchers to determine when our invisible Lord would shine forth in such a way that *every* eye would see him -- they also which pierced him. They knew, too, that when *that* event should occur their own pilgrimage here must of necessity be ended, for when Christ who is our life shall be *thus* manifested, then shall we also be manifested with him in glory (Col. 3:4). Such a reflection could not but add to, rather than detract from the zest with which this line of study was pursued. All are aware that the conclusions reached pointed to 1914 as the year in which the glorification of the Church might be reasonably expected. All are aware, too, that this expectation was not realized. To quote from Brother Russell: "Our thought was purely an inference, and now [Sept. 1916] we see that it was an unjustified one" (*Reprints Vol. 7*, page R5950). Since that time various further attempts have been made to determine the date of the glorification of the Church, but all have thus far proved futile.

### **CAST NOT AWAY YOUR CONFIDENCE**

Naturally this continual failure has been disappointing to many, and some, unable to understand why their expectations have failed to eventuate, have begun to question if they may not have erred also in their former conclusions as to the return of the Lord. In view of this it has more than once been suggested to us that if a candid review of the subject were presented in these pages, it could not fail to be of interest and profit to our readers. Acting in accordance with this suggestion, we have, from time to time, reexamined the evidences which have hitherto seemed to us to point to our Lord's presence and to the consummation of the Age.

We did so in 1936, in 1948, and again in 1961. Today, in view of the fact that our list of *Herald* subscribers includes so many new readers who do not have access to those back numbers of our journal; in view, also, of the timeliness of the subject; in view, too, of the increasing light which unfolding events shed upon our pathway, it has been urged that yet another review be undertaken at this time. This we propose to do now. We trust to make such review in the spirit of discipleship -- the spirit of a learner not that of a master -- and while presenting our own conclusions, to do so in a, spirit of loving consideration of the views of any who may differ with us, and whose fellowship we would cultivate rather than mar. Let us then unite our prayers to this end. Then surely it shall come to pass that, whether or not we shall see eye to eye at the conclusion of our study, none of us will be without the blessed realization that our study was characterized by the spirit of love, without which though we have all knowledge, on this as on any subject, we shall be as nothing.

### **DOES CHRIST COME BEFORE OR AFTER MILLENNIUM?**

The importance of a doctrine may be judged to some extent by the proportionate space and prominence given to it in the New Testament. Measured by this standard, the theme of Christ's coming is second only to the Atonement, in the claim which it makes upon our consideration.

Would that such a theme might be divested of all controversial aspects! But here, as everywhere, there are schools of interpretation between which one finds himself obliged, whether he will or not, to choose. Premillennial or Postmillennial advent -- Christ's coming before the Millennium or after the Millennium -- is the issue which divides two great parties of Biblical students.

With only kindly thoughts for those who differ with us, we humbly, but nevertheless firmly, hold with the first school on this question. To our understanding the Scriptures present clear and convincing testimony that Christ comes not after but before the Millennium, that he comes to introduce that glorious Age.

### **HAS ANTICHRIST COME OR IS HE YET TO APPEAR?**

Premillenarians, again, are divided into two schools, the Futurist and the Historical; the former of whom holds that Antichrist is yet to appear and that the greater part of the prophecies in the Book of Revelation awaits fulfillment; the latter maintains, with the Reformers and the expositors of the early post-reformation era, as well as outstanding preachers of more recent times, including our own dear Brother Russell, that Antichrist has already come in the bloody and blasphemous system of the Papacy, and that the visions of the Apocalypse have been continuously meeting fulfillment from the time of our Lord's ascension to the present day.

Here, again, we hold in very high esteem many of those who take the Futurist viewpoint, and freely concede their right to hold and express their views. If we cannot share them, but on the contrary express our firm adherence to the Historical interpretation, it is only because we believe the latter is more Scriptural and rests upon the more obvious and simple interpretation of the Word; and also because we find that it has such verifications in fulfilled history and chronology as to compel even some of its strongest opponents to admit that it is a true interpretation -- although they do not think it the complete and final one.

*(Continued in next issue)*

- P. L. Read

## Authority of the Divine Word

*"The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you." - 1 Peter 1:24, 25.*

THE DIVINE standpoint is that no one really lives except he who has the Word of God in his heart and who is obediently keeping his conduct through life in harmony therewith. This is surely the import of the words of Jesus, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The Word of God, the Message from God, is compared to life-giving waters, because that Word embodies the Divine instruction setting forth God's will in the matter of cooperation with him so as to bring the blessing of continued life, everlasting life.

As God is unchangeable, so his Word remains unchanged from age to age; and what was truth in ages gone by is still truth. Another enlarging upon the words of St. Peter says, "It is sad to look on a beautiful lily, a rose, a magnolia, and to think how soon all that beauty will disappear. It is more sad to look on a rosy cheek, a bright eye, a lovely form, an expressive brow, an open, serene, intelligent countenance, and to think how soon all that beauty and brilliancy will fade away. But amidst these changes which beauty undergoes, and the desolations which disease and death spread over the world, it is cheering to think that all is not so. There is that which does not change, which never loses its beauty. 'The Word of the Lord' abides. His cheering promises, his assurances that there is a brighter and better world, remain amidst all these changes the same. The traits which are drawn on the character by the religion of Christ, more lovely by far than the most delicate coloring of the lily, remain for ever. There they abide, augmenting in loveliness, when the rose fades from the cheek; when the brilliancy departs from the eye; when the body molds away in the sepulcher. The beauty of religion is the only permanent beauty in the earth."

It is the perversion of the Divine truth by men, the traditions of men, that make void the Word of God. And for this reason, it is of the most signal importance that those who are walking in the pathway of life and seeking to be fed upon the life-giving truth shall learn to distinguish between the Word of God and the traditions of men -- that which is not according to that Word.

### OUR INHERITANCE IN THE BIBLE

The Bible is the great touchstone or source of spiritual truth. Not only so, but it becomes the means by which we determine what is truth and what is error, of all the messages that are being propagated amongst men. It may be truthfully said that the entire Bible from beginning to end is the inheritance of the saints -- "The sanctified in Christ Jesus." To them, all the Apostolic epistles are addressed -- including the Apocalyptic visions of St. John, which are said to be in the opening pages a revelation of things for the Lord's people -- "To show unto his servants things which must shortly come to Pass."

Furthermore, the Apostle Peter in referring to the prophecies of the Old Testament, says even of the Prophets that, "Not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister" (1 Pet. 1:12). (See also Dan. 12:4, 8, 9.) And the Apostle Paul says that "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we [the sanctified in Christ Jesus] through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). Consequently, all that was written aforetime by Moses and the Prophets -- whether of history or law or prophecy or type or precept -- was designed specially for those who are in Christ, for the instruction and comfort of the children of God. And not any of it belongs to the unregenerate world. It is indeed a "light which shineth in a

dark place," to Christians. It is a "lamp to our feet, and a light to our path." And whatever light the worldly or the unbelieving get from it, reaches them indirectly -- as reflected from the children who "shine as lights in the world." "Ye," said our Lord, "are the light of the world" (Phil. 2:15; Matt. 5:14).

The Plan of God once discerned, indirectly inculcates every principle of morality and virtue by showing just what God designs to have us do; by showing first how he created our first parents in his own image and designed our race for everlasting life in the enjoyment of his favor; next, by causing us to see that everything in us that is short of that original perfection is due to sin and renders us unworthy of life. Then there is the recognition of sin; and thus the glorious plan for both our legal and our actual deliverance from sin and death is opened up, the final restitution of all things is assured to the loyal and obedient sons of God, and the necessary provisions thereto are made manifest.

As the Plan is now clearly outlined and laid bare before the children of God as never before, we see how history and prophecy and type and law all minister to the one grand design of the Book of Books, in which the reverent and careful student finds the highest incentive to purity and holiness and the most perfect delineation of that praiseworthy character, which he should seek to build up and in contrast with which the deformity of every evil is manifest.

### **THE THING WHICH THE LORD HATH COMMANDED**

As in ancient times it was of the greatest importance that God's people not only heard but gave heed to and obeyed the Word and his instruction concerning them and how they were to proceed; so it is no less important that the true Israel of God today journeying to the promised inheritance shall show forth great meekness and teachableness and be swift to hear and obey what the Lord their God has said unto them.

"It is of the deepest interest," says another writer\* whose comment is specially to the point here, "to see that in the consecration of the priests as well as in the entire range of the sacrifices, we are brought immediately under the authority of the Word of God. 'And Moses said unto the congregation, This is the thing which the Lord commanded to be done' (Lev. 8:5). And, again, 'Moses said, This is the thing which the Lord commanded that ye should do: and the glory of the Lord shall appear unto you' (Lev. 9:6). Let these words sink down into our ears; let them be carefully and prayerfully pondered: they are priceless words. *'This is the thing which the Lord commanded.'* He did not say, This is the thing which is expedient, agreeable, or suitable; neither did he say, This is the thing which has been arranged by the voice of the fathers, the decree of the elders, or the opinion of the doctors. Moses knew nothing of such sources of authority. To him there was one holy, elevated, paramount source of authority, and that was, the Word of Jehovah, and he would bring every member of the assembly into direct contact with that blessed source. This gave assurance to the heart, and fixedness to all the thoughts. There was no room left for tradition, with all its uncertain sound, or for man, with his doubtful disputations. All was clear, conclusive, and authoritative. Jehovah had spoken; and all that was needed was to hear what he had said, and obey. Neither tradition nor expediency has any place in the heart that has learned to prize, to reverence, and to obey the Word of God.

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\*C. H. MacIntosh in *Notes On Leviticus* (written 1890).

"And what was to be the result of this strict adherence to the Word of God? A truly blessed result, indeed. 'The glory of the Lord shall appear unto you.' Had the Word been disregarded, the glory

would not have appeared. The two things were intimately connected. The slightest deviation from 'thus saith Jehovah' would have prevented the beams of the Divine glory from appearing to the congregation of Israel. Had there been the introduction of a single rite or ceremony not enjoined by the Word, or had there been the omission of aught which that Word commanded, Jehovah would not have manifested his glory. He could not sanction by the glory of his presence the neglect or rejection of his Word. He can bear with ignorance and infirmity, but he cannot sanction neglect or disobedience."

### **THE WORD OF GOD MUST TEST ALL TEACHING**

A careful study of the history of the Lord's people, both prior and subsequent to our Lord's First Advent, discloses the fact that their difficulties and their failures to attain and secure to themselves the things God had promised, were due to a partial or complete neglect of his infallible Word; to a measure of indifference to what was marked out in that Word as the Divine will for his children. Neglect of the Word of God and the authority which it alone has, always opens up the way for the words of men to enter in, for there have always been those in the Church, from the beginning of the Age, who have been overconfident concerning themselves and their own importance, and whose natural bent seems ever in the direction of exercising authority over others and telling others what to do. Consequently, the word of men has many times been substituted for the Word of God. The same writer continues in earnest appeal:

"Oh! that all this were more solemnly considered, in this day of tradition and expediency! I would, in earnest affection, and in the deep sense of personal responsibility to my reader, exhort him to give diligent heed to the importance of close -- I had almost said severe -- adherence and reverent subjection to, the Word of God. Let him try everything by that standard, and reject all that comes not up to it, let him weigh everything in that balance, and cast aside all that is not full weight; let him measure everything by that rule, and refuse all deviation. If I could only be the means of awakening one soul to a proper sense of the place that belongs to the Word of God, I should feel I had not written my book for naught nor in vain."

### **THE STAMP OF DIVINE SANCTION**

The above writer discloses unusual wisdom, a wisdom that is borne of long experience in the school of Christ and that comes as a result of careful study of the lessons that are realized from history. His emphasis on the importance of the unvarnished Word of God and the strong appeal to the true disciple of Christ to be sure that all he is accepting and engaging in is according to God's Word and will, is surely seasonable advice. Thus he continues:

"Reader, pause, and, in the presence of the Searcher of hearts, ask yourself this plain, pointed question: Am I sanctioning by my presence, or adopting in my practice, any departure from, or neglect of, the Word of God? Make this a solemn, personal matter before the Lord. Be assured of it, it is of the very deepest moment, the very last importance. If you find that you have been, in any wise, connected with, or involved in, aught that wears not the distinct stamp of Divine sanction, reject it at once and forever. Yes, reject it, though arrayed in the imposing vestments of antiquity, accredited by the voice of tradition, and putting forward the almost irresistible plea of expediency. If you cannot say, in reference to everything with which you stand connected, 'This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded,' then away with it unhesitatingly, away with it forever. Remember these words, '*As* he hath done this day, *so* the Lord hath commanded to do' (Lev. 8:34). Yes, remember the '*as*' and the '*so*'; see that you are connecting them in your ways and associations, and let them never be separated." - Reprinted from *The Herald*, May 1, 1927

## Jehovah's Footstool Made Glorious

*"Thus saith Jehovah, Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool." "And I will make the place [footstool] of my feet glorious." "And his [Jehovah's] feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives. Isaiah 60:13; 66:1; Zechariah 14:4; Matthew 5:35; Acts 7:49.*

GOD'S footstool has been anything but glorious for the past six thousand years: sin, pain, crying, mental and physical suffering, and death have made it one vast charnel house in which now, conservatively estimated, at least fifty thousand millions of humanity wait for the time to come when the curse of divine justice shall be lifted; and the light of divine favor, shining in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord, shall rise as the Sun of righteousness,

"Chase away sin's dismal shadows,  
Light the gloom with healing ray."

To this end God has made abundant provision. The *ransom* for Adam, and for all who suffered loss through him as his children, bought the whole world, and secured for each member of our race an opportunity for a trial for everlasting life under favorable conditions; but it did more, it purchased back Adam's Paradise home (lost by his transgression), and his dominion as earth's king, representative of God, his Creator and Father.

Hence we read, "And thou, O Tower of the flock [Christ], the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the *first dominion*" (Micah 4:8). The Apostle Paul also speaks of the "redemption of the purchased *possession*" (Eph. 1:14). Our Lord in one of his parables referred to this also, showing that he purchased not only mankind, the treasure, but also the field, the world, the earth from under the curse: and that all who join with him, as members of the Kingdom class, share in that purchase of the field and the treasure (Matt. 13:44).

The entire work of the Millennium will consist in reordering and making glorious God's footstool. Paradise, when lost through sin, was but a "garden" in a corner of the earth; but inasmuch as the race of Adam has multiplied to fill the earth, in accordance with the divine intention (Gen. 1:28), and inasmuch as they all have been redeemed, it will be necessary to provide a Paradise sufficiently large to accommodate all: and this will imply that the entire earth shall become as the Garden of Eden for fruitfulness and beauty and perfection. And all this is promised as the grand future consummation of the divine plan (Acts 3:20, 21; Rev. 2:7; 2 Cor. 12:4).

But the richest jewel of the Lord's glorified footstool in the close of the Millennium will be mankind, in whose perfection, liberty, and likeness to God, in moral and intellectual graces, will be reflected the very image of Divinity. And most gloriously will the perfect man reflect honor upon his Maker and his wondrous plan for his creation, redemption, and restitution. And with that wonderful plan will always be intimately identified first the Lord Jesus, Jehovah's "Word," and second the Bride, the Lamb's wife, and joint-heir in disbursing the blessings secured by the ransom.

The beautifying and glorifying of the Lord's "footstool" will not be *completed* until our Lord Jesus, as the Father's honored agent, "shall have put down all [conflicting] rule and all authority and power. For he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet," before he delivers up the Kingdom at the close of the Millennium (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

The period of the reign of Sin and Death is represented as the time when God "remembered not his *footstool* in the day of his anger" (Lam. 2:1); but following the beginning of the Millennium, the people are prophetically called upon to-"Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his *footstool*; for he is holy [worthy]" (Psa. 99:5). And this thought, that the establishment of the New Jerusalem, the Church of God glorified, as the new government in the earth, will mean the beginning of the restoration of divine favor to Jehovah's footstool, is clearly set forth through the Prophet Zechariah (Zech. 14:4, 5).

### **JEHOVAH'S FEET ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES**

This prophecy is generally misunderstood, and applied to the feet of our Lord Jesus, at his second advent: and indeed, those who thus err generally go farther and assert that it will be the feet of flesh, pierced with the nails of Calvary; -- not realizing that our Lord gave his human nature, complete and forever, as our ransom; and that he was raised from the dead, by the Father's power, a glorious spirit being -- "the express image of the Father's person."

But a glance at the preceding verse (3) shows that the Prophet's reference is to the return of Jehovah's feet; for the statement (referring to the trouble by which the Kingdom will be established) is: "Then shall *Jehovah go* forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle [in olden times for Israel]. And *his feet* shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives shall be divided in its center, from east to west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove northward and half southward."

As soon as any recognize the fact that the feet mentioned are Jehovah's feet, they will not dispute that this language is symbolic, and refers to the Lord's reestablishment of his dominion in the earth, which has long been comparatively abandoned to the "god of this world" Satan; -- except as the Lord was represented first by the typical Tabernacle, secondly by the Temple at Jerusalem, and lastly by the present tabernacle condition of the Church of Christ, during this Gospel age. Surely, no one will err and get the thought that Jehovah literally rests his feet upon this earth as a "footstool."

And if the placing and resting of Jehovah's "feet" are symbolic, and signify the return of divine favor and dominion to earth, so, we may be sure, other features connected in the same prophecy are symbolic: the Mount of Olives, its peculiar division, its valley, the flight of the people, the waters of life from Jerusalem (Compare verse 8 with Ezek. 47:1-9.), etc., are all symbolic statements -- pictures of grand spiritual truths.

The *olive* is a symbol full of meaning: in olden times it was the source of artificial light, its oil being generally used for this purpose (Ex. 27:20). Indeed, in the Hebrew the olive tree was called *shemen* or oil tree. Olive oil was also used as the basis of many of the precious ointments of olden time -- such as that used in anointing the priests and kings, typifying the holy spirit upon the antitypical "royal priesthood" (Ex. 30:24). And from time immemorial the olive branch has been used as a symbol of peace (Gen. 8:11; Neh. 8:15).

If then the olive be the symbol of *light, peace, and divine blessing* through the holy spirit, and if mountain be considered as elsewhere the symbol for a Kingdom, the significance here of the term Mount of Olives is easily seen to be -- the Kingdom of Light, Peace, and Divine Blessing. And the standing or establishment or fixing of Jehovah's "feet" upon it, signifies that the divine favor and law will be reestablished in the earth by and through the holy Kingdom.

This application of the term Mount of Olives is in full accord with the Apostle's statement (Rom. 11:17, 24) in which he compares fleshly Israel with the original cultivated olive tree, and Gentile converts to wild olive branches grafted in where the natural branches had been broken off. (Compare Jer. 11:16, 17.) And he explains that the root of the tree is in the promise of God -- the Abrahamic promise, that the seed of Abraham should eventually bless all the families of the earth, etc. Eventually the same root or promise will bear two kinds of branches -- the ingrafted wild olive branches, and the reingrafted natural branches: when fleshly Israel shall have his blindness turned away, and shall look with the eye of faith upon the Savior crucified and pierced nineteen centuries ago -- a sacrifice for sin. We remember also that fleshly Israel was God's typical Kingdom or mountain for a long time, and that spiritual Israel of the Gospel age is called to be the real Kingdom of God, as our Lord declared, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

Moreover, from these *two* Kingdoms (even before Jehovah's *glory* rests upon them, to make them his channels of blessings to the whole world of mankind) has proceeded all "the *light* of the world" during all the darkness of the past: for are not these the representatives of the Old and the New Testaments, the old and new Covenants? Do not these correspond to the Lord's two witnesses and to the two olive trees of Zechariah (Zech. 4:3, 11, 12) distinctly mentioned also in Revelation (Zech. 11:4)? -- in that these two parts of the mountain symbolize the outcome of those covenants, the results of the witnessing -- the Kingdom in its heavenly and its earthly phases?

Here we see, then, that the *two halves* of the Mount of Olives signify the *two parts* of the Kingdom of God, distinctly separated according to a divine order or arrangement. The separation indicates no opposition between the two parts of the Kingdom. It is, on the contrary, for the purpose of producing the "Valley of Blessing" between -- to which all who desire divine aid may flee and find succor under the blessed protection of both the heavenly and the earthly phases of the Kingdom.

The Prophet David (Psalm 84) seems to have been given a foreview of this great "Valley of Blessings," close to Jehovah's "feet," when he sings first of the saints of the Gospel age and then of those blessed in the next age, saying:

"How lovely are thy dwelling places  
O Jehovah of Hosts!  
My soul desired, yea, it even fainted  
For the courts of Jehovah.  
My heart and my flesh shout with joy  
Unto the living God.  
Even as the sparrow hath found a house,  
And the swallow a nest for herself,  
Where she may lay her young: (so I have found) thine altars,  
O Lord of Hosts,  
My God, my King.  
Happy are they that dwell in thy house:  
They shall be continually praising Thee.  
Selah.

"Happy is the man whose strong confidence is in thee,  
Whose heart reflecteth (wholly) on the paths of (righteousness).  
Passing through the valley of mourning,  
They change it into a place of (joy) springs -- [Valley of Blessings].  
The Autumn rain brings them blessings [Joel 2:28]:  
They go from strength to strength  
That each of them may be presented (perfect)  
Before God in Zion."

The eighty-fifth Psalm also pictures the return of divine clemency and blessing under the Millennial Kingdom -- the Olive Mountain (Kingdom) of two parts.

The removal of one part of the mountain to the north and the other to the south is significant; the north is the direction of the group Pleiades, the celestial center of the universe, the supposed seat of divine empire. This would seem to indicate the "*change*" of the Gospel Church at this time, from human to spirit conditions as "partakers of the divine nature:" and the removal of the other half of the mountain would seem to signify the complete restitution, to perfect human conditions, of those ancient worthies accounted worthy to constitute the earthly representatives of God's Kingdom.

The valley thus produced would be one full of light -- free from shadows for the sun would stream through it from east to west. This speaks symbolically of the Sun of Righteousness and its full light of divine truth and blessing scattering the shadows of sin, ignorance, superstition, and death, and healing and restoring the willing and obedient of humanity who will flee to this valley of blessings, the valley of mercy. The valley of mercy, *between* and under the care of the spiritual and human phases of the Kingdom of Light and Peace (the establishment of Jehovah's feet), will surely be a "Valley of Blessings" to all who enter it with broken and contrite hearts.

We must remember, further, that while it is to Israel only that it is said, "Ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains," yet as a name Israel signified "The people blessed of the Lord," "The people of God," "The Lord's people" (2 Chron. 7:14). And while, as we have seen, the first or spiritual blessing of the Kingdom shall come to spiritual Israel, and the second or earthly blessing shall begin with Israel according to the flesh, yet it will not stop there; for whosoever will may become an Israelite: by exercising the faith and obedience of Abraham, all mankind may become Israelites indeed-"the people of God." And hence the Prophet Isaiah declares that when Israel is called back to divine favor, at the establishment of the Kingdom, it will include "*Every one that is called by my [Jehovah's] name*: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him." The name Israel will then apply to all who are God's people (Isa. 34:7; Rom. 9:26, 33; 10:13).

"And [thus] will Jehovah my God come in, and all the holy ones shall [thus] be [united] with him" (Zech. 14:5). When God's time shall have fully come, when the lease of power to the Gentiles shall have run out, when the sacrificing of the great Day of Atonement (the Gospel Age) shall have ceased, when the High Priest shall have finished making atonement, not only for his own "body," the Church, but also for his "house," and for "all the people," and he shall come forth to bless all the people, then Jehovah's curse, or sentence of death, shall be lifted from the earth, his footstool tabernacle will again be recognized, and its beautifying in righteousness and truth and in the holy spirit of love shall begin and progress, until, in the end of the Millennium, all the willingly righteous shall have reached perfection, or been reunited with Jehovah, and all the unwilling shall have been destroyed (Acts 3:23; Rev. 20:9).

Carrying the picture further, the Prophet declares, respecting that day in which gradually the earth shall be made glorious as Jehovah's footstool: --

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be bright, nor the darkness thick; but the day shall be the one foreknown to the Lord - neither full day nor night: but it shall come to pass that at its close [evening] it shall be [clear] light" (Zech. 14:6, 7).

Some confounded the "day" here described with the "day of Vengeance" which is "a day of clouds and thick darkness with no light in it" (Joel 2:2; Zeph. 1:15) and the translators have, seemingly, generally, tried to harmonize the translations. But not so; the day here referred to by Zechariah as only partially bright is the Millennial day, although in it the Sun of righteousness will arise and shine, to scatter earth's miasma of sin and superstition and death. It will nevertheless be only partially bright, because throughout it will be dealing with generation after generation of the fallen race as brought from the tomb, and in various stages of restitution toward perfection. But how refreshing it is to be assured that in that day of the reestablishment of Jehovah's feet upon his footstool, there shall be no more "thick darkness"; and that at the close of that Millennial Day, instead of growing darker, the world will only have reached the high noon of its "light of the knowledge of Jehovah"; and that its sun shall never set.

The reference to the rivers of living waters flowing from Jerusalem, during this Millennial Day of the reestablishment of Jehovah's feet upon his footstool (Zech. 14:8, 9), reminds us of the corresponding testimony of Ezekiel (Eze. 47:1-12) and of John's Revelation (Rev. 22:1, 2) which, under this same symbol of living waters proceeding from the throne of the Millennial Kingdom, show us the restitution blessings under the symbols of "waters of life," to which whosoever will may come and drink freely, and fruitful trees of life everlasting whose leaves will heal the repentant peoples of earth of all imperfections.

Ah yes! "In that day the Lord shall be King over all the earth"; His Kingdom shall have come as his faithful have long prayed; and by the end of that day his will shall be done on earth even as it is done in heaven. God's footstool shall then be glorious indeed: as it is written: --

*"As truly as I live, the whole earth shall be filled with the glory of Jehovah"* (Num. 14:21; Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14).

"No place shall be in that new earth  
For all that blights this universe;  
No evil taint the second birth  
There shall be no more curse.  
Ye broken-hearted, cease your moan;  
The day of promise dawns for you;  
For he who sits upon the throne  
Says, 'I will make all things new.'

"We mourn the dead, but they shall wake!  
The lost, but they shall be restored!  
O! well our human hearts might break  
Without that sacred word!  
Dim eyes, look up! sad hearts, rejoice!  
Seeing God's bow of promise through,  
At sound of that prophetic voice:  
'I will make all things new.'"

- C. T. Russell (in *Scripture Studies*, Vol. 4).

## **"Underneath Are the Everlasting Arms"**

*"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." - Deuteronomy 33:27.*

The words of our text are the words wherewith Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel just before his death. However, in an important sense, *they constitute God's message*, not only to Israel then, but *to all mankind* today.

According to the Genesis account, man was created "in the image of God," that is, with similar mental powers of reason, memory, judgment and will, and moral qualities of justice, benevolence and love; not with a mere first glimmer of moral sense as claimed by Evolutionists.

Moreover, at the time of his creation there was implanted in him the ability to appreciate, and the desire to worship, and to, have communion with, his Creator. Even today, after six thousand years of sin in the earth, there are times in the lives of most men when their minds reach out, instinctively, however vaguely, to their Creator. Without this relationship with God man is incomplete. In confirmation of this note the words of the Apostle Paul to the people of Athens, in that wonderful speech of his on Mars Hill. Declaring to them the Unknown God, Paul says that he "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:26-28).

Moreover, these words were spoken, not to Christians, but to pagans. Today, among the so-called "enlightened" nations (which is another way of saying those more scientifically advanced) there is a marked tendency to deny the existence of God, or of any superior intelligent authority in the universe. The belief is widespread that man came into existence by pure chance, by a process of evolution, and is, or will shortly become, entirely self-sufficient.

### **IS PEACE OF MIND EXPERIENCED IN A LIFE LIVED APART FROM GOD? WHAT SAY THE PSYCHIATRISTS?**

But we know that man was not created to exist independently of his Creator. As the result of thus seeking to live apart from God, has man found satisfaction? No. Indeed! We are informed that today fifty percent of our hospitals are occupied by people with one kind or another of mental disorder, and that every second person outside the hospitals is taking drugs or tranquillizers of some description. Psychiatry was practically unknown fifty years ago; today there are thousands of practicing psychiatrists.

It was recently reported, in the *Readers' Digest*, that a leading American psychiatrist who always keeps a Bible on his desk, when asked, "Do you, a psychiatrist, read the Bible?" replied: "I not only read it, I study it. If people would just absorb its message, a lot of us psychiatrists could close our offices." This psychiatrist endeavors to persuade his patients to memorize and absorb what he considers to be *the message* contained in the Scriptures, namely, "*Underneath are the everlasting arms.*" He said that the thought of a pair of loving arms, sustaining and eternal, was an answer to the yearning in every human being to "feel safe," to find security, and that this is essential to everyone who values his mental health. Man was not created with the power to be completely independent and self-sufficient.

Some time ago in an interview in New York, Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick\* made the following observation: "Does any intelligent being really think that the cosmic scheme of things is mindless and purposeless, without meaning or destiny? To explain the law and abiding order of the world, the nobility of the human character at its best, as mere happenstance, is like saying that the letters of the alphabet were blown together by a chance wind to form the works of Shakespeare."

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\*Dr. Fosdick died in October 1969 at the age of 91. - *Ed. Com.*

### **IS SATANIC INFLUENCE BEHIND THE CURRENT CRIME WAVE?**

It may be asked: Why is it, in an age when we know more of the wonders of creation than ever before, there is such widespread unbelief among otherwise intelligent people? Some think that the answer might well be that Satan, the god of this world, together with his angels, is especially busy at this crucial end-of-the-age period, blinding the minds of the people as never before. A leading English judge stated, in a recent interview, that his experience in the courts had led him to believe that there was a Satanic power behind much of the present wave of crime, and that it was necessary for judges, lawyers, and all concerned with the administration of law, to devise better ways of dealing with this extraordinary state of affairs.

Occupied, as we all are, with the daily round of pressing duties, we may fail to notice the downward trend in the world's affairs; possibly, too, it is because we have become inured to wars and rumors of wars and crime in general. Nevertheless it is true that humanity is rushing headlong to the final trouble of the age. Serious statesmen do not hesitate to warn us that unless a way is found to avert it, the worst phase of that trouble will be upon us before another ten years have passed.

### **HOPE NOT ONLY FOR THE CHURCH BUT FOR ALL MANKIND**

It is natural that, in the present condition of world affairs, the thoughts of the Church should be chiefly directed to the consummation of their hopes, of being "caught up . . . to meet the Lord in the air" and of being forever with the Lord, but with that hope for ourselves, let us always associate the great blessings to follow, which will be for all mankind. Let us link 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 with John 3:16 and Acts 3:19-21.

As a matter of fact, does not our personal happiness depend on this universality of God's love? Could we be content to be among the few who are saved in this age if we did not know that God's plan includes the salvation of our fathers and mothers, brothers, and sisters and indeed, of all mankind in due time; all, that is to say, except those who, with full light and understanding willfully reject God's favor. It was this very knowledge that an opportunity would be granted to all, that attracted us in the first place to what we often refer to as "The Truth." How privileged we are to understand God's Plan, as graciously revealed in his Word! Otherwise, how difficult it would be to live with the sickness, pain, and death which daily surround us, the disasters and calamities which so frequently occur. And so our daily prayer is "Thy kingdom come, O God; thy rule, O Christ, begin."

### **STEPHEN'S NOBLE EXAMPLE**

What an example of this confidence in God's protection we have in Stephen! We read of him in Acts 6:8 that he was "full of faith and power," and when the Jews brought false witnesses against

him and condemned him to death, not for a moment did he lose confidence in the care of his Father, but rather used the occasion to give a witness to those condemning him. We are told how a vision was given to this first Christian martyr, which undoubtedly helped to sustain him and we read that Stephen "being full of the holy spirit, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55). The record is that a little later, just before he expired from the stones thrown at him, he called upon God in full assurance of faith saying "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" and "lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:59-60).

### **PAUL - AT THE END OF THE JOURNEY**

We note also the supreme confidence of the Apostle Paul that "*underneath are the everlasting arms,*" in spite of all the hunger, privation, imprisonment, and countless trials that came his way. In his second letter to Timothy he showed that he had complete assurance that he was in God's hand and that no one could pluck him out. Moreover, he showed this not only when all was well with him from an earthly standpoint, but when the opposite conditions prevailed. To quote his own words: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day" (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

### **ACCORDING TO OUR FAITH**

Meantime, how is it with us, we who not only believe in God, but have entered into special relationship with him as sons; we who have been given his holy spirit, and who may and do address him as our Father? As we pass through the trials, sicknesses and sorrows of life, have we the faith, the assurance in our hearts and minds, that for us, also, it is true that "*Underneath are the everlasting arms?*"

However, it is not only at a time of extreme crisis or approaching death that we should have this confidence, but also in our daily experiences. The peace and tranquility we enjoy as we journey through life will be in proportion to our faith. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee" (Isa. 26:3). "Faith gives substance to our hopes, and makes us certain of realities we do not see," as the writer to the Hebrews states (Heb. 11:1; N.E.B.). The greater our faith the greater our peace of mind; the closer our communion with the Father and our Lord Jesus in prayer, the less our anxieties about the things of this life.

We are urged to bring our burdens to the Lord and the result should be as described in verses 6 and 7 of Philippians 4 (Phil. 4:6-7 N.E.B.): "Have no anxiety, but in everything make your requests known to God in prayer and petition with thanksgiving. Then the peace of God, which is beyond our utmost understanding, will keep guard over your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus." Note particularly the words "with thanksgiving." It is only as we come to the throne of grace with thankful hearts for what we have, and for what God has already done for us, that we can expect peace of mind.

"Count your many blessings,  
Name them one by one,  
And it *will* surprise you,  
What the Lord hath done."

## THE SECRET OF CONTENTMENT

Paul had found peace because, as he explains in verses 11 and 12 of Philippians 4 (N.E.B.): "I have been very thoroughly initiated into the human lot with all its ups and downs -- fullness and hunger, plenty and want." He had learned, he tells us in verse 11 "In whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." And the secret of his contentment? Very simple: his mind and heart were set on heavenly riches and not on the things this world has to offer. His advice to Timothy, given in 1 Timothy 6:6-9 reads: "Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare."

Godliness with contentment should be the aim of every one of us. Moreover, if we do, indeed, attain this state in any measure, it should be manifest at least to some extent in the attitude we display towards the difficulties of life. This brings us back again to Philippians 4. In verse 4 Paul says "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice." We should have the confidence in our Father's care for us, in all the circumstances of life, that is expressed so beautifully in Psalm 23. "Have faith in God," said Jesus (Mark 11:22). Have such faith in him that you will be able to face up to all the changing scenes of life with an inner peace of mind, a realization that whatever happens "*underneath are the everlasting arms,*" protecting, sustaining you.

- G. B. Chapman, England

## **Holding the Profession of Our Faith**

*"Having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering." - Hebrews 10:21-23.*

THE EXPRESSION by the writer to the Hebrews, "our bodies washed with pure water," has occasioned much discussion among expositors. It will be remembered that in the court was placed a laver filled with water at which the priest washed, and also at which the sacrifice was washed, in each case symbolizing the purity of the individual. The bullock, which represented our great Head, was not so washed because it represented One already perfect, clean, free from any defect, and so not needing this ablution. This custom commonly prevailed among the heathen also, for historians tell us that at the entrance of their temples was a vessel of consecrated water in which was placed in some cases a branch of laurel with which the priest sprinkled the worshipers. This water, even with them, must be clean and pure, and was therefore drawn from springs and wells and not taken from ponds or other open places. Sea water, because of the salt contained in it, was regarded as especially appropriate.

Ezekiel too says, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and all your idols will I cleanse you." This is in connection with the promised restoration of the Jewish people in the next Age, for he further says, "A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you. . . . And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them" (Ezek. 36:26, 27). It was from the pagan religion that the custom passed into the Roman Catholic Church, where is placed at the entrance to their churches a basin of water that the worshiper may cross himself.

### **LAYING ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT**

The same Apostle in writing to the Ephesians (Eph. 5:25, 26) says that "Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word." The thought would seem thus to emphasize the previous one -- that of "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience" -- rendered pure. We must be in God's sight free from the filth and pollution of the world, for in drawing near unto him we must divest ourselves of all impediments, one by one as we, under the influence of the holy spirit, travel this new and living way. The road grows more narrow and straight, more rugged as though traveling a mountain path; the things of the world hamper us more and more, and as our character develops we recognize as a hindrance today the thing which did not seem so in the days that are past. Thus we cast them aside, with only the robe of Christ's righteousness for a covering, until we appear in the presence of God. Many friends filled the way in the early days with an abundance of fellowship and great rejoicing, but as the tests have come, one by one, there has also come a falling away; fewer and fewer we find able and willing to climb where "sometimes the shadows are deep, and rough seems the path to the goal," where "sometimes so long seems the day, and sometimes so heavy our feet; but, toiling in life's dusty way, the Rock's blessed shadow, how sweet!"

In this narrow way we find, as in the grand gallery of the pyramid, room enough for "My Lord and me." And as we travel on with our minds set upon the goal, may we recall his promise, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee." May we sing with the poet:

"Love did for my sin atone;  
I shall live through Christ alone.  
I need fear no evil thing,  
While by simple faith I cling."

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering." To secure this was the object of this whole Epistle -- to convince them that their old system was transitory, designed to pass away, and that every good thing attained through it was more abundantly contained in the new system established by the antitypical High Priest -- a system which was designed to be permanent, and if they would only hold fast the profession of their faith a little longer, if they would turn a deaf ear to their seducers, they would attain unto the promised blessings and escape the inevitable fate to be meted out to those who should turn back unto perdition.

The same argument holds today -- the same rewards for the faithful, the same rewards for the unfaithful, the same Savior, the same taking out from among the nations a people for his name -- a bride, a body, a priesthood, a little flock. What visions of the future blessings are in these names! To the overcomer he will give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (Rev. 2:10, 11). With these assurances "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith ... for he is faithful that promised" (Heb. 10:23). Let us give diligence "to make our calling and election sure: . . . for so an entrance shall be ministered unto us abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:10, 11).

### **BUILDING ONE ANOTHER UP**

The Apostle's next injunction, "Let us consider one another" (Heb. 10:24) is one which the Church of today might well take to heart. Consideration one for another seems to be but little manifested; but instead of considering one another to provoke unto love we find much which bespeaks the opposite, and the injunction is surely timely. Criticism of others of like faith may create a rancor which may possibly eat into the heart, and like the little foxes destroy the vine. Evil surmising and gossip may quench the smoking flax or destroy the broken reed. Our mission is to build one another up in the holy faith rather than to tear down; to comfort and help rather than to distress and destroy. All are not of the stature of a man, some are still in the class of babes and need the help of the more advanced in the walk of the Christian life. Rancor in the soul of man prevents his growth and development. We are our brother's keeper and answerable to God so far as we fail in our privilege of lifting one another up, helping on toward that love which is the bond of perfectness.

For this reason we find it profitable to forsake not the assembling of ourselves together. While each is responsible to God for his own conduct, fellowship and exchange of experience assist in our progress in the higher life. The word assemble in the original means to gather together for the purpose of worshiping God. Herein we know from experience the benefits of such assembling. They are like water and sunshine and air to the physical organism. And he who neglects these means of grace is like the plant transferred from the open sunlight to the dark of the cellar. Spiritual growth soon ceases and our vital forces decline. The most virile of God's people are found among those who assemble whenever it is possible. Our attendance, to a certain extent, is the measure of our growth in spiritual things. We find some exceptions to this in those who are prevented by insurmountable difficulties. These seem to be especially blessed if their desires in this direction are strong. God is able to provide for his own. Let us remember such in our petitions to the throne of grace.

In this assembling ourselves we have greater opportunities for exhorting one another, as the Apostle bids us. This also is a profitable means toward the end, that is, the development of character, and this seems "the more so as we see the day approaching." This expression has given rise to a diversity of opinion, some claiming that the writer had in mind the coming day of trouble upon the Jewish people, and others that it refers to the second coming of our Lord. The construction of the sentence permits of either interpretation. Some remarkable occurrence was anticipated, and since these Christians had been Jews, and since their danger was that of falling back again into the old errors, the expiring system of their old faith, it may be argued that the writer was holding up to their vision this great calamity, and pointing out to them the foolishness of going over to a system which had been cast off from favor by our Lord and upon which he had pronounced a curse. It may not be unlikely that this was the prime meaning so far as these were concerned to whom this epistle was addressed.

### **"WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS"**

But does it not seem also that there was a prophetic note in the warning which should apply to those of the Lord's people who would be living in an age when there would be signs of his presence, his second presence. These signs of his presence seem very definite, and we are bidden to lift up our heads and rejoice when we see them for then our deliverance draweth near. This second presence is surely an important matter to the Lord's consecrated. Is the thought not enough to make us heedful of our conduct? What manner of persons ought we to be? Ought we to be backbiting, and accusing one another? Can the Lord's people strive and still be the Lord's people? Does it not make us fear as we look about us? Do we not fear as we endeavor to work out our salvation with the Lord's help?

For many years we have heard that the time is short. Can we not see the gradual unfolding of God's Plan, his stately stepplings along the corridors of time? Do we not hear the rumbling of the coming storm, louder and louder, until we can see the swaying and bending of the present order of things in all its avenues, like the trees of the forest in the line of the advancing tornado! The Lord is not slack concerning his promises; and do we not see "the elements beginning to melt with fervent heat"? Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless. Can we be blameless if we permit the old nature to rise to the ascendancy? Can we be dead and our lives hid with Christ in God if we allow our minds to be set upon the things of the flesh? Must we not put to the death the old nature? Then how can Christians strive? We cannot if we have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. If we do these things after we have received the knowledge of the truth, are we not in danger of a willful sin?

The Christian who should apostatize to Judaism placed himself without the bounds of Christian grace. Since he had come to a knowledge of the truth then due, he was beyond the reach of the Judaic system, the obsolete order which must give way to the new and living way, and he had nothing left but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries.

Comparing him with one who despised Moses' law and suffered death, the Apostle says, "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who bath trodden under foot the Son of God, and bath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:29). Apostatizing from the Christian faith of that day is comparable to going back into the world in this day. It is not difficult to tread under foot the Son of God today. Sins of omission may cost us our crown, and we may

become castaways, not "more than overcomers." Willful sin will cost us our inheritance. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Rev. 2:17). "I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people" (Heb. 10:30).

### **EXPERIENCE PROVES HIS SUPERVISION**

Let us call to remembrance the former days, in which "after we were enlightened, we endured a great fight of afflictions" (Heb. 10:32), those early days in our Christian life when we started out with confidence and hope, joyous in the prospects before us, confident in the full assurance of faith, those days when we seemed surrounded and protected by an influence which must have been divine. We seemed like the little one learning to walk -- all obstacles and blocks of stumbling were removed from the pathway, there were no storms and the skies were cloudless, and we felt that we could conquer life with God's help. We rejoiced in our new relationship and our enthusiasm ran high.

These were the days of preparation for the struggle of life, and as we developed a measure of strength, the trials began to come. The Adversary was permitted to test us perhaps as Job was tested; doubts came to our minds concerning some of those things which had seemed settled beyond dispute. We questioned our consecration, our part in the divine Plan, though not the Plan itself, for we believed firmly that God had a beautiful and wonderful arrangement for the world's salvation, but we felt we were not worthy of a share in it. These and other things intruded upon our minds until the temptation began to come that we could not qualify and had better cease the struggle, for it was not for us. We remember how these, and other thoughts, came to us to disturb and distress; we remember, too, how by the guidance of his holy spirit we were led again into the light and how we rejoiced in the victory, stronger for the experience; how again and again these days came upon us, and how again and again we came off conquerors by his grace, for he had promised that with each temptation a way of escape would be provided, that he would not suffer us to be tempted beyond endurance. These things are something like the ballast in the hold of the vessel, they keep us from getting heady. "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations"; "and I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels" (Rev. 2:26; 3:5).

Our experiences in the way have served to prove his supervision over us. The trials have not been joyous at the time, but we have learned to count all but loss and dross, and our faith in God increases with each of these experiences. We therefore cast not away our confidence which hath great recompense of reward, both here, in the peace and joy of life, and hereafter, because of our promised inheritance. These things must be borne with patience that after we have done the will of God, we might receive the promise. Patient endurance of affliction is necessary if we would become joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. To such is our Savior's promise, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out ... and I will write upon him my new name" (Rev. 3:12).

"Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him" (Heb. 10:38). Is it possible that any can draw back after having been received into this heavenly relationship? It must be so or the Apostle would not have expressed such a possibility. May we apply the lessons of this epistle to our own lives. Is there anything which can separate us from the love of God? "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Only by our

own delinquencies can this be accomplished. "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37-39).

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21). This can be only if "we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe unto the saving of the soul" (Heb. 10:39).

"The bird let loose in Eastern skies,  
When hastening fondly home,  
Ne'er stoops to earth her wing, nor flies  
Where idle warblers roam.  
But high she shoots, through air and light,  
Above all low delay,  
Where nothing earthly bounds her flight  
Nor shadow dims her way.

"So grant me, God, from every care  
And stain of passion free  
Aloft, through virtue's purer air,  
To hold my course to Thee!  
No sun to cloud, no lure to stay  
My soul, as home she springs.  
The sunshine on her joyful way,  
Thy freedom in her wing."

*-S. D. Bennett*

## The Question Box

### Creeds - Are They Proper for Christians?

The question is sometimes asked: Is it proper for a Christian to have a creed? To this we reply: It is not only proper for a Christian to have a creed, it would not be possible to be a Christian without one. We content ourselves here in quoting from Brother Russell, who wrote very helpfully on the subject years ago:

"The word 'creed' comes from *credo*, and means *I believe*. It is entirely proper that every Christian have for himself a creed, a belief. And, if a number of Christians come to a unity of faith upon the lines of the Word of God, their assembling together for fellowship and communion is both proper and helpful, as the Bible declares. The general difficulty is that, when groups of Christians meet as brethren, they make either a written or an understood creed, which goes beyond the Word of God and includes human tradition; or else they ignore all faith, and make morality -- good works -- the only basis of fellowship. But, as the name indicates, Christians are *believers* in Christ, and not merely moralists. While, therefore, a creed is necessary, and he who has none has no belief, and would therefore be an unbeliever, and while in Christian fellowship harmony of faith is necessary to communion, all should see that the fellowship and faith of the early Church, under divine direction, were built upon the *first principles* of the doctrine of Christ; and nothing more nor less should be the basis of Christian fellowship here and now.... And since the *credo* or belief of each Christian professes to be built upon God's Word, it follows that each should be not only willing but ready at all times to change his belief for one more Scriptural, if such can be pointed out to him" (*Reprints*, p. R1578).

In another illuminating discussion Brother Russell himself raised the question: "Why not abandon all human systems and confessions, now used for tying men's tongues and consciences, and let each other stand free to study God's Word untrammelled, and to build, *each for himself*, such a creed as he shall find authorized in God's Word; adding to his creed or subtracting therefrom continually, as he continues to grow in grace and in knowledge and in love of God. This is the attitude which God designed; this is the liberty wherewith Christ made us all free. Why surrender our liberties and enslave our consciences and tongues to a sect, or the decisions of majorities in sects? If all of God's children were really free, thus, it would not be long before they would be at perfect oneness of heart and nearly at one in faith and work - the only true union" (*Reprints*, p. R1168).

Again, in that same year (1889) he wrote: "We exhort all God's true Church-the one Church, which includes *all consecrated believers*-to awake . . . to a recognition of the *right of individual judgment* upon religious questions. Demand Scriptural proofs for all you are asked to believe. . . . And be sure that you believe and confess nothing that you do not *understand* fully and clearly. To subscribe to, or confess, what you do not understand, and therefore cannot truly believe, is *solemn lying* in the presence of God.... Require of all who shall attempt to teach in the name of the Lord, the *exact words* of the Lord or the Apostle which they claim support their teaching. Get the chapter and verse and look the matter up for yourselves, critically examining the text and context. Weigh and test every item of teaching which you receive as your faith, regardless of how much you esteem the person who presents it. We know that no fellow-mortal is infallible, and that His Word is the only standard by which God wishes us to square and measure and build up our faith" (*Reprints*, p. R1136).

## **Entered Into Rest**

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