

Grace and Glory

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whole counsel of GOD

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Loving His Appearing

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The Lord
is good, a strong
hold in the day of
trouble; and he
knoweth them
that trust in him.

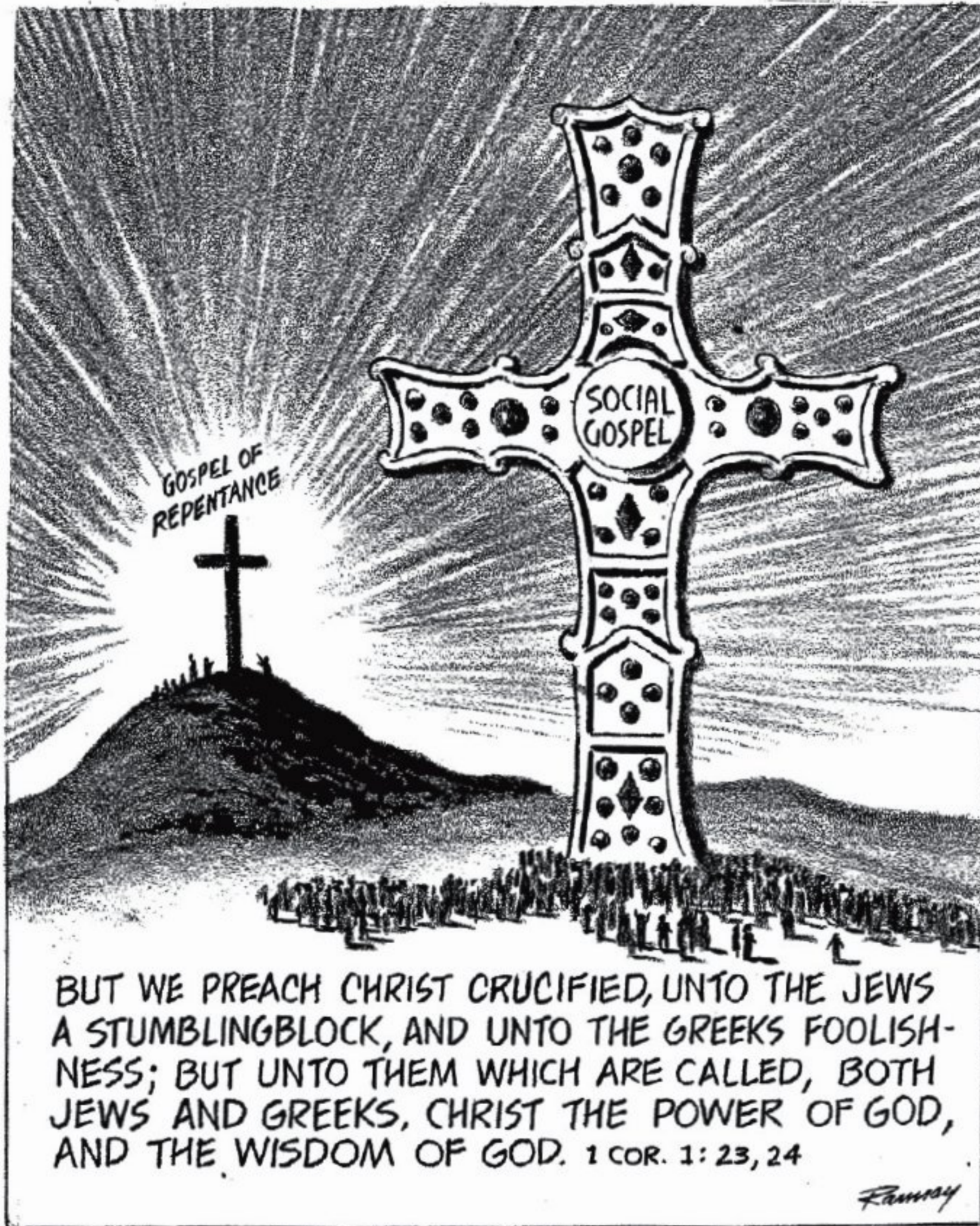
NAHUM 1:7.



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BEWARE OF THE BLOODLESS CROSS



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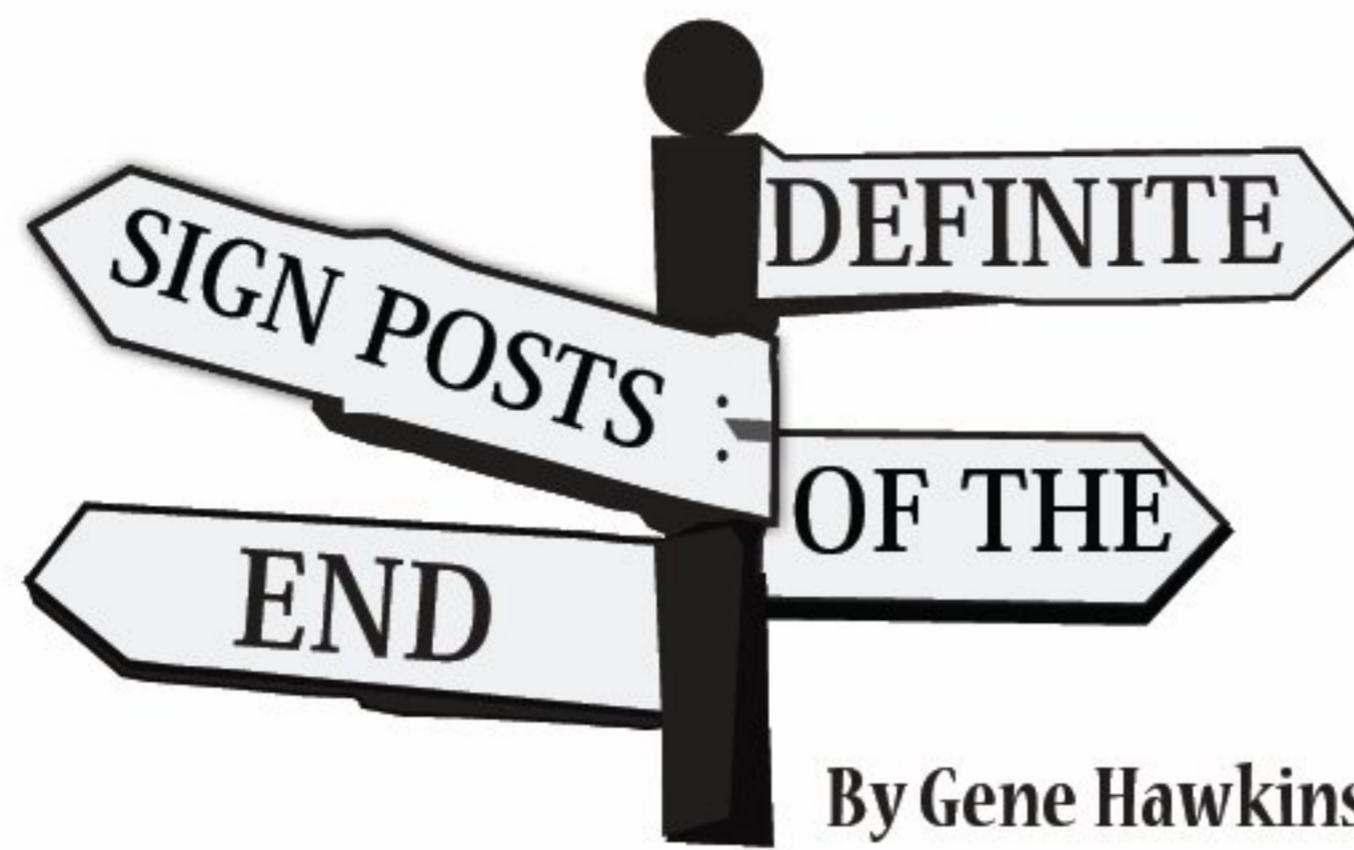
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Editor: Gene Hawkins



“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” Isa. 7:14

“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel;..... Micah 5:2

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression,.....and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks:... Dan. 9:24,25

3

“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming?” II Pet. 3:3,4

“But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” Matt. 24:37

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first,....” II Thess. 2:3

God has been very precise and meticulous in announcing both the first and second advents of His Son, Jesus Christ. Scripture is also very specific that “...there is no new thing under the sun,” (Eccl. 1:9) and the attitudes which prevailed at Jesus first coming, are likewise prevalent at His second.

Though He had given the sign that “a virgin shall conceive,” and designated a specific time period wherein He would be born, men in general were oblivious to the fact that God had indeed come to dwell in their midst. Instead, they tried to explain it away, clearly intimating that Jesus had been born of fornication. John 8:41 Had they had “ears to hear,” they would have known that Bethlehem had been specifically named as His birthplace, but that fact only came to light after the wise men prompted Herod to demand that the scribes find out “where

Christ should be born.” Matt. 2:4

God has long been very precise in declaring His intentions regarding the purposes for His people. “...Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.” Dan. 9:2 The prophet, by this time, had been in captivity more than 70 years and knew from the scripture that the Jews should go back to their land and that the temple should be restored. He was grieved because he saw none of that happening, and thus begins his long prayer of confession and intercession, praying specifically that God would “hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.” Dan. 9:17

There is no record that Daniel saw a mass exodus back to Jerusalem, but Isaiah is very precise in his declaration, hundreds of years earlier, “That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.” Isa. 44:28 Daniel already knew that the Medo-Persian Empire had replaced that of Babylon. Darius was the current king of the Medes and God had clearly shown His prophet that the Persian branch of this empire would come to power shortly. His vision in Ch. 10 occurred in the “third year of Cyrus king of Persia,” and according to Ezra, Cyrus decreed that the Jews were free to go back to Jerusalem and build the temple during the first year of his reign, in fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy. Ezra 1:1-4 Daniel makes no mention that this decree was implemented, but he is given another vision proclaiming that “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression,and to anoint the most Holy.” Dan. 9:24 Seventy weeks translate to 490 (70X7) years and that time period begins with the announcement that the “wall” of Jerusalem is to be rebuilt. Dan. 9:25 This occurred in Nehemiah when the reign of Cyrus had given way to that of Artaxerxes. Neh. 2:1 According to Daniel, precisely 69 weeks later “Messiah the Prince,” would appear. This cannot refer to Jesus’ birth, for this prophecy centers around “the holy city,” which is Jerusalem, not Bethlehem. It is actually a record of Jesus marching into Jerusalem, on what has come to be called “Palm Sunday,” when

He officially offered Himself to Israel as their King. That offer was soundly rejected about seven days later as Daniel's prophecy "to finish the transgression," was fulfilled at Calvary. The final week, of the seventy, began to be fulfilled with the anointing of "the most holy," on The Day Of Pentecost. Seven years, or one week of millennial blessing, followed, and thus was these seventy weeks of blessing completed at the stoning of Stephen.

Some, like Simeon, who had perhaps also "read the books," knew that Jesus had arrived, even though the multitudes were completely oblivious to it. He recognized this 8 day old infant for "...it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: Then took he him up in his arms,.....and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared...." Luke 2:26-31

5 Jesus likewise tried to inform men, even His disciples, of the things which were prophesied of Him, but many were still shocked and surprised, at both His death and resurrection because they simply did not recognize the specific signs given in scripture. There were also those who went to great lengths to "cover up," or explain away, the sign manifested so vividly before their eyes. Matthew tells us that the chief priests "gave large money unto the soldiers, Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day." Matt. 28:12-15 They all knew that this "sign" was absolute proof that Jesus was Whom He said He was: The Son of God!

Men have in no wise changed in the days just prior to His **second** coming. They are still ignoring, denying, or even scoffing, (jeer, mock, make sport) ".....walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" II Pet. 3:4 This verse continues with the same refrain found in Eccl. 1:9 ("there is no new thing under the sun,") as men today attempt to justify their attitude by quoting scripture, for they too proclaim that "..... since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Religious, political, and social plans of our day insist that life on this earth will go on

indefinitely, despite the plain facts before us that King Jesus will soon set up His Own Kingdom and thus thwart all the projected plans of men. Just as surely as God gave very specific and precise indications of Jesus' first advent, so He has done for His second. The disinterest, even among Christians, is a certain sign that these days are upon us. Men are surely walking after their own lusts, trying desperately to fulfill their own agendas, even as Peter announced. Political leaders are still obsessed with a lust for power, and despite the fact that elections are held, some are already plotting their strategies for the next one, though it may be four years down the road. James instructs individual Christians not to make concrete plans of what we shall and shall not do, "For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that." Jas. 4:15 People trying to fulfill their own plans make no such provision and they surely do not make their decisions based on the coming of Jesus. I have been in the midst of some religious groups outlining their plans for "converting the world," or implementing some other program, and have gotten the distinct impression that they would be extremely disappointed, were Jesus to come and interrupt their intent.

6

Signs proclaiming, that the days of Noah are surely here, abound everywhere, but they are most generally dismissed as simply representing a different culture for our day. Some seem to decry the wickedness, and violence which prevails around the world, but we do not hear that these very conditions are a clear prelude to the coming of Jesus. Men seem rather intent on how they might stop them, or worse yet, simply justify much of man's ungodly behavior as being right and proper for the "more modern, and sophisticated," world.

Paul clearly announced the present day "falling away," as being a sign of Jesus' coming. The term is defined as a divorce, separation, or defection from truth, and it is manifest in every area of society. It does not simply signify a departure from "doctrine," but rather the lack of adherence, obedience, compliance, and conduct, according to truth. Ours is a day when men simply try to alter what is truth or make truth what you want it to be. The book of Judges describes it as a time when "every man did that which is right in his own eyes." Jud. 17:6 The days of the Judges, depict our own. There was no king and men were simply left to their own devices. Likewise, today there is no authority of

righteousness, for men have absolutely refused the authority of God's Word. The days in Judges finally ended when Saul, the false king, was anointed to reign over Israel. Only after that, did David come to the throne, and he was designated as a man after God's own heart. He is typical of Christ Himself Who will soon assume the reins of government in this world and reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. Until that time, this world must deal with the same circumstances which plagued Israel when leadership was lacking.

7 We noted in our last issue that Pope Benedict had relinquished his throne. He has since been replaced by Pope Francis and the world at large, now stands with great wonder and anticipation as to how this will affect them. News channels were filled with almost constant coverage of this transition, once again showing that no Church on earth can command the attention of the entire world as does Catholicism. When John saw her in Rev. 17:3, even he declared "and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration," prompting the angel to ask him, "Wherefore didst thou marvel?" That angel then proceeded to unfold the great "mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her." The present intrigue of the world seems to be how Pope Francis will lead the Church in dealing with a great number of very pressing issues, which are in themselves, evidence of this world wide falling away from truth, both in word and deed. Erin McClam, a Staff Writer for NBC News, opines that there are "seven pressing challenges for the new pope," as he embarks on leading "a church at a crossroads — wrestling with scandal after scandal, changing demographics, and calls for liberalization." Mr. McClam's list includes number 1. Cleaning house at the Vatican. 2. Leading the church out of the sex abuse scandal. 3. Getting along with other faiths. 4. Winning the West. 5. Should women be priests? And should priests marry? 6. Modernization. (allowing gay marriage and birth control) 7. Persecution. (It is alleged that Christianity is the most persecuted religion around the world, especially in Asia and The Middle East)

There is no doubt that Pope Francis is faced with problems both inside the Church and out. He also seems to be very much in contrast with his predecessor, and the above writer noted that the pope "must also be the church's most prominent diplomat." Pope Benedict did create a number of rifts with other groups

during his short tenure. We have noted previously that he angered some Evangelicals very early in his papacy, by his claim that salvation comes only through the Catholic Church and that other Churches cannot even claim to be churches, because they cannot prove their apostolic succession. He also alienated some Middle East Christians (Catholics) when he basically shunned them in an effort to build a bridge to the Palestinian community. He then angered the Muslims by declaring that Islam is a religion of violence.

Many prophetic scholars have looked for signs of the “peace and safety,” which will come just prior to “sudden destruction,” announcing that the day of The Lord will come as a thief in the night. I Thess. 5:3 We know that these two seals of judgment will not actually be opened until after Jesus takes His throne, but as with so many of the seals recorded in Rev. 6, evidence of their ultimate fulfillment is already taking place. Jesus defines this time as “the beginning of sorrows.” Matt. 24:8 We have been in that period for some time now, and current events indicate no sign of improvement. The “falling away,” cited 8 previously, includes every area of society, religiously, politically, and morally. Likewise, the aforementioned, peace and safety will affect religious groups, social groups, financial institutions, and political nations. The term peace and safety simply means that men truly believe they have arrived, that they have indeed achieved their goals, and solved the problems which had brought them such consternation and unrest. We know that the announced peace and safety will be fragile, tentative, superficial, short lived, and a mere counterfeit of the genuine peace that only Christ will bring, but it will most assuredly come. Whether or not Pope Francis will, in any manner, contribute mightily to this effort, remains to be seen. We have long wondered as to whether or not the stalemate in the Middle East might be solved more by religious means, rather than political finesse, and we may rest assured that Catholicism will retain a very active presence there. Israeli P.M. Netanyahu commended Pope Benedict for his efforts to heal a relationship with Israel, but whether the new pope can carry that even farther and be a peace maker between the two diametrically opposed Israeli and Palestinian forces, surely remains a great mystery.

We, as overcoming Christians, must be acutely aware of

our surroundings, and the vast array of signs appearing before us, announcing the fact that Jesus is coming quickly! Those who are truly looking for Jesus' return must have a heart such as that of Simeon, extremely sensitive to the whisperings of God's Spirit. However, we must not cling to the idea that just because we do not see or hear the earth shaking news, that peace, or some other prominent sign has come to pass, in this world, then Jesus' coming is farther off than we expected. Jesus said "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." These words are actually written in the latter part of Matt. 24, and time wise, testify of a time very near the end of the tribulation period, when "one will be taken" away in judgment, "and the other left," alive to remain on the earth during the millennium. We would point out however, that Paul, the chief apostle to the Church, gave this exact same admonition to this present generation, in order that we might escape impending wrath **BEFORE** the tribulation even begins. "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, (of the tribulation) but to obtain salvation (translation to glory) by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. I Thess. 5:2-11



Isaiah's Vision

E. J. Witte

I am sure if all of God's saints would get absorbed with their Beloved, all their troubles would be taken care of. They would skip over everything. My mind was turned to Isaiah 6 tonight. You may have heard expositions of this chapter; but I do not think we can exhaust it. There are three outstanding principles I adhere to in studying God's word. First, I want to know what God says, I get the facts. That is the most important thing after all. Second, after I know what He says, I want to know the dispensational, or prophetic setting. Third, what is the typical, or spiritual application? I do not think we go very far astray when we follow these three under-lying principles.

In this chapter, Isaiah tells the glorious transformation that came to him in the dark hour of national distress and despair. Solomon tells us that without the vision, the people perish. There are a great many visionary people today. They have visions of all kinds, by which they are guided and controlled, perhaps after a heavy supper. But God is looking for men who have the vision. Isaiah had the vision. I may not touch upon the dispensational aspect; but upon the typical, and spiritual application.

"Uzziah died." I think it is a good thing he died. Do you know why? Because Uzziah was Isaiah's idol. We read in Chronicles where God mightily blessed Uzziah, prospered him in a most marvelous way; but like many today, he could not stand prosperity. His head began to swell. He became puffed up, egotistical, and went so far as to usurp the place of a priest. He went into the Holy Place to offer up incense. While he was doing so, eighty-one priests went after him and remonstrated with him and told him not to do it; but he retaliated and said, "I am going." As a result, he became a leper and died. I think you will find here it is a good thing for some preachers to die; for people worship them. I believe God's people should hold pastors and teachers in high reverence; but do not let them come between you and the Lord. Isaiah needed that vision to cure him of

partial idolatry, at least.

First. Isaiah got a vision of the Lord's glory. That was what he needed. Where did he see the Lord? On His throne. That is the first thing. There he saw the glory of the Lord. He was high and lifted up and His train, or skirts, the royal power, or his followers filled the temple. He saw the glory of the Lord in His royal power.

Second. He got a vision of worship. That is the next thing. Many people know how to pray and praise the Lord in a way; but I believe when we worship we take a step in advance. In prayer we ask Him and in praise we thank Him for past blessings; but in worship we are absolutely lost in the Giver. The blessing, so to speak, and the promises are good; but the Promiser is better. The gifts are good; but the Giver is better. Like lovers, you know. They are wrapped up in their love so that they forget everything else. So to us in worship, Christ is everything. The gifts are good in their place; but they will not take the place of the Giver. That way we get new blessings every day. We grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. We thank and praise Him for the blessings; but we move on up into the great heart of Jesus. We get so wrapped up in Him that He is almost compelled to pour His power upon us because we love Him so much.

Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered His face and with twain He covered His feet and with twain He did fly"—V. 2. Who were the seraphims? Burning ones. They were glowing and shining in their holiness. Isaiah needed to see how they worshipped in their zeal, in their holiness. They were burning with zeal for the glory of Him whom they served. We need it too. They had wings, which is typical of carriage, bearing God's mercy and judgment. They covered their faces, which speaks of humility. Remember, Isaiah was watching those seraphim. Humility. That is the first step in real true worship. We never get down too low. The way up is the way down. We go down; but He lifts us up. In humility they covered their faces. They also covered their feet, which figures self-forgetfulness. When we are humble, we forget ourselves and are lost in Him. When we are on an errand, running for Him, we forget ourselves, because we have a message to deliver. We are real ambassadors carrying the message. How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace. We may have our

feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. And I am sure if you have them shod they will never carry you anywhere except where He wants you to go. With twain they did fly. There is holy alacrity, activity, promptness, obedience, ready on tip-toe to fly, because God's message should be carried with haste. We should never be hasty ourselves; but when He puts the message upon us, then we should carry it with that same spirit.

"And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory"—V. 4. He had a vision of the Trinity and the unity of the God-head. We also find this in Rev. 4:8. "And the four living ones had each" 'of' them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes Within; and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was and is and is to come." The Psalmist says, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." Also Habakkuk tells us, "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea;" looking forward to the coming of Jesus is our hope today. If we have a fore-taste of His glory today, we will have the fullness when He comes. We sing of His glory and what a wonderful thing it will be when we see Him face to face and tell the story saved by grace.

"And the posts of the doors moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke"—V. 4. Something moved. The foundation moved. When we begin to cry to God for the glory of Christ, and cry with hearts breaking, for whatever God lays on our hearts—loved ones, or circumstances, or some specific place, or purposes of God to be worked out and for souls, the foundations are moved in our behalf. Jesus intercedes for us. He ever lives to make intercession, and is able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by Him. A mother is conscious of the cry of her baby in the adjoining room, although she is busily engaged in domestic affairs. So when you and I are crying to God, someone is going to be moved. I believe the Lord moves today through the prayers of His people. Some of the most stubborn cases I ever knew were moved toward God through prayer.

Third. Then the prophet had a vision of himself. "Then said I, woe is me; for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for

mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts"—V. 5. Now he exclaimed, I am just good for nothing. It was an easy thing for Isaiah to pronounce those woes in the preceding chapter. It is much easier to confess someone else's sins, rather than our own. I believe Isaiah's sin was his tongue—the old nature. And I guess that is ours. We can have perfect victory through Christ only as we keep yielded. If I reckon on the finished work of Christ day by day and yield myself wholesale and retail, I find I have complete victory. That is the only way we will have it. It is not a matter of dying daily, but of reckoning daily. People talk of dying by inches; but they do not know what they are talking about. Dying daily is pouring out one's life as a sacrifice for others. Did not Jesus do that for you and me? "As He is, so are we in this world." The new creation wants full sway in your life and mine. Isaiah would not acknowledge that he was the only one with unclean lips, but there were others. We do not like to be singled out. Yes, he got a vision of Christ.

13

I remember some years ago, in Chicago, a man was marvelously transformed from the lowest depths of sin into the very image of God. Someone said to him. "Will you please tell us the secret of your marvelous transformation." This is the answer he gave. "I saw Jesus." I tell you, a vision of Christ will change the vilest life and transform the hardest character. He will take the saints that are out of fellowship with Christ and replace them, no matter how deep in sin they go. There is something that goes deeper than the saint ever goes. The grace of God goes down with the believer and lifts him up. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." You cannot go so deep in sin, but what God's grace goes down deeper still. We can't comprehend, or understand God taking us out of the dung hill and putting us on the pinnacle with Himself.

I find among God's people today, even Spirit-filled people, that they are occupied with some other one besides Jesus. What would you think of a young woman who was engaged, flirting with some other man. That is the way a lot of people are acting toward the Lord. Let us be true to Him. He is there (in heaven) and we are here, bound up in Him. Let nothing come between us and hinder us from becoming a member of the Bridehood. He is looking for a Bride undefiled. It is our privilege to be in that company. Very soon we are going to see the King.

Fourth. A vision of cleansing, "Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; and he laid it upon my mouth and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin purged." Vs. 6,7 He got on the right track. Here we see the altar, typical of the cross. He had a vision of the cross and of the Christ on the cross. When Jesus was on the cross, they pierced His side and water and blood flowed out; blood for cleansing and water for power. We have the two-fold aspect of Salvation and the fullness of the Spirit here. I firmly believe that when Jesus hung on the cross He did not die just to take away our sins, but that we might be filled with the Spirit. He was made a curse for us that the blessings of Abraham might come to us and that we might receive the promises.

I cannot conceive of anything else but that Jesus was the Gift of God to the world and the Holy Spirit the Gift of the Father to His children. We need to know that we are saved, that we are a new creation; old things have passed away. We have a new life, new hopes, new ambitions, new affections, everything new. The old is gone. The old man is here, of course ; but has no right-of-way any longer, as we hold him in the death state by yielding to Christ. "I was crucified with Christ nevertheless I live, yet not I; but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." Gal. 2:20. Our old man, the old nature, was nailed to the cross with Jesus, and was buried with Him in Joseph's tomb. Jesus arose and we arose with Him to walk in newness of life, with power over the old man.

I like to think of Jesus bearing our guilt on Calvary; but tonight He is in heaven praying for us. He is interceding to deliver us from the power of sin. Sin confronts us in the domestic life, the social life, the business life. There the power of sin is manifested. But He gives us victory over it. Our environment does not cut any figure. Remember, we are not getting back to where Adam was. Our environment is in Christ Jesus, in the realm and spirit of grace. Law and flesh cannot enter. Some folks sing, "My all is on the altar and I'm waiting for the fire." True, my all is on the altar, but I'm not waiting for the fire. It has been with me ever since I believed and saw Jesus on Calvary for me. When I get a touch from Him, I feel it burning in my soul. "And he laid it

upon my mouth and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin is purged." V. 3 Our sins were atoned for. How precious that is. Jesus' blood was spilt on Calvary and we are redeemed, not by corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus as a Lamb without spot." We are without any inward imperfection and without any outward condemnation. The secret of it is "Christ in you the hope of glory." We are a new creation within and that is above law and without spot, because of the Christ life within. The precious blood of Jesus avails in behalf of the believer, as well as of the sinner. "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." I do not know whether you agree with me or not; it is not so much a question of how I am walking, but it is a question of where I am walking. If I keep looking at my steps to see if they are all right, I am pretty sure to stumble; but if I walk in the light and keep my eyes on Jesus, He will keep my steps. That is a secret of walking with Him. Many are occupied with a negative holiness and forget that there is a positive holiness. I am on the positive side. All legalists are on the negative side, because they do not understand God's plan. It is a good thing to be established with grace.

Fifth. A vision of a call. "Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? V. 8 Notice "us" not "me." The Trinity mentioned again. That is a sticker for New Issue people. Well, the Lord open their eyes. Now Isaiah was ready for service. He would not have been ready if he had not had the vision. Paul also had a vision about his call. He said, "I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise. So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also: for I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ for it is the power of God to salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." Rom. 1:14,16 I am a debtor; I am ready; I am not ashamed. Every child of God that is filled with the Spirit is a debtor to someone else. We should not be trying to get to heaven without being interested in somebody else. The vision comes, and if we realize that souls are at stake. We should say, We are not ashamed.

Sixth. A vision of alertness. "Then said I, here am I;

Send me." V. 8 I am ready to go. When we are cleansed from sin, we want to tell others about it. We are ready to answer God's call.

Seventh. A vision of the task. "And he said, go and tell this people, hear ye indeed, but understand not, and see ye indeed but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat and make their ears heavy and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and convert and be healed." V. 9, 10 That was not a very promising prospect; not very encouraging after all that preparation. Isaiah might have said, What is the use of going if they will not hear me; but the Lord said, "Go." The first thing is to get the "glow," be thoroughly warmed up, enthusiastic, filled with the glory of God. Then comes the "Go." What follows? "Lo! Lo! I am with you always." Jesus goes with me. If we have the "glow" and the "Go," we will have the "Lo." If we do not have the "glow" and the "lo," we will have something else, that is the "woe." Many people have the woe. What we need to do is get prepared. He will send us out and go with us, if His call is upon us; but remember if we do not go, something will happen. 16

*"Ready to go, ready to stay,
Ready my place to fill.
Ready for service, small or great,
Ready to do His will."*

Lord, what would thou have me to do? What is my mission? Everyone has a mission, and when you meet the qualifications for service, then qualify for the bridehood. And the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential to be qualified for the bridehood. Many of God's people do not see the great privilege of qualifying for this choice company. God wants to give us His best; but He gives the best to those who stand the test. It is just a question of where we are tonight. There is no excuse for us. I have been a minister for 40 years, and God does not use any excuses. He gives us everything we need. When I was starting out years ago, He gave me John 15:5 — "Apart from me ye can do nothing." I went on reading my Bible faithfully. Finally I came to Phil. 4:13 — "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." "Another rendering of that is, "Through the dynamic power of Christ, I can do anything." He extends His power to us. He said, My Child, don't you want the power offered to you? All we

have to do is to appropriate it, take what He has offered. He offers us everything He has purchased. There is no reason why God's people should go about as though they had lost their best friend. You say, I cannot be happy all the time. "Rejoice always, and again I say rejoice." The joy of the Lord is your strength, not YOUR joy; but His joy gives you strength. "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." II Cor. 9:8.

WATCHING

WAITING

LISTENING

APRIL 6th 1936

*Hark we hear our Savior whisper
"Soon for you my Bride I come,"
And our hearts send back an echo,
Hasten with a gladsome song;
We are waiting, watching, listening,
Watching gladly till He come,
Listening for His gentle summons,
Weary children, "Welcome Home".*

*In yon bright and heavenly city,
No more sorrow, no more pain,
Only just a little moment,
Till our Bridegroom comes again
Shouting "Amen, Lord come quickly",
We are longing for that day,
When thy saints shall rise to meet thee,
Clothed Immortal, caught away.*

*Listen to the wondrous singing,
As we gather round His throne,
Unto Him who washed and loved us,
And has sealed us for His own,
Holy, Holy, Holy, HOLY
How the ransomed saints will sing,
Glory, Wisdom, Praise and Honor,
Unto Christ our glorious King.*

*We are waiting, we are watching,
We are listening for His voice;
Soon we'll see our Savior coming,
And the saints will all rejoice.
For we'll hear the trumpet sounding,
Then to heaven we shall go
There to reign with Christ, our Bridegroom,
Robed in garments white as snow.*

Mrs. F. E. Newman

REFLECTIONS

. . . *From the Editor*

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, . . . But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.” Jas. 1:2-6

Ours is a day of absolute uncertainty and chaos. No corner of the world is exempt as men simply do not know what will befall them next. Earthquakes strike at one place, tornadoes at another. Drought wreak havoc in one area, while floods, bring destruction and misery elsewhere. Add to that the tremendous wave of physical ailments that seem to know no limit or discrimination, even among God’s people. God has however, offered us a glorious alternative. James tells us here, that in the midst of such a chaotic existence, we can know of a certainty “that the trying of your faith worketh patience.”

18

There are also a multitude of other things that we can know beyond doubt, and it is this knowledge that keeps us from being tossed to and fro even in these most turbulent times. Abraham too was a man of faith who went out “not knowing whither he went.” Heb. 11:8 However, his journey began when God told him, “know of a surety..” and then proceeded to tell him what would befall his seed for generations to come.

Knowledge brings stability, and there are times in our lives when that is all we have. Job was severely criticized and falsely accused by his “comforters,” yet in the midst of all that he vehemently declared “I know that I shall be justified.” Job. 13:12 His assurance went quite beyond the circumstance with his accusers when he said “For I know that my redeemer liveth, . . .” Job. 19:25 He also committed his unknown future into the very hands of God when he cried out “But he knoweth the way that I take. . . .” Job. 23:10

We also are comforted when we realize that “...we know that all things work together for good,” (Rom. 8:28) and are “... confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:” Phil. 1:6

The knowledge that God is never taken by surprise, and that our times are in His Hands, (Psa. 31:15) serve as an unmovable anchor in our lives, despite the turbulent waters which prevail at this present time. Paul boldly shouted “for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” II Tim. 1:12 Such an attitude of faith carried him to the very end of his life on this earth and there was absolutely no uncertainty when he wrote “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight,.... Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,...” II Tim. 4:6 We too can be filled with that same knowledge and confidence for “In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength:” Isa. 30:15 There is no reason for us to be unstable even though everything around us is.

GH

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Denver Youth Camp July 1-5

Youth Camp will be held at Ponderosa Retreat and Conference Center in Larkspur, CO, just south of Denver. Camp will begin with dinner Monday night and end with lunch on Friday. There will be Bible studies for all ages in the mornings, supervised recreation each afternoon, and Church services every evening.

For lodging and registration please contact Angie Siebert at (303) 906-6809 or Polly O’Dorisio at (303) 594-0933. Forms and additional information will be available at www.livingwaterstabernacle.com. We invite you to join your brothers and sisters in Christ for this annual gathering to give glory and honor to God and be strengthened and renewed by His Spirit.

Glad Tidings Youth Camp July 15-19

This camp is located near Polo, Missouri. More details will follow. For more information, please contact:

Don and Gloria Smith

gloriasmith55@gmail.com

660-645-2825

THE ART OF LISTENING

“Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak.” James 1:19

In this day and age in which we live, effective listening seems to be a lost art. It appears to have gone by the wayside along with politeness. Recently, when I was in a convenience store, standing in line to make a purchase, a man cut in front of me to ask the clerk for directions to a certain street. As the clerk proceeded to give him directions, the man kept interrupting to suggest alternate routes to a place where he had not a clue of its whereabouts. The clerk was repeatedly cut off by the man in his attempts to give directions, who in the end, decided he knew the route necessary to take. He left without ever accepting the help he had asked for. I was amazed how one could be so rude to those waiting in line, as well as to the clerk, and equally amazed, how an individual could not simply listen to that about which he had inquired. 20

Listening is an art. It takes us out of self and connects us with others. A good test of how well you listen is, the next time you are at a gathering with several people, ask yourself the name of an individual you were introduced to ten minutes earlier. Many times we hear but do not listen. Another test of how well you listen is, when engaged in a conversation, check yourself as to whether you are actively listening to what the other person is saying, or are already forming a response while they are yet speaking.

Active listening is a ministry. People need an outlet to share their concerns; a means to vent their feelings. Often when one confides to another, they do not want a response, they simply want someone who will listen and show that they care. When an individual suffers a loss, such as a loved one, the biggest mistake we can make is to ramble on about how the deceased is in a better place or how God works in mysterious ways. These sayings are true, but usually the one needing to be consoled just wants someone to be there with them in silent sympathy. To hear the things they wish to express. The only thing we can say is the truth

“Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” - James 1:22. We deceive ourselves into thinking we have an ear for God. When we have a need, we either do not include God in the decision making, or are selective in what we hear Him say. This is usually based on what we want rather than what God would have for us. Self-will keeps us from asking because we suspect the answer might be “No!” If we half-way listen to God to what God says we might experience His good or acceptable will, and be allowed that which we ask for with some level of modification or moderation. But, if we truly listen to God, He might indeed say “No” in order that we might be in His perfect will. See Romans 12:2 for three levels of spirituality.

Prayer means to communicate. It takes two to do this and it requires talking and listening by both sides. True prayer includes making our requests to God and quietly listening to Him as well. It is a special blessing when we first worship Him for Who He is, rather than what He is able to do. God knows our hearts, and in spite of imperfect speech, hears us with supernatural hearing. *“And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth (hears) what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercessions for the saints according to the will of God”* - Romans 8:27. Our hearing then needs to be attentive to inward speaking of the Holy Spirit which dwells within us and guides us.

Christians need not only to hear on an individual basis, but on a collective one as well. In the letters to the churches (Revelation two and three), we see the admonition given to each church to *“hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”* If we hear and heed the instruction of the Spirit, we ascend to a higher spiritual plane. If we fail to hear, we descend to a lower place than what God has for us. May we learn the art of listening in our natural and spiritual lives, that we might be in tune with our Creator and Lord, as well as our fellowman. *“He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”* - Revelation 3:13.

Anon

How Great Thou Art!

English Words by Stuart K.Hine 1899.

Music Arrangement by Stuart K. Hine and Manna Music of Swedish Folk Melody

Meter-11 10. 11 10 with Refrain

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable. Psalm 145:3

This is a fine twentieth century hymn of praise that has become a favorite with God's people during the last three decades. Its popularity is due in large part to its wide use by favorite gospel singers, notably George Beverly Shea. Although introduced to American audiences when Mr. James Caldwell sang "How Great Thou Art" at Stony Brook Bible Conference on Long Island in 1951, it was not until Cliff Barrows and Bev Shea of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Team used it during the famed London Crusade in Harringay Arena that "How Great Thou Art" started to become universally well-known.

The original Swedish text was a poem entitled "O Store Gud," written by a Swedish pastor, the Reverend Carl Boberg, in 1886. In addition to being one of the leading evangelical preachers of his day, Boberg was also the successful editor of the periodical *Sanningsvitnet*. His inspiration for this text is said to have come from a visit to a beautiful country estate on the southeast coast of Sweden. He was suddenly caught in a midday thunderstorm with awe-inspiring moments of flashing violence, followed by a clear brilliant sun. Soon afterwards he heard the calm, sweet songs of the birds in nearby trees. The experience prompted the pastor to fall to his knees in humble adoration of his mighty God. He penned his exaltation in a nine-stanza poem beginning with the Swedish words "O Store Gud, nar jag den varld beskader."

Several years later Boberg was attending a meeting in the Province of Varmland and was surprised to hear the congregation sing his poem to the tune of an old Swedish melody.

The subsequent history of this hymn is most interesting. It is thought that soon after Boberg's version, the text was translated into German by Manfred von

Glehn and entitled "Wie gross bist Du." Later in 1925 the Reverend B. Gustav Johnson of North Park College, Chicago, Illinois, made the first literal English translation from the Swedish text. This translation is quite different from the text that we know today but may still be found in some hymnals. Johnson's literal translation of the Swedish text is entitled "O Mighty God. When I Behold the Wonder." In 1927 I. S. Prokhanoff came upon the German version and translated it into the Russian language.

In 1933 the Reverend S. K. Mine and his wife, English missionaries, were ministering to the people of the Ukraine. It was there they learned the Russian translation of "O Store Gud" from a congregation of Ukrainians. They remember singing it as a duet in dark, unevangelized places and the telling effect it had on the unsaved. The thought of writing original English lyrics to this song did not then occur to them---that was to await their crossing into Sub-Carpathian Russia, where the mountain scenery was to play its part. The thoughts of the first three verses in English were born, line upon line, amid unforgettable experiences in the Carpathian Mountains. (The fourth verse was written later in England.) Thus, inspired partially by the Russian words, partially by the awesome wonder at the sight of "all the works thy hand hath made," the thoughts of the first two verses sprang into life in English. As Reverend Hine and his wife continued their evangelizing in the Carpathian Mountains and distribution of gospels in village after village, verse three came into being.

When war broke out in 1939, it was necessary for Reverend Hine and his wife to return to Britain; now armed with these three verses, the writer continued his gospel campaigns during the "Blitz years." The fourth verse did not come until after the war.

The tune for this hymn is an arrangement made of an old Swedish folk melody. It is typically characteristic of many other hymn tunes, i.e., "Day by Day" with its lilting, warm, singable simplicity. With his original English lyrics and his arrangement of the Swedish folk melody, Mr. Stuart K. Hine published what we know today as the hymn "How Great Thou Art." Assignments of copyrights and

publication rights to an American publishing firm in 1954 helped spread the popularity of this hymn. In April of 1974 the *Christian Herald* magazine, in a poll presented to its readers. named "How Great Thou Art" the No. 1 hymn in America.

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How Great Thou Art!

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
Consider all, the worlds thy hands have made.
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy pow'r throughout the universe displayed!

When through the wood and forest glades I wander
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees,
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur
And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze,
And when I think that God, His Son not sparing,
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in –
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin!

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation,
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart:
Then I shall bow in humble adoration,
And there proclaim, my God, how great Thou art!

Refrain

Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee;
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee;
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

The Devil's Payroll

John H. Reed

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Rom. 3:23.

Which of these will you take, reader? Let us analyze this Scripture and see more definitely what it is about. The first part, "the wages," speaks of a payroll; "of sin," speaks of the one whom you serve. The devil is the author of all sin; thus it is the devil's payroll. The *wages* you receive on this payroll is death. The second part of this Scripture speaks of a "gift" of which God is the Giver, which is "Eternal Life." Again, I ask you this question, Reader, Which of these will you take, the wages of sin, or the Gift of God? You will have to take the former if you do not take the latter; that is well known. If you have not accepted Jesus Christ as your Saviour, you are on the devil's payroll working for him, and you are waiting with millions of others in the, pay-line for your wages which is death, or eternal separation from God, forever without hope, lost in a place of eternal woe and torment—Luke 16:24, Rev. 20:10.

You ask, "What have I done to be on this payroll?" The answer is, Nothing, absolutely nothing. "But he that believeth not is condemned already," because he hath not believed on the only begotten Son of God"—John 3:18. "All have sinned and come short of the Glory of God"—Rom. 3:23. Therefore, because you have sinned and have not believed on the only begotten Son of God, you are a lost sinner, "without Christ, having no hope and without God in the world"—Eph. 2:12. You are therefore in line to receive your wages which, in the final result, is death and damnation forever, as it is written, "And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the, Lake of Fire."—Rev. 20:15. 0-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o, how awful," you say. "Do you mean to tell me that such is my doom?" Yes, that is what God states in His Word.

"Is there any hope for me?" Yes, but the hope for you is not in doing something, such as trying to live a good moral life, or joining a Church, or in being baptized, but it is in taking the Gift that God has for you. Because you are absolutely unable to save yourself, "God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh" to fulfill His just demands for your Salvation. "For God so loved the world

that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting Life"—John 3:16. Jesus paid the full price of your Salvation when He hung on the Cross of Calvary, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own Body on the tree, that we being dead to sin should live"---I Pet. 2:24. There He shed His precious blood for your redemption and the forgiveness of your sins—Eph. 1:7. He took your place that you who are dead in sins might live, or have eternal life. He died and was buried and carried your sins far away "to be remembered against you no more." And then He rose from the dead to justify you which means, to be accounted righteous, to have His righteousness placed to your credit as though you had never sinned! To take this precious gift all you do is "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved"—Acts 16:31. "He that believeth on me is not condemned"—John 3:18. It is yours by believing through faith in His blood—Romans 3:25. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved"—Romans 10:9. You do not deserve this in the least but He did this for you by His wondrous Grace. "For by Grace are you saved, through faith; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast"—Eph. 2:8, 9. "Yes, I know how to get saved, but there is plenty of time; so I will just wait awhile."

Oh, Oh! Watch out! God warns you against waiting. He says, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth"—Prov. 27:1. You might die without Christ in your life!



- * ***Christian faith is both assuring and enduring.***
- * ***Silence can be beautiful and impressive;
don't break it unless you can improve on it.***
- * ***Giving up is the ultimate tragedy.***
- * ***In dealing with people, always be prepared to go the extra smile***

ISAIAH

Chapter 7

Gene Hawkins

Isaiah 7 corresponds with the book of Judges, which is a book of resounding failure. It records a cycle which is repeated over and over again. First Israel would be completely surrendered to the Lord. Jud. 2:7 Secondly, they would depart from Him. Jud. 2:11 Third. God would allow them to be dominated by their enemies. Jud. 2:14 Fourth, the people would fall on their faces before Him in genuine repentance and the Lord would raise up a judge to deliver them. Jud. 2:16 There is also a very prominent fault found in that book, which prompted this tremendous failure, and it is mentioned numerous times. “In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” Jud. 21:25.

27 There was somewhat of a “confederacy” of men sharing the same ideal of doing “that which was right” in their own eyes, and that same scenario prevails in our present chapter. The difference here is that Israel, has joined the confederacy which is gathered together against Judah. “And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it.” V. 1

We noted in chapter five that the twelve tribes of Israel had been divided into the two tribes, known as Judah, and the ten, known as Israel, since the end of Solomon’s reign. Though both Solomon and Rehoboam, had tried to prevent this separation God plainly declared, “this thing is from me.” I Kings 12:24. God does not speak such a thing at this time and though the ten tribes of Israel will be taken captive in 65 years, (V. 8) they have, at this present time, yielded to doing “that which was right,” in their own eyes and have joined Syria in going to war against their own brethren, but “could not prevail” against Jerusalem.

“And it was told the house of David (Judah) saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. (Israel) And his (Ahaz) heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.” V. 2 We can surely understand that the hearts of the people would be “moved with the wind,” realizing

that their own people , with whom they were once closely united in claiming the land of promise, are now separated from them to join forces with their avowed enemies. God, however, is for Jerusalem and thus: "...said the Lord unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz;...." V. 3 Isaiah is primarily the prophet for Judah, and is instructed to go to the king along with "..... Shearjashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field." The prophet was given exact instructions of where to go, and his message was one of great comfort and hope. "And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah." V. 4 This message has been given to many in time of crisis. God declares that Ahaz is to "be quiet" or to rest in faith, simply believing God's promise to fight the battle against these "two smoking firebrands." Even though they are against Jerusalem, at this time, verses 4 - 7, impart a wonderful promise to Judah. Ahaz and Jerusalem can, by no means, be termed "spiritual people, but they could boast of more spirituality than could Israel. After the split, when Jereboam literally led the ten tribes into idolatry, there is not one righteous king recorded in that nation. Judah could boast only seven and they are always measured by King David. This is undoubtedly the reason for the ten tribes being taken captive by Assyria, quite a number of years before Judah was carried away to Babylon. Thus God promises Ahaz that he need not be concerned about these "the two tails of these smoking firebrands." There are, in essence, only "smoke" without any fire in them. Their intentions are recorded as being God's cause against them. "Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying, Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal." V. 5 The intention of this wicked confederacy is to destroy Ahaz and replace him with "the son of Tabeal." This is exactly what many have in mind today, but scripture plainly declares that It is God Who sets up and removes kings. Dan. 2:21 Thus this personal assurance to Ahaz continues: "Thus saith the Lord God, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass." V. 7 He then gives the King some specifics as to how He will make good on His promise. "For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head

of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people.” V. 8 The “heads,” of “the two tails of these smoking firebrands,” are now singled out, and though God does not divulge the outcome for Syria and Damascus, at this time, He is very specific concerning Israel.

This is a direct prophecy proclaiming that within 65 years Israel will be “broken,” or taken into captivity. This is yet another example of a scriptural “word of knowledge.” I Cor. 12:8 The key to that glorious gift of the Holy Ghost is “specificity.” Many claim to use this gift in our midst today, but more often than not, men speak only in great generalities, of “somewhere, sometime, something,” will come to pass. God knows the end from the beginning and He can be extremely specific when He speaks. We also learn here that when God speaks to Israel, or of them, He, more often than not, deals in exact terms of years or even days. His dealings with the Gentiles, are more in symbolic terms. Thus the time of Israel captivity is pin point perfect.

God continues in verse 9 announcing that “The head of Ephraim is Samaria,” meaning simply that Samaria is the capital of Israel. After Assyria invaded Israel and took them captive, they replaced the Jews with their own people. Thus Samaria, intermixed with the Gentiles, developed a very inferior image. These Samaritans were despised because they were no longer considered “pure Jews.” The woman who met Jesus at the well in John 4:9 declared plainly that “the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.” Jesus likewise portrays Himself as the “Good Samaritan,” in Luke 10 for exactly the same reason. He too was despised, and rejected by His own.

Verse 9 closes with this rather strange statement. “If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.” The margin says it this way: “Do ye not believe? It is because ye are not stable.” The Septuagint renders it thus: “but if ye believe not, neither will ye at all understand.” Ahaz was in no wise a spiritual man, and he surely does not believe. He therefore will, in no wise understand, that God will still honor the promises He has made.

God is so very patient with all men. He has placed Ahaz on the throne and still desires that he be the leader of His people. Because of that, He continues to try and “induce” this man to gain a knowledge of Himself. It is for that reason that “...the Lord spake again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask thee a sign of the Lord.” V.

10,11 Isaiah has just offered the king a personal invitation to seek a sign guaranteeing the promise of God. It can be in “..either in the depth, or in the height above,” or as another expression would be, the deep things of God. Ahaz responds, “I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord.” That seems to be such a wonderful statement of humility, but it is, in fact, only another blatant declaration of unbelief. God invited him to make this request and “God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:” Jas. 1:13 Had Ahaz been a spiritual man, he would have jumped at this opportunity. However, God is not at a loss when men refuse Him “And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?” V. 13 In other words, it wearied God, because this man was not interested in a sign, and refused to pursue what God had to impart. The same thing is true in our day when men are simply not interested in what God thinks. There are times when He is simply silent but this is not one of them. “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign;...” V. 14 God’s Signs are generally centered around redemption, which is exactly what Ahaz and Jerusalem needed at this time, and thus Isaiah announces the first advent of Jesus! “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel,” meaning “God with us.” He has already promised that He would deliver Jerusalem at the time then present, and here is the basis for that deliverance.

30

This “son” is further defined in the next verse. “Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.” The butter speaks of the richness of God’s Word, while honey tells of its sweetness. This prophesied son shall eat of it that He may know how to “refuse the evil and choose the good.” Jesus would later say “And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.” John 8:19 He came in absolute obedience to the Word of God and was indeed the embodiment of It. His mission was to please His Father and if we likewise follow the same pattern of eating that message in order that we too may discern between good and evil, we too shall please Him.

Most prophecy is at least two fold. There is a local fulfillment and a far reaching one. Verse 16 is clearly the prophecy of a “sign” child to be born, at the time then present. Chapter 8:18 declares that Isaiah had two “sign” children, the first of which would have been Immanuel.

The text here in Ch. 7 asserts that "... before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings." The statement "both her kings" means the kings of Israel and Judah. Both of them will be removed before this child is grown. It will happen long before the Real Immanuel comes into the world, for both Israel and Judah were led away captive to Assyria and Babylon respectively, before Jesus would even be born.

The prophecy continues declaring that "The Lord shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; even the king of Assyria." This is a direct prophecy concerning the ten tribes which departed from Judah during the idolatrous reign of Jereboam. These ten tribes, with their capital of Samaria, would be taken captive by the King of Assyria. II Kings 17:6 This is The Lord's doing, for "...it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall hiss;" (to whistle or hiss --as a call) for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria." The Lord literally calls these other nations to punish both Israel and Judah. The words in this portion seem to be directed specifically toward Ahaz and the house of Judah. The fly would be the king of Egypt, who was Pharaohnechoh, when this actually came to pass. II Kings 23:29. The bee, which has a stronger "sting" than the fly, is a reference to the King of Assyria. Judah encountered both of them in II Kings 23. These final chapters of II Kings reveal that Josiah, one of the seven good kings in Judah, was slain at Megiddo, when he refused God's counsel through Necho, King of Egypt, to "...forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not" II Chron 35:21-22 After Josiah was slain, by the King of Egypt, his son Jehoahaz was anointed king. He too did that which was evil in the sight of The Lord, "And Pharaohnechoh put him in bands at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem;..." II Kings 23:32,33. Jehoahaz was replaced with Eliakim, who became known as Jehoiakim. His reign ushers in the regime of Nebuchanezzar, the ruler of the first world empire, when God committed world government into the hands of the Gentiles. Both the "fly," and "the bee" gave way to him, and like Israel, Judah was also taken captive.

"And they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the

desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorns, and upon all bushes. In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired, namely, by them beyond the river, by the king of Assyria, the head, and the hair of the feet: and it shall also consume the beard.” V. 19,20 All the prophets were ordained of God and He used them mightily in warning Israel, and predicting events that are even yet, waiting to happen. It is rather intriguing that these prophets all had their own “style.” God does not simply use them as “robots,” who speak beyond their own control, as many today suppose. Paul informs us that “...the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.” I Cor. 14:32 The Holy Ghost rather incorporates the gifts and abilities which He has given to each of them, and Isaiah employs some rather interesting poetic language throughout his writings. The text before us is rather descriptive of God’s intention regarding both Judah and Israel, for it describes the conditions that will prevail in the land when they are invaded, just prior to their captivities. The valleys will be desolate, and the people will rest in holes, and thorns, simply trying to maintain a place of protection. The devastation is likened unto one with a “razor,” giving a very close shave, wherein nothing is missed. It is not just a random, helter-skelter cutting off, but rather complete judgment “...that is hired, namely, by them beyond the river, by the king of Assyria, the head, and the hair of the feet: and it shall also consume the beard.”

32

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that a man shall nourish a young cow, and two sheep; and it shall come to pass, for the abundance of milk that they shall give he shall eat butter: for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the land.” V. 21,22 This is the record of those who are left after Israel has been forced to vacate this marvelous land of promise. God has cast out His people and this is undoubtedly a reference to the fact that “...the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof.” These new tenants will now be the beneficiaries of the land “which flows with milk and honey.”

God had prophesied long ago, before they ever entered the promised land, that “...if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; And if ye shall despise my

statutes..... ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.” Lev. 26:14-16

The next verse of our chapter seems to be directed more toward Judah. “And it shall come to pass in that day, that every place shall be, where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings, it shall even be for briers and thorns.” V. 23 This describes a land that is untended, and forsaken. There is no record that others moved into Jerusalem, and the surrounding area, as was the case in Samaria, after Nebuchadnezzar burned it with fire. It is rather described as a wasteland by those who returned 70 years later, because Nebuchadnezzar completely destroyed it. It had been a very fruitful land with thousands of vines worth a great deal of money, or “silverlings,” but such a fruitful land has now been turned to “briers and thorns.

Verse 24 describes the way life has changed in this area which once boasted one cluster of grapes requiring two men to bear it. Num. 13:23 Now we are told that “With arrows and with bows shall men come thither;” that is, they are coming with their weapons of war, “because all of the land shall become briers and thorns,” and is now a very hostile place. V. 24 “And on all hills that shall be digged with the mattock, there shall not come thither the fear of briers and thorns:....” The “mattock” is a weeding hoe, telling us that in order to have good crops, from fertile lands, they must now be cultivated. That however will not come to pass, for this land no longer brings forth the bountiful harvests which once identified it. It is rather good for nothing more than “....the sending forth of oxen, and for the treading of lesser cattle.” This beautiful, bountiful land has now been reduced to “grazing land,” for oxen, and “lesser (small, sheep or goat) cattle.”

So it is, that this chapter closes much like the book of Judges. Samson was the last judge, and died with the Phillistines after having had his eyes put out. After that, Israel is plagued with a civil war, as they are gathered together against Benjamin.

The book of Judges closes with proclamation that, “In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” Jud. 21:25 Likewise, Isaiah 7 closes with great devastation following the prophecy that “the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.” V. 16

(To Be Continued)

NONE LIKE HIM

Albert J. Woehr, Jr.

“He trusted in the Lord God of Israel”. — II Kings 18:5.

In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, the Lord names some of His greatest heroes—those of whom "He was not ashamed to be called their God". In our text we have another great man of God mentioned, named Hezekiah. Of this king it is said, "after him was **none like** him among all the kings of Judah, nor any before him". This takes in a great deal of territory. What was the out standing characteristic that caused God to have such a high opinion of His servant? It was his faith in God. For "he trusted in the Lord God of Israel."

We always trust those in whom we have faith! The significance of the word "trust" in this verse, is to lean hard on God as a foundation. The actual use of the word is as a cripple leans hard upon crutches in order to move forward. This was the exact attitude expressed in the life of Hezekiah. There was no fretting when highly successful Sennacherib came up against him, for Hezekiah "trusted in the Lord God", that is, leaned hard (depended upon) his foundation.

How well have we learned this lesson? Can it be said that we daily lean hard upon our sure Foundation, Jesus Christ? There is no other foundation for the people of God. Let us surrender ourselves unto our God, trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, leaning and depending hard on Him, constantly looking away from all the difficult circumstances, unto Him, who died for us and rose again, ascending on high to live and make intercession for us.

Then our God will not be ashamed to be called our God.

oooooooooooo

GOD'S PROMISES

***As the deep blue of heaven brightens into stars,
So God's great love shines forth in promises.
Which, falling softly through our prison bars,
Daze not our eyes, but with their sweet light bless.
Ladders of light, God sets against the skies,
Upon whose golden rungs we step by step arise.***

-- Author Unknown



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