

Grace and Glory

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'Loving His Appearing'

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A
Christmas
Message

"I am the Way,
the Truth,
and the Life;"

St. John 14:6

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THE WORLD'S TIMEPIECE



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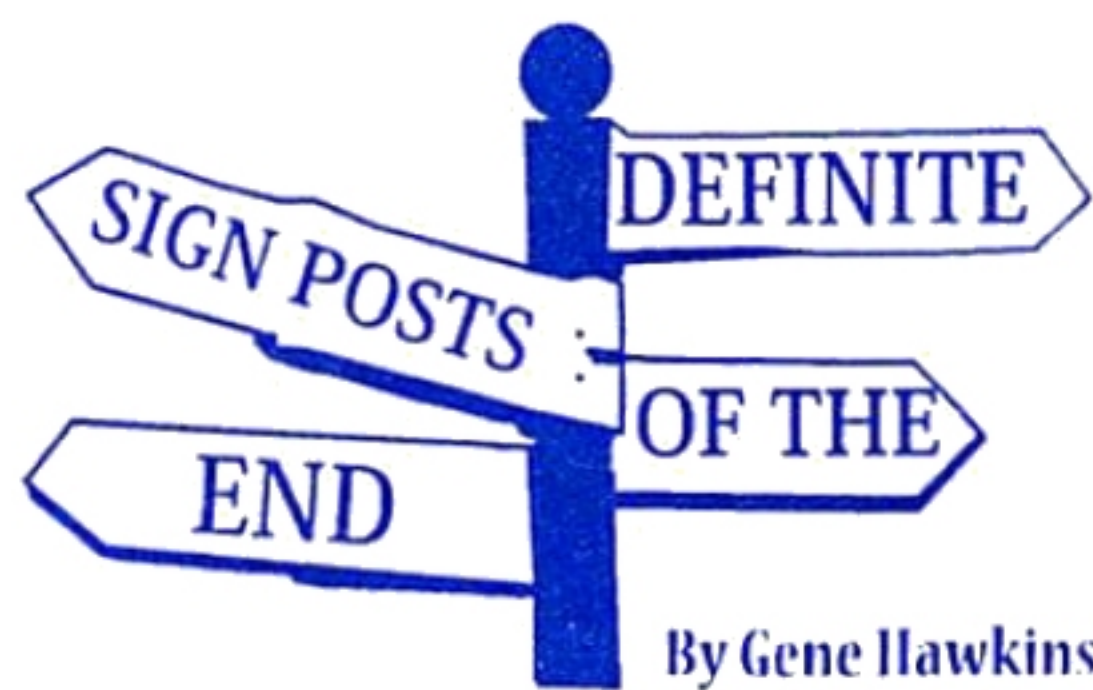
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Editor: Gene Hawkins



*“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.”
Luke 21:25-26*

“And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of

All these signs from the above text in Luke seem to converge on the earth resulting, in “Men’s hearts failing them for fear....” The signs from heaven do have a direct influence on the earth and Jesus plainly states that “... the powers of heaven shall be shaken,” meaning that these various signs in heaven are quite beyond the control of men, but they do have a powerful impact on his environment. The recent “supermoon” seems to emphasize this very point. According to a NASA article in Space.com “... the surface of the Earth is about 70 percent ocean, which not only affects the moon’s orbital pattern, but in turn creates tidal variations on Earth. This year, slightly higher tides are expected in relation to the Nov. 14 supermoon, although this is nothing unusual for close full moon approaches. One of the interesting things about the moon is that it’s not only pulling on the Earth’s oceans, it’s actually pulling on the Earth’s crust. The Earth’ crust --- the land beneath our feet --- actually deforms and responds to the moon in a very subtle way.” Reports from the experts declare that the next supermoon will not occur until Nov. 25, 2034. We cannot imagine Jesus’ coming millennium being put off beyond 2034, but we are quite sure that all the phenomenon recorded in Revelation in regard to the sun, the moon, and all the other heavenly elements will most assuredly come to pass, and they will all have some horrendous and devastating effects upon this little earth ball.

Jesus is also very emphatic in describing the uncertainties that will prevail in these last days, as He describes “...distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring.” Though

the sea and waves will literally roil with devastating unrest and destruction as God's judgment is poured out upon the earth during the tribulation period, these terms are actually figurative, describing the relentless uncertainty of the nations at this present hour. We continue to repeat that we are witnessing events during this time known as "the beginning of sorrows," which means that all these signs will escalate and become even more prominent and intense than they are now. The above text from Revelation will not actually occur until a time well into the tribulation period, but the atmosphere depicted by the "sand of the sea," is a description of the very volatile and ever-changing political atmosphere of this present world. There will come a time when the "waters" of the Gentile nations will produce a beast having seven heads and ten horns. The seven heads are seven nations; specifically, the leaders of those seven world powers. The antichrist will eventually emerge from that coalition, and though hidden at the beginning of the seven year tribulation, this man of sin will make the infamous covenant of death with the Jews, described in Dan. 9:27 and Isa. 28:15.

4

The shifting sands and roiling waters are already very clearly in evidence as we witness a great upheaval in political affairs around the entire globe today. The recent election in America wherein God has set up His king, despite the fact that he has no previous political or military experience, shocked both this nation and the rest of the world. That decision has also produced tremendous unrest in this country and abroad, and the fear of which Jesus' prophesied in this portion from Luke is rampant. Consider this headline from Haaretz.com, a Jewish source in the Middle East. "With tears and palpable fear, dozens of synagogues hold hastily-organized gatherings across the county." This article then portrays Pres. elect Trump as expressing "explicitly anti-Semitic, racist and sexist views." The greater part of this particular piece, however, centers around the gay lesbian community. Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum declared that, "As Jews and members of the LGBTQ community, CBST (Congregation Beit Simchat Torah) members feel doubly vulnerable. Rabbi Denise Eger, "an out lesbian rabbi," is also quoted as saying: "People in same-sex partnerships are worried that their marriages are on the block, women are really worried about women's reproductive rights. We have people of color, immigrants, people whose partners are immigrants and they are all

afraid, Eger explained. As an out lesbian rabbi, she has seen many previous political campaigns strike fear in the hearts of LGBT people, but added that 'in my lifetime I have not seen anything frighten the Jewish community like this' [election]."

Other articles also seem to echo these same feelings among many Jews. Haaretz publishes another journalist who reveals that, "Among white Americans who identify with a religion, Jews are consistently the most secular and most liberal group, supporting liberal agendas in far greater numbers than all others." We were also a bit shocked and dismayed to find that Jews are not enamored with Evangelicals, "despite their warm support for Israel." This is surely disheartening, because Christians are clearly taught that the Jews are God's chosen people and that, "through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy." Rom. 11:11 Thus we owe to them a debt of love and gratitude, and regardless of such attitudes as are displayed, it is imperative that we continue in our quest to fully support this people.

And then there is this rather shocking headline from Haaretz announcing the "Trump effect: Jewish and Muslim organizations form new alliance. A new Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council will work to protect the religious minorities' rights as well as other issues of common concern." This is said to be an "unusual alliance," and we can hardly imagine Israel who claims the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, forming a union with a group shouting Allah. Regardless of claims, they are NOT one and the same. There is only One God and He is the God of Israel. Nevertheless, the alliance's "initial action items, the press release said, will be to develop a coordinated strategy to address anti-Muslim bigotry and anti-Semitism in the U.S. and to protect and expand the rights of religious minorities in the country." 5

Other accounts in the multitude of news articles surrounding the election indicate that the anti-scriptural lifestyles which are being adopted around the world are more important to some in the Jewish community than the ungodly U.S. - Iran nuclear deal, the proposal to remove Israeli borders back to pre 1967 boundaries, or allowing Jerusalem to become the capital for a Palestinian State. No mention is made of Iran vowing to remove this tiny nation from the face of the earth, nor the threat of multiple terrorist groups which are a constant threat to the well-being and safety of Israel.

We also note that China is now trying to become a major player in the Middle East, as Haaretz also reports that "Chinese president calls for East Jerusalem as capital of Palestinian State. Xi Jinping addresses Arab League in Cairo before planned visit to Iran, announces millions in aid to Palestinians. Thus, we hear another world leader calling for "...a Palestinian state within the pre-1967 war borders amid efforts by Beijing to assert its economic and political clout in the Middle East."

Russia is likewise making her presence known in the Middle East. Not only is there a very strained relationship between the U.S. and Russia because of Syria, Russia has moved an antiquated aircraft carrier into the Mediterranean. Some have asked "Why?," and the answer seems to be that it is just for show, since the Admiral Kuznetsov aircraft carrier and Russia's entire fleet is so inferior to that of an American force. The consensus is that, "Putin is saying to the world, but first of all to his own citizens, that Russia once again has super-power aspirations."

6 This recent election has also created a major furor over the relationship between Pres. Elect Trump and Russian Pres. Vladimir Putin. A rather lengthy dispatch from Newsweek reports that "The telegram was one of the first to arrive from a world leader. On the morning of November 9, the Kremlin announced that Russian President Vladimir Putin had sent a message to U.S. President-elect Donald Trump expressing his hope that they can work together toward the end of the crisis in Russian-American relations, as well as address the pressing issues of the international agenda and the search for effective responses to global security challenges." Owen Matthews then continues to describe how the Russians have used the internet for modern day cyber warfare, citing one example on Dec. 23, 2015 when Russian hackers took control of the Ukraine electricity grid. There are a great many more examples of such "hacking," but this piece closes with, "The next president has only a few more weeks to figure out whether Putin is a friend or a foe." Thus, it is quite obvious that the shifting sands of uncertainty across the entire political spectrum of the world will become even much more volatile than they are now, as men persist in their quest to wrest and wield power at all costs.

Many have asserted down through the ages that Israel is at the heart of all the activity and fate of this world. That fact will become increasingly prominent as time goes on. Daniel clearly

tells us that "... he (the antichrist, that man of sin) shall confirm the covenant with many for one week:..." Dan. 9:27 It is imperative to focus on the little word "*many*," for it is key to understanding that though the majority of the Jews will approve this covenant, there are some in Israel who will not. The fact is that God has always had a remnant, even in times of great spiritual declension. Joshua and Caleb stood alone against a mob-like multitude which refused to go into the land of Canaan, when they cried out "If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us;..." Num. 14:8 Elijah called fire down from heaven during a time of great rebellion and unbelief in Israel, and though many responded to that miracle, Elijah insisted that "... I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." God subsequently assured him that He did have a faithful remnant, declaring, "...I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal,..." I Kings 18-19 These days of Elijah are indeed symbolic of the coming days of tribulation, wherein the two witnesses will demonstrate the same type of power and might as that wielded by this prophet of old. "And I will give power unto my two witnesses,... And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth,... These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy.... and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will." Rev. 11:3-6

We are also confident that God likewise has a remnant in Israel today who will try to resist this covenant prophesied by Dan. 9:27. They will be unsuccessful, for given the way that the majority of religious Jews have completely dismissed the tremendous threats to their own country and well-being as they insist on "their rights," completely ignoring the principles of God's Word, it is easy to see how the "many" will ignore the consequences and enter into this infamous covenant of death with the antichrist. The remnant, along with the entire world, will then suffer for that decision. Much of the Church will endure the first part of the tribulation period because of their own unbelief, but Israel as a nation must suffer the period known as "... the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." Jer. 30:7 Paul likewise boldly declares that "... all Israel shall be saved:..." Rom. 11:26 God will hear the cries of His remnant and will preserve Israel, as promised in Rev. 12:14, but she must first suffer the

most intense days of the tribulation period. “And to the woman (Israel) were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.”

8 We would continue to earnestly exhort men not to become overly involved with the political, religious, and social ills of this world. We must stand for truth and refuse to bow to the ungodly practices purported by society today, making sure that the gospel of the Lord Jesus does shine brightly in our daily conduct, but our demonstration of faith in Jesus’ soon return is imperative. Peter publishes this advice not only for Israel, but for ourselves also in view of the ever-present signs, in both heaven and earth, of Jesus’ eminent return. “Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?” II Pet. 3:12 The major fulfillment of this destruction will not be fully realized until after the millennium when God will make a new heaven and a new earth, but let us make no mistake, this process has already begun. The signs which Jesus posted in Luke 21 confirming Peter’s proclamation in regard to the destruction of heavenly elements along with the upheaval and rebellion on the earth, are most assuredly manifest. It is high time that God’s people give strong attention their own attitude and move with haste toward the prospect of Jesus’ coming for His Own. Amidst all this prophesied destruction of the elements which will without fail affect the affairs on this earth, Peter counsels: “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,” II Pet. 3:11 The meaning of this message is exactly the same as that prompted by John. “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” I John 3:3

We would close with one final admonition, especially for those “Evangelicals” with whom Israel is not particularly enamored. “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.” Psa. 122:6 We must pray this prayer with the realization that we are actually praying for great trouble and misery to be inflicted upon Israel, for scripture is very plain in asserting that peace will not come to Jerusalem until Israel falls on her face in submission to God and accepts her Messiah. The great tribulation is designed to bring that to pass, so praying for the

peace of Jerusalem means that we are praying earnestly for this chosen people to respond to God's ways of correction and call on the Name of The Lord Who is waiting with open arms for them to claim their glorious promise: "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:" Rom. 11:26 That Deliverer is Jesus, Who will come for The Church and then set up His Own Kingdom with New Creation Israel as the head and not the tail of the nations!

The future for Israel is most glorious and we must surely pray for the will of God concerning them, but in the midst of such prayer, lest us be ever mindful of God's purpose for our own lives in these closing days of this Church Age. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Heb 10:35-37

"Unto You Is Born ... A Saviour"

9

*"Glory to God in the highest,"
The angels sang that morn,
"For unto you a Saviour
In the city of David, is born."*

*"Unto you - A Saviour" -,
Good news for you and me,
A Saviour for poor lost sinners,
From sin to set us free.*

*And now through faith in Christ Jesus,
We're created anew in Him,
Seated with Him in the heav'nies,
Victors in Him, over sin.*

*Oh, our hearts overflow with thanksgiving
For the wonderful gifts of God's love;
And Christ gave us His indwelling Presence,
Then He went to His Father above.*

The Bells of Bethlehem

Mary M. Bodie

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.” Isa. 9:6-7

10 In the early dawn of the ages, the Spirit of God declared that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head—Gen. 3:15. Adam, the fallen man believed in this coming Deliverer as did his sons, Abel and Seth, and also others of his progeny. There was a line of faith in active expectation of the Redeemer; but the years lengthened into centuries and still He did not come. God called the man Abraham out of Ur of Chaldee a land of night and idolatry. He believed the good news concerning a child which Jehovah promised to give him, a seed thru whom all nations should be blessed. Isaac was born, the type of the Seed, but not the reality. Men continued to look forward for Another in whom all the promises would be fulfilled.

Finally, the shadows deepened into Egyptian bondage. Abraham's seed were captive in that iron furnace of the Pharaohs for several hundred years, when lo, there is a ray of light. Moses, a deliverer appears. He is sent of God to loose them from slavery and bring them into freedom. They follow him into the Red Sea and on out into the wilderness. Later they entered...Canaan, a land of rest and prosperity. But yet the reality had not come. Moses was only the figure of Him, the Seed. Joshua also was not the image, neither was Canaan the rest and plenty of the promised land.

Again, the centuries drag on. The time went by with leaden feet to those who looked for the Messiah to appear. He came not; though there were many types of Him along the way.

At last a sound booms forth announcing Him. Isaiah rang his gladsome chimes of prophecy, after telling that a Virgin should conceive and bear a Son — Chap. 7:14. But

the Prophet could only foretell. He could not fulfill his prophecy. That was still for the future. The weary world was still left waiting while seven centuries passed. But God is not slack concerning His promises, as some men count slackness (II Pet, 3:9); but He is of times slow --- He has purposes to effect—mighty counsels to bring to the birth and He takes His time. Not one jot or tittle shall fail of fulfillment. His clock will strike the hour and lo, the thing is done; the event has transpired, even as the promised Child was born.

It was night—apt figure of the world steeped in darkness morally and religiously, into which He journeyed from on high. The shepherds heard the song from heaven celebrating His birth. The wise men saw His Star arising in the East. The high and the low were apprised of the fulfillment of prophecy. They hastened to the place designated and found the Virgin in a stable, cooing a lullaby to the Babe upon her breast. God had not forgotten His promises. Here was the long-looked-for Seed of the woman, who was destined to crush the head of humanity's foe and loose men from His grasp. Here was the Kinsman Redeemer.

The angel of the annunciation appeared to Joseph, the affianced husband of Mary, and told him of the mystery relating to the Virgin and the fulfillment of the prophecy concerning the coming Redeemer. He said, "*She shall bring forth a Son and thou shalt call His Name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins.*" Matt. 1:21 Hence, Jesus He was called, which Name is all the following prophesied names rolled into one. Listen to the FIVE reverberating strokes of Isaiah's Bells, as they peal forth the future glory and greatness of the Babe of Bethlehem and His destiny as Sovereign of the world.

Five is a most significant number in this connection. It is 4 plus 1, expressive of man, the helpless human, in union with God, the mighty Creator. Man's hand shows this connection admirably. The four fingers represent him—four being expressive of the weakness of the creature; the one thumb represents God—one signifying His indivisible unity and sufficiency. The hand is helpless without the thumb and vice versa, the thumb is useless without the fingers.

The analogy is simple and clear. Man can do nothing

without God. He is dependent upon His power to fulfill his destiny. At the same time, God cannot fulfill His divine counsels without humanity's cooperation. Man has need of God; but oh the marvelous condescension, God has need of man. So, let us hear the chiming bells of the Prophet Isaiah, revealing the stupendous miracle — God has come to dwell with man.

First Chime. "His name shall be called *Wonderful*." This has been fulfilled in His first advent in every phase of His life from its beginning to its end; but the manifestation of the wonder is still future. He was wonderful in His birth, for no other man was born as this Man. "Great is the mystery of Godliness—God was manifest in the flesh." I Tim. 3:16 Angels desire to look into this mystery. It is divinely marvelous. Who can explain the interweaving of Deity with humanity in the warp and woof of the Child wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger? Yet upon those humble wrappings, we may read, "*Immanuel—God with us*." No other man was born as this Man.

12 He was wonderful in life—different from all other men. "He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil." Jesus was the one man that not only was negatively good but positively good. He lived an unchallengeable life and performed unchallengeable deeds. His life was perfect, powerful and pregnant of holiness—possessive of infinite possibilities. He healed the lame, opened the blind eyes, broke the shackles of the maniacs, cured the sick and raised the dead. His life was freighted with wonderful deeds--dynamic supernaturals followed Him all the days of His earthly pilgrimage. He amazed men, angels and demons. He still amazes us as we read the writings concerning Him. There never was another like Him.

Wonderful in His death, No other man died as this Man. There was no penalty of death attached to His life. We must die because of sin; but He need not die; for He had no sin in Him. He willed to die, else no power of man or Satan could have nailed Him to the cross. He was immortal until He said, "Amen," to the will of God in the garden of Gethsemane. His death was a miracle even as His birth and His life. He gave up His Spirit. It was not taken from

Him. He was a willing offering for sin--- tasting death for every man, as the Scripture affirms.

Wonderful in His resurrection, death could not hold Him in its embrace. He tore its bars asunder and rose triumphant over its terrors—unlocking the graves and leading out a multitude of captives when He arose. He will bring many more out from their prison shortly, for He has the keys of death and hell as His resurrection proves.

Wonderful in His ascension. In Him man is received again into fellowship with God—not to dwell in the garden of Eden, but better far—the Paradise above. Christ went up to God, but He did not go alone. His risen associates, the Old Testament overcomers went up with Him, passing all the wicked principalities and powers in the heavenlies in virtue of the precious blood of Calvary. The wonderful Head of the new creation in triumphant procession led captivity captive in His train into the very presence of a holy God. And He is there today, sitting upon His Father's throne making intercession for His church, influencing individuals and dynasties. It is wonderful, even as men acknowledge, because His name shall be called **WONDERFUL**. Napoleon said of Him—"Is it not amazing that whereas the ambitious dreams of Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great and myself should have vanished into thin air, a Judean peasant should be able to stretch forth His hand across the centuries and control the destinies of nations and of men."

13

And that is not all. His name shall be called **WONDERFUL** in greater measure when He comes again. His glorious Self and His mighty works will be visible around the world, not in the few and separate places as is witnessed today. He will show Himself and all men will marvel, from one end of heaven to the other. As King of kings and Lord of lords, He shall be extraordinary, majestic, sublime and divine. As sovereign Despot of the ages He will reign as the **WONDER** of God upon the earth. This is no vain dream nor imaginary vision. The Babe that was born in Bethlehem lives to rule in regal royalty over the earth.

Second Chime. "His Name shall be called **COUNSELLOR**." In a measure this was fulfilled at Christ's first advent, and during these two millenniums since He has been the Adviser and Advocate of His people. Happy are they who consult

Him and follow His counsel. They will walk in the light and be successful spiritually, even tho' in the natural they may not always be in the first rank. But it is at His second coming, that He will be announced as Counsellor. The whole world will then acknowledge and seek His counsel and advice. He will solve their problems, answer their questions and untangle their difficulties. He will be able for every situation and equal to any emergency that may arise.

Third Chime. "His Name shall be called *The Mighty God.*" Remember, Isaiah is announcing the future greatness that will fall to the lot of "the Child that should be born and the Son that should be given" the nation, Israel. It is true that from a past eternity the Son of God, in the bosom of the Father, was equal with Him as the Mighty God, but this Scripture does not apply to Him as He was at that time. Neither does it refer to Him at the present time as He sits upon His Father's throne, the Mediator and Intercessor of His church. It refers to Him at a future time when He will as a Man, the Seed of David, sit upon His own throne in the heavens. All the authority of the Almighty God will be vested in Him, for a thousand years. The Father will take a back seat, as it were, and watch His Son (who emptied Himself of His divine prerogatives for the few years of His earthly pilgrimage) rule and reign and put down everything in the universe that is not in harmony with the Creator. The holy Man glorified the Father to the uttermost by His obedience to death upon the cross; therefore, the Father will glorify the Son to the uttermost, seating Him upon the throne of David where all the honor, glory and authority of the Godhead will be manifested in Him for the millennial age.

Fourth Chime. "His Name shall be called the *everlasting Father,*" or Father of eternity. The above peal continues the harmonious strain of Isaiah's bells. Folk who do not give the Trinity any place, lay great stress on this name, as well as the former, "The Mighty God," seeking to thus prove that Jesus is so named now. But their conclusions only show their ignorance of Scripture; for these appellations as well as their proclamation, is still future. Christ was not so called at His first advent; neither is He so honored at the present time. His exaltation as described by these marvelous names will be evidenced in the next age. He will be looked upon, worshipped and glorified as Deity at

His second advent.

Fifth Chime. "His Name shall be called *The Prince of Peace.*" He made peace by the blood of His cross. He preached peace, and He is, "The Peace" of His believing people during the present age; but He has not yet been proclaimed "The Prince of Peace." Men are continually endeavoring to make peace, keep peace, etc, etc, but there is no peace. The world is anything but peaceful. War is in men's minds and war will be in evidence again upon the earth; but when the Prince of Peace has been manifested wars will cease to the ends of the earth. War cannot be present when the Prince of Peace is on the scene. The one precludes the other. The ringing of Israel's bells which are based on Bethlehem will signal peace for all men and nations. The Prince of Peace in manifestation will cause all strife and discord to flee. Peace will flow like a river when its Prince is reigning.

How foolish for folk to teach that these blessed, glorious divine appellations belong to the Man on His, Father's throne. He is there subject to His Father; but when He comes again He will be manifested Sovereign of heaven and earth. All things shall be subject unto Him, "He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death"—I Cor. 15. The Father will not be subject unto the Son, but neither shall He reign over Him until the thousand years have passed. Then the Son will hand the reins of government back to His Father and He and all the redeemed will be His willing subjects forever and forever. God will be glorified in a new humanity, as He never was in the old creation. This new line of mankind will be in harmony with all God's will and ways. They will be in tune with Him. His Kingdom will be safe in their hands as He will prove by investing His Son with divine power for a millennium. It is a marvelous mystery, the drama of all dramas, and it will all be played upon the earth—stage. The last act will shortly be put on. The Great Conquering Man, the Hero of all heroes, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Lover of mankind, who stooped to conquer will enter the scene. The curtain will fall on all the preceding things. They will be eclipsed by the glory and grandeur of the last act.

Isaiah's proclamation will be heralded far and wide.

The bells will ring out this challenge to the world—
"Behold The Wonderful, The Counsellor, The Mighty God,
The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace is on His
throne. The government is upon His Shoulder. Of the
increase of His government and peace there shall be no end—
upon the throne of David and upon His Kingdom to order
and establish it with judgment and with justice from
henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will
perform this." —Isa. 9:6-7

Looking For Jesus

There are trials as I walk
And I hear people talk,
And am scorned and rejected by some,
But my heart does not quail
For His Word cannot fail,
I am looking for Jesus to come!

Though sorrows are here,
And problems --- and fear.
While worldly activities hum,
They hold me no charm --- no, fear nor alarm
I am looking for Jesus to come!

His Word is my riches
All others will go ----
In that day when our Savior appears,
I hold earth's gin lightly,
My treasure's above,
And cannot disappear with the years.

Trials cannot crush me
And fears cannot dim
My faith in God's wonderful Son.
Earth's pain fades away,
There is sweet rest in Him,
I am looking for Jesus to come!

Celebrating Christ

Paul N. Smith

"And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His Name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins" - Matthew 1:21.

The time is here again, when it is claimed that the world's Redeemer was born. Without empty religious mockery and tiresome revelry, we may celebrate His miraculous and unique birth. We could not have had the full-grown Redeemer without the Baby Redeemer. Therefore, we exclaim with the angels, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" - Luke 2:14.

The various titles circling about His glorious birth are interesting. Our text calls Him "Jesus," or Saviour, His family name which brings Him most closely to us and appeals to our hearts. Then His Deity, eternity, and power are expressed in the sublime title, "Emmanuel," meaning "God with us." Matthew 1:23. Thus Christ, as both Man and God, is introduced in this first chapter of the New Testament. Then follow two national appellations --- "King of the Jews," and "Governor," (Matt. 2:2,6) for He was destined to rule over Israel as David's Son and Successor. His rulership is emphasized and outlined particularly in Matthew. Christ is termed "The Consolation of Israel," "The Lord's Anointed," "Thy Salvation" (God's salvation for men), and "The Glory of Thy people Israel." Luke 2:25-32 The first chapter of John introduces our Lord as "The Word," then "The Light," and the apostle adds eight more significant titles, because he does not write of Jesus' childhood, but only of His Manhood. Happy are they who believe and admire His birth, but also adore His Godhood and Manhood, and rest upon His sacrificial death, and are justified through faith in His triumphant resurrection. Such also glory in His ascension and hope for His return.

REFLECTIONS REFLECTIONS

... From the Editor

18 Luke is very emphatic that Jesus was not actually the son of Joseph, but only his “supposed” son. The genealogy in Luke is traced through Jesus’ mother Mary, for he presents the Savior as the Son of Man “...made of a woman, made under the law...” Gal. 4:4 Luke does declare that Joseph was the “... son of Heli...” but that must properly mean “son in law” because according to Matthew’s gospel “... Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.” Matt. 1:16 Matthew, who sets forth Jesus as the King and His Kingdom, properly records the genealogy of Jesus through his “supposed” earthly father, Joseph, because the accepted succession of a king must come through the father. Both records conclude that Jesus is the Son of David, but the root of Luke’s account is found in Adam, while Matthew’s ends with Abraham. Thus, Luke gives an account which begins with the first man which “... is of the earth, earthy:...” and ends with “...the second man” Who “... is the Lord from heaven.” I Cor. 15:47

Today we glory in the knowledge that both these accounts reveal the Very God as coming down from heaven to dwell among men. Luke shows the lowly birth of Jesus, The Man, in a stable and only he reveals that the humble shepherds were the first visitors and heralds of the Savior. The angel had also told Mary, “And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.” “Jesus,” that Precious and most Marvelous Name we have come to love and adore is the Greek form of Jehoshua, (Joshua) meaning Jehovah is salvation. Matthew likewise describes how the angel assured Joseph that “... Mary thy wife... shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” Matt. 1:20-21

He furthermore declared both the way and the purpose of this Grand Event. "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Matt. 1:23 Isaiah had announced the virgin birth many years previous declaring that, "... 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 Many rejected that "sign" which had appeared before their very eyes, but the purpose and result of God's Wisdom remains before us for eternity. Though Jesus' tenure on this earth was a mere 33 years, the effects of God with us still remain and will be shown forth throughout all eternity. We take comfort today in the fact that He is still surely with us, and that Jehovah is salvation far beyond deliverance from our sins. Paul beautifully declares the all inclusive salvation for man with the words: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. 8:3 So, in this season where men seem to be only temporarily obsessed with giving, let us realize that God gave the Ultimate Gift, when He sent Jesus into this world. Be the need in spirit, soul, or body, God has already given us all things in Christ Jesus. The Babe in the manger, has given way to Man among men, Who now understands our every need and has come to dwell among us for eternity.

19

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

President's Day Weekend Convention
Living Waters Tabernacle
February 17-19, 2017

Make plans now to join like-minded saints for a time of fellowship and encouragement in the things of eternity during this annual gathering in Denver, Colorado. Sermons, studies, and plenty of food will be provided throughout the weekend. Come prepared to be refreshed in the Lord!

Building for Eternity

Margaret Keener

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." II Tim. 3:16-17

The Bible is written expressly to people of faith — the children of God; thus the Book begins with a simple declaration, "In the beginning God,..." with no explanation as to His origin, nor an inkling as to when time began. The people of faith accept it because it is the Word of God. The skeptic closes the door in his own face by his doubt, "... for he that cometh unto God must believe that He is and that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Heb. 11:6.

20 The history of God's dealings with His ancient people, the Jews, is instruction for us today. We may profit by their mistakes and be encouraged by God's faithfulness to them that believe. I Cor. 10:11. Understanding deepens in the measure that we appropriate the Word and allow it to govern our daily lives. If we are willing to take reproof, God gives strength for overcoming; if we correct our walk, He begins to instruct in righteousness and true holiness. So the Word unfolds day by day and we alone determine the extent of our knowledge. He will never trespass against our will, but as we yield to Him, He never ceases to instruct. The whole Bible contains doctrine — the books of poetry, prophecy, the epistles, the historical books — in fact, they all teach the principles of godly living. No wonder Paul admonished Timothy to "Preach the Word," for it alone gives us the blueprint for our eternal building. We are determining now, exactly the place we are going to occupy throughout all eternity. In the history of Israel we have a duplicate of the life of any Christian. Their faith in God identified them apart from the heathen nations round about. No amount of education nor refinement can ever elevate a man above the category of the heathen; but God's Love has always been so universal that anyone who would accept His only mode of approach (through the blood) would be accepted by Him. Through faith alone we become the children of God, and because we are His Own, He seeks to guide and instruct,

and chastises for disobedience that afterward we might bring forth fruit, providing we are "exercised thereby." See Heb. 12:6,7. Our reaction determines the results.

Israel, like the nominal Church in the end time which feels "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," was prone to be self-satisfied. "... fulness of bread and abundance of idleness..." was her downfall. Ezek. 16:49 They were unmindful of the heathen all around who were perishing without God —neither were they concerned for the poor and needy when God always included "... the stranger that is within thy gates..." in all His plans. Chosen as a nation, that He might have a witness of Himself in the earth, He held them responsible. "Sodom and Gomorrah", synonym of evil, were not as accountable, for to them had not been given the rules for righteous living. Prophet after prophet had sought to arouse Israel to their need of repentance, but to no avail. Tender hearted Jeremiah and fiery Ezekiel alike delivered their messages to the Jews, but they were received only as a "lovely song that was sung" and they continued to do as they pleased. See Ezek. 33:31,32.

21

Many countries had ravaged Palestine, carrying away captives and transplanting colonies, but it was not by coincidence that the dispersion ended with the last mass transplantation. When God's purposes are accomplished, He changes His program. His plans are all bound up in His earthly people, the Jews, and His heavenly company of all believers, the Church; for "... in these last days Simeon hath declared that God is visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people to be called by His name." Acts 15:14 Israel was likened to a signet on God's right hand. A signet bears the initial of the owner. Jerusalem would never have rated among the leading cities of earth, yet God chose to "set His name there." See Neh. 1:9,10. But the people of Israel, in their spiritual indolence, settled down and were quite content in the land of captivity. They had prospered materially on enemy soil and the majority of them were content to stay there. Bondage is not the role for a child of God. Ezekiel was the "Son of Man" whom God used to remind them of their condition and to urge them to repent.

"The burden of the Lord" is laid upon the heart of mankind

and God uses humanity for His spokesmen. "Cause Jerusalem to know her abominations" was the gist of his message. Only a small remnant had a heart for God and a yearning to return to Jerusalem.

Nehemiah, also a captive, was deeply concerned for the city he loved. When fellow kinsmen came from Jerusalem, he inquired of the state of his hometown. It was sad tidings indeed that they bore. The walls were torn down and the gates burned with fire. Nehemiah tried to go about his duties as usual as Cupbearer to the King, but his grief showed in his countenance. The king asked the cause of his misery, for he perceived that it was "none other than sadness of heart." Nehemiah prayed before speaking — for the welfare of the beloved city lay in the answer he received. The people of God and Jerusalem are closely linked together even as is the Church and the New Jerusalem. They cannot be separated nor can they enjoy the fullness of God's blessing until they are in their rightful place.

22 God moved upon the heart of the king to grant permission for as many as chose to return to Jerusalem. Every provision was made for the journey, but very few of the number in captivity were willing to make the sacrifice. Little is said of those who remained in that land, but those who returned received honorable mention in God's Record. It took real courage to face the opposition and rebuild that which was torn down. Although Jerusalem had been an eyesore to the community for seventy long years, there was not enough civic pride in the inhabitants to want to see it rebuilt. They did all they could to hinder, but God was the Master Engineer behind that building project, and in due time the work was completed. There was great rejoicing among the people of God, that can only be revealed by the Hallelujah chorus that shall be sung in heaven at the completion of the New Jerusalem.

The hindrances and discouragements encountered by the Jews as they rebuilt that temporal city are typical of those met by Christians as they build their heavenly city. Nehemiah realized that the task was beyond the ability of man, but his very weakness caused him to rely upon God who has never refused an answer to faith. Unbelief saw only the dirt and rubbish, but faith visualized the finished work. God's faithful remnant never wavered as they persistently labored together as one man. Ridicule and scorn were the chief weapons of

their enemies. "What do these feeble Jews?" they asked. "Will they make an end in a day?" Little did they realize that had God chosen to do so, He could have accomplished His plans in short order.

But God's patience is infinite, and construction of the Bride of Christ, the New Jerusalem, is taking many years. Compared with those who scoffed at them, the remnant felt small indeed, but "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." I Cor. 1:27 So the Jews continued to build in the face of ridicule. Their experiences have been faithfully recorded for the encouragement of those who are building in the "end time." All who will build today may lay hold of the power of God to clear away the debris and build a city worthy of the name of God. See Rev. 3:12. Only by His strength do we build our eternal home and build a city worthy of the name of God. See Rev. 3:12.

The walls were reconstructed about the city. Walls are built for protection and segregation and to establish a distinct line of demarcation between the holy city and the outside world. The desert extends to the very wall of the city. The people of God are in the world but distinctly not of the world. The wall of the New Jerusalem is composed of redeemed humanity. Compare Rev. 21:17 with 22:9. It is built not of one stone, but many "lively stones" of which no two are alike; therefore, one could not possibly fill another's place. Within its confines is fellowship and safety. United, we present a compact barrier through which the enemy cannot pass.

**"We'll give the glory to Jesus!
And tell of His love!
And tell of His love!
We'll give the glory to Jesus!
And tell of His wonderful love.**

Prophecy

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephra-
tah, 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;
whose goings forth have been
from of old, from everlasting."
Mic 5:2

"Therefore the Lord him-
self shall give you a sign; Behold,
a virgin shall conceive, and bear
a son, and shall call his name
Immanuel." Isa 7:14

"... because he hath
poured out his soul unto death:
and he was numbered with the
transgressors; and he bare the sin
of many, and made intercession
for the transgressors." Isa 53:12

24

"For thou wilt not leave
my soul in hell; neither wilt thou
suffer thine Holy One to see cor-
ruption." Psa. 16:10

Fulfillment

"And Joseph also went up from
Galilee, out of the city of Naza-
reth, into Judaea, unto the city of
David, which is called Bethlehem;
(because he was of the house and
lineage of David:) To be taxed with
Mary his espoused wife, being
great with child. Luke 2:4-5

"Now the birth of Jesus
Christ was on this wise: When as
his mother Mary was espoused to
Joseph, before they came togeth-
er, she was found with child of the
Holy Ghost. Matt. 1:18

"And when they were
come to the place, which is called
Calvary, there they crucified him,
and the malefactors, one on the
right hand, and the other on the
left." Luke 23:33

"He is not here: for he is
risen, as he said. Come, see the
place where the Lord lay. Matt. 28:6

THE UNIQUE CHRIST

Only one Child had a virgin birth!
Only one Man knew no sin on earth!
No other e'er healed the sick like He!
None other could die to ransom me!
None but God's Son could conquer life's foe!
No one but Jesus could love me so!

Jean Wilson

Modernism Versus Fundamentalism

C. G. Powel

“PREACH the word: be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine: for the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine; but having itching ears, they shall heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts.” II Tim. 4:2,3.

Some men tell us that modernistic preaching is the old apostolic Gospel in a new setting. They say that it is adapted to modern needs and manner of life, as if humanity were different today from those in apostolic times. Others speak of a re-statement of apostolic faith and practice in modern times.

The Apostle Paul said that he became all things to all men, that he might by all means save some. We have all sympathy with an up-to-date presentation of the Gospel of God, providing "the faith once delivered to the saints," (Jude V.3) is neither watered down, nor adulterated. When Paul called the elders of the Ephesian Church together at Miletus he said among other things, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." Acts 20:27 He kept nothing back of the revelation of Jesus Christ and His teaching, that was profitable. Human nature is much the same (except that it is more devilish, Ed.) in the twentieth century as it was in the first. Human need is *just the same*; and we are persuaded that there never was, and is not now, anything like the apostolic Gospel, which so meets man's need at all points. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," except the name of Him who was crucified for us, buried and raised again. Acts 4:12 Men cry out today for the Living Bread, which came down from heaven. 25

Mr. H. J. Campbell's new theology, or Mr. Lester Wetherhead's psychology (of the City Temple) are very poor substitutes. They are both against Paul's sound doctrine, destructive and satanic. The clergy are wedded to science and philosophy. The Gospel of Christ "... is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Rom. 1:16 It is of faith, that it might be by grace. The salvation of men is, in the wisdom of God, ordained in a Person, even Immanuel, God with us. Truth, beauty, grace and love are personified in Him. Salvation is vested in Jesus Christ. David said, "The Lord is my light and my

salvation." Simeon said, with the infant Christ in his arms, "... mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Lk 2:30 Jesus Christ wins men's hearts and transforms their lives.

Salvation is for sinners. Jesus said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Pardon is secured upon the ground of the forfeited life (crucified) of the Lamb of God. "He tasted death for every man." "He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." Heb. 9. "He bore our *sins* in His own body on the *tree*." Paul exclaimed, "...through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things,..." Acts 13:38-39 Was this Gospel the invention of man? Nay, it is not an invention. It is a revelation from God. Paul said, "I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me, is not after a man; for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Gal. 1:11,12 That was the message which delivered people in his day.

26 A significant fact about modern Protestantism is, that it undermines the authority of the holy canon of Scripture. It has gone the way of Rome in this matter. The Roman Catholic Church proved that to establish their vagaries, it was necessary to relegate the Bible to a place of isolation. They made it difficult for the common people to get it. Enquirers had to go to the priests for the interpretation of the Word. As compared with pagan traditions, ritualistic practices, superstition, speculative science and vain philosophy, their interpretations were hopelessly out of line with the mind of the Spirit of God.

History is repeating itself. "The right of private judgment," secured to us more or less by the Reformation has been much abused. The shame of Protestantism — its 400 sects — is evidence of such abuse. Christianity, so-called is in a deplorable condition. It is departing further from the old landmarks every day. We need not be surprised at anything we may hear, or see. The apostasy is sweeping on unchecked everywhere.

(Reprint 1936)

Christ Went All the Way

C.H. Smith

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; --- For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Rom. 3:23, 6:23

Jesus knew from the beginning the price He would have to pay for man's redemption. He received the wages of sin which was due when He died upon the cross and darkness was over the face of the whole earth. But that darkness was nothing compared to the depth of darkness which He was plunged into, when the true light from God, the Father, was entirely cut off from Him, and He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," the anguish He then endured far exceeded all other pain He suffered. I think the drops of blood, as it were, that dropped from His brow at Gethsemane were caused from the knowledge of this very period of anguish which He anticipated as just ahead. He was delivered up for our transgressions, our offenses, and now has the keys of hell and death.

Surely Christ went all the way, the way that all of us would have gone if He had not paid our debt in full. "He was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification," which latter becomes ours by faith. I think Satan mustered together all the forces of his evil powers to try and hold the Lord Jesus in the power of death. But it is written in the Holy Scriptures, Christ arose and has those keys. Yea, when Christ arose He unlocked those doors for each one of us, and passed us out of death into life, eternal life. And not only so, Christ Jesus, the Lord of Life and glory, took us all the way with Him — "Far above all principality and power," and seated us in the heavenlies from where we shall later reign with Him. 27

Yes, "we are more than conquerors" through Christ Jesus, because He has overcome the world, the flesh and the devil for us. For many years after Calvary those Jewish disciples found it difficult to lay hold of the fullness of God's Grace, and many find it so today, clinging to many things which they have picked up in the synagogues, the teaching of the sects in Christendom. Many speak so ignorantly of the Scripture. One well-meaning Christian woman said to me, "There is one thing sure, every Christian has got to pay his own debts."

It is wonderful that the Lord looks upon and reads our hearts instead of just listening to the words uttered from our mouths. Often I have heard folk end a prayer by - saying: "In Jesus name we ask it," and I have done so myself. But we do not have to tell Him. He knows if we are praying as Jesus would pray or as He does pray. John 14:15, "If ye love me, keep my commandments," reveals the condition to be met, or required of John 14:14. Christians who do not yield themselves fully unto Him, and who are disobedient, need not fool themselves by just repeating "in Jesus Name,..." "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." John 4:34. "... Lo, I come... to do thy, will O God." Heb. 10:7 "Ye call the master and Lord: and ye say well, for so I am." John 13:13.. "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men." I Cor. 7:23 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord; neither He that is sent greater than He that sent Him." John 13:16 "And what-so-ever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ." Col. 3:23,24.

28

Paul learned the secret of always yielding to the Spirit that the power of God might rest upon him continually. In his testimony before King Agrippa, he reveals the first step every child of the Lord must take when he said, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." He ever moved in the will of the Lord, and in order to do so he must "rightly divide the Word of God." He knew the Old Testament Scriptures, when he had this heavenly vision, but he received his Gospel of Grace for this Church Age direct from the Lord Jesus. Gal. 1:11-12 He did that which he admonishes others to do. He "studied to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing THE WORD OF TRUTH."

What a privilege some saints have trampled in the dirt. They had the chance of winning the Prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, instead of just being saved as by fire. As the days grow darker, as each day goes by and every condition of the world grows worse and worse, and scarcely any of the people of God have an ear to hear, and we groan within ourselves over their failure, I hear Him say, "Let not your heart be troubled. Behold I come quickly." And in spirit with John (after he had seen a picture of these last days) we also cry out, "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly."

Subdued

Before God can launch us out into the breadth and sweetness of His service, and entrust to us great things for Himself, we must be perfectly subdued in every part of our nature to His will and the disposition of His mind. We must be subdued in our hearts, in our wills, in our words, in our tempers, in our manners, subdued thru and thru so thoroughly that we will be flexible to all His purposes and plans. We must be so subdued that harshness, severity, criticism, sluggishness, laziness, impetuosity and all wanting our own way even in religious matters, must be subdued out of us. Conversion will not finish this work. Being able to preach strong sermons on sanctification will not do it, or having charge of camp meetings, or conventions, or Bible Schools, or the writing of books and editing papers on Christian holiness will not prove adequate for this grace.

We must be subdued, not merely in our own opinion, not merely think ourselves subdued, not only be subdued in the esteem of our friends and fellow-workers, but subdued so perfectly that the all-seeing eye of God can look us through and the omniscient One knows that we are subdued. God must conquer the man that He can trust with His great thoughts and plans.

The Holy Ghost must saturate us with a divine conquest before He can use us to conquer other souls. The Lord will begin to subdue us with gentle means. and if we sink lovingly and promptly into His mind, the work will be done, but if we have flint or iron in our nature and it is necessary, He will use heroic means and put us between the millstones and *grind* us to powder until He can mold us without any resistance to His purpose. The greatest difficulty in the way of God using His servants, even His zealous servants, is that they are not perfectly and constantly subdued under the power of God.

We must be so subdued as to stop meddling with other people's matters that God has not entrusted us with; so subdued as not to be calling God's servants hard names, and thrusting at Christians who are doing what they can in their various fields for the Master; so subdued that we can hold our tongues and walk softly with God, keep our eyes upon Jesus, attend to our own work, and do God's will

promptly and lovingly, glad to have a place in His kingdom and to do a little service for Him.

Oh! It is grand to be absolutely conquered by the Holy Ghost, and swing out a thousand miles from everybody and everything into the ocean of God's presence, and work with Him in humility, without stumbling over others, without religious peevishness and bend with every plan that God gives to us.

When we are subdued in the sight of God, He will work miracles in us and through us; miracles of mercy and power in experience, in healing, in finance, in opening doors, in widening the fields of service, in gentleness and sweetness of the inner heart life; miracles of grace that will astonish us and surprise our friends and utterly amaze our enemies when they come to know the magnitude of what God has wrought. Let us get subdued in every way, in everything; so subdued that we can keep still in God and see Him work out the great, bright thoughts of His eternal mind in our lives.

—Selected

“MY PRESENCE”

Our hearts would ask a program,
An outline, sent from heaven,
But no such chart is granted,
A life-map is not given;
Instead, there comes a promise,
A promise for each day,
“My presence shall go, with thee,
My presence — all the way.”

Provision and protection
We rightly seem to crave;
Were we of these quite certain,
We think we could be brave:
But — greater than these portions
Can this Word come to be:
“My presence shall go with thee,
My Presence! Mine! With Thee!”

—Selected.

ISAIAH 46

Gene Hawkins

“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:” I Cor. 1:30

The above scripture is just one example of how Isaiah 46 forms a clear link with Paul’s message in I Corinthians, where Christ is determined to be our righteousness. Verse 13 of our present chapter declares that “I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.” Both citations are a clear reference to Christ, the only righteousness which God has ever recognized, and both Jew and Gentile are included in its provision.

Both Paul and Isaiah also point out the fallacy of idolatry. God clearly contrasts himself with idols in the following verses as He exhorts His hearers to “Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will **do all my pleasure:**” V. 9-10 The idols pictured in verses 1-2 are in no wise capable of **doing** anything. Rather, they must be ministered TO, and carried about on some carriage; rather than being a service to others. “Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy loaden; they are a burden to the weary beast. They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity.”

31

Paul likewise declares the vanity of idols, and the Supremacy of God. “...we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.” I Cor. 8:4 The Corinthians were also reminded that, “...ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.” I Cor. 12:2

Idolatry has been a major theme in the last few chapters of Isaiah, as God has repeatedly distinguished Himself as having the ability to perform great feats, while the idols of men remained

powerless in the same endeavor. He begins this portion asserting that “Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy loaden; they are a burden to the weary beast. They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity.” “Bel” is simply another word for Baal, and “Nebo,” is a Babylonish deity. Isaiah concludes that all of them, though purported to be a great benefit, must be borne about on beasts and carriages. They proved that they could, in no wise, “... deliver the burden,...” but the idols along with those who trusted in them, “...are gone into captivity.” Contrariwise, God invites these idolaters to “Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb:” V. 3 These idols failed in bearing themselves, let alone Israel, but God emphatically states that He has most assuredly borne “...all the remnant of the house of Israel,...” from the very time in which they were conceived as a nation. He also assures them that such care has not ended for “... even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.” V. 4 God never begins something that He cannot finish, and though He has proven these words again and again in the history of Israel, He will yet bring them to the place He has promised. They will be an “aged nation,” by the time all His purposes are fulfilled for them in the Millennium, but still He will bear them unto Himself. Thus, God challenges them. “To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like?” V. 5 They have tried multiple gods, but which of them may be compared like unto God? Who can be His equal? “They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship. They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shal! he not remove: yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble.” V. 6-7 These idolaters have spent great sums of money to hire one to “create,” a god for them. After that, they fall down, worship it, and carry it

about on their own shoulder, rather than being borne about by its own idolatrous power. It is then set in a certain place, and simply remains there, lifeless, unable to move out of his place, even though one may “cry” unto it. It cannot answer such a plea for help, and is certainly unable to “...save him out of his trouble.” All these lessons Israel has learned from their idolatrous ways and now God calls on them to “Remember this, and shew yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors. Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,” V. 8-9 This nation has had experiences with The LORD, from the time they were conceived as a nation in the land of Egypt. God showed Himself Mighty in their behalf as He poured out the plagues of judgment against their captors and led them out of that land across the Red Sea, destroying the Egyptians in the process. Such Mighty Acts were also repeated again and again in the wilderness as He sweetened the waters at Marah, rained down the Manna from heaven, and brought forth Water out of the Rock. Miracles have abounded throughout the history of this nation, and Israel is exhorted to 33 “Remember the former things of old:” in order that they might know that God is indeed God, and “...there is none like me.” He has proven Himself to them multitudinous times and now they are to “...shew yourselves men...” or grow up into what God has ordained for them.

God further defines Himself; “Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:” V. 10 This is one of the major tests which God had put before them in the past few chapters. He had previously called on them to “Produce your cause,...bring forth your strong reasons,... Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: ...or declare us things for to come. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together. Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you.” Isa. 41:21-24 Now, He declares definitively that He can indeed declare, “...the end from the beginning,...”

meaning that He can foretell, in intricate detail, what will transpire in the future, and then bring it to pass. These “gods,” have simply proven, beyond doubt, that they cannot accomplish such feats, and thus they can, by no stretch of the imagination, be His equal. He then puts an exclamation point on His message by giving an example of how His “...counsel shall stand , and I will do all my pleasure:”

“Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.” V. 10 This “ravenous bird,” would undoubtedly be the aforementioned Cyrus, from the east country of Persia, the point being that God foretold his arrival even before the first world empire, Babylon, had been inaugurated. Medo-Persia did not come to power until after the Babylonish Empire collapsed and the 70 year captivity of The Jews was ended. God truly can “...declare the things not yet done,” and Cyrus will most assuredly bring to pass all His Counsel, in regard to Israel, and indeed the world.

34 “Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness:” V. 12 The “stouthearted,” here would be those of Israel whom God must turn from their idolatrous ways. They are most assuredly “far from righteousness,” but according to His Own Counsel, they will come to the place of repentance, where they, as an entire nation will experience the full deliverance promised in the closing verse of this chapter. “I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.” V. 13 Scripture repeatedly testifies of the fact that Israel, and the beloved city of Jerusalem, Zion, will be saved and the good news is that “it shall not be far off.” The path to that salvation is through “my righteousness,” that is, Christ, Whom Israel will accept as their Messiah. God has spoken it from ages past, “Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:” thus assuring that these fulfilled prophecies of “...salvation in Zion...” will produce “...my glory.”



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