

The
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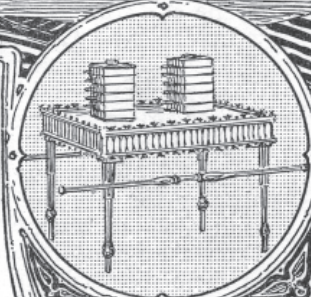
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ANNOUNCEMENTS



"The Lamb opened the seventh seal." "Ye have approached Mount Zion, and the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem. . . See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh . . . saying . . . 'Yet once more I shake not the earth only but also heaven' . . . Wherefore, receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and Godly fear." "Christ being come an High Priest . . . by a greater and more perfect Tabernacle . . . obtained eternal deliverance."—Rev. 8: 1; Heb. 12: 22, 25, 26, 28; 9: 11, 12.



PROSPERITIES AND ADVERSITIES

“Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit” (Job 10:12).

Since God’s providences extend over all His creatures, they embrace the good and the evil. Thus, He causes His sun to shine upon the good and the evil and sends His rain upon the just and the unjust (Matt 5:45), as He also sends them fruitful seasons and food (Acts 14:17) and supports their existence with all necessary things (Acts 17:25-28). However, there is a difference between His providences for the world in general and for His people in particular; for the former are the recipients of His general care only, no special providences being exercised for them for their own sakes, though because of the relation of some of them to His people special providences extend to such in so far as this is needed for His people’s sake.

There are no accidents in the experiences of God’s

people. Both their prosperities and their adversities, their exaltations and their humiliations, are under the Divine direction. His unerring judgment suits to our varying needs His changing providences, working all things together for good to them that love God. Therefore, we may rest content in His hand.

Let us consider a few of many Scriptures that show that there are no accidents in the lives of God’s saints, but that all their experiences are ordered and directed by the Lord for their highest good. We make comments on certain scriptures to help in our understanding of Pastor Johnson’s comments. God seeks a tested people, proven loyal in every point of character. For this reason, He arranges the various providences in the lives of His people, so that they may demonstrate amid these providences their hearts’ attitude, whether it be one of devotion to Him, to self, or to the world; and blessed is the Christian who demonstrates devotion to God! Deut. 13:3, “The LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

Through the years past and to this day some of mankind have come into accord with God in the spirit of their minds, in their hearts; their wills are in accord with the divine will. Their deficiencies, which are still known to themselves, and some of them sadly apparent to their neighbors also, are not deficiencies of the will, of the heart, of the intention; and the terms of the New Covenant being applied to these in advance of the world, their blemishes are reckoned as covered in and by the merit of their Redeemer’s sacrifice. Thus God declares that he can be just, and yet be the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus—of him who trusts in Jesus, and through Jesus accepts forgiveness of sins and full reconciliation to God’s will, so that he desires to sin no longer. If justice be delayed, it is only for the development of some greater good than could be accomplished by a speedy adjustment: Psa. 1:6, “For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.”

All consecrated children of God are lifted up when they recognize that in their circumstances and experiences, He will not change His attitude toward



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Free from all sects, parties, organizations, and creeds of men, but bound to God as it understands His Word, this magazine stands for —

- The defense of the Parousia Truth, given by the Lord through “that Servant,” as basic for all further development of the Truth;
- The defense of the arrangements, charter and will given by the Lord through “that Servant,” as binding on controlling corporations and associations among Truth people; and for
- The exposition and defense of the unfolding Epiphany-Basileia Truth, as meat in due season for the Lord’s people, as He is pleased to provide it.

them, cast them off and have nothing more to do with them. If faithful to their consecration God will continue to execute His Plan and perform works of providence, instruction, justification, sanctification, and deliverance toward His fully consecrated. God's meekness is a guarantee against all such evils and is a shield and buckler to us in our fight with its incidental dangers on behalf of His cause: Psa. 3:3, "But thou, O LORD, *art* a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head."

The consecrated cannot despise service and long for release from its restraints, for the only men and women worthy of remembrance after they have died are those who have faithfully and ably served God and their fellow men. It is only such persons whose names have come down through history covered with true glory, while those who lived in selfish ease have generally been forgotten. Among the shining lights of the world in their day were such noble servants of God as Moses, Elijah, and Paul—men who braved every danger and hazarded their lives to serve God's purposes in the interests of their fellow men. Consider Moses, burdened with the care of that mighty host of stiff-necked Israelites: with what indifference to his own ease, or rest of mind or body, he gave his whole energy to the service of his people. Think of Elijah and his keen interest in and zealous and self-sacrificing service on behalf of idolatrous Israel, in withstanding and destroying the 450 prophets of Baal and in restoring the worship of Jehovah. Then consider Paul, with the care of all the churches upon him, and the great work of spreading the Gospel among Jews and Gentiles, in the face of determined opposition and persecution which constantly imperiled his life and never allowed him the quiet ease so desirable to all men: Psa. 9:9, "The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble."

In presenting the good news of the Kingdom and the deep things of God, we should seek to recognize those who seem to have the Spirit of God. Spiritual or deep things cannot be discerned except by those having the Holy Spirit of understanding. This must be our method, therefore: when we find anyone obviously without an ear to hear, leave off telling such an one. You cannot give him an ear; God will do that in His "*due time*." Waste not valuable time and energy. In love and sympathy leave them with God

and put no obstacle in their way. At this present time, very few have the eye to see, the ear to hear nor the heart to appreciate God's mercy as it is told to us in the good tidings which can be understood only by the hearing of faith. Jehovah knows the humble of heart: Psa. 10:17, "LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear."

All consecrated children of God wake up from the night's rest with the hope of being instructed in God's righteousness in the day ahead. Yes, we should look to the Lord for leading in all of life's affairs. The Lord's eye will watch over us, that He may give us the necessary proper counsel. The eye is the symbol of wisdom. Let us not be as the horse or mule that are without understanding and require a bit and bridle to make them serve us properly. We are exhorted not to be driven in this manner, because such is not acceptable to the Lord. We have a prime example of ones willing to do God's service in the three Hebrews who were cast into the fiery furnace and were uninjured, while those who threw them in were slain by the heat, smitten to death: Psa. 32:8, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye."

There is among mankind the arch-deceiver. He who was a liar from the beginning, has carefully instructed his messengers to blame the God of love for all the misery that exists and comes upon the world. How often do the widow and orphan in their anguish doubt the love and goodness of Him whom they blame for robbing them of their loved protector. This is just what the deceiver wanted. When Adam was created, it was that he might be the Lord of this world. To him was given "dominion" [Gen. 1:28] after "the likeness" of God, to be an "image" or miniature representation of the Lord of all. When Adam fell in disobedience, he lost his birthright; and his dominion and possessions passed into the hands of the crafty conqueror. Since then, Satan has been the Prince and God of this world. Jesus recognized him in John 14:30, "the prince of this world." For the saints, the dedicated, consecrated children of God, this promise is given: Psa. 97:10, "Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked."

Many Christians have credulity [the acceptance of a thing without good reason, without sure evidence];

however, the consecrated children of God have faith which is the acceptance of a thing because of indisputable evidence of its reality, its truthfulness, and its reliability. As we exercise faith in God, we come nearer and nearer to Him. The secret of the Lord is with them that reverence Him; and He will show them His Covenant. The consecrated increase in faith as they go on in the path of obedience. Faith and obedience are like our two feet. We put one forward, and then the other; and in so doing we develop in faith by continuing in the spirit of obedience, following on wherever the Lord points the way. We have good tangible evidences all along our Christian journey. Plus, the true Christian has in his own personal experiences abundant proof of our Father's love and care. As the consecrated child progresses in a narrow way, they come to learn the fulness of meaning in God's Word of Truth. We take a moment to recall the despairing cry of the Apostles to the Lord, in the midst of what must have been a remarkably severe storm on the Sea of Galilee and the Apostles for fearing the storm, they awakened Him to quell it. Indeed, their action indicates that they had faith, that they believed that the Master had the power which could save them. The Lord wanted them to exercise a still broader faith than this. He wanted them to realize the Father's care as He had taught them, saying: (Matt. 10:29, 31) "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."

The great Jehovah has throughout the Scriptures used poetic exaggeration, or literary license, or *hyperbole* in describing events of much importance. This does not mean that the statements are not true. Rather, they reflect the language in use at the time, the words designed to address the feelings and emotions of the audience—the hearts of the readers and the listeners. We read in Acts. 27 of a tempestuous sea voyage of Paul towards Rome. In vs. 22-24: "And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of *any man's* life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." V. 34 "Wherefore I pray you to take *some* meat: for this is for your health:

for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you." This particular expression, minutely identifying the hairs on the head, conveys, in so many words, the promise, "you will not suffer any essential injury." An angel of God conveyed this promise to Paul while he was in route to Rome under armed escort. The ministry of angels is the guardian care of God's people, and on this occasion the Heavenly messenger had assured Paul that all aboard the vessel would have their lives spared, though the ship itself would surely be broken up. Another thoughtful consideration is when the Psalmist David exhorts the waters to "clap their hands" the reasonable mind understands this to be symbolic—a poetic application: Luke 21:18, "But there shall not an hair of your head perish."

For almost 2,000 years there has been a search going on everywhere for jewels in their rough state, uncut, unpolished, with no more value than any other common stones for ordinary purposes, until they come into the hands of the great lapidarist. Yes, the Lord is selecting and preparing His jewels to derive their ultimate value from the cutting, shaping, and polishing of their characters under Divine providence—as it is written: "We are his workmanship" (Eph. 2:10). In this design we recognize that the imperfect gemstone must submit to the cutting, shaping, and polishing needed to be credited with an outcome of beauty and grace as a finished jewel. As the experienced diamond miners reject the soft clay and various hard stones, in seeking for the desirable kind, so the great jewel-Gatherer operates according to certain principles in seeking for His jewels. Oh, the chosen vessel must become faithful in permitting the suffering of testings even when allowed to stumble. It has never been the Lord's intention that trying experiences shall crush the consecrated servant; but that the putting forth of endeavor to resist the Adversary and every evil shall make us stronger. As with the four Hebrew youths the furnace heat will never be permitted to grow so intense that the precious gemstone quality of our characters shall be destroyed or even injured. God has promised a way at the very moment when strength and endurance would fail—not through lack of desire to do the Lord's will, but through weakness of the flesh. If not for this the evil one would indeed utterly destroy the Lord's consecrated ones, but he will not be permitted to do so. "So far and no further" in matters

pertaining to God's plan for God's people. However, we are assured that no real son of God is exempted from the needed trials of patience, faith, and loving-kindness: 1 Cor. 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*."

While the world marks and rejoices in, and in some cases returns thanks to God for the truly glorious common earthly blessings, which our loving and benevolent Father showers alike upon the evil and the good, let our hearts rejoice not only in these things, but also in the higher, spiritual favors bestowed only upon the sons of God, giving thanks always and for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Where the spirit of joy and thankfulness reigns, pride finds little place. Let us each in lowliness of mind and in the reverence of Christ submit ourselves to one another for helpful, loving counsel or criticism. Thus, by mutually taking heed to God's Word and seeking to measure up to all its requirements, we may as His people be conformed to the image of His Son. In view of the urgent necessity of sober watchfulness and close attention to God's will regarding us, the Apostle calls upon all who are to any extent intoxicated and stupefied by the spirit of the world, saying: (Eph. 5:14) "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

By misrepresentations, misapplications of Scripture, neglect of rightly dividing the Word of Truth, Satan deceives those who listen to him as he speaks through his emissaries, and who therefore are not fully loyal to the voice of The Good Shepherd, even causing them to oppose the Lord's purposes, plans and activities, while thinking that they are doing God's will. This becomes ever clearer as we witness the shaking and falling away from the Truth and its Spirit that has been in progress since 1954, which has caused even some Epiphany-enlightened ones to be deceived and fall away. Let us not think it strange that the sifters and sifflings continue to lose the precious Truth that they once professed and enjoyed. Some may wonder why the LORD allows Satan through his emissaries to spread his errors among the Truth people. We answer, it is because He wishes His people not only to be developed in the Truth and its Spirit, but also

to be tested as to their faithfulness in these respects, for He cannot use any servants who are not loyal to Him and are not willing in all things to do His will, even unto death. These tests will naturally bring divisions, for the faith justified and consecrated will hold to the Truth and its principles of righteousness, while the unfaithful will yield to pride, ambition, and personal preference: Rom.16:17-18, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences [disorderly conduct] contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."

This begs the question: Is the truth free? No, we purchase it with a price! "Buy the Truth, and sell *it* not." Pro. 23:23. The Truth is of priceless value—let us sell it not for the short-lived advantages of error! Jehovah has hidden His Truth so that the search for it becomes a beneficial exercise for us. This induces us to appreciate it all the more. Consecrated Epiphany Campers are the prominent class at this time and God is using them to carry out the very necessary yet incidental work of building the Epiphany Camp. Psa. 33:9, "For he spake, and it was *done*; he commanded, and it stood fast." This scripture covers other precious Bible stories: God induced Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering. How culpable Abraham would have been in laying his son (25 years old) on the altar of sacrifice had he merely imagined that God desired him to do this. He believed and trusted in the Lord which brought about the oath-bound covenant. We have the stories of Lot in Sodom, Jonah and the whale. Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts. Wonderful and interesting Bible stories that have captured the imagination of many and yet these are but incidental features.

Let us consider the Consecrated Epiphany Campers: pre-millennial seed, virgins without number, a spirit-enlightened class, having the cloudy fiery pillar as our guide, consecrating unto death, having the privilege of praying to God, having fellowship with Him, and having the resurrection of the just. While sin is still in the ascendancy the Consecrated Epiphany Campers, especially the Queen of Sheba class, are being fitted to

be among the chief helpers of the Ancient Worthies/ Youthful Worthies in their millennial service in the Kingdom. In E-12, pp. 187, bottom, 188, Bro. Johnson refers to the *quasi*-elect as “the fifth elect class,” so close do they in many cases come to being of the elect. They are closely related to the Youthful Worthies, being of the same tribe antitypically, but they receive eventually their eternal inheritance in the land of restitution, represented by the *west* side of Jordan; whereas the Youthful Worthies will post-Millennially have their eternal inheritance on the spirit plane, represented by the half tribe of Manasseh which had its inheritance on the *east* side of Jordan. We must study, think over, cogitate, consider, ponder the words I say and the Lord will give us understanding! Jehovah desires that we reflect, think, ponder study the revelation which God has made respecting Himself: Pro. 4:26, “Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.”

The class God is seeking, at this present time, are not supine or placid, rather of strong character. They tend to have the quality of an overcomer. We are living under Gospel Age conditions of elective or selective salvation; yes, we have been called by the Father. “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:44). We if fully consecrated have been placed in God’s book of remembrance (PT 2002, p.43). We understand that expanded Gospel Age harvest conditions will continue until the Millennial Mediatorial Reign begins. The Consecrated Epiphany Campers as antitypical Nethinim are regarded by God as beforehand bringing or presenting offerings to the world’s High Priest at the gate of the court. Yes, the world’s High Priest is now dealing with the Youthful Worthies and the Consecrated Epiphany Campers (PT’99, p.87). “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels” (Rev. 3:5).

As one of God’s consecrated children do you see God’s hand [power] working in your life? God has promised to all the followers of Jesus a very high and special reward. We understand by the Gospel message that this present life is but transitory, a vestibule to a more glorious life, a schoolhouse of instruction, preparatory to entering the life which God has provided to the pre-Millennial seed of Abraham.

However, that blessed opportunity of attaining eternal life & earthly perfection will not mean an escape from the penalty of willful sins of the present life. It is a part of the Divine Law that whoever sins shall suffer. Gal. 6:7, we will reap what we sow. This begs the question: should Christians expect exemptions? NO! The consecrated child of God is given to understand that Psa. 107: 22, “And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing” is a privilege of the consecrated only. We must accept that God does not wish for everyone to have the Truth yet, for at this time it would work to their disadvantage (Matt. 11:25). Order is the law of God, the designer and framer of all things.

How often it is that when some present truth has opened the eyes of a consecrated child of God, their acceptance has brought fiery trials into their lives. In every experience of sorrow and distress, and when the strain of the jarring discords and the stinging vexations, and wounds that make the heart bleed, threaten to overwhelm the spirit, let the child of God remember that “He knows, and loves, and cares,” and that His ministering angel is ever near us, and that no trial will be permitted to be too severe. The dear Master is standing by our testing experience and will never permit it to grow so intense that the precious alloy of our characters shall be destroyed, or even injured. The true Christian has in every sorrow and grief a blessed consolation of which the world is wholly in ignorance. None but the true child of God can know it.

It is the precious balm of Gilead for wounded spirits on the battlefield of life; it is the stimulating, refreshing draft for fainting souls, hard pressed by the relentless Adversary. It is the soothing caress of a loving hand upon the fevered brow of the noble contender for truth and godliness. It is the gentle whisper of hope and love and courage when heart and flesh are almost failing. This is Divine consolation, the only consolation that has in it any virtue of healing or refreshment. It is reserved alone for those noble souls who are faithfully bearing, as soldiers of the Cross, the danger, burden, and heat of the day in the service of the King of kings; while those who listlessly drift with the current of the world and the downward tendencies of the carnal nature can never have an intimation of its sweetness. We cannot have God’s approval until we are first tested and found faithful, and it is to His glory that we prove faithful

under our testing, bringing joy to His heart and added glory to His name: 1 Pet. 4:12, 13, “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”

PROSPERITIES AND ADVERSITIES

How reasonable it seems that those who become God’s friends, and especially those who have come into His family as children, should be blessed by Him in multitudinous ways, in which others of mankind (who are aliens, strangers, and foreigners to Him through wicked works—Col. 1:21) should not be blessed! We look into the past and see Father Adam, very rich while in Divine favor, the possessor of the whole world, filled with bounties. We read of Father Abraham, “the friend of God,” that he was very rich in cattle and money (Gen. 13:2), and that Jacob, although he lost all inheritance in his father’s estate, was blessed by God, so that he also became very rich in flocks and in herds (Gen. 31:30, 43). So Israel as a nation (*e.g.*, in Lev. 26) was promised that if they would obey God, they would be blessed in all of their temporal affairs: their land would bring forth bountifully; they would not be afflicted with drought or pests; their flocks and herds would prosper and multiply exceedingly, and even their physical health would be provided for—Jehovah guaranteed that by abiding in His favor as a people they would not be subject to pestilences, diseases, *etc.*; for He Himself would be their physician, to preserve their health and give them every physical prosperity.

However, with the introduction of the Gospel Age came a great change—not in the Divine plan, but in the Divine dealings; and thenceforth the favored of the Lord were not promised earthly prosperity, nor immunity from sickness, pain and persecution; but on the contrary, they were assured that whoever would be received into God’s family as prospective consecrated children of God while sin is in the ascendancy would, more than others, be required to pass through experiences of suffering and through trials of faith, patience and character development. The instructions given were that these adversities should be accepted by them as marks of Divine favor, as evidences that God was *dealing* with them as with sons and was by these

experiences fitting and preparing them for positions of honor and untold blessings in the future (Rom. 8:17; 2 Tim. 2:12; Heb. 12:6-8). “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit” (1 Cor. 2:9, 10).

THE CONSECRATED CHILD OF GOD, TO HAVE EXCEEDING JOY, MUST EMBRACE THE PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER!

Prayer is not only a great privilege; it is also a necessity—enjoined in the Scriptures as indispensable to our Christian life and growth (Rom. 12:12; 1 Thes. 5:17). It usually means not only a living faith, but also a growing faith. Experience proves that neglect of prayer in private (Matt. 6:6) or in the congregation of the Lord’s people (Acts 1:14, 15; 12:12; 16:13; 1 Cor. 11:4, 5; 14:13, 14) is sure to lead to leanness of soul, lukewarmness, unfaithfulness, coldness and even death in respect to spiritual things. Whoever loses the desire to thank and worship and commune with the Father of mercies may rest assured that he is losing the very spirit of sonship; he should promptly seek and remove the barriers.

Communion with our Heavenly Father in prayer brings increased confidence in His supervision of our affairs, increased faith in all the exceeding great and precious promises of His Word, increased realization of His leadings, past and present, increased love for all the brethren of Christ, and increased solicitude for their welfare and spiritual progress. Prayer is thus closely and actively identified with progress in spiritual things, progress in the development of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23), toward God, the brethren, and all men, including enemies.

The Gentile nations had no privilege of prayer while the Jews were privileged to offer prayer, because they as a nation were in typical relationship with God under the Law Covenant, as a “house of servants.” But the Gentiles had no privilege of approaching God in prayer until after the Jewish covenant favor had ended—3½ years after Jesus’ crucifixion, the end of the seventieth week (Dan. 9:24-27). According to the Bible, the first Gentile as such whose prayers were heard and who was received into God’s covenant favor was Cornelius. And even his prayers were not

acceptable until he had been instructed respecting Christ Jesus and His redemptive work and had become a follower of Him (Acts 10:25-48). Then his prayers and his consecration were acceptable to the Father, and he was received into the family of God as a son, who had the right or privilege of prayer, in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to let his requests be made known unto God (Phil. 4:6).

There is a difference between worship (which includes adoration, homage, and service) and prayer in its intimate sense of petition and communion. Anyone may express repentance for sin and a desire for Divine mercy, offer homage to God, bow the knee to Him, or express thanks and appreciation. But as for making requests of God for His covenant blessings in our times of need—petitional prayers—this privilege is distinctly limited. May our devotion to Jehovah's Loving-kindness find us worthy of sonship in the House of God! Let us consider some examples of prayer: "And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven" (1 Kings 8:54). "And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the LORD my God" (Ezra 9:5).

Jesus in his time of agony: "Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here, while I go yonder and pray. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and sore troubled. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: abide ye here, and watch with me. And he went forward a little, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:36-39 and 45). "Then cometh he to the disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."

There can be no doubt that this thought of the extinguishment of life was an important factor in our Lord's sorrow. The Apostle clearly intimates it in the words (Heb. 5:7), "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with

strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from [out of] death, and was heard in [respect to] that he feared"—extinction. Intent continually upon doing the Father's will, day by day had passed in self-sacrifice, until now, in a few hours, the whole would be complete; and the thought of this brought with it another thought, viz., Had he done the Father's will perfectly? Could He claim, and would He receive, the reward promised Him, a resurrection from the dead? As stated in verse 45, after praying awhile He went to the three disciples, in whom He had greatest confidence, and who, more than any others, were His tried and trusted companions, but He found them asleep. Luke explains that their sleep was the result of sorrow. The reaction from the sorrow brought a measure of stupor. Very gently our Lord upbraided them: "Could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation." It is not merely that you need to watch on my account—you need to be in a watching attitude on your own account. An hour of severe trial is upon us all; watch and pray lest ye fall in this evil time.

As consecrated children of God we understand it is the heart attitude that counts. At moments of crisis the thoughts do indeed fly to God for help, but that help is not absent as we perform our daily duties, giving our minds conscientiously to the task in hand. In this way we find He answers our unexpressed prayers, those desires and sentiments embedded in our hearts. However, at the close of the day nightly prayer is for most Christians our chief meeting time with our Maker. It seems impossible to maintain a close relationship with Him, to build a Christlike character and a firm faith structure, without prayer; more than this—without *regularity* in prayer. But how often, at the end of a busy day, we find ourselves failing to draw near and show him our love and gratitude! Even when upon one's knees, the mind wanders, and the cares of the day and the morrow creep in. He knows our weakness—but there is a remedy. Putting our praise, our thanks and our petitions into audible words, talking softly with our loving Father—be the words ever so simple—wonderfully focuses the mind and heart, and brings such a blessing that we shall never willingly forgo this greatest of privileges. "LORD, teach us to pray."

THE DESTRUCTION OF CHRISTENDOM

Isaiah 63; 64

Isa. 63 tells of Isaiah's inquiring as to the identity of and also the stains on the garments of a gloriously clad conqueror coming victoriously from the destruction of Edom, and gives the great conqueror's vivid replies (vs. 1-6), and then his description of Jehovah's past great blessings to Israel amid afflictions, including their great deliverance from bondage in Egypt, their rebelling, and Moses leading them to their Canaan rest (vs. 7-14). Then Isaiah's prayers for deliverance, *etc.*, for God's people while still in their captivity in Babylon are given (vs. 15-19; 64:1-12).

There was a fulfilment of this prophecy in connection with the destruction of Jewry in the end of the Jewish Age. But here we will consider the Gospel-Age Harvest fulfilment, in which Isaiah represents Jehovah's servants, especially here in the end of the Gospel-Age Harvest, in the Epiphany-Basileia period, inquiring as to the identity of and the evidences of destructiveness in our Lord Jesus after the overthrow of Christendom, and next His vivid replies (vs. 1-6), and then His description of God's blessings on and the privileges of His early Gospel-Age people (vs. 7-9) and His people's subsequent Gospel-Age afflictions in symbolic Egypt (v. 10). Next Jehovah's arising through our Lord as antitypical Moses and His delivering them from symbolic Egypt is set forth (vs. 11-14). Then prayers of God's servants during the Interim, the period between the Jewish and Gospel-Age Harvests, for deliverance for God's people from the captivity in symbolic Babylon, *etc.*, are given (vs. 15-19; 64:1-12).

Edom was the name given to Esau, Jacob's twin brother, after he sold his birthright for a mess of red pottage: "Esau came from the field, and he *was* faint: And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red *pottage*; for I *am* faint: therefore was his name called Edom. And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I *am* at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised *his* birthright." (Gen. 25:29-34; 36:1; Num. 20:18-21).

We take note that in Gen. 25:30 the color of the pottage is emphasized, and seems especially to emphasize Esau's impatient hunger and the intensity of his appetite; therefore was his name called Edom [*red, ruddy; Edom* and *Adam* are related words, both derived from the same root word; it is noteworthy that Esau was born with *red* color, and now he was begging for *red* pottage, and was even willing to sell his birthright to get it—little wonder that he and his descendants were called *Edom*, or *red*]. The *real* people of God, seeing that the *nominal* people of God (nominal Fleshly Israel, especially in the Jewish Harvest, and also nominal Spiritual Israel) earnestly sought the earthly blessings, and esteemed lightly the antitypical birthright, asked by attitude, word and act that it be relinquished to them (v. 31). The *nominal* people, with their "profane," earthly-minded disposition (Heb. 12:16), lusted after earthly things so greatly that they felt they could not continue without gratifying these desires, and therefore failed to recognize the real value of the antitypical birthright (v. 32). God's *real* people desired special solemn assurance that it would really be theirs, and His *nominal* people by attitude, word and act gave it to them, thus fully relinquishing it to them (v. 33). Accordingly, His *real* people left to them the earthly things they so earnestly desired, which they then greedily appropriated to themselves, after which they actively proceeded on their chosen wrong course (v. 34). Thus, they considered the antitypical birthright, the privilege of being Messiah's joint-heirs in His Kingdom, as of comparatively little value. This was true of nominal Fleshly Israel in the Jewish Harvest, and of nominal Spiritual Israel in the Gospel Age.

Consequently, the name Edom types Christendom, and appropriately represents a system in which for trifling considerations the great majority have sold their Covenant birthright—in this application nominal Christendom (E-5, p. 124; E-6, p. 368), which has falsely been called Christ's Kingdom. Edom means *red*; this seems to refer to the bloodguiltiness of Christendom (E-14, p. 463), which also "spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt," (Rev. 11:8; E-4, p. 15). Bozrah (meaning *sheepfold*), Edom's capital city,

represents Ecclesiasticism, Churchianity, the chief citadel of Christendom.

While our study is about Christendom, we read of David's bloodguiltiness in Psalms 51:14: "Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: *and* my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness." King David committed some very serious sins, but he uncovered them before God, confessed them, and earnestly sought God's forgiveness. God forgave him and covered his sins in His sight, because of Jesus' coming death on his behalf; for God "quickeneth the dead [those dead in trespasses and sins—Eph. 2:1], and calleth those things which be not as though they were" (Rom. 4:17). When David committed his great sin of adultery and murder against Uriah, God severely rebuked him through the prophet Nathan. David repented, saying, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan assured him, "The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die" (2 Sam. 12:13). In connection with David's sin of numbering the people, his "heart smote him" and he "said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly," (2 Sam. 24:10). Again, he was forgiven, though in both cases he was punished for his sin.

Note David's beautiful confessional prayer in Psa. 51, how he prayed for God to have mercy upon him, to blot out his transgressions, to cleanse him from his sin, to cast him not away nor take the holy Spirit from him, but to deliver him from bloodguiltiness and restore to him the joy of God's salvation. God graciously answered his prayer, as he testified in Psa. 32: "Blessed *is he whose* transgression *is* forgiven, *whose* sin *is* covered [in God's sight, because of the coming Messiah's Ransom merit]. Blessed *is* the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit *there is* no guile," (vs. 1, 2; comp. Rom. 4:6-8). God testified of David that he was a man after His own heart, (Acts 13:22).

God's enlightened servants and some of His other servants, especially here in the end of the Gospel Age, taking their viewpoint after the destruction of Christendom, (Jer. 49:7-17; E 14, pp. 463-465) in the Time of Trouble in the very end of the Age, ask and will ask one another and others if they truly recognize the identity of the mighty conqueror, returning from the destruction of Christendom and also the tares

as such (including many of the clergy—Isa. 34:6; Jer. 49:13), with His glorious sterling qualities and His official powers figuratively bloodstained, proceeding in overwhelming strength, next to that of Jehovah Himself, as His mighty Vicegerent (Isa. 63:1).

The answer comes that He is indeed the great Lord Jesus, the Father's right-hand General, the Announcer of Righteousness, who is mighty to deliver and who has destroyed Christendom and also its tare class as such. Blessed are we if we recognize and help others to recognize our mighty Savior, the Lord Jesus, as the One destroying Christendom here in the Time of Trouble!

A further question is asked, Why are His qualities and His powers figuratively bloodstained? Why, if He is the Lamb of God and the Prince of Peace, has He been engaged in so much retributive and destructive work that His qualities, His powers, seem much involved (Isa. 63: 3; in ancient times the grapes were placed in a winepress and trampled by the feet. As a result, the garments of grape-treaders were made red with the grape-juice).

Our Lord answers that He is the One who has been bringing retributive destruction upon Christendom in the Great Tribulation (Psa. 2:9; 110:5, 6; Rev. 2:27), that under Jehovah (Mic. 1:3) He alone is responsible for it, that it requires Divine power—human energy and generalship are unable—to bring this retribution upon the nations of Christendom. In great righteous indignation and wrath, He with proper aggressiveness and destructiveness has brought retributive destruction upon Christendom in the great Time of Trouble, whereby His qualities and official powers have all been obviously much involved. Rotherham says in Isa.63:3, "A winepress have I trodden alone. And of the peoples there was no man with me. So I trod them down in mine anger, And I trampled upon them in mine indignation, And there life-blood besprinkled my garments, And all mine apparel I defiled."

Our Lord's treading of the winepress, which began with the beginning of World War, Phase I, in the Fall of 1914, was preceded by the gathering of the figurative ripe grape-clusters of "the vine of the earth," which is Christendom (as contrasted with the Church, the Lord's true Vine—John 15:1-8). This is described in Rev. 14:17-19. V. 19 says, "The angel thrust his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and

cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.”

In harmony with the Word of God and Bro. Russell’s teachings we understand that the reaping of “the vine of the earth,” described in Rev. 14:17-19, is the same as the gathering of the tares into bundles described in Matt. 13:30, 40-42 and that the reaping of the wheat, described in Rev. 14:14-16, is the same as the gathering of the wheat described in Matt. 13:30, 43. We understand further that the garnering (not reaping) of the wheat began in 1878, with the First Resurrection, its completion coming much later with the rapture of the final Little Flock member, and that the casting of the clusters of the vine of the earth into the winepress—the great Time of Trouble—and their treading therein began in the Fall of 1914; and their treading will be completed by the end of the Time of Trouble. According to Matt. 13:30 the gathering of the tares into bundles—aggregations of selfishness (in which “their wickedness is great,” Joel 3:13)—*i.e.*, the clusters of, “the vine of the earth,” began “first,” before the reaping of the wheat began.

Accordingly, the first thing that our Lord did on His Return in 1874 was to begin the gathering of the tares into bundles, the clusters of “the vine of the earth.” This seemingly was done in the following way: Our Lord’s not returning in the flesh by Oct. 1874, as some brethren expected and ministered, but His doing so then as a spirit being, immediately served to harden altogether some specially oppositional nominal church tares against the doctrine of Christ’s Second Coming; and this started their gathering as tares, for their bundling.

With these helps in understanding we see how in the nature of the case the gathering of the tares for bundling was begun “first” rather than the gathering of the wheat beginning first. Just a little later on Pastor Russell was gathered as the first grain of wheat by the Lord’s making clear to his mind the thought that our Lord, because since His resurrection He is a spirit being, would be invisible to mankind’s physical eyes in His Second Advent, which doctrine was the first specifically Harvest truth—the first part of the sickle—to be made known. It was about Oct. 1874 that this doctrine was made clear to him. There were perhaps only a few days’ difference in the beginning of these two works.

The fact of the completion of the reaping of the

wheat in each separate country before that country was involved in the World War (Phase I), *i.e.*, before the clusters of “the vine of the earth” began to be thrown into the winepress—before the tare bundles began to be thrown into the furnace of fire—and the further fact that the faithful began to discern the gathering of the wheat before they began to discern the gathering of the tares, accounts for the vision (“I looked, and behold,” *etc.*) of the gathering of the wheat (Rev. 14:14-16) preceding the one of gathering the clusters of “the vine of the earth” (Rev. 14:17-19).

Let us consider the understanding pictured in 1 Kings 19:11-12: “And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; *but* the LORD *was* not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; *but* the LORD *was* not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; *but* the LORD *was* not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.” From other studies of God’s Word of Truth, we have been given to understand that the *strong winds* represent World War and World War (Phase I) was a component part of the great Time of Trouble. It was intended by the Lord to weaken the nations and to prepare them for the next stage of trouble, World War (Phase II).

The statement *an earthquake* we understand to represent Revolution which has been constant in the world governments, restless mankind, schools of higher learning, and the incorrect teachings and actions of the nominal church systems. We recognize that *fire* represents anarchy which is becoming very prevalent in world culture. We expect this feature of God’s plan guided by the prince of the power of the air [“Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2)] to bring the Time of Trouble to its completion (Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21).

This symbolic fire of anarchy is not the limited, experimental forms of anarchy that have emerged throughout history; nor the local or incipient anarchy that is with us in the unruly events of today. This particular “fire” refers, rather, to a period of *worldwide* anarchy. We know from our Studies of the Scriptures that at some

point the old taskmasters of sin, error, and selfishness, now measurably restrained by national governments, will run riot in a leaderless, lawless world, and the period will quickly deteriorate into the worst kind of anarchy, chaos, and devastation. This is the great *fire*, the destroyer that sweeps away into history any vestiges of Satan's empire that are left unbroken by the worldwide war and revolution. This will be a catastrophe of unimaginable proportions for the peoples of the world.

How are we to understand the last words of 1 Kings 19:12, *after the fire a still small voice*? This will be God's voice, speaking to a chastened, humbled and beaten world. Psa. 46:8-10 confirms this, saying: "Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I AM God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth." Not a shout heard throughout earth, rather a *still small voice* is heard in the hearts of men, the very thing Jehovah has asked for. "My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways." Perhaps the words of Solomon tell it best, "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, *and* apply thine heart to understanding." (Prov. 2:1-2)

The Father of Communism, Karl Marx, a German philosopher and economist, proposed this new ideology in his "Communist Manifesto," which he wrote with Friedrich Engels in 1848. His theories led to the development of Marxism. His ideas also served as the basis for communism. His books, "Das Kapital" and "The Communist Manifesto," formed the basis of Marxism. The manifesto emphasized the importance of class struggle in every historical society, and the dangerous instability capitalism created. Marxian socialism ends in a communist society, which is stateless and classless. "I wish to avenge myself against the One who rules above. My object in life is to dethrone God and destroy capitalism. The task is not just to understand the world but to change it. To be frank, one has to leave philosophy aside, one has to leap out of it and devote oneself like an ordinary man to the study of actuality."

Socialism is guilty of a fatal conceit: It believes its system can make better decisions for the people than

they can for themselves. And yet, socialism still beguiled leading intellectuals and politicians of the West. They could not resist its seductive song, of a world without strife because it was a world without private property. They were convinced that a bureaucracy could make more-informed decisions about the welfare of a people than the people themselves could.

It is during this time of downward-plunging anarchy with total collapse of society and devastation of the hopes of all nations, that this harshest of lessons will come to mankind as God's Word of Truth continues to sweep away the refuge of lies. The world, in total disarray and unable to muster a defense against any evil condition, must then be in truly desperate straits and at their wit's end (Psa. 107:27). This will fulfill to the uttermost the prediction of Dan. 12:1 that "there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time." (For in-depth considerations on Anarchy see: Bro. Russell and Bro. Johnson on Anarchy, PT 2003, p. 10).

Israel as the "land of unwallled villages" will attract the wrath of the distraught peoples of the earth (Ezek. 38:11, 12 NASB). The Scriptural account reads this way: "And you [the anarchistic remnants] will say, I will go up to the land of unwallled villages. I will go against those who are at rest, that live securely, all of them living without walls and having no bars or gates, to capture spoil and to seize plunder, to turn your hand against the waste places which are now inhabited, and against the people who are gathered from the nations, who have acquired cattle and goods, who live at the center of the world."

This is described as in the day of battle, and it is interesting to see from the Scriptural standpoint how God refers to this in the following quotation: "Behold the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations, against Jerusalem ... Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle," (Zech. 14:1-4). This has not yet occurred. The Arabs have tried repeatedly to take Jerusalem and have not succeeded. The Lord has indicated that, in this future episode, God is going to eventually deliver Israel out of this difficulty.

Another quotation describing these events begins: "And in that day"—when in the Old Testament,

concerning the prophecies, it says: “in that day,” “that day,” or “at that day,”—it always refers to sometime during the Millennial age, either the Parousia, the Parousia and Epiphany, or the Basileia—the Kingdom—as a whole. It reads this way: “And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all peoples” (Zech 12:3, 10). Is not Israel, that people in the Middle East, a burdensome stone even now—to all nations? The nations do not know what to do. “All that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.” Many armed forces are going to be involved in that onslaught against this tiny nation.

Verse 10: “And I will pour upon the house of David, [symbolic David: Israel, and the Jewish people] and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications.” So, God is going to bless them amid and following this great catastrophe that comes upon them. “And they [the Jewish people] shall look upon me whom they have pierced. ...” Oh! Somebody is going to say that is not right! The Jews did not pierce our Lord! It was the Roman soldiers that put the spear in Jesus’ side and the nails to His hands and feet! While that is true, God puts the blame where it belongs—on Israel more than with the Romans. You know Pilate washed his hands before the multitude, saying, “I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see *to it*,” (Matt. 27:24 NKJV). He did not really wash away his responsibility, for although he had the power to save Jesus’ life, he failed to do it. He did not exercise it. He feared the people—that there would be an insurrection. While he had the power and the soldiers, he no doubt felt that it would look bad for him in the Roman emperor’s view, and so he declined to step in and save Jesus’ life. We know why that was; because Jesus had to die as the ransom price, but in this little experience, Pilate was also responsible. It is easy to get out the bowl of water and to wash your hands and say, “take you note of it, I am not responsible for the blood of this righteous man”—nevertheless he was, somewhat responsible.

However, the Jewish people were also implicated in this sin, for we read: “they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced.” God is putting the blame right where it belongs, as Israel was responsible more than any other people for our Lord’s death. The Scriptures declare it; because it is describing the future, that there is going to

be a change of heart among the Jewish people and that change of heart is expressed right here. “Then they will look on Me whom they have pierced,” (Zech. 12:10; John 19:37). Yes, “they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for *his* only son, and grieve as one grieves for His firstborn.” The Jewish people are going to discern their accountability for Jesus’ death, and with repentant hearts, the experience will result in their eventual blessing.

After anarchy has run its course, done its prophetic work, and all vestiges of former civilizations and institutions are ground into the dust of history, despair will be worldwide, except in the nation of Israel. At that time, we understand that somehow (it is not clear how) a prosperous and peaceful Israel will come into existence. It is easy to see how envy and bitterness will bring the anarchic remnants of once-proud nations against the nation of Israel at that time, causing her great suffering and unwittingly fulfilling the prophecies concerning the closing stages of this present evil world. At that time, Israel’s Messiah will bring them such a signal deliverance that as one man they will turn to the Lord, while the summary punishment meted out by God to the marauding, anarchic remnants of the Gentile nations will be the last universal lesson required in this present evil world. Fear and utter despair will force from mankind the cry of Psa. 107:28.

This is the condition in which we understand the peoples of the world will be when they first hear that “*still small voice*” of 1 Kings 19:12, the voice that speaks peace, answering their cry and finally bringing them out of their distresses, and unto their desired haven (Psa. 107:30). “Oh that *men* would praise the Lord *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!” (Psa. 107:31). This begs the question: did God know of all these conditions? Yes, He says “Watchman, what of the night? Watchman what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come,” (Isa. 21:11-12). According to the Bible, God foreknew the conditions of our day; and in this text He gives a key to the situation—elsewhere in the Scriptures made very plain. Through the Prophet, God tells of the dark night coming—after the (Millennial) morning has been well ushered in—a dark storm-cloud just at sunrise (Isa. 28:2; Joel 2:2; Nahum 1:3). This dark hour is described in the prophecy of Daniel and also in that of our Lord Jesus, to be “a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a

nation,” (Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21, 22).

God indicates that we should take warning, that we be not surprised nor dismayed, as though the promise of the glorious morning were broken or some strange thing allowed to befall us. He intimates that there may be a delay before the morning has been fully ushered in—this dark night of the Time of Trouble—for which we should be prepared. During this waiting period He calls for watchfulness, for the exact length of the night is hidden from us, and the time of the shining forth of the Sun of Righteousness in the Kingdom of God on earth is uncertain.

During the delay, the watchman encourages us to “inquire,” to “return,” “to come.” He expects us to ask: “How long?” and to inquire for the morning. Surely, we would not wish for this night and its darkness to continue forever! “For the vision *is* yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not

lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry” (Hab. 2:3).

In its widest sense the dark night of weeping has been during mankind’s entire history since Adam was expelled from the Garden of Eden. Under the blight of sin, human beings have suffered both individually and as a whole. Their own imperfect and often unjust governments, as well as their aches and pains of body and mind, are the natural consequences of their imperfect, fallen condition. And though men can do something toward general improvement, their efforts are at best but feeble and spasmodic; they are utterly incapable of releasing themselves from their difficulties. God’s great time clock tells us that the night is far spent and that the day is at hand.

How glad we are to know that “joy *cometh* in the [Millennial] morning” and that the night, with its sin and sorrow, will soon be fully ended (Psa. 30:5)!

THE POWER OF JESUS

“The Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins” (Luke 5:24).

This account of Jesus’ works covered in Luke 5:17-26 shows the rapidly growing influence of our Lord even at this early stage of his ministry. From the wilderness scene of temptation and victory he had gone into Galilee filled with the power of the holy spirit, and his fame had gone out through all that region. He had taught in their synagogues and been glorified of all. He had come down to Capernaum, and the people were astonished at his doctrine, for his word was with power. He had healed the sick and the lepers, and had cast out devils, and the multitudes thronged about him continually. And so great was the attention which his teaching and his works attracted that Pharisees and doctors of the law came out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem to hear and to see (Luke 4:14-16, 22).

We next notice the great faith that so perseveringly brought the palsied patient to the attention of the Great Physician. Being unable to reach Jesus through the crowds that continually thronged about him, so great was their faith in his healing power that they removed a portion of the tiling from the roof, and, with his couch, let him down over the heads of the people. This persevering, trusting faith in Christ speedily received its reward, the forgiveness of sins and healing.

We notice that the forgiveness of sins was the first blessing—“And when he saw their faith [the faith of the sick man and those interested in him], he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.” This evidently was an unlooked-for answer. The previous miracles of healing doubtless led all to expect a similar manifestation of healing power; but as yet it was not manifest. There lay the sufferer before them all while the people pondered this claim of the man of Nazareth to have power on earth to forgive sins, probably while the Lord was proceeding with his discourse, not allowing this incident to interrupt it entirely.

But there were some whisperings among the scribes and Pharisees present, who said, this is blasphemy. Who can forgive sins but God alone? Though their murmuring words did not reach the ear of the Lord, he perceived their thoughts. Their cynical faces doubtless told the tale of their scorn and unbelief; and their influence upon the people who looked to them as leaders and teachers was also manifest. Has this man indeed power to forgive sins? Has he authority from God to this effect? Is he indeed the Messiah, the sent one of God? These were the questions revolving in the minds of the people. And it was to awaken these thoughts that the Lord had said it. His words

implied the claim of Messiahship. Truly none could forgive sins but God alone, except as his anointed and authorized agent and representative, and in his appointed way. The divinely appointed way for the cancellation of sins was by means of the ransom as the legal settlement of the penalty, and faith in Christ the Redeemer.

The faith of this man and his friends in Christ and his claims had been put to the test and manifested, and though the ransom price had not yet been actually given, the Lamb for sacrifice had already been presented by our Lord at his baptism and had been accepted of God and was on the altar of sacrifice. And therefore, in view of the complete consuming and acceptableness to God of that sacrifice, Jesus, perceiving their faith, could then say, "Thy sins are forgiven thee."

We observe that the healing did not follow as a result of the forgiveness of sins. The forgiveness of sins was one thing, and the healing was another; and Jesus intimates that the same divine authority that was necessary to the forgiveness of sins was also necessary to the healing; and that if the forgiveness of sins was blasphemy, so also was the healing. From what they had seen, they must all admit his power, and consequently also his authority, to heal, and that the authority and power must be of God. And this power and authority they must therefore recognize as the divine testimony of his claims to be the Son of God and the Messiah of Israel. "Whether is easier," (said he) "to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?" for the same authority and power are necessary to both.

But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins (he said to the palsied man), I say unto thee, Arise and take up thy couch, and go into thine house. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. And they were all astonished, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen strange things to-day."

Thus our Lord called attention to his miracles of healing as the divine testimonials of his claims to be the Son of God and the long-looked-for Messiah of Israel, to whom was entrusted the great work of taking away the sin of the world, and subsequently of healing men

of all their infirmities, these all being part of the wages of sin. "Behold the Lamb of God!" says John 1:29 and 36; and Jesus endorsed that saying by his subsequent claim to have power on earth to forgive sins. And the Father also endorsed his claim by granting him the power to do many wonderful works in the sight of all the people.

While the forgiveness of sins is an assurance that the healing, or removal of the penalty of sin, will surely follow, as the palsied man doubtless considered it and waited for the healing, it does not signify that the recovery from the penalty will immediately follow. The Gospel Church, for instance, receives the forgiveness of sins in this Gospel age; but not until the dawning of the Millennium will she be delivered from the bondage of corruption. But in due time the power that accomplishes the one will accomplish the other also; and by and by those miracles of grace which brought health and gladness to so many in Israel, and which attracted the attention and were the astonishment of that whole nation, will be totally eclipsed by the wonder-working power and authority of this same Jesus exalted to power and dominion over the whole earth as the mighty Prince of peace, who, having in the days of his flesh redeemed the world by the sacrifice of himself, comes again to heal all their infirmities and to restore them to the fulness of divine favor in which is eternal life and peace.

Blessed be God! it is as easy to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; as to say, Rise up and walk, and vice versa; for both the authority and the power are committed unto Jehovah's Anointed, in whom is all our hope and all our trust.

It will be observed that all the healings performed by our Lord were both instantaneous and complete, showing the fulness of his authority and power, and they included the worst forms of disease—leprosy, palsy, blindness from birth, and even awakenings from death. In all these respects they differed from the healings we hear of to-day, many of which are somewhat remarkable; and when the agents and agencies employed are not in opposition to the Lord and His truth, we are justified in accepting them as slight intimations to men that the times of restitution are at hand, and as a preparation for the great restoring work which may be expected as soon as the world's great tribulation is past.



HAVE YOU MOVED OR
ARE YOU GOING TO BE MOVING?
RENEW TODAY!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

POLISH REPRESENTATIVE OBITUARY

Brother Henryk Olekszy (1958–2025)

On December 19, 2025, Brother Henryk Olekszy completed his earthly pilgrimage at the age of 67. A faithful servant of the Truth and a long-time coworker in the Lord's vineyard, he was laid to rest on December 30, 2025, at the Junikowo Cemetery in Poznań.

Born on February 17, 1958, Brother Henryk was raised in a family in which the Truth of God's Word was passed down from generation to generation. This spiritual heritage reached back to his grandfather, Brother Wawrzyn Olekszy, who in the 1940s brought the Parousia Volumes from France, and was continued by his father, Brother Jan Olekszy.

In 1973, at the age of fifteen, he moved to Poznań, where he became permanently established both in life and spiritually within the Lord's congregation. In 1978, at the age of twenty, he made his consecration to God, symbolizing it by baptism during the last visit of Brother Jolly to Poland.

Brother Henryk served the Poznań congregation in many capacities. In 1979, he was elected a deacon; in 1981, he was entrusted with the responsibilities of an elder; and in subsequent years he was appointed a probationary evangelist (1983), an evangelist (1986), and a Pilgrim helper (1987). He was also actively involved in organizational and material work, including the construction of the House of Prayer in Poznań, where he served as assistant construction manager.

In 1994, he assumed the service of the Movement's bookseller in Poland, and in 1995 he became Secretary of the Lord's Congregation. In 2007, he was appointed deputy to Brother Piotr Woźnicki, the representative of Brother Ralph Herzig for Poland and Eastern European countries. Following Brother Woźnicki's death, he was confirmed in August 2019 as the representative of Brother Leon Snyder in the work for God's people.

On October 18, 1986, Brother Henryk entered into marriage with Sister Beata Olekszy. The Lord blessed their union with three children—Timothy, Miriam, and

TO:

Benjamin—and with granddaughters.

Brother Henryk Olekszy remains in the grateful memory of the Brethren as a brother whose life was marked by quiet service, responsibility, and faithful love for the Truth.

POLISH REPRESENTATIVE APPOINTMENT

January 5, 2026

My dear Brethren

With the death of Bro. Henryk Olekszy's, I write this letter with my heart and mind filled with pleasant memories of the years God has privileged me to work with Bro Henryk. God brought us together to do the work of bringing His Word of Truth to the consecrated Children through the arrangements given in the writings. Bro. Henryk was a strong defender of the foundation arrangements set in place through Pastors Russell, Johnson, and Jolly.

However, the work of defending and advancing the Word of Truth continues, and God in His righteousness has provided a qualified and consecrated Brother to carry out this work as the Bible Standard Ministries [LHMM] representative in Poland and the Eastern European countries. I believe Jehovah has set in my mind the Brother that can carry out the necessary work, in harmony with the arrangements.

I have invited Brother Grzegorz Novak to be the Representative in Poland and he, after due consideration, has accepted this invitation. This letter of announcement is in harmony with Paul's advice as given in 1 Cor. 14:40: "Let all things be done in a becoming manner, and according to order" (Diaglott).

I invite God's consecrated Children to hold this chosen vessel of God in prayer, that he shall uphold the arrangements of Bible Standard Ministries [LHMM] as he seeks to do Jehovah's will. We make the same request to the consecrated Brethren for his wife Sr. Ania that she will stand in support of her husband in her privilege of service.

Bro. Leon Snyder,
Executive Trustee
Bible Standard Ministries (LHMM)