

GOD'S "LITTLE WHILE."

Because of the shortness of human life, we act quickly ourselves and expect others to act so, and we can scarcely avoid carrying the same thought with us when we go to the investigation of God's Word.

We read – "Yet a little while, and He that shall come, will come." Heb. 10:37, We think, as we look back at the eighteen centuries which have elapsed since our Lord's first advent, that it is not a "little while." No, to us it is a long while. Our ideas of long and short periods are drawn from our experience. When you were a child you thought as a child; you impatiently looked at an hour as a long time, and a year seemed an age if it intervened between you and some coveted object or enjoyment. Since you have grown to manhood or womanhood years are short; how quickly they fly. Your plans and arrangements reach out and embrace numbers of them.

We see then that a long time and a "little while" are accommodative terms, to be understood in harmony with the standpoint of the one using them. When Paul used these words he was God's mouthpiece, therefore the word is God's – and it is from His standpoint, in whose sight "a thousand years are but as yesterday," and "as a watch in the night." If we remember that He is from everlasting to everlasting, we can readily see, that eighteen hundred years are but "a little while" to Him. In His sight it is only "a little while" since He created Adam. Let us not be so impatient; there is plenty of time in eternity.

If we can get this standpoint of time – God's standpoint – it will assist us to see how "the Lord is not slack concerning His promises." When God promised Eve that her seed should bruise the serpent's head, she doubtless supposed that God's promise had failed when one of her sons was slain and the other had become a branded murderer;

and when Seth was born, as his name indicates, she thought him the promised seed. She came to death, and yet saw not God's promise fulfilled. Ages rolled on, generations came and went, Moses and Israel read the promise, but saw no fulfillment. Had it failed? No, four thousand years after Jesus appeared on earth; suffered, died, arose, ascended. Was the promise fulfilled? No, only in part. Satan's head (vital part) is not yet crushed; he rears it higher than ever; his control is greater perhaps than ever before. Does God's promise mean less than it says? No, give Him more time; it is only "a little while" since he promised, and "in due time" it will all be fulfilled. Because He saw that we would wonder whether He is "slack concerning His promises;" and because Jesus counts us His friends ("I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." Jno. 15:15), therefore He kindly gives us through Paul, a clue as to how and when this promise will be fulfilled. Rom. 16:20, reads: "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

This is the same promise made to Eve, and though Jesus had died, Paul well knew that Satan was not yet bruised.

But God has not forgotten his promise; He will perform, but when? "Shortly." Ah, God's "little while" again. But why say under your feet? What had the Christians at Rome to do with bruising Satan? Had God's Word not said the seed should do it? And was not Christ this seed? Yes, Jesus is the head over this seed, but we are members of the body under this head, as we read: "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ...gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His body." Eph. 1:17-22. He is the head...that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. Col. 1:18.

Satan was permitted to bruise Jesus, the head. "He was bruised for our iniquity." He was made perfect through suffering, and we, the members of the body, must suffer with Him if we would be made perfect. We must "fill up the measure of the afflictions of Christ." The

head suffered most, but we must be sharers of the suffering, if we would be glorified together.

Therefore, "count it all joy," and "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 ("a little while," "shortly") His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad, also, with exceeding joy." 1 Pet. 4:12,13. Yes, we shall share in the "glory that shall follow," and part of that glory shall be to crush the serpent. Now he bruises our heel. (Ours are not vital wounds, they will all heal.) We shall crush his head (a vital part, indicating the utter extinction of evil – when death shall be destroyed, and "him that hath the power of death, that is the devil.") As this has required time for its accomplishment, so have almost all the promises of God. Take

THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM.

God had promised and sworn to Abraham that his seed should be as the sand of the sea – innumerable – and Abraham believed it; but as years rolled on he and Sarah thought it a long time. They were getting old, and yet had no child. Finally, they concluded to help God to fulfill his promise. How many Christians want to FORCE a construction on prophecy, in order to help God out of a supposed dilemma, and help him to fulfill his word. Let us rather wait on the Lord.

"God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain."

Yes, they would help God to keep his word, and as Sarah was too old, her maid must bear the promised seed. This was a human way to fulfill, but God waited fifteen years until they were both old, so that both Abraham and Sarah laughed when they were told that they should yet have a son Isaac. "After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure my

lord, being old also?" But the answer was: "Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the time APPOINTED... Sarah shall have a son."

O, that we could learn that –
"It may not be my time,
It may not be thy time,
And yet in His own time,
The Lord will perform."

Ages have rolled around, yet the seed of Abraham, although a nation and partially possessing Canaan for a time, have never yet had those promises to Abraham FULFILLED.

"I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee." "And I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession."

But Paul shows us that there was a deeper meaning than the surface promise couched in the utterances of God to the seed of Abraham. Not only the fleshly children, but the children of faith have a share.

"Now, to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds as of many; but as of one, 'And to thy seed' – which is Christ."...And if ye be Christ's (if you have been "baptised into Christ, put on Christ," become "members of His body," if ye be the antitypical bride of the Lamb"), then (and only then, no other way), are ye Abraham's SEED and HEIRS; according to promise." Gal. 3:14 and 29. Jesus individually is the heir of all, and we by nature have no claims of heirship, but by our union (marriage) with Him we become heirs – joint-heirs (united) with Jesus Christ our Lord or husband.

Here again we realize that God's "little while" is to man a great while; but surely and steadily the members of the body of Christ are being developed, and in due time they will be united to their Head, and

with Him glorified – constituting in the complete sense "the seed" – and then, never fully until then, can it be true of Abraham and his seed: – "In thee shall all nations be blessed." (Gal. 3:8.) Then "A king shall reign in righteousness and princes shall rule in judgment and under that righteous reign and rule "all the families of the earth shall be blessed," for then "the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth." But there, are

PROMISES TO THE NATURAL SEED,

as well as to the spiritual. They never have and do not now possess Canaan as an "everlasting possession." The prophets tell us that "the Lord shall yet choose Jerusalem." Zech. 1:17. "I will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem;" it "shall be called a city of truth." "The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing." "If it be marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvelous in mine eyes, saith the Lord of hosts?" Zech. 8:3-6. "In that time....I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem." "Then shall Jerusalem be holy." Joel 3:1-17.

James shows that these promises lacked fulfillment. Acts 15:16. After showing the object of the Gospel age to be the taking out of the Gentiles, a people for His name – the Bride – His body, the seed, after recounting this, James says: "To this agree the words of the prophets [or this is in harmony with prophecy.]" "As it is written, 'After this' [after the seed is taken from among the Gentiles] 'I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down, and I will build again the ruins thereof.'" Yes, God has good things in reserve for his ancient people, and as Paul says, though they were "blinded" and "cut off" from the first position of heirs of those promises, yet, "God hath not cast away His people whom He foreknew." "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel." How long, Paul? "Until the

fullness of the Gentiles be come in." [That is, until the entire Church, which James says God is taking out of the Gentiles, have all been taken out and gathered into full sonship, as the seed of promise.] And if they are blinded only until that time, it is evident that at that time the blindness will be removed. But Paul continues, "and so all Israel shall be saved," [not saved eternally as individuals, but saved – rescued nationally – brought back to power and grandeur.] But Paul goes to the prophets as his authority. "As it is written, there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer [the seed, the Christ, head and body], and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob [fleshly Israel] for this is my covenant unto them." Paul then gives us his reasons for speaking so confidently, "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." God's giving us the high calling, and the promises on the higher plane, does not interfere with or hinder His keeping His promise to the fleshly seed, but all the more guarantees it.

Then he explains how it is that we, who were once Gentiles, had God's mercy and truth revealed to us, when and because natural Israel was blinded; so we obtained mercy through their unbelief; so these have not believed that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. Through whose mercy? Yours, the Church's, when the Church is all taken out and glorified, she is with Christ, her head, her husband, to mercifully and justly rule the world; then Israel shall obtain your mercy. Rom. 11:2-25.

O, that we could realize that every promise of God is sure, in His own due time; it would give us childlike trust and confidence for everything; and not to accept them as all sure is to make God a liar.

Paul, as he looked forward and realized how in due time every jot and tittle should be fulfilled, and saw the greatness and majesty of God's plan, breaks forth in ecstasy and exclaims, "O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" "Who hath known

the mind of the Lord?" [Who knew that God's plan was so comprehensive and full?] And our hearts can say, Amen.

God knows the end from the beginning, and looking at the great clock of the ages, declares to us that the things we so much desire shall be "shortly," "yet a little while," and the glory, power and blessing of the promised Seed will be revealed to all. Let us look at things from his standpoint, and so

"Let the little while between
In its golden light be seen."
