

WHEN THE NATIONS WILL SEEK GOD

"That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us." – Acts 17:27.

NEW TESTAMENT evidences on this subject of seeking the Lord give the thought that not very many are in the condition of heart to seek him at the present time. "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the glorious light of the Gospel of Christ" and the faith of Jesus should shine into their hearts. (2 Cor. 4:4.) Nevertheless, as the Apostle puts it, God is "not far from every one of us," and every one who will seek or feel after him, he will be pleased to bless by a manifestation of himself. In fact, this is the very object of this present Gospel Age – to find, to enlighten, to bless and to gather into a special class those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness." Those who thus seek after the Lord he guides, draws, influences. He leads them to the Lord Jesus Christ, pointing to him as the necessary way by which they may approach himself and assuring them that there is no other name given whereby they can be saved (Acts 4:12), and that all who will come unto him through Christ will be accepted.

Such as do come in this way, we have proven from our own experiences and the experiences of others, as well as from the Word, are met half way by the Lord. "Draw nigh unto me, and I will draw nigh unto you." (Jas. 4:8.) And as they draw nigh and continue to approach closer by God's grace, they are brought by and by to a full realization that God is willing to accept them as *sacrificers*, as "members of the Body of Christ." If they fall into line with the Divine provision and present their bodies a living sacrifice, they will be looked upon as holy, acceptable to God (Rom. 12:1); they will recognize the "high calling" to "glory

and honor and immortality" with Christ. But if they fail to go on, they will thus receive the grace of God in vain. – 2 Cor. 6:1.

The Apostle intimates, not only in the text under consideration, but also in his Epistle to Timothy (I Tim. 2:4), that God wills that all men shall be saved; wills it in the sense that he will awaken them all from Adamic death and "bring them to a knowledge of the Truth"; that they may be recovered entirely from all imperfections that belong to Adam's condemnation, and thus brought fully into harmony with him. Because this *is* his will, he has made ample provisions – not only in the arrangement by which our Lord died on behalf of all mankind, that he might be the Ransomer of all, but also in the provision that all shall have the opportunity of coming to this knowledge and of benefitting thereby.

In this sermon on Mars Hill, the Apostle Paul pointed out to the men at Athens that this "unknown God," this God who was unknown to *them*, is the great God who has divided unto men their habitation and determined their bounds; that he is the supervisor of the nations; that he determines how long and under what conditions the nations may prosper and what liberties and opportunities they may have. Then he proceeds to point out that while God has for a long time left men in ignorance and winked at many of their imperfections and flagrant wrong-doings, as though he did not notice them all, nevertheless another step has now been taken in his great Plan: "**Now** he commands all men everywhere to repent."

The Apostle further declares, I, Paul, have something to tell you about this great God and about his message – that all men everywhere should repent. Do you ask me why they should repent? I answer, for the reason that God is prepared to forgive them their sins, on this condition: He was not prepared to do this a short time ago; he was not prepared to do this until Christ died;

but since Christ has died and ascended up on high and "appeared in the presence of God for *us*" – for *believers* – God is now willing to accept any who come unto him through Jesus. It is proper, therefore, that I should tell you that there is to be an opportunity of future life through him.

And, furthermore, it is proper that I should tell you also that "God has appointed a Day [the great Millennial period] in which he will judge [try] *the world* in righteousness." The whole world will then have a trial, a righteous trial, a fair, impartial trial, a full opportunity "to come unto the knowledge of the Truth"; to come to a knowledge of right and wrong, a full opportunity to come to perfection of human life and to attain all that was lost in the fall of man. (Luke 19:10.) This message should, as far as possible, be made known to all men everywhere, because every act of their lives will have a bearing upon the future; it will either uplift them to some extent out of the depths of degradation into which the world has been plunged through ignorance and superstition and bring a development of character, or it will condemn them and bring a measure of retribution, and thus make the conditions of the future more difficult than they would be if righteousness were sought.

