

GOD'S SUPERVISION IN THE WORLD AND IN THE CHURCH

"Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge; He putteth down one, and setteth up another." – Psalm 75:6,7.

THE Scriptures declare that "The earth hath He [God] given to the children of men." Father Adam was the first great king of the earth. After his fall, this kingdom over the beasts of the field, the fish of the sea and the fowl of the air, was bereft of the power of the perfect man, because man had begun to deteriorate. This kingdom was also bereft of the Heavenly Father's guidance by His Spirit, because of man's disobedience. It was originally intended that humanity should have God's guidance in the affairs of the earth. But humanity became insane, or mentally unbalanced. This is their condition from the deterioration which sin and death have wrought.

Satan has been blinding and deceiving and misleading mankind on various subjects, putting light for darkness and darkness for light. This power of Satan is spoken of in the Scriptures as being that of the "prince of this world." And we are told how he rules. By promoting sin, he promotes that which is in opposition to God. He "now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience." This work has been going on for centuries, and particularly since the time of the Deluge. Before that time Satan operated in a somewhat different manner, because men were more generally acquainted with the proper standard and less fallen than they have been since. Longevity before the Deluge was greater than now, the average length of life today being thirty-five years.

Very rarely has God interfered with the arrangement which He put into the hands of man. As mankind look back they see the blunders that have been made. Being under the power of the "prince

of this world," and allowing Satan to mislead them, they have fallen into various traps. Mankind has had a more severe experience with sin and death than would have been thought possible. The Apostle Paul calls our attention to the fact that man was not always in this degraded condition. He says that when man sinned, God gave him over and allowed **[R5305 : page 265]** him to take his own way – to lose himself in sin and the misguidance of the Adversary.

Why should God do this? We believe that His intention was that thus, eventually, during the next Age, mankind shall see what the real nature and outcome of sin is; that they shall learn a great, permanent lesson – that any deviation from the Divine standard is injurious; and that that lesson shall be recognized by the angels – that they also shall see what is the result of sin, and that they shall have this great, horrible object lesson before them. One can hardly read in the pages of history what humanity has done in this course of sin without being disgusted and horrified.

Then we see how humanity could have helped themselves by seeking to follow God's way. We see that when God gave man over to a reprobate mind, and did not hinder him from taking an evil course, it resulted in terrible excesses. (Romans 1:28-32.) We see that God merely intervened when, in the condition of things before the Deluge, to have permitted this course to continue would have been a serious wrong. The thoughts of men were evil, and only evil continually. Therefore God brought that condition of things to an end in the Flood. And He started things afresh with Noah and his family, who were saved in the Ark. God has interposed only here and there, as in the case of the Ninevites, the Sodomites and the Amalekites. In the case of the Sodomites, God rained down fire from heaven, setting forth an example, and the kind of destruction that would better conditions – not thereby settling the future of the Sodomites, but making them an example. **[R5305 : page 266]**

WORLD EMPIRES ILLUSTRATED GREAT PRINCIPLES

When the Babylonians essayed to be the rulers of the world, they apparently had good intentions, good sentiments toward mankind. They wished to give the world a good government. In some respects, perhaps, their rule was a benefit. At all events, it was not long before their success brought in a measure of arrogance. And then God permitted another nation to gain the ascendancy – the Medo-Persians. After them, the Grecians tried to rule the world, with a better government; and again, after them, the Romans. Each of these World-Empires, after a measure of success, toppled over and made wreck of their progress.

And so God has in a general way been permitting things to go thus, keeping humanity within general bounds in their sort of loose governments, and has merely hindered them when they went too far and were likely to hinder the Divine Program.

There was some promotion in some manner. The Scriptures say that Nebuchadnezzar became the head of gold – the head of the Gentile governments. Promotion came to him because God was pleased that Nebuchadnezzar should have this opportunity, because God *permitted* him to have it, and that nation to have the ascendancy. And thus with the other universal governments; and God had to do with the setting up and the pulling down. He thus permitted the world to have a variety of governments. As another instance, a certain Pharaoh was in power in Egypt at the time for Israel to be delivered from their bondage. According to the account given by the Apostle Paul, the Lord said to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose have I raised thee up." – Rom. 9:17; Exodus 9:16.

Pharaoh thus was given an opportunity of illustrating certain great principles along the lines of which God was dealing. There are some who think that God worked in Pharaoh to make his heart hard and to make him a bad man such as he was. But *this is not*

so! He was a bad man naturally. God may have let other heirs drop out so that this particular man would come to the throne at that particular time. God set him there at that time – not that He might influence Pharaoh to evil, but that He might show the influence of an unregenerate heart.

The plagues came. "Let My people go," said the Lord. Thus after each plague had come, Pharaoh would entreat Moses, the servant of God; and when the plague was gone he would say, "Well, you did not have much to do with it. The plague has gone anyway." And so another plague would come. And time after time Pharaoh illustrated the mercy of God, who time after time lifted the plague and had mercy on the Egyptians.

It was a lesson, not of God's working in a man to make him a bad man and make him do evil things, but a lesson of the hardening effect of God's Mercy – in taking away the plague – of its having only a bad effect, instead of softening the heart. And so it is with many in the world. They are told that God is willing to forgive them, and they think, "Well, then I can go on and sin more!" We learn from this a great lesson of God's Mercy and of His method of dealing with men. Finally came the last plague. Yet even after that Pharaoh and the Egyptians went out to capture the Israelites. The finale was that the Egyptian pursuers were drowned in the Red Sea. – Exodus 14:5-31.

ACCORDING TO GOD'S WILL

By faith we believe that God has a supervision of all the affairs of today. Therefore if we voted for a candidate at the last Presidential election, and if the one we thought the most suitable for election was not elected, we are not to believe it was a matter of chance. We are to assume that the Lord knew all about the election; and that in the Divine arrangement certain things were permitted to go in certain ways; and that therefore, the President, Mr. Wilson, was the most suitable as in harmony with the Divine arrangement.

We are to believe that all things are working according to the counsel of God's will – not that God touches every thought or act of every individual. Not so! But God is able so to regulate the winds of strife or contention that the results will come about not contrary to the Divine arrangement. We may be assured that so far as mere man is concerned, God does not care whether it is one or another. So far as the world is concerned, the Lord has no preference or favorites at all. It is along the line of principles that He is directing and ruling, to work out, eventually, good to all.

Thus God is arranging that all the affairs of the world shall reach a crisis soon, whether He is permitting this king to rule, or that one; or this one to be President, or that one. All things are working in harmony with His great Program. God will set down the "prince of this world," Satan, and all the arrangements he has made – set them down by a severe fall, by a great overthrow, and will set up His own Kingdom, that will bring blessing to all mankind – His own Kingdom that will be the "desire of all nations." It will be the Kingdom of Messiah and His Bride, who is to be His Joint-heir in the Kingdom. It is the Kingdom for which we pray, "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as in Heaven."

MATTERS OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE

We would apply our text particularly to the Church – the Church being especially guided of the Lord, and those in which He is especially interested. In His arrangement He has provided for the setting of these members in the Church. "God hath set the members every one in the Body, as it hath pleased Him." "God hath set some in the Church, first, Apostles, secondarily, public orators, thirdly teachers, pastors, after that workers of miracles," etc. – indicating different stations in the Body of Christ. We are to remember that, as the Apostle says, *God* hath set the members in the Body.

In proportion as twenty or thirty or three hundred or five hundred or a thousand put themselves in harmony with His will, He

will set some to be Elders and some to be Deacons, etc. How will He set them? Through the voice of the Church. Whoever should receive the appointment to be a Deacon in the Church should be faithful to the Lord and to the brethren. And whoever should be appointed as an Elder should consider it a matter of privilege, and be faithful to the Lord and to the brethren, so that he might profit the Church and be pleasing to the brethren, and above all, be pleasing to the Lord.

This is the thought the Apostle gives in his parting words to the Elders of Ephesus. (Acts 20:17-38.) He tells them to take heed to themselves that they may feed the flock. And he goes on to give varied advice – how they should take heed as those who should give account of their opportunities and responsibilities, which they must recognize as from both the Lord and the brethren.

Sometimes in the Lord's permission – certainly not *without* His permission – the classes, in their endeavor to express the Lord's will, may say, This brother was chosen as Elder last time, and we will not choose him as an Elder this time. Or they may say, He was a Deacon last time, and we will not choose him as a Deacon this time, but we will drop him. What should be the attitude of the brother thus dropped? **[R5305 : page 267]**

SUBMISSION TO THE LORD'S WILL

We have had experience along this line – letters from those thus dropped, intimating that they think the Class has made a mistake in not recognizing their ability and not re-electing them. And our answer has been that we did not know what had been the thought back of the action of the Class, and we did not know whether the Class had acted wisely or not, but that our thought would be that the brother should accept this decision as from the Lord.

Such a one should say to himself, I have been the servant of the congregation and have appreciated it very much. I recognize that such a promotion is of the Lord, and that the service given me was of the Lord. But now, in God's providence, I am not to be an overseer for a year, or six months, or what-not. Perhaps the Lord has [R5306 : page 267] a good lesson in this for me. Perhaps the Lord wishes to show whom He will set up and whom He will not. So instead of feeling hurt or miffed or moody over the matter, I am going to say, If I can see anything in which I was derelict in my duty, I will consider it a chastisement from the Lord. I will remember the words of the Scripture which say, "Let the brother...rejoice in that he is exalted, and let the brother...rejoice in that he is abased." I am glad to see that the Class exercise independence enough to do what they consider the Lord's will. At all events, I will try to recognize that promotion cometh not from the East nor West nor South, but that God is the Judge, the Decider, and that He putteth whomsoever He will over the affairs of the Church.

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