

REST FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD

**"My Presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."
– EXOD. 33:14.**

WE ARE NOT to think of our Heavenly Father as literally walking through the wilderness with the children of Israel, as leaving the affairs of the Universe and going with them in their journey. Nor are we to get the thought that God is everywhere at the same time. This unscriptural thought has been the foundation for much error. Christian Scientists say that God is everywhere – in every piece of wood, of china – in everything. When we ask what they mean, they say that since the word God simply stands for good, and since there is good in everything, therefore God must be in everything; for God means good and must be everywhere, even in every atom of matter. So on this erroneous doctrine of God's omnipresence they build their theory. But theirs is not the Scriptural thought.

The Scriptural thought is that God specially manifests His Power and Love to His people. God is in Heaven; the earth is His footstool. But by His various powers and agents, and by His intelligence and knowledge, He can be as if present everywhere – through His angels, His messengers. Just as we by the telegraph and the telephone can have communication with the uttermost parts of the earth, so God can exercise His Power in every part of the Universe.

The words of our text, we remember, were the Lord's answer to Moses when that great statesman was in perplexity. He had been commanded to go forward as the leader of Israel, and through Divine favor to bring them into the land of Canaan, there to give them rest.

From the beginning of the wilderness journey, there was more or less of disinclination or fear on the part of the people. They realized that they were breaking up their homes and going forth into a strange land. Even though they had been oppressed by the Egyptians, they reasoned that if they went out into the wilderness with no Egyptian taskmasters, this would mean that they would have no food. Thus they were stiff-necked – like an ox – difficult to turn about.

The Lord's promise to Moses was, "My Presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." And He promised to be with the Israelites. He gave them assurance that they might recognize His power in their midst; for God's energy in all the affairs of earth, as of the Universe, is not merely a power to know the things that are happening, but to control all events that they may outwork His designs. He guides and assists the efforts of His people. Additionally, the angels of the Lord quite probably were employed in this special work of superintending the affairs of the Israelites.

This thought is in harmony with the Scripture which intimates that there is a guardian angel for each one of the Lord's saints, who has supervision over him. We read, "In Heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in Heaven." (Matt. 18:10.) They have immediate communication with the Father; and thus He has direct oversight of all who belong to Him.

The Divine Power was manifested directly with the Israelites in the Shekinah glory over the Mercy Seat in the Most Holy, which indicated the Lord's presence with them. And when they were to journey onward, the pillar of cloud went before them by day, and the pillar of fire by night. When they were to stop, this cloud would stand still. While they were encamped, the cloud would rest over the Tabernacle, and the Shekinah glory rested between the cherubim on the Mercy-Seat in the Tabernacle. Thus the presence

of God went with them to the Land of Canaan, and gave them all things which He had promised – Joshua 23:14.

MOSES' NEED OF ENCOURAGEMENT

From our context we perceive that Moses' meekness was again manifesting itself. He had previously asked for some one to be mouthpiece for him, and the Lord had said that Aaron might be his mouthpiece. Rash people often get into trouble, because there is a lack of meekness, modesty. But it was not so with Moses – "the meekest man in all the earth." Humility is a most important element of character. The meek man will find it easier to be gentle and patient than will the man who lacks meekness. And so in enumerating the fruits of the Holy Spirit St. Paul mentions meekness. – Gal. 5:23.

When the Lord promised that His presence should go with Moses, He was speaking to him as the *Mediator*. Therefore He said, "My Presence shall go with *thee*." As soon as Moses had inaugurated the Law Covenant at Sinai, Israel was in covenant relationship with God, and the Lord with Israel.

ISRAEL'S FAILURE TO ENTER REST

One might get the thought that God's promise to give rest would signify that Moses should have a rest of mind, and that all who would come into line with Moses and with God's promises would also have a rest of mind. But this mental rest is not what is here meant. The Israelites were going from the land of Egypt into the Land of Promise, which was to be an everlasting inheritance to them, if they would keep their Covenant. But of all the adults who came out of Egypt, only Caleb and Joshua entered into Canaan. (Num. 32:11,12.) The majority failed to enter in because of their lack of faith. The forty years' wandering in the desert was because of their fearfulness and consequent rebellion.

When on the wilderness journey Israel came finally to the place where they could see the land of Canaan, spies were sent to make investigation and to report as to which would be the best way to enter the promised land. All of the spies save Caleb and Joshua, gave an unfavorable report. Then through timidity the people said, "We cannot go up and take that land. Those people are giants, and we look like *grasshoppers* beside them." So in their lack of faith they murmured against going up. Therefore God swore in His wrath, "This people shall not enter into My rest." – Hebrews 3:11. [R5388 : page 26]

TYPICAL AND ANTITYPICAL REST

The Apostle Paul shows that the rest in Canaan was a type of the rest of the people of God, in this Gospel Age. (Heb. 4:3,9.) By *faith* we rest in God – we rest in His promises. We are not moved away by any of the adverse conditions of the present time. Our rest is the *reality*; the rest of Israel was the *type*.

The antitypical rest, into which the Lord's people enter, has two phases. We who believe enter into rest *now*. We have the peace of God ruling in our hearts and guiding our lives. We have the peace of faith, the rest of faith, the confidence that God will direct our course. Therefore we are *contented*, even though not yet *satisfied*. We shall not be *satisfied* until we enter into our *complete rest*. Our true rest will be that glorious, perfect condition beyond the veil, which we shall attain through the First Resurrection.

St. Paul, in discussing this question in the 3d and 4th chapters of Hebrews, declares that the people of Israel failed to enter into rest, not because God did not perform His part, but because they failed to exercise the proper faith in the Lord; they had "an evil heart of unbelief." And he proceeds to say, "Let *us* therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." (Heb. 4:1.) There are requirements; there are conditions. The Apostle means that whoever would be of

this *overcoming* class must take heed, or he will fail to enter into the eternal rest of God. There *will be* such a class of overcomers; and God has predestined and foreordained that they shall enter into this glorious and perfect rest. If we are faithful unto death, we shall attain this glorious rest by the resurrection "*change.*"

JOSHUA A TYPE OF CHRIST

The world is not now able to enter into rest. They are like the raging sea. They have not come into relationship with God. As the Scriptures tell us, mankind is a poor, groaning creation, travailing together in pain. They do not see the rest which God has provided. We see, however, that when the antitypical Moses, the great Mediator, shall have been completed, He will lead the people into rest. – Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:22.

Moses did not lead the people into the Land of Promise; it was Joshua – their new leader – who led them over Jordan. Thus the type shows that mankind will enter into the promised land, not by the Law, but by a Savior. The name Joshua means savior – Greek *Jesous*. (Heb. 4:8, margin.) So Jesus will lead all of mankind who will, into the true Land of Promise – into love and loyalty to God and to the principles of righteousness. It will take the entire thousand years of the Messianic Kingdom to bring the world into condition for all the blessings which God has in store for them.

Our Lord Jesus entered into rest by trusting the Heavenly Father to fulfil all His gracious promises. Jesus, the Head of the antitypical Moses, thus enjoyed perfect rest of heart, and realized the Heavenly Father's continual presence with Him. This continued for three and a half years; and then He entered into the rest complete, by the First Resurrection.

The same is true of all the members of the Body of the antitypical Moses – The Christ. God's presence goes with them. The world at present is not in a condition to enter into the Father's rest.

Only the members of the Body of Christ have entered into this rest of faith, trusting in the Lord. And none except those who continue faithful will be recognized as members of the great antitypical Mediator. All who lack faith lack proof that they are in the Body of Christ. If, then, our hearts are disturbed and we cannot enter into this rest of faith, the proper course is to seek the Throne of Grace, that we may overcome the difficulty.

THE REST PROVIDED FOR MANKIND

As for those Israelites who the Lord said should not enter into His rest, we understand Him to mean, not that *no* Jew will enter into the true rest of God, but rather, that this was a prophecy of the end of the Jewish Age – that they as a nation would not be ready to enter into this rest of faith which was then offered them – that *as a nation* they would fail. They did fail; for "they knew not the day of their visitation."

As soon as the great Messiah shall establish the New Covenant, both Jews and Gentiles will enter into peace and prosperity, as rapidly as they enter into that New Covenant. But the disobedient, after a full, fair trial, will go into the Second Death. Throughout the Millennial Age mankind will be entering into the actual rest, which will mean deliverance from the bondage of Sin and Death. Before Messiah's Reign shall have ended, they will have fully entered into that rest and into perfection of life, and will be counted in as a part of the seed of Abraham, according to the promise, "I have constituted thee a father of many nations." (Gen. 17:5; Rom. 4:17.) The blessing of the Lord will be upon them all. Any *refusing* to enter into the rest of God will be cut off – the wilful sinner shall die at one hundred years of age. – Isa. 65:20.

=====