

"NOW IS OUR SALVATION NEARER"

ST. PAUL WROTE, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed." (Romans 13:11.) God's people of today are surely justified in expressing the same sentiments. The salvation of the Church through the glorious "change" of the First Resurrection is nearing every day, we are sure, even though we do not know exactly how many days still remain before that glorious consummation. So also the world's salvation – the world's rescue from Satan, sin and death – is nearing every day, notwithstanding the fact that we cannot say positively just what day or hour Satan will be fully bound for a thousand years and the Messianic blessings begin to supplant and to roll away the curse which for six thousand years has rested as a great pall over humanity – a dark night, soon to give place to the glorious Millennial Day and the bright-shining of Messiah's Kingdom.

Nothing could shake our faith in the Divine Plan of the Ages epitomized in God's great Oath-bound Covenant made with Abraham, confirmed unto Isaac and Jacob and Israel. There is absolutely no ground for questioning that all the families of the earth will eventually be blessed. There is no room to doubt that God has laid a broad foundation for that blessing in the sending of His Son, who became man's Redeemer. There is no reason for questioning the fact that the Church for more than eighteen centuries has been called out of the world to be sharer with her Lord in the sufferings of this present time and in the glories that are to follow.

There is absolutely no question about the fact that "faithful is He who called us, who also will do it." We have His promise that "if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ" our Lord. We have the Divine Word that Jesus

the Head and the Church His Body, Jesus the Bridegroom and the Church His Bride, constitute the antitypical Spiritual Seed of Abraham, through whom, when glorified, God's blessing will be poured upon humanity. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed, and heirs according to the Promise" (Galatians 3:29), which promise reads, "In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." – Genesis 12:3; 28:14.

There is absolutely no ground for Bible students to question that the consummation of this Gospel Age is now even at the door, and that it will end as the Scriptures foretell in a great Time of Trouble such as never was since there was a nation. We see the participants in this great crisis banding themselves together under the leadership of Capital and Trusts, Labor and Trade Unions. The great crisis, the great clash, symbolically represented as a fire, that will consume the ecclesiastical heavens and the social earth, is very near.

But when we have said this we have said about all that it is safe or proper for us to say. We have never claimed inspiration nor prophetic vision. All that we have ever claimed is that "Wonderful things in the Bible we see," and that the dearest is the love of the Heavenly Father and our Heavenly Lord Jesus, and that the time for the establishment of the Kingdom is very nigh.

CHRONOLOGY BASED UPON FAITH

We remind our readers here that in these columns and in the six volumes of **STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES** we have set forth everything appertaining to the times and seasons in a tentative form; that is to say, not with positiveness, not with the claim that we knew, but merely with the suggestion that "thus and so" seems to be the teaching of the Bible. The Berean Lessons are running now in Volume Second of **STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES** in order that all of our readers may have fresh in mind the Bible chronology as furnished there in Chapter II. We have pointed out that the

chronology is the basis of nearly all the suggestions of prophetic interpretations set forth in *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*. We have pointed out there that the chronology of the Bible is not stated with great clearness, that fractions of years are ignored and that there are certain breaks in it.

We have suggested that ordinarily the chronology would be quite insufficient as evidence and that our acceptance of it is based on faith – on the supposition that God wished to give us a chronology, wished that we might have some knowledge of the times and seasons, and yet wished that it might be so obscure and indefinite as to require faith on the part of His people. We pointed out further that we could not exercise that faith were it not for the fact that this chronology seems to be interwoven and interlocked with numerous prophecies – and these prophecies, in turn, interwoven and interlocked with other prophecies and fulfilments not dependent upon the chronology. Having thus set the matter before the minds of our readers, we asked each to judge for himself as to how much faith he would repose in the chronology and in the application of the prophecies connected with it. We announced that to our own mind it seemed reasonable to accept the chronology and the prophecies from this viewpoint.

Having laid this broad foundation, having put all of **[R5450 : page 135]** our readers on notice to use their own judgment, we proceeded to use this chronology in connection with the various prophecies, drawing various hypotheses and conclusions. We did not in any case remind the reader afresh that all these conclusions were based upon the chronology, and that the chronology is admittedly supported by faith. We assumed that all intelligent readers realized this, and that all such were using their own judgment, not ours, in respect to the chronology and in respect to the applications of the prophecies along the lines of that chronology. We ask you all still to do this.

The chronology still seems as strong as ever to the Editor. He sees nothing to alter or amend. Nevertheless, the Editor wishes to put all THE WATCH TOWER readers on notice, as he already has done twice this year, that to his judgment it now seems unreasonable to expect during the present year all that he had anticipated, as suggested previously. He sees no possibility that the Church Federation will reach its climax of organization and power, and then reach its fall, during the remaining months of this year. And he surely looks for this to occur prior to the full ending of this Gospel Age and the glorification of the last members of the Church, which is the Body of Christ.

This does not prove the chronology wrong, nor does it prove that the Times of the Gentiles do not end with this year. It may be that Gentile Times will end before the ecclesiastical oligarchy attains sacerdotal power. We must wait and see. The Lord is still our Shepherd. No good thing will He withhold from those who follow Him as His sheep, harkening to His Voice and ignoring the voice of strangers. His promises will stand sure, and [R5451 : page 135] these, as all other things, shall work together for good to those who love Him – the called ones according to His purpose. – Romans 8:28.

A SCRIPTURE TO BE FULFILLED

The Lord declares through the Prophet David (Psalm 149:5-9): "Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgments written. This honor have all His saints." Heretofore we had not questioned that this description of the glory of the saints applied to them beyond the veil – beyond the completion of the First Resurrection. But a more careful investigation of the words

forewarns us that we may not be too sure in such a supposition. We suggest as a bare possibility that a time may come when a part of the saints will be in glory beyond the veil, and when those on this side the veil in the flesh will enter very fully into the joys of their Lord and into participation in His work.

If we interpret the statement, "let them sing aloud upon their beds," in harmony with the significance of similar statements elsewhere in the Scriptures, the expression would signify that the saints in glory will be telling the good tidings of great joy – singing, presenting in melodious cadences the messages which none can learn except the one hundred and forty-four thousand. But the word *beds* here, in harmony with usage elsewhere in the Bible, would signify a rest of faith – that these saints were at rest in the midst of conditions to the contrary. This could hardly be the case if the reference be to those who have experienced the First Resurrection "change." Theirs will not be a rest of *faith*, but an absolute *entering into* rest.

Again, while the high praises of God are in their mouth they have the two-edged sword in their hand, according to the prophecy. This "two-edged sword" is evidently, as elsewhere, the Word of God. We can scarcely imagine the saints beyond the veil as handling the Word of God. On the contrary, this would seem to imply that the saints described are on this side of the veil, using the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, in connection with the showing of high praise to God – clearing His name from the dishonor attached to it through the ignorance, superstition and creeds of the Dark Ages.

The next statement, that these saints will use the "sword" to execute vengeance upon the Gentiles and punishments upon the people [of Israel], seems to imply that these saints, whatever their condition, will be in authority; for the Scriptural injunction to them elsewhere is that they should "judge nothing before the time." This

Psalm, therefore, describes the time when they are to do a judging work in respect to the world in general, as well as in respect to Israel, God's people.

A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR SCRIPTURE

A somewhat similar description of The Christ in glory is given us in Revelation 19:11, where He that is called "Faithful and True" goes forth in righteousness to judge and make war. The Heavenly armies follow Him (V.14), and out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations. – V.15.

We know not why this prophecy speaks of Heavenly *armies* – in the plural. We merely suggest that the Heavenly army may possibly be in two divisions – one on this side of the veil, the other on the other side of the veil. We are waiting to see, and merely watching while we wait, and noting with possibly still greater care our Father's Word. We may be sure that if any commission be given to the Lord's people to execute judgment this side of the veil it would be so explicit as to leave no room for doubt, remembering that the Divine requirement throughout the Age has been that the saints of God shall be subject to the powers that be. Any change from this order to the effect that we should execute judgments upon them will need to be very positively and very clearly understood before being executed.

Just how the kings and nobles – financial, political and social – will be bound, and just what kinds of fetters of strength will be used, we may not know until qualified; but the outworking of all these will be, as expressed in Psalms 149:9, "to execute upon them the vengeance written; this honor have all of God's saints." Whether we participate in this work on this side of the veil or on the other side makes no difference to us. In any event, whatever we shall do at any time under the guidance of the Lord's Holy Spirit will be in harmony with justice and all the time intermingled with sympathetic love. None except those possessing and controlled by

this, the Holy Spirit of God, will ever be permitted participation in the Kingdom glories and power.

"Be patient and submissive – strength is given
For every step along the weary way.
And for it all thou'lt render praise to Heaven,
When dreary night gives place to Perfect Day.

"Yes, Perfect Day, the day of God eternal,
When not a shadow shall flit o'er the scene
In that fair land where all is bright and vernal,
And we will be with Christ and naught between.

"Wait, then, dear heart; control thy sad emotion;
God will subdue each angry wind and wave;
And when the voyage ends across life's ocean
Within the haven of sweet rest will save."
