

THE SOURCE OF TRUE PROMOTION

"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.

ONE watching the stars night after night, would observe that while each one has its own motion, yet all seem to revolve around a fixed point which we call the North Star. This fixed star is apparently motionless, and therefore is a point by which a man may gage his course. As we all know, the magnetic needle of the mariner's compass always points due north.

From the clearer astronomical knowledge of our day, it has been ascertained that while the planets of our solar system revolve around our sun, yet there are vast numbers of other suns each having its own retinue of planets, which with their satellites are revolving around it as a center. Furthermore, Science declares that there is a far mightier Center, around which these countless millions of suns revolve, accompanied by their planets and satellites. This great Center seems to be associated with the Pleiades, particularly with Alcyone, the central star of this renowned group. For this reason the suggestion has been made that the Pleiades may represent the Residence of Jehovah, the place from which He governs the Universe. This thought gives new force to the question which the Almighty asked the patriarch Job: "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth the constellations of the Zodiac in their season?" – Job 38:31,32.

There seem to be fewer stars in the North than in any other part of the heavens. Thus the North seems to have been given a very prominent position, the other points of the compass giving it homage, as it were. This fact was observed by the ancients, as the

Prophet Job declares – "He stretcheth out the North over the empty space, and hangeth the earth upon nothing." (Job 26:7.) Throughout the Scriptures the North seems to be closely associated with Jehovah's government of the earth.

LESSONS IN THE RESULTS OF SIN

For six thousand years this planet Earth has been a rebellious province in the Universe of God; and God has permitted mankind to work out their own designs, to manifest what they could do. He not only gave His chosen people Israel certain promises and blessings, but He afterwards gave opportunity also to various nations of the world to exercise great power, to become indeed world-empires, as representatives of Gentile wisdom, to show what the unregenerate heart could give to men in the way of order, law, prosperity, blessings, peace. The **[R5710 : page 186]** period during which He gave this opportunity to the nations is Scripturally called the "Times of the Gentiles," a period of 2,520 years, which began with Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon at the time the Lord permitted His own typical kingdom of Israel to be overthrown, to so remain until Messiah's Day. – Luke 21:24; Ezekiel 21:25-27.

During this interim the world has had four great universal empires. These world-governments have attempted to bring various blessings to mankind, yet they have all proven weak so far as righteousness is concerned, and strong so far as evil and viciousness are concerned. Evidently this is the great lesson which God designed that mankind should learn – that in this fallen condition human government cannot be a success; that perfection of being and perfect conformity to the Divine Law alone can give true happiness; that mankind in their present sinful, dying condition, can meet with only ultimate failure and disaster. Thus through actual experiences mankind will come to realize their own helplessness and their need of God.

But while God has been permitting man to prove his own weakness, He has also been preparing for the blessing of the whole world, as He has foretold in His Word. The time when He will take charge of man's affairs, through the Kingdom of Messiah, will be the time when true and lasting promotion will be realized. All who will then come into harmony with God will receive this true promotion – the attainment of all the good things which were originally provided for mankind in God's Plan, but which were lost by the disobedience of our first father and our first mother, Adam and Eve.

"God is the Judge; He putteth down one and setteth up another." The Lord will put down the attempt of the great usurper Satan to rule the world. Satan, originally Lucifer, conceived an ambition to exalt himself to "sit upon the sides of the North," to "be like the Most High." (Isa. 14:12-17.) But very soon now he will be bound for a thousand years, and will finally be destroyed.

So far as earthly kingdoms are concerned, we may say that God has a general supervision over them in so far as they might otherwise thwart His purposes; and He sometimes puts down one and favors the exaltation to power of another. We are not able to say, however, that this putting down or setting up is in the nature of Divine judgment for sin; for some of those put down have not been the unworthy, and some of those raised to power have not been the best, but often very evil. God has been merely so overruling as to cause all things not only to work together for the ultimate outworking of the great Plan which He has arranged, but also to teach men the necessary lessons of the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

"MOUNT ZION ON THE SIDES OF THE NORTH"

God's particular dealings with the world will be in the future, and for the first thousand years will be through the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. All things are of the Father, and by the Son. In

this glorious work of judging the world, Christ Himself will be the Judge, and the Church, His Body, will be the associate judges. They will render righteous judgment in all cases, will set up only those who come into full accord with God, and will overthrow and eventually destroy all others.

In the meantime God has a special dealing with His people – those who have already left the world, who have consecrated their lives to Him, who have been accepted through the Lord Jesus Christ and counted members of Christ's Body. These are in the way to a promotion, a prominence, greater than that of all others. Satan's ambition [R5711 : page 186] was for self-exaltation; Christ's ambition, on the contrary, was to please the Father and to do good. So likewise the class called to be Christ's associates in the Kingdom have a similar purpose and spirit to that of their Lord and Head. They also seek to do only the will of the Heavenly Father. They also are moved, not to promote their own selfish interests and to gratify their fleshly propensities, but to lay down their lives in carrying out God's great Purpose and Plan.

This is the class which will receive the preeminence over all other classes, all other stations, in earth or in Heaven. With their Lord they are to receive glory, honor, immortality. They will be exalted far above angels and be granted the Divine nature, as has been their Master and Forerunner. (Romans 2:7; 1 Corinthians 15:53,54; 1 John 3:2,3; 1 Corinthians 1:26,27; 2 Thessalonians 2:14; 2 Peter 1:4.) These will share the First Resurrection, Christ's Resurrection. (Revelation 20:5,6; Philippians 3:10.) Their mortal bodies, now merely the instruments of the New Creature, will be laid down forever in death – "Sown in weakness," they will be "raised in power"; "sown in dishonor," they will be "raised in glory"; "sown an animal body," they will be "raised a spiritual body."

A careful study of the above citations of Scripture will be very helpful to those who are comparatively new in the study of the High Calling of the Church of Christ. It is a subject but little understood by Christians in general. But such is the great promotion which God purposes to give His true saints of this Gospel Age, and this promotion can be received from no other quarter than God Himself, on His own terms. This is the glorious inheritance of Zion. When she has been thus exalted and glorified with her Lord, it will be said of her, "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, *on the sides of the North*, the City of the Great King." (Psalm 48:2.) Thus the great eminence which Lucifer in his pride and presumption sought to grasp, that he might "sit upon the sides of the North," will be granted as a reward to The Christ, Head and Body.

PUTTING DOWN AND SETTING UP IN THE CHURCH

This is the great prominence which the people of God, called to this high station, should be seeking, by faithfulness, humility, love and zeal in the service of the Lord. During the present life, experiences of developing and testing are necessary preparations for this exaltation. All those begotten of the Holy Spirit as New Creatures are now called the Church of Christ, although the elect Church proper will not be organized and completed until the First Resurrection. Not until then will the personnel of the Church of glory be manifested. But God deals now with all those who have made a Covenant of Sacrifice. (Psalm 50:5.) When they meet, even two or three of them, the Lord's presence is in their midst; and each has the Lord's blessing in proportion as he has His Spirit. God is now judging in the Church through His Son. He is not judging the world at present.

The principle expressed in our text is operating now in the Church – the setting up of one and the putting down of another.

That the Lord does take an active part in the affairs of the Church we truly believe. St. Paul says that "God hath set the members, every one of them, in the Body as it hath pleased Him." (1 Corinthians 12:18.) This surely indicates a Divine supervision in the Church. We believe that a great deal of trouble is caused by the failure of many of the Lord's people to view matters from this standpoint. They are too apt to forget about the supervision and oversight which the Lord is taking of His Cause. Some therefore have felt great distress [R5711 : page 187] if they were not elected to be a Deacon or an Elder in the Church. Instead of looking at the matter from this viewpoint – that the Lord Himself has the supervision of the affairs of His Church – they are too liable to think, It was that brother who opposed me, or this brother, etc.

We believe that these take a wrong view. Perhaps the Lord permitted the matter to result thus in order to test their humility. The Apostle James intimates something of this kind: "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted, and the brother of high degree in that he is made low." We should look beyond the mere circumstances of the moment; we should consider and remember well that all prominence, all promotion, and all control of the Church, is in the hands of the Lord. Not only might the Lord wish to give a lesson to a brother who might have been a faithful Elder or a faithful Deacon, but it might also be a good lesson to the Class. They might have failed to appreciate what zeal, energy and ability this brother had. If so, their neglect to reelect him to the position would in time prove a lesson to them. The same is true in the case of a brother who has energy, zeal and ability with spirituality, who has never been elected to eldership by the class.

In any event it is for each of the Lord's children to exercise faith, and to remember that real prominence, true exaltation, is of the Lord. As the Apostle Paul shows, he that "desires the office of an overseer [from a real wish to serve], desires a good thing." So it is not wrong to appreciate such office in the Ecclesia; and we are

to appreciate it when we are chosen Elders, because we shall thus have special opportunities for service and for laying down our lives for the brethren. But we are not to be self-seeking in the matter.

When brethren who have served as Elders or Deacons are not reelected, yet are rightly exercised and manifest no resentment, but say, "I am just as glad to serve in one place as another," and enter cheerfully into whatever service is open to them, it will no doubt prove a blessing to their own hearts, and also a blessing to the Class, who note their Christlike spirit. So such brethren should say to themselves, "I will do everything I can to forward the Lord's Cause. The vote of the Class has not given me the responsibility of initiative and direction, but I will do my best to help on in other ways the work of the Lord." Thus they would show the proper spirit of humility and submission to the Lord's providence in the decision of the Class.

"HE CALLETH HIS OWN SHEEP BY NAME"

We believe the principle of our text should be considered in the daily lives of all the Lord's people. Some may fail to see the particular interest which the Lord takes in each one who is His. Every true child of God is the Lord's in the particular sense of having entered into a Covenant of Sacrifice. We should always remember this. Thus as we grow in grace we shall undoubtedly come to see that all "the steps of a righteous man are ordered of the Lord, and He delighteth in his way." "He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken." (Psalm 37:23; 34:20.) The Lord will surely direct the path of such. The Master emphasized His peculiar and personal interest in each of His followers. He calls Himself their Shepherd, and says, "He calleth His own sheep *by name*, and leadeth them out." (John 10:3.) This means a very special supervision of the affairs and interests of each one of His true disciples. Whatever may come to these is not a matter of chance or luck.

The steps of the world are *not* ordered of the Lord. But God's people in proportion as they walk by faith and realize that "all things are working together for good to them that love God, to the called according to His purpose," in that proportion will they be able to have joy, blessing and peace in every experience that comes to them. Failing to do this, some of God's people, we continue to see, are fretting and chafing, feeling that things are working wrong with them, fearing that the Lord has forgotten them, or that the brethren have forgotten them, and that everything is amiss in their case. They are failing to recognize that **God** has to do with all backsetting. If He sees best not to promote them, not to use their talents for a time as they would like, let them learn a lesson of humility and submission, of patience and trust. Let them be willing to cheerfully await God's own good time for their promotion.

To us, then, the great lesson of our text is that promotion, exaltation, cometh neither from the East nor the West nor the South, but from Jehovah, who alone is the Judge, who setteth up one and putteth down another – and all in love. If the putting down seems at times to be the result of mistakes or lack of appreciation on the part of the brethren, let us remember that it has come in the providence of the Lord, and is designed of Him for our good, and perhaps for the good of others in one way or another. The experience will prove a blessing if received in the right spirit. "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." Nothing can by any means hurt us if we keep close to the Lord. Then in due time, we shall be promoted to sit with Christ in His Throne.

