

A Very Present Help

*“God is our refuge
and strength, a
very present help
in trouble.
Therefore will not
we fear, though the
earth be removed,
and though the
mountains be
carried into the
midst of the sea;
Though the waters
thereof roar and be
troubled, though
the mountains
shake with the
swelling thereof.”
—Psalm 46:1-3*

ANOTHER YEAR IS ENDING

and for those not acquainted with the plans and purposes of God it has been a year of increasing tension and fear. To us to whom it has been given to know “the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 13:11), the “Fear not” announcement of the angel on the night Jesus was born has never meant more. (Luke 2:10) Every circumstance in the world which causes fear to strike deeper into the hearts of those who do not put their trust in God,

causes us to “look up” and “lift up” our heads, knowing with increasing certainty that our deliverance “draweth nigh.”—chap. 21:28

Our sympathy goes out to the suffering world, and we long for the time to come when, if we are

found worthy, we will enjoy the blessed privilege of shining forth with Jesus as the sun in that glorious kingdom in which none will molest nor make afraid, and peace and health and life will be assured to all. This sympathy is an active one. By it, we are moved to do all we can to tell the suffering world about the kingdom that is so near. What a joy the proclaiming of the kingdom message has brought to those who love the LORD.

Because God 'is our refuge and strength' in this time of trouble, we will not fear, says the psalmist, 'though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.' Throughout the year, those who have been taking heed to the sure Word of prophecy have seen the signs that betoken the removal of the symbolic earth, that is, the social order which Paul described as "this present evil world." (Gal. 1:4) The people of the world have also seen this removal taking place, but not knowing the ultimate purpose of God in connection therewith, their hearts have been filled with fear.

"There is a river," David continues, "the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God." (Ps. 46:4) These 'streams' seem clearly to symbolize the many promises of God which outline the Divine plan, and they rejoice the hearts of those who have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son—that 'city' which is represented in the people of God who are "alive and remain" during this time of the Master's presence. (I Thess. 4:15) While fear fills the hearts of others, these are made 'glad.'

Above all things, we rejoice in the LORD. Through the Truth we have learned to know him, and to put

our trust in him. We rejoice in the Truth that has revealed his wisdom, justice, love, and power to us. We rejoice also in one another, in the privileges of fellowship we enjoy with the LORD's people of "like precious faith." (II Pet. 1:1) In this respect there are many evidences that the brethren have been drawn together more closely than ever, that the 'blest tie' which 'binds our hearts in Christian love' has been strengthened.

This is as we should expect, for each year brings us a little closer to the kingdom, and if our preparation for the kingdom keeps pace with passing time, each year should find us more emptied of self, and more filled with, and controlled by, the Holy Spirit. It is by this "one Spirit," Paul wrote, that we have all been "baptized into one body." (I Cor. 12:13) The more that self-will is conquered, and the will of the LORD allowed to control our minds and hearts, the stronger will be our affinity for other members of the body, and the greater our joy in fellowshiping with them.

The time of trouble that is upon the world is leading to increasing chaos everywhere, and along all lines of human endeavor. The 'earth' is truly being 'removed,' just as the psalmist foretold. Paul prophesied the same ending of Satan's world saying that the Lord at this time would "shake not the [symbolic] earth only, but also [the symbolic] heaven." The apostle then speaks of "those things which cannot be shaken," and explains that he refers to a "kingdom which cannot be moved."—Heb. 12:26-28

How beautifully this harmonizes with David's assurance that "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her when the

morning appeareth.” (Ps. 46:5, *Marginal Translation*) The ‘earth’ is being removed, the ‘mountains’ are being carried ‘into the midst of the sea,’ but ‘she shall not be moved.’ Since the First Advent of Christ, the Lord has been preparing his kingdom. Now that work is nearly complete, and he is especially in the midst of the last members of the kingdom class. This kingdom cannot be removed. As individuals, we could lose our place in it by unfaithfulness to our vows of consecration. From this standpoint we should take to heart Paul’s admonition, “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) We do not fear because the earth is being removed, but we should have this ‘fear’ mentioned by Paul—that is, an alertness, or watchfulness, to make sure that we are not neglecting any of the means of Divine grace by which we are kept from falling, or from being removed from the kingdom class. Peter expresses a similar thought saying, “Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.”—II Pet. 1:10

To this blessed assurance, Peter adds, “For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” (vs. 11) This is the kingdom that shortly will manifest itself in power and great glory, the kingdom we are ‘receiving,’ during this time when all earthly kingdoms are being removed. We are the “children of the kingdom” now (Matt. 13:38), but if we are faithful even unto death we will be with our Lord in glory, and will actually reign with him “a thousand years.”—Rev. 20:4

‘God shall help her,’ the psalmist declares. Every consecrated follower of the Master can testify that throughout the year the LORD has indeed been a ‘refuge and strength,’ that he has provided help in every time of need. The ‘help’ here mentioned is a special reference to the use of Divine power in the final deliverance of the last members of the church. This is the help that is given to the LORD’s people ‘when the morning appeareth.’

The “day star” (II Pet. 1:19), which introduces the morning is now present. One by one the ‘feet’ members of the body are passing over, receiving their abundant entrance into the kingdom beyond the veil. For all the faithful remaining ones the time is short. Shall we not, then, as Peter admonishes, “gird up the loins” of our minds, and “be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought” unto us “at the revelation of Jesus Christ”?—I Pet. 1:13

As we look ahead to the new year, it is with confidence that regardless of what our experiences may be, whether bitter or sweet, the LORD will be with us to give wisdom and strength in every time of need. The shortness of the time in which to make our calling and election sure should increase our zeal to know and to do the Father’s will; not only with respect to the personal application of the Truth in our own lives, but also in making known the glad tidings to others. Opportunities for bearing witness to the Truth were never greater.

It is the time foreseen when the troubles of this Day of Jehovah will give opportunity for preaching the good tidings of coming good, such as is seldom afforded, and blessed are they who will follow in

the footsteps of the Master, and be the good Samaritans binding up the wounds and pouring in the oil and wine of comfort and cheer.

Those who sacrifice time, strength, and means to proclaim the kingdom message can all testify to the rich blessings their efforts have brought into their own lives. The Truth becomes more precious to us, and is a more powerful influence in preparing us for the kingdom, if we use it for the blessing of others. This will continue to be true throughout the coming year, and all the years to come.

Let us then rejoice in all the wonderful opportunities the LORD is giving us to proclaim “good tidings unto the meek,” and “to bind up the brokenhearted.” (Isa. 61:1-3) Not only should we rejoice that through the Truth the LORD has removed fear from our hearts, but we can also be joyful in the fact that he has commissioned us to “Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.”—Isa. 35:4 ■