

Sing unto God, Ye Kingdoms of the Earth!

"Though ye have lain among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold"—verse 13. PSALM SIXTY-EIGHT

THIS beautiful psalm places before us much food for thought from the inspired pen of the 'man after God's Own heart'—1 Sam. 13:14. Principally, we have revealed in this psalm the Divine Purpose: the glory and strength of God as He has made, and will make, His presence known in the earth. In many verses we also find reference to the Glad Tidings of the Kingdom of God. Indeed, this is the one spirit and theme that pervades the whole of Scripture: the one great Purpose underlying all God's works—to finally bring everything upon earth under One Head, Christ, to the glory of the Eternal Creator.

God is referred to herein by 4 Names: Yah, Yahweh, Elohim, and Shaddai—all of deep significance, as bro. Thomas so well brings out.

The psalm begins with a prophetic, inspired plea for the crushing, scattering, and total annihilation of the wicked from the earth—

v.1: "Let God arise: let His enemies be scattered. Let them also that hate Him flee before Him."

David here picks up, almost word for word, the solemn invocation of Moses at the marching forth of the hosts of Israel—Numbers 10:35.

v.2: "As smoke is driven away, so drive them away. As wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God."

Many have stumbled at this aspect of God, and of the servants of God. Why, say they, should Christlike, humble men of God beseech Him to execute vengeance and destruction? The reason is that true believers, who are divinely enlightened as to the nature of man, know that there is nothing good in man of himself, and that there can be no peace on earth and glory therein to God till human rule is crushed. The Psalmist elsewhere describes natural, fleshly man completely (Psa. 10:4)—

"The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God. God is not in all his thoughts."

Paul, writing to the Romans 3:10-8, shows that all flesh in its natural state falls into this category. Yes, how true! All man's ways are fleshly, and he will not submit to his Creator. This is, and has always been, the vast bulk of the race. Modern man has invented a new god of 'Force' or 'Nature,' who blindly makes all things by random chance, and without any purpose. Man thinks by this device he can do as he wishes, not having to answer to any.

Because of this, all his efforts are opposite to what God has intended. Man's history is one of bloodshed and destruction, without any sense or reason—and more so today than ever. All the earth is full of man's abominations. Every nation is wilful and evil in God's sight, and it is only by the manifestation of divine power that this evil will be removed. Only when the wicked are destroyed from the earth can there be room for the righteousness and glory of God.

Certainly, we are not, at the *present* time, to pray for or seek the punishment of any specific wicked ones. Rather we are to pray, and desire, and work for their turning from the stupid, self-destructive folly of wickedness, unto holiness and salvation, in God's mercy.

But we *are* to be constantly praying for the glorious and dreadful Day when all wickedness—and all who stubbornly cling to it—will be ruthlessly crushed and swept from the earth, that a pure, beneficent morning of righteousness may dawn for a cleansed earth and a perfected mankind. May God speed that Day!

It is only the enfeebled philosophy of orthodox religionism that balks at these robust, inspired cries for the utter destruction of the evil, and exaltation of the good. There is no more difficulty in these *inspired* words of God's faithful servant than in the declaration that Christ—

"Shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in *flaming fire* TAKING VENGEANCE on them that know not God" (2 Thess. 1:7-8).

Therefore, throughout the ages, the elect have been beseeching God to arise and reveal His might, as He has promised He at last will do—and has instructed us to fervently pray for. We see examples of this in many of the godly individuals found in Scripture. They constantly pleaded with God—as David does here—to fulfil His holy purpose, and rid the earth of its corruption. As we work in the Truth, and live the Truth, and get the mind of the Truth, we likewise shall cry for God to arise in might and fulfil that long-foretold, long-awaited Purpose.

Our actions today in the Truth testify to the depth (or otherwise) of our desire for God to act. If we are deliberately doing little, then it would appear that we are quite content with this life and its pleasures, and do not want things changed. If we are working earnestly for the Truth and the Brotherhood, and mourning because of the ascendancy of sin and evil, then our constant petition in word and deed will be for God to arise in manifested wrath and glory.

The psalm continues v. 3 (in contrast to the wicked perishing) with the plea for, and exhortation to, the righteous to be glad—

"But let the righteous be glad: let *them* rejoice before God: yea, let them *exceedingly* rejoice."

They have waited so long, suffering constantly at the hand of evil. When delivered, they will have cause to rejoice that they have been perfected by suffering and patience, and made eternally 'glad.' Note the expression '*exceedingly* rejoice'—indicating that the joy of deliverance will surpass anything man has ever experienced. All past pleasures and happinesses will pale into insignificance before that glory—

"In Thy presence is fullness of joy: at Thy right hand are pleasures forevermore."

And Paul brings this thought out (1 Cor. 2:9)—

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

v.4: "Sing unto God: sing praises to His Name. Extol Him that rideth upon the heavens* by His Name Yah, and rejoice before Him."

Singing—especially a large group in joyful unison—can be a wonderful thing even today, in this weak mortal state. But in the Future Age it will be an eternal joy beyond conception. The exhortation has a present bearing, but the fullness of the picture here is of the triumphant march in the establishment of the Kingdom Age, when—in tireless immortal strength—the singing of the Multitudinous Christ will be immeasurably magnificent: the glorious 'New Song,' the 'Song of Moses and the Lamb,' the Song that none can know but those who sing it.

*(Heavens' = *arabah*: correctly 'desert'—same thought as v. 7. See RV and most recent versions.)

Multitudes will sing unto Yah, and to His saving Name, and (as the word 'rejoice' here means) will leap for joy! They have been blessed beyond their highest imaginations. Theirs is life for evermore! In the reverse of human conquerors who have stained the pages of history, and devastated the fair earth, God (in Christ) will march through this present human desert, and make it like the Garden of the Lord.

v.5: "A Father to the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in His holy habitation."

The concept of God as Father—so prominent in the New Testament is much rarer in the Old, but it is there: clearly and beautifully. It is implicit in man being made 'in the image and likeness of God'—Gen. 1:26. It shines forth in God's declaration to Pharaoh: "Israel is My Son, My Firstborn!"—Exodus 4:22. It is of essential significance in the Promise to David concerning his Seed: "I will be his

Father, and he shall be My Son"—2 Sam. 7:14. And Isaiah 64:8 and Malachi 2:10 make pitiful and appealing reference to it, as does David, here and elsewhere in the Psalms.

v.6: "God setteth the solitary in families. He bringeth out those which are bound with chains. But the rebellious dwell in a dry land."

In the present dark system of things on earth, men are cold, unmerciful, and unrighteous. Many feel alone and unwanted in the earth. Selfishness, violence and greed are the order of the day. Millions are starving, billions are hungry: much is said about it, but little done. The fraction of their wealth the rich countries give the poor ones is infinitesimal.

What a change when kindness and justice will be the rule of all law and administration. Today, wherever there is money handled, there is corruption. The humble, the widow and the orphan will not find the world such a dreadful place in the Age to Come. All their wants and needs will be bountifully supplied by the blessings of that New Day—

"Behold, the Lord God (*Yahweh Elohim*) will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him . . . He shall feed His flock like a shepherd. He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young" (Isa. 40:10-11).

And Psa. 72:4, 17—

"He shall judge the poor of the people. He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor . . . Men shall be blessed in Him, and all nations shall call Him blessed."

Great and wonderful changes—far exceeding anything that has ever occurred—will take place, for everything will be after the divine pattern. Everything stamped with the flesh shall be swept away. All men will at last realize that God is their Father, and will consider themselves His loving and obedient children.

The immediate close family bond for all to see will be found in Christ and his brethren and sisters, who reign, and are ruling the affairs of the earth. God's holy ways will be manifest on every side. Christ will be the Head and King of the *family* of nations, who will worship God in Truth.

". . . But the rebellious dwell in a dry land."

The rebellious have no part in this joyful and blessed Millennial family of God. They will be put out, subject to the punishment of God. Only the lovingly obedient will receive God's mercy, guidance and care.

vs. 7-8: "O God, when Thou wentest forth before Thy people, when Thou didst march through the wilderness—the earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God. Even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel."

The awful majesty of God as manifested in the past will soon be seen on a fuller and more intense scale. The whole earth will feel the dreadful power of the Creator of Heaven and Earth. Man's greatest achievements will crumble before Him; and there will be a complete cleansing, and destruction of all that is contrary to holiness. All will know in that Day that God has indeed intervened in the affairs of men.

v.9: "Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby Thou didst confirm Thine inheritance when it was weary."

Throughout the past 6000 years, God has provided for His people in many ways. Of all the blessings He has given, the most important has been the life-giving Spirit-rain of His Word. Just as those who have gone before, and who at times had more direct communication, *we* are equally privileged to feed upon the Word, and drink freely of the Water of Life. This privilege is limited only

by the limits of our own zeal and desire. We are blessed in being among the thirsty, the poor, God's inheritance who are weary with the dryness of the way. Jesus said of such pilgrims—

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they *shall be filled*" (Matt.5:6).

They are those who are eager and anxious to do what is right, and not to seek their own will and pleasure; who *want* to be filled with God's Word, and with righteousness and holiness; who perceive the infinite desirability of its beauty, and their own natural ugliness. The *complete and perfect* filling, of course, is by the rain of blessings bestowed in the Kingdom Age. It will not be fully given until the Law goes forth from Zion, as is prophesied in Moses' Song of Witness (Deut. 32.2)—

"My doctrine shall drop as the rain; my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass."

But now is the time to agonize toward it, and manifest that God-pleasing desire for it, above all else in life. While we wait and long for this complete filling with all the fullness of God, do we always remember and appreciate God's *current* care for us? Or do we fret and rebel because our circumstances are not always as we wish? Are we drinking of the Water of Life in the Word, or do we not even have the thirst? We need to drink deeply now to sustain our spiritual life, until the time when the plentiful rain is bestowed, and our inheritance confirmed. It is concern for our spiritual health that should be our greatest interest, not for present wealth or welfare.

v. 10: "Thy congregation (Living Ones) hath dwelt therein. Thou, O God, hast prepared of Thy goodness for the poor."

The term here for 'congregation' (*chai*) is not the regular word that is so translated. It means (as will doubtless be recognized) 'alive, life, or living creatures.' It is the word used in the early chapters of Ezekiel that is translated 'Living Creatures.' These are the Cherubim: those who are spiritually *full* of life. To be alive implies activity, doing something constructive, comforting, encouraging, building up the Household of Faith. The Cherubim, to be living and to merit their name, must be full of zeal and enthusiasm for the Truth and its work. It must be all their pleasure and consuming desire. Otherwise we are not *Living* Creatures, but mere vegetables, in any spiritual sense. Are we striving to be a fitting part of these glorious Cherubim, this great Congregation of Life for whom God is preparing all His goodness?

V. 11: "The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it."

Today, God has given His Word in the Scriptures, and it is our individual duty—be we brethren or sisters—to teach it to others, to 'publish it.' It is our position to let our light shine, so that all may see that we are a separate and holy people, and have a message of joy for mankind *that we give evidence of our belief in by our own holy and unworldly conduct.*

But this verse mainly points forward to the future, when Christ issues the command to go forth and teach the nations: the proclamation of the Everlasting Gospel—Rev. 14:6. When he gives the word, a great and immortal host will publish the invitation to give allegiance unto Christ, and forsake the deceptive wine of the Mother of Harlots—Rev. 18:3.

Throughout these verses, we are given glimpses of what life will be like in the Kingdom for those who attain to it; and are shown the work in store for the Saints who are redeemed: God's 'Holy Ones.'

v. 13: "Though ye have lain among the pots*, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold."

*RV renders this 'sheepfolds,' but 'pots' seems to fit best. It is the same word as 'Set on the great pot' (2 Kings 4:38), and 'Set on a pot' (Ezek. 24:3).

Again, we see another vivid contrast: the contrast between degradation and servitude—the common earthenware pots (or perhaps even the cast-off, broken potsherds of refuse)—and the free, joyful soaring of a beautiful Spirit-dove with wings of Redemption-silver and feathers of Faith-gold. The one speaks of weakness, lowness, mortality, death and destruction: the other of divinely-provided Redemption (silver) through a tried and purified Faith (gold).

In this verse, too, we see the dove aspect of peace and redemption. Although we have lain, and do lay, among the pots and potsherds of the earth, yet our potential destiny is spiritual and divine. God in love has given us the opportunity for eternal peace and everlasting life.

Now, as spiritual Israel living in these last days, among the pots but not of them, we must not let the glorious picture of the Dove, the Silver, and the Gold, grow dim. If we remain faithful to our holy calling, we shall be of the dove, class, of pure silver and gold, purified from all dross, not earthen vessels but precious metal, vessels of honour.

vs. 15-16: The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan; an high hill as the hill of Bashan. Why leap ye, ye high hills? This is the hill which God desireth to dwell in. Yea, the Lord will dwell in it for ever."

'Bashan' appears to refer to Mt. Hermon, which is on Bashan's border, and is the highest mountain in the Promised Land. It seems to refer here to the proud and lofty, looking down upon the lowly Land. The Bashanites were giants. 'Bulls of Bashan' were fierce enemies.

But this is to be changed when Zion is exalted above the hills, for it is now-lowly Zion which is the hill of the Lord, the holy hill of righteousness, and upon which God's Temple will be built. To dwell upon this hill and to be a part of the service and worship of God should be all our desire. *Everything* we do, every day, should be centred around this one supreme and foremost goal.

Zion, we know, is to be 'lifted up' above the hills: both figuratively and literally, as the prophets reveal—Isa. 2:2; Zech. 14:10.

V. 17: "The chariots of God (are) twenty thousand, (even) thousands of angels: the Lord (is) among them, (as in) Sinai, in the Holy (place)."

If we remove the translator-added italics of this verse (as bro. Thomas suggests), we see that Sinai is to be the Holy Place of judgment & national assembly. Just as Sinai was used in the past, so it will be used in the future. This is the place where Christ will manifest himself with 1000s of angels. All the responsible living and dead will come to this great gathering to meet the Lord and his angelic host. The angels will no doubt be the arrangers and executors of all the details of the judgment, and the care of the assembled multitudes. And at the event's triumphant climax they will rejoice and sing praises with the Redeemed.

Assembled perhaps in a similar way to Israel, one by one they pass before the Lord Jesus, and each hears one or the other of the two verdicts: "*Come, ye blessed!*" or "*Depart, ye cursed!*" They form 2 companies: one on the right hand, and one on the left. On the right hand, in the 'twinkling of an eye,' all are made like unto the angels, and a mighty Song of Rejoicing will ascend. On the left hand, they are sent away into the area of Europe (the pre-Millennial 'Lake of Fire'), destitute and hopeless, with no place to go, to suffer the dreadful judgments to be poured out there upon the Imperial Beast and the Papal False Prophet. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, much frantic 'repentance' and petition for forgiveness: but all in vain—it is *too late*.

v. 18: "Thou hast ascended on high; thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men. Yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them."

Throughout this psalm, as in all Scripture, our minds are continually directed to Christ, as the Pivot of the Plan and the Source of Salvation. We see him in the Eden-Covering, the Noah-Ark, the Isaac-Sacrifice & Resurrection, the Joseph-Redeemer, the Moses-Lawgiver, and many, many others.

In Exodus we see him as the slain Passover Lamb, & the whole multitudinous ordinance of sacrifice that typically sheltered Israel from failure to keep the impossible perfection of the Law.

Here we see him ascended to heaven in the triumph of his victory over Sin and Death, as Priestly Intercessor for his people, to return with gifts of Spirit and of Power. These are Spirit-gifts that will be given only to the righteous who have overcome. But the rebellious nations—mankind in general—once God's judgments have humbled them and taught them righteousness and holiness, will enjoy the promised Abrahamic blessings that God has reserved for them. Christ will, by Millennial education and transformation, bring the great gifts of God to the nations *'that Yahweh-Elohim might dwell among them'* & wipe all tears from their eyes forever, according to the gracious promise and prophecy of Rev. 21:3-4. Paul applies this v. 18 to Christ, in Eph.4:8.

v.19: "Blessed be the Lord, Who daily loadeth us with benefits: even the God of our salvation."

This attitude of blessing God must be our state of mind at all times. It must fill our minds, and overflow irresistibly through thankful lips of praise. It must not be interrupted by passing disappointments or sorrows, or our faith is indeed weak and sickly. God has graciously given abundantly of His benefits to help us: things temporal and things spiritual—including, above all, His Word. If—having the inestimable gift of the knowledge of the Truth and of the freely offered love of God—we are not overwhelmed with grateful appreciation, then we are blind indeed; yea, cold and dead.

It is our responsibility to keep plentiful oil in our lamps and vessels by constantly imbibing of the Word of Life that is given us. And we must understand that *studying and searching* the Spirit-Word is not to be confused with mere surface *reading*. We can read the Bible through many times, and still know pitifully little about its great message.

Deep studying is best done alone, and under peaceful and quiet conditions, so that the mind can be fully absorbed in the work. Reading and discussing our daily lessons together with others is very good and beneficial. But those passages that do not readily yield their full meaning must be dealt with at such times as we can give ourselves wholly to them in private study. The more we come to know, and *labour* to know, the more plentifully God will give us of His goodness and fellowship.

vs. 20-21: "He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.

"But God shall wound the head of His enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses."

God is salvation, and unto Him do belong the issues (exit, deliverance) from death. God alone can deliver us from death, through His gift of life in Christ. We absolutely cannot deliver ourselves, no matter what our works and efforts may be. But we must not make the mistake of orthodoxy. This wonderful gift of life must never be taken lightly or casually, as if 'Christ has done everything,' and there is nothing for us to do to—

"Make our calling and election sure" (2 Pet. 1:10).

Even after we have accepted the Truth, and have entered into Christ, *we can be rejected*. Salvation is not an instant, automatic, irreversible thing, as the shallow religious world around us assumes. No! We must—

"WORK OUT our salvation *with fear and trembling*" (Phil. 2:12).

It requires a full life dedicated faithfully to the end to following the example of Christ, and doing the will and work of God—

"He that *endureth to the end* SHALL be saved" (Matt. 24:13).

To profess the Truth and 'go on still in trespasses' (that is, the natural, fleshly way of life) will bring dreadful punishment and retribution. We must live what we *profess* to be, in holy separateness, or—as 'friends of the world'—we shall be counted 'enemies of God'—James 4:4.

In vs. 22-35 we have the activities of Christ and the saints in delivering Israel and establishing the Kingdom—

v.22: "The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan (the haughty oppressor): I will bring My people again from the depths of the sea."

Israel will be saved, and once more pass through the sea, after the pattern of the Exodus under Moses. As we do our readings, especially of Israel's great deliverance, let us remember that the events that have gone before are types of what will happen at Christ's return.

v.23: "That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same."

Another robust passage of God's punishment of evil and vindication of good, at which feeble orthodoxy professes to wince. Do they not believe that Sin and sinners will not forever triumph, and that a Day *will* come when—after long divine patience—Evil will be mercilessly crushed, and Good for ever exalted? And that the long-patient and long-suffering righteous will rejoice at the glorious events of that Day, *even as God Himself exhorts them to?*

v.29: "Because of Thy Temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents to Thee."

Here is the 'House of Prayer for All Peoples'—Isa. 56:7, the world-centre of government, instruction, and worship, which appears many times in the prophetic Scriptures—the "Tabernacle-Sanctuary in the midst of Israel" that will manifest to the world that Yahweh is with Israel forever—Ezek. 37:28. It is here the world must go yearly for the Feast of Tabernacles—Zech. 14:16.

v.30: "Rebuke the company of spearmen . . . till every one submit himself. . . Scatter Thou the people that delight in war."

Christ will rule with an iron hand. The disobedient nations are rebuked and kept under subjection. Those that delight in war, today's world rulers, are scattered and destroyed. War is abolished—Isa. 2:4; Psa. 46:9, and peace and righteousness will fill the earth. And—vs. 32-34 all will—

"Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth! O sing praises unto the Lord! To Him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old.

"Lo, He doth send out His voice, and that a mighty voice. Ascribe ye strength unto God: His excellency is over Israel, and His strength is in the clouds."

These are the clouds of the Redeemed that accompany Christ—Rev. 1:7, and on which he rides in judging and subduing the earth—Rev. 14:14. They are the Cherubim-Cloud that form the Chariot of Yahweh—1 Chron. 28:18. His 'strength is in these Clouds' of Redeemed, for He is *Ail Shaddai*, 'The Strength of the Mighty Ones.' They are Mighty Ones because His strength is now in them unto the eternal ages. The psalm ends (v.35)—

"O God, Thou art terrible out of Thy holy places. The God of Israel is He that giveth strength and power unto His people. Blessed be God!"

The Spirit ends this wonderful Millennial psalm with these words because it is the ultimate consummation of all things. God manifested in Spirit through His Holy Ones will be terrible to all His enemies. Only those under the shadow of His wing will be spared in that Day. To 'bless' God means to kneel before Him, to praise and acknowledge Him Who shall be Mighty Ones.

The Hope before us is indeed glorious; and *if we are wise and careful and diligent* in this brief day, that Hope will be realized. We should have one main concern today, & only one: *What does God think of me?*

What will determine His opinion? Will it be our so-diligent state of mind *after* we know His Son Jesus has returned? No, for then *everyone* will show loyalty, and try to make themselves appear faithful. In that day, as Jesus himself says, many will be prepared with all manner of excuses and professions with tears of how much they desire him.

None of this will move Christ. To many he will seem cold and hard. *'Depart from me, ye cursed!'* That which will determine his opinion of us is what we are quietly and consistently doing *now*. If we are totally dedicated and obedient to God today, then we shall be among those glorious *Elohim*—Mighty Ones—who receive strength and power from *Ail*: the Eternal, Uncreate Source from Whom all things are derived, and in Whom all things are sustained and consist.

—D.C. 2/81

Berean
