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Editorial Comment

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The Forward Thrust

There they were! In front of them lay the Sea of Reeds; behind them were the troops of Pharaoh. To Moses came the order from God Himself, "Tell the people to go forward!" At His command an east wind began to blow strongly enough to create a way of escape for Israel and a path of destruction for its enemies. God's word is always one of power. When He speaks things begin to move—forward! In fact, His action is at times His first word, giving promise of more to come.

The Scriptures tell us of His mighty acts in days gone by: the call of Abraham, the Exodus, the choice of David's house, and the return of a remnant from Babylon. On the level of history there was nothing to distinguish these occurrences from other events. Yet as God's prophets were enabled to see and tell, there was movement here, along a line into the future. These happenings were part of a redemptive sequence, drawn, like the net of the parable, through the breakers of human activity. In their significance for man's salvation they were manifestations of power harnessed by divine grace. In them God revealed Himself as the Lord of history and of nature, intent on man's salvation. Again and again God demonstrated His utter faithfulness to the promises He had given.

To the prophets God gave insight into His ways. Yet God's promises and actions were so big with assurances of great things to come that His very prophets felt the need to search their own utterances, wondering when all these events would get

their full meaning (1 Peter 1:10, 11). They looked confidently into the years yet to come. In this respect, as in many others, their words differed from that of seers in other nations. At the very height of their civilization, citizens of Athens, for example, heard their poets and saw their artists depict the great events of days gone by, the age of Homer's heroes. The future, however, held only "exile from Argos." Not so Israel's prophets, for these served and proclaimed a God of promises yet to be fulfilled.

Then came the solution: the Incarnation, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the creation of the church on "the fiftieth day." Jesus of Nazareth came as the unveiling of God's many secrets. In His life and work the forward thrust of God's Word became incarnate. In His wake came apostles as heralds of all that God had done for men. They had a direct word from the King. Theirs was the task of sounding it out and transmitting it to generations yet to come—to us! Behind all this is "the command of God, our Savior" (Titus 1:3). The friction of the centuries has not worn down the thrust of that order. We have been caught up by it to move along through life, against a strong east wind, into the land of our final liberation. We are under orders to move forward, and the very telling of this fact embodies the forward thrust of God's promises, propelling us and others toward the consummation of our redemption.

MARTIN H. SCHARLEMANN