

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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## "Selah"

*"Let us know, let us follow on to know JEHOVAH: His going forth is sure as the morning." - Hoses 6:3, A.R.V.*

THIS New Year comes at a time when, as never before, our Lord's prophecy is being fulfilled, in that "men's hearts [are] failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens [are] shaken" (Luke 21:26). The "powers of the heavens" as operating in men may be defined as religion, faith, spirituality, devotion to God and righteousness. At no previous crisis in the affairs of men has there been greater need for faith in God-in His willingness and ability to intervene on earth in behalf of "men of good will" -and at no time in man's history has real faith been at so low an ebb. To be sure, lip service to the Supreme Being is rendered quite generally, but more as a precaution than with any real expectation of the personal return of Jesus Christ, the Deputy of Jehovah, to reign over and bless mankind, as solemnly and repeatedly promised in Holy Writ.

New Year's Day is generally recognized by the serious-minded as the proper time for looking backward and forward, a time to pause and consider. This is the thought of the interjection "Selah," which occurs seventy-four times in the Psalms and the Book of the Prophet Habbakuk.

According to Scripture lexicographers and commentators, this word is used to call particular attention to the passages in which it occurs. It is defined as meaning "take note" or "weigh this." So the New Year seems an appropriate time to examine some of these specially marked and underlined passages, and particularly the prophetic ones, which should give us a view of what the future holds.

There are at least eight such prophetic Psalms, with eleven verses marked "*Selah*" - *take notice*. We are not disappointed when we gather and compare them; they afford so remarkable a revelation of the divine Intent as to cause us to exclaim: "Hallelujah, what a Savior" -- and what a King!

The 21st Psalm (Psa. 21) is a beautiful hymn of praise of Jehovah, by the King Himself. It reminds us of the colloquy of the Second Psalm, between the Father and the Son. Rotherham's

fine rendering of this Psalm is recommended. The point particularly emphasized is that Jehovah has blessed and exalted the King: "The request of His lips Thou has not withheld. Selah! ... Yea the King is trusting in Jehovah, and in the kindness of the Highest He will not be shaken."

But it will take many and hard experiences yet to bring man to his senses and to a realization that in resisting the new order he is fighting against God. If not, why the repeated warnings to the rulers of the present order to submit to the incoming King? The 75th Psalm (Psa. 75) reads in part (Rotherham): "Surely I will take a set time; I will with equity judge: Dissolving may be the earth and all the dwellers therein; I have adjusted the pillars thereof. Selah! I have said to boasters -- 'Do not boast!' and to lawless ones -- 'Do not lift up a horn!'"

The points here emphasized for our meditation are the "set time"; the equity of the coming judgment, under which every mitigating circumstance of heredity, environment, and Satanic pressure will be given full consideration; and the dissolution of the earth and all the dwellers therein. The literal fulfillment of the latter and other similar prophecies is now seen by scientists as a possibility, through uncontrolled loosing of destructive energy in atomic fission, by evil and reckless men. How reassuring to the student of these prophecies to find coupled with the dire possibilities the promises of divine intervention, to preserve the earth and mankind. "I have adjusted the pillars thereof."

Mr. Rotherham comments on this assurance of the Psalm:

"Society-and perhaps especially the society of nations -- may appear to be falling to piece -- for lack of the effective grip of the bonds of equity; but Jehovah prophetically declares that already He has adjusted the pillars of the social structure. That those 'pillars' are to be understood as fundamental *moral principles*, is at once intimated by the two Divine behests -- *Do not boast, Do not lift up the horn ...* seeing that boasting and oppression so often go hand in hand."

"Equitable as is the Divine Rule," Mr. Rotherham continues, "in dealing with individuals and nations, it nevertheless is framed upon the pattern of 'times and seasons' -- times of delay, in which God as judge is silent and seemingly inactive, as though he were taking no notice of the moral quality or human conduct; and then 'seasons' of activity, involving the principle of bringing up arrears, and dealing all at once with long series of actions; and implying, where wicked conduct has been in the ascendant, an accumulation of punishment, corresponding with the accumulation of unvisited sin.... And so we arrive at the conception of stored-up wrath, arrears of displeasure: intensified punishment, involving stroke upon stroke, when it does come. This is the revealed principle of Divine resentment against sin. That very fact confronts us in this Psalm: accumulated wrath breaking forth in accumulated punishment, figuratively represented as a cup in the hand of Jehovah, a cup foaming in the activity of its contents, mixed as with stimulating spices in the intensity of its action." *"Surely the dregs thereof shall all the lawless of the earth drain out and drink."*

Those who constitute the officials and the citizens of "the City of the Great King" -- the new government of earth -- are referred to in Psalm 87. They are the object of Jehovah's particular love; "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. *Selah!*" -- *take note of them!* Its citizens shall be famous and acclaimed by all the world. Egypt, Babylon, Philistia, Tyre, Ethiopia, shall know them all by name. "Jehovah will count, when he recordeth the peoples, This one was born there. *Selah!* -- *Take note of this!*

The rejoicing people of earth shall know the source of all their joy: "They that sing as well as they that dance shall say, All my fountains are in Thee." This prophecy of general happiness is again

emphasized *in* Psalm 66: "All the earth shall bow themselves down to Thee, and sing praises unto Thee, shall praise in song Thy Name. Selah! Come and see the doings of God, Fear-inspiring is He in act towards the sons of men [Adam]."

The action of the new regime is advanced in Psalm 76, and the picture becomes still brighter: "God is known in Judah, in Israel great is His Name; now hath come into Salem His pavilion, and His dwelling-place into Zion. There hath He broken in pieces the arrows of the bow, shield and sword, and battle [weapons]. Selah!"

The King is now prophetically established in Zion, His pavilion, in Jeru-Salem, the city of Peace, of friendliness, of restitution -- for the word means all of these. There the weapons of warfare are to be finally destroyed: "For all the armor of the armed man in the tumult, and the garments rolled in blood, shall be for burning, for fuel of fire." "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." - Isaiah 9:5; 2:4.

Continuing the address to the coming King from Psalm 76: "Enveloped in light, Thou art more majestic than the mountains of prey. They let themselves be spoiled did the valiant of heart - they have slumbered their sleep, And none of the men of might have found their hands. At Thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, stunned were the horsemen! ... Earth feared and was still; when God rose up to judgment, to save all the humble of the land. Selah!"

How expressive the designation of the kingdoms of the earth - "The mountains of prey!" As Jesus said of their rulers: "The kings of the Gentiles have lordship over them, and they that have authority over them are called Benefactors. But ye shall not be so." Under the new government, the rulers are to be the true servants of the people, no longer such as use their offices as a means of exploitation-of graft, of self-aggrandizement.

The divinely inspired Psalmist-prophet of twenty-five hundred years ago now takes his stand beside the "sons of the prophets" of today, and viewing the great events and changes in earth's affairs now taking place, gives triumphant expression, in the 46th Psalm, to the faith of all those who today are eager to "welcome back the King." "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth do change, and though the mountains be shaken into the heart of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled; though the mountains tremble with the swelling thereof. Selah! ... The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered His voice, the earth melted. Jehovah of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah! Come, behold the works of Jehovah, what desolations He hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariots in the fire. Be still and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth. Jehovah of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah!"

Soon -- perhaps sooner than we think -- the faithful ones will be saying on the other side the veil, as the Psalmist says prophetically in Psalm 48:8: "Just as we had *heard*, so have we *seen* in the city of Jehovah of Hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish her unto times age abiding. SELAH!"

The Hebrew Prophet, in our Year-text for 1985, strikes the note of assured faith! "The going-forth of Jehovah is sure as the morning." The Apostle James echoes his confidence: "Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the presence of the Lord is *at* hand. The prospective citizens of the King's capital city today respond: "Amen; even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus."

- *H. E. Hollister*

## Triumphant Zion

Triumphant Zion, lift thy head  
From dust and darkness and the dead!  
Though humbled long, awake at length,  
And gird thee with thy Savior's strength.

No more shall foes unclean invade,  
And fill thy hallowed courts with dread;  
No more shall sin's defiling host  
Their vict'ry, and thy sorrows, boast.

Put all thy beauteous garments on,  
And let thine excellence be known,  
Decked *in* the robes of righteousness,  
The world thy glory shall confess.

God, from on high, has heard thy prayer;  
His hand thy ruins shall repair;  
Nor will thy watchful Monarch cease  
To guard thee in eternal peace.

Yea, soon astonished men shall see  
The laurels of thy victory;  
And thou, with grace and glory crowned,  
May'st lavish blessings all around.

## The Truth Shall Make You Free

*"If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." - John 8:31, 32.*

IT WAS a maxim of the Jews, "that no man was free, but he who exercised himself in the meditation of the law." By the simple process of inventing this maxim the bondage of the great mass of the Jews to the law was assured. There was no reason to seek freedom from the law as long as they were convinced that liberty was to be gained by mere meditation on it. It is true that "whatsoever things were written aforetime [including the law] were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope," but this fact does not make true their maxim, for the sacred writings bring their blessing only to those who use them as they were intended to be used.. It is just as false a maxim today to say, "I have the truth, therefore I am free." Every slave knows some truth. The better translation which Rotherham gives of our text makes clear why the Jews of Jesus' day, who thought they were faithful followers of Moses, as well as the majority of those down to our present day who have thought of themselves as followers of Jesus, have never attained liberty. His version reads: "If ye abide in My Word of a truth My disciples ye are; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

### SIN'S BONDAGE

Our Lord's explanation that follows our text, that "whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34), is used by the Apostle Paul as the basis of his discussion in the sixth to the eighth chapters of Romans, culminating in the glorious prospect of every creature in the universe having the opportunity of deliverance from every form of bondage into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. (Rom. 8:21.) The One who has planned this transfer from the kingdom of darkness into His Kingdom of Light determined that every one in it should first have an adequate acquaintance with bondage before having freedom offered to him. The little handful comprising the Church are granted in advance of the rest what amounts to a complete liberation, but without depriving them of the advantages of contact with sin and its ravages. The fact that they are left in the midst of an evil world under the rulership of the most guilty of all sinners, the hardest of all taskmasters, does not lessen their freedom of heart; no, not even the fact that the new creature must be content to find its present expression through a body the members of which are distorted and contaminated by sin. The new creature's own sinful body has no more effect on its freedom from sin than have the other sinful bodies that surround it. The new mind is entirely devoted to righteousness, and therefore, while patiently accepting and profiting by the imperfections of its temporary body, and the imperfections of its neighbors and brethren, it holds a steady reign on every tendency of that natural body. The mind of Christ can never be a slave to the human appetites and propensities but must be the master of them. It can never hide behind the excuse, "That is just my way." For the Christian, however, to take over the responsibility of regulating the lives of others would be a sin comparable to that of neglecting to regulate his own life in conformity with the mind of Christ, thus failing to "dwell" in His Word, to "walk in the light."

The "Jerusalem which is above is free.... We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.... not children of the bondwoman but of the free. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 4:26-5:1). Paul's reference in this passage is evidently to freedom from the law. For those Jews, as both Jesus and Paul imply, the thing greater even than being made free from the law, is the freedom offered in common to Jew and Gentile, freedom from sin and the curse which it brought

-- death. This deliverance is not merely as regards the final stage of death, but the death that reigns in our mortal bodies, manifesting itself in depraved affections, unworthy ambitions, selfish purposes, petty aversions, prejudices, superstitions, willfulness, fault-finding, touchiness, impatience, foolish anxieties, fears, avarice, envy, strife, and a multitude of other little demon qualities that haunt the lives of all who in any degree seek their own will. What a changed universe it will be when "the creation itself [R.V.] also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21). This "Declaration of Independence" will eventually have the signature of every creature in the universe who is *willing* to "dwell" in His Word. Already, by various testings, a little Gideon's band is being found of those who are devoted not only to the knowing but also to a doing of His *will* in such fashion that it pervades every moment of every day. They alone can now truly say, "The law of the *spirit o life* in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." - Rom. 8:2.

### **LIBERTY IN CHRIST**

The spirit of life in Christ Jesus must of necessity be in every respect counter to the spirit of Satan and of the world that he governs. The one therefore who is in Christ is a new creature in the most absolute sense, though it is the will only and not the body that is new. This new creature is liberated from all blame as to the sinful tendencies of the old body, for he not only takes no pleasure in its evil ways and desires, but vigorously opposes them by every effort and strategy he can invent. Additionally, that his liberation may be complete, he has an imputation of the merit of Christ's righteousness covering the imperfections of his body, and balancing all that is charged to his account in God's records. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1), but instead, freedom "from the law of sin and death." The situation is paradoxical in that to gain *liberty* one must become a *bond-servant* of Jesus Christ. This he cannot be and be a man-pleaser. "The fear of man bringeth a snare," and any one who is in bondage to man or to the opinion of others cannot serve the Lord with a "single eye." If he is a slave to himself or to any other creature he must first gain his freedom to become the bond servant of Jesus Christ. (Gal 1:10; 4:3, 9.) "No man can serve two masters" (Matt. 6:24). The first step of Christian discipleship, Jesus said, is to "deny self." Thus having gotten rid of the old master, one is ready to "follow" the great Burden bearer.

### **THE CHRISTIAN'S DEFENSIVE WARFARE**

Having attained the liberty that is the result of a personal knowledge of the truth, there is then a life-long struggle to retain it. In this also our opponents are the world, the flesh, and the Adversary. These do not represent merely individuals, but each is a supreme commander of a host more varied in its methods of attacks- than any earthly army with its numerous divisions. Strangely enough it seems usually to take longer to learn to know the many devices of the flesh than those of either Satan or the world. This is largely because its warfare is in the main of the guerrilla type. Many of its tactics are, however, undoubtedly suggested by its wily ally. Who else but Satan would have thought of employing such deceitful phrases as "free-thinker," "I have a mind of my own," etc., to assure the perpetuance of our slavery to our own imperfect reasonings. Rare indeed is the Christian who has learned in the early years of his discipleship that he is not "sufficient of himself to think [reason, Greek] anything of himself; but our sufficiency is of God" (2 Cor. 3:5). What a happy and blessed day it is when that fact is actually learned and we begin to enjoy the liberty that this truth gives. The exercising of this liberty consists in following slavishly, but joyfully, the will of God. Since all in the universe that are not devoted to the doing of God's will are in "the bondage of corruption," His truth alone can make "free indeed." All else is slavery. When finally Satan's lying labels are torn from all these bondages, which all but those who "personally know the truth" have been induced to believe are forms of liberty, the "creation

itself can "be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God."

The names of the shackles the world, the flesh, and the Devil have placed upon us are legion. Time therefore would not permit our even listing them all. It will, nevertheless, well reward us to briefly glance at a few of the more common ones, for among them are many that it is possible for one to wear while boasting of his liberty.

### **YIELD YOUR MEMBERS SERVANTS UNTO HOLINESS**

One would suppose that surely the lower appetites would be instantly brought under control of the divine will as soon as the truth is understood that "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price" - with our gracious heavenly Father's chiefest treasure. (1 Cor. 6:19, 20.) But how few can claim that "whether we eat or whether we drink, or *whatsoever* we do, we do *all* to the glory of God"? (1 Cor. 10:31). Death even to these lower appetites is a long, a tedious process for most disciples, for it means that the habits of years must be broken that the dictates of the flesh may be forsaken and no human functions be used except so far as they operate to fulfill the original and wise intentions of the Being who implanted them.

Still more subtle are the deceptions of those appetites we speak of as the higher ones-desire for knowledge, fellowship, the esteem of others, and the like. As eating and drinking are essential in our present existence, so also are these higher propensities. But even though they are less base than the others, their abuse is none the less to be reprehended. To acquire knowledge merely that one may argue more effectively, is to cultivate pride, an inveterate and merciless foe of the new creature. To seek fellowship merely to gratify the social instinct, is to give complacency to a starving spirit. Pride is served if the esteem of others is sought for any purpose other than the glory of God. We are "a spectacle for men and for angels" not that they might admire us, but that they might see God in us, as He was manifest in Christ because of His never varying love for the Father's will. This love for God's will can mean only that love for righteousness and hatred for evil will always be active, always in operation.

### **BONDAGE TO WHIMS**

In cultivating an aversion to evil one can become so enamored with his self-righteousness as to be entirely unconscious of the fact that instead of using this aversion as God intended, he is becoming a slave to it. As for instance, one might, in his aversion to evil, be continually fretting and fuming about it; thus making himself and every one else miserable. The purpose of our experience with evil is that we may learn to set our hearts on things above. An aversion to evil is inevitable, essential, and proper, and must in some degree include all imperfections of which we are conscious. Evil will eventually be banished from the universe, but the one who endeavors the impossible task of eradicating it before the time by attempting a complete reformation of his brethren and neighbors, in accordance with his own imperfect ideals of perfection, is not only inevitably doomed to disappointment, but what is more important, he is using time and energy that could have been, *should* have been used in bringing his own body into subjection.

But while aversions to evil are essential and proper for the Christian, there are other aversions that are improper and should not be encouraged, as they may deprive one of spiritual blessings. Sometimes, perhaps because one's mind is in a degree carnal, some little personal trait of a speaker is made to be of greater importance than the beautiful truths he is declaring; or the listener, not agreeing with the speaker on every point, is so engrossed with his disagreements that he fails to discover the many sanctifying truths on which he could have agreed and received much



benefit. Similarly many privileges of service are missed by those who choose to perform only those for which their flesh has no aversion. And in a multitude of other ways uncontrolled aversions rob the life of its joys; but for the one who has attained emancipation through the power of the spirit, new beauties unfold every day as he centers his heart, his affection, his vision on things above and beyond this sin-cursed earth. This is the walk of faith.

### **MANIFESTATIONS OF BONDAGE TO SELF**

In ways too numerous to mention, bondage to self is manifested: confirmed fault-finding -- an effort to conform every one to our imperfect judgment; easily disturbed feelings -- because things are not going our way; impatience -- because our ideal of perfection is not attained by others; excitement--because others have not agreed with us, etc. He who possesses true liberty of spirit is not easily excited by opposition. By the power of grace he has inward strength, and the nature of strength is to be deliberate. When his views are opposed, therefore, he is not hasty to reply. While not indifferent, he replies calmly and thoughtfully. Confidence in God gives confidence in the truth, and we are assured that God can have no fellowship with that which is opposed to truth. If our own sentiments or beliefs are not correct, they will pass away in due time; because "everything which is false necessarily carries in itself the element of its own destruction." Therefore if the teachings of those who oppose are false, they bear no stamp of durability. They must sooner or later fall. Our strong faith in God and in His truth, of which He is the protector, should destroy all our over-eagerness of nature. We should therefore be calm amid opposition, patient under rebuke.

Again, he who enjoys this true liberty of spirit, when he has submissively and conscientiously performed a duty, following the leadings of the Lord, will not be troubled or unduly anxious with regard to the result. He who asserts that he has left all in the hands of God, and at the same time manifests a troubled and agitated spirit about the results, gives evidence that he has not made the complete surrender which he professes. Entire surrender and undue anxiety cannot exist at the same time.

As another has remarked, the true spirit of liberty is found only in those who "keep the heart totally disengaged from [free from enslavement to] every created thing, in order that they may follow the known will of God"; or only in those who, in the words of St. Paul, are "dead, and their life is hid with Christ in God." The supremacy of the divine will in our life, the reign of God in our heart, must necessarily have a direct and powerful operation in our mortal body, bringing all into subjection and subordination to that will. True liberty consists in being free from self; liberated from the dominion of the world -- a heart where the Spirit of God rules.

From all forms of bondage there may be temporary liberation by human means, and there will be moments of peace and happiness resulting; but there is only the one means by which permanent deliverance may be accomplished. This blessing is for those who "get to personally know the truth" by the process of "dwelling" in His "Word." One simple and glorious truth, if made a transforming power in the life, is sufficient to emancipate one from nearly all the enslavements of self that have been mentioned. That truth, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed," reveals the "Kingdom of heaven" and its divine King. "If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8:25). "God be thanked, that [though] ye were the servants of sin, ye have *obeyed from the heart* that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17, 18). "Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also [who claim to have been made free by the truth] should walk in newness of life." - Rom. 6:4.

-P. E. Thomson

## Day By Day

O the bitter pain of sorrow,  
That a time could ever be  
When I proudly said to Jesus,  
"All of self, and none of thee."

Yet he found me; I beheld him  
Bleeding on th' accursed tree;  
And my wistful heart said faintly,  
"Some of self and some of thee."

Day by day his tender mercy,  
Healing, helping, full and free,  
Brought me lower, while I whispered,  
"Less of self and more of thee."

Higher than the highest heaven,  
Deeper than the deepest sea,  
Lord, thy love at last has conquered -  
"**None** of self and all of thee."

## Is Israel Emerging from Hell

*"For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.... He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit. " - Hosea 3:4, 5; Isaiah 27:6.*

TWO assumptions are implicit in 1 this question, (1) Hell is a condition from which emergence or escape is a possibility, and (2) Israel, for some indefinite period, has been in hell. With both assumptions we are in agreement.

For a proper understanding of the significance of the term hell, as it is employed in the Bible, readers are referred to the Pastoral Bible Institute edition of the free booklet *What say the Scriptures about Hell?* In that booklet, every text of Scripture in which the word hell is found, is examined.

As to whether or not the nation of Israel has ever been in hell, and, if so, for how long; for light also on the additional question as to whether that nation may now be seen emerging from hell, we believe C. T. Russell's exposition of our Lord's Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus furnishes a satisfying answer. Accordingly, we suggest a review of that exposition at this time. To facilitate such review, we reproduce it, unabridged, in the following paragraphs. Notwithstanding the fact that it was written so long ago (1881), it throws a remarkable light on today's (and tomorrow's) headlines. - Ed. Com.

### PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

"And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

"And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

"And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

"And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

"And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

"But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

"And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

"Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

"For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

"Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

"And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

"And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." - Luke 16:19-31.

THE great difficulty with many in reading this Scripture is that, though they regard it as a parable, they reason on it and draw conclusions from it as though it were a literal statement. To so regard it involves several absurdities; for instance, that the rich man went to hell because he enjoyed many earthly blessings and gave nothing but crumbs to Lazarus. Not a word is said about his wickedness. Again, Lazarus was blessed, not because he was a sincere child of God, full of faith and trust; not because he was good, but simply because he was poor and sick. If this be interpreted literally, the only logical lesson to be drawn from it is, that unless we are poor beggars full of sores, we will never enter into future bliss; and that if now we wear any fine linen and purple, and have plenty to eat every day, we are sure of future torment. Again, the coveted place of favor is "Abraham's bosom"; and if the whole statement be literal, the bosom must also be literal, and it surely would not hold many of earth's millions of sick and poor.

But why consider absurdities? As a parable, it is easy of interpretation. In a parable the thing said is never the thing meant. We know this from our Lord's own explanations of his parables. He said "wheat" meant "children of the kingdom"; "tares," "the children of the devil"; "reapers," his servants, etc. (Matt. 13.) The same classes were represented by different symbols in different parables. Thus the "wheat" of One parable corresponds to the "faithful servants" and the "wise virgin" of others. So, in this parable, the "rich man" represents a class, and "Lazarus" represents another class.

In attempting to expound a parable, an explanation of which the Lord does not furnish us, modesty in expressing our opinion is certainly appropriate. We therefore offer the following explanation without any attempt to force our views upon the reader, except so far as his own truth-enlightened judgment may commend them as in accord with God's Word and Plan. To our understanding, Abraham represented God, and the "rich man" represented the Jewish nation. At the time of the utterance of the parable, and for a long time previous, the Jews had "fared sumptuously every day" -- being the especial recipients of God's favors. As Paul says: "What advantage, then, hath the Jew? Much every way: chiefly, because to them were committed the oracles of God [Law and Prophecy]." The promises [to Abraham and David and their organization as a typical Kingdom of God] invested that people with royalty, as represented by the rich man's "purple." The typical sacrifices of the Law constituted them, in a typical sense, a holy (righteous) nation, represented by the rich man's "fine linen" -- symbolic of righteousness. -- Rev. 19:8.

Lazarus represented the outcasts from Divine favor under the Law, who, sin-sick, hungered and thirsted after righteousness. "Publicans and sinners" of Israel, seeking a better life, and truth hungry Gentiles who were "feeling after God" constituted the Lazarus class. These, at the time of the utterance of this parable, were entirely destitute of those special Divine blessings which Israel enjoyed. They lay at the gate of the rich man. No rich promises of royalty were theirs; not even

typically were they cleansed; but, in moral sickness, pollution, and sin, they were companions of "dogs." Dogs were regarded as detestable creatures in those days, and the typically clean Jew called the outsiders "heathen" and "dogs," and would never eat with them, nor marry, nor have any dealings with them. - John 4:9.

As to how these ate of the "crumbs" of Divine favor which fell from Israel's table of bounties, the Lord's words to the Syrophenician woman give us a key. He said to this Gentile woman, "It is not meet [proper] to take the children's [Israelites'] bread and to cast it to dogs [Gentiles]"; and she answered, "Truth, Lord, but the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table" (Matt. 15:26, 27). Jesus healed her daughter, thus giving the desired crumb of favor.

But there came a great dispensational change in Israel's history when as a nation they rejected and crucified the Son of God. Then their typical righteousness ceased; then the promise of royalty ceased to be theirs, and the kingdom was taken from them to be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof- the Gospel Church, "a holy nation, a peculiar people." (Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:7, 9; Matt. 21:43.) Thus the "rich man" died to all these special advantages, and soon he (the Jewish nation) found himself in a cast-off condition -- in tribulation and affliction.' In such a condition that nation has suffered from that day to this.

Lazarus also died; the condition of the humble Gentiles and the God-seeking "outcasts" of Israel underwent a great change, being carried by the angels (messengers - Apostles, etc.) to Abraham's bosom. Abraham is represented as the father of the faithful and receives all the children of faith, who are thus recognized as the heirs of all the promises made to Abraham; for the children of the flesh are not the children of God, "but the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (children of Abraham); "which seed is Christ"; and "if ye be Christ's, then are ye [believers] Abraham's seed [children], and heirs according to the [Abrahamic] promise." - Gal. 3:29.

Yes, the termination of the condition of things then existing was well illustrated by the figure, death -- the dissolution of the Jewish polity and the withdrawal of the favors which Israel had so long enjoyed. There they were cast off and have since been shown "no favor," while the poor Gentiles, who before had been "aliens from the commonwealth [the polity] of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise [up to this time given to Israel only], having no hope, and without God in the world," were then "made nigh by the blood of Christ and reconciled to God. - Eph. 2:12, 13.

To the symbolism of death and burial used to illustrate the dissolution of Israel and their burial or hiding among the other nations, our Lord added a further figure: "In hell [hades, the grave] he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off," etc. The dead cannot lift up their eyes, nor see either near or far, nor converse; for it is distinctly stated, "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave"; and the dead are described as those who "go down into silence." (Eccl. 9:10; Psa. 115:17.) The Lord wished to show that great sufferings or "torments" would be added to the Jewish nation after their national dissolution and burial amongst the other peoples dead in trespasses and sins; and that they would plead in vain for release and comfort at the hand of the formerly despised Lazarus class.

And history has borne out this parabolic prophecy. For eighteen hundred years the Jews have not only been in distress of mind over their casting out from the favor of God and the loss of their temple and other necessities to the offering of their sacrifices, but they have been relentlessly persecuted by all classes, including professed Christians. From the latter the Jews have expected mercy, as expressed in the parable: "Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue"; but the great gulf fixed between them hinders that. Nevertheless, God still

recognizes the relationship established in his covenant with them, and addresses them as children of the covenant. (Verse 25.) These "torments" have been the penalties attached to the violation of their covenant, and were as certain to be visited upon them as the blessings promised for obedience. - See Lev. 26.

The "great gulf fixed" represents the wide difference between the Gospel Church and the Jew -- the former enjoying free grace, joy, comfort, and peace, as true sons of God, and the latter holding to the Law, which condemns and torments. Prejudice, pride, and error, from the Jewish side, form the bulwarks of this gulf which hinder the Jew from coming into the condition of true sons of God by accepting Christ and the gospel of his grace. The bulwark of this gulf which hinders true sons of God going to the Jew -- under the bondage of the Law -- is their knowledge that by the deeds of the Law none can be justified before God, and that if any man keep the Law (put himself under it to try to commend himself to God by reason of obedience to it), Christ shall profit him nothing. (Gal. 5:2-4.) So, then, we who are of the Lazarus class should not attempt to mix the Law and the Gospel, knowing that they cannot be mixed, and that we can do no good to those who still cling to the Law and reject the sacrifice for sins given by our Lord. And they, not seeing the change of dispensation which took place, argue that to deny the Law as the power to save would be to deny all the past history of their race, and to deny all of God's special dealings with the "fathers" (promises and dealings which through pride and selfishness they failed rightly to apprehend and use); hence they cannot come over to the bosom of Abraham, into the true rest and peace -- the portion of all the true children of faith. - John 8:39; Rom. 4:16; Gal. 3:29.

True, a few Jews probably came into the Christian faith all the way down the Gospel Age, but so few as to be ignored in a parable which represented the Jewish people as a whole. As at the first, Dives represented the orthodox Jews, and not the "outcasts of Israel," so down to the close of the parable he continues to represent a similar class, and hence does not represent such Jews as have renounced the Law Covenant and embraced Christianity or such as have become infidels.

The plea of the "rich man" that "Lazarus" be sent to his five brethren we interpret as follows:

The people of Judea, at the time of our Lord's utterance of this parable, were repeatedly referred to as "Israel," "the lost seep of the house of Israel," "cities of Israel," etc., because all of the tribes were represented there; but actually the majority of the people were of the two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, but few of the ten tribes having returned from Babylon under Cyrus' general permission. If, then, the two tribes were represented in the one "rich man," it would be a harmony of numbers to understand the other ten tribes to be represented in the "five brethren." The request relative to them was doubtless introduced to show that all special favor of God ceased to all Israel (the ten tribes, as well as the two more directly addressed). It seems to us evident that Israel only was meant, for no other nation than Israel had "Moses and the Prophets" as instructors. (Verse 29.) The majority of the ten tribes had so far disregarded Moses and the Prophets that they did not return to the land of promise, but preferred to dwell among idolaters; and hence it would be useless to attempt further communication with them, even by one from the dead -the figuratively dead, but now figuratively risen, Lazarus class. - Eph. 2:5.

Though the parable mentions no bridging of this "great gulf," other portions of Scripture indicate it was to be "fixed" only throughout the Gospel Age, and that at its close the "rich man," having received the measurement of punishment for his sins, will walk out of his fiery troubles over the bridge of God's promises yet unfulfilled to that nation.

Though for centuries the Jews have been bitterly persecute by Pagans, Mohammedans, and professed Christians, they are now gradually rising to political freedom and influence; and

although much of "Jacob's trouble" is just at hand, yet as a people they will be very prominent among the nations in the beginning of the Millennium. The "vail" (2 Cor. 3:13-16) of prejudice still exists, but it will be gradually taken away as the light of the Millennial morning dawns; nor should we be surprised to hear of great awakenings among the Jews, and many coming to acknowledge Christ. They will thus leave their heathen state (national death) and torment, and come, the first of the nations, to be blessed by the true Seed of Abraham-Christ, Head and Body. Their bulwark of race prejudice and pride is falling in some places, and the humble, the poor in spirit, are beginning already to look upon him whom they have pierced, and to inquire, Is not this the Christ? And as they look, the Lord pours upon them the spirit of favor and supplication. (Zech. 12:10.) Therefore, "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her appointed time is accomplished." - Isa. 40:1, 2, margin.

In a word, this parable seems to teach precisely what Paul explained in Rom. 11:19-33. Because of unbelief the natural branches were broken off, and the wild branches grafted into the Abrahamic root -- promise. The parable leaves the Jews in their trouble, and does not refer to their final restoration to favor-doubtless because it was not pertinent to the feature of the subject treated; but Paul assures us that when "the fullness of the Gentiles [the full number from among the Gentiles necessary to make up the Bride of Christ] be come in . . . through your [the Church's] mercy, they also [natural Israel] may obtain mercy." He assures us that this is God's covenant with fleshly Israel (who lost the higher, spiritual promises, but are still the possessors of certain earthly promises), to become the chief nation of earth, etc. In proof of this statement, he quotes from the Prophets, saying: "There shall come out of Sion [the glorified Church] the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob [the fleshly seed]." "As concerning the gospel [high calling], they are enemies [cast off] for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes." "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

- C. T. Russell

## God's Possessive Ownership

*"I am Thine; save me." - Psalm 119:94.*

OUR TEXT, a jewel of truth, expresses the great personal principle in our own salvation. God's ownership and our discipleship are bound together. These five words embody three elements: first a Statement, then a Request, in turn leading to Conviction. We shall consider them in that order.

### "I AM THINE"

What a tremendous Statement if true in our case, for so much then follows! Dare we say to our God -- "I am Thine"? How wonderful if we can because of the resulting privileges and possibilities. For then the Lord replies: "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine" (Isaiah 43:1). How these words echo and re-echo the redemption message of our blessed Lord Jesus!

How true is this. Statement of God: "Thou art Mine," for the possession is fourfold and revealed explicitly in his Son Jesus. First, by *creation*: "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3). Second, by *redemption*, for Jesus "gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:6). Third, by *regeneration*: "the washing of water by the Word" (Eph. 5:26). Fourth, by our *dedication* in obedience to Romans 6:13: "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead." Let us enlarge on these four constituents.

How wonderful is our *creation*! "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me" (Psa. 119:73). "Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture" (Psa. 100:3). "I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well." - Psalm 139:14.

How costly is our *redemption*! "Foreasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without... spot" (1 Pet. 1:18, 19). "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." - Col. 1:14.

How amazing is our *regeneration*! "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ" (Eph. 2:4, 5). "After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we had done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." - Titus 3:4-7.

How natural and becoming is our *self-surrender*! "Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." - 1 Peter 2:5.



Just ponder what this involves in our consecration. Henceforth you cannot write *that* letter, for your hand is not your own - it is His. You cannot go to *that* place, for your feet are not yours now-they are His. You cannot say *those* words, for that tongue is not yours -it is His. He sees into your heart and says: "Thou art Mine." You see into His heart and say: "Yes, Lord, I am Thine," and we sing

"Take my love, my God; I pour  
At Thy feet its treasure-store;  
Take my-self-I wish to be  
Ever, only, all for Thee."

### **"SAVE ME"**

In the second place, we have in our heading text, the Request -- "Save me." Save me from what? Simply, from a five-fold dereliction most obvious. We need salvation from our daily besetting sins. Further, salvation from self, the ruination of the Christian life. Then, salvation from fear in all its aspects; even that of witnessing to God's goodness by "confessing with our mouths" (Rom. 10:9). We also need salvation from a contentment with our own spiritual blessings but a neglect of Christian service. We need to be saved from all that hinders full discipleship.

But it is not only a matter of "save me *from*" but also a "save me *to*." "To a holy life which exemplifies that of Christ in our daily tasks; to a constant joy in the Lord; to a laying down of one's life on behalf of "others." Can our request for this fullness of salvation be Divinely fulfilled in every respect? Consider Eph. 3:20: "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or *think*, according to the power that worketh in us." Then rejoice with Jude's paean (vs. 24, 25 Roth.): "Unto Him who is able to guard you from stumbling and to set you in the presence of His glory without blemish with exultation -- unto God alone our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord be glory, greatness, dominion, and authority, before all the by-gone age and now and unto all the coming ages. Amen!"

O Love that wilt not let me go,  
I rest my weary soul in Thee;  
I give Thee back the life I owe,  
That in Thine ocean depths its flow  
May richer, fuller be.

### **CONVICTION**

Our third consideration of the two clauses leads to a Conviction of the factualness of these profound statements; that of a sound conclusion. God's possessive ownership involves obligations on his part to us. When He says I am his, it is not irreverent to believe it is his responsibility to "save me." If I for my part, trust Him, he on his part, will save. Inasmuch as I am His, he is desirous to save to a full salvation -- "to the uttermost" (Heb. 7:25) for "He careth for you." - 1 Pet. 5:7.

In humbleness of mind, we may appropriate to ourselves His wonderful expressions. Such, for instance, as "My jewels [My special treasure]" (Mal. 3:17); and "Precious in my sight" (Isa. 43:4); and "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands" (Isa. 49:16). (Glorious words shared by natural Israel with spiritual Israel.) "What more can He say than to you He hath said?"

With glowing hearts, let us survey anew God's manifold provisions on our behalf; the "cup that runneth over." He *purchased us* -- "You are bought with a price" (1 Cor. 7:23). He *selected us* -- "The men which Thou gayest me out of the world (John 17:6). He *cleanses us* -- "To purify unto Himself a peculiar people" (Titus 2:14). He *transforms us* -- "Changed into the same image" (2 Cor. 3:18). He *exalted us* -- "Made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." -Eph. 2:6.

Truly, "of grace divine the half was never told." The Lord "is our Shepherd" and we are "the sheep of his pasture." "By grace we are saved" (Eph. 2:5) and now possess the ultimate gift-"the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory" (Eph. 1:13, 14); "the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." - Eph. 4:30.

"I stand all astonished with wonder,  
And gaze on the ocean of love;  
And over its waves to my spirit  
Comes peace, like a heavenly dove."

In view, then, of God's matchless grace to us, outpoured in "exceeding great and precious promises," can we be "of doubtful mind" (Luke 12:29) as to his ultimate and endless care? Says St. Paul: "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). Further, in 2 Tim. 3:14, 15: "Continue thou in the things thou hast learned and hast been assured of... the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." And Hebrews 10:22, 23: "Let us draw near with a true heart in *full assurance* of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering; for He is *faithful* that promised To this, what can be our response? Such lavish benevolence moves our deepest emotions!

"O, how can words with equal warmth  
The gratitude declare  
That glows within my inmost heart?  
But Thou canst read it there."

To the Divine exhortation, "Seek ye my face," our hearts have responded, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek"; with the rational further reaction: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that I will seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple" (Psa. 27:4, 8). How else could we react but as did the Psalmist: "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord in the presence of his people." - Psalm 116:12-14.

Perhaps St. Paul has best expressed the fullness of Christian dedication: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). And in Eph. 3:17-19): "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."

The Poet has perfectly worded our heart's desire:

"Have Thine own way, Lord! Have  
Thine own way!  
Hold o'er my being. Absolute sway!  
Fill with Thy spirit 'till all shall see  
Christ only, always, living in me!"

So, once again -- "I am Thine; save me." Hear, then, once again, the wondrous response -- "Fear thou not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine."

Union sublime! "Made perfect in one" (John 17:23). Alleluia!

### **BENEDICTION**

"The God of peace-He that led up from among the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep, with the blood of an age-abiding covenant-our Lord Jesus, fit you by every good work for the doing of his will, doing within us that which is well-pleasing before him through Jesus Christ: to whom be the glory unto the ages of the ages. Amen." - Heb. 13:20, 21. Roth.

- *W. J. Siekman*

## The Half Hour's Silence

*"And when He [the Lamb] opened the Seventh Seal, there was Silence in the Heaven about Half an Hour." - Rev. 8:1. Diaglott.*

THIS event evidently closes the first series of visions, and it is seen that their fulfillment covers the whole Gospel Dispensation, and the New Dispensation is introduced. The seventh seal is here recorded as opened by the Lamb; the symbolic transactions that occur under it, in the order described are as follows:

1. The symbolic silence.
2. The giving of seven trumpets to seven angels.
3. The symbolic angel taking much incense for the prayers of the saints into the presence of God.
4. The filling of the censer with fire from off the altar, and casting it to the earth.
5. The result of this last transaction caused voices and thunders to be heard by the Revelator, and also an electrical storm-flashes of lightning and an earthquake to be seen by him.
6. The seven angels are next seen making preparations to sound their trumpets.

However, before John himself saw the symbolical transactions of the seventh seal, before he saw or heard anything more, he informs us that a period of "silence" followed, lasting *"about a half hour."*

Up to this time John had been continuously hearing voices and witnessing symbolical occurrences, either before the Throne or upon the earth, etc.; but when the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there came a cessation of activities, both in the scene of the throne vision and on the earth. Concerning the symbolical significance of this "silence" there are two very important things that must not be overlooked in our investigation, viz.:

First, the very fact that *a half hour* is mentioned implies that symbolic time is referred to.

Second, that while the expression, "half an hour," would of itself refer to an exact definite period of time, yet the fact that the word "about" is used, meaning a little more or less, changes the complexion of the matter somewhat and leaves us to look for something that would be either a little more or a little less than a half hour of symbolic time. When symbolic time is employed in the Scriptures, a year of 360 days invariably is represented by a "day;" an hour being one twenty-fourth part of a day would, therefore, represent fifteen days; a half hour would be seven and a half days; and "about" a half hour would be either a little more or a little less than seven and a half days. Expositors of the Revelation have searched in vain for a period in history in which there was a cessation of activities in connection with the work of carrying forward the Divine purposes. Whenever an application has been attempted the time feature has been ignored. One eminent expositor has explained the symbolic "silence" to be a brief but indefinite period when no new agents were to go forth to work important changes in the world. This interpretation is founded upon the fact that as this "silence" precedes the sounding of all seven of the Trumpets, the fulfillment of it must also precede the events symbolized by all the Trumpets. We believe that this is the only logical conclusion to be reached in locating the "silence."

## **LOCATING THE SILENCE**

That John himself did not have disclosed to him the symbolic occurrences of this seventh Seal until the "silence" ended, enables us to locate the symbolic "silence" as the period beginning at Christ's ascension, and ending with the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. This period was, as is stated in the Scriptures, ten days in length, which would fulfill the requirements of the symbol, "about a half an hour" -- seven and one-half days. Immediately preceding his ascension to heaven, Christ commanded the disciples, that before beginning their work they tarry in Jerusalem *until* they were endued with power from on high. (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4.) Thus we see that according to a Divine command all activities on the part of the disciples were to cease during this period -- they were to wait and tarry in silence. The reason for this command is very apparent:

1. They needed to be endued with Divine power and illumination from on High and thus be qualified to execute the Divine commission.
2. He must appear in the presence of God and there arrange for the imputation of the merit of his sacrifice in behalf of his followers, before this Divine power and illumination could be given them to enter upon this work. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come," the Gospel Age was fully opened and the Divine commission began to be carried out, *and the symbolic "silence" ended.*

"And I saw the seven angels who stand in the presence of God and seven trumpets were given to them." - Rev. 8:2. Diaglott.

The seven angels standing in the presence of God represented the various agencies, animate and inanimate, that are at his disposal, and which he designed to be used in the further fulfillment of the visions. These symbolic angels being given seven trumpets would symbolize that everything was now in readiness for the work to proceed. The seven seals represented Jehovah's plans unfolded *to* Christ. The seven angels with their trumpets represent the events and developments of the Gospel Age in greater detail, and gradually unfolded *by* Christ. However, before the seven angels make their preparation to sound their trumpets (Rev. 8:6), another vision is seen by John.

## **ANGEL WITH THE INCENSE**

"And another angel came and stood by the altar having a golden censer; and to him much incense was given, that he should give it for the prayers of all the saints on that golden altar which is before the throne. And the smoke of the perfumes went up for the prayers of the saints out of the hand of the angel in the presence of God. And the angel took the censer and filled it from the fire of the altar, and threw it on the earth; and there were thunders and lightnings and voices and an earthquake." - Rev. 8:3-5. Diaglott.

The vision is of course symbolical. It is designed to picture our Lord Jesus offering His sacrifice in behalf of His Body members, the Church. So far as He personally was concerned it began at His consecration. It was completed at the Cross. Its acceptableness was proven by the fact that He was raised from the dead by the Father. Its formal acceptance in behalf of the Church was manifested after His ascension to heaven. The "incense" represented the perfection of the man Jesus.

The Common Version reads that the "much incense was given Him *with* the prayers of the saints." The Diaglott renders this "*for* the prayers of the saints." The thought evidently is that before the prayers of the saints on earth could be answered, the merit of His sacrifice must be accepted and applied for them. We thus see that as the prayers, offerings, devotions, of the saints throughout the whole Gospel Age, the antitypical Atonement Day, are offered up to God, the merit of Christ's sacrifice would be there to make their offerings, prayers, etc., acceptable. The fragrance of Christ's acceptability to Jehovah gives efficacy to his people's prayers. "And the smoke of the perfumes [incense] went up for the prayers of the saints out of the hand of the angel in the presence of God." - Rev. 8:4.

### **CHRIST "THE ANGEL" BEGINNING HIS ACTIVITIES**

"And the angel took the censer and filled it from the fire of the altar and threw it on the earth: and there were thunders and lightnings and voices and an earthquake." -Rev. 8:5.

The first event in connection with the beginning of these activities is described in the symbolism: the filling of the censer with fire from the altar and casting it to the earth. The effects of this commencement of these activities is described in the symbol by St. John hearing the thunders and voices and seeing the lightnings and an earthquake. In brief, this symbol describes, among other things, judgments poured out. These judgments are of course to be looked for at the beginning of the Age. Upon whom were judgments poured out at that time? The answer is, the Jewish nation, which at that time was a part of the Roman "earth," or order of things. Some might object to this application, because these judgments began before John had the vision. It will be remembered that the Apostle hearing the voice behind him (Rev. 1:10), represented that *some* of the visions of the Revelation had already had a fulfillment before John had given to him the visions. The vision we are now considering we believe is one of these. Let us briefly note some of the particular symbols:

The "Angel" who came to the altar and filled his censer with fire therefrom was the same as the One who offered up the incense -Christ. The censer would represent God's Word. In the words of the prophets and Christ, himself, we find threats of punishments to be meted out to the Jewish nation, because of transgressions against the Divine requirements. The rejection of Christ by that nation was the great transgression, which brought upon the nation the long-deferred judgments, punishments. The altar would represent Divine justice. In its use here, it would seem to represent Divine justice in the act of inflicting punishment upon violators of justice, the Jewish nation. Fire invariably represents destruction or agencies of destruction. The fire that was cast to the earth by the Angel was to eventually destroy the Jewish polity.

### **BAPTIZED WITH FIRE**

"Earth" symbolizes organized society or government. In this symbol, it represents the Jewish government, which at the time of Christ was a part of the Roman earth. Israel as a nation had been threatened with judgments. The nation was called to repentance by John the Baptist. "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance," were his words addressed to them as they came to his baptism. He further said, "And now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He [Christ] that cometh after me is mightier than I. . He shall baptize you [the Israelites indeed] with the Holy Spirit and [the rest of the nation] with fire: Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." - Matt. 3:8-12.

Christ began His ministry to the Jewish nation with the words, "Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mark 1:15). He continually warned them of judgments impending. He foretold the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and its temple, and their dispersion among all nations. He told them that He would send unto them prophets and wise men, who would be His mouthpieces (voices), and some of them they would kill, and some of them scourge in their synagogues, and persecute from city to city. And then foreseeing that they would not give heed to his messengers. He said, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate." -Matt. 23:34, 35.

"Voices" in the visions of Revelation represent human agencies who speak for God, or as, in some instances, for others. In the instance under consideration, it represents the inspired teachers of the early Church beginning at Pentecost. "Lightnings" symbolize flashes of truth, proceeding from these divinely chosen human agencies. Thus do we have pictured before us the wonderful illumination of truth concerning the Divine Plan that broke the symbolical silence. Thunders symbolize controversies.

The "earthquake" in the vision we are now considering, however, refers to the overthrow of the Jewish polity in the years 70-73 A.D.

- R. E. Streeter

## **Human Destiny -- In Whose Hands?**

*"For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited. -- I am the Lord; and there is none else.... Who laid the foundations of the earth, that is should not be removed for ever." - Isaiah 45:18; Psalm 105:5.*

DEMONSTRATIONS against the preparation for nuclear warfare is one of the many indications of the fear of thinking people with regard to the possible use of such power.

Scientists, statesmen and other well informed people tell us the destruction of the human race is a possibility by use of the powers now in the hands of man. This is staggering and gives rise to the question, "Will a man or a few men be allowed to decide the fate of mankind?"

As Christians, we must answer that this matter rests in the hands of God. As the Creator he alone has the right to decide the destiny of the human race. He has given to us definite assurance upon this matter. **THE HUMAN RACE WILL NOT BE DESTROYED.**

Jesus would not have taught us to pray "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" if mankind were to be destroyed. In harmony with this all the Prophets of God have spoken of the time when his Kingdom would be established on earth. We call to mind as an example the words of Daniel, "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed" (Dan. 2:44). No power in the hands of man or devil can hinder the purpose of God. The long promised Kingdom of God is sure to be established.

### **THE LOVE OF GOD**

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." - John 3:16, 17.

These are well known words which tell us that God did not send his Son to earth in a desperate effort to "save" a few of the human race, but that he had the whole world in mind. The coming of Jesus was to fulfill a great and essential feature of the divine purpose, preparatory to the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth.

Sin separates man from fellowship with God and is the cause of death (Rom. 5:12) and all the imperfections and ills which afflict mankind, Jesus took the sin of the world upon himself in order that we and all men might have the opportunity of life and reconciliation with God. The work of saving the world from sin and its consequences as seen in human affairs, is delegated to Christ at his second advent.

Then he will come as earth's rightful King, to judge the nations of the present world order, to establish truth and justice in the earth and bring in everlasting peace. Then all will have the opportunity of eternal life, even those who have as yet never heard of him. - Isaiah 9:6, 7.



## **KINGDOM OF GOD IS NEAR**

Fulfilled prophecy, particularly with reference to world fear, the return of the Jew to Palestine and events in the Middle East, indicate that the Kingdom of God is at hand. This is the assurance that mankind will not be destroyed. The second coming of Christ will save mankind from such a fate.

Since the First Advent, the Gospel has been preached by the command of the Lord Jesus, not to convert the world, but to take out from mankind the true Church of God. This is composed of a "remnant" from Israel and a "people for his name" from the Gentiles. (Rom. 11:5; Acts 15:14.) These are they who have heard the Gospel, believed in Jesus, received him as their personal Savior and accepted his call to follow him (John 14:6; 6:29, 44; mark 8:34-38, etc.). Such embrace his promise to come again to receive them unto himself. -John 14:3.

If this is your happy position, "lift up your head," "be ready," "watch and pray," his coming is at hand. (Matt. 24:42; Luke 21:28; 31, 34-36). We would say to all, Have faith in God, commit your way to him, trusting in his Son Jesus Christ. - Acts 4:12.

In Him there is sure rest and peace *of* heart and mind for the present, and hope for the future.

- *Fred Musk*

Only waiting till the dawning  
Is a little brighter grown,  
Only waiting till the shadows  
Of the world's dark night are flown,  
Till the shadows all shall vanish  
In the blessed, blessed day;  
For the morn, at last, is breaking  
Through the twilight soft and gray.

Only waiting till the presence  
Of the Sun of Righteousness  
Shall dispel the noxious vapors,  
Ignorance, and prejudice;  
Till the glory of the sunlight  
Of the bright millennial day  
Scatters all the mists of darkness,  
Lights the gloom with healing ray.

Waiting for the restitution,  
Promised in the holy Word:  
When our race, redeemed and risen,  
Know and love their Savior Lord.  
When each man shall love his fellow;  
Justice give to each and all:  
Dwell in love, and dwell in Jesus,  
Who redeemed them from the fall.

## Entered Into Rest

F. A. Bartram, Fayetteville, Tex.  
Mary Bialek, Milwaukee, Wis.  
Ernest Bodnar, Cleveland, Ohio  
Emma Bredlau, Loyal, Wis.  
Robert M. Cauley, Jacksonville, N.C.  
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