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Day of Vengeance What? When? Where?

"To proclaim the Day of Vengeance of our God, and to comfort all that mourn."—Isa. 61:2.

IN considering what the Anointed Members of the Body of Christ are to proclaim in his name we come to the subject of the "Day of Vengeance." The Anointed were to preach good tidings unto the meek for the binding up of the broken hearts, and were to proclaim liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison doors to those that are bound, and to make known the acceptable time of the Lord, in which he would be willing to receive sacrifices of the "little flock," and withal they were to proclaim also "The Day of Vengeance of Our God."

This part of the proclamation must not be overlooked, even though the preachers be thought in consequence to be pessimistic. There is a sweet element in the message and there is also a bitter element. Those faithful to their anointing, to their ordination, must not shun to declare the whole counsel of God. However, it is necessary that we scrutinize carefully this subject. A considerable amount of prejudice and misconception of the Divine character and plan have come down to us from the Dark Ages, and we are able to attach to the words of the Lord sentiments which they do not really express.

Day of Vengeance a Brief Period, Otherwise No Flesh Would Live

Well may our hearts rejoice to note the Scriptural declaration that the Day of Vengeance is limited, that it will be cut short. We are assured that "a short work will the Lord make on the earth," and that to this end, instead of allowing the time of trouble to run its course and to practically exterminate the race in the reign of anarchy, the Lord declares that in the midst of the trouble he will establish his Kingdom on the ruins of the present civilization, and that under the ministration of that Kingdom, order and peace and blessing will soon be established on the earth on a sure foundation—on a foundation of righteousness and truth.

The Apostle describes the world of mankind in general at the present time as a groaning creation, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God in their Kingdom power in the end of this Age, in the dawning of the New Dispensation. And if it is true that the world is now groaning and travelling in pain how much more true it will be in that Day of Vengeance, in that Day of Wrath, in that great time of trouble which will affect every human being throughout the world? We may expect

vengeance with this happy thought in our hearts, that as the Lord in the present time has favored us, his people, by permitting the plowshare of trouble to break up the fallow ground of our hearts and make them ready for his glorious message, so he speaks of this coming time of trouble as the plowing of the world, the time for the breaking of the stony hearts, the time for the general preparation of the world of mankind to be brought to a knowledge of the truth—to a knowledge of God's righteousness and justice as well as to a knowledge of his mercy and love, to the intent that all the world then may be on judgment, on trial, to test their loyalty to the principles of righteousness.

This Day of Vengeance, more properly the day of recompenses or vindication will be a thousand years long, but it will be in its beginning that the flame of God's righteous indignation will be most conspicuous. As the Apostle declares, our Lord Jesus shall be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance, vindicating the Divine character, recompensing mankind in proportion as they shall be obedient or disobedient. Because of the prevalence of iniquity, injustice, selfishness, opposition, etc., the flaming fire will burn fiercely at first, but all the more quickly will the world be reduced to submission and yield obedience to the principles of righteousness, the law of the Kingdom of God's dear Son, which will

speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge, and there is no place where their voice is not heard." Consequently there is no excuse for any—neither for the heathen nor for his civilized atheistic fellow, occupying a high position in Christendom and having various honorable titles attached to his name. The flaming fire will enlighten both and scorch these in a figurative sense, and happy will they be who promptly yield and come into accord, for otherwise they shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.

The second class that will be affected will be those who have a knowledge of God, who are not atheistic, but who refuse to fall into line and to co-operate with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ—those who refuse to accept God's favor in the forgiveness of their sins and to abandon sin and to endeavor to be obedient to the terms of the Kingdom. These shall have retribution, the light and the scorching of that flaming fire. And well will it be for those who will promptly yield in submissive obedience, for otherwise they also shall have part in the destruction which that flaming fire will bring to every member of the race who will not come into fullest accord with the Lord and his law of righteousness and his law of love.

Escaping the Condemnation

We see what is coming in the world, and the Lord assures us that through

Day of Vengeance Misunderstood by Many

The average Christian, mistaught by the creeds and traditions handed down from the Dark Ages, thinks of the great majority of the human family as being either in purgatory or in everlasting torture. Such are very apt to think of this message of "the Day of Vengeance" as referring to those tortures which they believe are already being endured by the vast majority of the human family who have died. When we point out to these that "the Day of Vengeance" is everywhere in the Scriptures indicated as a future period or epoch they will feel a still greater fear and dread, saying to themselves: "If the eternal torment which we are taught is already being experienced and is awful to the degree of being indescribable, what further atrocities can the Almighty Creator propose that he should speak of a further Day of Vengeance, as though all the tortures of the past had been merely incidentals, unworthy of being regarded as punishment at all."

Before recounting the particulars of the great Day of Vengeance let us note that there have been other days of vengeance in the past, which in the Scriptures are to some extent referred to as bearing some likeness or resemblance to this coming Day of Vengeance. For instance, at the close of the first dispensation, in Noah's day, there came a reckoning time, a day of judgment, a day of vengeance, a day of Divine visitation or punishment upon the world that then was, which perished in the flood.

A more particular picture of the coming Day of Vengeance is furnished us in the time of trouble which came upon the Jewish nation. After their rejection of Messiah, after they had been favored with the Gospel at the mouth of the Apostles and other proclaimers of that time, there came upon that nation a destructive trouble which utterly overthrew their polity in A. D. 69. Describing that very trouble, the Scriptures declare: "These be the days of vengeance, that all things written may be fulfilled." (Luke 21:22.) The Apostle, referring to the same wrath or vengeance upon the nation of Israel, says: "Wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."—I Thess. 2:16.

just what the Scriptures declare, that as a result of that trouble many nations will come and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord's house; he will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths. For then the law shall go forth from Mt. Zion (the Heavenly Kingdom, the Glorified Christ) and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem.—Isa. 2:3; Micah 4:2.

It is a proper question, Why should God take vengeance upon the world when he teaches us to the contrary, saying: "Avenge not yourselves"? We reply that the entire Word of God, the entire plan of God, the entire Kingdom or dominion of God, is based upon Justice; as we read, "Justice and judgment are the foundation of thy throne." But Justice has not been administered in the world by the Almighty. He has confined his efforts to setting before his people the laws of righteousness. He has indeed held a slight rein over the kingdoms of the world, that they might not overreach the Divine purposes and arrangements; but as for endeavors God's only dealings have been with Abraham and his seed—the natural seed, the few during the Jewish Dispensation, and the spiritual seed, the Church, during this Gospel Dispensation.

The judgments of the Lord have been with these, not only collectively, but also individually, ordering their affairs, blessing them in certain respects in proportion to their faithfulness to him, punishing them in some particulars in proportion to their unfaithfulness; but the mass of the world has been judging itself.

"Joy Cometh in the Morning"

Look back to the closing of the Jewish Age and note how much there was of formal Judaism, of professions of holiness, called Pharisaism. Note how the bitterest enemies of God's Son and of the Plan of Salvation centered in him were found among those who made the greatest professions. See how it was the Scribes and Pharisees and Doctors of Divinity of that time who misled the populace into crying for the crucifixion of Jesus. Was it any wonder that vengeance came upon those men—that, having so much light and opportunity and advantage every way, they should be held responsible for their course of evil?

We may look forward to the Day of

when he is in process of establishment.

This same vindication, or the burning of justice against all unrighteousness, against all sin, shall continue throughout the Millennial Age, giving a just recompense of reward to every son of man that doeth evil and likewise to everyone who shall seek to walk in the highway of holiness in obedience to the law of the Lord, then made so plain that a wayfaring man need not err therein.

"All the Wicked Will God Destroy"

Those who refuse to yield to the stripes and chastisements of the time, who refuse to do what they can to attain the righteous standard then lifted up before the people, will be counted worthy of only a limited measure of forbearance, stated in the Scriptures to be a period of a hundred years, and to all who will not yield, to all who in spite of the Lord's favors reject his mercy and the laws of his Kingdom there can be but the one end, namely, he "shall be destroyed from among the people;" the flaming fire of righteousness of justice shall consume him; as it is written, "A sinner an hundred years old shall be cut off"; and again, "It shall come to pass that the soul that will not obey that Prophet (the Messiah of glory, Head and Body) shall be cut off (utterly destroyed) from among the people."—Isa. 65:20; Acts 3:23.

Thus, eventually, the flaming fire in which our Lord Jesus will be revealed and which will constitute the terrible time of trouble at the time of the establishment of the Kingdom, will burn only against wilful evil-doers until it shall have consumed them all as adversaries of God, for to all his adversaries our God is a consuming fire. He will utterly destroy them—he will not preserve them in torment.—Heb. 10:27; 12:29.

From this standpoint notice again the words of the Apostle that the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven "in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and them that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus." Two classes will be chastened: (1) Those who recognize not God. None are so degraded that they should not be able to recognize the fact that there is a great Supreme Creator to whom we are indebted for our lives and all that we possess—"Day unto day uttereth

faith in him and joyful obedience to his instruction we may escape all those things coming upon the world. (Luke 21:36.) We shall escape because all the members of the Church will be glorified before the Day of Vengeance upon the world. Before the revelation of the Lord in flaming fire comes his parousia, his manifestation to his saints through the eyes of their understanding under the guidance of the holy Spirit and the teaching of the Word. Blessed are our eyes for they see, and our ears for they hear! Blessed are we whom the Son of Man at his second presence comes forth to serve with the precious things of his Word, things new and old, according to promise.—Matt. 13:52.

We are not concerned in the day of retribution in the sense of expecting to be under retributive judgment ourselves, but are hoping, by the Lord's grace, to be among the overcomers, whose judgment will be complete in this present age and who will be accounted worthy of a share in his Kingdom, and who, the Apostle says, shall judge the world and be associated with Christ as his mighty angels, messengers of power, in the exercising of the judgments written—"This honor have all his saints."—Psa. 149:9.

Nevertheless it is profitable to us that the Lord hath anointed us to declare the day of retribution as well as to declare the good tidings. If the whole world could be made aware of the real retribution that is coming it undoubtedly would influence many. The thought that the future will be the same for all, whether they sin much or little, has tended to make many careless of the extent of their wrongdoing. On the contrary we see that every word and act of life has its bearing, even so far as the world is concerned, in proportion to their knowledge, and that those possessing much light will have the severer retribution if they neglect it or walk contrary to what they discern to be the Lord's standard of righteousness.

WHAT SAY THE SCRIPTURES ABOUT HELL?

A Post-Card Request will bring you free a 48-page magazine treating every Scripture in which the word Hell is found.

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An Independent, Unsectarian Religious Newspaper, Specially Devoted to the Forwarding of the Laymen's Home Missionary Movement for the Glory of God and Good of Humanity.

The announcement of the World's Christian Unity Commission that J. Pierpont Morgan is to be financial manager of the commission which has for its purpose the bringing together of all Christian denominations of the world, was the most striking feature of the closing session of the House of Deputies at the recent Episcopal Convention.

The latest invention of torpedoes is by a truck gardener of Missouri, named Ikerman. His torpedoes have been tested on the battleship Texas. One naval officer is quoted as saying that with twelve men and enough of Ikerman's torpedoes he could withstand the attack of the combined navies of the world. We are waiting for the day when the nations shall learn war no more.

Some years ago mention was made of the discovery of miracle wheat in Virginia. Two grains produced 1,312, which produced five pounds—one grain having fifty stools of well-developed stalks or straws. The wheat was sown alongside of some ordinary wheat, and reports have it that the miracle wheat heads are from three to five inches long and from three to five grains to the mesh, whereas with the common wheat the heads are from two to three inches in length. The yield of the miracle wheat is more than double that of the common wheat.

This is the view of Dr. Lyman Abbott, respecting the Federation of Churches, as set forth in a recent issue of the "Outlook": "These instances of united action indicate only a primitive form of Federal Union. Nothing more could be expected within nineteen months. But, primitive though it is, it is real. The American States, when they were first federated, were as truly a nation as they are today. They were a weak nation, an immature nation, but a nation, nevertheless. Today the Federal Council demonstrates that not only Church Union is practicable, quite wise, but also that it has been achieved."

It cannot be proved that the Rev. C. J. Tuthill, Congregationalist, of Massachusetts, is a prophet, but here is his idea of heaven: "Heaven is only an evolution of this world. A Christian may love a baseball game and, loving it, remain a Christian. Why, then, is it not safe to prophesy that even the game of baseball will have its place in some spiritual form in heaven? Imagine an everlasting rivalry for the pennant! Think of the new eternal question, "What's the score?"

It is written that in "the latter days men would be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."

The Upper Iowa Methodist Conference recently faced the fact that 57 "charges" in the Conference had been vacated by young men in the prime of life, who intended to engage in secular lines of work. Many of these men were only a few years out of the university or seminary. The general complaint was that the salary paid was not sufficient.—*Exchange*.

Such a condition of things should not cause astonishment. Nearly all of the ministers that have been graduated from all colleges and seminaries within the last fifteen years left the Alma Mater Higher Critics—unbelievers in the Bible—and many of them skeptical as respects a personal God. This is the general teaching of all the colleges and seminaries, male and female—not openly and avowedly sometimes, but really and truly, nevertheless.

Thieves in Paradise

Luke 23:43.—This greatly misunderstood text explained in Peoples Pulpit, Vol. I, No. 7.

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The Lord's House in Top of the Mountains

"It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it."—Isaiah 2:2.

OUR text has not yet been fulfilled, but we believe the beginning of its fulfillment to be near. It pictures Messiah's Kingdom, for which Christian people have long been waiting and praying, "Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"—the same Kingdom for which the Jews so long waited and are still waiting. Our text relates, not to the spiritual part of the Kingdom, which the Gospel Church is called to share, but to the earthly part of the Kingdom, which belongs to the natural seed of Abraham. A great mistake has been made by many of us in the past, in that we have not discerned and acknowledged the two Israels, spiritual and natural, and the separate rewards and blessings apportioned to these by the Divine promises of the Scriptures. Both are to be used of God in fulfilling the promise made to Abraham—in blessing all the families of the earth.

After the completion of Messiah, Head and Members, on the plane of glory, the New Covenant will be inaugurated with Israel, as the Scriptures distinctly teach. (Jer. 31:31-34.) Our text, therefore, waits for its accomplishment until the last member of the elect Church of Christ shall have passed beyond the veil.

Israel the Earthly Representative of the Kingdom

In the symbolic language of the Scriptures a mountain is always symbolical of a Kingdom. Hence the mountain of the Lord's house means the Kingdom of God and that royal house or family recognized by him. For instance, we read that David sat upon the throne of the Kingdom of the Lord and that God made a Covenant with him, "even the sure mercies of David"—viz., that none but his Seed, his posterity, would ever be recognized as the Divinely appointed representatives of God in kingly authority and power. In other words, Messiah was to be the offspring of David, the great antitypical David (Beloved), who must "reign from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth."

The Messiah-King on the spirit plane, the Son of God (and like God invisible to men, as are also the angels), is the antitypical David and the antitypical Solomon, the wise, the great, the rich. In the days of his flesh our Lord was the Son of David according to the flesh, though begotten of a divine life not tainted by any human imperfection. He was, therefore, holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. His faithfulness to the will of the Father made him subject to all of the experiences of suffering and death, as expressed in his own words, "The cup which my Father hath poured for me, shall I refuse to drink it?" His obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, demonstrated his loyalty to the last degree and he received the high reward appropriate. "Him hath God also highly exalted and given a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, both of things in heaven and things in earth."

Exalted to the right hand of Divine favor he waits only for the Father's time to take to himself his great power and reign (Revelation 11:17). Meantime, in harmony with the Divine will, purposed before the foundation of the world, he acts as Advocate for such as have the hearing ear and the obedient heart and will now respond to the special invitation of the Gospel Age. That call is to leave the world, its sins, its pleasures and its hopes, and to walk by faith in the exceeding great and precious promises of God—the things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man. These are the heavenly things promised them as the Bride and joint-heir with their Redeemer in his glorious Kingdom to come and its blessed work of uplifting Israel and the world.

In the Top of the Mountains

We have before our minds the antitypical house of David, Messiah's kingly household, the Royal Priesthood Divinely prepared. As a Kingdom it will be at the top, above all the kingdoms of earth. Not only will this be true of the spiritual Kingdom (invisible to men as the angels are invisible), but it will include also an earthly Kingdom

composed of "Israelites indeed." At their head as princes in all the earth will stand the resurrected Ancient Worthies, perfected as men and samples of what all mankind, by obedience to the laws of the Kingdom, may attain to, with eternal life. These Ancient Worthies are enumerated in the Scriptures—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the prophets, etc., and described by St. Paul in Hebrews 11:38-40. To these belong the earthly promises of the Old Testament. They never heard of the heavenly or spiritual promises. Their loyalty will find its reward in the fact that they will come forth from the tomb no longer blemished and imperfect, but fully, completely restored to the perfection originally enjoyed by father Adam. Additionally these will have the special guidance and instruction of Messiah (Head and members) in all the affairs of mankind. Thus as the Master said, speaking of that time, "Ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the prophets in the Kingdom."—Luke 13:28.

God's Kingdom will be represented in the earth by Israel—especially by these saintly men of Israel, resurrected perfect, who will be the special appointees and representatives of the glorified Messiah's rule. As it is written, instead of thy fathers (the ancient saintly ones were styled "the fathers," as Jesus was styled the Son of Abraham and David) shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth. (Psalm 45:16.) These princes acting under and continually in contact with the spiritual Kingdom and rulers styled in the Scriptures "the royal priesthood," will, of course, be so superior in their wisdom and power as to command the obedience of the whole earth. The nation of Israel, with whom they are related, would naturally respond more quickly than others to the New Order of things, which will be just that for which they have been waiting and praying for more than thirty centuries.

All Nations Shall Flow Unto It

In these words the Lord through the prophet assures us of the wonderful success which will attend the establishment of the New Empire of earth, the dominion of the Prince of light, which will supersede the dominion of the Prince of darkness, when Satan shall be bound for a thousand years, that he may deceive the peoples no more. Messiah's Kingdom will be high above all other Kingdoms, not only in its grandeur, majesty and authority, but also in the lofty principles which it will represent.

Thus it is written, "He shall lay righteousness to the line and justice to the plummet and the hail [Truth] shall sweep away the refuge of lies" (Isaiah 28:17). Nevertheless, as the world shall come to appreciate the new order of things all nations shall flow unto it, flow up to it—contrary to the downwardness of fallen human nature. It will make manifest such wonderful rewards for righteousness and obedience to God and it will so make manifest the stripes that must attend all willful disobedience to the Divine arrangement that the Scripture will be fulfilled which declares that when the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.—Isaiah 26:9.

Humanity for six thousand years has been learning "the exceeding sinfulness of sin," its downward tendency in every sense of the word. Every form of government has been tried in an endeavor to secure the greatest amount of blessing. But the uniform results have been that those exalted to place and influence and power have proved themselves unequal to the opportunities and temptations of the positions and have abused them selfishly. Whoever is acquainted with history realizes the

truthfulness of all this. If some of us have hoped that the general education of the masses and the general enlightenment of the race would abolish sin, and selfishness and demonstrate the truthfulness of the Proverb, "Honesty is the best policy," we are willing to confess that this has been a mistake. We perceive that the greater the wisdom and intelligence granted to a selfish mind and heart the greater will be its opportunities for evil and incitement thereto.

"Every Man's Hand Shall Be Against His Neighbor"

As a consequence the world is losing confidence in itself. All, whether politicians or judges or governors, great or small, of one party or another, of one nationality or another—all are accused of being tarred with the same stick of selfishness. The Bible clearly indicates that this distrust is not without reason and that the great time of trouble soon to come upon every nation (Daniel 12:1) will be the direct result of this loss of confidence. The Bible's description of the matter briefly summed up is, Every man's hand shall be against his neighbor (Zechariah 8:10; 14:13). It will be after that great time of trouble shall have thoroughly sickened humanity as respects itself and any hopes it might have had of bringing about a Millennium by its own efforts—that God will manifest his Kingdom in the top of the mountains—higher than all other kingdoms every way, and all people shall flow toward it. As it is written, "The desire of all peoples shall come."—Haggai 2:7.

This is described in the verses following our text which read, "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, let us go up to the mountain (kingdom) of the Lord, to the house (temple) of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths, for out of Zion [the spiritual unseen Kingdom of Messiah] shall go forth the Law and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem [the seat of earth's empire to be]. And he shall judge among the nations [rewarding and punishing justly], and shall rebuke many people; and 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."

All Christians agree that these words apply to the Messiah's Kingdom. They tell us clearly and distinctly of how the judgments of the Lord will be abroad in the earth, causing wars to cease and the knowledge of the Lord to fill the whole earth as the waters cover the great deep.—Isaiah 11:9.

O House of Jacob, Come!

We have already noted that this prophecy belongs to natural Israel and not to spiritual Israel. As the first verse declares, it concerns Judah and Jerusalem. By the time this prophecy shall have begun to be fulfilled, spiritual Israel will be beyond the veil. It is in full harmony with this that we read in the fifth verse, "O house of Jacob, Come ye and let us walk in the light of the Lord."

This is particularly the time when this wonderful message to natural Israel should go forth. We understand the Scriptures to teach that during the next few years the Lord will have special dealings with Israel in connection with this call. He will point out to them the way of righteousness and the great privileges that are theirs as a people, because of Divine promises to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, etc. But only those who respond by turning to the light of God's Word to walk in it will be in the proper condition of heart and obedience to promptly get the blessing at the beginning of Messiah's reign. Those most prompt to respond will get the greater blessing.

Verses 6-10 portray some of the reasons why God's favor has been withdrawn for a time from natural Israel—aside from the fact that his special favor was for the time to be given to Spiritual Israel. Then follows a description of the time of trouble, in which present institutions will succumb, to be followed by Messiah's Empire.

"WHERE ARE THE DEAD"

This sermon was published in PEOPLES PULPIT, Volume one, Number 3. The interest aroused and the great demand for copies of this sermon have been remarkable. A sample copy will be mailed to any one free.

Vessels of Gold and of Silver

"In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honor, and some to dishonor. If a man, therefore, purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."—2 Tim. 2:20, 21.

THIS text shows that the Apostle was solicitous for the Church because of a sectarian spirit of contention which prevailed where the spirit of fellowship should have manifested itself. This does not signify that the Apostle ignored the importance of fidelity to the Truth, for concerning this he had already written that the Church should "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." He here objects to the disposition of many to contend about matters of no moment, which he terms "words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers," and again "profane and vain babblings, which would increase unto more ungodliness and eat as doth a canker."

In a word, man-made differences should be ignored and only those doctrines which the Scriptures clearly and distinctly set forth are to be insisted upon and contended for. In all other things the Lord's people are to have fervent charity and liberty among themselves. After exhorting Timothy, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth," he declares that notwithstanding these various babblings and twistings of the Scriptures, the "foundation of God standeth sure." God's great plan will stand and will finally triumph no matter who may babble against it and no matter how much the Adversary may seek to draw attention away from the fundamental facts to the theories and fancies of the egotistical and hypocritical. The Apostle's thought seems to be that some of the Lord's people, by following the course he has outlined, and becoming thoroughly furnished in the word of truth and able to rightly divide it to others, will be vessels of honor in the service of the Lord in the present time. On the contrary, some—truly God's people, truly consecrated to him, yet neglecting these important principles—will be vessels of less honor and used of the Lord to accomplish less glorious results.

To Honor and Less Honor

How manifestly true is this inspired declaration only the more advanced of the Lord's people may know. The world judges by outward appearance, and perceives the prosperity of many who have the form of godliness without the power thereof; it perceives the prosperity of many sects and parties, divided chiefly by mere quibbles, and it perceives the lesser prosperity of those who ignore sectarian lines and stand only for the word of truth, and contend only "for the faith once delivered to the saints." Only the spiritually minded can see the situation from the Lord's standpoint—only these can realize which, from the Lord's standpoint, are the gold and silver vessels and which are those of wood and of earth. Only this class can discern which vessels the Lord uses to the greater honor—through which he sends the greater riches of his grace and truth, and which he uses in an inferior sense.

The "great house" of the Apostle's parable is the household of faith—the house of God—the Church of the living God. This Church is now in an embryo condition; unfinished, imperfect; it bears a similar relationship to the Church in glory that Israel's tabernacle in the wilderness bore to the temple at Jerusalem. We are not to understand that only the most proficient of the Lord's people are recognized by him and others entirely ignored, but, as the Apostle says, our sure foundation lies in the fact that "the Lord knoweth them that are his," and also in the fact that those who name the name of Christ should depart from iniquity. Every servant of God, every vessel in his house, must come under these conditions to be vessels at all: (1) The Lord must know them as his; they must be of the class mentioned by the prophet who have made a covenant with the Lord by sacrifice—self-sacrifice, consecration to death; (2) they must also be of the class that depart from iniquity—that recognize righteousness, truth, holiness,

and strive toward perfect attainment.

But not all of those who make a full consecration and who strive for righteousness shall occupy the same station in the Divine service, either now or hereafter. The degree of honor in the Lord's service will depend upon their degree of honesty and zeal. While, therefore, we may well rejoice to be vessels in the Lord's house, to be used of him either in more honorable or less honorable capacity in his service, nevertheless he is pleased to have us aspire to such faithfulness in thought, in word, in deed, as would have his approval and win for us the higher stations in his esteem and service here and hereafter.

"If a Man Purge Himself"

The Apostle tells us how as Christians we may attain to the highest positions in Divine favor. He says, "If a man purge himself from these he shall be a vessel unto honor." He does not mean, however, if any man do so, for here and elsewhere he shows, in harmony with the other Scriptures, that the world has nothing whatever to do with this matter—that the first step of approach to God must be through the door, through Christ, and that only those who come unto the Father through him have any standing whatever at the present time. Hence the Apostle's thought is that if any man in the Church will purge himself, will purify himself, will seek to put away these elements of dross and unrighteousness, will seek to avoid profane and vain babblings, will cease to strive about words to no profit, and will seek more and more by the Lord's assistance to "rightly divide the word of truth"—such a man in Christ, whether his talents and opportunities be great or small, will be blessed of the Lord and reckoned of him as one of the more honorable vessels for his service here and hereafter.

Continuing further he declares that the man who thus purges himself and seeks to bring himself closely into alignment with the will of God, will not only be reckoned a vessel unto honor, but will be sanctified and set apart by the Lord for his service. He will give him opportunities, special opportunities, to do and to be assisted, which he would not have provided for him otherwise. Christian people too often seem to overlook this matter—to forget how much God has to do with his Church, with those who have made consecration of themselves to him.

More and more should we all remember, as is urged by the Apostle, that "God hath set in the Body the various members as it hath pleased him." It is for us not to be ambitious for a high station, but to humbly desire to be and to do those things acceptable to the Lord, leaving it for him to give us whatever experiences in life will be best for us—either larger opportunities for service or lesser opportunities, for the testing and proving of our loyalty. Selfish ambition in any of the Lord's people would be the surest road to Divine disapproval. It might succeed in securing place and power in nominal systems of human origin, but such a course—so far from bringing these into greater prominence with the Lord or into greater opportunities of service in connection with his truth—would work in an opposite direction; as it is written, "The Lord disdaineth the proud, but showeth favor to the humble." The Apostle, therefore, urges, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time"—in the present life or in the future life or both. It is for the Lord to choose our places and our work for us; it is for us to

seek to be instruments willing and ready, "for the Master's use made meet."

"House of Many Mansions"

Looking beyond our present opportunities and privileges of usefulness in the Lord's service, and the degree of opportunities secured by us now through faithfulness, we perceive that the great work for which we are called, chosen, being schooled, is that of the future, of which the Apostle says, "That in the ages to come God will show forth the riches of his grace, in his loving kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:7). Our Lord referred to that glorious future condition when he declared to his Apostles, "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you." The many mansions, the many stations, the many planes of celestial being and blessing are here pictured, and the suggestion is further given that one special place in the Divine family would be made for the special followers of the Lord—those known throughout the Scriptures as "the Bride, the Lamb's Wife," and again as "the Royal Priesthood" under Christ, their great Chief Priest. The chief mansion will be for these who, called to the highest honor, are represented by the golden vessels.

And again they are called the "Lord's Jewels," and he says of them, "They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I come to make up my jewels." (Mal. 3:17.) As jewels are scarce, so these are described to be only a little flock to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom. (Luke 12:32.) To be of this company, styled in the Scriptures as "more than conquerors through him that loved them and bought them with his precious blood," the Apostle Paul declared that he was glad to suffer any loss—to count all things but as loss and dross that he might win Christ and be found in him—as a member of his Body, a member of the royal priesthood, a member of the little flock, a partaker of the divine nature.

In the tabernacle and in the temple gold was used as a symbol of this divine nature, the highest of all natures, superior to the angelic. Our Lord described this immortal condition as signifying the possession of life in himself—life not derived from other sources. "As the Father hath life in himself (immortality), so hath he given unto the Son to have life in himself" (immortality). (John 5:26.) And he has been given the privilege of giving this to whomsoever he will—to the worthy ones constituting his elect Bride, otherwise styled "members of the Body of Christ," vitally connected with him, their living Head. It is to this glorious quality of the divine nature, symbolized by the gold, and again in our text styled the vessels of gold, that Peter refers, saying "God hath given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might become partakers of the divine nature."—2 Peter 1:4.

"Vessels of Silver"

All recognize silver as less precious than gold, but much more abundant. As one of the precious metals it is used in the Scriptures to represent a spiritual class, but a different class from that represented in the vessels of gold—a more numerous class. While all of the Lord's people of this Gospel Age were called, as the Apostle says, "In one hope of their calling," with at least the prospect or opportunity of becoming golden vessels, nevertheless the Lord foreknew that not all of his true followers would prove in the end to be "more than conquerors;" not all of those who love righteousness and hate iniquity would be so zealous for the service as to be esteemed worthy to be of that little flock, the Bride, because all would not run in the race with zeal, following in the Master's footsteps; hence we find in the Scriptures another class, another division of the Church, clearly pointed out.

In the types of the Old Testament they were represented by the Levites, who had an important work to do in conjunction with the priests and as their assistants. In the New Testament this class is referred to in our text as "vessels of silver," or less honorable than the vessels of gold, and they are particularly brought to our attention in our Lord's last message to his Church, in which he pictures them as a "great company" in contrast with the "little flock."

This great company he designates as in the end honored and honorable victors, with palm branches—the crowns being reserved for the little flock, the vessels of gold. In the same picture he shows us that while the little flock of more than conquerors are to sit upon the throne with him, these others, worthy but less worthy, are to be before the throne. He points out that while the "little flock" will share his glory and honor as his Bride, this greater company, represented by the more numerous vessels of silver, will serve him in his temple. (Rev. 7:9-15.) He points out further in the same message that while the little flock will be the Bride class, the "great company" will be honored with an invitation to be present at the marriage supper of the Lamb in glory. (Rev. 19:9.) And through the Prophet David he pictured the distinction between these classes, the little flock, the vessels of gold unto greatest honor, and the greater multitude, the vessels of silver unto less honor, picturing them as the Bride and her companions—bridesmaids. The picture shows the Bride all glorious in raiment of fine needle work, of embroidery and gold, brought in before the King, and then it shows us the "virgins, her companions, who follow her."—Psalm 45.

"Vessels of Wood and of Earth"

To be in any part of God's great house—to be in his service in any capacity, either now or hereafter, is an honor, is no dishonor. Hence we prefer that translation of our text—vessels unto more honor and vessels unto less honor. The vessels of earth and of wood are specified as indicating those unto less honor, and to our understanding represent in the future those who will be servants of God on the earthly or human plane. Whoever through the portals of the Divine Word catches a glimpse of the coming glory of the earth during the Millennial Age—a glimpse of the "times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets"—can rejoice with any who will be found worthy to be a vessel of less honor in the Master's cause in the future on the earthly plane. To our understanding the majority of Christian people have never appreciated the glorious grandeur that is to come to earth during and as a result of the reign of Messiah—his Bride included. Surely, as Saint Peter declares (Acts 3:19-21), these will be times of restitution which God has declared through all his holy prophets.

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The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand

"Freely ye have received, freely give."—Matthew 10:8.

JESUS had been preaching for more than a year when he appointed twelve of his followers to be specially his representatives sent forth—Apostles. He sent these two and two throughout Judea. They had not the Father's appointment. They had not yet received the holy Spirit from on high and did not receive it until Pentecost, some two years later. The holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified (John 7:39). But by virtue of the holy Spirit given without measure to Jesus at the time of his baptism, he conferred upon these Apostles his own special powers that they might heal the sick, cast out demons, etc. But their special mission, like his own, was not that of healing physical ailments merely, nor chiefly. They were to proclaim the Lord Jesus to be the King, the long-expected Messiah, and to tell the people that the time was at hand for the establishment of his Mediatorial Kingdom, in conjunction with their nation.

This message would be in harmony with the expectation of all the Jews. For centuries they had been waiting for the fulfillment of God's promise made to Abraham that through them all the families of the earth would be blessed. The miracles of Jesus and the Apostles were to call attention to the proclamation, "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2). This message, in harmony with that of John the Baptist, was expected to arouse all the "Israelites indeed" and to attract their attention to Jesus as the King. They were particularly warned that their message was not for the Gentiles, nor even for their neighbors, the mongrel people called Samaritans. True Jews, and these only, were called upon to make ready their hearts and minds that they might be participants in the Kingdom and its glories. Their message was only "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."—V. 6.

They were to make no provision for their journey—neither money nor extra clothing. They were to learn a lesson of absolute dependence upon the Master who sent them forth. They were not to be beggars seeking from house to house. On the contrary, they were to recognize the dignity of their mission and service for God and Messiah and were to inquire in each village for the most worthy, the most saintly, the most holy people, because these would be the ones who

would be specially interested in their message—whether rich or poor. And such of these as received their message would be glad indeed to treat them as representatives of the King, whose Kingdom they announced. Their stay in each place was to be as guests until they were ready to depart to the next place. On entering into a house they were to salute the householder in a dignified manner, advising him of the object of their call. If received peacefully, cordially, their blessing would be upon that house. Otherwise they were not to lose their own confidence and serenity, but to pass along and look for one more worthy of the message and of them as its representatives. Those receiving them would receive a blessing. Those rejecting them and their message would lose a great privilege.

The Gospel of the Kingdom

Many wonder greatly why it was proper for our Lord and the Apostles to declare the Kingdom of Heaven at hand when, as a matter of fact, it has not yet come and, by the Lord's directions, his followers still pray, "Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." The understanding of this furnishes the key to the appreciation of much of the Bible that is now misunderstood. We must, therefore, outline the matter in some detail.

For more than sixteen centuries Israel has been waiting for the fulfillment of God's promise that they would become so great that through them the Divine blessing would extend to every nation. Our Lord through the Apostles signified that God's time had come to fulfil all of his promises made to the Jewish nation if they were ready for them. To be ready they must be a holy nation. And to instruct them and prepare them their Law Covenant had been introduced to them through Moses centuries before. And now, just preceding Jesus, John the Baptist had preached to them reformation, repentance, getting into harmony with the Law, that they might be ready to receive the Messiah. While as a people they were the most religious nation in the world at that time, nevertheless but few of them were "Israelites indeed"—at heart fully consecrated to God; fully in accord with the principles of holiness. As a consequence, instead of the whole nation being ready for God's work, only a small remnant

of them were saintly and received the message.

Kingdom Privileges Transferred to Spiritual Israel

God foreknew this, however, and through the prophets declared that a remnant only would be found worthy. To the nation as a whole our Lord declared, "The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. 21:43). Accordingly five days before his crucifixion our Lord said to them, "Your house is left unto you desolate. Ye shall see me no more until that day when we shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."—Matt. 23:38, 39.

The Kingdom privileges or opportunities which were first offered to natural Israel were transferred to Spiritual Israel, whose existence began at Pentecost. All "Israelites indeed" of the fleshly house were privileged to become members of the spiritual house—to receive the begetting of the holy Spirit and adoption into the Body of Christ, which is the Church. Of this Church St. Peter says, "Ye are a Royal Priesthood, a Holy Nation, a peculiar people."—1 Pet. 2:9.

After selecting as many Jews as were worthy a place in Spiritual Israel, nominal Israel was cast off from Divine favor until the completion of Spiritual Israel, when God promises that his favor shall return to them (Rom. 11:25, 26). Meantime the invitation has gone through the Lord's faithful members to every nation, seeking such as have the spirit of loyalty to God, the spirit of "Israelites indeed." All such are accepted with the Jews as members of the same Kingdom. Around these Spiritual Israelites have gathered all sorts, so that there is an outward or nominal body or Church numbering millions, as well as a real body or Church scattered amongst them.

As at the end of the Jewish Age Jesus came to inspect them and to set up his Kingdom if enough worthy ones were to be found, so he will do in the end of this Gospel Age; he will come to Spiritual Israel to find the saintly. The Scriptures assure us that from first to last, from Pentecost until the end of this age, a sufficient number of saints will be found to constitute the elect Church of Christ, designed of God to be his Queen and Joint-Heir in the Mediatorial Kingdom, which will then be set up and begin the work of blessing the world. After the spiritual Kingdom of God shall have been exalted, the Bible assures us (Rom. 11:25-

32), that God's favor will return to natural Israel and they will be the first nation to be blessed under the New Order of things that will then prevail and through those of that people in harmony with God the blessing will extend to every nation.

"More Tolerable for Sodom" Than Capernaum

The Sodomites were wickedly immoral; yet, in the Master's estimation, less wicked than those who, after hearing the Gospel, rejected it. This principle applies to many people and many cities of our day, as well as to Capernaum. The Master assures us that when the age to come, otherwise called the Day of Judgment, shall furnish opportunity for the whole world to be on trial for everlasting life or everlasting death, it will be more tolerable for the Sodomites than for many others. In proportion as anyone has come to a knowledge of Christ he has become responsible. The death of Christ secures for Adam and all of his race one full opportunity for salvation and no more. The majority have died in heathenish darkness without any opportunity; and many in Christian lands have disregarded their opportunity, as did the people of Capernaum. All must be brought to a full knowledge of their privileges in Christ and then all rejectors will be destroyed.—Act 3:23, 1 Tim. 2:4; Matt. 20:28.

"WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS."

"What a friend we have in Jesus,
Sang a little child one day;
And a weary woman listened
To the darling's happy lay.

"All her life seemed dark and gloomy,
All her heart was sad with care;
Sweetly rang out baby's treble—
'All our sins and griefs to bear.'

"She was pointing out the Savior,
Who could carry every woe;
And the one who sadly listened
Needed that dear Helper so!

"Sin and grief were heavy burdens
For a fainting soul to bear;
But the baby singer bade her
'Take it to the Lord in prayer.'

"With a simple, trusting spirit,
Weak and worn, she turned to God,
Asking Christ to take her burden,
Owning Him as her dear Lord.

"Jesus was her only Refuge,
He could take her sin and care.
And He blessed the weary woman
When she came to Him in prayer.

"And the happy child, still singing,
Little knew she had a part
In God's wondrous work of bringing
Peace unto a troubled heart."

—Unknown.

Worthy and Unworthy Ambition

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you."—Matt. 6:33.

THE Great Teacher taught no extravagance. He was energetic in the Father's business and taught his followers to be "not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Nevertheless his teaching in this lesson is that our energies are not to take the selfish form of laying up earthly treasures: We are to lay up heavenly treasures instead. Notwithstanding the reference to moth and rust and thieves despoiling earthly treasures, we understand his teaching rather on a higher plane, though the principle is a broad one. All will admit that it would be folly to lay up clothing or food far in advance of need, except under very peculiar circumstances. But gold might be treasured, or money in the bank, or bonds, or stocks, or farm added to farm, and house to house, and the same principle would be involved.

Although no moth could touch the bank account, nor rust injure the gold, and no thieves could steal the title to the property, the principle is the same. Treasures of every kind may lose their value—do lose their value to us, when we die, if not before. Death, corruption, touches everything earthly under present conditions, no matter how careful or thoughtful the provision. "Naked came we into the world, and naked must we leave it" (Job 1:21). Intelligent people are generally agreed that God has provided a future life beyond the tomb, attainable in the resurrection morning. And the Scriptures teach that the degree of our blessing then will stand related to our use of the present life. It is this point that

the Great Teacher emphasized in the study of today. All intelligent minds assent to the reasonableness of this.

Those Who Provide Not for Their Own Are Worse Than Unbelievers

Let us not take the extreme view entertained by some; let us not suppose that the Master taught that people might not make reasonable provision for their own comfort, that they might not be dependent upon charity in their old age. Let us not suppose that he meant that parents should be neglectful of their duties toward dependent members of their family. The Bible distinctly teaches that "he who provides not for his own is worse than an unbeliever." The proper thought, then, is that it is right to economize and, as St. Paul expresses it, "to lay by in store" for our own future needs or that we may have to lend to others, in need. God's people are to be frugal, to avoid debts, to be "forehanded," and with some reserve of capital.

But earthly things are not to be the treasures of their souls, but merely their servants, conveniences—always ready for use, for every emergency, freely, whole-heartedly. He who follows this course will rarely have large earthly wealth. Only by making wealth a treasure and setting upon it inordinate desire can one become miserly or very rich. Setting the affections on things above would signify so prudent handling of worldly riches as would hinder the accumulation or preservation of great wealth.

The Master's word is, that whoever sets his affections upon earthly treas-

ures will become sordid, selfish, earthly; while he who sets his affections upon the things above will become correspondingly heavenly, spiritual, blessed, generous. We have two eyes and if they be not properly adjusted with relationship to each other our vision of things will be distorted. Hence we seek to correct such a difficulty, that we may get the true view of matters. So it is with the eyes of our understanding. They have both a present and a future outlook, an earthly and a heavenly view. It is important that we get these rightly adjusted, so that we may see matters in their true light—see the great value of the future life in comparison with the present one, and correspondingly be guided to the setting of our heart affections there, and in general balancing all the interests of life wisely.

As in the natural body the eyes may become darkened or blinded, so it is with our eyes of understanding. And if this blindness come upon us after we have once seen and enjoyed the Divine promise, our case would be all the more pitiable. How great that darkness would be!

Still another lesson there is for us along the same line. The serving of mammon would bless us in the present life, but be injurious to our future interests. But the service of God would prepare us for future influence. And although obedience to God may cost us the loss of the pleasures of sin and the loss of some legitimate worldly blessing in the present time, nevertheless there is a blessing even now to those who are faithful servants of God and righteousness. And additionally there is the glorious prospect of the future. It is necessary, however, for us to choose between the two masters. We cannot serve both. We cannot get the rewards of both. As Joshua did, so

let us determine, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

"Consider the Lily of the Field"

The Master urges us to commit all of our interests to God and to wholly resolve to be obedient to him, to the extent of our ability, and then to realize the Divine care which is over all creation to be specially over us, because of having come into special relationship to him, in accordance with his promises. Such need have no anxiety with respect to their earthly affairs, but may trust all their interests to their Heavenly Father. Our eternal life is worth more than the food and raiment of the present life. If wise we will seek the future life at any cost, at any sacrifice of the present one.

As for the ability of our Heavenly Father to care for our interests, we should consider the manifestations in nature, of his power and wisdom and grace, in his provision for the fowl of the air and for the lily of the field. We should realize that he has equal power to provide for our best interests; thus faith should firmly trust him, come what may. Suppose we were of small stature, and inclined to worry over the matter of increasing our height? Then let us realize our own littleness and look rather to the Lord for the things respecting the present as well as the future life. Let us be diligent in his service, leaving all of our present experiences as well as our future rewards to his wisdom, love and power.

Should we suppose that God, who cares for the lilies and the birds, would not much more care for us after we had become his children through faith in Christ and through the consecration of our lives? Let us then cast off all anxious care respecting food and raiment and all matters pertaining to these, which the world in general are worried about.