

"AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT."

Many who have read DAWN VOL. II. – "The Time is at Hand" – are anxiously inquiring whether they are too late for admittance to the kingdom class: whether the door of opportunity is yet open, or whether it closed when the high calling ceased, in 1881. We answer, Though the "call" has ceased, the "door" is not yet shut. The "call" and the "door" are distinct and separate.

The Scriptures teach that God fore-ordained or predestinated that a fixed, definite number should *be selected* from among men to constitute the Bride of Christ and be his joint-heir in the great work of bestowing the Millennial blessings upon the world in general. And this is perfectly reasonable.

To secure this number, "many are called" or invited to pass an examination in the school of Christ, to prove their worthiness to be of that select and limited number. Only believers in Christ, only such as recognize him as their Redeemer, are "called" or invited to stand this examination under the promise of that great prize of joint-heirship with Christ; and *all such* believers were invited, from the day of Pentecost down to the time when enough had been called to *complete the fixed number*, which God had fore-ordained. Then, of course, the call to that honor and distinction must cease; for God would certainly not mislead any one nor promise "the *great* salvation" to a single individual more than the *predestinated number*. None shall have it to say that God invited him to run the race for the prize of the *high* calling and that after running faithfully he could not receive the reward because too many had been called and the fore-ordained number was more than supplied.

First notice, that the close of the "*call*" is not the close of the *race*. Those who have been called, and who have accepted the conditions of the call and promised to "run" faithfully so as to obtain the prize, must

be *tested*. And hence the fact that the general calling of new runners has ended, in no way ends the running of those who were called in time and who had consecrated themselves to the Lord's service before the call ceased.

And the fact that you may only recently have come to a *clear knowledge* of the exceeding great and precious promises of the things which God hath in reservation for them that love him, does not prove that you were not called and accepted as a runner for this great prize long before you understood clearly how great and grand the prize is to be. In fact, not one who accepts the "call" is able at first to comprehend fully either the roughness and narrowness of the way, or the grandeur of the prize to be attained at its farther end. The clearness of our comprehension of the promises comes to us as the *power* of God working in us to strengthen us and enable us to overcome present obstacles, difficulties and trials. The exceeding great and precious promises are unfolded to us gradually, as we prove faithful and *go on*, in order that by these – by the strength and courage which they infuse – we might be enabled to so run as to obtain the promised prize. – 2 Pet. 1:4.

The class to receive the prize is not only called and chosen (accepted), but also *faithful*. And though the general "call" has ceased, it is evident that the testing of the *faithfulness* of the called ones is not yet finished. The faithful are being marked, sealed, and separated from those who are unfaithful to their covenant of self-sacrifice; the wise virgins are being separated from the foolish ones, whose folly consists in supposing that they can run for and win the world's prizes of honor, wealth, etc., and at the same time run faithfully the race for the great prize, of glory, honor and immortality, – the very conditions of which render such a course impossible.

When all the faithful "wise" virgins have been proved so, and have entered in to the joys of the Lord, the "*door*" of opportunity to become of that class will close, and no more will enter. When all the "wise" have entered in, the *number* predestinated will be complete;

and then the Master will rise up and shut the door. (Luke 13:24,25; Matt. 25:10.) Our Lord himself tells us that *then* many will begin to see matters differently – to see what privileges and opportunities for sacrifice they once enjoyed and missed. But when they shall seek and knock, the Master will tell them, I do not recognize you as my Bride – she is complete and I have but one. But thank God, other Scriptures show that the foolish virgins, though thus rejected from the high calling for which their conduct, when on trial, will have proved them unworthy, will nevertheless be granted a lesser favor and will be known in a humbler capacity in the Lord's household. [R1113 : page 3]

Before the door shuts, therefore, before the full number of the faithful is finished, let each strive to make his calling and selection sure; and to this end let us permit the Lord, by these precious promises and these explanatory and illustrative parables, to work in us to *will* and to *do* his good pleasure.

But some will say, I am certain that I am not one of those called before the general "call" ceased in 1881, because I then was not only wholly ignorant of the deep things of God's promises, but more, I was wholly a stranger to God, and even an enemy of his, far from any covenant with him to do him service, and far from any such desires. But recently I came to know God at all, recently I took Christ's yoke upon me to learn of him, and still more recently I learned of the privilege of suffering with Christ now, in self-denial in his service, and that such joint-sacrificers are by and by to be made joint-inheritors with him in the glorious work of the Millennium. And now, after seeing these glories, and after admiring those precious things, and after setting myself to run this race for this wonderful prize, must I conclude that it is not open to me, because enough to fill the number had already been called? I would not think to change the divine arrangement, or to ask that another be added, beyond the limit determined by divine wisdom, but I shall feel keenly my misfortune.

To such we answer (briefly here, more fully in DAWN Vol. III. now in preparation): Run on, dear brothers and sisters, your case is not so dark as it seems to you. Remember that if *all* who had accepted the call when it closed should prove faithful to their covenant, there would be none too many, but just enough. Remember, too, that your observation, as well as the Scriptures, indicates that of the "many" who accept the call "few" will be chosen, because but few prove faithful to their covenant when on trial. As one after another some of the "called" ones prove unfaithful, their *places* of labor and their crowns of reward are transferred to others. One of these places of labor and one of these crowns of reward may be transferred to you, and your name may be written on the scroll of life as a probationary member of the Bride of Christ, instead of one blotted out therefrom as unworthy. – See, Rev. 3:5; Heb. 12:23.

It is already "the eleventh hour," the time for labor and sacrifice in the Lord's service is nearly ended, "the night cometh wherein no man can work," so if you see a "door" of opportunity, to labor for and serve the Lord and his truth, open before you, consider that the Master is saying to you, as in the parable, "Go ye also into my vineyard, and whatever is *right* I will give you." Remember that the reward is paid only to such as render service, and remember that while, as in the parable, the Lord does not promise the prize (the penny) as he did at the beginning, yet the parable shows that some thus admitted to the harvest work just at its close, just before the night when work will be impossible, will get the same reward as others – taking places and opportunities of labor left vacant by others.

And what a lesson is here for such as have covenanted with the Lord to serve him first and chiefly, and who are neglecting his work to strive with time and thought and means for the transient joys and prizes which the world offers. These the Lord urges saying, "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life;" "He that overcometh [who conquers in himself the spirit of the world] the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out

of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father and before his holy servants." But, our Lord says also: "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." – Rev. 2:10; 3:5,11.

