

## THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS SHALL COME

**"For thus saith the Lord of hosts: Yet once [more] it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts." – Hag. 2:6,7.**

Here is one of the richest promises in the blessed Word of God. It is the gospel in a nutshell – the gospel of grace to the world and of glory to the Church; and it is signed at both ends with the signature of the Sovereign of the universe, Jehovah of hosts. It was thus uttered by the mouth of one of his holy prophets – Haggai. But though with the other writings of the prophets it was held sacred as the word of the Lord and reverently read by his anciently chosen people, fleshly Israel, their understanding of it fell far short of its true significance; and not until the holy Spirit was given as a comforter, a guide into all truth and a revealer of things to come (John 14:26; 16:13), was the precious import of this declaration of Jehovah made manifest to his saints (the gospel Church), as it has been through his holy apostles and prophets. – Eph. 3:5.

Fleshly Israel thought they saw in this declaration an intimation of the exaltation and universal dominion of their nation, the fall of the Persian kingdom and the subserviency of all other nations to them, and that the house of Israel, thus exalted and enthroned above all the nations, would be filled with the glory of the Lord and recognized by all the world as God's specially chosen and honored people – a holy nation and a royal priesthood. With such a hope in view they diligently and cheerily worked to rebuild the ruined temple and to repair the fallen walls of Jerusalem after the decree of the Persian monarch Cyrus granted them liberty to return from captivity. But centuries rolled on: the Persian empire

fell, but Israel's glory still tarried; for they only passed from under the dominion of [R1500 : page 72] Persia to that of Greece, and then of Rome; and then, as a nation scattered and peeled, they were driven out of the land of their fathers – the land of divine promise – and scattered among all nations and persecuted among all unto this day.

What then? has God's promise failed? or has he forgotten it? No; for the Apostle Paul, under the leading of the holy Spirit, calls it to mind again (Heb. 12:26-28) and shows that the house which is to be thus filled with the glory of the Lord is not the fleshly house or kingdom of Israel, but the spiritual house or kingdom of God – the Gospel Church.

The shaking of the earth mentioned in this text presupposes a former shaking, and this one is shown to be the last. The former shaking was that typified in the quaking of the earth at the giving of the law at Sinai; for under the law, says the Apostle, every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, and at various intervals the nation was thoroughly shaken and sifted by captivities and otherwise, that only the loyal and true might remain. (See Hebrews 12:25,26; 2:2; 3:17; 10:28.) But this last shaking is to be a greater shaking than fleshly Israel ever experienced; it is to be a shaking of the heavens [symbol of the ruling powers], and the earth [all organized and law-abiding society], and the sea [the lawless and anarchistic elements], and the dry land [the established aristocracy of wealth and social independence]. And it is to be a shaking, not only of one nation, but of all nations – "And I will shake all nations." Surely this predicted shaking of all nations is but a repetition of the prophecy of Daniel (12:1) of a great time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation.

But the Apostle Paul gives us the comforting assurance that "This word, yet once more, signifieth the *removing* of those things

that are shaken, that the things that cannot be shaken may remain." And he further shows (Heb. 12:28) that that which will remain after the shaking, and which cannot be moved, will be the kingdom of God, which we shall inherit if we prove worthy – *i.e.*, if we stand all the tests and shakings and cannot be shaken out.

The Apostle, in stating that the kingdom of God – the true Church, the elect – cannot be shaken, thereby intimates that it shall not be exempted from those blasts that shall shake and utterly remove all other organizations, but rather that the true, elect Church shall not be moved by them. Her foundation is sure. "God is in the midst of her, and she shall not be moved." (Psa. 46:5.) As a matter of fact, we find ourselves to-day in the midst of these perilous and disintegrating influences. The storm is rising, and, as predicted, it is felt first by the Lord's little flock of consecrated believers. Their faith and patience and zeal and endurance are being tried by every means that the adversary can devise. Every device of error is being put forth in its most pleasing and subtle form; and advantage is being taken of every weakness of the flesh to overcome those who are endeavoring to fight the good fight of faith and to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil.

And when we consider that "we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities, and powers, and against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12), we realize that the contest is a very unequal one unless we lay hold upon the strength which God supplies to us through Christ.

The Apostle's language further intimates that since only that which *cannot be shaken* will remain and will inherit the kingdom, all others will fall. And in this light the words of the Psalmist – "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand" – are seen to be no exaggeration. Nor should the faithful few be at all dismayed when the various shakings sift out their number; for

so it must be until only that which cannot be shaken shall remain. Thus the whole nominal church, both within and outside the various organizations, must be shaken until only the true and faithful remain; for God will gather out of his kingdom all things that offend. – Matt. 13:41.

But this shaking is permitted, not only to sift out of the Church all shakable things, but **[R1500 : page 73]** it is to extend to all the nations; and so unprepared are they for the storm that is coming, and so unable to resist it, that the Apostle, with prophetic foresight, declares that their shaking signifies their removal (Heb. 12:27); and further, that their removal is not in order that anarchy may prevail, but in order that the kingdom of God, which cannot be shaken, may take their place.

Thank God for the prospect of an unshakable kingdom, whose king shall reign in righteousness and whose princes shall decree justice (Isa. 32:2; Prov. 8:15), and under whose dominion the whole earth shall be at rest. (Isa. 14:7.) This is the kingdom which the Prophet declares will indeed be "the desire of all nations," when it is once established and its blessings begin to be realized by the world. Yes, truly "the desire of all nations shall come" – with blessings of life and health and peace and prosperity and good government. It is for this coming kingdom and its blessings that the whole creation groans and travails together in pain, waiting for the adoption, viz., "the redemption of our body" – the body of Christ, the heirs of the kingdom. (Rom. 8:22.) As soon as this body is all selected, fitted and tested, then the kingdom will be established and the desire of all nations will have come – the long desired peace and prosperity which every experiment of their own will have failed to secure. And doubtless every possible experiment will have been tried and proved futile before that time; the last, that of socialism, ending in universal anarchy.

It is this body of Christ, this spiritual house of Israel, which, though lashed by many a storm, nevertheless "cannot be shaken," because it is firmly founded upon the Rock Christ Jesus: it is this house that Paul calls "the temple of God" (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19) that is to inherit the kingdom of God, and that Jehovah says he is going to fill with his glory.

He will fill it with the glory of the divine nature: he will make every member of it like unto Christ's glorious body: he will endow them with power from on high to execute faithfully all of the divine purpose for human restitution, and for the establishment of universal harmony and peace. Praise the Lord for such a prospect for both the Church and the world. May its inspiration be felt by every devoted heart, and its warning be heeded by every one who feels to any degree inclined to be unstable. Take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand unshaken in the midst of the storms of this evil day, and be counted worthy to be a living stone in that glorious temple of God, now shortly to be filled with his glory, and to be an heir of that kingdom which cannot be *moved*, and which shall indeed be the desire of all nations.

### **THE WORLD LONGS FOR PURE RULERS.**

The following editorial, from the *Pittsburg Telegraph*, February 29th, shows how worldly people estimate present governments and how an improvement is already *the desire of all nations*. The great time of trouble, predicted in the Scriptures as nigh, even at the doors, which will result in world-wide anarchy, will be the result of efforts to improve upon just such dishonesty of government as is here brought to our attention. We who see and have confidence in the Lord's plan and kingdom alone realize how futile is every such hope – because rulers can not be found that are pure in heart and that rule from love of the interest of the people.

God is selecting the only absolutely trust-worthy rulers – Christ and the little flock of his saints – whose rule will be to bless all the families of the earth and whose motive will be love.

The article referred to is as follows: –

### **ITALY'S FINANCIAL SCANDAL.**

"A perfect epidemic of financial scandals seems to have swept and is still sweeping over the world. Not to speak of comparatively small transactions, we have had something like scandal in Germany in connection with the small-arms factory there. Portugal had to send one of her leading statesmen into the penitentiary for frauds committed in the State railways. France is still in the throes of a financial revulsion connected with the Panama Canal swindle. It happily did not extend to **[R1500 : page 74]** the government finances, which are still able to show a clean bill of health.

"Now comes a scandal of the first magnitude in Italy, compromising many of her principal statesmen to such an extent as to endanger the very throne itself. Many of the most powerful Ministers have made use of their positions to sanction fraudulent operations on the part of the principal banking institutions of the country in return for large bribes. Indeed, the situation there may be described as far more serious than that in France, since the revelations made there, however damaging to the reputation of the official and parliamentary classes, do not directly affect the national credit, as do those on the south side of the Alps.

"It seems a secret investigation was made by the Government some three or four years ago, when the National Bank of Italy had advanced some \$10,000,000 to another institution in great straits. The results of this investigation were pigeon-holed for reasons which the reader can readily supply.

"A few weeks ago the Government submitted to the Legislature a proposal for a six years' extension of the Banking law which is now about to expire. Great was the consternation of the Ministers when they found that the measure was opposed by a Sicilian Radical Deputy named Napoleone Colaianni.

"Almost at the very outset of the speech (says a letter in the New York *Tribune*) against the projected bill, he confronted the Ministers with the damaging report above referred to as having been kept secret by the Government. No one knows how it has come into his hands. His charges, founded on the paper in his hands, were directed principally against the great Banca Romana, and consisted, among other things, of an assertion that it kept a duplicate series of notes (each set bearing the same numbers) in circulation, thus fraudulently exceeding its legal issue by 100 per cent. It is calculated that by this means the bank has an illegal circulation of \$6,000,000. This state of things, repeated in a smaller degree by the other banks of emission, had become known during the last two or three years, and has led to the institution in question being black-mailed by various statesmen, Government officials and politicians, [R1501 : page 74] under threats of exposure.

"It is stated by the writer quoted that not less than 150 Senators and Deputies are compromised by these revelations, as having borrowed money without ever having gone through the formality of paying back.

"A number of arrests have been made, but that the events alluded to will have more consequences than merely increasing the population of the jails would seem to be clear to all who consider the very precarious nature of the hold the National Government has on the masses of the people."

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