

SOME BETTER THING FOR US.

"These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. – Heb. 11:39,40.

IN the eleventh and twelfth chapters of Paul's letter to the Hebrews the two classes who are to constitute the two phases of the Kingdom of God (the human and the spiritual*) are brought to our attention. At the time of this writing the heirs to the earthly phase had all run their course, and were awaiting their reward in the resurrection, John the baptist having been the last and most highly honored of all that noble line of ancient worthies (Matt. 11:11); but the heirs to the heavenly phase had just entered upon their course; and, knowing that it would be a long and painful one, the worthy Apostle would have them draw a large measure of inspiration and zeal from considering the faithfulness and patient endurance of the worthy ones who shall constitute the earthly phase of the Kingdom.

***See MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. 1., Chap. xiv.**

His words, while addressed directly to the early Church, apply with equal force to the whole Church, to the end of the age; and in some respects the application will be seen to have special force in the end, or harvest, of the age. In recounting the prominent characters among those to inherit the earthly phase of the Kingdom, beginning with Abel, he shows that it was their faith in the promises of God that nerved them to such endurance and faithfulness, even unto death; and so he would have us consider and, with the same faith, rely upon the *exceeding* great and precious promises given unto us, whereby, as Peter says, we may "escape the corruption that is in the world" and be made "partakers of the divine nature." (2 Pet. 1:4.) He shows how by faith they walked with God; how they ventured upon his promises,

doing his will and leaving the results with him; how they overcame great obstacles in the strength of that faith; and how they endured persecution, pain and loss, and then died in faith that what God had promised he was able also to perform, and would perform in his own good time and way. They were such men and women, says the Apostle, as the world was not worthy of. They endured as seeing him who is invisible, so strong and courageous was their faith.

Yet, though the reward of those ancient worthies will fully recompense their faithfulness, the Apostle would have us know that God hath still reserved "some better thing for us;" *viz.*, the inheritance of the heavenly phase of the Kingdom. In so doing, however, God is not rewarding us according to our deserts; for neither our merit, nor that of the ancient worthies, could claim *by right* an inheritance in either phase of the Kingdom. Both callings are of his abounding grace. The times and seasons for the selection of these two companies, as well as the conditions of eligibility to them, were fixed by Jehovah before the foundation of the world; and within those appointed seasons those individuals who will have complied with the conditions become heirs of the promised inheritance to be realized in the time appointed. God has a right thus to do what he will with his own, and his wonderful favors will be received with thanksgiving by all his righteous heirs without respect to comparisons; and all will be satisfied when they awake in his likeness, whether it be on the human or on the spiritual plane of being.

The "better thing" reserved "for us" who are called of God during this Gospel age is the joint-heirship with Christ, Jehovah's only-begotten Son and heir of all things, the partaking with him in all his subsequent work for the blessing of all God's intelligent creation. Therefore it is, as the Apostle states, that the **[R2035 : page 219]** reward of the ancient worthies tarries until first the overcoming Gospel Church is exalted to the throne with Christ in the dawn of the Millennial age, now so close at hand. As soon as the spiritual phase of the Kingdom is established in power the setting up of the human phase

will be immediately accomplished. In humble recognition, therefore, of the divine purpose and order in the superior exaltation of the Gospel Church, we repeat the Apostle's statement that "they" – those noble, loyal, righteous, faithful ancient worthies – "without us shall not be made perfect." Their perfecting will be instantaneous with their awakening from death, their trial having been passed successfully, as attested by the Lord's word.

But as to whether *we* shall be numbered among the "us" depends yet upon our successful running of the race set before us. Surely, no less faithfulness and nobility of character can be expected of us than of those who ran for the earthly prize. And since all the blessings of God's plan, – the exaltation of the ancient worthies, the liberation of the whole world from the bondage of sin and death and the final judgment of angels – await the manifestation of the spiritual sons of God, the Gospel Church, therefore the Apostle in chapter 12, in forceful metaphor, points us back to those ancient worthies as a stimulus for faith and zeal; saying: –

"Therefore also we, being compassed about with so great a cloud of martyrs [Greek *marturon* – who so nobly witnessed for God and righteousness], let us [emulate them and] lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the [higher, heavenly] race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Jesus, our Ransomer, is also our forerunner and pattern in this race. He ran successfully, and in consequence is even now at the right hand of the throne of God, whither we also may go to him. His way to the crown was the way of the shameful cross, and he said, If any man love me, let him take up his cross daily and follow me: the servant is not above his Lord. Persecution and shame and grief and loss are our portion in this present world, and the exaltation and the glory will follow in due time, if we faint not. Therefore we are urged to consider his example and teaching

lest we be weary and faint in our minds under the trials of faith, patience and endurance of this evil day.

Again referring to the ancient worthies and their faithfulness (12:18-24), we are reminded of our much more favored position on the stream of time; for we are not approaching, as were they, the established typical kingdom of God under the typical mediator Moses; but, in point of time, we are approaching the glorious antitype of that – the Kingdom of Christ. How inspiring is this thought of the proximity in time to the glory of the Kingdom! And if this was true of the early Church, how much more is it true of us who are living in the end, the "harvest," of the age?

The Apostle would also lead us to a fuller appreciation of the glory to be revealed in the setting up of the real Kingdom – the antitype – by a reference to the glory that attended the setting up of even the typical kingdom, and the enunciation of its righteous code of divine law. (Verses 18-21; see also 2 Cor. 3:7-11; Exod. 19.) That was a scene whose majesty and glory caused all Israel to fear and tremble; and even Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." But, he says, that manifestation of glory was nothing in comparison to the glory that excelleth, which shall attend the setting up of the real Kingdom. That will be the glorious New Jerusalem, the true Mount Zion, the city (government or Kingdom) of the living God, the city for which Abraham looked afar off. It will be the general assembly of the Church of the firstborn in the midst of a welcoming host, "an innumerable company of angels:" it will be the gathering together of the Church unto Christ, the mediator of the New Covenant which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel – not vengeance, but peace, pardon and life, – and unto God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits [lives] of just men made perfect; – first the earthly phase of the Kingdom, and finally the full number of the restitution host.

What a glorious prospect! and how full of solemn import to us specially, who have approached to the very threshold of this blessed

hope; – solemn, in that the overcoming to be done before we reach the goal will tax all our fortitude and faith and test every principle of righteousness to the utmost. To do this will require the greatest humility and dependence on Christ, not only for redemption but also for grace to help in every time of need. If we should allow pride and self-righteousness to come in and our ears to grow dull to the voice of him that speaketh from heaven, we shall no more escape the wrath of God than would an Israelite have escaped it had he disobeyed the voice which commanded that he should not touch the mountain where God appeared unto them and spoke to them through their mediator Moses; for our God is a consuming fire to all who attempt to approach him except through our mediator, Christ, just as, in the type, he was a consuming fire to any who disregarded the mediation of Moses.

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"ONLY FOR JESUS! – Lord keep it forever
Sealed on the heart and engraved on the life!
Pulse of all gladness and nerve of endeavor,
Secret of rest, and the strength of our strife."
