

[R2296 : page 127]

"BEHOLD, THY KING COMETH UNTO THEE!"

– MAY 1. – MATT. 21:6-16. –

"Hosanna to the Son of David: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" – Matt. 21:9.

THE SCENE of this lesson occurred about six days before our Lord's crucifixion. In many respects it differed from any other circumstance in his ministry. Previously, when the people had spoken of taking him by force to make of him their King, Jesus had withdrawn himself: to such an extent was this true that his friends and disciples marveled that anyone proclaiming himself the Messiah should seemingly avoid the very means of centering public attention upon himself and favoring the sentiment of making him the King. (John 7:4-6.) But on this occasion our Lord deliberately sent for the ass upon which he rode triumphantly as King to Jerusalem: and when the people shouted our Golden Text, "Hosanna to the Son of David: blessed is he that cometh in the name of Jehovah" and strewed their clothing in the way and put palm branches as marks of honor of the King, breaking all previous records, our Lord accepted these marks of honor. It was when the Pharisees, being greatly displeased, remonstrated, urging that he should rebuke the people and not permit them so to honor him, that our Lord explained, to the effect that a prophecy was being fulfilled, and that, since the Prophet had said, "Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King cometh unto thee," etc., therefore there must be a shout to fulfil the prophecy: so that, if the people had not shouted, the very stones must have cried out, in order to fulfil the Word of the Lord by the Prophet Zechariah. – 9:9.

The fact that our Lord was *thus fulfilling prophecy*, explains the entire situation; and we at once catch the thought, elsewhere enforced in the Scriptures, that our Lord's previous ministry to Israel had not been as their King, but as John had introduced him – as their Bridegroom and as their Teacher. But now, at the close of his ministry

and just as he was about to finish his course of sacrifice at Calvary, the time had come to offer to Israel, formally, the King and the Kingdom which God had long before promised to father Abraham and reiterated through the prophets. The hour was come. Would they now at this moment of trial and testing as a nation receive the Messiah, the long promised King, or would they be so blinded by false expectations, superinduced by wrong conditions of heart, as to be unable to know him and to appreciate him, when the crucial moment should come? God had foreseen that, notwithstanding the favors which he had bestowed upon Israel, including the sending to them of John the Baptist to prepare them, including also the work of our Lord and the apostles, and the "other seventy also," they would not be ready, would not receive their King, and would hence be rejected from being his peculiar people. God, acting upon his own foreknowledge, might have avoided sending our Lord in this formal way to make a formal tender of the Kingdom to the nominal seed of Abraham, knowing in advance that they would reject it; but had he done so, his course would not have been so plain and clear to the Jews, nor to us. God's judgment would have been just, but its justice would not have been apparent to his creatures, and the latter is a part of his good pleasure.

Not only did our Lord accept the salutations of the people as the Messiah, but continuing the same thought of his dignity of power and authority, he rode to the Temple and with a scourge of small cords drove out the money changers and merchants, who were defiling the Temple and violating the divine rule respecting it. Whether it was because of our Lord's dignity of person and presence alone, or whether also because of the large multitude that was with him and shouting for him, the fact remains that no attempt was made to resist him, and the King had his way, cleansed the typical Temple, reproved the wrong doers and received the poor outcasts of society, the blind and the lame, and healed them in the Temple, while the shouting of Hosanna to the Son of David was continued, fulfilling the testimony of the Prophet, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise."

It was on this occasion that our Lord in his journey, when on the hilltop opposite Jerusalem, wept over it, saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, *your house* is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" – the very shout the Pharisees objected to. – Luke 19:41; Matt. 23:37.

This was the turning point in Israel's history, as the Prophet Zechariah has marked out.* It was here that the Lamb of God offered himself to Israel as a nation as their Paschal or Passover Lamb, and they did not receive him as a "house" or nation. In the type the lamb was to be taken into the house on the ninth day of the first month and to be killed on the fourteenth. Here our Lord appropriately offered himself to them as the Lamb on the ninth day of the month in fulfilment of the type, and on the fourteenth day he was crucified – the Lamb was slain. But since Israel did not receive the Lamb into their house, they lost the great blessing that the Lamb was to bring; their house was not passed over, their house was given up to destruction: [R2296 : page 128] and from that day onward until A.D. 70 the work of destruction progressed, and from it they have never since recovered. Only now – since 1878 – is their measure of chastisement coming to its full, so that we may fulfil the words of the Lord through the Prophet Isaiah, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare – her appointed time – is accomplished, [R2297 : page 128] that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand a second part [of chastisement] for all her sins." – Isa. 40:1,2.

*MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. II., Chap. 7.

Thank God, that the failure of the natural seed of Abraham to prove worthy of the great promise, did not frustrate divine grace: but that, using the little band of Israelites indeed as a nucleus, our Lord at

once began the work of gathering "a holy nation, a royal priesthood," the true seed of Abraham which, with himself as its King, shall ultimately fulfil all the exceeding great and precious promises implied in the promise and oath to Abraham – that all the families of the earth should be blessed through this "Seed." – Gal. 3:16,29.

But while the incident of this lesson is both interesting and instructive of itself, it assumes still greater importance when we remember that the fleshly Israelites were typical of the spiritual Israelites, and that those features in the close of that age correspond to a considerable degree to the closing features of this Gospel age. Here our Lord has come to the second house of Israel, and he finds it as he found the fleshly house, nominally pious, compassing sea and land to make a proselyte, yet, as described in his own words, neither cold nor hot, and ready to be spewed out of his mouth; – ***knowing not that they are "wretched and pitiable*** – even poor and blind and naked." (Rev. 3:16,17.) ***Poor*** in that they lack the true riches of divine grace, the gold of the divine nature and the precious hopes and promises associated therewith. ***Blind***, in that they cannot see afar off, cannot see the length and breadth and height and depth of the divine plan revealed in God's Word, cannot see either the high-calling of the Church, with the blessed provisions of restitution for the world of mankind in general. ***Naked***, in that their chief ones have already lost faith in the ransom, the only covering of our nakedness (which the filthy rags of our own righteousness will not cover), and in that the people are following the examples and precepts of their leaders in discarding the precious robe of Christ's righteousness – the only "wedding garment." Surely, this is a pitiable condition, and to many of themselves a miserable one.

As the King he is now taking possession of his Kingdom – first, as with the Jews, offering himself to his professed people – but now, as then, finding only a remnant, in the nominal mass, truly anxious for his Kingdom, and prepared to receive it and him. He is now seeking for all the Israelites indeed in whom is no guile, and he will thoroughly winnow the "wheat," and when it shall be gathered into the garner, it

shall be found exactly sufficient to complete the foreordained, predestinated number of the "elect" Church.

As the nominal Jewish "house" was given up and left desolate, and the true Israelites were gathered out of it, so with the "house" of nominal spiritual Israel – Christendom. The Lord is calling out all who are his people, saying, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." As soon as this call and the various siftings of divine providence shall have found the worthy ones, who shall inherit the Kingdom with the King (as his Bride and Consort), then the plagues shall come upon the residue, the nominal system. The great time of trouble so long foretold in the Lord's Word (in which the whole world will be humbled before him, its proud heart broken, its pride and haughtiness brought low) will then break forth upon the world.

We must remember, however, that the King takes his Kingdom not to destroy men's lives, but to save them; to bless them. And while the early part of his reign shall be the ruling of the nations as with a rod of iron, and the breaking of them in pieces as unsatisfactory potters' vessels, yet the intent of all this is that he and his Kingdom may thus be recognized of all, and the work of healing and restitution be caused to progress for a thousand years to earth's blessing.

Meanwhile, however, the Temple class, the "little flock," must be purged, cleansed; the money changers, and those who make merchandise of the sacrifices, must be driven out, before the Temple, composed of living stones, with Christ as its top-stone and foundation, shall be ready to be filled with the glory of God and to become the place of prayer for all nations, the channel which all mankind may, during the Millennial age, find access to God.

Fleshly Israel failed to receive the King because "They knew not the time of their visitation." And they were left in ignorance, because their hearts were not right – they were *not worthy* of the truth. Realizing that they and their experiences were types of Christendom to-day, let

us take heed to our *hearts* that we may continue to be accounted worthy to be reckoned among the "brethren" to whom the Apostle declares, "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief; ye are all children of the light and of the day."

"The 'Gentile Times' are closing, for their kings have had their day;
And with them sin and sorrow will forever pass away;
For the tribe of Judah's Lion now comes to hold the sway:
Our King is marching on.

"I can see his coming judgments, as they circle all the earth,
The signs and groanings promised to precede a second birth;
I read his righteous sentence in the crumbling thrones of earth:
Our King is marching on.

"The seventh trump is sounding, and our King knows no defeat.
He will surely sift the hearts of men before his judgment seat.
O! be swift, my soul, to welcome him, be jubilant, my feet:
Our King is marching on."

– HYMNS OF DAWN.
