

THE PEOPLE THAT KNOW THE JOYFUL SOUND.

"Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance." – Psalm 89:15.

SALVATION is the joyful sound, as the poet has well expressed it,* saying: –

"Salvation! O the joyful sound,
What tidings for our race!
Deliv'rance for the world is found
Through God's abounding grace."

*[POEMS AND HYMNS OF DAWN, No. 255.](#)

This joyful salvation sound is the Gospel, as declared by the angelic messengers – "Good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people." But alas, how few have heard this joyful sound! As mentally we glance over the sixteen hundred millions of the world's population, we find that even the most extravagant claims would show that not one-fifth of the whole have ever heard these blessed tidings; the four-fifths are totally blinded by the god of this world, and see nothing and hear nothing of God's grace. And the matter has been as bad as this, or worse proportionately for six thousand years. How we should rejoice that under divine providence we were born in lands where the light of truth sends forth at least a feeble ray, and where many are not totally deaf to "the joyful sound!"

Yet coming to civilized lands, we are surprised, almost appalled, at the gross darkness which beclouds the minds of the people of so-called Christendom, and by the dimness of vision and dullness of hearing of the vast majority in these most favored parts of the earth – of the majority of those whose lines have fallen unto them in pleasant

places comparatively. Mentally we see nearly two-thirds of the so-called enlightened fifth [R2569 : page 35] of humanity bowing to the Virgin Mary, addressing her in prayer, and crossing themselves with reverence at the mention of her name, and generally grossly ignorant of the divine character and plan – believers in an eternity of torment for all except those of their own communions, and in long periods of purgatorial agony for the great majority of their members. Heart-sick with the picture, we exclaim, O that these people could hear the joyful sound! for evidently they have at very most merely heard an indistinct strain of it conglomerated with the jargon of Babel's confusion and Satanic discord.

Looking expectantly to the remaining third of the so-called enlightened fifth of humanity, known as "Protestants," we enquire, Are these the blessed people who know the joyful sound? A hundred *discordant* voices answer, Yes! but we enquire, If you have heard it, why such discord, such clashing of doctrines, such separation from each other by creed-fences? Are not all the people who know the joyful sound one people – the one Church of the living God, whose names are written in heaven? This at once arouses doubt respecting "Protestantism," and we hearken for evidences to the contrary, that many at least, if not all, know "the joyful sound." We perceive that in many respects amongst these are found people who know more respecting the divine character than do the outside fifteen hundred millions; and yet here also we find great blindness, obscure mental vision, great deafness to the voice from heaven. Truly amongst these also the great Adversary has done a work, so that altho in their midst more may be heard of "the joyful sound" than amongst other classes of the world, yet Satan has here also introduced the discords so as almost to drown the heavenly music – "the joyful sound." For while to some extent Protestantism discerns God's love and justice, the Adversary has beclouded its vision and dulled its hearing for the truth, by whispering theories that are at variance with divine justice and love, and make void and meaningless "the joyful [R2569 : page 36] sound." To some he whispers that God never had either sympathy or provision for any

except "the elect;" to others he whispers that God has the sympathy for all, but lacks the wisdom and power to give practical assistance to any but the few: and thus in the minds of nearly all "the joyful sound" is reduced to a song of praise and joy and thanksgiving and salvation from a little flock, with which will mingle to all eternity the anguishing wails of the vast majority of thousands of millions.

There are a few (but alas how few!) who not only hear "the joyful sound," but who discern that the discord is of the Adversary, and that the joyful sound, if separated from Satanic inharmonies, is beautiful, harmonious beyond any other sound or song. Full of the spirit of the song themselves, they haste to make its beauty known to others, and to point out the origin of the discord. They feel certain that it will be merely necessary to indicate the discord and its source to have others like themselves instantly discern and reject the discord, and rejoice more fully than ever in "the joyful sound" – the true Gospel. But alas! what disappointment is theirs: they find that even amongst the "Protestant" fifteenth of humanity not only is the darkness great, but the depravity of heart and mind are so dense that the darkness and discord are *preferred*, and "the joyful sound," the good tidings of great joy for all people, is spurned, and considered to be the discord that is of the Adversary. Only here and there can any be found who "*know* the joyful sound" – who can distinguish the joyful sound of the heavenly message from those by which Satan has "deceived all that dwell upon the earth." – Rev. 18:23; 19:20; 20:3.

SOUNDING THE JUBILEE TRUMPETS.

The question may arise, Why did God permit Satan, through his human agencies, to bring false doctrine amongst his people during the dark ages, thus to blind and deafen them to the true light, and the heavenly harmonies of the divine plan?

We answer that God's purpose during this age has been the selection of merely the "little flock" of "overcomers" to be joint-heirs with his Son in the coming Millennial Kingdom which is to "bless all

the families of the earth;" and by permitting darkness to come upon this nominal church class he has (1) taught a great lesson both to angels and men concerning the necessity of not only starting right, but remaining loyal to the Lord and his Word, and maintaining a teachable attitude of heart. (2) Doubtless the majority of the "little flock" has been selected from the two ends of this gospel age – its beginning and its closing years. (3) There may have been much more knowledge of the joyful message amongst God's people during "the dark ages" than we now have means of knowing, since the history of that time had few recorders, and their records then dealt chiefly with the error-blinded systems and ignored or misrepresented the unpopular instrumentalities used by God in making "the joyful sound" – some of whom quite probably were denominated heretics, because they knew the joyful sound of the true Gospel, and proportionately denounced the popular "doctrines of devils."

At all events, under divine providence the joyful sound is now heard above the din of "Babel" by those who "have an ear to hear," and it is found to be the very same gospel which was preached by the Lord and the Apostles and announced by the angels on the plains of Bethlehem – a "joyful sound," "good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people." Moreover, as we have seen in other studies,* we are now in the early dawn of the *Millennial Day*, which in the Scriptures was typically represented to Israel by their *Jubilee Year* – of release from bondage and the return to original possessions, etc. And as the *priests* were to announce the Jubilee Year in the Day of Atonement, by the blowing of silver jubilee trumpets, so here we have the antitype: the royal priests in this, the close of the antitypical Day of Atonement (the Gospel age), are to blow the trumpets of truth (silver being a symbol of truth), announcing to the people that the grace of God is come nigh unto them, and that during the Millennial Day (of one thousand years) now dawning the great High Priest, also Prophet and King, shall stand forth as God's representative, and by virtue of his own sacrifice shall give the needed *blessing of knowledge* to all mankind, and shall lift up out of degradation and sin and death, by his

providence and grace, all who seek to come back to righteousness and fellowship with the Father through him.

*See [MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. II., Chap. 6.](#)

So then, *as* it was appropriate in the type that this announcement should be made at the close of the Day of Atonement, *so* that indicated that it is a part of the divine plan that the sounding forth of the joyful sound, the message of the Jubilee of divine love and favor and blessing should be given at the present time – just in the closing days of the Gospel age – the closing hours, so to speak, of the great Day of Atonement,+ and at the dawning, so to speak, of the Millennial age of Jubilee.

+See [Tabernacle Shadows of Better Sacrifices.](#)

Now another matter, little in itself, and easily overlooked in our translation of the Bible, is the fact that the very word (*turnah*) used in our text, rendered "a joyful sound," is the same Hebrew word that is used in [Lev. 25:9](#), where the *sounding of the Jubilee trumpet* is commanded. How strikingly the Lord has [\[R2569 : page 37\]](#) arranged his Word, to make it a basis for faith and joy to his people. How clear it is to those who "know the joyful sound," and yet how obscure to all others! Well does our text say, "*Blessed* are the people who *know* the joyful sound!" The blessing upon them is certainly not because of their own merit, for we are all conscious of the fact that in our flesh dwelleth no perfection, and that none of us could be commended to God by our own righteousness – all of these blessed people who know the joyful sound have reason, therefore, to give thanks unto him who loved them, and who bought them with his own precious blood, in whose merit alone they have standing with the Heavenly Father. And yet these blessed people have *something* to do with the matter of their blessing – something to do with the fact that they have *heard*, and hearing have *known* or discerned the joyful sound, while others hearing have not discerned it. They have the hearing of faith: from the little which they first heard they must have *cultivated* a love for righteousness, and

a hatred of iniquity; they must have *cultivated* honesty with themselves, honesty with the Lord, honesty in handling his Word – "not handling the Word of God deceitfully." (2 Cor. 4:2.) They must have consecrated their hearts fully to the Lord, and thus have come fully under the guidance of "the spirit of the truth," else they would not be able to discern better than others between the joyful sound of the truth and the discordant sound of error. Evidently in these we see fulfilled the Scripture, "He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him [to know him, to know his will]." – Heb. 11:6.

THE NEW SONG OF MOSES AND THE LAMB.

Our Lord in symbol pointed out to us the fact that the message of his grace in the closing days of this Gospel Age would be so different from the commonly accepted message, misnamed the Gospel, that it would properly be termed a *new song*, altho it would be the old song of Moses – the message of blessing typified by the writings of Moses and by all the ceremonies of the Law, and the message of the Lamb, the good tidings announced in connection with our Lord's birth, and throughout his own ministry, when all the people "bare him record, and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth" (not threats of eternal torment to nine-tenths of the human family); and the testimony of all the apostles respecting the Lamb of God and the great work to be accomplished by him in taking "away *the sin of the world.*" It is **[R2570 : page 37]** merely this same song that is now being sung by those whom God has blessed with a knowledge of present truth – it is "the joyful sound" which only the people thus blessed *know* or can sing.

It is a worldly proverb that truth is stranger than fiction, yet this proverb is illustrated throughout "Christendom" today – the vast, vast majority of professed followers of Christ are strangers to the truth, but thoroughly familiar with the fictions of human invention – "traditions of the elders," which "make void the Word of God." It is in full accord with this that the angel declares to the Revelator that no man can learn

to sing this song except the elect – the 144,000, the "little flock." (Rev. 14:3.) Indeed, nothing is more manifest than that it is necessary to be somewhat of an "overcomer" of the world and its spirit which pervades nominal Christendom, ere any would have the courage to sing this song – to declare before men the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the goodness and grace of the divine plan, of which Jesus and his sacrifice are the center. To all others "the fear of man bringeth a snare," and stoppeth their mouths from speaking "forth the praise of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light." "But the people that *do know* their God [his character and plan] shall be valiant and do exploits," and like the apostles of old will feel and say, Whether it be right to obey God or men, judge ye; but we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. – Dan. 11:32; Acts 4:19,20.

Nor need we suppose that the fact that only the 144,000 can sing this song implies that those able to sing the song could not fall from their steadfastness and become castaways, and lose the privilege of singing it. On the contrary, the Scriptures most distinctly assure us that only by *unceasing* faithfulness will any be permitted to continue to be reckoned as members of that elect company, foreknown and prearranged of God. Our Lord clearly intimates that he will blot out the names of those who are unfaithful, that other names may be written in their stead. He clearly intimates that unfaithfulness will cause that the crown set apart for the faithful will, if he prove unfaithful, be given to another. – Rev. 3:5,11.

THE WALK OF THE BLESSED PEOPLE.

In harmony with the foregoing is the intimation of our text which implies that in order to be of the people who will know the joyful sound it will be necessary to "walk in the light of God's countenance." Or, reversing the statement, the thought is that all who walk in the light of God's countenance shall be his blessed people, and shall know the joyful sound.

What a lesson of holiness is here: not a lesson of human perfection and self-commendation to God, but a lesson of *abiding in Christ* under the robe of his righteousness, and of walking continuously *with him* and in the path of the just, which "shineth more and [R2570 : page 38] more unto the perfect day." And whoever would walk with Jesus in the light of divine favor, in the smile of divine approval, must needs walk the narrow way of self-control and self-sacrifice – "even unto death." Whoever delights in sin and sinful practices cannot walk in the company of Jesus, cannot be recognized as a member of his body or under his robe – can have neither part nor lot in this matter, whatever may be done with him or for him in the future age. As the Apostle expresses it, those accepted of Christ, and who would maintain affiliation with him, must remember that all of the "royal priesthood" are given the truth, not to make them vain or boastful, or heady and high-minded, but to purify them, and to sanctify them. He declares "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

A TEXT FOR THE YEAR.

We suggest to the friends of the truth the adoption of the precious words of our text as a talisman for the year, if not for the remainder of the pilgrim journey. We believe that these inspired words will help all who understand them to more and more measure up to the divine ideal which they present to our minds: "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance."

Another line, in full harmony with this, from the succeeding Psalm, might profitably be added: "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us." Only those who see the beauty of the great King, who discern something of his justice, his mercy and love, his wisdom, his power, can clothe their new minds with these glorious graces which more and more shine before our anointed vision as the beauty of the Lord our God. And the more clearly they are discerned, the more faithfully can we copy them, and the better do we love the joyful sound, and the better can we sing the Song of Moses and the Lamb.
