

## **CHRIST THE MAGNET – "I WILL DRAW ALL MEN."**

JOHN 12:20-33. – JAN. 20.

**GOLDEN TEXT:** – *"We would see Jesus."*

OUR LORD continued his teachings in the Temple daily after his triumphal entry into Jerusalem on the ass, – going to Bethany at night, and returning to the Temple each morning during the few days that intervened prior to his arrest and crucifixion. It was at this time that certain Greeks sought an interview with Jesus, and made known their desires through Andrew and Philip, who were probably the only two of the disciples who spoke the Greek language, they coming from a city (Bethsaida) in which the Greek language was considerably used, and their names are of Greek origin. It was most natural, therefore, that these two should be the mouthpieces of the visitors, to communicate their wishes to our Lord. The reason for the request doubtless was that our Lord at this time was in a part of the Temple inaccessible to any except Jews by birth, and these Greeks were Jewish proselytes, hence were not permitted to approach nearer the holy places than the Court of the Gentiles. Their request therefore meant that Jesus should come out to where they were for an interview.

What may have been the object of their visit we are not told; nor do we presume that our Lord's words recorded in the succeeding verses of our lesson were addressed to the Greeks, but rather that a break in the narrative occurs. Our Lord doubtless responded to their request for an interview, but the substance of their converse has not been considered necessary for the Church, and hence has not been recorded. It may not be amiss, however, to mention that Eusebius, a church historian of early days, relates

that an embassy was sent to Jesus by the king of Edessa, Syria, inviting him to take up his abode with him, and promising him a royal welcome. It would not be surprising if there were truth in this statement, but we know well that our Lord would refuse any such overtures, for he himself had plainly declared to the disciples when he sent them forth, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

God had blessings in store for all the families of the earth; but not yet, and not in this way. All things must be done in a divine order and according to the divine plan, which provided for the selection of the **[R2758 : page 11]** Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16,29) before the general blessings could come upon the world; and the offer of membership in this Seed of Abraham must, according to divine arrangement, be to the Jew first.

It was probably after the interview with the Greeks had ended, and while the hearts of the apostles were beating fast with anticipation that finally the world was waking up to recognize their Master in his true light, and would shortly exalt him to the high position foretold for the Messiah, and while their hopes on their own behalf were also running high that they should be joint-heirs with him in the Kingdom, that Jesus uttered the words constituting the remainder of the lesson. It was a good opportunity for him to show them how his sufferings of the immediate future were the foundation upon which all the future glory must rest. He well knew what bitter disappointments and heart-aches would come to his faithful few when they would realize the literalness of what he had already told them respecting his death. He would give them some suggestions which would be helpful to them subsequently, and enable them to look through the sufferings to the glories in reservation, unseeable except with the eye of faith.

It was, we believe, with this thought in mind that our Lord declared, "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be

glorified." The disciples at first would take this as intimating his earthly exaltation; but he speedily drew their attention to the fact that while the beginning of his glorification was near, it must be preceded by the suffering of death. His glorification began in his resurrection from the dead, when he was raised in incorruption, in power, a glorious spiritual body – "a quickening spirit," as the Apostle explains. (1 Cor. 15:42-45.) This glorification was enhanced when he was received up into glory in the Father's presence, there to appear on our behalf, and at the right hand of divine power to wait for the appointed time when he should take unto himself his great power and reign as King over all the earth, which he had redeemed with his own precious blood.

### **"THE HOUR IS COME!"**

The expression, "The hour is come," is not necessarily to be understood as signifying sixty minutes; just as the word "day" does not always signify twenty-four hours, but a comparatively short period or epoch, as, for instance, "Noah's day," "Moses' day," "Jesus' day," etc. As compared with "Jesus' day" the experiences referred to were properly enough said to be occurring in that "hour," or short time.

Having thus assured them that the beginning of his glorification was not far distant, our Lord makes very impressive the necessity of his death, by saying, "Verily, verily," – that is, Truly, truly, most positively, emphatically, I give you the illustration that my glorification, according to the divine arrangement, must come through my death, even as a grain of wheat would remain but one grain unless it were planted, and through the dying of one grain life and being were given to a number. Had our Lord chosen to do so, he at one time had the privilege of remaining alone, – of not dying on our behalf. Had he followed this course we would still have been unredeemed and he could have brought forth **[R2758 : page 12]** no fruitage. But he

had consecrated his life; he had voluntarily engaged to sacrifice himself on behalf of Adam and his race, in compliance with the Father's will, and hence he declares that if *now* he would love his life he would lose it; that on the contrary, instead of seeking to save himself he must indeed hate or *despise* the present life in comparison with the future and eternal one which the Father had promised him as a reward for obedience unto death.

It will be noticed that in this understanding of it, this 25th verse is applicable to our Lord alone, and not to his followers, for they had no life to lose; they and the whole world were dead, under condemnation of death, because of father Adam's transgression. Our Lord alone had life, which he had a right to lay down or exchange in order to keep it unto eternal life. Such privileges could not come to his followers until first Jesus had given his life "a *ransom* for all." Then as soon as the ransom was given and had been accepted of the Father, the redeemed ones (believers justified by their faith) could be reckoned as having life-rights which they would be privileged to consecrate upon the Lord's altar, and to exchange for the heavenly life, following in the footsteps of Jesus.

And in full accord with this interpretation is the next verse, which distinctly speaks of Jesus' followers, saying that all who desire to serve him, and to be with him, must follow him – follow him in this experience, which he, as the Forerunner in this way, was already passing through; *viz.*, the consecration and then the despising of his earthly existence, as compared with the spirit life and heavenly glory promised.

It is to their great disadvantage that Christian people so generally fail to discern that there are to be several different classes of saved ones – the overcomers, the great company and the restitution class. The benevolently disposed of those seeking to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, in earthly self-denials and sacrifices, and in despising the present life in comparison with the

future one promised, are robbed of much of their joy and peace and consolation by the thought that only such footstep-followers can ever be with the Lord and honored by the Father; for they realize that such servants constitute a "little flock" indeed. The effect of their ignorance of the divine plan is, with many, a hardening of heart in an attempt to be more like what they understand God to be, as expressed in what they believe to be his plan of eternal torment for all except the little flock. Others, on the other hand, cultivating their benevolence, refuse to believe that the way to this association with Jesus and the divine glorification is so narrow – they widen it more and more to take in their friends, their families, their neighbors, and as many as possible of the heathen; and thus, unconsciously perhaps, gradually but surely they lower the standard of true discipleship, not only for others but also for themselves: they become more and more satisfied with outward forms and ceremonies and platitudes and moralities, and come more and more to consider that their former views were incorrect – when they supposed, in harmony with our Lord's words, that all who would be with him and be honored of the Father, must take up his cross and follow in his footsteps.

The light of this harvest-time now shining upon the divine Word and plan makes clear to us, not only the height of the calling of the "elect" Church to joint-heirship with her Lord in his glory, but also the reality of the fact that all who would share that glory in the future, must suffer with him in the present life – must be crucified to sin and to self and to the world; must rise to newness of life in Christ Jesus reckonedly now, actually, if faithful, in the first resurrection. But this harvest light makes clear to us also that the class now called, now intended of the Father to be joint-sacrificers with his son and joint-heirs with him of his glory, is altogether but a small fraction of the human family, and that the others who receive not this high calling are to be otherwise blessed in due time under the Millennial Kingdom, by the glorified Jesus and his glorified Church and Bride.

Those who have this light and appreciate it are saved from the discouragements common to others. They can see the reasonableness of making the way to so high a station as that to which they are called a very narrow one, which will admit at its opening only those who are justified through faith in Christ and who are desirous of pleasing and serving God, and which, at its furthest end, will admit to glory only those who have passed faithfully through the experiences of this time, and are found in heart and character copies of God's dear Son. – Rom. 8:29.

"Now is my soul troubled" – my feelings are turbulent; I am in a commotion. Shall I pray, Father deliver me from this hour? Shall I not, on the contrary, remember that for this very cause I am come to this hour, that I might endure, and that willingly, rather than ask to be delivered? I might ask the Father for a certain kind of deliverance which would not invalidate the engagement which I made, that I would give my life in obedience to his will. I might ask him to permit some calamity to befall me which would result in my death and thus save me from the peculiarly trying and ignominious conditions incident to my apprehension and execution as a criminal – as the worst kind of a criminal, a blasphemer against my Heavenly Father. Such a deviation would seem to me not an unreasonable concession for one who has shown his faithfulness to the Father's will in all things. And yet **[R2758 : page 13]** I will not ask even this concession. Rather, I will submit my will to the Father's will most absolutely, and carry out to the very jot and tittle the spirit as well as the letter of my covenant. Let the Father's will be done in every particular; it must be the wisest and best, else it would not be his plan. It is for this very purpose that I came to this hour, that I might manifest, demonstrate, to the Father my devotion, my most implicit obedience to his will. Proceed, Father! Glorify thine own name and in thine own way, at whatever the cost to me!

Then a voice was heard, a voice which some understood and which others misunderstood, as is always the case with the voice of God. The world heareth no message; believers hear the message partially; but the begotten sons, in perfect accord with the Father, hear and understand fully. No doubt our Lord received a [R2759 : page 13] blessing through this message from the Father, and yet he assures us that it was not specially sent for him, but rather as a demonstration for the benefit of the disciples – that they might note that God attested his teachings. God does not today speak to his people by such an audible voice; but he speaks none the less forcibly to us – through his Word and through his providences. Yet now, as then, some hear and appreciate more than others. Some, who have the word of God in their hands appreciate it only as another book, and likewise discern not God's providences in the affairs of his people. Others see in the Lord's Word a message, a good message, and reverence the book and see in his providences something of the divine care and provision in connection with the body of Christ. But only the spirit-begotten sons, the members of the body of Christ, today, like the Head eighteen hundred years ago, hear the Father's Word, with distinctness and clearness and understanding. These also note divine providences, and are enabled to rejoice in them, and to realize that all things are working together for good to them because they love God, and have been called according to his purpose, and are in the way of responding to that call, seeking to make their calling and their election sure.

### **THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD.**

When our Lord said, "*Now* is the judgment of this world, – *now* shall the prince of this world be cast out," he evidently meant by *now* the same as in his previous expression, "*The hour is come.*" But a little space of time *now* intervened until this would be accomplished. The judgment of this world, so to speak, was in the balance and would speedily be decided. The first trial

took place in Eden, father Adam being the one who was on trial, and the world of mankind, still in his loins, was in a certain sense on trial, in the balance, with him. That trial, as we know, resulted in disaster to Adam and all his posterity. "By one man's disobedience sin entered into the world, and death as a result of sin, and so death passed upon all men for all [through inherited weaknesses] are sinners." (Rom. 5:12.) That judgment (trial and sentence) of the world was unto death; and Adamic death had reigned up to the time that our Lord spoke, for 4161 years. But now under divine providence, under the grace of God, a substitute or *ransom* had been found, acceptable to God, and willing to give his life a ransom for Adam and his race. This one was now on trial, and the fate of the whole world was in the balance and depended upon his victory. Hence, as our Lord expressed it, *now* the world's *krisis*, or trial, was at its climax, and his decision to be faithful to the Father's will, and to despise the present life in obedience to that will, determined that trial favorably to the world; for the Apostle declares that as the world's condemnation was unto death through Adam, so the world's justification is unto life through Christ – that so far as the divine law was concerned Jesus paid the full penalty for the whole world, and hence will have both the right and the opportunity, not only to rescue mankind from the tomb by an awakening, but also to rescue fully and completely so many as will accept the favor, by raising them up fully out of sin and death to perfection and harmony with God during and at the close of the Millennial age. – Rom. 5:18,19.

Our Lord's other statement is quite in accord with this: "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out." That is to say, the trial now in progress in my own person will result not only in a reversal and cancellation of the divine sentence of mankind unto death, but it will also result in the overthrow of the present rule of evil in the hands of Satan, the prince of this world. He shall be cast out; he shall be chained for the period of my Millennial reign, and shall subsequently be destroyed. Since the whole matter of the world's



judgment and the removal of its present captor through sin was dependent upon our Lord's victory, it was quite proper that he should date all those results from that "hour," notwithstanding the fact that it would be centuries before these things would be accomplished; – the binding of Satan, the release of mankind from the Adamic sentence through the instrumentalities of the Millennial Kingdom (Christ and the glorified Church), into the glorious liberty (from these things) which belongs to all sons of God, – whatever their plane of being. Not that we are to suppose that all men will avail themselves of these heavenly mercies and privileges, but that all are to have a full opportunity to do so; so that whosoever will die the Second Death will die for his own sins and not through inherited imperfections – not because the fathers ate the sour grape of sin. – Jer. 31:29,30; 1 John 5:16.

### **WHEN CHRIST WILL DRAW ALL MEN.**

The statement of the next verse is in absolute accord with this: "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto [toward] me." While, as the narrator records, these words signified by what manner of death Jesus should die – lifted up on the cross – nevertheless, they meant more than this. They meant, also, If I shall faithfully give my life according to my covenant, and shall receive of the Heavenly Father the high exaltation or lifting up which he has promised, that exaltation will bring with it the power to bless all the families of the earth; first, according to the Father's will and prearrangement, **[R2759 : page 14]** he himself will draw unto me a Church or Bride; I will not draw these, but the Father: "No man can come unto me [in the present time, in the narrow way] except the Father which sent me draw him, and I will **raise him up** [exalt him] at the last day" – the Millennial day, "early in the morning" of that day. – John 6:44; Psa. 46:5.

And when these shall have been thus exalted as members of my body, raised up as sharers with me in the first resurrection,

then I will begin *my* drawing work, which will not be confined to a special class, a Royal Priesthood, like the Father's drawing. Mine will be a general drawing: I will draw all men; it will be a universal opportunity to come unto me and receive from me, as the Father's representative, full remission of sins that are past, and such instructions in righteousness, such chastisements, such experiences, such judgments, as will tend to lift them up, up, up, to the glorious condition of human perfection from which all fell through Adam's transgression, and the right to restore to which I gained for them by not counting my earthly life precious unto me, but instead by despising it, that I might redeem men and gain this high heavenly condition in which, according to the divine arrangement, I and my servants who will be with me, and whom the Father will honor also, and whom I will call my Bride and brethren, and joint-heirs, shall bless all the families of the earth. – Rev. 22:17; Rom. 8:17; Gal. 3:16,29.

-----