

SPARED IN THE DAY OF TROUBLE

"They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his only son that serveth him." – Mal. 3:17.

LIKE MANY OTHER prophecies, the words of the Prophet Malachi seem to have a general application throughout the Gospel Age and a particular one at the close of the Age. Eighteen hundred years ago the Lord Jehovah began to make up His jewels. The first of these jewels was our Lord Jesus Christ, who was polished, perfected and taken up on high. Jehovah did not cease His work with the perfection of His Son, our Lord. He has arranged that other jewels be cut and polished after the similitude of His Son, that they may shine with Him in the heavenly glory and Kingdom; as it is written, "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." – Eph. 2:10.

These gems must all be found by God, who is making up these jewels. But having been found of Him, they are placed in the hands of the great Lapidarist, our Lord Jesus, that He may cut, polish and fit them for the glorious work of shining with Him in the Kingdom. Our Heavenly Father has appointed our Lord to be the great Master Workman in the preparation of the jewels.

In our text, the Lord Jehovah says that in that day of preparation of the jewels He will spare this class as a man spares his only son that serves him. He has not spared this class in the sense of relieving them from all suffering, for if they were thus spared they could not share the glory to follow this trial time. He did not spare Jesus, the Head over the Church, which is His Body. But He will not permit them to be tempted above what they are able to bear. (I Cor. 10:13.) He has an interest in them and a sympathy for them, and delivers them from those things which would prove too weighty for them.

THE MOUNTING OF THE JEWELS GOING ON

In a certain sense, then, God has been making up His jewels for more than eighteen hundred years – in the sense of preparing them. But there is still a final gathering, or assembling, of this class, which has not yet been completed. The gathering of these jewels must include the resurrection, not merely of those who have been sleeping as members of the Body of Christ, but also of those who are alive and remain to the end of the Age. These all experience a change from animal to spirit conditions – "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." (I Cor. 15:51,52.) In the assembling of this class – the *mounting* of the jewels, as it were – the Lord will show His own workmanship, what He has selected out of the filth and mire of the sinful race of mankind, and what He has made of them.

This gathering of the jewels is that to which the Prophet Malachi refers in the following quotation: "Behold, I will send My Messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, He shall come, [R5119 : page 327] saith the Lord of Hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap; and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." – Mal. 3:1-3.

The Messenger of the Covenant is, primarily, our Lord Jesus, who came more than eighteen hundred years ago and presented Himself to those who were heirs of the New Covenant – the Jews. The Apostle points out that this new arrangement meant, not only a new Mediator for them, but also better sacrifices and a new priesthood, who would be able to effect a satisfaction for the sins of the people, so that it would not be necessary to render the typical sacrifices thereafter year by year. – Heb. 9:11-15.

This Messenger of the Covenant came unto His own, but His own received Him not, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God" – to become associated with Himself, to become identified with Himself, as members of His Body. They are begotten to a new nature, not of the will of the flesh, but only of God. – John 1:11-13.

THE LORD'S WORDS A REFINING FIRE

In this sense of the word, our Lord sat as a refiner of gold and silver – discriminating, purifying. The words which He spoke were not only words of grace, of eternal life, but also words of purification, likened elsewhere to a sharp, two-edged sword. (Heb. 4:12.) The Prophet Malachi compares them to fullers' soap, which would take out all stains and leave the garment pure and white; and he also says that our Lord will sit as a refiner of gold and silver, that the Levite class may offer to the Lord an acceptable sacrifice.

This prophecy refers, as we see, to the antitypical priesthood and includes both the Royal Priests and the Great Company. The work of this great Refiner is to purify the members of the Church class – not only the Little Flock, but the Great Company as well.

This refining process takes place all through the Gospel Age. As the individual members of the Body of Christ grow in grace, they are put through not only the preliminary processes of the refining, but also the more trying ones. Gold represents the Divine or higher order of spirit nature, and silver, the lower order. The gold represents the Little Flock, and the Silver the Great Company.

None of these would be able to make an acceptable sacrifice of himself; but the great Advocate imputes His merit to each who offers himself in sacrifice and thus enables him to become such. The Father permits the Advocate to make of these acceptable sacrifices. They are *His* sacrifices, not their own. Then they are begotten to the new nature and adopted into the Body of Christ. By this offering, our Lord,

as the great Mediator, is getting ready for the institution of the New Covenant.

THE PRESENT A WONDERFUL TIME

The closing scenes of the Gospel Age will be the most remarkable of the world's history. The Church will then be completed. We are not at liberty to guess when the end of the trouble will be. Whether *all* of the trouble will come in the next two or three years we do not know. But we think that the *most serious part* of the trouble will occupy a very short time.

Let us remember that we are living in most wonderful times. More can be accomplished in one month now than could have been done in years some time ago – more in one hour than in days formerly. We are still in the waiting attitude, so that the Lord can indicate His will in the matter to us. We believe that the year 1915 will be even more wonderful than the present. We fully believe that the year 1914 will see the end of the Gentile Times, *for we cannot find even one flaw in our Bible chronology*. But we do not claim infallibility. To err is human. If, therefore, the Father permits us to blunder in respect to His Word in this matter, nevertheless, He will undoubtedly have a great blessing for us. And if it should be that the year 1914 should not mark the close of the Gentile Times, we would still believe that the time could not be very far distant; for the nearer we come to that time, the nearer we see the fulfilment of the things which the Scriptures indicate will then occur.

In a short time the Lord will spare His people – not from the trouble altogether, but from any unnecessary experience. We cannot expect that He will spare them as jewels any more than He did His Only Begotten Son. He allowed that Son to be put to death – even the death of the *cross*. Yet He protected our Lord and did not permit any of the things which He suffered to work to His detriment. And so the Lord will spare us as New Creatures. He is preparing for us the glorious things which He has in reservation for the faithful.

