

SERVICE OF THE BRETHREN A PROPER ZEAL

"The zeal of Thine House hath consumed Me." – Psa. 69:9.

THESE WORDS must have seemed extremely poetical, hyperbolic, to those of David's time. David indeed had a zeal for the House of God – for the Tabernacle first, and subsequently for the Temple, which he desired to build, but which the Lord would not permit him to build. David had a real zeal for that House.

We get the key to this prophecy from its application in the New Testament to our Lord. When Jesus had made a scourge of small cords, He drove the money-changers out of the Temple. Then His disciples remembered and probably quoted the passage: "The zeal of Thine House hath eaten Me up." (John 2:17.) The Lord's House in that case was the Temple; and our Lord's zeal in cleansing the Temple of all merchandise would be considered by some as very appropriate, and by others as very extreme.

But the still deeper meaning is indicated by the declaration that the Church is His House – the House of God. The Apostles, speaking of the Church, say that we are the Temple of the Holy Spirit. (I Cor. 6:19.) Again, it is said that we are builded together as living stones. (I Pet. 2:4,5.) So we see that the real House of God for which Jesus had zeal was the House of Sons. The Jews had been a House of Servants under Moses; but Christ was a Son over His own House – the House of Sons – "whose House are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end;" for "Faithful is He that calleth you." – Heb. 3:5,6; I Thess. 5:24.

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST THE SPIRIT OF SERVICE

Having this view of the House before our minds, we can see in what way Jesus' zeal for the House of God consumed Him – burned

Him up. We use the word *burn, consume*, in the same way that we use the word *rust*, in the case of *iron*. And so zeal is that which is warm, aglow, hot. With this view of the Master and His House before our minds – the House that He was interested in – we perceive that His zeal, His energy for them, prompted Him, led Him, to lay down His life – for as many as would become God's House, God's sons, God's people. This zeal for the Lord's House, for the Lord's people, consumed His time and strength in helping them.

During this Gospel Age the Lord invites the Church to be similarly consumed with Him. But the only ones who are yet members of the House of God, or sons of God, are those who are begotten of the Holy Spirit, as the Apostle distinctly tells us. If we then have this Spirit of Christ, it will be the spirit of service. It will be a zeal, a warmth, an energy, prompting us to serve in the Church. It will mean that we will be consumed as the Master was consumed – in the service of His Church, which is His Body. – Matthew 20:28; I John 3:16.

THE PREPARATION FOR THE DIVINE NATURE

There are sons of God on the Heavenly plane who were never given an opportunity to manifest such a zeal as this. There was no offer made to them to be associated in the reclamation of mankind. This privilege was given to the Logos, the Only Begotten. To Him was given the opportunity to lay down His life – "Who made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Therefore, God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name." – Phil. 2:7-9.

Our Lord's zeal has not cost Him His Heavenly home, His Heavenly estate; but, on the contrary, God has highly exalted Him – to a higher position. The statement that He was consumed refers to His earthly life, which He laid down for the world. The Father has

given Him a still higher nature than He had before – the Divine nature. And this zeal in being consumed prepared Him for the high reward of the Divine nature.

St. Peter says that the Lord hath "given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these [working in us] we might become partakers of the Divine nature." (2 Pet. 1:4.) The Apostle Paul says that if we suffer with Christ, we shall reign with Him; if we be dead with Him, we shall live with Him. (2 Tim. 2:11,12.) If we have our earthly natures consumed, then we shall get the Divine nature. "We shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." – 1 Cor. 15:51,52.

This opportunity, then, of manifesting a fulness of zeal for the service of God, was granted, not to Adam, or to any of the human family, until this Gospel Age. This opportunity will *not* come to the sons of God in the next Age. The sacrificing then will be at an end; and there will be no more sin, sorrow, pain, sighing, crying or dying! – Isaiah 35:10; 51:11; Revelation 21:4.

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"One more day's work for Jesus,
One less of life for me!
But Heaven is nearer, and Christ is dearer,
Than yesterday to me;
His love and light fill all my soul tonight!

"One more day's work for Jesus!
How glorious is my King!
'Tis joy, not duty, to show His beauty;
My soul mounts on the wing,
At the mere thought how Christ my life has bought!

"One more day's work for Jesus!
How sweet the work has been,

To tell the story, to show the glory,
Where Christ's flock enter in!
How it did shine in this poor heart of mine!

"O blessed work for Jesus!
O rest at Jesus' feet!
There toil seems pleasure, my wants are treasure,
And pain for Him is sweet.
Lord, if I may, I'll serve another day!"

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