

"THE SPIRITS OF JUST MEN MADE PERFECT"

"But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the City of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the General Assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."

– Hebrews 12:22,23.

THE Apostle is here addressing the Church, and is pointing down to the end, or consummation, of this Age. The context indicates that at the end of this Age everything that can be shaken will be shaken – all will be shaken out except that which is unshakeable. And the unshakeable thing is the Kingdom, which will then be ushered in. The Apostle likens the time of its inauguration to the inauguration of the Law Covenant at Mt. Sinai, when all the people heard the thunderings, and the noise of the trumpets, and saw the lightnings and the mountain smoking; and when Moses "drew near unto the thick darkness where God was"; and Moses went up into the mountain. All of this was typical – the sealing of the Law Covenant at the hands of the typical mediator, Moses. – Exodus 20:18-22.

The antitype is what we are approaching – what will be reached by the Church at the end of this Age. There will then be commotion, strife, in the world – thunderings, lightnings. And as in the type, so in the antitype, the people will be discouraged, and in great fear and trouble. By the end of the time of trouble, the New Covenant will be inaugurated. The Mediator will be Jesus the Messiah, as the glorified Head, and the Church His Body.

The Apostle says [see Diaglott rendering] that we are approaching the General Assembly of the Church of the First-borns. In this will be included Christ, the Head, and all the faithful

of this Age, of the past and of the present. It will include both the Little Flock and the Great Company; for together they constitute the Church of the First-borns, whose names are written in Heaven. Consequently this demonstration will be made after the Little Flock shall have been gathered. We are every day approaching nearer to this time – are getting *into it* somewhat even now.

The Apostle also says we are approaching the place where "the spirits of just men" will be made perfect. It would not be reasonable to suppose that he would first mention the Church of the First-borns, including them *all* and then mention a *part* of them. Hence we conclude that this phrase refers to another class. Our minds naturally go out in inquiry, thinking of the Ancient Worthies – a class who are merely waiting until the Church shall be glorified. Thus these come in here in proper course, or order. So after telling about the assembling of the Church of the First-borns, St. Paul tells of this other class – "the spirits of just men made perfect." But there is another reason why these *could not* be the Church, and *would* be the Ancient Worthies – and that is that neither the Church nor the Great Company will be "*men* made perfect." The very condition on which the Church become [R5295 : page 249] of the spirit class is that they give up the *human* nature.

But how shall we apply this expression to the Ancient Worthies? We do this by the transposition of a few words, thus: "We are coming to the perfect men whose spirits are just." And the Ancient Worthies were just, although they had fleshly imperfections. The Apostle has referred to this class and told us that they will have a *better resurrection*, though not so good a resurrection as the Church will receive. The Ancient Worthies will attain the better resurrection in that they will be perfected flesh when they come up from the tomb. As they were just in spirit, so will they be perfect men in the beginning of the Restitution time.

The figure of a mountain is one commonly used in the Scriptures for a kingdom. Mount Zion represents the Kingdom of God. This Mount Zion Kingdom is to include the whole earth. This Kingdom is about to be established. Its establishment is what the Apostle is discussing. A kingdom is in figure also called a City; but strictly speaking, a *mountain* represents the *nation*, and a *city* represents the *government* of that nation. This figure of speech is very common today. If we read that Berlin does thus and so, we know that the German Government is referred to; or if we read of St. Petersburg's doing thus and so, it means the Russian Government; similarly, Washington would represent the Government of the United States, and London, the British Government.

Our text has reference to the holy Kingdom of God. And then, not to lose its identity, but to carry the thought that the City represents the whole Kingdom, the Apostle speaks of the City of God as the Heavenly Jerusalem. Thus he carries our minds to the thought that as the literal Jerusalem was the capital of the typical Kingdom of God, so there will be a New Jerusalem – a higher Government – which is to be God's Kingdom to rule over the whole earth. Thus these various pictures are used to show us the antitype of the kingdom of earthly Zion, of Jerusalem. Then follow the other statements, and the one that appertains to the righteous in spirit made perfect. These were *already* righteous in *spirit*, and now they will be made *perfect*, by having this better Resurrection which the Lord has promised.

In connection with this we have the statement, "an innumerable company of angels." These we think will be the spiritual angels of God, who have had to do with so much service for God. We think they are the same angels of whom our Lord spoke when He said that He would confess us before His Father and before the Holy angels – those who have been ministers to the saints all the way down through this Age. It is very fitting that they

should meet us, and that they should see our introduction to the Father.

