

## THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL AGE

**"To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life." – Romans 2:7.**

THE call of this Gospel Age is a call to glory, honor and immortality. As the Apostle Peter says, God has "given unto us [the Church] exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might become partakers of the Divine nature." (2 Peter 1:4.) St. Paul says that we were called in the "One Hope of our Calling" – this is the Hope that is set before us. Shall we all get this great reward? No. Some will draw back. "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe [and go on] to the saving of our souls [our lives]." (Heb. 10:39.) Those who draw back go into the Second Death. For them there is nothing reserved but everlasting destruction. They will perish as brute beasts. – 2 Peter 2:12.

We have been redeemed from Sheol, the grave, the tomb. God will later deliver also all mankind, and give them an opportunity to come to a knowledge of the Truth. Only a comparatively small portion have as yet been made partakers of the Holy Spirit. Only the spirit-begotten ones are able to see these things now offered; therefore, "Blessed are *your* eyes, for they *see*; and *your* ears, for they *hear*." This is the only class with which God is dealing at the present time – those who have been begotten of the Holy Spirit.

## BOTH OVERCOMERS AND "MORE THAN CONQUERORS"

But there is a difference between these that have been begotten of the Holy Spirit. Every man's work shall be tested "as by fire." The Apostle tells us that some will build with gold, silver and precious stones of the Divine promises. He declares that others will

build with wood, hay and stubble, and that this latter class will suffer loss, but will themselves be saved, "yet so as by fire." (1 Cor. 3:12-15.) Eventually only those of the Wise Virgin class, who have copied the Lord's character, will be counted as "*more than conquerors.*" The "more than conquerors" are those who go into this self-sacrifice voluntarily, as did our Savior. Others will not be counted as "*more* than conquerors." "To him that overcometh will I give power over the nations." These are more than merely overcomers – these that become the Royal Priesthood. These are the ones who will inherit immortality, who will receive the highest blessing.

We see two classes brought to our attention in Revelation 7:4,9. In the first class are twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes of Israel – one hundred and forty-four thousand in all. These are they "who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." These are the ones who will stand with the Lamb on Mt. Zion, and who will sit with Him in His Throne. As many from the different tribes of Israel as were worthy at the First Advent were received and given the begetting of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. But the full number were not found in Natural Israel. "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the Election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." – Rom. 11:7.

During this Gospel Age God has been completing the Elect, filling up the number lacking to complete the one hundred and forty-four thousand, and apportioning, to each of those that come in, one of the places that were vacant.

The Apostle says, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits: that blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." "The Deliverer shall come out of Zion, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob," my people. (Rom. 11:25,26.) The Deliverer is Christ the Head and the

Church His Body. And this Deliverer will be the One who will bless all who become Israelites.

The picture in Revelation 7:9 shows us the Great Company. And we read that John saw a great company, out of all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues – not an elect number, not a fixed number, but one which no man could compute, being a number which no man *knoweth*. In the treatment that they must undergo, it is shown that these must wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb, and they will stand *before* the Throne, instead of *sitting in* the Throne. They will have *everlasting life*, but not *immortality*. Only the Little Flock, the Bride class, will have immortality. The Bride class will be counted worthy to escape the trouble coming on the world. They will keep their garments unspotted from the world. If there comes a spot or wrinkle, they go immediately to the Throne of Heavenly Grace, and find mercy and help and cleansing in time of need.

## TWO CLASSES IN THE CHURCH

Thus we see that there will be two classes – the Little Flock and the Great Company. All of these were typified in the first-borns of Israel, who were spared, or passed over, in the night when Israel left Egypt. So all these will be of the Church of the First-borns. But a part of these will attain the Divine nature as the Bride of Christ, and a part will attain everlasting life, similar to the everlasting life that the angels possess.

Only the Father originally had immortality. The First-begotten of the Father was the Logos. He was the Beginning of the Creation of God, the First-born of every creature, by whom all things were made that were **[R5372 : page 382]** made. St. John tells us that "In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with *the* God, and the Logos was *a* God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." Hence we understand that angels, principalities and powers, cherubim and seraphim, as

well as man, were all the direct creation of this Logos, though not by His own power.

All things are *of* the Father, and all things are *by* the Son, and *we* by Him. First, Jehovah Himself is of the Divine nature; secondly, our Lord Jesus; and thirdly, the Church, the Lamb's Wife, will be of the Divine nature. The Great Company will be on the spirit plane, because begotten of the Spirit.

