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"LET NO ONE TAKE THY CROWN"

– *SEPTEMBER 27. – QUARTERLY REVIEW. –*

"I come quickly. Hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown." – Revelation 3:11.

THE TEXT of today's Study is a prophecy by Jesus Himself. Picturing the seven stages of His Church, the Master used these words in addressing one of them. There is, nevertheless, an appropriateness in all of the Lord's counsel at any time. So we now, as well as those who were particularly addressed, may find instruction in our text.

It teaches, in harmony with the entire Bible, that there can be no remedy for the reign of Sin and Death, except that which God has provided, to be applied at the Second Coming of the Redeemer, when He will set up His Kingdom. Meantime, the delay in the fulfilment of our prayer, "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in Heaven," does not indicate any carelessness on the part of the Father or of the Redeemer in respect to the world and its terrible reign of Sin and Death. It does, however, indicate great composure on God's part and on the part of the Master. It indicates that the Plan of God is working, and that it will ultimately bring a blessing to the whole world, the blessing which God has promised since the days [R5532 : page 269] of Abraham – the blessing of all the families of the earth.

God has from the beginning foreseen how the six great Days of the reign of Sin and Death could be wisely permitted, in view of the power to be exercised by Messiah's Kingdom. Messiah will be quite competent, backed by Power Divine, to cope with sin, sorrow, pain, death – everything that is now troubling humanity. The time appointed of the Father, a thousand years, will be abundantly long. And when the Church shall have been selected

from the world as the Bride, the Lamb's Wife and Joint-heir in His Kingdom, everything will be ready for the blessed work of restitution, restoration, resurrection, regeneration of mankind – to bring the willing and obedient back to the image and likeness of the Creator, lost through Adam's sin and gained through the willing obedience of Christ, even unto death – even the ignominious death of the cross.

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE CHURCH

Our text addresses not the world, not the nominal Church – but the true Church. The true Church, having turned away from sin, having accepted Christ, having given their hearts to God, through Christ having been accepted of the Father and begotten of the Holy Spirit, are children of God; and, as the Apostle says, "If children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ" our Lord. (Romans 8:17.) A crown of glory is set apart for each son thus received of the Father, and the name of each is recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life.

So far as God is concerned, the whole matter is settled. But so far as the Church is concerned, it still remains for them to fulfil their Covenant. Having presented their bodies a living sacrifice to God, acceptable through Christ, they are to continue in that attitude – day by day gladly presenting their bodies, willing to endure, to suffer, to be anything and everything that God would be pleased to have them be. All who do this continue to grow in character-likeness to the Lord Jesus; and all such will thereby make their calling and election sure.

But should any of these neglect this Covenant of Sacrifice, and through fear of death be subject to bondage either to sin or to sectarian errors, or in any other manner fail to be responsive and loyal to their Covenant, they will thereby fail to maintain their election and make it sure. After a time of testing they will be relegated to a secondary place; they will be no longer counted part

of the Royal Priesthood, even though they might still maintain their standing as Levites, servants of the Priests.

This is the thought of the text; namely, Be of good courage. It will not be long until I will come to receive you to Myself. Let the thought of the Kingdom and of the Divine blessing connected with it cheer, strengthen, comfort you, and make you strong to do God's will faithfully, nobly, courageously, loyally. "Hold fast that which thou hast." Do not let slip from you the blessed relationship which was entered into, which was established for you by Me, your Master, when I made you acceptable on the basis of your Covenant to be dead with Me, to suffer with Me, to give up all earthly ambitions and to strive daily for the great prize which I set before you – a joint-heirship in My Kingdom.

The crown is yours now, by virtue of the arrangement which I have made with you as your Advocate, and by virtue of the Covenant of Sacrifice which you have made with Me. Hold fast your crown! Do not allow it to pass to another. If any one of you is unfaithful, God will not permit you to have a share in that Kingdom, but will enroll another name than yours, will apportion another name instead of yours as a new Covenanter.

THE NUMBER OF THE ELECT

This Scripture, with others, shows us definitely that the Church is to be composed of a definite, fixed number – not one more, not one less. This is also illustrated in the body of the Jewish high priest. The head of the priest represented Jesus; the body of the priest represented the Church. As the Apostle says, "Now are ye the Body of Christ, and members in particular." "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ." "God hath set the members every one of them in the Body, as it hath pleased Him." "There are many members, but one Body." – 1 Corinthians 12:27,12,18,20.

According to the Law, no one could serve in the office of high priest unless he had the full number of members – fingers, toes, etc. (Leviticus 21:17-21.) No one could serve who had a superfluous member – an extra finger, an extra toe. Thus the Lord indicated the completeness of the antitypical Priesthood, The Christ.

In Revelation, Chapter 7, we have a picture of the Church, the antitypical Royal Priesthood. Then following that picture we have one of the antitype of the Levite class. The first shows a definite number, one hundred and forty-four thousand – twelve thousand for each of the tribes of Israel. Thus God indicates that He is following out a definite purpose. Israel was first invited to be this Royal Priesthood. (Exodus 19:5,6.) At Pentecost a few out of the different tribes responded, and became the nucleus, or earliest members, of the Church. Then the door of opportunity was opened to the Gentiles; and all coming in are assigned to places in the twelve tribes to fill up the vacancies. This the Apostle Paul pictures in Romans 11 – the wild olive branches being grafted into the olive tree to take the places of the branches broken off because of unbelief.

Those loyal to the Lord, yet not sufficiently loyal to be of the Bride class, after having been tested as to their loyalty and proven worthy, will constitute a Great Company, **[R5533 : page 269]** an innumerable company, a company whose number no man knows – a company whose number is not foreordained. The discipline through which these will be put is pictorially stated. They will come through great tribulation, and wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. They must in the end be faithful; else they will not have any part or lot with Christ in His work.

But since this testing needed to come upon them as a judgment, because they did not voluntarily and full-souledly keep

their Covenant of Sacrifice, therefore they cannot be of the elect Body of Christ. They will miss the Throne. They miss the glorious crown of the Divine nature – immortality. But they receive palm branches, signifying victory, and we have the assurance that they will be permitted to serve God in and through His Temple, the Church, which is the Body of Christ.

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NO CROSS, NO CROWN

"THE purple grape must be crushed
To make the sweet, red wine,
And furnace fires must fiercely burn
The drossy gold to refine;
The wheel must cruelly grind,
Else where the jewel's light?
And the steel submit to the polishing,
Or how would the sword grow bright?

"How then, my soul, wilt thou
The Spirit's fruits possess,
Except thou lovingly yield thyself
To the Hand that wounds to bless?
Then patiently let the fire
Consume all earthly dross –
Thou canst not hope to wear the Crown,
If thou refuse the Cross!"

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