

THE ETERNAL REMINDERS OF GRACE

THE ETERNAL REMINDERS OF GRACE

And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thy hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends (Zech. 13:6).

Jennifer, the youngest member of the family, was usually subdued when she came to the breakfast table, but one morning her eyes were bright with excitement and her face was radiant. "Mother," she exclaimed. "Last night I dreamed I was in heaven, and I saw many wonderful people about whom I learned in Sunday School. An angel introduced me to Joseph, and David, and Peter, and John, and many others." "And were you introduced to Jesus?" gently asked the mother. "On, no, there was no need for that. When I saw the smile on His face, and saw His arms held out to me, I saw the print of the nails in His hands." Miss Fanny Crosby would have appreciated the girl's comments for she wrote:

When my life-work is ended,
And I cross the swelling tide,
When the bright and glorious morning I shall see;
I shall know my Redeemer
When I reach the other side,
And His smile will be the first to welcome me.

I shall know Him, I shall know Him,
And redeemed by His side I shall stand,
I shall know Him, I shall know Him
By the print of the nails in His hand.

When the prophet Isaiah spoke on behalf of Jehovah, he said: "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isa. 65:17). All Christians would be delighted to know the mistakes made during their stay on earth will be obliterated and eternally forgotten. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge

106

of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9). Nevertheless, the statement made by Isaiah was not all embracing. Some things will be eternal reminders of the matchless grace of God.

The Irreplaceable Remaining
Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God (John 20:27-28).

Thomas was despondent; his Master had been crucified. and the world had fallen apart! The other disciples had changed. Sorrow had been replaced by happiness, but their testimony seemed outrageous. How could Jesus be alive when He was dead? The unbelieving disciple was disgusted-and then Jesus arrived. "Thomas, be not faithless but believing." The poor man seemed to be paralyzed for a few moments and then excitedly, he exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" He saw the nail prints in the outstretched hands of his Master and heard

THE ETERNAL REMINDERS OF GRACE

the invitation, "Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side." Jesus awaited a response which was not forthcoming. Thomas had seen and heard all he desired. Nevertheless, the disciples saw

something that day which was incomprehensible. They saw scars destined to be visible throughout eternity.

Zechariah described events to take place preceding the coronation of Christ. He said the returning Messiah would stand upon the Mount of Olives and hold out His arms toward the astonished Israelis. "And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends" (Zech. 13:6). It is intriguing to know that after thousands of years, the scars inflicted on Jesus will still be visible in His glorified body.

It is the fervent hope of all Christians that the mistakes made on earth will someday be completely forgotten. The lame will walk, the blind will see, and the deaf will hear. Wheelchairs will never be needed, hospitals never built. It

107

will be impossible to find a doctor's office. Redeemed saints will possess bodies "like unto his glorious body," for the mortal will have put on immortality, and the corruptible will have put on incorruption. There will never be a blemish, except for those in the side and hands of the Savior. The wound prints inflicted by the Romans, will forever remind the redeemed of the price paid for their redemption.

The Irremovable Revealing

And I saw heaven opened, and beheld a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean (Rev. 19:11-14).

It is believed that when John described the return of Christ, his statement was linked with another made centuries earlier by the prophet Isaiah. "I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come" (Isa. 63:3-4). John described the battle of Armageddon and the Messiah's ascension to the throne of David when He will reign for one thousand years. The slaying of evil people is not a pleasant thing to consider, but many teachers believe the Lord will be covered with the blood of His enemies. So great will be the slaughter, Isaiah's prediction will be literally fulfilled. "I will stain all my garments." This prophecy might have had an earlier fulfillment, but it must be admitted this gruesome interpretation is not convincing. Other theologians compromise by saying the stained garments may refer to the blood of His enemies and his own blood.

108

THE ETERNAL REMINDERS OF GRACE

It is unwise to be dogmatic in interpreting the Scripture, but certain facts should be considered. The final battle of time will terminate, not as a blood bath, but because of radiation. Writing of the same conflict, Zechariah said: "And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD shall smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth" (see Zech. 14:12). The prophet also described how the enemies of Christ will attack their comrades, and there will be no further need for divine intervention. The situation described does not resemble a blood bath, but a deadly catastrophe similar to what happened when American airmen dropped the atomic bombs upon the cities in Japan.

It is necessary to consider another important fact. The only garment to be stained by blood will be the vesture worn by the Savior; the clothing worn by His followers remains spotless. John said: "And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." If the Lord leads His armies into a terrible battle, how can the garments of the soldiers be unstained when those of their Leader seem to have been "dipped in blood"? Was God reminding everyone that others remain clean because Christ died to make that possible? "These are they which came out

of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14).

The Indescribable Singing... Resounding

And they sung a new song, . . . and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands (Rev. 5:9,11).

This is an intriguing Scripture and difficult to comprehend. Whether or not the figures are to be accepted literally is debatable. Ten thousand times ten thousand would be one hundred million. To that must be added "thousands of thousands." It is impossible to visualize a choir of those dimensions. Where

109

would they rehearse? Or, if there were a command performance, where would the presentation be made? It is interesting to remember that Daniel made a prediction closely related to the event described by John.

I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened (Dan. 7:9-10).

The words "ten thousand times ten thousand" are not found in the Greek New Testament. The text must be examined with care. Yet some details cannot be questioned. The apostle was referring to an immense company of singers that included angels, the living creatures, the elders, and the church. They stood around the throne of God to pay homage to the Lamb. It is not known what songs of praise may be included in heav-

THE ETERNAL REMINDERS OF GRACE

en's repertoire, but evidently these singers were reminding everybody of "the Lamb that was slain to redeem us to God by his blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation." John mentioned two songs which may be listed under one title.

And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints (Rev. 15:3).

The song of Moses referred to the redemption from Egypt. The song of the Lamb celebrated the death of Christ and the amazing transformation made possible by His sacrifice. Heaven's music will supersede anything heard on earth. It has been my privilege to listen to great choirs, but nothing ever surpassed what I heard in the villages and schools of native

110

Africa. When I first heard a tune being commenced by an individual, and then slowly. the deep bass voices of the men began to supply harmony, I thought it to be a foretaste of heaven.

When the choir sings in the presence of God, my African friends will be there, and so will the representatives of all nations.

People whose earthly voices left much to be desired will thrill the heart of God. What the Savior did to redeem men and women will never be forgotten, and maybe an old chorus from earth might be heard again.

Lest I forget Gethsemane;
Lest I forget Thine agony;
Lest I forget Thy love for me,
Lead me to Calvary.

The Incomparable Splendor... Reflecting
And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. . . and his name is called The Word of God . . . And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (Rev. 19:11-16).

When John described the final events of time, he mentioned four names of the Savior.

1. Relating to His Successful Mission .. "Faithful and True"
2. Relating to His Strange Mystery.. "A Name Unknown"
3. Relating to His Splendid Message.. "The Word"
4. Relating to His Supreme Majesty.. "King of Kings and Lord of Lords"

These names, although not fully understood, reveal every facet of the Lord's ministry. They reach from everlasting to everlasting-from the eternal ages before time until the Savior will live forever with His bride, the church.

111

Faithful And True... His Successful Mission

THE ETERNAL REMINDERS OF GRACE

The most eloquent testimony to the faithfulness of Christ was found in His own statement: "And he that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29). God endorsed that claim when He said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). Throughout His mission to earth the Lord was true to Himself and to the cause He represented.

A Name Unknown ... His Strange Mystery

And he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself (Rev. 19:12).

It would be unpardonably presumptive to speculate what Christ's new name will be. Nevertheless, its importance cannot be dismissed, for it was mentioned three times. (1) It was written on a stone (see Rev. 2:17). "To him that overcometh will I . . . give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." (2) It was written on saints. "I will write upon him my new name" (Rev. 3:12). This was a reward offered to overcoming Christians. (3) It was given to the Savior. "And he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself" (Rev. 19:12). Whatever that name may be, Christ will share it with His redeemed people when they will be with their Lord throughout the ages. Their association with Christ will be another reminder of the price paid for citizenship in heaven.

The Word ... His Splendid Message

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one (1 John 5:7).

It seems strange that of all the New Testament authors, only John was impressed by Christ's claim to be The Word. The apostle wrote his Gospel, three epistles, and the Revelation and mentioned that name in each of the three types of communication. These references may be classified:

112

The Savior who saved from the penalty of sin.
The Supplicator who saves from the power of sin.
The Sovereign who will save from the presence of sin.

Words are a means of communication; they express thought. The message of God was conveyed through the Savior, who was, is, and ever will be, the divine Spokesman. John's references, when considered in sequence, become exceedingly informative. The Word shared in the counsels of the divine family and helped formulate the plan whereby salvation became possible. John wrote: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). God thought it necessary to have a special representative on earth who would be capable of performing what needed to be done. The Word therefore decided to become human. "A body hast thou prepared me" (see Heb. 10:5). The eternal Son was cradled in the womb of Mary and thus became "the only begotten of the Father." The Gospel explains how He took sin to the Cross and made reconciliation between God and guilty people.

When John wrote his epistles, he provided a unique glimpse of heaven. "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one" (see

THE ETERNAL REMINDERS OF GRACE

1 John 5:7). The Savior commenced providing salvation when He was upon earth. He continues that work as the High Priest of His

people, and the day is approaching when He will be crowned King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and believers will be delivered from the very presence of evil. Sin will be expelled forever.

Without a word, or words, this world would be a strange place. Men would be isolated without speech, sound, or intelligence. Similarly, without Christ, life would be meaningless. John had rare wisdom when he recognized the importance of a great name-The Word.

King Of Kings And Lord Of Lords... His Supreme Majesty

It should be remembered that during the lifetime of the apostle, kings, and lords represented the most important people

113

in the world. They were either absolute potentates or friends of those who were. Therefore, when John mentioned these names of the Savior, be ascribed to the Lord the greatest honor known to mankind. Jesus was the Supreme One whom all people would adore. It is informative to know that Christ received crowns at least three times. (1) He was crowned with thorns (John 19:2), (2) with glory and honor (Heb. 2:9), and (3) will be the recipient of many crowns (Rev. 19:12). Only then will He have completed the task given by His father.

Prophets predicted the Coronation of Christ. Saints preached about it, and when it happens, everybody will praise the Lamb upon His throne. The words of the poet may ring throughout heaven:

The head that once was crowned with thorns
Is crowned with glory now;
A royal diadem adorns
The mighty Victor's brow.

The highest place that Heaven affords
Is His by sovereign right;
The King of Kings, and Lord of Lords,
He reigns in perfect light.

When John tried to express what had been revealed to him, his soul was stirred, and he said what every Christian would like to repeat: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

1. See also Ivor Powell, "The Little White Stone" in Bible Treasures (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1953).

114□

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.daneprairie.com>.
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.