

Review and Herald, April 14, 1885 - Advent Experience--No. 10

"The Close of Probation to Those Who Reject Light" p. 1, par. 1, [NUM10].

While we have proved that the early believers in the third angel's message did *not* believe in a shut door which excluded those who had not rejected light, we have freely admitted all the way through that they did believe that those who had willfully rejected the truth would not be saved. This may be thought by some to be an uncharitable view. We propose, therefore, to consider in this article what the Bible teaches relative to the closing of the probation of persons previous to the end of their natural lives. p. 1, par. 2, [NUM10].

We understand that God vouchsafes to every man a certain measure of light, varying in different ages and countries, according to circumstances. When this light is deliberately rejected, God withdraws His Spirit, and that person no longer feels its strivings with him. We need not say he could not be saved *if* he should repent. But under such circumstances they never *desire* to repent. True repentance is caused by the work of the Spirit of God as a reprover upon the heart. John 16:7, 8. We cannot doubt that millions seal their eternal destinies in this manner. p. 1, par. 3, [NUM10].

The Antediluvians closed their probation before the flood came. The Lord said: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." "The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood," etc. Gen. 6:3, 13, 14. They would not yield to the strivings of the Spirit; therefore God rejected them, and withdrew His Spirit from them. This occurred long before the rain began to fall. So it was with Sodom and Gomorrah. They had passed the boundary line of God's mercy before the fire from heaven fell upon them. p. 1, par. 4, [NUM10].

In many of the experiences of the children of Israel the same principles were illustrated. When they murmured, and found fault, and rebelled over and over, they came at last to a point where they had done so once too much. Numbers 13 and 14 contain a forcible illustration. The spies returned with an evil report, and the people believed them, and said, "Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt." They would not listen to the counsel of Caleb and Joshua. God said to them: "Ye shall bear your iniquities even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise," "Ye shall not come into the land,

concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun." The fiat had gone forth, and their temporal destiny was fixed. We may hope that some of them repented of their sins and may be saved; but the decision was made that they should never see the land of promise, and they never did enter it. Their wanderings were typical of those of many others who should imitate their conduct in the spiritual life. p. 1, par. 5, [NUM10].

Over and over we are warned by their example, lest we should also fail as they did. So also in the later history of that nation. The ten tribes known as "Ephraim" (because that was the leading tribe) backslid till the mercy of God was withdrawn. "Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer. . . . Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone." Hosea 4:16, 17. The awful results which followed, proved that God's protecting hand had been withdrawn. p. 2, par. 1, [NUM10].

Judas Iscariot passed the line of his probation at quite a period before his death. When Christ said of him, "It had been good for that man if he had not been born," his day of grace had passed. p. 2, par. 2, [NUM10].

Our Saviour teaches that those who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit have never forgiveness "neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Matt. 12:31, 32. And St. Paul tells us of a class who "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame;" and that it is impossible to "renew them again unto repentance." Heb. 4:6, 7. p. 2, par. 3, [NUM10].

Who can doubt but that the Jewish rulers who had seen the mighty works of Christ, who had conspired against Him and put Him to death, and said, "His blood be on us and on our children," had passed the line of mercy? Their judgment lingered for years, but overtook them at last in the terrible calamities which came upon that people. God waited because there were honest souls to be gathered out from among the rejected ones. The whole wicked world will close their probation previous to Christ's appearing. p. 2, par. 4, [NUM10].

When our Saviour closes His ministry as a priest, He announces it in the solemn words: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly," etc.

Rev. 22:11, 12. The probation of every person is then closed forever; and this is before Christ appears. p. 2, par. 5, [NUM10].

Here we see the general principles upon which God conducts His moral government. He holds out overtures of grace to the perishing. He entreats them to come and be saved. But if these mercies are despised and His tender love scorned, at least He ceases to plead for them. He leaves them to have their own way. Such will say: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Jer. 8:20. p. 2, par. 6, [NUM10].

There is a class to whom the Lord will say: "Because I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh." "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." Prov. 1:24-26, 28. Who can deny that there are many such whose probation is practically closed, so far as any hope of reaching them is concerned? p. 3, par. 1, [NUM10].

If these things be true upon general principles, it is still more clear that those who reject special warnings reject their own salvation. Thus our Saviour, in speaking of the work of John the Baptist (Luke 7:29, 30), declares: "And all the people that heard him and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him." "The publicans justified God" by accepting the work of Him whose mission had been foretold by prophecy. When He came as the prophet said He would, they received Him. They were found in harmony with God's work. "But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves" by rejecting this same work. p. 3, par. 2, [NUM10].

It is a serious matter to be found out of harmony with the work of God foretold by prophecy. When we willfully reject such a work, we reject God, the Author of the work, and therefore cause our own rejection. Hear the piteous cry of our Saviour as He beholds the doomed city: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Matt. 23:37, 38. "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now

they are hid from thine eyes." Luke 19:42. Here the dear Saviour, weeping in anguish, beholds them blindly closing their own probation, and He cannot save them. p. 3, par. 3, [NUM10].

How do these plain principles apply to the experience of 1844? Here was one of the most important movements ever foretold in prophecy. It announced to the world that the "hour of God's judgment" was reached, that the greatest prophetic period of the Bible was closed, that Christ would soon appear in glory, and that the great day of God's wrath was about to begin. This warning message went to all parts of the earth. Thousands were engaged in proclaiming it, and tens of thousands embraced it. It went with a power not seen in the church for ages. Multitudes of sinners and skeptics were converted by it. It bore all the marks of a genuine Heaven-sent message. p. 3, par. 4, [NUM10].

The proclamation made at that time marked the transition of our great High Priest from the general work of pleading for man before the Father, to the special work of blotting out the sins of all His people from the books of God's remembrance, and closing the period of probation forever. No event in our Saviour's work could be of greater importance than this. Kings and prophets had looked forward to this work of judgment with the deepest interest. Was not this movement as important as that of John the Baptist? His was proclaimed by one man, in a few months' time, over territory less in size than some of our states, to a comparatively small population. This was preached by thousands. It went to the uttermost parts of the earth, and was a fulfillment of many important prophecies. Millions upon millions heard it. Those who rejected John's message rejected the counsel of God against their own souls. How much more evident, then, that the same effect would follow the rejection of this greater light! p. 4, par. 1, [NUM10].

This time message, based upon prophecy, was the first of a series of three which constitute the closing warning to the world, and bring us to Christ's coming. Rev. 14:6-16. These are closely linked together, each presenting features of the deepest interest to mankind. The same series is presented in one of our Saviour's parables. Luke 14:16-24. p. 4, par. 2, [NUM10].

"A certain man made a great supper, and bade many; and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it; I pray thee have me excused. And another

said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. p. 4, par. 3, [NUM10].

"So that servant came, and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper." p. 4, par. 4, [NUM10].

Here are represented the three calls to the marriage supper of the Lamb. These correspond to the three messages. The servant is sent out at "supper time," which is at the close of the day. In the first call, excuse is made. Some worldly object was more important to them than being a guest at the supper. The *compelling* message corresponds to the third of the series of Rev. 14. Its truths are very plain, but very unpopular, and contrary to our worldly interests; and none but those whose consciences compel them to do so will heed it. p. 5, par. 1, [NUM10].

Mark the solemn words: *"For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."* The rejection of that solemn judgment call, is the rejection "of the counsel of God against themselves," just the same as in the time of John the Baptist. "Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified; but he shall appear to your joy, and they *shall be ashamed.*" Isa. 66:5. "That evil servant who shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming," "shall be beaten with many stripes." That class who cry, "Peace and safety," when the faithful servants are giving the message of the Lord, will not be prepared. "As the days of Noah were, so also shall the coming of the Son of man be." Those who refused the light were rejected of God. p. 5, par. 2, [NUM10].

These and many other scriptures clearly demonstrate that terrible consequences follow the rejection of the light concerning the coming of Christ. Is it, then, any wonder that the believers in 1844 attached importance to the light which God had given them? Is it any wonder that they concluded that those who hated and rejected that light brought the frown of God upon themselves? How could they have concluded otherwise? p. 5, par. 3, [NUM10].

They could not, unless they admitted at the same time that the truth they loved was of no importance. This they could not do without stultifying themselves, and condemning their glorious experience. They saw the same spirit in their opposers which characterized the ancient Jews who rejected John's preaching. Therefore, they came to the same conclusion concerning them that Christ taught concerning the opposing Jews, and so believed them to be rejected of God. p. 5, par. 4, [NUM10].

In all our extensive acquaintance with this work, traveling from Maine to California, from Minnesota to Texas, and seeing many thousands of believers at our large camp meetings, we have never yet known one who had bitterly opposed the first messages, who ever embraced the third. Therefore the result proves that the position taken by the believers was right. Those who rejected the light of God were rejected by Him.--G. I. B. p. 5, par. 5, [NUM10].