

# GOD'S YEAR OF RELEASE.

## THE KINSMAN— THE STRANGER.

*“In the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.” (Lev. xxv. 9.)*

REVISED.

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# “GOD’S YEAR OF RELEASE.”

(LEV. XXV.)

GOD always delighted in mercy. “I *will* have mercy,” is the expression of His sovereign will and delight. And ere the work was done which laid the basis upon which He could righteously extend mercy to those who needed it, He took delight in picturing in the Old Testament scriptures both the work and the mercy based upon it, together with the glory of Him who should accomplish it.

Such a scripture is Leviticus xxv., in which we get a picture applicable no doubt primarily to the Jews and the millennium, but wonderfully setting forth also the present period of grace,

the year of Release, the acceptable year of God's gospel jubilee.

Man's downward history, and the rigour of the rule of the stranger—that is, of Satan—the timely appearing of the Kinsman in the Person of Jesus, and the gracious dealing of God with poor man upon the ground of atonement, we shall find all wrapped up in the types of this wonderful chapter of Holy Writ.

How many lost sinners have through God's grace heard the joyful sound of a proclaimed liberty! How many are yet to hear it? Scripture declares all such happy. "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound." (Psa. lxxxix. 15.) My reader, are you amongst the number? If not, will you not now hear, ere it be too late?

Remember, this *year* of release sets forth a "period," which although it

has been largely extended by Him with whom one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day, in order that men might count His long-suffering salvation, yet “the Lord is not slack concerning his promise,” and “the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.” When men say “Peace and Safety” then sudden destruction cometh upon them, and they shall not escape.

As yet the door of mercy is still held open, but who may say when it may be closed? Assuredly, in one moment, in the twinkling of an eye, it will be closed and thousands shall take their place without, to knock and cry, “Lord, Lord, open to us;” but only to hear the words, “I know you not.”

Turning to our chapter, we have first, as an institution established in Israel,

## "THE SABBATIC YEAR."

In this year nothing was to be sown nor reaped, but in it God said, "I will command my blessing." (Ver. 21.) The people, however, had no confidence in God, and preferred their *own sowing* to *God's blessing*, and so lost all. They were carried into captivity to Babylon, that the land might enjoy her sabbaths. Like the seventh day, so the seventh year failed.

Sin broke in upon the seventh day and spoiled *God's rest*.

Man had no faith or confidence in God and so forfeited *God's blessing*.

The blessing of God, as based upon the obedience of His people, being thus forfeited, God retires into His sovereignty, and brings about restitution, based upon atonement. Every fiftieth year (after seven times seven years) the reverberating blast of the horn was to

go forth throughout all the land, “On the tenth day of the seventh month, upon the day of atonement shall ye sound it.” (Ver. 9.)

In this year of release all forfeited possessions returned to their owners, and all decayed and enslaved persons returned to their possessions. (Ver. 13.)

This was God’s law in Israel, and this set forth what He Himself intended to do.

“The land shall not be sold for ever : for the land is mine. . . . And in all the land of your possessions ye shall grant a redemption for the land.” (Vers. 23, 24.)

And this truth of the land belonging to God extends itself also to all the earth, for “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof.” (Psa. xxiv. 1.) And, “As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the

Lord." (Num. xiv. 21.) And faith says, "Let the whole earth be filled with his glory." (Psa. lxxii. 19.)

Man's history follows in several successive stages, and two mysterious persons, dimly figured in this chapter, come into prominence as we trace the history of God's dealings with man. These two persons are, the Stranger (ver. 47) and the Kinsman (ver. 25).

#### MAN'S HISTORY

is that of gradual departure from God, and the blessings wherewith he is endowed are forfeited one after another. Man, like the younger son in Luke xv., was richly endowed, but loses all. The cases supposed in this chapter become the stages in his downward course.

1. He parts with some of the blessings that were his, and here it is supposed that it is to a neighbour, although afterwards he discovers he is

under the hand of the oppressor.  
(Ver. 14.)

2. He grows poor and parts with his possession, and has none near of kin competent and willing to redeem, nor can he recover himself sufficiently to release it himself, and so loses his possession until the year of jubilee.  
(Ver. 25.)

3. Not only has he lost or sold his inheritance which he obtained from God, but also all that which he hath wrought himself. His house that he hath built in the city which man has made for himself, this is gone, and, not being redeemed within the specified time, a full year, the jubilee based upon God’s atonement will never restore him that, but he loses it for ever.  
(Ver. 29.)

4. Now poor man waxes poorer, and falls into such decay that he needs

relief; but, like the prodigal, having spent all, he began to be in want, and discovers he is in a place where no man gave unto him. (Ver. 35.)

5. Then he joins himself to a citizen of that country—sells *himself*, alas! Yet, as he supposes, to a brother, hoping as a *hired servant* to be able to meet his own need. (Ver. 39.)

6. But finds he is a *bondslave*. (Ver. 39.)

7. And in the hand of *the Stranger*, who *rules* him with *rigour*. (Vers. 47, 53.)

Now, not only is there none to redeem the inheritance, but there is none to redeem *himself*. Moreover, the strong man into whose hands he has fallen refuses to let him go, and the swine-trough is his only portion. What an awful condition! And no hope as far as man is concerned! For a double

failure of man is set forth in these figures—not only his prodigality on the one hand, but his unwillingness and incompetency to help either himself or his neighbour on the other; while his true neighbour is shadowed forth by one who says, "I am Jehovah your God, who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, to be your God. (Ver. 38.)

We will now look a little at

### THE STRANGER,

who, however, does not assume that character until the end.

To rob man of his endowments and to make him his slave, at the same time plotting to supplant God in his heart and to obtain the worship due to Him alone, while suggesting that *he* shall be as God, has been Satan's aim

from the beginning, and too successfully has he played his game as far as man is concerned.

As a friend he first appears upon the scene; and Eve is deceived, and Adam transgresses; and if they become *as* God in the knowledge of good and evil, they become *unlike* Him in every other respect in which they were made like Him, and unable to choose the good, or refuse the evil. Giving up thus the blessing of *confidence* in the goodness of God, they soon lose their *possession* and are driven from the garden.

Then man begins to do for himself as he supposes, and builds his house and his city which are doomed to destruction. His city is Enoch, "consecrated," but not to God, and cannot stand. Satan, having succeeded in thrusting himself between man and

God, now fills the earth with violence and corruption before the flood, and with idolatry after, himself behind all the gods he seduced man to make—for idolatry is truly *demon* worship. The attributes of God first being stereotyped as idols, soon the very lusts and passions of the human heart are deified, and Mars, the god of war, Bacchus, the god of wine, and Venus, the goddess of lust, claim the worship of poor fallen man, who thus himself falls into the hands of this supposed neighbour, but real stranger, who rules with rigour, and as a strong man armed keeps his goods in peace.

Think of man spoken of as the *goods* of the devil! That in which he traffics!! Bodies and souls of men are spoken of as part of the merchandise even of great Babylon!! (Rev. xviii.) Ah yes, man’s soul is truly

his aim, and scripture speaks of man as led captive by the devil at, or for, his will.

But God asks the question, "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?" And gives the blessed answer, "Even the captive of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible be delivered." But how? The history of Him who made Himself

### THE KINSMAN

of man supplies an abundant answer. Faith could ever say, "I know that my redeemer (Kinsman) liveth." Although God had in view the Kinsman from the moment of the fall, and spoke of Him as the conqueror of the Stranger into whose hand man had fallen, yet He Himself did not appear until it was fully proved what man's own impotency

really was, as well as his defilement. No man can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him. But God's purpose was to redeem.

"After that he is sold there shall be right of redemption for him; one of his brethren may redeem him." (Ver. 48.)

He meant to be man's God, and when the fulness of the time was come He sent forth His Son, made of a woman, that as a man and a brother (blessed grace) He might redeem. And Jesus partook voluntarily of flesh and blood, that He might be a kinsman to those who were partakers of flesh and blood, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth, a Man amongst men, so that it could be said, We beheld His glory, as of an only-begotten with a Father. A real Man, but a wonderful

Man, of altogether a new order to the first man. And so the Stranger found, when in the wilderness He was the subject of his temptations. Unmoved by the wiles of the devil, because obedient and dependent, Jesus knew how to resist him, when he claimed at *His* hand *also* the worship that he sought.

And while so staunch against the foe, how gentle and kind was He to the poor victim to whom He had become a real Kinsman. What grace in His heart! What power in His arm!

"Poor hearts oppressed with sadness,  
Found ever rest in Thine."

The defiled were cleansed, the powerless strengthened, the sorrowing comforted, the broken-hearted healed.

He proved too in Himself the depth

of the ruin that had come upon man. His visage was so marred, more than any man’s; and His form than the sons of men.

Alas! He proved also the state of alienation and enmity into which man had fallen, who, having already failed in his undertaking to love God, now shewed also that he hated his neighbour, even when presented to him in the Person of God manifest in the flesh.

But all this shewed the necessity of a deeper work. Indeed, the very acts of grace and power could only be extended to the relief of man, as based upon

### THE ATONEMENT.

God’s claims must be first met; hence the trumpet of the jubilee is not heard until the day of atonement rolls

round in this fiftieth year. No details of it are given, but the great general fact that the claims of God must be met, ere man's blessing is secured, is set forth.

And this is the great feature of the day of atonement. The blood of the sin offerings satisfied the claims of God and of His throne, so that in peace He could govern the world and accomplish the purposes of His love. *Peace has been made!!* The Christ of God, who died upon the cross as the Victim for sin, now sits upon the throne. He who died is raised again, and that throne thus becomes the mercy-seat. But based upon this

### MAN'S REDEMPTION

is possible also, for the ransom price was paid in this same act in Jesus' blood. The strong man was destroyed, the

death penalty was borne and judgment was exhausted. Through death He destroyed Him that had the power of death, and delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Redemption, according to the right secured by God’s enactment (ver. 48), has been accomplished by Him who became Kinsman in order to do this very thing. He knowing perfectly the price demanded went to the cross and paid the ransom price with His own life’s blood ; purchasing both persons and inheritance ; and frees the persons first, “In whom we *have* redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace ;” while we wait for the inheritance, although sealed for it by the Spirit, “until the redemption of the purchased possession.”

All having been thus accomplished—

God's claims met, redemption's price paid—God is free to save, and sends down the Holy Spirit to proclaim

"THE YEAR OF RELEASE!"

The Jubilee! The acceptable year of the Lord!! Glad tidings are thus announced—healing for the broken-hearted, liberty for the captive, and the opening of prison doors is proclaimed. Poor, decayed, enslaved, ruined man may be FREE through the act of another—an act which he can by no possibility accomplish himself—the act of our Lord Jesus Christ, the act of death as the wages of sin, accepted by Himself, and inflicted by God upon Calvary's cross.

Reader, wilt *thou* not be FREE?

Hast thou heard the joyful sound?

Mark! Enslaved persons are free from the one who rules with rigour.

Have you felt the rigour of the devil’s rule? Why not be *free*? God proclaims *liberty*. A single lust or desire is sufficient to enslave; but, alas! you love it, and hence do not feel the bondage. Awake! Arouse thee, man! The yawning flames of hell are covered by that darling lust, that intense desire. Liberty! Who would not be free! Wilt *thou* NOT? Christ delivers. Go, hear his word, and *live*. If the Son shall make thee free, thou shalt be free indeed.

Yet not only are enslaved persons free, but forfeited inheritances return to their owners, and so the land shall return to the Jew, and the earth be possessed by God’s saints. Yet has Christ’s death purchased a better inheritance for all who are believers in this day of His grace, as Peter speaks of being “Begotten again to a living hope by the

resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for YOU, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." (1 Pet. i. 3-5.)

Then for the house which he built for himself and could not redeem in time, and so lost utterly, he is introduced into God's house which He hath built for Himself to dwell in, even His sanctuary, where He may enjoy His presence and adore Him for ever. (Ex. xv. 17.)

Thus it is not mere restitution, but the purposes of God's love accomplished by that marvellous act of the second Man, the Lord from heaven. Already is heaven secured to man, since a Man sits upon the throne of God.

Will you refuse this inheritance?

*Earth* and the body are forfeited. "It is appointed unto man once to

die." You cannot stay upon earth ; and if you refuse *heaven*, the only inheritance God offers to-day, nothing remains for you but HELL.

May the Lord put you, my reader, amongst the happy people that know the joyful sound of God's Year of Release.



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