

"THE TESTIMONY OF OUR LORD."

**NOTES OF AN ADDRESS
BY
P. R. MORFORD.**

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(2 TIM. I. 8 ; 2 CHRON. XXII. 10-12 ; XXIII.)

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.

WERE I to ask you to name the most precious thing to you on earth, you would have to answer, if you answered according to scripture, “The testimony of our Lord.” The chapter in Chronicles is a good illustration of what the testimony of our Lord really is.

It will be seen that Joash^h has an inveterate foe from the very outset in the person of Athaliah ; she is typical of the great religious world-power ; which is under idolatrous influences. For you must not forget that Satan is a religious being ; he is the god of this world, and seeks to make all worship centre

around himself. He even tried to get the blessed Lord when here to fall down and worship him, though, of course, he failed ; and his object has always been to “destroy the seed royal.” This began right from the moment when the news was told to him of the woman’s Seed who should bruise his head, and so whether with Christ personally, or with what is *of* Christ now, he does not disguise his bitter hostility to all.

It is instructive to see that Joash was, as it were, taken out of death, and thus typifies the resurrection of Christ. At Christ’s birth, Herod, the Idumæan king, unsuccessfully tried to get rid of Him by slaying all the children, and doubtless Satan thought he had really got finally rid of the “seed royal” at the cross. He reckoned, however, without the power of God, which was put forth in the resurrection of Christ.

A perfect period of seven years is brought before us, during which time Joash is hidden

in the house of God, and Athaliah reigns over the land, the thought never entering her mind that the king's son was alive. This seems to typify this present period while Christ is hid in the heavens, "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things." (Acts iii. 21.) But the world goes on just as though it had never murdered God's Son, and does not take into account the retribution that must inevitably follow, nor the fact that He *must* reign. Just think if, during a debate in Parliament on a measure that affected the future, a member rose to point out that Christ might have returned by then, and upset all their calculations by overturning all that is not of God. What would his hearers say? But do *we* really expect the Lord, and love His appearing?

The religious world has a large place, for the commercial world, the social world, in fact everything hangs on it, and there would

not have been civilisation apart from Christianity and the Bible ; and yet the religious world never takes into account the fact that Christ will shortly appear.

Well, in the seventh year—the end of the perfect period, Jehoiada strengthens himself, and, with the captains, he gathers all the Levites and the heads of the people together at Jerusalem, and to them he makes the announcement, “ *The king's son shall reign.*” In this way, as priest, he commits the testimony to and enshrines it in the house of God. At the very time when all was confusion in the kingdom, when Athaliah was bringing in idolatry all over the land, and had left God out of account—the testimony of the Lord was held in the house of God, as to-day it is held in the hearts of His people. The truth can still be held in perfect order in the midst of the direst confusion outside, if we are but keeping “the watch of the Lord.”

The details are more for private exercise,

but the third part spoken of in verses 4 and 5 is instructive. The porters guard the sanctity of the house of God, and are in a very essential position; then the next company would set forth personal ministry in the king's house; while those at the gate of the foundation shew God's sovereignty in resurrection, as we read in 2 Timothy ii., where the resurrection is in question, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure," &c., and we must stand *there*.

All the people were to be in the courts of the house of the Lord, for all the testimony was connected with it, and all were to "keep the watch of the Lord," that is, to love His appearing. It is not your rights, or men's rights, or women's rights, but *His* rights that are to be our chief interest.

What a wonderful scene of order we see in these verses! The Levites are to be round about the king; and every man is to have a weapon. Note, too, that Jehoiada

dismissed not the courses, for it was a strenuous moment, and one of the most extreme tension. And so it is now, and we cannot afford to stand at ease. There is no "pension-list" in the Lord's service; conflict is continuous, and every divinely-given fibre must be strained to keep the watch of the Lord.

Then Jehoiada serves out the spears and bucklers and shields that had been King David's which were in the house of God. All had been tested by David and proved through death. Goliath's sword—as to which he said, "There is none like that"—amongst the rest, and they now belonged to the house of God, to be used in connection with the testimony. If we touch the conflicts of the Lord, we cannot fight with human weapons; they must be in accord with the house of God, and all others will only mar the testimony.

Now survey this ordered scene, and con-

trast it with the confusion that was all around. Athaliah knew nothing as to all being in order in the temple, and yet all the people were there, with everything in readiness, *waiting*. For what were they waiting? There is a hush, and then: "*They brought out the king's son.*" They had been waiting for him. Have you thought, as you have taken the bread and the cup on Lord's Day mornings, that you are only shewing His death "*until he come,*" and that this points to the overturning of the world-system and spells "treason" to it? The world has not yet awakened to this fact, or the days of the martyrs would not be days that are past. It *will* awake to it when the King's Son comes, and will, to its own doom, pronounce the word "treason."

Let the blessed fact of His appearing dawn on you for a moment. They make Joash king, and what a scene immediately comes into view! He stands at his pillar,

for he has his pillar (ver. 13), and Athaliah sees him there. I do not think the thought of a pillar in Scripture is to support a building, but rather Christ presented in testimony. You will remember that in the temple there were two pillars named "Jachin" (He shall establish) and "Boaz" (In Him is strength), which set forth the wisdom and the power of God expressed in testimony. The saints, who are really the overcomers (for you are nothing unless you overcome), get the place of pillars now. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God." (Rev. iii. 12.) If true to His word and not denying His name, you thus become Christ's stand-by, and publicly He will give you His approval. You may be scorned, despised and rejected now, as He was, but you will be His pillar then. All hearts that are faithful to Him in this day will be engaged in His public praise and worship in that day.

In verses 18-20 we have not simply His appearing, but the moment of display when our Lord will have put down every opposing force and will have His public place as King.

Paul could look on to that day when the Lord, the righteous Judge, would give him the crown of righteousness, and not to him only, but to all them that love His appearing. And so, when he stood before Nero, the representative of the great world-power, no man being with him, he could say: "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me." The King stood by His pillar!

"Lo, He comes, from heaven descending,
Once for favoured sinners slain ;
Thousand thousand saints attending
Swell the triumph of His train :
Hallelujah !
Jesus comes and comes to reign !"

