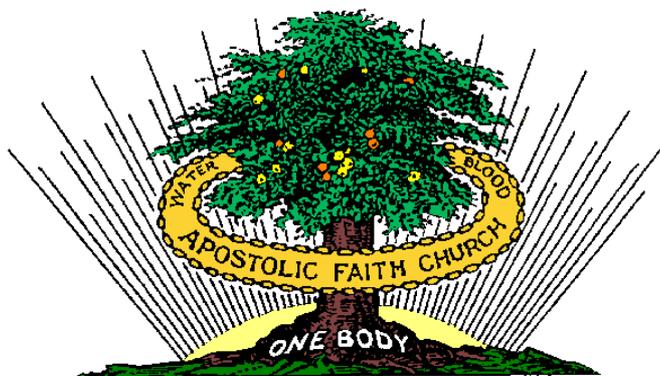


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Towards The New Heaven

The question was asked, if heaven is perfect, why should it be destroyed to be replaced by a new one? What a strong point this question raises, and which remains a great puzzle, until the key to unlock it is discovered.

Perhaps the best way to present the answer, is to first consider just what is really meant by the word "heaven". References to the 'heaven' or the 'heavens' may be understood to convey a sense of the presence of overarching powers, which silently tower above, dominating all that goes on in the earth, and over which they maintain complete control.

Nothing in the earth could or would ever dream of confronting or mounting an insurrection against the heavens, whose perpetual rule is unquestionably paramount. This being the ordained structure framed by the Creator of the Universe Himself who made the stars also, (Genesis 1:16) and as the earth (this planet) abides forever (Eccl 1:14), this order of things will never be changed by the only wise and unchangeable God.

In the Scripture (1 Kings 8:27), it is written that even the heaven of heavens could not contain Him (God), meaning that He is infinitely greater than all He has created, for it was He, Himself who created the very heaven of heavens. Neither does the order of things in that heaven, which is God's Throne, ever change for He is the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, to whom be all honour and glory for ever and ever, Amen! And what does the word 'Amen' mean? It means, "So be it, So be it!"

It was to this eminence that the Lord Jesus Christ was elevated, who declared before His ascension, "the Father whom I go to is greater than I". After that He was raised from the dead as a quickening Spirit at His resurrection, when three days earlier He, having submitted to be put to death in the flesh, willingly sacrificed His perfect human nature and life as a man, a ransom for all the human race, as the just price to be paid for the life of the world of mankind, who as Adam's children did by descent, inherit their father's newly acquired corruptible nature.

Yes, to this eminence was the Victor over all sin and death raised far above all principalities and powers, and every name that is named, being given a name transcending all created beings, and granted to sit down in His Father's Throne, having proved Himself worthy of such a reward because of His faithfulness unto death, even the death of the Cross! His Father sent Him, His only Son, to redeem the world, because their love for the world's need was one.

This redemption meant the buying back of the earth lost to sin, and repossessing it by condemning sin in human flesh. He gave His perfect manhood, unblemished by sin, a ransom for all, thereby legally paying the just price for the sins of the whole condemned race of mankind.

At Calvary, it was Satan's hour, appointed by God, permitting him to use all his powers to ultimately try and break the Spirit and heart of Jesus' resistance against sin. He, the great usurper and deceiver, who through temptations had led captive the race of mankind ever

downwards from the first man, Adam; but Jesus won this greatest battle of all time, and Satan lost, and as a man Jesus won, thereby completely sealing His work as the Saviour of the world, redeeming it with His own life's blood as a human being, and shedding it upon the earth - the home of mankind.

There is war between the spiritual ruling powers of the Lord versus Satan, and between belief and unbelief in the Word. We look for the extension of Christ's Kingdom through the increase of faith, to overthrow the works of the Devil. Faith will recognise the steady achievements wrought down this century, seeing the breaking of oppression in many countries, the uplifting of the common man to enjoy the fruits of the earth, to see a process of new blessing coming in every day, and a reduction in the spread of many diseases such as leprosy, diphtheria and tuberculosis.

There is a great lengthening of the average life span, and also there is an amazing expansion in education, all over the earth. Nation-wide provision is now made for the aged and infirm, and better housing for the needy. This is part of making a man's worth more precious than gold.

Positive faith blesses the Most High, and watches with joy the great yearly advances on all sides. The enemy is not winning. In all these territories he is beating a fast retreat before the Lord, who is descending with a great shout of the people's clamouring for their long withheld rights and freedoms.

And Jesus said: "no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John 3:13). This statement seems to be a contradiction, but understood in its context, it is perfectly consistent.

He laid aside His former spiritual body and glory, when instead a natural body was prepared for Him, yet by walking in a spirit-filled state, He was also dwelling very closely with His Father in heaven. This heaven which is God's dwelling place, remains forever. In contrast to the above observations, referring to the heaven which will never change, we read in 2 Peter 3, about two other heavens which do change. The first is replaced or succeeded by a Second heaven, which is even now in turn being superseded gradually, by the appearing of a Third heaven, wherein dwells righteousness, "and it shall stand forever" (Daniel 2:44), overarching the whole earth.

We now quote excerpts from 2 Peter 3:5-14. "...by the word of God the heavens were of old ... whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgement and perdition of ungodly men ... But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with a fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness. Looking for and hasting the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness ... seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

Now we quote from Hebrews 1:10-12, "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest: and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shall thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."

(To be Continued.)

Article by the late Pastor R. Pain, first published in Showers no. 4291, 22/7/99.

