

The Jubilee Trumpet.

by the Rev. David Herron [1832-1908], missionary to India.

“THEN shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement, shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.”—Lev. xxv. 9.

The Jewish law required not only that every seventh day be a Sabbath, but that every seventh year should be a sabbatical year, and likewise, that the year after every seven weeks of years, or every fiftieth year, should be of the same character. The last period, or fiftieth year, was called the jubilee, because it was introduced with the sound of trumpets, and is a subject of great interest, viewed either in its political benefits, or in the fullness and importance of its typical meaning.

As a *political institution* it is unparalleled in the laws of nations. Besides rest for man and beast and field, it provided a release for all debtors, deliverance of all who were in bondage or imprisonment, and restoration of all alienated inheritances. By these provisions it secured to Hebrew families the shares of Canaan originally allotted them, and enabled them to keep distinct genealogies till the coming of Christ. It discouraged monopoly, restrained cupidity, and checked wild speculation. It prevented overgrown wealth on the one hand, and extreme poverty on the other, as it was a practical prohibition of all landed aristocracies and privileged classes, and a security against any part of the

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Jewish nation falling into a state of hereditary degradation and servility, it was the divine safeguard of the equality of their social condition. Whatever reverses, disorders, or inequalities, happened among them, the fiftieth year, the year of jubilee, brought all back to the original social state as instituted by Moses.

As a *typical ordinance* the jubilee is most comprehensive and striking. It was a full and animated prefiguration of the gracious dispensation under which we live, which is the completion of the old economy, and which was ushered in with the proclamation of the glad tidings of salvation. It was an illustrious type of that grand consummation of all things, which shall be introduced by the shout of the Most High, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, when the redeemed shall rest from all their labors, be restored all their forfeitures, and shall entere upon the inheritance which God has prepared for them before the foundation of the world, an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

I.—THE TIME OF ITS INTRODUCTION.

“Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound, on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the *day of atonement*, shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.”

The jubilee commenced on *the day of atonement*. The character and services of this solemnity are determined and described in Lev. xvi. 23-32, and Num. Xxix. 7-12. According to these descriptions, the day of atonement was a

day in which the whole Hebrew people were to afflict their souls, and it is therefore, called the “Fast of Expiation”—the only stated fast enjoined in the ceremonial law. The high priest, on this occasion, laid aside his golden robes, and having washed his flesh in water, put on his linen garments, the same as those worn by the ordinary priests. He offered a ram for a burnt offering, and taking two goats for a sin offering, and determining their fates by lot, he sacrificed one of them, and confessing the sins of the nation over the head of the other, sent it away into a land not inhabited. During these sacrificial services he went several times (and this was the only day in the year in which he went) into the Holy of Holies, burning incense, and sprinkling the blood of the sacrifice before the mercy seat. He then laid aside the linen garments, and having washed himself as before, resumed the rich habit of his holy office. After presenting other offerings he blessed the people, and thus closed the laborious service of this solemn day. Such was the character of the day of atonement, and such was the occasion on which the jubilee began. When the typical atonement was made for the sins of the people, when God’s anger was thus appeased and his favor secured, then the trumpets of the jubilee sounded out their welcome notes, till the whole land was filled with the joyful sound, and put in possession of the gladdening benefits of this divine enactment. Is not this a faithful and striking delineation of the events bringing in the gospel dispensation? Its illustrious introduction was the atonement of Christ, which he made in the days of his humiliation. He laid aside the splendid robes of his majesty and glory, and put on the humble garb of human nature with his brethren. He offered himself a sacrifice for sin, and rose again to effect the

purpose of his death, in carrying away our sins in our actual forgiveness and sanctification. As Mediator, he clothed himself with the robes of glory and majesty, which, as the Son of God, he had worn from eternity, and which he had laid aside, when he took upon him the form of a servant in our nature, and, as the High Priest of our profession, he blessed his disciples by pouring out upon them the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. Then, then, it was that the gospel trumpet was sounded, proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord, in obedience to his last command: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

The trumpet note of salvation, which the Apostles sounded, was hailed by thousands in their days, and it has been propagated from generation to generation, till it has reached our own ears, and gladdened our hearts, and filled many lands; and it will be propagated from land to land, and from age to age, till the evangelized world shall be filled with its joyful noise, and it will continue to grow louder and louder, till it rises into the Alleluiahs of the eternal jubilee.

II.—IN THE JUBILEE INSOLVENT DEBTORS WERE RELEASED.

This provision was, doubtless, only for those who were unable to pay. Debts would be collected of others before the year of release, or the year of jubilee would arrive. God gives no encouragement to dishonesty. The debtor was bound in conscience to pay the debt when he was able, but the creditor was not allowed to prosecute for payment, nor the magistrate to enforce it. The law was intended for

the relief of the indigent, not for the security of the fraudulent. Among the poor Hebrews, doubtless, many a heart would beat with new delight, and many a home would be lighted up with an unaccustomed joy, at the sound of the trumpet of the jubilee. In its echoes, the poor, oppressed debtor would hear the voice of God pleading his cause, and recognize divine authority affecting his deliverance.

The blast of the typical jubilee, has slept for ages, in the hills and plains of Judea. But it still lives and extends in its spiritual and higher significancy. The gospel, and all who preach it, proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord—the forgiveness of spiritual debt to a world of sinners. They are all insolvent debtors—they are involved, infinitely beyond their ability to pay. They owe a debt of perfect obedience to the infinitely holy law of God, and a debt of satisfaction to offended justice. “By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God.” But He has made his own son our surety. “He has laid upon him the iniquities of us all.” The debt is paid—both the law and justice of God are satisfied. God is reconciled to sinners in Christ. He can now be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. In this gospel jubilee, God offers Christ to all sinners, and in him the forgiveness of sins. These are the notes of the gospel jubilee. “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember your sins.” “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abund-

antly pardon.” Happy is the man who hears and enjoys this delightful sound. Yes, saith God himself, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered.”

III.—THE YEAR OF JUBILEE SECURED FREEDOM TO ALL WHO WERE IN BONDS AND IMPRISONMENT.

Verse 10.—“And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim *liberty* throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof.” At the sound of the jubilee, the bond servant, who had been bowed down by the toil and servitude of years, raised himself up into the dignity of manhood and the proud consciousness of self-control. At the same sound, the chains fell from the hand of the prisoner, his prison doors were opened, and he went forth into the light and air, and activities of freedom.

The liberty which the jubilee thus conferred upon the unfortunate of the children of Israel, was more precious than life; but more precious still is the liberty proclaimed in the gospel to all the sons of Adam. Here, too, there is “liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound;” liberty from the degrading bondage of sin and Satan; liberty to breathe the air, to bask in the light, and enjoy the life of the spiritual world, a world infinitely more splendid and cheering than this world of sense; liberty to aspire and labor after the highest enjoyments of heaven and eternity; liberty to seek and obtain the most intimate acquaintance and endearing converse with God himself.

All mankind are in bondage to the law as a covenant of works—the most cruel of task-masters. It demands nothing less than perfect obedience as the ground of justifying the sinner. “He that offendeth in one point is guilty of

all.” Nothing less than eternal death is the penalty it threatens for violating any of its precepts. “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.” “The wages of sin is death.” It speaks its commands in the thunders of Sinai, and threatens the offender with the lightnings of its vengeance. To the poor, trembling, convinced sinner, the gospel is indeed the sound of jubilee—a note of gladness to his soul. It tells him that Jesus “was made under the law that he might redeem them that are under the law,” that he satisfied all its demands, both in the precept and its penalty, paying the infinitely precious ransom of his own life to deliver the sinner from its bondage. It whispers to the soul that is led to Jesus as its only hope. “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” The soul is thus delivered from its fears and enabled to say, “The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” “Now I am delivered from the law, that I should serve in the newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.”

We are all more or less in bondage to our lusts and evil habits, the remains of our corruptions. And we are brought into captivity to the law of sin that is in our members. And so oppressive and hateful is this bondage felt to be, that from the most eminent saint the painful cry was wrung, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” But the gospel gives a joyous answer to the cries and inquiries of such groaning bondsmen. It tells them of Christ our sanctification, our Redeemer, a strong one mighty to save, and enables them to look up to God in the midst of the severest conflict, and to shout in faith of certain victory, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The year of jubilee has come. The trumpet has been blown, proclaiming liberty throughout all the land, and to all the inhabitants thereof—liberty from every species of tyranny. It is the war cry of heaven against Satan, the enslaver of our race, and against all that imbibe his spirit, and imitate his example in claiming possession of the bodies and souls of men. It has roused the spirit of the freedom in the human heart, which will diffuse itself from heart to heart, and from heart to life, and from individuals to societies, till man, in all his relations, shall be moulded into its heavenly character, and shall exhibit its heavenly image. It has waked up the human mind from the sleep of ages, and will never permit it to slumber, till every chain is cut in sunder, till every yoke is broken from spirit and mind and body; till every unholy throne is overturned, and every ungodly power is cast down; till natural and civil, religious and spiritual liberty is secured, under the beneficent and millennial rule of the Mediator.

IV. AT THE JUBILEE ALIENATED INHERITANCES WERE RESTORED.—Verses 10 and 13.

An Israelite, through debt or misfortune, might be obliged to sell his inheritance, but he could do it only till the year of jubilee. On this year it reverted to him again.

What the fiftieth year secured in this respect to this favored people, the gospel offers in a far higher sense to all who hear its offers, and avail themselves of its benefits. The inheritance which God at first bestowed on us, was his loving favor, communion and fellowship with himself, and an unending life of highest happiness. But we have forfeited this inheritance by our original transgression, and have been forfeiting it more and more, if it were possible,

for the pleasures of sense and sin. We have sold ourselves for naught. We are by nature the children of Satan, and the heirs of hell. God, however, even before our inheritance was actually lost, had devised means for its restoration; and in execution of his eternal plan of mercy, his only Son, God equal with the Father, laid down his life to redeem for us the favor of God and eternal life. And now he holds a jubilee for sinners, and calls upon the ends of the earth to come and appropriate its blessings. “Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man.” “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money.” “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come.” And the redeemed of the Lord hear his voice, and return to him as the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls, and to God in him as their portion for ever; and when they shall have entered upon the full and blissful enjoyment of this inheritance, they will sing a new song of praise to him that “was slain and hath redeemed them by his blood, from every kindred and tongue, and people and nation.”

V. THE EXTENT OF THE PROCLAMATION.

“Ye shall make the trumpet sound throughout *all your land.*” “Ye shall proclaim liberty *throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof.*”

It is supposed that the head of every family was provided with a trumpet, that he might take his part in announcing this year of rejoicing. When the yearly atonement was made on the beginning of the fiftieth year, the trumpet was sounded from the tabernacle or temple. The sound went out and was caught on every side, and propagated from house to house, and from town to town, from

city to city, and from tribe to tribe, till every mountain and valley, and rolling hill and extended plain, responded in echoes of welcome to the joyful sound. This sound that began in the temple, was not checked in its course, but spread itself abroad without interpretation, till it reached the limits of the land of Israel. It was not for one city or district, but for the whole land. The proclamation of it was not to be confined in any place till there was an assurance that every one in that place had heard and given it proper attention, before it should be made to others. No. The ordinance of heaven was that it be “proclaimed throughout all the land, to all the inhabitants thereof.” that all might have an opportunity of hearing and enjoying its merciful provisions.

The land of Canaan was a type not only of the heavenly rest, but of the earth as the inheritance of the saints. The year of jubilee was a type of the gospel dispensation, and the proclamation of it by the blowing of trumpets, was typical of the preaching of the gospel.

The great Atonement has been made not for the benefit of one nation, but of all nations. No people has a right to it more than another. The great High Priest has blown the trumpet of the Jubilee of the world. The commission he gave to his apostles was, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” They acted in obedience to this commission; and inspiration has recorded it of them, that “their sound went throughout all the earth, and their word unto the end of the world.” The commission of the church is the same now that it was in the days of the apostles, though for ages sadly overlooked, ages that have reaped the bitter fruits of that neglect. Let the church now go forth in the spirit of her commission, and

she will soon act with her primitive vigor, be clothed with her primitive glory, and realize the fulfillment of the promises made her in her living Head—"I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth."

Such is the jubilee that is this day proclaimed in our ears. It commenced in the atonement of Christ. It proclaims rest from our vain efforts to establish our own righteousness; forgiveness of sins; deliverance from the dominion of sin, and restoration to the favor of God. Such are the benefits of the gospel of Christ. Ought not, then, the language of our song, and prayer, and lives, and labors be, "Blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen."

In this subject we find,

1st. *Instruction for the ministers of the Gospel.*

The proclamation of the jubilee began on the day of the typical atonement, and the gospel began in the atonement of Christ. The cross of Christ is the fountain head of salvation in all its particular benefits on earth, and in its completeness in heaven. It is the foundation of pardon, the motive to holiness, the door to God's favor, the source of strength, the fountain of comfort, and peace, and joy, and glory. The trumpet that did not sound on the day of atonement, however long and loud its note, was not the trumpet of the jubilee. The preacher that does not preach a crucified Saviour to sinners as their deliverer and restorer is not, however eloquent and accomplished his oratory is, not, I repeat it, the preacher of the gospel.

Again, as the jubilee was to be proclaimed throughout all the land, to all the inhabitants thereof, so the gospel is to

be preached throughout all the world, and to every creature. It is proper to have convenient places for preaching the gospel; but the minister whom the Lord hath anointed to preach good tidings, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, will take advantage of the friendly visit, the casual meeting, social intercourse in the house and by the way, in the vehicle of travel, and the walk of recreation, to make known the name of Jesus. He will feel bound to preach the gospel not only to the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made him overseer, or to those of a particular denomination, or to those that make a profession; but to all men, saints, and sinners, of every class, and color, and condition. He will regard the gospel not as designed for a favored spot and privilege few, but as God's best gift to all the world, and to every creature. He is known as the messenger of God to sinners, and not the hired servant of a congregation; as the voice of eternal truth crying in the wilderness, and not the echo of the opinions and prejudices of those who give him bread.

2d. *Good news for sinners.*

The atonement is made. The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world in the purpose of God, and in the types of Scripture, is actually offered up. God is reconciled. The jubilee is sounded. The gospel is preached. Proclamation is made of pardon to the chief of sinners, even to those whose sins are as scarlet and crimson. Deliverance is proclaimed from the wrath of God, from the curse of the broken law, from death and hell; deliverance from the deepest, darkest dungeons of spiritual bondage, from the vilest drudgery of sin and Satan, from the strongest chains of evil habit and sinful lust. Proclamation is made of an inheritance of richest blessings and honors, such as eye hath

not seen, nor ear heard, glory and honor and immortality. Take Christ as your righteousness, to free you from your guilt. Take him as your strength, to free you from the power, the love, and the pollution of sin. Take him as your life, to make you holy and happy, and all these blessings shall be yours. “To-day, if you will hear his voice.” “Now is the accepted time—now is the day of salvation.”

3d. *The duty of Christians to the world.*

I speak to those who know by experience that they are Christians. You have been waked into life by the good tidings we have been describing. You have tasted the sweets of pardon. You have seen the smile, and felt the love of a reconciled God. You rejoice in the liberty of Christ, and look for the inheritance of his people. The unconverted around you, and millions in heathen lands, are dead in trespasses and sins, are under the cruel and degrading bondage of Satan, and are heirs of death and hell. A trumpet is put into the hand of every one of you, some means of awakening them—some instrumentality of reaching them with the appliances of salvation—your prayers, your thoughts, your contributions, your personal labors, something, whatever it is, this is the trumpet that you hold in your hand, and God who gave it bids you *blow*. Have you been made to tremble yourself at the dangers of an unconverted state? then *religion* bids you blow. Have you the hearts of men? then *humanity* bids you blow. Has God committed the glad tidings to you for the benefit of others? then *honesty*, the commonest *honesty*, bids you blow. Give the alarm of danger, and sound the note of safety, while there is one nation, nay, one individual that has not heard. Cease not till the voice of peace and salvation has fallen on every ear, till it is caught by every isle of

the ocean, has rolled over every plain, and echoed from every hill and mountain of the inhabitable world. God has lately been opening wide doors in the heathen world. Shall we refuse to enter, because there is still work at home? Had the apostles acted in this way, they would never have gone beyond the walls of Jerusalem, nor passed the boundaries of Judea. "Go ye into all the world," is the commission which *they* obeyed, and which determines our duty to-day. Let us not excuse ourselves, because we can not do much. We are God's instrumentalities for converting the world. "This honor is to all his saints." He demands this service; he commands this duty, and to Him we will have to render an account for the manner in which it is discharged.