

Revelation 1:16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

Revelation 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches... OR, as Tyndale put it: the messengers of the vii congregacions

Last time we worked to establish that the stars in the right hand of the Son of Man represent angels not in the sense of spiritual beings like Gabriel, but in the sense of the congregation's ministers or pastors. So we go on from there.

The old-time authors that I read were themselves pastors. It has become evident to me in reading them that they delighted in this passage of scripture. It seems to have been a great encouragement to them, and they wanted to encourage others with it. They wrote more about this than about many other passages, so I have had more helpful material to read, to learn from, and to share with you.

It seems to me, also, that there are large helpings of comfort and encouragement to be had here.

There are at least two profitable lines of contemplation about this vision:

1. that the congregation's pastors are shown as being in the Son of Man's right hand
2. that the congregation's pastors are shown as stars

I plan for us to work this evening from the first of those, that the congregation's pastors are shown as being in the Son of Man's right hand

We very much need the work of Jesus Christ.

That work must be done in large part by the congregation's pastors.

But the congregation's pastors do not appear to be anything close to what we need them to be.

-the pastors come very short of the standard set by our Lord Jesus

-the pastors come very short even of the standard set by our Lord's apostle to the gentiles, Paul

-most of the pastors come very short even of the standard set by famous pastors such as Luther, Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Spurgeon

-David Dawson: I don't know about you, I sure feel like a pathetic excuse for a pastor 99.9 percent of the time.

Spurgeon:

Christ holds in His hand that which He bought with the blood of His heart. John saw that His Lord held in his right hand seven stars.

Let us always think of our Lord Jesus Christ as full of power and actively using it.

Let us think of Him at this moment as having a deft, and skilled, and mighty right hand, which He will lift up on the behalf of all those who put their trust in Him.

On the right hand of the Majesty on high there sits a right-handed Christ, still carrying on according to His own good pleasure the work of the Lord, which ever prospers in His hand.

- I. These stars are said to be in the Lord's right hand, first, **because He made them stars**. They are in the hand of Him who made them what they are. . . If any man in the church of God shines like a star to guide others to the port of peace, he owes his light entirely to Christ.

II. They are there, next, dear friends, **because He holds them up.**

- A. Every Christian has to face great perils and every Christian has need to pray to the Lord, “Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe.” But ministers of Christ—ministers whom He makes to be stars—are exposed to sevenfold peril. Against the leaders of the spiritual Israel the sharpest arrows of the enemy are sure to be shot. . . . If there be anywhere a captain who leads the way and comes to the very front of the host, the temptations that gather about him will be most fierce and terrible. Slander, misrepresentation, and every kind of evil shall dog his heels and he above all men who are on the face of the earth must cry to his Lord, “Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe.” The mercy is that the true minister of Christ is held up in Christ’s right hand. He shall be kept faithful even unto death. He shall not fall, and God helping him, he shall be caused to shine on right to the end of his ministry.
- B. Every now and then, we hear a rumor that some of God’s own children have fallen from grace. I do not believe it. It is said that they have fallen away and perished. I do not believe it. Those of you who live till next November and go out late at night may see a great many shooting stars. And some of your little children will cry, “Look, Father, the stars are falling.” And possibly some children will believe that stars have fallen from their places.
- C. Take the telescope and look at the heavens—sweep the sky as far as the range of the instrument will permit. Jupiter is all right, and Saturn, and Mars, and Venus, and Mercury, and all the planets—they are all in their places—and the fixed stars are shining on as they have done ever since the Lord first kindled them to charm away the gloom of night.
- D. I do not know what these shooting stars may be—there have been many guesses with regard to them. Neither do I know what these apostates may be—there have been a great many guesses about those that did flame out so brightly. But I do know this—that Jesus still holds the seven stars in His right hand and He will not drop even one of them—they shall not be reduced to six, or five, or four, or three, or two, or one, or vanish altogether—and neither shall it ever be so with any of the true sons of God.
- E. Our Lord Himself has said, “They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hands.” If you, my brother, are kept in the right hand of Christ, then you are kept.

- III. Next, are not the stars represented as being in Christ's right hand, **because He holds them out as well as holds them up?**
- A. As a man holds a lamp in his hand and holds it up and out as far as he can, that its light may shine the farther, so does Christ hold His servants up.
 - 1. Sometimes He holds some of them up high aloft above the multitude, so that, on the Sabbath, they rise quite out of themselves.
 - 2. They say what they could never have thought of saying by themselves and they are enabled to plunge into mysteries which aforetime had not been opened up to them. And there are given unto them burning words that shine as well as burn, for their Lord lifts them up and holds them out.
 - B. Dear friends, pray much for us who are called to preach the Gospel, that we may always be lifted up in the right hand of Christ. If we try to shine simply with our own natural brightness, it will be a very poor, miserable exhibition of darkness. And if we try to work ourselves up, as some do, into a state of excitement, we may goad ourselves into a condition of semi-madness and lead others into the same folly, but no good will come out of it.
 - C. That elevation of spirit which comes from the right hand which once was pierced for us—that lifting up of holy speech which is given through contact with the right hand of Him who spake as never man spake—that is the kind of uplifting that we want. Pray, beloved, that every star in the right hand of the Lord Jesus Christ may be held up and held out—and so shine yet farther and farther across the wild waste of the waters of sin and sorrow.

IV. Do you not also think that, by the stars being in the right hand of Christ, is meant that **He claims them as His own?**

- A. Every faithful minister is Christ's property. He belongs to his Lord and he recognizes that blessed fact. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price," is true of all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but it is specially true of as many as are called out from among their fellows that they may be the mouth of God—and that God may speak by them to the feeding of His flock—and to the bringing home of His lost sheep. They are peculiarly and especially in the hand of Christ, for they belong entirely to Christ.
- B. Is not this the highest honor any man can have, that he should be in Christ's right hand because he belongs to Christ? You see it is especially mentioned that these stars are not in the left hand of Christ, but in his right hand, as if the Lord intended to put peculiar and special honor upon His servants who are faithful to Him.
- C. Brethren, it does not become any of us who preach the Gospel to seek honor of men. What is it, after all? What is the value of commendation from the lips of men? Suppose they should praise us and flatter us, and say that we are "thoughtful men," "abreast of the times," and I know not what—all such stuff as this is but carrion, fit for the scavengers of the earth—not worthy to be set before the angels of the churches.
- D. The true servants of Christ may well be satisfied to eat of the crumbs that fall from His table, rather than to feast upon the dainties that load the tables of the ungodly. If our hearts are wholly set on shining for Christ, and shining for nothing but Christ, and shining with nothing but Christ's own light, and the light of Christ's own truth, then are we as the stars in his right hand, beloved of Him and precious in His sight.
- E. Verily I say unto you, there shall be a glorious reward at the least for those who are made by Christ into stars and who are held up, and held out in the right hand of their Lord, and so claimed by Him as peculiarly and specially His own.

APPLICATION

What we need, the Lord Jesus is supplying, by holding the pastors in His right hand.