

MEAT IN DUE SEASON

“Who then is the faithful and wise servant
whom his lord hath set over his household;
to give them ‘Meat in Due Season’?”

(Matthew 25:45)

SERMONS, DISCOURSES AND
EXPOSITIONS OF THE WORD OF PROPHECY

By

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CHAPTER I

The Spiritual Value of Prophecy

THE study of prophecy has a great spiritual value. Here again the objectors to prophetic study are very much mistaken. They say it is unprofitable; that it leads men and women to become dreamers, that it paralyzes Christian service and activity. If this were so then let us eliminate it from the Bible, for it could not stand the test of 2 Timothy iii:16: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." If we could find any portion of Scripture which is not profitable, then either the words of Paul are not true, or that Scripture is uninspired and therefore not trustworthy.

The study of prophecy has an immense, inestimable spiritual value. No true believer can get along without it. Hundreds who neglected prophecy have testified to it, that when this neglected truth was taken up it produced a wonderful quickening of the inner life and brought about a change almost as marked as in the new birth. During our long teaching ministry of over forty years we received hundreds of letters testifying to this fact. What then is the spiritual value of prophecy?

1. *It is a lamp which gives us light.* This is Peter's inspired statement. He speaks of it as a light shining in a dark place (2 Peter i:19). The dark place is our

age. It does not get lighter, but the darkness is increasing. We need a lamp for our pathway, and prophecy furnishes this light. It shows us the way of separation in which we are to walk. It shows the dangers ahead.

2. *It strengthens faith and increases confidence in the Bible as God's infallible Word.* We read what is written about this age and its end; when we look about us we find it all confirmed. Nineteen hundred years ago the Spirit of God revealed the future of Christendom in the second Epistle of Paul to Timothy. He gave a picture of the liberalism of collapsing Protestantism (2 Tim. iii:1-5, iv:1-4). It is here today. We study other prophecies and find their minute fulfilment in the past. This strengthens our faith and we know God will keep all His promises and predictions.

3. *It keeps us from false doctrines and false hopes.* There is a false hope in Christendom, it is the hope that the world is to be converted by the activity of the Church during this age. This is an unscriptural conception. If we study prophecy intelligently we will be delivered from this. On account of this false hope all kinds of false doctrines and false, un-Christian practices have been adopted by the professing Church. It has produced modernism. The preaching of the Gospel of Grace and the salvation of the individual is considered too slow a work. They speak of bringing in the kingdom by saving humanity as a mass, by legislation and education. The true Gospel, the only power of God unto salvation, is abandoned. Then they go a step further and turn to Socialism as a possible means of ameliorating present evils in human government. Worse still, they fraternize with vile

Hinduism, atheistic Buddhism, sensual Islam and lying Confucianism. They can pronounce such a lost soul as Gandhi of India a great man, almost next to Christ. The neglect of prophecy, and the denial of it, leads to the denial of Christ and the Gospel. The study of it delivers from false doctrines and hopes.

4. *It produces and encourages holy living.* We let Scripture speak: "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii:2). This is prophecy. But what follows? "And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." The believer in His coming, who studies these things prayerfully, does not shuffle cards, but turns the leaves of his Bible. He who gazes into the coming glory has no desire for the moving pictures of a fading age. Again in Colossians we read an exhortation to holiness. Paul writes, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii:4). What follows? "Mortify therefore your members which are on the earth." The prophetic Word has in it a great separating power.

5. *It makes the Unseen real and creates the atmosphere of heaven in our lives.* All believers suffer from a lack of reality of the unseen. The seen things are more real to us than the unseen things above. The study of prophecy makes the unseen real and creates in our lives the atmosphere of heaven. A believer who reads the last book of the Bible frequently breathes in the reading of Revelation the atmosphere of worship, and it will become evident in his life.

6. *It gives power and joy in tribulation and affliction.*

Those who study prophecy “rejoice in the hope of the glory of God” and as a result when tribulation and affliction come they “glory in tribulation.” They know “that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom. viii:18). The study of prophecy gives them this assurance—“our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. iv:17). The vision of the promised glory lifts over all dark and depressing circumstances of time.

7. *It produces loyalty to Christ and true self-sacrificial service for Him.* Through prophecy the believer is stirred up to contend earnestly for the faith delivered unto the saints, and remains loyal to Christ, knowing that the day is coming when at the Award-seat of Christ a promised crown awaits him. “Hold fast what thou hast, that no one take thy crown.” The study of prophecy leads to untiring, self-sacrificial service. The noble band of missionaries, those who have gone forth bearing the precious seed to the regions beyond, those who labor in the China Inland Mission, or the African Inland Mission, in India, in the islands of the sea and elsewhere, are all believers in the return of the Lord. They realize the Gospel must be preached still as a witness, to call out the members of the body of Christ, and this has been the mighty incentive to sacrificial service, knowing that the time is short. The charge that prophecy leads to indolence is unjust.

8. *It makes the believer satisfied to be nothing now.* Prophecy makes the believer satisfied to serve, like our Lord served, in an unostentatious way. He who looks forward to the coming of the Lord, seeks not the honor

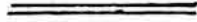
of the world but the honor which comes from God only.

He heeds the warning, which the Spirit of God sent to Baruch, Jeremiah's secretary: "Seeketh thou great things? Seek them not" (Jer. xlv). The un-Christian ambition to do something big, to be big in service and everything else, becomes impossible, when there is a true heart-belief in prophecy.

9. *It delivers from Sectarianism.* Sectarianism is the work of the flesh and not the work of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. i:11-14; Gal. v:19, 20). We are exhorted to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. iv:1-3). The study of prophecy reveals the future glory of the body of Christ, the Church. There is but one body, to which all new born believers belong. When we have a spiritual knowledge of this, it lifts us over all the man-made divisions of Christendom. This is evident today in Bible conferences in which the blessed hope is taught. The Spirit of God produces through that blessed hope a fresh realization of the unity of all believers in Christ.

10. *It gives the true Comfort in Sorrow and Bereavement.* The anodyne of the great physician is contained in two passages of Scripture; in John xiv:1-3 and in 1 Thessalonians iv:13-18. He has promised to come again and take us to Himself. Then in the Epistle to the Thessalonians, by His own Word, He gives the fullest comfort and assurance. He is coming to awaken those who have fallen asleep (as to the body). Then together with them the living ones will be caught up in clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be for ever with the Lord. "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." Those who brand these

blessed words as apocalyptic Jewish tradition have no hope of resurrection and re-union. *Study prophecy*, for it has an immense spiritual value.



A LITTLE WHILE

I'm captive to a thought, that will not free me,
In an upper room in old Jerusalem,
Christ said "A little while" and ye shall see me,
And it was said to me as well as them,
A little while.

The way is long, the client is often weary,
And I am not like Jacob in a dream,
But O my Lord, no pathway can be dreary,
That hears in chorus the alluring theme—
A little while

Pilgrims go singing on with glowing pleasure,
I cannot sing, my heart alone can smile,
O let my life be one melodious measure,
Beginning with that note a little while,
A little while.

A little while complete the souls endeavor,
A little while all earthly toils are done,
A little while and we shall meet forever,
All things are mine, for Christ and I are one—
A little while.

CHAPTER II

A True Biblical-Prophetic Belief

AS IN other revealed truths there exists also much confusion in the minds of Christians as to the prophecies in the Bible relating to the future. The Word of God contains a complete forecast of future history, but so many theories have been invented that the simplicity of this forecast has been quite obscured. As our Fundamentalist brethren have formulated declarations of faith, so, it seems to the writer the time has come when a simple declaration of a Biblical-Prophetic belief might be published to which all premillennialist can subscribe. We hope the following statements, which cover prophetic truths, will be acceptable to the premillennial household of faith.

“1. I believe that the world will never be completely converted to Christianity by any existing agency, before the age ends. In spite of all that can be done by ministers, churches, schools and missions, the wheat and the tares will grow together until the harvest; and when the age ends, it will find the earth in much the same state that it was when the flood came in the days of Noah (Matt. xiii:24-30, xxiv:37-39).

“2. I believe that the widespread unbelief, indifference, formalism and wickedness which are to be seen throughout Christendom, are only what we are taught to expect in God’s Word. Troublous times, departures from the faith, evil men waxing worse and worse, love waxing cold, are things distinctly predicted. So far from making me doubt the truth of Christianity,

they help to confirm my faith. Melancholy and sorrowful as the sight is, if I did not see it I should think the Bible was not true (Matt. xxiv:12; 1 Tim. iv:1; 2 Tim. iii:1-5, 13).

“3. I believe that the grand purpose of the present dispensation is to gather out of the world an elect people (the Church) and not to convert all mankind. It does not surprise me at all that the heathen are not all converted when the missionaries preach, and that believers are but a little flock in any congregation in my own land. It is precisely the state of things I expect to find (Acts xiv:14).

“4. I believe that the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is the great event which will wind up the present dispensation for which we ought daily to long and to pray. ‘Come Lord Jesus’—‘Thy Kingdom come’—should be our daily prayer. We look backward to Christ having died on the cross, and we should look forward no less, if we have hope, to Christ coming again (John xiv:3; 2 Tim. iv:8).

“5. I believe that the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ will be a real, literal, personal, bodily coming; and that as He went away in the clouds of heaven with His body, before the eyes of men, so in like manner He will return (Acts i:11).

“6. I believe that after our Lord Jesus Christ comes again, the earth shall be renewed, and the curse removed; the devil shall be bound, the godly shall be rewarded, the wicked shall be punished; and that before He comes there shall be neither resurrection, judgment, nor millennium, and not till after He comes shall the earth be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord (Acts iii:21; Isa. xxv:6-9; 1 Thess. iv:14-18; Rev.xx:1).

“7. I believe that Israel shall ultimately be gathered again as a separate nation restored to their own land, and converted to the faith of Christ (Jer. xxx:10, 11, xxxi:10; Rom. xi:25, 26).

“8. I believe that the literal sense of Old Testament prophecy has been far too much neglected by the churches, and is far too much neglected at the present day, and that under the mistaken system of *spiritualizing* and *accommodating* Bible language, Christians have too often completely missed its meaning.

“9. Finally, I believe that it is for the safety, happiness and comfort of all true Christians, to expect as little as possible from churches or governments in the present dispensation—to hold themselves ready for tremendous convulsions and changes of all established things, and to expect their good things only from Christ’s second coming.”

It will be noticed that these statements, all founded on Scripture, do not enter into detail. Nothing is said about the coming of the Lord for His Saints and with His Saints, about the restoration of the Roman Empire, about Antichrist, the great tribulation and other predicted events. The great Biblical facts as to the character of this age, the Lord’s personal and visible return and what will follow His return are emphasized. These foundation facts must be restated in our days; they are the real starting point for a true understanding of Bible prophecy!

CHAPTER III

Premillennial Coming of Christ

THAT Christ will come again, and come again in person, is agreed by all Christians. The testimony of Scripture is so plain and explicit that no one who believes it to be inspired questions the fact. Some indeed suppose that in a certain sense, Christ came at the destruction of Jerusalem; others that He comes at death; some again speak of His coming to the soul of each believer in the power of the Holy Spirit; still others that He comes in great providential crises, etc.

But all alike look for a coming of Christ beyond all these, a coming "in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." It is of this event we have to speak.

Another fact, concerning which there is little or no question among those who believe the Bible to be an inspired book, is the certainty of a future period of universal blessedness on earth. Scripture so plainly teaches this that hours would be consumed in simply citing passages.

And here also there are differences of opinion as to the means *by* which, and the time *at* which this period will be introduced; but as to the fact there is no doubt. The question before us is, which of these two events comes first? Are we to expect the Millennium *before* the Lord returns in person, or are we to look for His coming to *introduce* the Millennium? The Word of God alone must decide, and its decision must stand, whether we appreciate its full significance and practical value or not.

We suggest certain lines of Scripture proof.

1. The prophet Daniel, interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the great image, says: "In the days of these kings (*i. e.*, the ten kingdoms represented by the 'toes' of the colossus) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (ii:44; cf. also vii:13, 14, 27). This was the specific prophecy, on which, together with all the Old Testament prophecies, the Jews based their expectation of the Messiah's kingdom.

Now, it was during the existence of the last of the four world-empires, represented by the "legs of iron" (ii:40)—generally agreed to mean Rome—and before it was broken up into its ten-toed condition, and while still in its full power and integrity, that Jesus Christ appeared among men, and Christianity, or the Gospel age, began.

The miracles that Christ wrought and the doctrines He promulgated were so extraordinary, the multitudes in Judea thought the kingdom spoken of by Daniel was immediately to be set up. Then Jesus spake a parable to them of "a certain nobleman, who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, *and to return*" (Luke xix:11 sq.). The "nobleman" is Christ. The people thought the kingdom should "immediately appear." "No," says Jesus in the parable, "I must first go into a far country and receive the kingdom from my Father, and *return*, before it can be set up." Nothing can be plainer or more decisive than this. And then the parable goes on to describe what would occur prior to the setting up of the predicted kingdom. There is not a hint about the gradual spread of truth

and righteousness till the whole world should be ready to receive Christ for its King. Instead, we have the endowing of His servants with gifts to be employed for Him during His absence, and until His return—"Occupy till I come";—we have the deliberate and general rejection of Him by the world—"His citizens hated Him," "we will not have this man to reign over us"—we have His investiture with the kingdom during His absence, according to our Lord's words to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world"; also Daniel's testimony, "I saw one like unto the Son of Man come unto the Ancient of Days; and there was given unto Him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples and nations and languages should serve Him" (Dan. vii:13, 14); next, in the parable, we have the Lord's *Return*, "*having received the kingdom*"; then follows the rewarding of the faithful servant, the judgment of the unfaithful and the slaying of the "enemies," with which the scene closes.

There is nothing beyond this, except the kingdom itself. If language can teach anything plainly, this is clear, that the kingdom which the people thought was "immediately" to appear was not to "appear" till all these events should first transpire; but one of those events is the *Return* of the Lord. It follows then that Christ will come again *before* the Millennium begins.

2. Again, in Matthew xxiv, Mark xiii, Luke xxi we have a discourse by our Lord to His disciples. In it He predicts the destruction of the temple, the overthrow of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the surviving Jews—"For there shall be great distress in the land and wrath upon the people. And they shall fall by the sword and shall be led captive into all nations, and

Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke xxi:24). And what is to be the end of this period of suffering and dispersion? The words of Jesus are explicit—"Immediately after the tribulation of those days" (not after a millennium of peace and blessing), "shall the sun be darkened, etc., and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. xxiv:29, 30). Could anything be more explicit? Those days of tribulation, as Luke teaches, *begin* with the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews, already eighteen centuries ago. They *continue* through the whole period of the dispersion, until the "times of the Gentiles" be fulfilled, and they end, as all three evangelists tell us, with the coming of the Son of man. If then, we ask, there is to be a period of millennial blessedness, and this is impossible during the continuance of Jewish tribulation and dispersion, which dispersion reaches on to the Coming of the Lord, is it not plain that there can be no millennium before Christ Himself returns?

3. Consider next, Acts iii:20, 21, "And He shall send Jesus Christ, whom the heavens must retain until the times of restitution (restoration) of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." Those "times of restoration of all things," none will dispute, refer to some period of universal blessedness and peace still in the future, a future limited by the return of the Lord Jesus from heaven—"whom the heaven must retain *until* the times of restitution." Peter does not

say, "must retain" *during* the times of restitution, or *until the end* of them, but "until the times" *i.e.*, until those times *arrive*. Paul testified before King Agrippa, "I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made to our fathers, unto which promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain" (Acts xxvi:6, 7).

Clearly then Christ does not come at the close of the millennial period, but at its commencement—to introduce it.

4. Take another line of proof. In 2 Thess. ii:3-8, Paul describes the events which would occur between the time in which he was writing and the Coming of the Day of Christ. "That day will not come," he says, "except there come"—What? The millennium? No, but "a falling away first, and the man of sin be revealed, etc." And to show that the millennium cannot ensue *before* the coming of Christ, the apostle goes on to say, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work, only there is one that restraineth now until he be taken out of the way." If then "the mystery of iniquity" was already working in the apostle's day and ultimately to head up in the person of the "man of sin," the "son of perdition"; and if that "wicked (lawless) one" is to continue and work until the return of the Lord, and only to be destroyed by the "brightness of His coming"—the outshining of His parousia,—how then, we ask, can there be an intervening millennium?

5. The New Testament teaching concerning the resurrection of believers is another line of proof. 1 Thess. iv:15, 16 tells us that "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven" to raise the righteous dead and

translate the righteous living—them that “remain unto the coming of the Lord.” To this accords 1 Cor. xv:23, “Christ the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming,” and Rev. xx:5, 6, “This is the first resurrection; blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; they shall reign with Christ a thousand years.” This is the resurrection the apostle strove to attain—literally the out-resurrection from among the dead (Phil. iii:11). Taking these passages and others of like import together, we learn that the Lord will come to raise the righteous that they may reign with Him in His kingdom. From 1 Cor. xv:54, we learn what is to follow that coming and resurrection,—“then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory.” But where is it so written? Only in one place (Isaiah xxv), and that single passage gives force and special point to the citation; for there it stands connected with the introduction of the millennial period (verses 6-8), “In this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all peoples a feast of fat things,—He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away all tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth, for the Lord hath spoken it.” The second coming of Christ is therefore at the beginning, and not at the close of the millennium.

6. There is one more line of Scripture proof we would suggest. The Bible presents four great lines of revelation in the outworking of the divine purpose of redemption, viz.: *Creation*; the *Gentiles* or nations; *Israel*; the *Church*. This is the Old Testament order in its historical unfolding. The New Testament

reverses the order and presents first the calling and destiny of the Church; then follows the restoration of the kingdom to Israel under the sway of Messiah's sceptre on David's throne; next the calling of the Gentiles or nations, and last the deliverance of creation from the bondage of corruption. Acts xv:13-18, gives the divine order of events. Each of these lines runs its predicted course of mingled imperfection and pain and suffering until the time of consummation—"the dispensation of the fulness of times"—at the second coming of Him in whom "all things" shall head up (Ephes. i:10). There is no peace, no rest from suffering, no glory for any of these four great subjects of revelation till Christ comes again in power and great glory.

(1) Take first *the Church*.

Everywhere in the New Testament, the Church is presented as an elect body—the ecclesia—and as compared with the multitudes of earth, a small company, a body called out. "Simeon hath rehearsed," says James at that first council in Jerusalem, "how first God did visit the Gentiles (the nations) to take out of them a people for His name" (Acts xv:14). This is the work of the present dispensation. And not only is the Church described as an elect body, but also as a witnessing and persecuted body, in the world but not of it.

The Church's completeness, her consummation as a "glorious church," will not be till Christ comes again in resurrection power. This is her "blessed hope," its *fruition* to be reigning with Christ in His kingdom over a redeemed world, as His Bride and co-regnant queen. Since then the Church is not complete till

the resurrection, which itself is synchronous with Christ's coming in person, there can be no millennium before that coming.

(2) *Israel.*

We turn again to the apostolic testimony,—“After this,” *i. e.*, after the calling out of the Church, “I will return, saith the Lord, and I will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen, and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up” (Acts xv:16). James is quoting Amos ix:11, 12, which chapter contains a prediction of an actual restoration of Israel to land and cities and vineyards, “And I will plant them upon their own land, and they shall *no more* be pulled up out of their land, which I have given them, saith the Lord” (Amos ix:14, 15). But there will be no such restoration of Israel until Messiah Himself shall come, “*I will return*”—“I,” “I” will do all this, and make good in all its fulness of glory the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, with Samuel, and with David.

Perfectly familiar as Jews with all this, the disciples on the day of Christ's ascension, asked, “Wilt thou at *this time* restore again the kingdom to Israel?” And Jesus answered them,—not, “there will be no kingdom for Israel,” but, “it is not for you to know times or seasons,”—your mission is first, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to be my witnesses unto the uttermost part of the earth (Acts i:7, 8). And lest they might think they had misunderstood His repeated declarations about His return and all its accompanying events, and their duty to watch, He sent to them, as they stood gazing after His receding form, two men in white apparel, who said, “Ye men of Galilee . . .

this same Jesus which was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye beheld Him going into heaven" (Acts i:11).

Accordingly, just so soon as the Church (the ecclesia) the fulness (pleroma) of the Gentiles is brought in, then shall "all Israel be saved" (Rom. xi:25, 26), and "the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the saints of the Most High" (Dan. vii:27). So here again we learn that there will be no millennium, no kingdom of heaven on earth, until the Messiah Himself comes, and "there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer" (Rom. xi:26).

(3) *The Nations and Gentiles.*

Again we refer to the passage in Acts xv. When the tabernacle and throne of David shall be restored, it will be in order that "the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord" (comp. Rom. xi:12-15). "Then," according to the Psalmist, "shall the nations be glad and sing for joy, the world also and they that dwell therein"; or as quoted in Rom. xv, "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people"; again, "Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles"; and again, "Isaiah saith, There shall be a root of Jesse and He that ariseth to rule over the Gentiles, on Him shall the Gentiles hope." This does not refer to the Church, for the Church, which is Christ's Body, is not reigned *over* but reigns *with* Him in His kingdom.

There is no peace therefore to the nations, no period of universal blessedness and peace, but rather overturning and overturning, till He shall come, whose right it is, and He shall reign King of kings and Lord of lords.

(4) *Creation.*

Then too—and not till then—shall creation itself receive deliverance (Rom. viii:19-23). Like a poor wounded stag, panting for the water-brooks, with outstretched neck, “Creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God”; “for the creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.” It groans and travails in pain, and “not only so, but ourselves also groan within ourselves, waiting for our redemption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” But this “redemption of the body” will not be till Christ Himself, “who is our life, shall be manifested, and we shall be manifested with Him in glory” (Col. iii:4). Then also shall “the floods clap their hands and the hills be joyful together before the Lord, for He cometh, for He cometh, to judge the earth in righteousness and the peoples with His truth” (Psa. xcvi:8, 9; xcvi:11-13). There’s no rest therefore for *Creation* until the Lord comes again to restore all things.

We conclude, from whatever direction we approach the truth of Christ’s second coming *on the lines of Scripture*, the verdict is the same and cannot be confuted, that *our Lord’s Return is Premillennial*, possible at any time and always to be watched for by the faithful servant, at “midnight or at cock-crowing or in the morning.” Can we wonder then that the aged, beloved Apostle, hearing in his island prison the sublime assurance, thrice from the Lord Himself, “Behold, I come quickly!” should lay down his pen and close the Book of God and respond, “Amen. Even so, Come, Lord Jesus.”

It may not be amiss to subjoin the testimony of

one or two church historians as to the faith of the Primitive Church concerning the coming and kingdom of our Lord, testimony all the more significant in that the writers did not themselves accept the doctrine they attest.

Dr. Philip Schaff in his Church History says, "The most striking point in the eschatology of the ancient church is the widely current and very prominent Chiliasm, or the doctrine of a visible reign of Christ on earth with the risen saints for a thousand years." "This precious hope was a copious fountain of encouragement and comfort under the pains of that martyrdom which sowed the seed of a glorious harvest, or the Church." "In the age of Constantine, however, a radical change took place in this belief. After Christianity contrary to all expectation, triumphed in the Roman Empire, and was embraced by the Caesars themselves, the Millennial reign, instead of being anxiously waited for and prayed for, began to be dated either from the first appearing of Christ or from the conversion of Constantine, and to be regarded as realized in the glory of the dominant imperial state church."

Dr. Adolph Harnack, in his article on the "Millennium" in the Brit. Encyclopedia, says,—"It must be admitted that this expectation—of the nearness of Christ's second advent and the establishing of His reign of glory on earth—was a prominent feature in the earliest proclamation of the Gospel, and materially contributed to its success." "It was associated, and to all appearance inseparably associated, with the Gospel itself."

The infidel historian Gibbon, among the five reasons

(chap. xv) which he gives for the rapid and widespread progress of the Christian religion in the first centuries, mentions this same article of faith in the early church as one of them.—*A. E.*

"FOREVER WITH THE LORD"

"At home with Jesus! He who went before,
For His own people mansions to prepare;
The soul's deep longings stilled, its conflicts o'er,
All rest and blessedness with Jesus there—
What home like this can the wide earth afford
'So shall we be forever with the Lord.'

With Him all gathered! to that blessed home,
Through all its windings still the pathway tends;
While ever and anon bright glimpses come
Of that fair city where the journey ends.
Where all of bliss is centred in one word,
'So shall we be forever with the Lord.'

Here kindred hearts are severed far and wide,
By many a weary mile of land and sea,
Or life's all-varied cares, and paths divide;
But yet a joyful gathering shall be,
The broken linkes repaired, and then restored,
'So shall we be forever with the Lord.'"—*Selected*

C H A P T E R I V

The Biblical Logic of Premillennialism

THE word "millennium" is a Latin compound of the words "mille" and "annus" and signifies "a thousand years." Some also use a Greek word for millennialism; it is the word "chiliasm," which is the Greek equivalent of the Latin "millennium." In Revelation xx a number of times the fact is revealed that our Lord will reign in the future with His saints over the earth for a thousand years. This period of time of the Lord's reign is therefore called the millennium. Certain exegetes make the claim that the belief in such a personal reign of Christ in an earthly kingdom has very slender Scripture support. They say the Book of Revelation is obscure and mysterious in its meaning and that it is unwise to build such a doctrine upon a passage in this book which solely teaches such a reign of Christ. But they greatly err. As we have shown in our "Harmony of the Prophetic Word" it is one of the great revelations of the Old Testament. Nearly all the prophets saw in vision such a golden age for the world, including the physical earth. As the Holy Spirit witnessed beforehand of the Christ who was to suffer and to die, so He witnessed of His coming glory in the earthly kingdom from sea to sea, unto the uttermost parts of the earth, when the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the deep. Frequently this period of His reign is called "His Days," which the rabbinical expositors paraphrased "the days of the Messiah." Christian

expositors have spiritualized these glorious visions and explained them as meaning "Christ's reign in the Church" or "the glories of the Church," and by this unsound method have brought confusion to the hearts and minds of professing Christians. The Apostle John, the instrument used in writing the Apocalypse, did not invent the thousand year reign of Christ. He used the definite article "*the* thousand years," an indication that he referred to it as a period perfectly familiar to the Jews as well as to Christians, as the time of the Messiah's glorious reign, called by our Lord and His apostles "the world to come" or "the coming age."

The character of this coming age is clearly revealed in both Testaments, as consisting in universal righteousness, peace and blessedness. Not parts of the world will experience the predicted blessings, but all the earth, every continent and every nation will share in it. The people Israel, in fulfillment of their oath bound covenants, will be restored, Jerusalem will become the city of the great King of kings, His capital, the centre of the theocratic government. The saved nations of the earth who passed through the judgments, bring then their wealth and glory to the feet of the King, and adore and worship Him, as the Lord of all. Longevity, fertility, the harmony of the lower orders of creation, will be some of the great features of the millennial kingdom. Groaning creation will no longer groan; peace in the animal world will be as evident as peace among men. War is forever abolished. That which peace pacts, treaties, leagues of nations and disarmament plans failed to accomplish, will in that coming age be a glorious reality. No more discussions

about limited navies; no more bombings by aeroplanes; no more warfare by chemical productions; no more submarines—all the satanic instruments for the destruction of life, invented by the erstwhile civilized nations, will be forever gone. Idolatry ends. Every false religion is gone! Islam and Hinduism, fetishism, polytheism and every other pagan system and philosophy have been wiped out, never to return. False sciences, headed by "Christian Science," evolution and every other philosophy, with existing metaphysical cults, the worst enemies of true Christianity, have all collapsed. Modernism has gone down in its ignominious and eternal defeat. Earthquakes and pestilences no longer claim their countless millions. The character and the glory of that age to come, the age of the millennium, though so beautifully sung by the harp of prophecy, is beyond our imagination.

The Time of the Millennium

When will this millennium come into existence. It is not here now, nor has it been in the past. The wars of the past, the still threatening wars of our own days, the increasing lawlessness and unrighteousness, the arrogant rejection of the revealed truth of God, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord, the ravages of pestilences and earthquakes and many other things, are evidences that there is no millennium on earth now. Nor is there the slightest hope that it is coming gradually. Some believe that this glorious time will ultimately come through the preaching of the true Gospel. But even if this were true (which is not the case) how is its coming possible when that Gospel is preached less and less? There is no such thing as a

world which is getting better morally, religiously and righteously.

The infallible Word of God decides the question as to the time of the Millennium. It has, according to Scripture, no existence in history until after the visible and glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ and the promised resurrection of the righteous dead. This is the teaching of the prophets. Every prophecy of the coming of the kingdom and its blessed glories is linked with the glorious manifestation of the Lord. This is the teaching of our Lord. The great regeneration can only come when He sits upon the throne of His glory (Matt. xix:28). In His Olivet Discourse (Matthew xxiv) our Lord first shows what precedes His second coming in great power and glory: a peace-less, a law-less, a righteous-less world, a world filled with evil and culminating in a great tribulation. Then He shows what will follow His visible and glorious coming: He will sit upon the throne of His glory, judge the nations, and some will enter the kingdom, not in heaven but on earth. This is the teaching of the apostles, Spirit filled and Spirit taught. And the early Church never believed anything different. It was the Church of "Our Hope," expecting the return of her Lord and with His coming the millennial kingdom. It was the teaching of the mighty men of God, the reformers, the chosen instruments of the Holy Spirit.

"No Millennium before the resurrection," and hence no millennium before Christ's coming, was the hammer with which these great men of God smote the false Chiliasm of their own day, so gross and unscriptural, and which still smites the postmillennial invention of

our own times. A pre-advent Millennium has met with the strongest condemnation from the whole Protestant Reformation, because it is a miserable theory of man, with no basis whatever in the Word of God. Long ago it was denounced by Irenaeus, the disciple of Polycarp, the disciple of St. John, the apostle, as "a heresy." Nowadays certain men, would-be scholars and teachers, denounce premillennialists as teachers of heresy. But it is postmillennialism which is a perversion of the Word of God. Not premillennialism distorts and denies the prophetic element in God's Holy Word, but the postmillennial theory does. To preach this theory, or to pass resolutions in favor of it, is a violation of the inspired teachings of both Testaments, and of the primitive and Protestant faith as well. There can be no Millennium until *after* the cessation of Christ's presence at the right hand of God (Acts iii:19-21); none until *after* the resurrection of the righteous dead (Rev. xx:1-6); none until *after* Israel's restoration and conversion (Acts iii:19-21; Rom. xi:25, 26; Isa. lix:19-21; Zech. xii:9-14, etc.); none until *after* the binding of Satan (Isa. xxiv:21-23; xxvii:1-6; Rev. xx:1-3). Equally is it that the millennial kingdom exists in history before the second resurrection, the resurrection of the wicked dead, and before the final cosmical new heaven and earth.

The Jews divided time into two great periods. (1) *Olam Hazei*. This means "this present world." This they believed began with the creation of man and continues till the Messiah appears in the clouds of heaven, for the overthrow of the enemies of Israel, and their national deliverance from the dominating power

of the Gentiles. The Book of Daniel mentions "the end of days" (Dan. xii:13) but these come after the demolition of the man-image, the prophetic picture of the times of the Gentiles. The stone which smites the image is His second coming; the stone which becomes a mountain filling the whole earth is His earthly kingdom. We are still living in this present world, which is also called in the New Testament "Man's Day." The other period to follow "this present world" is called by orthodox Jews *Olam Haboh*, that is "the world, or age to come." It contains two periods (a) the thousand years, the age of the kingdom and (b) the endless age, the ages of ages. Our Lord and His apostles endorsed this division and used the same terminology—"This World" and "The World to Come." The latter does not mean heaven, as it is generally believed, but the world conditions after Christ has come back to earth again. This "Age to Come," the millennial age, is bounded by *two resurrections*, the first resurrection before the millennium, the second resurrection, the resurrection of the wicked dead, at the conclusion of the Millennium: by *two judgments*, the judgment of nations in the beginning and the great white throne judgment at the end of the millennium; the *two conflagrations*, the fiery judgments by fire (2 Thess. i:8-9) in the beginning and the final burning of the earth at the close of the millennium; and by *two new earths and heavens*, one in the beginning partial, the other at the end complete and everlasting.

The common belief that at Christ's second coming time, history, the race, the physical earth come to an absolute end is positively unscriptural. His second

coming brings the end of "this present world—or Age" and ushers in "the coming age."

There are four "ends" mentioned in the Bible: (1) The Antediluvian end (Gen. vi:11-13; 2 Peter iii:5-6); (2) The Mosaic End (Matt. xxiv:13, 14; Rom. x:18; Col. i:13); (3) The end of the present age (Matt. xxiv:13, 14; xiii:40-43); (4) The end of the Millennial kingdom; then comes an endless age, eternity.

The Great Preceding Events

The events which precede the Millennium are therefore the following:

1. *The Coming of the Lord for His Saints.* This is an altogether New Testament revelation unrevealed in the Old Testament prophetic Word. The Lord will descend into the air. His shout will raise the righteous dead, awaken them out of their bodily sleep, and will change the living Saints in a moment in the twinkling of an eye. The whole company will be caught up together in clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Cor. xv:55, 56; 1 Thess. iv:16-18).

2. *The Great Apostasy and the Manifestation of the man of sin, the Son of perdition* (2 Thess. i:8 and other passages).

3. *The Great Tribulation.* This is in store for Israel, still unbelieving, for the world and for professing Christendom (Matt. xxiv:21).

4. *The Glorious Manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ.* It is the Coming of the Lord with His Saints, so wonderfully revealed in Revelation xix:11-15.

5. *The restoration and conversion of Israel* (Isa.

lix:20; Rom. xi:26; Matt. xxiii:39; Zech. xii:10; Zeph. iii:8; Joel iii:11-21).

6. *The Judgment of the Living Nations* (Matt. xxv:30-46; Zech. xiv:2-3; Zeph. iii:8; Joel iii:11-21). The "my brethren" in Matt. xxv:30-46, are the "our brethren" in Revelation xii:7-11, the 144,000, the sealed and saved during the great tribulation.

7. *The complete destruction of the Antichrist, as well as the little horn of Daniel vii* (2 Thess. ii:8, Rev. xix).

8. *The Binding of Satan* (Isa. xxiv:21-22; Rev. xx:1-3).

Why I am a Premillennialist

This question was answered almost fifty years ago by a speaker at the Niagara Bible Conference, Dr. N. West, whom the writer knew well. We adopt his reasons with our own additions.

1. Because God the Father speaks of it in the revelation of His eternal purposes. His "decree" to the Son in the second Psalm, locates His kingdom on earth *after* the dashing to pieces of the nations, by the Son, in the judgment of His second coming. "Until" then, the Son sits upon the Father's throne—"waiting" (Psa. ii:8-9; cx:1-3; Heb. ix:13; 1 Cor. xv:25).

2. Because God the Son taught Premillennialism. See the parables of the tares and of the nobleman. The kingdom comes to earth, according to our Lord's teaching, only *after* the harvest, which takes place at His second, visible coming; only *after* the return of the nobleman from the far country (Matt. xiii:40-43, etc.).

3. Because the Holy Spirit teaches and endorses Premillennialism. The kingdom cannot come until

after the second great outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh, that other great Pentecost in Jerusalem (Joel ii). This *follows* the invasion of the land by the final Assyrian, the last king of the North. Everywhere the Holy Spirit, the author of the Scriptures of truth, bears witness to the fact, "No Millennium till Christ comes again." No glory till His feet touch this earth once more.

4. Because the holy Angels bore a testimony to Premillennialism. Gabriel's message to Daniel was premillennial (Dan. xii:1-13). So was his message to Mary, the Virgin mother of our Lord (Luke i:32-33).

5. Because all the prophets of God are Premillennialists. Nowhere in prophecy is found any other teaching than the teaching that the glorious kingdom of our Lord comes before His visible manifestation. Postmillennialists must either force Scripture, or handle the Word of God deceitfully, or deny its prophetic revelation altogether (as the modernist does) in order to uphold their theory. Not one of the prophets is a postmillennialist.

6. Because Peter, Paul and John are premillennialists. Peter gave one of the most pronounced and glowing premillennial testimonies in Acts iii:19-21. Paul received from the Lord the greatest revelation as to the blessed hope (1 Thess. iv:16-18). He preached and taught prophecy (2 Thess. ii). The summit of Romans viii is a great declaration as to the golden age. And John also followed the same truth. The entire New Testament bears witness to the fact that the second coming of our Lord is the hope of the Church, the hope of His earthly people Israel and the hope of the nations, the entire world.

7. Because the early Church for three centuries knew nothing but the premillennial coming of the Lord. Any modernistic scholar will not dispute this fact. The premillennial hope was given up when the professing church became corrupted in the days of that chosen instrument of Satan, the Emperor Constantine the Great. Then the church and the world were married, a State, or World Church came into existence. Then they began to dream of a Church-Kingdom, without the King. Then the Old Testament prophecies relating to Israel were applied to the nominally Christianized empire of the fourth century. Then the flood gates of error were opened and one truth after another was given up, culminating in the abomination of the papacy with its anti-christian claims. No more was heard of the primitive hope of the Church. Anybody who disputes this is ignorant of church-history.

8. Because the premillennial coming of the Lord is such a wonderful incentive to holy living, to self-sacrificial service, and because all the great doctrines of Christianity are linked to that blessed hope and the coming kingdom of our Lord.

9. Because the premillennial coming of the Lord gives the only hope of re-union with our loved ones and the assurance of reigning with Christ over the earth. What Paul writes in the fourth chapter of the first Epistle to the Thessalonians is the only promise in the New Testament which assures of being together with those who died in Christ. "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

10. Because the only pre-advent millennialists in the Bible, are (1) Satan, who would have Christ seated

in His visible kingdom and glory on the earth, not only before the second advent, but even before His sacrificial death, his most subtle temptation (Matt. iv:8, 9). And (2) Antichrist and his associate, the head of the restored Roman empire, the little horn of Daniel vii, will attempt, under Satanic leadership, to bring about a mock-millennium. They will seek universal control and thus oppose the coming King. When He comes He will overthrow both and by His coming end the delusion of a King-less, Christ-less millennium.

11. Because, from whatever angle, or event, the thousand years are dated not *before* but *after* the coming of the Lord, let this event, the great mountain peak of all prophecy, be interpreted either literally, spiritually or providentially. If it is a spiritual coming, still a spiritual millennium must follow this spiritual coming and not precede it. If it is a literal coming, as it is, the case is the same.

12. Because postmillennialism is replete with manifest error. Its serious mistake is, that it confounds the accommodation and application of Scripture with the true interpretation, which in Bible study must have *always* the first place. Delitzsch well said, "Application is not interpretation. Application is manifold; interpretation is the very opposite, it is unitous. By the method of application the promises made to Israel are evaporated; in true interpretation Israel is given its rightful place in the purposes of God.

Postmillennialism mixes the different ages and their ends. It knows nothing of the different dispensations. It substitutes death, the destruction of Jerusalem, revivals, Pentecost, providence, for the second coming

of Christ. It does violence to interpretation by dogmatic presuppositions and personal inclinations. Some years ago a theologian of the Presbyterian Church, Professor Snowden, wrote a book in which he attempted to answer Premillennialism. Among the many puerile inventions, he tried to explain the first resurrection, mentioned in the Book of Revelation, by saying that the spirit of Washington, Lincoln, etc., had come to life in our courageous soldiers on the battlefields of Europe. This foolish invention does not deserve the honored name of exegesis, but it is an evidence of the hodge-podge twistings of the plainest Scriptures by postmillennial leaders.

Postmillennialism makes time and history end with the end of this present age. It creates an irreconcilable antagonism between Daniel and John, and between Christ and both, as to the first resurrection. It interprets "the world to come" to mean the disembodied state of the soul, after death, in a super-earthly sphere. It identifies the throne of David with the throne of God the Father in heaven. It obliterates the distinction between Israel and the Church. It is responsible for the most deplorable condition of the professing Church of our times. It is part of the predicted apostasy.

CHAPTER V

False Hopes

1. The False Hope of the World

THE world has hope. What a world it would be if it were entirely hopeless! The hope of the masses of the world is centered in material things. They dream and hope, and hope and dream, of progress and betterment of physical existence. They rely upon the vague promises of the different sciences. New inventions to make life easier, more comfortable, are hailed with delight and looked upon as harbingers of still better things. The world is altogether occupied with physical progress, and many also with producing a more agreeable social condition. Yet the eyes of the world are blinded to the real conditions and the real issues of human existence.

In spite of inventions and discoveries, in spite of the strides which have been made in making life more livable, as it is said, wiping a few drops of the sweat from the brow of the toiler, and giving a few more fleeting pleasures, so unsatisfying to the human soul, things continue as they are and as they always have been.

Human misfortunes continue and cannot be eradicated. There is poverty and want. Millions are living without ever satisfying physical hunger; millions insufficiently clothed and housed; millions upon millions herded together like cattle. Disease and pain continue. There is much boasting of conquering

disease, but cemeteries belong to the fast growing cities of this globe and their growth can never be arrested by science or physical progress.

Then add to it the evils inherent in the human race, the vicious tendencies exhibited in various crimes, which no laws can check. In our times the hope of the world runs high as to having outlawed war. New pacts have sprung into existence and now, finally, the world thinks war has been harnessed. But such pacts and such hopes are nothing new in the world's long history. War will be outlawed as soon as the human heart is no longer what it is today. But as long as it is true that "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matt. xv:19) there will be war.

And furthermore, add to all this another fact. There are disasters in nature which are beyond the control of man. There are floods which devastate vast tracts of land and bring misery and want to many thousands. Flood control? Yes, something may be done, yet floods continue. Earthquakes occur every day of the year and have claimed in the past their hundreds of thousands and millions of victims. They continue and no scientific invention or discovery can prevent them. There are droughts, intense heat and frosts; there are cyclones, hurricanes and tornadoes. The human race is unable to stop these disastrous life and property destroying phenomena.

How hopeless then all is for this world in spite of the hopefulness which the world entertains. But there is a real hope for the world. The Lord Jesus Christ is that hope. He will never leave the world in the condition in which it is today. If the world has to

struggle on without any hope of a better day, if all things continue as they have been and as they are, if the curse resting upon creation and upon mankind remains forever unremoved, then Creation's Lord died in vain and bore in vain the crown of thorns upon His holy brow.

But there is hope, a blessed hope for the world. That hope is His coming again. He has the power to straighten every wrong, to abolish every evil, to stop every error. He needs no scientific discovery to stop sickness. The Lord of life and the conqueror of death will then display His power of life and His power over death. Sin and the curse will yield before Him. Ignorance, crime, poverty and want will be no more. Nor can war lift its monstrous head when the Prince of Peace is on the throne of all the earth. "He shall judge the poor of the people, He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. . . . He shall deliver the needy when he crieth and the poor also." "He shall speak peace to the nations." "They shall learn war no more." Groaning creation will cease its groans and will be delivered from the curse. Oh! that the world would know Him who will surely come and bring the promised Day-Dawn, when the shadows flee away.

2. The False Hope of the Church

Christendom is filled with hope. It is a well meant hope; but the question is, Is it according to the revealed truth of God? We do not speak of that part of Christendom which has lost its rightful claim to the honored word "Christian." The ever increasing ultra Modernists, who deny the Deity of our Lord, who

reject His all-sufficient Saviour-hood obtained by Him in His sacrificial death—such have no right to His name. We speak of nominal Christendom which holds still the historic faith of the Church, believes in the Bible as the revelation of God and in the Lord Jesus as the Son of God. Yet they hold a hope which is a false hope, because it is unscriptural.

They believe that our age is becoming increasingly an age of righteousness and religious progress. They hope for the conversion of the world through the medium of church activities. The preaching of the Gospel used to be believed as the medium through which this world-conversion might be accomplished. But even this is no longer held as it used to be. Political agitations by different legislations, reform movements are now looked to for the accomplishment of bringing in more righteousness. The missionaries who go forth do no longer carry the banner of the cross, as the great hope for a lost world. They are occupied with educational schemes and many preach social improvements and try to produce physical amelioration. All this is the result of an unscriptural, false hope.

Roman Catholic Christendom aims at world dominion. The Pope is looked upon as the Vice-regent of Christ. The whole system, more than unscriptural, is a great machinery to domineer everything. Protestant Christendom is in our days aiming at a union of its different sects. Many see in this union the hope of better things in religious matters. Church-federation with political aims appears to many the great hope of making the world "Christian" at least in name.

But is the world gradually approaching submission to Christ as Saviour and Lord? Is our age improving

in righteousness? Have certain legislations and reform movements led to a decrease in crime and lawlessness? Only a knave or a fool will answer these questions affirmatively. Never before has the world been so far away from conversion to God as in the closing month of 1932. The increase of unrighteousness, crime and lawlessness is so evident that it is unnecessary to speak of it. There may be an increase in religiousness, churchism and cultism, but there is a decline everywhere in things spiritual. "Having a form of godliness and denying the power thereof" may well be written over the greater part of professing Christendom.

Yet there is the true Church, composed of those who are born again. They possess the hope which is the hope revealed in the Word of God. That hope is the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who study their Bible, believe its prophetic forecast, and who do not follow the beaten paths of theological opinions and creedal statements, know that the long promised coming of the Lord is the only hope, the blessed hope of the Church. The world will be converted, every knee must bow and every tongue confess Him; idolatry will be forever banished as well as the vicious denials of God's eternal truth, but not till He comes again.

The true hope of the Church is the coming of Christ to take His waiting people home to meet Him above, to share His glory. And after that the consummation in the promised kingdom out of which all offenses will be gathered and in which God will fulfill His promises of blessing and glory. And blessed are those who hold fast, in these days of confusion, that blessed hope without wavering.

3. The False Hope of Israel

In the days of Jeremiah, when dark clouds of judgment were rapidly gathering over disobedient Jerusalem, we read this complaint: "We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble" (Jer. viii:15). They had listened to false prophets who held out a false hope. These prophets had preached peace, when there was no peace. How could there be peace for a nation which disregarded Jehovah's claims and which refused Him obedience! How could there be a hope under such conditions! He, who is their only Hope, they had rejected, nor would they listen to His Word.

And Jeremiah warned, and lamented and wept over their sad condition. He cried out, "O, the Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest Thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night?" (Jer. xiv:8). And again: "O Lord, the Hope of Israel, all that forsake Thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from Me shall be written in the earth because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters" (Jer. xvii:13).

The Lord only is the Hope of Israel. In Him their fathers hoped; for Him they waited. And today Israel is possessed of a false hope. They hope in man. They hope in schemes and plans of their own. They dream that the end of their troubles has come. A Zionistic poet expressed it in the following lines:

Awake! Oh Israel, from thy sleep,
And turn a listening ear to Heaven
That bids thee rise from out the depth
Of black despair, to help thy brethren.

The hour has come which calls thee forth.
Oh, harken to the trumpet sound
Your chief hath raised, to prove your worth,
Ere o'er his face you place a mound!

The blood-red sun of wrong has set,
And love is wakening for thy race,
The eyes that saw thy grief are wet
With pity, and with sorrowing grace.

Thy wanderings past, thy sufferings o'er,
What land will then refuse to crown
Thy sons with laurel, gained when poor,
For noble deeds for its renown?

No, the sufferings are not yet over! The time of Jacob's trouble is still to come. The time of tribulation which Daniel saw in the time of the end, which our Lord predicted to come upon Israel, preceding His second, literal and glorious coming, is right ahead of them. They will yet have to learn by bitter experience that the once thorn-crowned, rejected King is their only hope, that He will deliver them, when they look upon Him whom they have pierced (Zech. xii:10). The coming Christ will bring the realization of Israel's age-long hope, the fulfilment of all the promises of the oath bound covenants; yet not for the apostates among them, but for the God-fearing, believing remnant.

CHAPTER VI

Dispensational Truth as Believed and Taught in the Second Century

THE earliest voice that speaks to the Church from the immediate sub-Apostolic age, is the remarkable document known as "*Didache*—The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles." The author of this document lived, as the best scholarship declares, between 120 and 170 of our age. It is the oldest source of the Christian faith and next to the writings of the Apostles. The following information we take from a volume containing the Greek text and the English translation, published by Charles Scribners Sons in 1885.

"The complete *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* is contained in only one known manuscript; from this manuscript it has been edited and published by Philetos Bryennios, Metropolitan of Nicomedia, in Asia Minor, and upon his work all other issues of the text depend. The manuscript was found by him in 1873, in the library attached to the Monastery of the Most Holy Sepulchre, in the Phanar, or Greek quarter, of Constantinople, where it is now preserved."

We are especially interested in the sixteenth and last chapter of the teaching of this document. In this chapter we find a statement of the belief of the second century concerning prophecy and dispensational truths. We quote this chapter in full:

"Watch for your life's sake; let your lamps not go out, and your loins not be loosed, but be ready; for ye know not the hour when your Lord cometh. But ye

shall come together often, and seek the things which benefit your souls; for the whole time of your faith thus far will not profit you, if ye be not made perfect in the last time. For in the last days the false prophets and the corruptors shall be multiplied, and the sheep shall be turned to wolves, and love shall be turned into hate; for when lawlessness increases they shall hate one another, and shall persecute and deliver you up, and then shall appear the world-deceiver as a Son of God, and shall do signs and wonders, and the earth shall be given into his hands, and he shall commit iniquities which have never yet been done since the beginning. Then all the race shall come into the fire of trial, and many shall be made to stumble and perish. But they that endure in their faith shall be saved from under even this curse. And then shall appear the signs of truth; first the sign of an opening in the heaven, then the sign of a trumpet's sound, and thirdly the resurrection of the dead, yet not of all, but as it hath been said—The Lord will come and all the saints with Him. Then shall the world see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven.”

And now we analyze this chapter, founded in all its declarations upon certain Scriptures. What then do we find here?

1. The impending character of the second coming of Christ and the duty of the Church to be ready and to watch for the imminent coming of the Lord. Here we have Matthew xxiv:42 quoted.

2. The solemn duty of Christians to assemble together, to promote preparation for the promised return of the Lord. This is to be the normal attitude of the Church. It refers us to Hebrews x:25,37.

3. The increase of false teachers in the Church itself during the last days. Here again we are face to face with Matthew xxiv:5, 24 and also 2 Thessalonians ii:1-8.

4. Lawlessness, together with hate and persecution, treachery, alienations, etc., will characterize Christendom in those days, preceding the coming of the Lord. Once more we find ourselves in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew (Verse 12).

5. The apostasy is mentioned—"Many shall be made to stumble." This also takes us again to Matthew xxiv:5, 24.

6. The coming of the final, personal Antichrist, as a self-deifying, Christ opposing, Christ imitating, world deceiver, the man of sin and full of iniquity. Matthew xxiv:5 and 2 Thessalonians ii.

7. The great Tribulation, out of which only they who endure faithfully, and to the end, shall be saved. And this coming great tribulation is again predicted in Matthew xxiv:21, and in other passages as Revelation vii:14.

8. The signs of the Advent founded upon Matthew xxiv:29-31; Revelation i:7; xix:11; 1 Thessalonians iv:16-18.

9. The resurrection of the righteous alone. "A resurrection of the dead, not of all, however, but of the saints" (John v:25; 1 Cor. xv:23, etc.).

10. The glorious epiphany of the Lord, coming in the clouds of heaven (Matt. xxiv:30; Acts i:2; Rev. i:7 and xix:2).

Such is the simple testimony, contained in this most ancient document, to the belief of the Church in the second century in the pre-millennial coming of our

Lord. What interests us the most is the way Matthew xxiv is quoted in the "Didache." At least seven times this chapter is referred to. As all students of the New Testament know, this chapter contains the first part of the great Olivet discourse, in which our Lord speaks as the prophet. He answers the questions of His disciples about the signs of His coming and the end of the age.

Modernistic expositors are all in line with the post-millennial theorists and claim that all our Lord said was fulfilled in the year 70 when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. They tell us that He came then. What preceded the destruction of the city was "the great tribulation" of which our Lord spoke. Hence they teach in commentaries of long ago as well as through certain echo-men, who attempt to discredit dispensational truths, that there will be no future great tribulation, that all is in the past.

But according to the testimony preserved in this ancient second-century document, the Church did not believe this. They did not believe that the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew *was* fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem. They did not believe that when our Lord said, "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be," He meant the siege of Jerusalem. They did not believe that Antichrist had appeared. According to this last chapter of the "Didache," the Church held in the second century the same belief, which all painstaking and well-balanced teachers of dispensational truths hold today, namely, that the twenty-fourth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew *is unfulfilled* and will yet be fulfilled in the

end of this age. They believed then, as we still believe, that the coming of the Lord will be preceded by a time of lawlessness, by the appearing of the man of sin, by the great tribulation. They believed, as we still believe, that His coming will be visible, literal, personal and glorious. Though the document does not enter into the details of His return, we learn from it that they held the belief of a first resurrection, that of the saints, and not a universal resurrection.

Those who believe in dispensational truths, relating to the character and end of the present age, the coming of the Antichrist and the great tribulation, the coming of the Lord for His Saints, before the manifestation of the Man of sin, the restoration and conversion of Israel, the literal, personal and glorious return of the Lord, and the establishment of His kingdom upon the earth, are in noble company. They believe what the early Church taught and looked forward to. True it is this dispensational belief was obscured and almost forgotten for many centuries, but it has had and has a wonderful revival, and is now held by more true believers of all denominations than ever before.

“Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev. iii:2).

CHAPTER VII

The Morning Star

2 PETER i:19. REV. xxii:16, 17

THE marvelous creation of God, which surrounds man on all sides, beneath and above, has a three-fold purpose. It is first of all a great witness to the power, the wisdom and the glory of God. There is a revelation of God in all nature. "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse" (Rom. i:20). "The Heavens declare the Glory of God" (Psa. xix:1). A second purpose is, that man, the creature and offspring of God, might enjoy the works of God. He is a poor Christian who does not appreciate a beautiful sunset, a babbling mountain stream, the dense woods with its manifold life, the seashore, and the star-lit heavens. All is for our pleasure. There is a third purpose of creation, that we might have through it illustrations of Divine Truths as given in the revelation of God.

The Holy Spirit, the author of the Bible, makes constant use of the created things about us. He speaks of trees, illustrating by them the state of the righteous, who is "like a tree planted by the rivers of water"; or nations, or proud rulers, who like the Babylonian king boast of their greatness (Dan. iv), or Israel as typified by the olive tree, the fig tree and the vine. Grass is used by Him to teach us the prosperity which God

gives, and the frailty of human existence as well. Water, fountains of water, rivers of water, are prominent in both testaments, illustrating the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit, the water of life, in its cleansing and refreshing power. The flowers are frequently mentioned. Our Lord spoke of the lilies and their pure whiteness. Christ, in His character and in His glorious work, is often compared to the earthly things of nature. He is the Lily of the valley, the Rose of Sharon. He is both the Lamb of God, and the Lion of the tribe of Judah. In His strong service He is symbolized by the Ox, the burden bearing beast. And there are many other objects of nature and natural occurrences used to teach us lessons. The sea in its restlessness typifies the wicked and the restless nations. Morning and evening, the weather signs of the sky, the calm and the storm, and much else, is used to teach us lessons of divine Truths. And so it is with the heavens above, the unknown worlds, with their solar systems, the planets and the stars. There is in the heavens every morning a bright and glorious star, which from time immemorial has been called "The Morning Star." This Morning Star is to hold our attention in this study.

1. What is the Symbolical Meaning of the Morning Star?

There is also an Evening Star. It is the first sign that the Sun, who gave us light and heat during the day, is gone. Yet the twinkling of that brilliant star in the twilight sky is an evidence that the Sun still shines. The Evening Star heralds the approaching night.

The Morning Star likewise bears a witness to the

Sun. When we behold it in the morning sky we know that the sunrise is not far away, that the night is far spent and soon the first rays of the dawn will appear. The Morning Star is the herald of the Sun. As a mighty king is preceded in his coming by a herald, who announces his coming, so the Morning Star heralds the soon appearing of the king of the sky.

The Sun is the symbol of our Lord Jesus Christ. The opening verses of the nineteenth Psalm are very suggestive. Here we read of the wonderful heavens that "in them hath He set a tabernacle for the Sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof."

Now compare this with our Lord. He has a tabernacle in the heavens into which He has entered. Not a tabernacle made with hands, but the eternal, heavenly dwelling place. He is as a bridegroom, who will receive the bride and then come out of his chamber with rejoicing. He will appear as the strong man to run the race and conquer all. He covers the heavens with His glory and then displays heat, the symbol of judgments.

We quote another passage in which the Sun is mentioned in the Old Testament. "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings, and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves in the stall" (Mal. iv:2). The context shows that this is spoken to the godly in Israel. The rising of the Sun of Righteousness "in that day" therefore means the coming of the Lord, so frequently

revealed by the prophets, when waiting Israel will receive her fullest blessing and when Israel's enemies shall be consumed by fiery judgments. Then the night is ended, the morning in its fullest glory has come.

What then is the symbolical meaning of the Morning Star, arising before the Sun appears? It symbolizes also the coming of our Lord, but in a special sense, unknown in the Old Testament.

In the last chapter of the Bible our Lord speaks for the last time to man. Ere the book is finished, and God puts it into our hands to read, and to obey, we hear His voice once more. He bears witness to Himself. "I am the root and off-spring of David, *the bright and Morning Star.*" How many times He used on earth the "I Am" to tell us of what He is for us. The door, the bread, the water, the way, the truth, the life, the shepherd and the light. And here is another "I Am." He calls Himself "The Morning Star," the bright star.

No sooner had He witnessed to Himself as the Morning Star than there comes forth an answer. Who answers? Not John, the beloved disciple, but the Holy Spirit. We read then "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come." We know this is often applied in this way—"God wants the sinner to come and be saved. There are two voices which call to the unsaved to come: The Holy Spirit invites and also the Church, the Bride." There is an invitation in this verse which is addressed to the unsaved. It is found in the next sentences: "And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will let him take the waters of life freely." But the first "come," by the Spirit and the Bride is not the "come" to the sinner, but it is the "come" of

the Holy Spirit and the “come” of the waiting Bride addressed to Christ the Morning Star. The Spirit longs for Him as the Morning Star; the Bride longs for Him, as well. Both want to see the rising and twinkling of the Morning Star.

The Morning Star and its rise is symbolical of what happens before Christ comes as the Sun of Righteousness, before He comes in the fullness of His glory, before He comes with wrath, and with mercy also. It is His Coming as the Bridegroom to take His Bride, His blood washed Church, home to Himself. The Morning Star symbolizes His coming for His Saints. This aspect of His coming was not revealed in the Old Testament, that is why the Morning Star, as a type of His appearing is nowhere found in the sayings of the prophets. It is “that blessed Hope” which the Lord has left for His waiting, expecting Church, His Bride. The Morning Star in its rise brings the fulfillment of that unique and most precious revelation communicated unto us by the Lord through Paul His servant: “For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; and we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be for ever with the Lord” (1 Thess. iv:16, 17).

2. When Will the Morning Star Appear? What Precedes His Advent?

Our second question is—when will this Morning Star appear? When will the Lord come to take home His waiting Bride? What precedes this wonderful coming of the Bridegroom?

Nature with its great laws teaches us something here. The great, for us incomprehensible Universe, is like a gigantic clock-work. It never gets out of order; it has never to be repaired; it never stops; it is never behind time and never in advance of time. It all moves with a precision which is the marvel of all marvels. There have been always a few who oppose what true science, the hand-maid of faith, has so fully demonstrated, that the planet on which we live is a globe and moves around the Sun. And there are other planets in our solar system who describe their great circles. Our earth has a Satellite, the Moon; others have several Satellites. But our system is only one of countless thousands found in the most distant, immeasurable constellations. But all moves like a clock on time, never too fast and never too late. Then think of those strange bodies, which we term "Comets." They become visible in our sphere from time to time. In the medieval ages they inspired fear, but now we have calculated their exact time of reappearing. We know some come back to us every fifty, or seventy-five, or three hundred years. They are always on the dot. What a Mastermind must control this wonderful machinery in nature! What a fool, the infidel, the atheist, the free-thinker and the evolutionist is, to say all this clock-work of nature came, and continues to work without a break, by itself!

And as it is in nature so it is in the realm of God's purposes. *All is timed.* Here, too, laws are at work which the finite mind cannot comprehend, laws which never fail, which are always right. When the appointed time arrived in God's schedule His blessed Son arrived on earth, born of a woman. And as the Morning Star

in nature has its set time of appearing to twinkle in the morning sky, so God has set a time for the coming of Christ for His Bride, His Church.

Would it hasten the rising of the Morning Star if some scientists resolved to rush its appearing some morning? Neither could we hasten the coming of the Lord for us. We must await the time of God's clock of gracious purposes. When the hand reaches the right moment, the clock will strike and He will come.

What then precedes His Advent, the Advent of the Morning Star?

It is not preceded by world conversion. How strange it is that so many earnest Christians can hold this view, that before Christ can come the world must be converted, when there is not a line of Scripture for this view.

Nor is the Advent of the Morning Star preceded by that which occurs in the end of the present age. We mention first, the great tribulation. The teaching of Scripture is very plain on this. The great tribulation is never mentioned in connection with the Bride of Christ, but always is it found in connection with Israel and the unbelieving nations of the earth. In fact the great tribulation *cannot* become history as long as the Morning Star has not arisen, as long as the Bride has not been called home.

Nor is the rising of the Morning Star preceded by the manifestation of the Antichrist. Altogether too many Christians trouble themselves about the man of sin. We can read what the Bible has to say about this Masterpiece of Satan, but to speculate about his person, or invent fanciful theories about him, is never done

under the guidance of the Spirit of God. The Anti-christ does not precede the Morning Star.

Nor do we find in Scripture that those who wait and watch for the rising of the Morning Star are commanded to watch and wait for signs in the heavens or the earth, for new wars, earthquakes, famines and pestilences. We are to wait for Himself as the Morning Star, and not for signs.

Several months ago I had a sleepless night on the train. A sleepless night always means to me a prayerful night. I also pull up the shade in the Pullman to look into the heavens. That night when morning was approaching showed a sky with a heavy cloud bank of storm. The darkness was intense, as we say, it was pitch-black. No star was to be seen. But all at once a bright light appeared in the very midst of the dark mass of threatening storm clouds. I imagined that there must be nearby an elevation and that someone had turned on an electric light. But soon I discovered it was the Morning Star. It twinkled for a few moments and then it was gone and covered by the advancing storm. And so it will be some day. We are living in the night of a passing age. It is getting darker. A big storm is brewing. But suddenly, some day, unheralded by signs, the Morning Star will shine forth and the praying, expecting watchers will see it, and then "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" we shall meet the Bridegroom.

3. What the Rising of the Morning Star Will Mean

It will mean the greatest glory for the redeemed people of God and it will mean the beginning of the greatest woe for the world. But who is sufficient to

describe what it will mean for us? We can but stammer out a few things. Even the highest imagination will miss the mark.

It will mean the redemption of our bodies. Such a redemption is a part of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That which was sown in corruption, put into the ground, will be raised in incorruption; that which is mortal, our death-doomed bodies, will put on immortality. Some will be unclothed and then will receive their resurrection bodies. We who shall see the twinkling of the Morning Star will be overclothed. What that resurrection body will be which we receive by His mighty power, no Saint knows at this time. It will be far above our thinking and our understanding. It will be a body like unto His own glorious body. What He is in His glorified humanity we shall be also.

It will mean our glorious meeting with Him, to see Him as He is. Peter wrote to his fellow believers: "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." How much do we know of this in our actual experience? Perhaps very little. Yet it should be so as Peter writes. We have never seen Him, yet we love Him. Only the Holy Spirit can give such a love and maintain it in our hearts. We do not see Him now, yet we believe and rejoice in Him, in His fellowship, in His love, in His graciousness, with joy unspeakable and full of glory. But what will it be when we shall see Him in His matchless glory, when the present limitations are done away with! We shall see Him in *all* His glory. We shall behold His essential glory, the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. We shall

see Him in His acquired glory, the glory which He received from the Father as a reward for having been the sin-bearer.

The Rising of the Morning Star will mean the possession of our possessions. Our possessions are in the heavenlies. All that is His shall be ours. What He said on earth in His prayer, we shall say in heaven in His presence, "*What is Thine is Mine.*" We are fellow heirs with Him and the Heirs of God. This vast, unsearchable inheritance will be ours when the Morning Star appears.

It will mean Rest and Reward for our service. Here again we are limited by our present knowledge and understanding. We still look into a glass darkly in all these things. But what a change the Morning Star experience will bring, when we shall know as we are known. All our Christian service will be reviewed then and nothing will be left unrewarded. But what that reward will be, in what it will consist we do not know. Yet this we know, it will be glorious.

The Morning Star will mark the beginning of the eternal fellowship with God and with all the Saints. What a fellowship that will be! To enjoy the fullest bliss with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the Son of God whose eternal love and sacrificial death has lifted us so high, and with the Holy Spirit whose power and guidance kept us all in a world of sin and suffering. Then we shall know the fullest meaning of the Cross, and our glorified lips shall burst forth in never ending praise. And in that eternal fellowship with God, which can never be broken, we shall pass from glory unto glory, and we shall at last understand what it means that in never ending ages

He displays the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus (Ephes. ii:7). The eternal purpose in Christ Jesus will then be fully realized.

But do not forget the next precious thing, the fellowship of the Saints. All our loved ones who died in the Lord will be there and we shall meet with them, fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, brothers, sisters and all others. Natural relationships will no longer exist, yet we shall know each other. The mystery of infants who passed on to be with Christ will be solved. Many a mother asked the question "Will my babe, which was so suddenly snatched out of my caring, sheltering arms, to find a better resting place in His arms—will my babe still be a babe, or will my little one meet me fully developed?" Who knows? Not I! But they will be with us.

Widen the circle! We shall meet for eternal fellowship all the Saints. What a mighty host they are! We shall meet Adam and Eve, our first parents. They went to glory the same way we all reached the goal. They believed and were saved by grace. The thousands upon thousands who believed in Old Testament times are found among the redeemed. We shall meet the patriarchs. We shall become acquainted with Joseph, Moses and Aaron, with Joshua and Samuel, David and Jonathan. Beautiful Ruth will be there and Hannah and Deborah. We shall walk in white with the prophets. And to think of it, we shall meet the twelve Apostles and Paul! Here are all the martyred hosts bearing their beautiful crowns. The Saints of every century will greet us all. What a joy it will be to meet Tauler and Suso, these forerunners of the

Reformation, martyred Savonarola and Huss. Here is Martin Luther, and how he shines in glory! The martyred Bishops and the host of others of the English and Scotch Reformation will seek our fellowship and we theirs. And what more shall I say of the Wesleys, Whitefield, John Newton, William Cowper, Thomas Chalmers, Charles Spurgeon, D. L. Moody, Wilbur Chapman, A. T. Pierson, C. I. Scofield, R. A. Torrey, and the thousands of others. What a glorious fellowship it will be!

All this and much more the Morning Star will mean. Yet we have only spelled the A B C.

4. What Follows the Rising of the Morning Star

The Sun, of course, arising in all its glory. But in nature the Sun does not follow the Morning Star at once. There is a fixed time between the two. It just takes so many hours and minutes and seconds, after the Morning Star has appeared for the Sun to arise. And so it is in God's dispensational dealings. There is a fixed time between the rising of the Morning Star and the appearing of the Sun of Righteousness, between His coming for the saints and His coming with His saints. Scripture tells us the time will be twice three years and a half, seven years in all. Scripture gives us the detail of what follows the rising of the Morning Star, the coming of Christ as the Bridegroom.

1. *There comes the full manifestation of the mystery of iniquity.* Paul tells us that it was at work in his day. It has been at work throughout this age. Satan has always opposed the truth of God, the Gospel of Christ and the person and work of Christ. The mystery of iniquity is working in our days, perhaps as

never before. Satan is getting ready for his great stroke. He is going to head up all iniquity in the man of sin, the final Antichrist. When the Church has had her Morning Star experience, the world and the world-Church will have to face the man of sin.

2. *The great tribulation will then be instituted.* It will be Satan's work, and God permits it as a judgment upon the world which has rejected His Son. The storm center of that tribulation will be Jerusalem, yet all the earth will be affected by it. It will come upon all the earth-dwellers, and great darkness and upheavals politically, morally and socially will result.

3. *During these seven years the judgment of the Lord will sweep over the earth.* These judgments were seen by the prophets in the Old Testament, but they are fully revealed in the last book of the Bible, the Revelation. The Lord Jesus Christ receives from His Father's hands the seven sealed book, written within and without. He breaks the seals; the seven angels appear sounding their trumpets, and seven more angels, which pour out the vials of wrath upon the earth. These are all the judgments from above. But they can never happen as long as the Bride of Christ is here, for He has assured all His own that they shall not come into judgment.

4. *Then follows the Visible Manifestation of Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords.* Now He appears as the Sun of Righteousness. His glory will cover the heavens and the glory of the natural sun will pale in His glorious presence. He comes to smite the earth, to demolish as heaven's stone, Gentile world dominion. The armies gathered before Jerusalem are defeated by the glory-flash from above. But He also comes with

healing in His wings. In wrath mercy will be remembered.

5. *He will dethrone the god of this age, the prince of this world.* The heel of the seed of the woman will now crush the serpent's head. He, who has defeated him so completely, will put him into the pit of the abyss. He can no longer seduce the nations to idolatry, nor can he spread his vicious denials of the Christ of God, nor mass armies to take up war. War and all unrighteousness is dethroned and righteousness and peace enthroned.

6. *Then follows the establishment of the Kingdom on earth, after the judgment of the nations.* It will not be a spiritual kingdom, but a literal kingdom. It will have a capital, Jerusalem. In it will stand the throne of David. From here the righteous government of the entire earth will be conducted, not in the form of autocracy, or monarchy, or the rule by the people and for the people, but it will be a theocracy. Then nations learn war no more; spears are turned into pruning books and swords into plowshares. A thousand years of blessing and glory follows.

CHAPTER VIII

He May Come Today

THE most momentous event in the world's history, next to the death and resurrection of the Son of God, is about to take place; and the world is as utterly unprepared for it as were the people in Noah's day when the flood came and destroyed them all (Matt. xxiv:38, 39). It is the event which will consummate the joy of the true Christian, and seal the doom of every gospel-hearer who is a gospel-rejecter, and therefore calls for the serious attention of everyone. It is this:

The Lord Jesus Christ Is Coming Back!

He May Be Here at any Moment!

He May Come Today!

Now this is not a foolish assertion that He *will* come today. Nor is it the setting of a specified time for Him to come, which would be equally foolish and wrong; yet many do it. It is the sober statement of a fact, to arouse souls from their carelessness and indifference, and point them to the clear testimony of God's holy Word that the Lord Jesus *is* coming again, and *may* be here today. My reader, are *you* ready to meet Him? Do not shirk the question. Face it and settle it. The issues that hang upon it are *eternal*. There is no room or time for trifling.

"I don't believe it!" says one, quite hotly. "I never heard of such a thing!" says another, quite indignantly. "It cannot possibly be true," says a third, "or it would be preached by all true Christian ministers!" While

others say, "Oh! that string has been harped on for years, and He has not come yet." And thus in various ways do they verify the above statement, "the world is utterly unprepared for it," yea, even the religious world. Well, it *is* true, all the same, and as certain as sunrise! Neither unbelief nor ignorance can make it other than what it is—

A Fact! An Absolute Certainty!

And no excuse will exonerate *you*, my reader, from the responsibility of searching the New Testament in order to verify it for yourself and be found ready to meet the Lord when He does come.

Make no mistake as to this! And think not it is a mere sectarian theory propounded by certain individuals who are termed "Second Adventists." It is not that, I assure you; neither is it a mere personal opinion which may be taken for what it is worth. Nor is it a thing to be spiritualized or explained away, as many try to do. No, no! It is the sober teaching of Scripture. And when once it is received by faith *into the heart*,¹ in the power of the Holy Spirit, and held there as a living *hope*—nor a mere doctrine in the *head*—it will be found to be the most blessed and glorious truth revealed in God's Word for the believer's comfort and joy, next to knowing Christ Himself, and will become a powerful controller of the daily life of him who thus receives it.

We shall view it in two ways. (1) What it means for the saints (and remember *all* the true children of God are saints, and called such in Scripture (Rom. i:7; 1 Cor. i:2). And (2) how it will affect the unsaved ones who will be left behind. But first, just let me

say a brief word as to the *work of Christ*, which He accomplished for God and man at His first coming, to assure our hearts before we look at His second coming.

We read, "But now, once in the end of the world (or 'consummation of the ages'—New Translation) hath He appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. ix:26). At the Cross the sin question was raised and settled forever by the death of the Lord Jesus. If not, it never can be, for Christ will never die again. The next time He comes it is "apart from sin unto salvation" (Verse 28). That is, He will come, not to take up the sin question again, but to give to His people—whether His earthly people, the Jews, or His heavenly people, the Church—the full result of His atoning sacrifice, as purposed by God for each.

When the Lord Jesus was on the Cross, all the holy nature and character of God was displayed in His dealing in judgment with sin in the Person of His Son, as well as His infinite love in giving His Son. Besides that, all His claims were met, and the Divine judgment borne by the Saviour when He drank that awful cup in order that God might be glorified about the whole question of sin which had so dishonored Him; and a way made whereby poor sinners could be righteously saved. Nothing more remains to be done. God is satisfied, yea, *infinitely* glorified. The resurrection, ascension, session, and supremacy of the Lord Jesus at the right hand of God (1 Peter iii:21, 22) is God's attestation of His satisfaction with the Person and sacrifice of Jesus; and the Holy Ghost come down is "the witness *to us*" (Heb. x:15), as well as "dwelling *in us*" (1 Cor. vi:9), with all which that entails. Bye-and-

bye there will be brought in, as the final and full result of it, "a new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter iii:13; Rev. xxi:1), and God will find His eternal rest and pleasure therein. Glorious prospect!

Then for the individual believer, he is privileged to look back to the Cross and see the perfect and permanent settlement, and putting away of all his sins, and hear the Divine declaration, "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. x:17). All were borne by Jesus "in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter ii:24), and believing, he is "justified from all things" (Acts xiii:39). "Sin in the flesh"—the old evil nature that produces the sins—was likewise "condemned" in the sacrifice of Christ (Rom. viii:3). So that sin, *root* and *branch*, has been effectually dealt with, and the believer is looked at as no longer "in the flesh," but in the Spirit"; no longer "in Adam," but "in Christ"; and "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. i:12); the indwelling Spirit being "the earnest of our inheritance" (Eph. i:14); and giving us the present enjoyment of all Christian blessings, too numerous to mention here. Thus being set free in the liberty of the gospel, the thought of the speedy return of Him to whom we owe all for time and eternity, becomes the joy and delight of our hearts. *It is Our Hope.*

Now Scripture is just as clear and emphatic about the second coming of Christ as it is about His first coming, or any other great truth it sets forth. For example, God announced in the Old Testament that Christ would come, and He came. The very *manner*, as well as the *place* of His birth were foretold (Isa. vii:

14, and Micah v:2), and He came exactly as it was said. He was born of a virgin; and born at Bethlehem. God announced that Israel should be scattered among the nations if they refused to obey His Word (Deut. xxviii:36, 37; 1 Kings ix:6-9), and their history is a standing monument to the truth of that Word.

He has declared they shall be restored to their own land again, and He will do it (Jer. xxxiii).* “God is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent; hath He said and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken and shall He not make it good?” (Num. xxiii:19). Did He perform His seven “I will’s” in Exodus vi:6-8 and deliver them from Egypt? Surely He did. Then He will just as surely perform His twelve “I will’s” in Jeremiah xxxii:36-44, when He “gathers them out of every land” (Psa. cvii:1-3). But the Lord’s return to earth is needed to make that good.

Take the three angelic announcements about Him in the New Testament, and observe how striking they are. (1) “Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke ii:11). Was it true? Why, it is an acknowledged historical fact, and brought to remembrance every Christmas Day. (2) “He is not here, He is risen” (Luke xxiv:6). This, likewise, is a recognized fact, remembered every Easter Sunday, and the very basis of Christianity (1 Cor. xv:14). (3) “He will so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven”

*The recent deliverance of Palestine from the Turks seems to indicate that the Jews are likely to have their own land back again soon, and be there in unbelief, in readiness for the Anti-christ when *he* arises (John v:43; 2 Thess. ii:8-12; Rev. xiii:11-18)

(Acts i:11). And this will be accomplished as surely as the other two. The New Testament opens with the announcement of His first coming (Matt. i), and it closes with the announcement of His second coming (Rev. xxii:20).

Then if we take the fact itself without distinguishing between the *two stages* of His coming, almost every book in the New Testament speaks of it, directly or indirectly. Indeed we might say *every book*, except the Epistle to Philemon, and the second and third Epistles of John. And this alone ought to open the eyes of all who profess to believe their Bible to the importance it has in the mind and revelation of God, and ought to have for us. In the two Epistles to the Thessalonians every chapter speaks of it. Read them and verify it for yourself. It is a touchstone which tests men's hearts. The *evil servant* says, "My Lord *delays* His coming" (Matt. xxiv:48). The *scoffer* says, "Where is the promise of His coming?" (2 Peter iii:4). The true Christian says, "Come Lord Jesus" (Rev. xxii:20), and patiently waits His return (James v:7, 8).

When the Saviour came the first time, He came in humiliation, and was rejected and crucified. When He comes the second time it will be "in power and great glory." The *first stage* of that coming (for it has two stages) will be *into the air* only, and His saints will be secretly gathered together unto Him there (2 Thess. ii:1). This is usually spoken of as "*The Rapture*" (admittedly not a Scriptural *word*, but none the less a spiritual *truth*). *How* it will be effected is explained in 1 Thess. iv:16-18. "The Lord *Himself* shall *descend from heaven* with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and *the dead* in

Christ shall *rise first*: then we which *are alive* and remain, shall be *caught up together with them* in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

After the Rapture has taken place and the saints are gone, the Lord will begin to deal with and take possession of the earth which is His (Psa. ii:8-9; Psa. xxv:1), by the execution of judgment on the Christless and apostate sinners left behind. Reader, will *you* be among them? Those appalling judgments are set forth in the seals, trumpets, and vials in the Book of Revelation (Chapters vi, viii, ix, and xvi), and the subsequent dealing with Satan, the Beast, and Antichrist who are cast into the lake of fire (chapters xix:20, and xx:10). They almost make one tremble to read them. And yet, awful thought! there *may* be those alive on the earth today; even readers of this pamphlet, rejecting the Saviour, spurning the mercy of God in Christ, who will have to endure those unparalleled horrors!

Then, on the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the Lord will come forth, and the second stage of His journey will commence. He will publicly appear "in power and great glory" (Matt. xxiv:39), surrounded by His heavenly hosts (Matt. xxv:36; 2 Thess. i:7; Rev. xix:14), to deliver His earthly people the Jews (Zech. xii), execute vengeance on their enemies (Joel iii:2), and hush the groans of a groaning creation (Rom. viii:19-23). But let us keep clearly before our minds and hold it fast, that *not one* of these fearful judgments recorded in the book of Revelation, from chapter vi to chapter xix, can possibly take place until the Church is taken away. And this surely is comfort for the Christian.

A mistake is made by many in confounding the Lord's coming *for* His saints with death. They think that when a Christian dies that is the Lord's coming—for him at least. Now that is quite a mistake. His coming is *not* death. It is the defeat of death. At death, the believer goes to be "*with Christ*," and such was the Apostle's desire (Phil. i:23). The penitent thief went to be "*with Christ*" (Luke xxiii:43); so did the martyr Stephen (Acts vii:59); and so do all who "die in the Lord" (Rev. xiv:13). But when that event takes place, for which all godly and scripturally taught hearts are waiting and longing, how different! It is the *descent of the Lord Himself into the air*, as we have seen already. Then the dead saints are raised first; the living saints are then *changed* (so if you are a Christian, dear reader, and alive when He comes you will not die, but be changed), and all are "caught up *together*." Not one company before the other—but together "in the clouds, to *meet the Lord in the air* (that is to be the junction—the grand meeting-place), and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv:16-18)—a different thing altogether from individuals dying and going to heaven. Turn to that passage and read it carefully; it will surprise you.

As noted already, it is the defeat and complete overthrow of death; for "the dead shall be raised incorruptible," death cannot hold them; while the living saints will *not* die, death cannot claim them; they will be taken away without passing through the article of death, they will be *changed* (Phil. iii:20, 21), "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor. xv:52). It will be the fulfillment of the Lord's promise made to His disciples ere He left them. He said, "I

go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, *I will come again* and receive you unto Myself: that where I am there ye may be also” (John xiv:2, 3). That promise has never yet been fulfilled. It is the event we are waiting for. The Lord did not say I will *send* for you; but *I will come Myself*. He is Himself coming back to receive us—*not individually by death*—but *as a company—His own*. Bear this in mind!

It is taught by some that when the Lord comes, only those Christians who are faithful and looking for Him will go; and the others will be punished for their unfaithfulness by being allowed to go through “the great tribulation” that follows the Rapture. One can only heave a great sigh of relief and say, Thank God that is *not true*. No, no! A thousand times no! Scripture teaches no such thing. It is “the dead in Christ” that rise, not *some* of them only. Then “we who are alive and remain” are to be changed, not *some* only. The Church, the body of Christ, is *one* (Eph. iv:4). You cannot divide the body. And to make *part* of the body suffer in the tribulation would be to divide the body, and make Christ suffer in His members *judgment from God* again. For the tribulation, remember, is *God’s judgment* on apostacy, though He uses men as His instruments to execute it. It is simply unthinkable that any member of the body of Christ could thus suffer judgment from God. It is practically making a *purgatory* for unfaithful saints ere they can be with the Lord.

Besides, how unjust it would be to leave the living unfaithful ones to suffer, and allow the dead unfaithful ones to escape. For those who teach this doctrine

allow that *all the dead saints rise*, irrespective of *their* previous conduct. But why this difference? No, no! We again say, it is *the whole Church of God*, and all the heavenly saints; all embraced in that precious sentence, "*they that are Christ's* (not *some*) at His coming" (1 Cor. xv:23). All are to be "caught up together" and ushered into the Father's house. It will be the greatest transformation scene in the world's history, and it may take place today.

A mistake has been made by many through incorrectly reading Hebrews ix:27, and inserting the word "all." It does *not* say "it is appointed unto *all* men once to die," but "*unto men.*" It is the common lot of men as sinners. But Jesus has died and that alters everything; and as we have seen, those who believe in Him and are alive when He comes get the benefit of His death—*will not die*, but be *changed*. There were two men who went to heaven without dying, Enoch and Elijah, which proves *all* men do *not* die. And the Apostle in unfolding the mystery to the Corinthian saints says: "We shall not all sleep (or die); but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump;* for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. xv:51-52). Nothing could be plainer than that. It is very remarkable, though a very awful thing, there are also two men

*"The last trump" is a Roman figure used in the military camp, and well known in the Apostle's day. It is said there were three calls. First, was to strike tents. Second, was to fall in. Third, called the last trump, was march. This makes the allusion very beautiful, for it supposes the saints all ready and waiting the signal to march. Only we shall not *march*. We shall be "*caught up.*" The mighty power of God which raised Jesus, and took Him up will catch us up in like manner.

mentioned in Scripture who go into the lake of fire without dying—the Beast and the Antichrist (Rev. xix:20). And “whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (verse 15). Is *your* name there, my reader? If not, you will have awful company. The minds of some of God’s people are being governed by *events* in connection with this subject, and they think it is near on account of the happenings around. But that is wrong. Events, however startling in their *seeming* fulfillment of Scripture, belong to earth and have to do with the Lord’s appearing to His earthly people for *their* deliverance. We (Christians) belong to heaven, and are simply waiting for the Lord to take us there, and events have *no place* in connection with *our calling and hope*. The Lord’s last word was “quickly”—“Surely I come quickly” (Rev. xxii:20), and it may take place while your eyes run from side to side of this page. Are you ready for it?

The Christian, then, has a *heavenly calling* (Heb. iii:1), and a *heavenly hope* (Col. i:5). He waits not for death, though he *may* die, but for *God’s Son from heaven* (1 Thess. i:10). He is to be ever on the watch (Mark xiii:34-37), because the Lord may come at any moment. The *Rapture* of the saints will take place suddenly. There will be no premonitory sign to herald its approach. It will simply happen. And the world will wake up in consternation to find the saints gone—vanished!

This “blessed hope” (Titus ii:13), if received into the heart, has a *sanctifying* effect on the saint, a *stimulating* effect on the servant, and a *sustaining* effect on the sufferer. Let it in and prove it. Jesus is coming as

“*The Bright and Morning Star*” for the Christian *before* the day dawns; and that is what characterizes the New Testament. It opens and closes with the Star (Matt. ii and Rev. xxii). The *sun* is what characterizes the Old Testament, and Jesus, as “the Sun of Righteousness,” ushers in *the day* of millennial blessing for the poor world, and for the down-trodden Jew, and it opens and closes that book (Gen. i and Mal. iii).

What It Will Mean for Those Left Behind

We must now glance at the subject in its connection with the world. When the Rapture takes place it will startle the world! Every country under heaven will be affected by it, for there is no country where there are not *some* true believers to be found and who will be “caught up,” and missed by those who are left. The necessity brake will be applied to the wheels of the world machine everywhere, bringing it to a sudden stop, for a time at least. Manufacture, commerce, travel—all will be held up. It must be so. How will it be possible for them to continue when thousands upon thousands of the operators have suddenly vanished! Not to speak of the probable fearful and fatal accidents that will happen by the sudden removal of some in charge of machines of various kinds on the earth, in the air, and on the sea, leaving them to take care of themselves. It is appalling to think of, and God will allow it. The day of grace will have ended.

It will be a *sudden, quiet, unseen vanishing* of every child of God. They will be missed from homes, factories, shops, offices, and everywhere, and the separations will be *eternal*. Solemn thought! No one will see them go. No one saw the Lord Jesus rise, and

no one will see the dead saints rise. No one saw the Lord ascend except the few disciples He led out as far as Bethany to see it (Luke xxiv:50; Acts i:9), and no one will see the saints taken up.* Think of the awfulness of being left! May God awaken souls who may read this to the reality of these things, and lead them to "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts xx:21). Nothing else can save them.

Yes, indeed! The world will awake some day, and it may be soon, to the surprise of their lives! One can imagine their amazement and agitation when they miss their friends! And how the newspapers after much trouble will appear with large headlines:

**Sudden and Extraordinary Disappearance
of Thousands of People!**

**Messages From Other Centers All Over the Country,
and Cablegrams From Abroad, State the
Same Occurrence Has Happened There!
What Can It Mean?**

It means that God has interfered at last and taken away His saints, and closed the door of mercy forever for those who have heard and refused the Gospel. Their day is past! Their doom is sealed! For them there is *no salvation*. Need we wonder? Look at the state of the world today! See how it has drifted away from God! Neither the horrors of war nor the noisome pestilence with its thousands of victims,

*Even as to "the shout," no unsaved ones will understand it even *if* they hear it. When the Father spoke to the Lord, the people thought it thundered, but they understood not the voice (John xii:28, 29). And so also in Acts xxii:9. The saints will hear it, understand it, and respond to it.

emptying homes and filling the graveyards, seem to have had any sobering effect on the community at large to lead them to repentance; and they continue in their guilty forgetfulness of God. And yet, O wonderful thought! the long-suffering of God lingers over it still; "not willing that any should perish" (2 Peter iii:9, 15). Marvellous indeed! But it *will end!*

They have shut God completely out of their lives, and gone in for *pleasure* and *profit* as they did of old (Luke xvii:26-30). The desecration of the Lord's Day for all manner of sport, and week-end parties and sea-side excursions, etc., leaving almost empty churches except where there is much music and singing and little gospel; all testify to the condition of people's souls in relation to God, and leave them in the dark and in their sins to be awakened, when too late, by the cold icy grasp of death, or the Rapture of the saints leaving them behind for judgment both here and hereafter. Awful thought! Yet still they refuse to believe it and escape.

What excitement there will be when it does take place! How easy to imagine what it will be like in the light of present-day procedure. Demands for public inquiry, and the fullest information to allay the timid ones. Probably special commissions will be set up, and scientists appealed to, to solve the riddle of the mysterious disappearances, while the newspaper editors will no doubt do their best to allay the fears and agitation of the public, who will be 'phoning and rushing hither and thither in their excitement to find out what has become of their relatives, friends, neighbors, employees, or employers, as the case may be.

Poor, poor world! What a spectacle it presents when

away from God even now, though there are present restraints which hinder the slumbering forces of wickedness giving vent to themselves! What will it be when those are removed, and they are given up to their own lawlessness and Satan's delusions? Some few there will be among them here and there, paralyzed with fear, and stricken with remorse at their own folly in rejecting the Saviour, and not being ready for His coming, who *could* tell them it means the Lord has come and taken away His people; but they would be laughed to scorn, or worse, and they know it, and will probably remain silent.

Today there is a restraining power on the earth which keeps the brake on lawlessness and wickedness, saying, as it were, "thus far shalt thou go and no farther" (2 Thess. ii:7). That power is the presence of God the Holy Ghost in the Church. His presence makes the saints the "salt of the earth," and preserves the world from complete corruption, yet the world knows it not. When the saints are "caught up," the Holy Ghost will depart with them, and what will it be like then? What a pandemonium it will become! Satan will be cast out of heaven, and will come down to earth, having great wrath because he knoweth his time is short (Rev. xii:19). He will have almost unlimited power over the whole world. Alas for the godless mass then!

There can be no doubt Satan will begin his deceptions immediately after the Rapture, and inspire the scientists, and commissioners, and editors, and enable them to invent and circulate plausible scientific reasons for the sudden disappearance of the vanished saints, in order to allay the agitation of the timid and deceive

the whole apostate mass (2 Thess. ii:11) until the excitement dies down on seeing that no further disappearances have taken place. Then they will resume their godless and mad rush to sudden and eternal destruction (1 Thess. v:3).

Think not that all this is nothing but the purest imagination set forth to frighten people. But even though some of it be, it is founded upon what God has revealed, and is *not* a mere cobweb spun out of the human brain. Listen again to what Scripture says, and Scripture cannot lie.

“For the mystery of iniquity doth already work (we can see it on every hand), only He who now letteth (or hindereth) will let (or hinder) *until He be taken out of the way* (that is the Holy Spirit). And then shall that wicked (or lawless One) be revealed (the Antichrist) whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming. Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all *power*, and *signs*, and *lying wonders*. And with all *deceivableness of unrighteousness* in them that perish; *because* they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause, God shall send them *strong delusion*, that they *should believe a lie*, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thess. ii:7-12).

Here, then, is God’s announcement and warning before your eyes, my reader, if you never saw it before. That is what awaits the Christ rejectors after the Lord has taken away His saints, and the Antichrist comes on the scene. What if *you* should be in it? Wake up, dear soul! Wake up! The Lord is waiting and will-

ing to save you just now, tomorrow may be too late. Flee to Him at once. Humble yourself at His feet. Confess to God your sins, and trust Jesus as your own personal Saviour. You have no time to lose. He may come today. If you are unsaved, you will be left behind to endure that pandemonium on earth, engineered by that hellish trinity of evil—the Devil, the Beast and the Antichrist (Rev. xiii). Read that chapter carefully. It is a frightful outlook for unsaved souls. The horrors of France, Belgium, and other places in the late war; and the worse horrors and abominations (if worse could be) of Bolshevism in Russia and elsewhere, furnish an idea of what it will be then. Yet the unsaved run the risk of all that by their rejection of Christ as their Saviour.

Again I ask, dear reader, are you ready to meet Him? Remember salvation is "*not of works*" (Ephes. ii:9). Reformation is not what is wanted. It is salvation you need—a new birth (John iii)—a new life. And this is only to be had by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Not merely believing *about* Him, but believing Him, trusting Him to save you. "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life" (John iii:36). His precious blood, shed for us on the Cross, "*cleanseth us from all sin.*" Nothing else will, nothing else can. And it is the cleansed ones, the saved ones, who will be "caught up" to meet Him when He comes—no others! He may come today. God grant, if He does, *you* may be among those who will rise to meet Him, and be "ever with the Lord."—*W. E.*

C H A P T E R I X

The Midnight Cry

Matthew xxv:1-13

THE study of this most solemn parable spoken by our Lord is surely very opportune. It is also necessary because certain wrong interpretations are being made of this parable, which have been accepted by not a few of God's people.

We find the parable of the ten virgins exclusively in the Gospel of Matthew, and here it is a part of the great discourse of our Lord, generally known as the Olivet discourse. Three great discourses of the Lord are recorded by the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of Matthew. The first is the so-called "Sermon on the Mount." This contains the proclamation of the King concerning His Kingdom. The second discourse is found in the 13th chapter; this is composed of seven parables in which the Lord makes known the mysteries of the Kingdom. In the last great discourse He reveals the Future. First He reveals the future of the Jews, how the Jewish age will close, what great events are yet to take place in the land of Israel. He speaks of the great tribulation, which is yet in store for the Jews, and immediately after the days of that great tribulation, He will come in power and great glory. At the close of His discourse He reveals the future of the Gentile nations, who are on earth when He comes again. He will take His place upon His own glorious throne and all nations will be gathered before Him. They will be separated by the King, as a shepherd

separates the sheep and the goats. Between these two predictions concerning the future, the beginning and the end of this discourse He gives three parables. These parables do not relate to the Jews nor to the Gentile nations nor do they refer to the period of time, the end of the age, of which He speaks in the first part of Matthew xxiv. In these three parables the Lord shows the conditions which will prevail during the time of His absence from this earth. *This period of time is the present Christian age.* The three parables of the prudent and evil servant, the wise and the foolish virgins and the faithful and the slothful servants give us a picture of the state of the entire Christian profession. This is seen in the very beginning of this parable. The parable of the ten virgins is one, which relates to the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven has here the same meaning as in Matthew xiii, that is, it means the entire sphere of Christian profession.

And now before we follow the different stages of this important parable I want to mention very briefly the two wrong interpretations, which like all other errors in our day, beome more and more widespread. The first claims that the virgins do not represent Christians at all, but that they represent the Jewish remnant during the end of the age. The parable, according to this interpretation, will be fulfilled in the future. I am not going to enter into the different arguments which are advanced to support this view, but only wish to point out one fact, which is sufficient to disprove this theory. The ten virgins fell asleep, which, as we shall see later, means that they no longer expected the coming of the Bridegroom. Is it possible to conceive that the believing Jews during the great tribulation,

when everything points to the rapid consummation of the age, can go to sleep? This to my mind is sufficient to overthrow this theory, not to speak of other reasons.

Another interpretation holds that the ten virgins represent indeed Christians. However, the foolish virgins are looked upon as true Christians, only they lack a maturity of growth, depth of consecration, were not baptized with the Holy Spirit, or had the so-called "second blessing." All this the wise virgins possessed. This is the favorable view with a certain class of holiness people. Others try to prove from it the theory of a first fruit rapture. The wise virgins are the first fruits and they are taken first. The foolish will have to pass through the tribulation and will be taken later. Against such teaching we simply hold up the words of the Lord, when He as Bridegroom tells the foolish virgins "I know you not." They were never His, they never knew Him and therefore they do not represent true Christians. Never will the Lord say this word to any one who has truly trusted in Him, no matter how weak and ignorant, how imperfect and erring that one may be.

And now let us look at the details of this parable, which gives us a picture of the attitude and character of the professing church up to the time when the Bridegroom comes.

Four historic stages can be easily traced in this parable. Three of them are passed and the fourth is imminent. At any moment the fourth may become actual history. They are the following:

1. A description of the Christian profession in its beginning and its characteristics.
2. The falling asleep of the virgins.
3. The Midnight cry.
4. The

Coming of the Bridegroom. We are living in the days when the midnight cry is heard and are facing the fourth great event of this parable, the Coming of the Bridegroom, the entrance of the wise virgins to be with Him and the shutting out of the foolish. And this it is which makes this parable so very solemn in the days in which we are living.

1. "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom." In 2nd Corinthians we read that the virgin is used as a type of the church. "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." The Lord in the parable uses the figure of ten virgins, because the parable does not altogether refer to the true church, His Bride, but because He had in mind the conditions of that which professes to be the church. The number ten is the number of testimony and responsibility. Nevertheless we learn from the beginning of this parable what true Christianity is. The characteristics of the Christian calling are three-fold: separation, manifestation and expectation. Separation from the world, going forth with lamps, which are for giving light, to shine as lights while the Bridegroom is not here, and then to go forth to meet the Bridegroom. One can read in these characteristics the very words and thoughts with which the Holy Spirit describes the Thessalonian Christians, "How ye turned to God from idols, to serve the true and the living God and to wait for His Son from heaven." The emphasis in this parable is upon the last of these characteristics. The whole body of Christians in the beginning went out to meet the Bridegroom. The blessed Hope of the

coming of the Lord was the Hope and the expectation of the church in the very start. It was the original attitude of the true church and bears witness to the heavenly hope and heavenly calling of the church.

In the next two verses the inner condition of the ten virgins is laid bare. It is noteworthy that the condition is stated first, the demonstration of it comes later; after the midnight cry had been sounded the foolishness of the five becomes manifested. The division of these virgins in five wise and five foolish, brings out the fact that in the professing church two classes of people are found, the true and the false, saved and unsaved, professing and possessing. The wise represent such who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who have personal knowledge of Christ and are sealed with the Spirit; they have the unction of the Holy One, which is represented by the oil. The foolish are such who have the form of godliness and deny the power thereof. They represent such who have taken the outward profession but lacked the reality. As they never truly trusted in Christ they have not the oil, the Holy Spirit. The objection has been made that the foolish virgins can hardly represent unsaved persons, because they are called virgins and went out to meet the Bridegroom. In their profession they were virgins, and in profession they had gone out to meet the Bridegroom. Another objection is raised. Did they not later say "give us of your oil, else how could they say that their lamps were going out?" Then they must have had some oil, else how could they say that their lamps were going out? There is no proof at all in this that they might have a certain supply of oil. It is distinctly said that they only took lamps,

but they did not take oil. They may have made an attempt to light the wick of their lamps only to see that they did not give light and went out. No, they never possessed the oil, just as the great mass of professing Christians in our days have lamps, an outward form, but no reality. Christ was never accepted and therefore the Holy Spirit and His power is lacking. A fearful condition it is! Alas, the thousands and hundreds of thousands who are in that condition today!

2. A second stage historically is seen in the fifth verse. "While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." Both the foolish and the wise grew heavy, became drowsy and then slept. This has been interpreted in different ways. However, the meaning of it is not hard to discover. The Bridegroom tarried and they no longer expected Him. As the centuries went on the professing church gave up the blessed Hope and ceased looking for the Lord. This is a historic fact. The Coming of the Bridegroom was forgotten and all, the most earnest believers as well as the mere professing ones slept, and for long centuries nothing was heard of the Bridegroom and His Coming. Darkness and confusion prevailed in dispensational truths; the writings extending over hundreds of years witness to this fact. Of the end of the world, a universal judgment day, and the Day of wrath something was heard occasionally, but the blessed Hope as it was known in the beginning was completely forgotten. Nothing is heard of it for many, many centuries. This is the second great historic event. The Lord was no longer expected.

3. And now we come to the third. "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the Bridegroom!

go out to meet Him.” The question is, has this period been reached, or are we still to wait for such a startling cry, reaching the ears of both the wise and the foolish, the professing and the possessing? Some teach in our day that that cry is the same as the shout which is mentioned in 1 Thessalonians iv, the shout which the descending Lord will give to call His own into His presence. But that is incorrect. The midnight cry and the shout of the Lord have no connection. The shout of the Lord is the first word which He will utter. His last word was, “Behold I come quickly.” The next word will be His shout. The midnight cry is not uttered by Himself, but it is given by the Holy Spirit. And has the midnight cry been given by the Holy Spirit? Has there been a revival of the blessed Hope of the Coming of the Lord? Did anything like this of which the Lord here speaks take place? We unhesitatingly answer it with, Yes. We all know of the Coming of the Lord. Most of us are cherishing the blessed Hope and are waiting for Himself. We sing previous hymns full of hope and expectation. Over the entire Christian profession the preaching has gone forth of the Coming of the Bridegroom. This is sufficient evidence that this stage in the parable has been reached. The midnight cry has been given. When was it given? We do not hear anything about the Bridegroom and His nearness during the great reformation period. The great instruments which were used in the reformation had no light on the Coming of the Lord. Luther, for instance, spoke occasionally of the great universal judgment day, which he believed was near, because he believed the Pope to be the Antichrist. In this conception he was followed by all his

contemporaries. It was not given to the great reformers to be used in the revival of the prophetic Word and to give the midnight cry. Nor do we hear anything like the midnight cry immediately after the reformation; we go back to the first half of the last century and there we meet with a revival of the blessed Hope, the coming of the Lord. The Holy Spirit flashed forth this blessed truth once more and ever since then the midnight cry has been heard, and it is still being heard. We live in the fulfillment of this period of the parable of our Lord.

But what is indicated by these words? You noticed we left out the word "cometh." The authorized version reads, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh." The revised version has left out the word "cometh" and that is the right way to read it, "Behold the Bridegroom! Go ye forth to meet Him." This tells us that the midnight cry is more than a mere announcement of the coming of the Lord. It is, of course, indicated, but the Holy Spirit in the midnight cry calls attention to the person of the Bridegroom. He unfolds His glorious person anew and brings out the fact that His church, whom He has loved, is His Bride and that He is the Bridegroom. And along with this message of the Bridegroom there is a call to go forth to meet Him. What else is it than a call to the original position? It demands a return to that as it was in the beginning. It is a call to separation from all that is false and unscriptural. How can any one, or how could any one honestly believe that that adorable Person, the Bridegroom, *is* near, soon Coming, without turning away from all that is displeasing to Him, without turning the back upon all which dishonors both

His Person and His Word? This then is the significant meaning of the midnight cry. Exactly this took place and still takes place in our present day. Along with the revival of the blessed Hope, the preaching of His imminent Coming, we have a return to other great truths, such as the teaching concerning the church. Just as the giving up of the blessed Hope affected the other great doctrines of the Bible and became in part responsible for the fearful decline, confusion and departure from the faith once and for all delivered unto the Saints, so the recovery of the blessed Hope, the imminent Coming of the Lord, results in the recovery of these same blessed doctrines which were given up and leads to a return to the true position. All this has come to pass. All is still coming to pass. The midnight cry "Behold the Bridegroom, go ye forth to meet Him," stands in closest connection with the church message to Philadelphia, in the third chapter of Revelation. There the *person* of Christ, as the Holy One and the True One, is in the foreground. Once more a company of His people at the very last days are keeping His Word and are not denying His name as well as keeping the Word of His patience, which has reference to His Coming, and to His Philadelphia remnant He gives the encouraging message "I will keep thee out of the hour of trial which is to come upon all the earth." Philadelphia assuredly originates with the midnight cry. The two are inseparably connected.

But to return to the parable of the Lord. We notice that the midnight cry discovers the true condition of the wise and the foolish. They all arose and trimmed their lamps. The message has an effect upon

the entire Christian profession. Of the wise we read but little, but the foolish now discover that they have no oil and further demonstrate their foolishness by appealing to the wise to give them oil. The wise in turn direct them to go to those who sell and buy for themselves. The words have occasioned much controversy.

It is not at all necessary that in a parable everything must have a definite meaning. It shows simply the utter blindness of these foolish ones in looking to human beings for that which they lacked. The oil, the Holy Spirit, can be obtained only from Him, who gives without money and without price. But their foolishness just consisted in this very thing that they came not to Him, who is so willing to give. One can imagine the haste and activity of these foolish virgins in running here and there trying to get oil, to have burning lamps to meet the Bridegroom. It is exactly that which has happened since the midnight cry has been given and which we still witness about us. There is a great deal of religious activity, an immense amount of religious fervour, all kinds of endeavour and service, trying to do this and attempting to be better and do better. The so-called religious world feels that there is something in the air. Something is troubling them and yet they refuse to go to Him who alone can give and whose Grace alone can save and make ready. This is, alas, the sad condition of a great part of Christendom today. They hear the midnight cry and yet refuse to go to Him for oil.

But the wise arose and trimmed their lamps. They had the oil and they responded to the message, "Behold the Bridegroom! go ye forth to meet Him." It

is a significant fact that the blessed Hope faithfully preached is causing separation between the true and the false. That is exactly why we must preach it and preach it more faithfully. And this continues. It has continued for a good many years, longer than those who were used by the Holy Spirit in the recovery of the blessed Hope, anticipated. The infinite patience of the Lord has delayed the next great event. How long will it all continue yet? Who can give us an answer to this? For all we know the next moment may usher in the actual appearing of the Bridegroom.

The next is "the Bridegroom came." How solemn this is. While the foolish kept on running and seeking and the wise had arisen and the separation between these classes had taken place, He came at last. *That is exactly what is before us now.* Oh! I wish I could impress it upon every heart here tonight, that this solemn event may be upon us at any time. Surely the Bridegroom will not delay his coming much longer. When John the Baptist announced the first Coming of the King through the power and energy of the Holy Spirit did it take long for Him to come? And now for so many years already the Holy Spirit has announced the nearness of the Bridegroom, His soon Coming; can it then take much longer? Every waiting one, every spiritually minded believer who has intelligence, answers with thousands of others, "It cannot be much longer. He will tarry no more, but will quickly come."

How it fills our hearts with joy. The Bridegroom is coming and it reads, "they that were ready went in with him to the marriage." The wise, those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and know Him, are ready. Grace has made them ready and when He

comes He will receive them. What a happy and glorious moment it will be at last. Said my little boy, who has an interest in the Coming of the Lord, "I wonder how He will look? I wonder what kind of a face He has when we see Him?" That is exactly what you and I have often thought about and often wonder what it will be when we see Him at last as He is. And we *shall* see Him.

But there is another side, fearful indeed. "The door was shut." What words these are. The door closed in the face of the rest of the virgins. No more possibility for them to enter in. Directly they come saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us." But He answered and said, "Verily, I say unto you, I know you not." They find themselves shut out. And let me say this is their final state. One of the fearful things with some of these new theories concerning this last parable is that they meddle with these last words addressed to the foolish virgins, as if they have another chance. No, no, the door was shut and when the door opens again He comes forth not as the Bridegroom, but as the King of kings and the Lord of lords, as the mighty judge. I know you not—what words from such lips! What eternal misery they foretell!

And this is the doom which hangs over the heads of the large masses of Christian people, Christians in name only, never saved. The moment He comes the door will be shut for these foolish virgins. Forever outside will be their destiny.

Perhaps I am speaking here to some, not many, but some, who have not the oil, who have not the Spirit of Christ and are none of His. Let me address these words to you, and if it is but one person. Delay no longer.

Arise this very moment and go to Him who still waits in patience. He waits for you and invites you to come to Him to buy without money and without price. Oh! come now, confess yourself with all your religiousness perhaps and self-righteousness a lost sinner. You need to be no longer in that dangerous position. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; decide it now and I can assure you, He will give you that which you lack in your empty profession and should He come tonight, as may be the case, you will be ready to enter in with the oldest saint of God. He died for you to have you with Himself. Will you reject then the offer of salvation as it comes in this solemn hour? How can you? Delay no longer, but now cast yourself into His arms.

And we who know Him and wait for Him with longing hearts, there is more than one solemn message which comes to us from this parable. Think of the awful doom of the multitudes of professing, but unsaved, Christians. Some believers who believe in the eternal punishment of the unsaved act as if it were not true. If it is true as, alas! it is, how can we be idle? Brethren, we have a great responsibility towards the foolish virgins, the great mass of the professing Church. God forbid that we should be negligent in discharging this duty. Away with the miserable sectarian spirit which takes the skirts together, like the Pharisee of old and says, "I am holier than thou," and refuses to go to those who need the truth and the Gospel. We have a debt to pay; we are debtors to all. As long as the Bridegroom tarries let us go to those who are Christians in name and who know Him not and He will graciously own our testimony.

"Watch, therefore, for ye know not neither the day

nor the hour." Soon all will be reality. Soon we shall enter in to be with the Bridegroom; shut in with Him. God grant that none of this company may be shut out.

"FORGIVEN"

(1 John ii:12)

Not far from New York, in a cemetery lone,
Close guarding its grave, stands a simple headstone,
And all the inscription is one word alone—
"Forgiven."

No sculptor's fine art hath embellished its form,
But constantly there through the calm and the storm,
It beareth this word from a poor fallen worm—
"Forgiven."

It shews not the date of the silent one's birth,
Reveals not his frailties, nor lies of his worth,
But speaks out the tale from his few feet of earth—
"Forgiven."

The death is unmentioned, the name is untold,
Beneath lies the body, corrupted and cold,
Above rests his spirit, at home in the fold—
"Forgiven."

And when, from the heavens, the Lord shall descend,
This stranger shall rise, and to glory ascend,
Well known and befriended, to sing without end—
"Forgiven."

CHAPTER X

Who Will be Caught Up When the Lord Comes?

THE doctrine of the first resurrection and the coming of the Lord for His saints is nowhere taught in the Old Testament; it is altogether a New Testament revelation. As it is so well known, the Apostle Paul, who received from the Lord the revelation concerning the church, the one body, received also directly from the Lord the revelation concerning the glorious removal of the church from the earth. As the church had a definite beginning, so she will have a definite end. This end of the church on earth is made known in 1 Thessalonians iv:13-17. To read these familiar words and meditate on them, and to realize a little of what it all will mean, fills the heart with rapture and joy unspeakable. Oh, for that shout, that assembling shout from the glorified Head to His own members! The dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive shall be caught up together with them in clouds. The clouds will be the chariots of glory which take us into His presence. Then we shall meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. This coming of the Lord for his saints is the blessed Hope, the Hope of the Church, our Hope.

We are to occupy ourselves with the question, who, when the hour arrives, will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Will all true Christians be caught up or only a few? This is an important question, important because that blessed event may come at any time. There is, in our days, a decided increase

of teachers who teach what has been termed a "partial rapture." According to some of these teachings only those who believe that the Lord is coming, and who wait for His coming, who have a correct knowledge of His Second Coming, will be taken, and others who had not light on dispensational teachings, but were equally sincere, will be left to pass through the tribulation. Others again declare that only those will be caught up who attained to a certain spirituality. What is termed "a higher life experience" is, according to these, necessary to share in the rapture. Only "consecrated" Christians will be taken up who are loosened from earthly things. This teaching is found mostly among Christian believers, who are much occupied with themselves, their experiences, and who do not know the blessed position the believer holds through grace in Christ. Then there are numerous groups of people, some of them perfectionists, who are scattered from Maine to California, from North to South and who claim that only the 144,000 will be caught up, and that those who hold these teachings, or, possess their peculiar experience, will belong to that company. These people forget that the 144,000 in Revelation are of Israel. Some of the so-called "Pentecostal people," now split up in different sects, have imposed another condition, that of speaking in a strange tongue.

There is still another view, or rather new presentation of the partial rapture, which seems to have unsettled some believers. We have received a number of letters from readers and others have come to us and asked us about it.

According to this view only those will have part in the first resurrection whose love and conduct after

their conversion have made them worthy of it. We shall quote from a volume which teaches this:

“By the first resurrection Christ exercises His power; when, as we shall presently see, those only, whose love and conduct after conversion have caused Him to deem them worthy, will come forth from the dead, to form the complete church and to act as members of the Heavenly Kingdom.

“By the final resurrection of all the remaining dead; when those who have been saved, but did not attain to the First resurrection, will be raised to life: and those who have rejected the Saviour will come forth for judgment. This resurrection does not take place until the close of the millennial reign, that is, until at least a thousand years after the First resurrection.”

According to this the first resurrection is a reward for faithfulness and right conduct. One has to attain a worthiness, what measure of it is not specified, and could not be specified by anyone. The perfect church will be formed by those who were faithful. The other believers who were truly saved, and also indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but less faithful, will see no resurrection till the great White Throne is set up. That this is altogether unscriptural need not to be further explained. No believer, who is saved by grace and hence is a member of Christ, will ever appear before the great White Throne. The second resurrection is of the wicked dead.

The author then goes to the Epistle to the Philippians and tries to show from the third chapter that the first resurrection is a prize. Especially is it the word of the Apostle in the tenth and eleventh verses he explains as supporting his false theory. We will let him speak in his own words:

“But what was the goal towards which Paul was thus directing his efforts? ‘If by any means,’ he continues, ‘I may attain to the select resurrection out from among the dead.’ In other words, his aim was to be numbered with those blessed and holy

ones who shall have part in the first resurrection. But we must note, that he had at the time, *no certain assurance* (italics ours) that he would compass the desire of his heart. * * * Just before his death, however, it was graciously revealed to him that he was one of the approved."

Speaking on the thirteenth and fourteenth verses of the same chapter in Philippians, he says:

"Here Paul again urges the fact, that, devoted as he was to his Master, he had as yet *no absolute certainty* of attaining to the first resurrection" (Page 41).

The worst statement on this line in the whole book is the following:

"The upward, or heavenward, calling is, of course, contrasted with the earthly calling of Israel. And its introduction here is sufficiently startling for those who have been taught that simple belief in Christ will win heaven for them, and membership in the Lord's body. For Paul unmistakably affirms, that these high privileges are a prize and not a gift, and are accessible only by the gate of the First Resurrection—a gate through which, after all his sacrifices and labors and sufferings for Christ, he was not yet absolutely sure that he would be permitted to pass."

According to this teaching the Apostle, who had received apostleship not of men but from the Lord, whom he saw in glory, the Apostle to whom was committed the Gospel of the Glory of the blessed God and to whom was made known the mystery of the Church, and that *all* believers are members of that body, this great Apostle and instrument through whom God gave the greatest revelation, did not know himself that he belonged to the body. He did not know it in spite of his sufferings and labors; he had to suffer some more and only when he wrote Second Timothy had he a special revelation that he had labored and suffered enough. How ridiculous and more than that, insulting to the work and the Word of our Lord Jesus Christ! And if

it were true what this book teaches, how dreadful it would be for almost every believer, for but few, if any, labor and suffer as Paul did, and we could have, even if we did, no assurance concerning our membership in the body and our share in the first resurrection, except by *special* revelation. But such a special revelation is nowhere promised in the Word.

We shall return after awhile to the argument of Philippians.

But let us give the answer to the question, "*Who will be caught up when the Lord comes?*"

Every person who fell asleep in Jesus belongs to the company which is mentioned in first Thessalonians, "the dead in Christ shall be raised first," and *every* true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, who lives when the assembling shout comes from the air, will be caught up in clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And if believers, as it is the case, were ignorant of the coming of the Lord, had absolutely no knowledge of the fact and therefore did not wait for Him, they will nevertheless be caught up. Let us make the statement as strong as we possibly can. Supposing the Lord came today to take His own out of the earth. Let us suppose a person who lived a very wicked life, but an hour before the Lord comes believes in the Lord Jesus Christ and is saved and accepted in the Beloved, made a partaker of the calling heavenly. This one saved by grace, though ignorant of the truth of God, would be caught up like the oldest, most matured Saint who loved His appearing for many years. Think of the dying thief. He pleaded, "Remember me when thou dost come into thy Kingdom." The assurance comes back to him, who could do no

works to gain a prize, who was so ignorant in all spiritual matters, "Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise." When the Lord comes with the assembling shout the body of the thief, saved by grace, as well as the body of Stephen, whose is a martyr's crown, and Paul's and every other one who was saved by grace will be raised up and *we*, meaning every saved one together with them, will be caught up.

But let us prove this statement by the only authority we have, the Word of God. Let the Scriptures give an answer to the simple question, "Is the first resurrection and to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air the prize for a holy, consecrated, faithful conduct and life, or is it a free gift of the grace of God in our Lord Jesus Christ?" The answer to this from the Scriptures is clear; it is put in every epistle as the result of grace and not as the reward for faithfulness and service. To cite all the New Testament passages which acquaint us with the wonderful truth of what grace has called us to and made us *in Christ Jesus* would fill page after page, and if we would ponder over them and search in its blessed depths under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, would fill our hearts with "joy unspeakable and full of glory." How clear it is seen in *Romans*. In the fifth of *Romans* we read of the blessed results of justification. It is not a question of *doing* from our side, but it is *God's doing*, for everyone who believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ. Peace, perfect peace, towards God. Every believer has it with God in virtue of the blood of the cross. There peace *was* made. The second, access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand, and the third result of justification, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. And this hope of the glory

of God is nothing else than what we have in the first epistle of John, "We shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is." Read also Romans viii:29, 30, "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son (in resurrection on the day of His coming for His Saints) that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called, and whom He called, them He also justified and whom He justified, them He also glorified." Justification and glorification are inseparably connected. They cannot be severed. Both are from the side of God, the result of the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has justified and God has glorified. The glorification begins when our Lord leaves the Father's throne and comes into the air to meet those whom the Father has given to Him. Not one will be left behind. And who are they whom the Father has given to the Son? Everyone who believed and came to the Son.

It is in that rich unfathomable epistle to the Ephesians, where we read God's gracious purpose towards everyone who believes in Christ, accepted in Him, blest with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. We would have to go through all the precious words in the opening chapters, where we learn more fully than elsewhere that *it is all the gift of God*, not of works, lest any man should boast. "Even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved). And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenlies in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Now we are there

by grace. God sees us there in Christ and bye and bye we shall be there actually. It is clear from a number of passages that when the Lord comes for His Saints *all* believers without any distinction, whether they are full grown in knowledge, fathers, young men or babes in Christ, will be taken *because* they are Christ's and God's grace has put them there. This is not only clearly seen in 1 Thessalonians iv:13-18, but also elsewhere. "For our commonwealth is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our body of humiliation, that it might be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. iii:20, 21). But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterwards *they that are Christ's* at His coming. * * * Behold, I shew you a mystery; *we* shall not all sleep, but we shall *all* be changed (1 Cor. xv:23, 51). It is clear that *all* means the whole company of believers.

But there are other scriptural proofs that all believers will be taken up when the Lord comes. One is the unity of the body. "For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we *all* baptised into *one* body" (1 Cor. xii:12 and 13). It is clear then that all believers are members of the one body. The teaching in the above cited paragraphs is an open denial of the truth revealed of the Church as the one body. "There is *one* body and *one* Spirit even as ye are called in *one* hope of your calling" (Ephes. iv:4). This one body, of which every believer is a member, will be joined to the glorified Head, it will be *one* joining and *one*

presentation of the assembly. Now, if only certain believers are caught up and another number passeth through a part of the tribulation, and still another company is taken later and other believers will not be raised at all till the great white Throne is set up, the revealed truth of the one body, its organic unity and vital connection with Him in glory is completely set aside.

Furthermore, *the* apostasy and the revelation of *the* Antichrist cannot come till that body, the Church, is taken from the earth (see 2 Thess. ii). The appearance of the final Antichrist therefore demands the complete removal of the one body. A remnant of believers, members of the one body, left in the earth during the great tribulation would still hinder the revelation of Antichrist and postpone it. The Saints in the tribulation are *not* members of the one body, but they are Jewish believers.

Again; "We must *all* appear before the judgment seat of Christ." This is the *Bema* in the air. *All* believers will have to appear before Him to receive approval or disapproval (*not* salvation or condemnation). Now, if they are *all* to appear before that seat in the air on the day of Christ—they must *all* have been taken up. When He comes at the end of the tribulation He comes with *all* His Saints. Many other Scriptures might be quoted which declare the same truth. Every believer will share in the first resurrection and be caught up when the Lord comes.

There are two passages which are generally quoted to support the teaching of a partial rapture. The first is taken to support the theory that it is a question of worthiness, and the second passage is claimed to make

clear that only those will be caught up who look for the Lord.

Luke xxi:36 is the first passage. "Watch ye therefore and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all the things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of Man." Our Lord spoke these words in connection with the prophecies concerning the end of the age when the earth and the heavens shall be shaken and when He will come as Son of Man in a cloud with power and glory. The title of our Lord, Son of Man, gives us His relation to the earth. When He was here in His humiliation He was Son of Man, when He comes in exaltation He comes as Son of Man. Nowhere is it said of the members of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ that they will stand before the Son of Man. The exhortation is one which concerns the Jewish remnant, the 144,000 in the book of Revelation. they will be in the earth during that time of trouble and with them it will be the question of faithfulness to the end to be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of Man. The disciples whom our Lord addressed in these words represent in type that Jewish remnant.

Hebrews ix:28: "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." This passage has been made to prove that only those who wait for Him will be taken up. The whole passage shows the three appearances of the Christ. He appeared on the earth to put away sin by sacrificing Himself. He appears now in the presence of God for us, He will appear the second time. This is unquestionably the glorious appearing spoken of in Titus ii:13, "The glorious appearing of the great God and our

Saviour Jesus Christ.” *He* who appeared and *He* who appears in the presence of God will be the *same* who comes back to the earth. Of course when He actually returns from heaven into the habitable earth, as the first-born, bringing many sons to glory (all His saints with Him) there will be such who wait and look for Him and to them He comes for salvation, and these are the believing Jews. Of this we read in Isaiah xxv:9: “And it shall be said in that day, Lo this is our God; we have waited for Him and He will save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.” The passage does not teach that only such will be caught up who believe in His coming and look for Him.

And now, as so many believers seem to be troubled about the words of the Apostle Paul in the third chapter of Philippians we give a short word on that. The position of the epistle to the Philippians is significant. Ephesians speaks of the glories of the Church, what every believer and the company of believers, the one body, is *in* Christ. Colossians acquaints us with the glory of Him who is the Head of the body, Christ. Philippians stands between the two and shows the believer *in* Christ with the life of Christ in him, living Christ and pressing towards the glory. It is the epistle of experience. In the third chapter the energy of this life in the believer is seen. Paul, of course, knew that he belonged to that glory. He had absolute certainty about the first resurrection. But this divine energy in him presses forward. It is in full harmony with what God’s grace has made him. All in him wants to get there, where the grace of God in Christ had placed him once and for all. The life of Christ

in him reaches out for that place and when he says, "By any means," he gives us to understand nothing shall hinder him, may the cost be what it will, he wants to lay hold of all for which Christ has laid hold of him. He reaches out after that goal, Christ in glory, because he knew he belonged there. This will be sufficient to show the way to a fuller understanding of the words of the Apostle. And if we know with the Apostle of the Gospel of the Glory what grace has done, what we are in Christ and shall be with Christ, surely the same divine energy manifests itself in our walk, as we are waiting for the glory.

Oh, that we never might forget
What Christ has suffered for our sake,
To save our souls and make us meet
Of all His glory to partake!
But, keeping *this* in mind, *press on*
To glory and the victor's crown.

C H A P T E R X I

The Great Tribulation

Rev. vii:14 (R. V.)

Its Relation to the Jew, the Church and the Gentile

OUR blessed Lord in the close of His farewell discourse to His beloved disciples, said emphatically, "Ye shall have tribulation" (John xvi:33). The historical record of the past nineteen centuries amply verifies the divine statement.

Present Tribulation

God's people have ever been a suffering yet rejoicing company—a seeming paradoxical statement, yet a true one. The Christian state is an enigma to the world; they cannot understand it—"sorrowful yet always rejoicing" (2 Cor. vi:10).

The pathway to the Kingdom, with its no night and no tears, is not one of ease, but of much tribulation. For Christ it was first the suffering, then the glory; first the crown of thorns, now the crown of glory. It is the same, the very same path and order for the redeemed host of the twentieth century. The wilderness, with its tears and sobs, precedes the Kingdom with its many joys and glories.

Triumph and Downfall

The weakest moment of the Church's history immediately precedes her triumphant ascension to glory. Her weakness and failure are exchanged for the strength

and grandeurs of the New Jerusalem (Rev. iii:12). On the other hand, the proud boast of Christendom, "I have need of nothing," and Christ outside, while surrounding herself with the splendor of the world and rising to the highest apex of pride; then, from the dizzy mountain-top, she sinks into the bottomless depths of a fathomless eternal degradation from which she never rises. Heaven celebrates her downfall (Rev. xix:1-5).

The Church is glory and a Christless Christendom in hell is the certain consummation of *present* events, which loudly declare The Lord is at Hand!

This Dispensation

We are nearing the close of this Dispensation, and on the threshold of the brief prophetic period of judgment detailed in the prophets and in the central part of the Revelation. The saints of this Christian age are delivered from the wrath to come (1 Thess. i:10)—be it governmental or eternal, "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation" (1 Thess. v:9). Ere the day of the Lord bursts suddenly upon apostate Christendom—as a thief in the night—we, the changed living and the raised holy dead, shall have been translated to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. iv:16, 17). The Lord's words in John xiv:3; xi:25, 26, and Paul's revelation in 1 Thessalonians iv:15-17, preclude the erroneous thought of a special worthy or faithful class. Those texts embrace *all* the saints of this Christian Dispensation, as also those of Old Testament times.

It is frequently said and written that every Dispensation closes up in judgment. We can but give a qualified assent to that oft-repeated statement. This

age is the most lengthened of the Dispensations. It is one full of Gospel light and grandly lit up with the moral glories of the Cross unutterable in expression. Its inauguration was by the Lord in Person risen from the dead (Matt. xxviii:19; Mark xvi:15). The age has its finale in the triumphant shout of the redeemed, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Such is the cry of the conquering host caught up to meet the Lord in the air. On the other hand, the translation of the heavenly saints seals the doom of Christendom. The truth is that the Dispensation closes in triumph on the one hand, and judgment on the other. Every past and future age has its dark and bright, its night and day.

The Coming Great Tribulation

is distinct in character and time from the ordinary troubles of life now willingly endured because of their present value (James i:2-4) and future blessed results (1 Peter i:6, 7). The Great Tribulation is yet future. It refers to a prophetically foretold and exact period measured to a day, in which the vengeance of God will fall in crushing effect upon apostate Judaism and on the equally apostate Christendom.

The Great Tribulation refers to the time when Satan and his angels are cast down from heaven to earth (Rev. xii:9). The Dragon is the unseen yet nevertheless the real instigator of the Great Tribulation. The Beast, the Antichrist, the Assyrian, etc., are Satan's chiefs in the accomplishment of his purpose, which is to wreck the testimony of God and fill the prophetic scene with crime and sorrow. The expulsion of Satan and his militant hosts from heaven is the great and

determining factor in bringing about the Tribulation. When cast down to the earth, in his baffled rage, he seeks to wreak his vengeance on the Woman, i.e., Israel (Rev. xii), then with the remnant (verse 17). But the Church, the heavenly saints, are then in heaven and rejoice in Satan's downfall, "Rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them." Note the contrast, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea." These latter are not believers, but apostates from Jews and Gentiles. At that awful period the Dispensation is entirely changed. It is one of righteous judgment. We repeat, no living saint of *this* Dispensation, which is one of grace, need have the slightest dread of finding himself in the Great Tribulation; it is a causeless fear from which may God graciously deliver every reader of these pages.

Satan's two chief lieutenants through whom he specially works are the Beast (a Gentile) and the Antichrist (a Jew). Those two men are apostates and are probably alive today and being trained in secret. When the hour arrives for their public manifestation and to enter upon their Satanic mission, the Devil will know where to find them. God has decreed the Great Tribulation. The time, the agents, the sufferers, its duration, the circumstances, and every detail thereof are before God. History and Prophecy, with the movements of men and history, are directed by God and made subservient to His will and purpose. What a strength to the human heart to know that God is in all and over all!

The Horror of the Tribulation-Crisis

The Temple defiled, Jerusalem laid in heaps, the dead of the people contemptuously thrown to the birds and beasts, the blood of the people flowing through the streets of Jerusalem, and no burial of the slain, the insulting taunt of the heathen: "Where is their God?" (Psa. lxxix). Jerusalem besieged and taken, the houses rifled, the women vilely used by a licentious soldiery, captivity and other horrors (Zech. xiv). The chosen witnesses of that day in Jerusalem itself, not simply the people, shall seal their testimony with their blood; no burial, no graves are allowed them; the Gentiles make merry and rejoice over the slain witnesses. What a scene (Rev. xi)! The foregoing horrors and others too numerous to mention make up a page of yet unwritten history, the blackest ever penned, of murder, blood, lust, blasphemy, and of unrestrained violence. We close this dark picture of human depravity in that startling and comprehensive statement contained in Mark xiii:19: "For in those days shall be affliction such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be." The climax of human trouble is reached in the Great Tribulation, and never exceeded before it or after it (see also Matt. xxiv:21).

Shortening of the Tribulation

"And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matt. xxiv:22; see also Mark xiii:20).

The 70th Week of prophecy—an exact period of seven years (Dan. ix:24, 27)—runs its course between the

Translation (1 Thess. iv:17) and the *Appearing* (Matt. xxiv:30). The week of years is divided into two equal parts, each three and a half years. The second half of the week is expressly noted in Daniel ix:27, and is referred to in Matthew xxiv:15 and Mark xiii:14 as marking the commencement of the Great Tribulation which lasts exactly 1,260 days. Three years and a half is 1,277½ days. Thus the Tribulation is shortened by 17½ days. The Beast (the fourth Empire revived) is the persecutor of the witnesses in Jerusalem (Rev. xi:3, 7) and of the saints in Judea and Christendom (Rev. xiii:7). Now the adherents and worshippers of the Beast suffer under the first vial of wrath (Rev. xvi:2), while the Beast itself in its executive and capital (Rome) is visited in severest judgment (verses 10, 11). Necessarily the Beast cannot persecute and murder while itself is undergoing the angry vengeance of God. The vials are poured out at and *after* the 1,260 days of Tribulation and before the expiry of the 70th Week of prophecy. Thus the days are shortened. The tribulation ceases before the last half of the Week runs out. Were the days not shortened no flesh could be saved. Israel would be wiped out (Rom. ix:29).

Double Suffering

Saints of God in the coming crisis are a sad and sorrowful people. They share in the afflictions of the Jewish nation from the Northern foe, the Assyrian (Isa. x), or King of the North (Dan. xi). This fierce, cruel and determined enemy of the restored Hebrew commonwealth enters the land, murders and plunders at his will, and fills the country with lamentation and

woe. In all this Jewish godly saints suffer as part of the nation then under the governmental wrath of God. On the other hand, the Beast and his coadjutor, the the Antichrist, inflict untold suffering upon the *saints*, while politically favoring and supporting the *nation*.

No Dread of the Tribulation

No living saint of this Dispensation need fear having to pass through the Great Tribulation. On this Scripture is emphatic. "We wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead; Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. i:10). Be the wrath governmental or eternal, we are delivered from it. The Church is removed to her heavenly home and rest *before* the Tribulation bursts forth. The saints are in glory in heaven before and when Satan is cast down to the earth, and consequently before he stirs up and lets loose the hosts of hell and earth in the Great Tribulation. All saints of this Dispensation are immune from judicial judgment.

Faithful and Unfaithful

It is said that only a faithful company of saints will, in the first instance, be translated to meet the Lord, while the unfaithful will be left to be disciplined in passing through the sorrows of the Tribulation. But is this so? We have conversed with many who hold and teach this erroneous view, and have not yet received a satisfactory reply to our oft-repeated question: What is the measure of faithfulness needed to earn the distinguished blessing of translation to meet the Lord in the air? "While the bridegroom tarried they *all* slumbered and slept" (Matt. xxv:5). We

welcome every exhortation to personal holiness in heart and life, but how any saint could lay claim to the blessedness of Translation on the ground of merit surprises us. "They that are Christ's at His Coming" (1 Cor. xv:23) is decisive. In John xi:25, 26 and 1 Thessalonians iv:13-17 the terms employed shut out the idea of a special company of saints—"liveth and believeth" and "alive and remain" apply to every living saint of God at the Coming. But why draw the line at the *living*? Why not apply the principle to the *dead*, many of whom were unfaithful in their day and generation? We are certain that it is not meant, but nevertheless the idea we combat is an attack upon the sovereignty of divine grace. The exponents of this theory are not as a rule happy. We have had this confession from more than one.

The Six Tribulation Passages

We know of but six passages which directly refer to the Great Tribulation.

First, Jeremiah xxx:7: "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's Trouble, but he shall be saved out of it." The text forms part of an address which "the Lord spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah" (verse 4). The simple question is, To whom does the text refer—to Jews or Gentiles? To the Jewish people undoubtedly. Here Gentiles are excluded and Jews alone included. Nor is there the slightest ground in applying it to the Church, which was not then formed nor known in Old Testament times.

Second, Daniel xii:1: "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for

the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time, and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." The expression "*thy* people" occurs twice. The people of the Hebrew prophet were the Jews. Now, this passage *must* refer to the same period specially spoken of by Matthew xxiv:21 and Mark xiii:19. There can only be one such time in human history. The Great Tribulation is future. Michael, the prince of the heavenly angelic hierarchy, appears on behalf of Israel in the day of her greatest trouble—"which standeth for the children of thy people." It is the *children* of Daniel's people who will be in the Tribulation. But the deliverance of the remnant is divinely assured—"saved out of it," says Jeremiah. "Thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book," writes Daniel. The deliverance is not national but individual. The deliverance of all Israel from her sins and her enemies is most certain, but deliverance from the Great Tribulation is true only of an elect number. The concluding chapter of this great book of prophecy is cast in Jewish mould. We may add that verse 11, as marking the significant moment when the Tribulation commences, is expressly referred to by our Lord in His Olivet prophetic discourse (Matt. xxiv:15).

Third, Matthew xxiv:15-28. This is the fullest and most detailed description of the Great Tribulation in Holy Writ. You cannot get either the Gentile or the Church into this portion of Holy Scripture. The Jewish people alone are in the forefront of this part of prophecy. Judea and its mountains, Jerusalem and

the Temple form the platform on which the scenes are actually realized. The sudden flight, the limitation of a Sabbath day's journey, less than a mile (Acts i:12), and other local circumstances positively forbid the application to any save to Jews in Palestine. Verses 23 and 24 could have no weight or meaning to people in Gentile lands. They are of direct Jewish bearing. This deeply interesting part of the Lord's great prophetic sermon, delivered on Mount Olivet, expressly refers to Judea and the Jews, and, of course, to the flight and deliverance of an earthly Jewish remnant.

Fourth, Mark xiii:14-23. The Evangelist practically covers the same ground as Matthew in his fuller account of the Tribulation. When this remarkable discourse was spoken the Church was not then in existence. Matthew xvi:18 speaks of it as *then* future. The Church came into view consequent on the ascension of our Lord. The place and circumstances could not apply to Gentiles. Our remarks on the Matthew account of the Tribulation equally apply to Mark's graphic story of it.

Fifth, Revelation iii:10: "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation (trial) which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth." The Great Tribulation is not specifically named, but is clearly indicated in the expression "the hour of trial," which, while focussed in Jerusalem, will yet extend in its effects to the whole habitable earth. Its agonies will be endured more especially by the Jews in Palestine as being the most guilty, but the Gentiles, too, according to the measure of their guilt, will have to drink of the cup of the Lord's vengeance. From this the

Church is exempted, "because thou hast kept the word of My patience." This does not refer to the patience of Christ on earth, but to His present patience at God's right hand. He patiently waits on high till Jehovah puts His enemies under His feet (Psa. cx). He waits for His Throne, Crown, and Kingdom. The Church waits with Him and for Him (Rev. i:9). Is not this the reckoning of grace? Can we truthfully say that the Church is on the tip-top of expectation, straining her eyes for Him? Alas! no. But God reckons it so, and that is grace. In the Lord's Prayer (John xvii) we have those gracious words recorded, "they have kept Thy Word"; yet on that same night we read, "Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled" (Matt. xxvi:56). Grace goes down to the root of our being, finds love to Christ there, and God reckons love's desires as accomplished. Here, then, is Christ's guarantee to the Church and to every member thereof, "I will keep thee out of (*ek*) the hour of trial." Out of it absolutely. No part of the Church will pass through the Great Tribulation to purge itself from its unfaithfulness, as some say. We cannot for a moment allow the Church to be broken up in this heartless manner. One portion with the Lord on high, and the other in the horrors of the Tribulation. Christ died that He might "gather together in *one* the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John xi:52). Laodicea is to be spued out (Rev. iii:16), while the true saints are to be gathered up to meet the Lord in the air.

Lot and Noah were each preserved *through* the respective tribulations of their days. On the other hand, Enoch and Abraham were kept *from* or *out* of these seasons of trial. It is these latter which figure the

Church. Total, absolute exemption from the coming world-wide Tribulation is the fixed promise of our God in His Word. May every fear and dread be dispelled from the heart of the weakest saint!

Sixth, Revelation vii:14, 15: "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, These which are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and whence came they? And I said unto him, My lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which come out of *the great tribulation*, and they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (R.V.).

There are two great companies described in this chapter, both on earth. (1) A carefully numbered company out of all Israel (verses 2-8). The hundred and forty and four thousand of chapter xiv, standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion, are the preserved of *Judah* who had emerged out of the fiery trial of the Great Tribulation; whereas those of our chapter are of all *Israel*. It is not predicated of these latter that they had been in the Tribulation. (2) A countless throng of Gentiles out of the numerous nationalities of earth are next witnessed (verses 9-17). It is not they *came* out of the Great Tribulation as the record of a past act, but *come* out—a characteristically present action. They are on the earth, not in heaven. There is not a hint of their translation to heaven. We gather that it is the same company as the sheep of Matthew xxv:31-33, but here viewed in the Kingdom in millennial blessing. These Gentile Tribulation-saints cannot possibly be part of the Church. The saints of Old and New Testaments were caught up to glory, and the marriage of the Lamb with the guests at supper (Rev. xix) are events prior to the millennial scene of Revela-

tion vii, which is an anticipatory vision explained by one of the elders—representatives of the redeemed in heaven. When the vision of chapter vii is realized—resolved into fact—the full company of heavenly saints had already been made up. The countless throng of Gentile Tribulation-saints are viewed in vision *before* the marriage of the Lamb, when, of course, the Church is and must be complete. But the vision is only realized—resolved into fact—*after* the marriage scene of Revelation xix. These Gentile saints, therefore, form no part of the Church.

Summary

Four of the passages we have been considering show *Jews* in the Tribulation. One proves that the *Church* is absolutely kept out of it. The remaining passage views a countless multitude of *Gentiles* coming out of the Great Tribulation.

Our heart goes out in increasing love to the beloved saints of God, irrespective of sect or party, and we greatly desire their spiritual blessing and freedom from this “partial rapture” theory as it is termed. We are convinced that it is hurtful to souls and tends to legalism, occupation with self and not with Christ.—*W. S.*

CHAPTER XII

The Shadows of the Great Tribulation

IN HIS last words our Lord said to His disciples, "Ye shall have tribulation" (John xvi:33). The pathway of Christians is not one of ease but of much tribulation. Yet true believers can rejoice, and glory in tribulation (Rom. v:3 and xii:12). What a paradox—"sorrowful yet always rejoicing!" (2 Cor. vi:10). The Bible is the record of the tribulations and sufferings of the righteous. These tribulations are willingly endured on account of their present value (James 1:2-4) and the future inestimable results (1 Peter i:6, 7).

But there is another tribulation mentioned in Scripture, which is called not "a tribulation" but "*the* great tribulation."

Let us look at the two outstanding passages in which this time of great trouble is mentioned. We read first from the last chapter in Daniel.

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. xii:1-3).

It is clear from this passage that there is yet to come a time of great trouble, greater than anything recorded on the pages of past history. Let us look at the outstanding passage in the New Testament, which speaks of that great trouble. Our Lord in His Olivet discourse in which He reveals things to come and describes the signs preceding His second Coming says:

“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Matt. xxiv:21-22).

Now, it is evident that our Lord in His prediction refers to the same period of time mentioned by Daniel. He confirms Daniel’s prophecy. Previously He mentioned another prophecy from Daniel in the fifteenth verse of the same chapter. The fact is that the abomination of desolation of which Daniel speaks is closely connected with this great tribulation.

It is almost unbelievable that intelligent Bible Commentators should claim that these two Scripture passages have no future meaning whatever. Postmillennialists and Mr. Philip Mauro tell us that the great tribulation is a thing of the past, that all the Lord announced has been fulfilled and nobody needs to fear anything like this to come in the future. The destruction of Jerusalem, it is claimed, and the time preceding it, was that time of great trouble. But let us see how wrong such an assumption is in the light of the context.

First the passage in Daniel. Here we read that when that time of trouble comes Michael, that angel prince, who is, it seems specially commissioned to act

in behalf of Israel, shall stand up, as their defender. Did this happen when Jerusalem was destroyed? No! There was no arrest of judgment then. Daniel furthermore says that the waiting, godly Israelites in that time of great trouble shall be delivered. Were they delivered in the year 70 A. D.? Then we read of a resurrection to come in connection with that time of trouble. It is a figure of speech of how that nation shall rise nationally out of the dust of the earth. Furthermore, we read of the reward of the righteous following immediately upon this time of trouble. Did all this take place when Jerusalem was destroyed? Only a fanatical spiritualizer who phantomizes the literal meaning of prophecy can claim such a fulfillment. But still stronger are the facts we find in the words of our Lord proving beyond the shadow of a doubt that the great tribulation is still future. Our Lord links with this great tribulation the coming of false Christs—antichrists, and false prophets. These will show great signs and wonders. Did this happen when Jerusalem fell? But still stronger is the statement that “*immediately* (not two thousand years later) after the tribulation of those days” the sign of the Son of Man shall appear in heaven and He shall come back to earth again in great power and glory. Did this take place in 70 A.D.? Certainly not. Then He says He, the returned Christ, will send His angels to gather together His elect (the people Israel) with a great sound of a trumpet from the four winds of heaven. The passage has nothing whatever to do with the home gathering of the Church as some maintain. Our home gathering is revealed in 1 Thessalonians iv:16-18. The very opposite took place when Jerusalem was de-

stroyed. They were led away captive among all nations. It is true when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman armies there was "great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people" (Luke xxi:23) but this distress and wrath was followed by what the Lord announced, "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." The distress and great tribulation yet to come will be followed by the Lord's return and the re-gathering of Israel from all nations. Look at the parable of the fig tree. It represents Israel. The curse was pronounced by the Lord upon the barren tree and it withered. That is what happened when the nation rejected the King. But in connection with the great tribulation that fig tree is to put forth new leaves, there will be a revival in Israel, a sign of returning life, even as it is today.

From all this we learn that the great tribulation is a period of time which has not yet come. It comes at the very end of this age and will last 1,260 days, that is, three years and a half so definitely stated in Scripture. It precedes the visible and glorious manifestation of our Lord in His Return.

Besides these two great prophecies in Daniel xii and Matthew xxiv there are other Scriptures in which this end time of trouble is predicted. Many of the Psalms in which godly Jews are seen in deepest suffering and are delivered by the appearing of the King, can only be correctly understood by this future trouble, which Jeremiah calls "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. xxx:7).

In the New Testament the last book "The Revelation," gives us the terrible agony which this time of trouble is going to bring (chapter vi-xviii).

A significant fact is the absence of any mention of this great tribulation in the New Testament Epistles. These Epistles concern the Church of Jesus Christ, the body and bride of Christ. While these Epistles have much to say of tribulations which true believers experience, the great tribulation is not once announced. Why not? Because the true Church will have no share and part in this final disaster of our age. The great tribulation is a punitive period, the time when the world reaps what it has sown, the time when God lets the world and apostate Christendom feel what the mastery of the god of this age means, for during that tribulation Satan will be cast out from heaven and will be on earth, as it is written: "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Rev. xii:12).

The parties concerned in this great tribulation are (1) the people Israel, who are partially restored to the land, they will suffer for their unbelief; it will be a world-wide catastrophe for them. But in their midst is a faithful, believing remnant. The sealed 144,000 of Revelation vii. They will suffer likewise, but to them is given the promise of deliverance, salvation out of that time of trouble, as they endure unto the end (Matt. xxiv:13). This remnant will bear a great witness among the nations of the earth, the final witness before Christ comes (Matt. xxiv:14).

(2) Christendom, Roman Catholic and Protestant, departed from the faith, now worse in every way than Romanism has ever been, will be in that great tribulation. Apostate Protestantism, the obnoxious Laodicea, He will spue out of His mouth, disown it com-

pletely (Rev. iii:16) and Babylon, the great whore and mother of harlots the Lord will cast into this great tribulation (Rev. ii:22) and her final shameful end is fully described in Revelation xvii and xviii.

But nowhere in Scripture is a word said that the real members of the body of Christ will be on earth, when this great tribulation is here. No true believer need fear that coming catastrophe. Scripture is very emphatic about this. "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation" (1 Thess. v:9). We are delivered from the wrath to come (1 Thess. i:10). True believers are not looking for the coming of Antichrist, nor for great tribulation, nor are they looking for the final signs in heaven and earth, heralding the visible manifestation of the Judge, the King of kings. "We wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from among the dead, Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come." We look for Him not as a Judge, but as a Saviour. Ere the day of the Lord comes upon the world and apostate Christendom, like a thief in the night, the gracious promises in John xiv:3 and 1 Thessalonians iv:15-17 will be fulfilled. When the great tribulation under Satanic control sweeps over the earth, the whole Church of Jesus Christ, the complete body and all the saints risen from the dead, will be safe at home in the Father's house. Some Christians are misled by the fact that Saints (separated ones) are mentioned as suffering in that great tribulation, but these suffering Saints are Jewish Saints, those who are called after the Church is no longer here.

But the question has been raised "will the whole Church be taken away when the Lord gives that shout?" Somebody has invented a theory which is

absolutely wrong and therefore harmful. This invention, which is advocated by a certain prophetic magazine in England, declares that only a small company of faithful ones will, in the first instance, be translated to meet the Lord, and the rest who are not so faithful will be left to receive the proper discipline by passing through the great tribulation. Some have even gone so far as to teach a "Protestant purgatory" into which worldly minded believers have to go in order to be fit to meet the Lord. All these inventions reflect upon the all sufficiency of the finished work of Christ on the Cross. Our fitness to be with Him in never-ending glory is not the question of our attainments but of His work for us. He, and He alone has made us fit for the inheritance of the Saints in light. And what is the measure of faithfulness needed to earn and merit the distinguished blessing of translation to meet the Lord in the air? Can somebody answer, how much is needed, what is the standard of this attainment? No real believer in the grace of God will lay claim to any merit, for grace excludes merit and merit excludes grace. "They that are Christ's at His Coming" (1 Cor. xv:23) is decisive.

We have briefly shown what the Scriptures teach about this future great tribulation. We have seen when it comes, how it comes, what it will bring and for whom this great tribulation is in store. There remains the question "how near is this great tribulation with which the age closes?" We will answer this question now.

The Shadows

At the close of the world war a great wave of optimism swept over the civilized world. On all sides it was said that we would have now a better world, that righteousness would increase, and ere long we would have a war-less world. One of the slogans was "we are making the world a decent place to live in." As material prosperity followed, many thought the better times had come, and all optimistic dreams would soon be realized. Christians who read and study their Bibles, who know what God says about our age and its end, could not be deceived by the things, which the god of this age uses to blind the eyes of them that believe not. Christians who know that the only hope for this age is the return of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ do not share the foolish, irrational expectations of the evolution theory. They know from Scripture that the present age ends in darkness, and culminates in a great world-disaster.

What has become of all these great expectations? What has become of the better world? All has vanished like a beautiful dream and the whole world is plunged into a condition, which at the close of the war, no one anticipated. The whole world trembles today not knowing what the next day will bring forth. It is exactly as our Lord foretold when He said: "*Upon earth distress of nation's with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring. Mens' hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken*" (Luke xxi:25, 26). World conditions, religious, moral, commercial and political, are the shadows of the fast

approaching end of the age and its great tribulation. Let us look at these shadows, the startling and solemn signs of the times.

1. *The Shadow of Religious Apostasy.* The Spirit of God speaks of the end days of our age as days of departure from the faith (1 Tim. iv:1); days in which sound doctrine is no longer endured, when the truth is rejected and fables are accepted (2 Tim. iv:3); days in which the Lord, who bought us is denied (2 Peter iii:1); days in which Antichrist will appear (1 John ii:18); days in which finally a complete apostasy comes under the leadership of the man of sin.

These days are upon us. Years ago some baptized infidels started what was termed "Higher Criticism." This soon became a destructive criticism, destroying faith in the Bible as God's infallible Word and thus robbing it of its authority. Judas when he betrayed our Lord with a kiss said, "Master." These modern Judases betray the Bible with a kiss speaking of it as a good book, but denying its divinity and handing it over to infidels to be crucified. The destructive Bible Criticism has led to the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. All the great supernatural events of His life and His Saviourhood are denied. No more Virgin birth, no miracles which He did, no sacrificial death, no physical resurrection, no glorious ascension, no triumphant return! One of these blind modernists dared to preach a few months ago in New York City on "the danger of worshipping Jesus." But the worst is yet to come. The Holy Spirit still is here and holds back the fullest manifestation of the mystery of iniquity. But as it was in the age before the flood "He will not always strive with man." He

will be taken away with the translation of the true Church.

God will not stand forever the dishonor done to His Son, our Lord. He will give over the apostate church to great tribulation; He will permit Satan's power to come upon them and finally pour out His great wrath. The religious apostasy is one of the shadows of the nearing time of trouble. God will soon rise up and fulfill His promises. Christ will call His true Church to meet Him in the air and then follows the great tribulation.

2. *The Shadow of Atheism.* Atheism is the most unnatural thing in the human race. It is the evidence of a depraved heart and a depraved intellect. Even the lowest tribes of the human race acknowledge a higher Being. While there always have been some Atheists, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans and others who were known by their immoral characters, in our days Atheism has become a great world-wide movement. We have in our land a Society for the advancement of Atheism, which functions among the young in different educational institutions. Everywhere in the United States, among Jews and Gentiles, Atheism is on the increase. Recently the President of one of the largest and richest Universities of our land, which claims to be "Christian" said: "We take nothing more for granted, not even the existence of God." The atheistic utterances of a Professor Barnes and others are too well known to need repetition. Destructive Bible-Criticism produces Modernism and Modernism leads onward into Atheism. This spectre is seen in every land. It is on the increase in every European country. The terrible cries "Away with the Bible!

Away with Christ! Away with the Church! Away with God!" are heard on all sides. Much has come from Russia. The Soviet Republic is an Atheistic state. The terrible persecution of Christians and Jews, the demolishing of Church buildings and synagogues has been going on for many months. No child is to receive religious instruction of any kind. Any religious belief is branded as a lie. The Atheistic propaganda of the vicious Soviet leaders is world-wide and connected with it are the most horrible blasphemies.

When the great tribulation comes Satan will attempt what it seems he has begun already, to crush out all the Truth of God. We read in the second Psalm that a great confederacy will say in the future: "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." Whom do they mean? They mean the Lord and His Anointed, the Christ, the Son of God. When the Antichrist comes he will deny the Father and the Son. "He is Antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son" (1 John ii:22). Atheism is a solemn shadow of the fast approaching tribulation.

3. *The Shadow of Moral Corruption, Increasing Wickedness and Crime.* The harvest of infidelity, the rejection of the Word of God and the Christ of God has always been, and will always be, increasing wickedness and moral corruption. Our times bear witness to this fact. Increase of immoralities and crimes keep step with the progress of the modernistic infidelity, the rejection of the Word of God and the Gospel of Christ, the good news of redemption by the blood of the Lamb. The Holy Spirit foresaw these conditions and linked them in New Testament prophecy with the departure from the faith.

We listen to His own words. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away" (2 Tim. iii:1-5). It is significant that a similar list of moral characteristics appears at the close of one of the darkest chapters in the Bible, the first chapter of Romans. There it is descriptive of the morality of the Roman world, which was without God, without Christ and without hope. But here in this prophecy in the Epistle to Timothy we have the description of religious professors, unsaved church-members, who are also without God, without Christ and without hope. They live the same natural life, the carnal life, which the Roman pagans lived.

We cannot take up each of these descriptions. Corruption is in the world through lust. The lust of the flesh with the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is the element in which the natural man lives and this trinity of evil controls the age today as never before. Twenty-five years ago the fallen women walking the streets were recognized by their painted cheeks and their gaudy dresses. In our days we behold thousands of girls and women painting their cheeks and lips and wearing dresses which are indecent. The cigarette habit among young girls and older women has grown at an alarming rate. The sex appeal is in evidence everywhere. Everything imaginable is done to feed

the flesh. The moral conditions in many high schools throughlout our land are more than deplorable, they are vicious. Companionate marriages are on the increase and are only the first steps towards free love. The advocates of this sexual looseness are found among the modernists. Recently V. F. Calverton lectured in the Labor Temple of New York City (Presbyterian) on some sex problem. In his publication "Is Monogamy Desirable?" this man makes it clear that the expected revolution will do away with this conception of morality.* Another awful fact is the increase of divorces. The family life and home life is rapidly being destroyed. The most horrible vices of the Roman Empire, so awful that they are unnameable, are flourishing in our big cities, it is said even on a larger scale than in pagan Rome, preceding its collapse.

How true it is of our generation, "Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." What a heart-breaking sight it is to see in our big cities long lines of people waiting on the Lord's day before the show houses in which crime and vices are glorified! Here are hundreds of boys and girls, young mothers with children in their arms to feed on the degrading things of life.

Often preachers speak of our "glorious country," the richest of the nations, the most progressive, the country which has prohibition and is so philanthropic. But one thing they never mention. They never tell their hearers that this country is foremost in all kinds of crimes and lawlessness. There are more highway robberies, burglaries and murders committed in the United States than in any other country. Statistics

*See "Our Hope, November, 1930.

show that over 50% of the criminals are young people between 15 and 25 years of age. Many states are forced to spend many millions of dollars to build larger prisons. They used to say that there are times when "crime waves" appear. It is not a crime wave which is engulfing this country, it is a terrifying flood which threatens to sweep law and order away. Then there is also the vilest corruption in political life.

It is so in every land, in every country. This increase of crime and lawlessness is world-wide; it is found on every continent, in every nation. Nothing seems to be so cheap as human life. Deeds of violence grow appallingly everywhere. And the constantly increasing suicides, even among children!

This moral corruption, the increasing immorality, the increasing crimes, deeds of violence and suicides are pronounced shadows of the nearing great tribulation. Our Lord said, "As it was in the days of Lot so shall it be when the Son of Man cometh" (Luke xvii:30). The awful sin of Sodom was moral corruption, a perverted sexuality. Such a condition will He find when He comes again. He also said, "As it was in the days of Noe so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man" (Luke xvii:26). Of Noah's days we read that the earth was filled with violence. So our age will end in darkest night and tribulation, in vice and violence of every description. The evidences of such an end surround us on all sides.

4. *The Shadow of World Revolution.* There have been many revolutions in ancient and modern times. History records them from the very dawn of history in almost every century. But never before has the world seen such a universal unrest as it is today. There

have been times of lawlessness, like the days of the French revolution at the close of the eighteenth century, but never before is the world being leavened with the leaven of lawlessness as in the twentieth century. As far as human records tell, the Russian revolution was the most horrible. Atheistic Jews, monsters in human form, had much to do with it. How many millions were murdered in cold blood and perished miserably, only heaven knows. Out of that revolution came Communism and Sovietism, a beast of the abyss. It rules and crushes with an iron hand. Its aim is to destroy capitalism, all well ordered forms of government, all religions, Christian, Judaism, Mohammedanism, and all others. Its boasted program is a world revolution. We quote a recent writer on the menace of Communism:

“The spirit of Communism is everywhere rampant and it is the most disturbing of all the evil spirits which afflict and threaten the securities of civilized life. Its propaganda is world-wide, penetrating all classes and minds, leavening with almost inconceivable rapidity the great human mass, and it presents to organized government, to organized society the gravest problem with which modern man has ever been confronted, and with which he has been called upon to wrestle. Communism is in some respects the most virile of all the great political and economic heresies of life, and its disciples number not only millions who stand openly with it, but it numbers frightful millions waiting in the borderland of organized society to rush forth at the first favorable opportunity to loot the world, and to destroy all the foundations upon which rests the mighty citadel of twentieth century civilization.”*

*H. H. Marlin. See “Our Hope,” Vol. 37, page 291.

And it is carrying out this program. In less than two years there have been many violent outbreaks of the revolutionary spirit in all the five continents. In each case the agitations of the Russian Reds were responsible for it. It was so, and still is, in China. There the Red propaganda was the most pronounced and cost thousands of lives. They are active in India. They are sowing their dragon seed in every European country. England, France, Belgium, Germany, Poland, Spain and all other countries have not escaped. Throughout Europe a terrible revolution after the pattern of the Russian revolution is being agitated. South America the Argentine Republic, Brazil, Peru, Cuba and other lands have their hands full and watch constantly the foreign and domestic agitators, who attempt to plunge the different countries into a ruinous disaster. Even in Africa among the different negro races world-revolution is being preached, as it is in Australia and the islands of the sea.

The American citizen who thinks that the United States has nothing to fear of the revolutionary spirit is ignorant and misinformed. The menace is as great here as it is in Europe. The events of one year, the past year 1930, have demonstrated this. We, too, are walking over a smoldering volcano. An outbreak may come sooner than we expect and when it comes the American-Red revolution may become the greatest of all catastrophes.

This world-revolution is another shadow of the great tribulation, for when that time comes, it will bring the dethronement of every government. All law and order will collapse. Lawlessness under the regime of the lawless one will sweep the whole world. The rider

upon the red horse will gallop from nation to nation, even unto the uttermost parts of the earth. "And power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another, and there was given unto him a great sword" (Rev. vi:4).

5. *The Shadow of Demonism.* Above the earth, according to Scripture, is the kingdom of darkness. Satan is the prince of the power in the air. His throne is established upon this earth, for he is the god of this age. He rules this age by the wicked spirits which are at his command (Eph. vi:12). There has been a conflict, as announced on the threshold of human history, a conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Satan by wicked spirits and demons tried to frustrate God's eternal purpose of redemption centered in the Son of God. He tried to oppose the coming of the Son of God into the world and was defeated.

From the Records of the Gospel we learn that when our Lord appeared and came to destroy the works of the devil, He found thousands of people possessed by demons. Perhaps there were more demon-possessed men and women than we know. It seems Satan anticipated the Coming of the Lord and so he marshalled his forces to oppose Him and the work He came to do.

And now Christ is about to come the second time and then to put His heel upon the head of the Serpent to crush him. Once more the demon-world is active and Satan once more marshals his forces to oppose Him in His triumphant, victorious conquest. How active the enemy is? Here are the different systems

of delusion. They are his productions through which he works and opposes. Any religious system which denies the Deity of our Lord, the blessed atoning work of the Cross, His victory over death and the grave in a physical resurrection and His bodily return is demonized. Take it to yourself ye leaders of modernism! Your denials of the essentials of Christianity is not of God but Satanic! And here are the ever increasing cults in which demons are at work—spiritistic-occult, theosophical-philosophical and metaphysical movements; in them demon power is manifested. We have heard from some who have charge of insane asylums and have heard from other sources, that there is a frightful increase of mental unbalance which cannot be explained in any other way than that it is the direct work of demons. Satan and the wicked spirits unfold an activity now which is most significant. They are reaching out after the men and women who are not sheltered by the blood and therefore not indwelt by the Holy Spirit. It is an indication that the great tribulation is very near, for during that end-time of our age Satan will be in control and torment the dwellers upon the earth. Then it will be said “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time” (Rev. xii:12).

6. *The Shadow of the Coming of the Man of Sin.* We hear much of “dictators,” men who take a place above kings and rulers and who rule with an iron hand. Mussolini is such a dictator with great power. As it is well known his great aim is the restoration of the Roman Empire. Greece, Poland, Spain and other

nations have had and have their dictators, men of ability and power. Germany, it is said, will ere long establish a dictatorship. Stalin, cruel and unscrupulous is a dictator. Smaller nations speak of dictators.

They are all forerunners of the great coming dictators, the political lead, the great dictator of the Roman Empire restored and the man of sin, the son of perdition, the Antichrist. In all probability these dictators are living on earth today, but only God knows, who they are and where they are. They will be revealed in due time. Read 2 Thessalonians the second chapter. They will not be revealed till the One who hinders is taken out of the way, which means the Holy Spirit and His restraining power. "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only He who now letteth will let, until He be taken out of the way. And then shall that Lawless one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming." But the Holy Spirit will not leave the earth as long as the true Church is here. When the true Church is translated, the Holy Spirit having finished the work, which He came to do, will be withdrawn and as a result the Lawless one, the man of sin, the son of perdition, the final Antichrist will be revealed, as well as the head of the Roman Empire. Both will flourish during the closing years of our age and the great tribulation; they are the two beasts of Revelation xiii.

7. *The Shadow of Jewish Apostasy and Jewish Revival.* During that coming tribulation Jewish infidelity will reach the climax. An infidel Gentile is bad, but an atheistic Jew is an abomination and monstrosity. There is evidence everywhere of this

abomination. Let us remember that the start of Bolshevism was through atheistic Jews and the Reds with their anti-religion program number among them many apostate Jews. But there is also Jewish revival. There is the national movement as we behold it in Zionism. It is exactly the movement needed for the events of Jacob's trouble. In their unbelief they are getting ready for the coming one, whom our Lord predicted, when He said, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John v:43). That "other one" is the false Messiah, the Antichrist, whom the apostate Jews will accept (2 Thess. ii:1-5).

But there are also indications among the Jews of a spiritual awakening, a search for the truth, and even a nearing to the person of our Lord, which is most significant. It may mean the beginning of that godly remnant which will be called into existence after the true Church is no longer here. In one word, the Jewish people are getting ready for the time of Jacob's trouble.

Such then are the signs of the on-coming tribulation. Some dream of an arrest of these conditions. Some think and earnestly pray for a great sweeping revival of true religion, which will swing everything back into better spiritual and moral conditions. In the opinion of the writer things are too far gone to warrant such optimistic expectations. The end of the age is upon us and there does not come another recovery. God will bless the preaching of the Gospel, as He always has done, by the salvation of some and for the completion of the body of His Son, His Church, but everything in religious, moral, commercial, political things is rapidly making for the very end of the age with its terrible

night of world-distress tribulation and the coming wrath and judgment of God. The shadows are upon us, the body is not far away.

And now, beloved reader, what message it is for you as a Christian and member of the true Church! The things you have read, these shadows, teach you and the writer as well as all others, that our days down here are numbered. With these solemn signs throughout the world, not decreasing, but constantly increasing, confirming the predictions of God's Holy Word, we are forced to believe and forced to say—our Lord cannot be far away. *We may expect the home-call at any time.* This should arouse us to use the little time left to live the life of separation, into which His grace has called us and which His grace makes possible. It should arouse us to dedicate ourselves afresh in a new self-surrender and the presentation of our bodies as a living sacrifice. It should arouse us to sacrificial giving and service for Him, who has graciously promised us a reward and who is on the way for the crowning day. Oh Christian awake! *Awake!*

And some will read this timely tract who are only nominally Christians, who are church-members but not members of the true Church. Some may read it who belong to liberal, modernistic Christendom. You are then outside of the ark. You are not sheltered by Him who said, "I am the door by me if any man enter in he shall be saved." The storm is coming! The clouds are gathering! You are sowing the wind and your harvest will be the whirlwind. Oh flee from the wrath to come! Delay not another moment. Put down this little messenger to your soul and fall on your knees and call upon the name of the Lord. Believe on

Him and thou shalt be saved. He will give thee life and shelter and you will be saved from the terrible fate which awaits all who are not found in Christ, when tribulation, wrath and judgment comes. Be not deceived it will surely come.

WE WOULD SEE JESUS

(John xii:21)

We would see Jesus—for the shadows lengthen
Across this little landscape of our life;
We would see Jesus, our weak faith to strengthen
For the last weariness, the final strife.

We would see Jesus—the great Rock-Foundation,
Whereon our feet were set with sovereign grace;
Not life, nor death, with all their agitation,
Can thence remove us, if we see His face.

We would see Jesus—other lights are paling,
Which for long years we have rejoiced to see;
The blessings of our pilgrimage are failing,
We would not mourn them for we go to Thee.

We would see Jesus—this is all we're needing,
Strength, joy and willingness come with the sight;
We would see Jesus, dying, risen, pleading,
Then welcome day, and farewell mortal night!

CHAPTER XIII

The Antichrist

VERY little scripture, comparatively, suffices to tell us all that God wants us to know about Antichrist. The subject is soon exhausted because he is only human, except that he will be energized by Satan, so that he may be able to pass himself off as more than human. Satan is more than human as regards power; but he is only a creature. It is written of him, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, until iniquity was found in thee." The iniquity that was found in him was, "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty." The way in which this pride manifested itself was, "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High" (Ezek. xxviii:11-19; Isaiah xiv:12-15). These words appear to be addressed to the king of Tyrus, and to the king of Babylon; but God's word goes behind these two kings and speaks of the being who is leading them on to the same self-exaltation that was the cause of his own ruin. He wants to drag others down into the same sin that he has fallen into, and to the same judgment that awaits him.

That was the character of his first temptation, in the garden of Eden. "God doth know," he said to Eve, "that in the day ye eat thereof, that your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God (not gods), knowing

good and evil.” Accordingly not only was the tree seen to be “good for food, and pleasant to the eyes”; God had made it to be that; but it was also “a tree to be desired to make one wise” (Gen. iii:5, 6). From that time there has not been a human being free from the sin which the tenth commandment prohibits in the words, “Thou shalt not covet” except one, the Lord Jesus Christ, for “in Him is no sin.” But He was not the seed of the man; He was the promised seed of the woman. Even as to His humanity He was the Son of God. The words of the second psalm, “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee,” speak of His incarnation, not of His eternal sonship; nor of His resurrection from the dead, but of His birth of a woman on a certain day, “this day;” when He came, not to exalt Himself as antichrist will do, but, having emptied Himself, not of essential Deity, but of the outward form of God, taking upon Him the form of a servant by becoming man; and then to humble Himself still more, even to the death of the cross. Deeper humiliation than that was impossible. His obedience brought Him to it. God having been glorified by that perfect obedience, in which the righteousness, the holiness, and the love of God, are manifested, has glorified Him and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil. ii).

This is the Christ. The antichrist will be an utter contrast to that in every particular. In him will be fully exemplified the Lord’s oft repeated words, “whoever shall exalt himself shall be abased.” Instead of being the truth, he will be the exemplification of the

lie. "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ." That is Jewish apostasy; but it will not stop at that. "He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son" (John ii:22). This is the denial of the God head of the Father and the Son; to which the present apostasy, of both Jew and Gentile, is going on, to culminate and to be headed up in the great lie of antichrist.

The time and circumstances of His manifestation are revealed through the Apostle Paul. The Thessalonian believers had got into confusion and trouble of mind by failing to distinguish between "the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, when He will come as "the Morning Star" (Rev. ii:28; xxii:16), and "the day of the Lord," when He will come as the "Son of Righteousness" (Mal. iv:2). As the rendering of the A. V. is defective, we quote from a literal translation. "Now we beseech you brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, for you not to be quickly shaken in mind, nor to be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by epistle as if by us, as that the day of the Lord is present" (2 Thess. iii:1, 2).

The apostle very evidently wishes us to understand that as long as "the coming of the Lord and our gathering together unto Him," is an event that is still in the future, that the "day of the Lord" cannot be present. It may be, and is, at hand; but as the rising of the morning star precedes the sunrise, so the coming of the Lord for those that are His, precedes the day of the Lord, and His appearing in glory. When He does thus appear it will be "with all His saints." Consequently, they will previously have gone to be with Him.

1 Thessalonians iv:17 reveals the way we shall go to be with the Lord; and 1 Thessalonians iii:13 reveals our coming with Him.

Then in 2 Thessalonians ii:3-12 the apostle tells us of one whom he calls "the man of sin." From the fact that Paul connects him with the "mystery of iniquity," which was working even in Paul's time, we see that he is the same personage that John speaks of as the "antichrist." At that time the denial of "Jesus Christ come in flesh" had begun. That is, the denial of the true Deity, and the true humanity, of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 John iv:1-6). Paul further shows that the day of the Lord, instead of being present, as they feared, would not come until this man of sin had appeared. The day of the Lord will be the time in which judgment on the earth will be executed, as revealed in Revelation vi-xix. The day of the Lord therefore waits for the object of judgment to appear on the earth. God has long patience; He allows men to go on in their course of evil until it reaches its height in the self-exaltation and blasphemous pretensions of the man of sin; God continuing His work of grace at the same time, until the moment comes when the command goes forth from the throne in heaven "gather the wheat into my barn." Then the kingdom of heaven passes to heaven (Matt. viii:11), and the "kingdom of the Son of Man" begins to appear on earth (Matt. xiii:41).

We further learn from the parable of the wheat and tares that not until the wheat has been gathered into the barn, that is, not until the rapture of "those who are Christ's at His coming," will the judgments on antichrist and his followers be executed. The tares

are gathered in bundles to be burnt at the time that the wheat is gathered into the barn. That concludes what is spoken of in the parable. What follows in Matthew xiii:40-43 is additional to the parable, in which the Lord reveals, in plain speech, not parable, the judgments on earth, after the rapture of the church. It will be at that time that the great tribulation will take place; but as the wheat will have been gathered into the barn before the burning of the tares, the Lord shows us quite plainly and distinctly how the Church will be kept "out of the hour, (or time), of temptation, (or trial), which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. iii:10). Paul shows, also, in 2 Thessalonians i, that the persecutions and tribulations the Church was then passing through were from the world. But when God recompenses tribulation to the world the Church will be at rest. Not until the Church is at rest in heaven will "the Lord Jesus be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." That will be the time of the great tribulation.

The goal of the present apostasy, that to which it directly tends, is revealed in what scripture says the "man of sin" will be. He will "oppose and exalt himself above all called God, or object of veneration, so as for him to sit down in the temple of God, setting forth himself that he is God" (2. Thess. ii:4). The development of this is now restrained while God continues His present work of grace. When that is over, and the wheat is gathered into the barn, the restraint will be removed; and "the lawless one will be revealed,

whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth, and annul by the appearing of His coming” (2 Thess. ii:9).

But this self-exalting man is but the tool of Satan. Satan is working by him. His pretension to be God himself will be confirmed by the working of Satan through him, “with all power and signs and lying wonders, and all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.” Those who have not received the love of the truth that they might be saved, will, by that refusal of the gospel, have laid themselves open to be deceived by the signs and wonders which Satan will work through this man. It is well to remember that the present offer of salvation, by the Holy Spirit come down from heaven, is God’s final effort to save in this dispensation. To refuse it, as is now being done throughout christendom, is to sin against the Holy Spirit. When that sin has been committed there is no further means of bringing such to repentance. Then God will send to them a working of error for them to believe what is false. As we see this working even now in the multitudes who are turning away from the gospel, and believing the false teachings that Satan foists upon them, we have another indication of how near to the end we are. But believing a lie does not make it to be the truth. That is but the proof of being doomed. “That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

There is another reference to Antichrist in Isaiah xxx:33. “For Tophet is ordained of old; yea for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.”

Tophet was in the Valley of Hinnon, outside Jerusalem, where dead bodies and garbage were thrown to be consumed by the fire kept burning there. It is taken by the prophet as a figure of hell; the name Gehenna is derived from it. The Lord made this contrast between it and hell, when He said three times, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark ix:43-48). In the valley of Hinnon the fire would go out when all was consumed; and the worm would die when it had no more corruption to feed upon. But in hell, the place of "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," there will be a kind of fire that will torment spirits, such as the devil and his angels are; spirits without material bodies. That fire will never be quenched, and the worm will never die, because the corrupt state will exist forever. There will be no repentance, no faith, no new birth in hell. Fire that torments disembodied spirits, as in Luke xvi:24, is evidently of the same kind as that of which the Lord speaks in Matthew xxv:41 and 46. This is the doom that awaits the false "king" and his followers. In Luke xvi:24 the sufferings of the disembodied spirit are spoken of in terms of bodily experience, as that is the only language we have in which to express them. When Paul was caught up into Paradise he heard unspeakable words which it was not possible for him to utter when he returned to bodily conditions. Similarly when the sufferings of the disembodied spirit in hades are spoken of, terms expressing bodily suffering have to be employed.

During the millennial reign of Christ, the punishment of those who transgress and are cut off, will be visible. We read, "And they shall go forth and look

upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh" (Isaiah lxvi:24). The valley of Hinnon again supplies the figure of the dread reality. The glory of Christ, and the punishment of the lost, will both be visible during the millennium. Yet that will not prevent the greatest rebellion against God the world has ever seen, at its end (Rev. xx:7-10). "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and remains the same to the end. Nothing avails for man but Christ upon the cross and the new birth.

In the Prophet Daniel there is but one passage, that speaks of Antichrist. On account of its importance we quote it in full.

"And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished; for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honor the God of forces; and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honor with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. Thus shall he do in the fortresses of munitions with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain" (Dan. xi:36-39).

We do well to ponder upon this passage. It describes a development, not out of conditions of degradation and vice, but of culture, education and refine-

ment; in short of civilization. Much of it is in evidence at the present time. The mystery of iniquity, which was working in the apostle's day, is almost past the mystery, or secret stage, for many features of that which describes Antichrist is already present. Not yet concentrated in one man, but different parts of it in different classes of people; some countries even, like Germany, France and England, exhibit features of it, each peculiar to itself, in a way that is almost startling in its correspondence with the description of Antichrist here given. He will not be in advance of his times when he comes.

An unmistakable proof that this passage is a description of Antichrist is that the man described is evidently a Jew. Of Israel only could it be said, "Whose are the fathers" (Rom. ix:5); this man will be a descendant of the fathers, for twice in the passage they are called "his fathers." He is therefore a Jew. He would need to be that in order to be accepted by the Jews as their Messiah. But he will not own the God of his fathers to be his God.

Another thing that marks him as a Jew is that he will not regard the desire of women. The desire of Jewish women was to be the mother of the Messiah. That desire has been fulfilled. The true Christ has been born of a virgin mother, exactly as foretold by the prophet (Isa. vii:14); for but Him who was so born this man has no more regard than he has for the God of his fathers. He comes himself as the Christ, although it is not likely that his mother thought that "the desire of women" had fallen to her lot when he was born.

But, instead of the God of his fathers, there is a god

whom he will honor, called the God of forces. It is doubtless the beast, of whom he makes an image and puts it in the temple that will then have been erected in Jerusalem. As this is the god he depends upon to support him in his false pretensions, he honors him with gold, silver, precious stones and pleasant things. He will also divide the land for gain, regardless of the way God has commanded it to be divided in Ezekiel. In short he will do his own will; exalting and magnifying himself above every god, speaking blasphemies against the God of gods. But this will reach the limit of God's endurance. The pre-determined indignation will be accomplished. Trouble arises, first, by the king of the south pushing at him. Then the king of the north will assail him with an overwhelming force and even Egypt will not escape. Then there will be a "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time." But divine interference on behalf of God's people in Israel will then appear. Michael will stand up for them, and every one found written in the book will be delivered (Dan. xi:40-xii:4). We do not attempt to forecast the changes in the map of Europe that will then, evidently, have taken place, and which may be the outcome of the present war. These details are, for a wise purpose, "closed up and sealed till the time of the end" (Dan. xii:9). Enough is revealed of what the present apostasy is developing into, to warn us to be entirely separate from it, while we are waiting to be translated at the coming of the Lord. He that hath this hope in Him will purify himself from the Spirit of the world, so apt to be engendered by the awful details of this war of nations, as well as from everything else that

defiles and dims the expectation of the Lord's return.

We have now to consider what is said of Antichrist in the book of Revelation. In chapter xiii two beasts arise; one from the sea, the other from the earth. The beast from the sea is not the Antichrist, but the Roman Empire, as it will soon emerge from the turmoil of the nations; and its final atheistic head, with a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies. The beast from the earth is Antichrist. We quote the passage in full:

“And I saw another beast rising out of the earth, and it had two horns like to a lamb, and spoke as a dragon; and all the authority of the first beast it exercises before it, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it that they should do homage to the first beast, of whom the wound of its death was healed. And it works great signs, that it should cause even fire to come down out of the heaven to the earth before men. And it misleads those who dwell on the earth, by reason of the signs which it was given to it to work before the beast, saying to those who dwell on the earth, to make an image to the beast, which has the wound of the sword, and lived. And it was given to it to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should also speak, and should cause as many as would not do homage to the image of the beast should be killed. And it causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bondmen, that it should give them a mark on their right hand, or on their foreheads; and that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except he who has the mark, the name of the beast, or the number of its name. Here is wisdom. He who has understanding

let him count the number of the beast; for it is a man's number; and its number is 666" (Rev. xiii:11-18).

The first thing to note with regard to this beast is that it arises out of the earth; not, like the first beast, out of the sea. The sea represents the Gentile nations, acted upon by the winds of heaven; that heaven which was the work of the second day, the only work of the six days which God does not pronounce "good." The reason was that the being hostile to God was there, "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience." When, therefore, Daniel saw the four great Gentile empires arise, it was out of conditions of strife and turmoil produced by the four winds of heaven striving upon the great sea (Dan. vii:2).

But the second beast arises out of the earth, for he is not a Gentile but a Jew. He comes of that nation through which stable government, not acted upon by Satan, will be established in the earth. But that will not be through this man, who is but the tool of Satan, but through the One whom Satan could not tempt, even Him, upon whose cross the representative of the Roman empire placed the inscription, "*Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.*" This is the King whom God will set upon His holy hill of Zion, as we read in the second psalm, a psalm which bears directly upon the circumstances of the times we are now considering.

He has two horns, like to a lamb, and speaks as a dragon. The horn is a symbol of authority, government, and the power by which it is maintained. No one has a right to it except as conferred by God. The powers that be are ordained of God. Therefore we are to be subject to them. And they should

recognize that there is a power over them—"that the heavens do rule" (Dan. iv:26). But this they are not doing; they are doing their own will without any reference to God or His will and authority, until, when this power arises, it will not be ordained of God; it will be Satanic; all acknowledgment of the true God will be thrown off, and it will make itself to be the object of worship. Hence while it has two horns like a lamb; pretending to be the Messiah of both Israel and Judah, its speech betrays it as Satanic; and its actions fully bear this out. The authority that it exercises is not that of God, but of the first beast. This favor it reciprocates by causing the dwellers on the earth to worship the first beast, who is the emperor of the then revived Roman empire, with its seat at Rome. The great signs and wonders, which Satan gives him the power to work, even to imitate Elijah in calling down fire from heaven, will so mislead the masses who have refused to believe the gospel, that, at his behest they will make an image to the beast. Then he will have power to give, not life, but breath, to the image, and to cause it to speak. Then, to complete the iniquity, he will command worship to the beast, instead of to the true God. "Here is the patience and the faith of the saints," for he will have power to cause that as many as will not worship the image of the beast shall be slain. This persecution will doubtless have its centre at Jerusalem, where the temple having been built, many believing Jews will have returned.

Then, further to get rid of all opposition, he causes all to receive a mark, publicly displaying allegiance to the beast; either on their right hand, that is by their work; or on their forehead, that is by their openly

manifested profession, that they are loyal to the beast; and only such will be able to buy or sell. That will be the great trades-union to which all will have to belong on pain of death.

The distinguishing mark will be either the name of the beast, or the number of his name. That will admit of no neutrality, such as being a secret believer in Christ and silent publicly. There must be a positive profession of loyalty to the beast such as no true believer could make, be he or she ever so timid. Consequently blood will flow; martyrs will again be slain. Against all this influence which the devil will exert, there is the warning in Revelation xiv:9-11, and the encouragement not to shrink even from death in verses 12, 13.

But what is the significance of the number of the beast? That it has some moral import seems evident, for the elucidation of it is a mark of such wisdom and understanding of the meaning of it as would absolutely forbid a believer from receiving it. The moral character of the beast would be revealed in the meaning of the number. The number is not six hundred three score and six, as in the A. V. but 6,6,6. Six repeated three times. We have therefore to find the scriptural meaning of six and three. The fourth commandment of the law was "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work" (Exod. xx:8, 9). Six, therefore, represents the period of man's work. Three is the number of full manifestation. When God is fully revealed it is as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Three persons, One God. Man consists of body, soul and spirit. All that is in the world comes under one of three heads; viz: "The

lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John ii:16). From this we learn that 6,6,6, is manfully manifested by his six days of labor. Peter says further, "Beloved be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter iii:8). So that as the commandment says "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work," and one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, we may quite expect that the period allotted to man in which to do all his work, is six thousand years. We know further that forty is the number of probation, trial, testing. The life of Moses, the one through the law was given, consisted of three forties. Forty years in Egypt, forty years in obscurity, and forty years from Egypt to Pisgah. The Lord was in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan. And it was at the end of forty centuries that, man's probation being over, the Lord Jesus came to seek and to save that which is lost. Two thousand years more under grace completes the period allotted to him in which to labor, and he reaches his full manifestation in the beast.

But if the number 6,6,6, has such an evil significance, is it not strange that the beast should choose it to distinguish his followers? It would be so if he saw what the believer sees in it. But he sees it to be a mark of gratifying progress and attainment. He glories in what is really his shame.

Antichrist comes before us again under the sixth vial, as the false prophet. "And I saw out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; for they are the spirits of demons doing signs which go forth to the kings of the earth,

and of the whole habitable world, to gather them together unto battle of that great day of the Almighty God. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watches, and keeps his garments, that he may not walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together to the place which is called in Hebrew Harmageddon."

We have here another instance of the number three being significant of full manifestation, and further showing the suitability of three sixes being the number of the beast. Satan has now got two men so thoroughly imbued with his spirit, that they become like himself, sources of evil influence, even commanding demoniacal spirits to go forth to the kings of the earth, and to the people of the world, to gather them together to the battle of the great day of Almighty God. Then, because of the great power of the evil influences which will be let loose, deceiving those that have not received the love of the truth that they might be saved, the Lord interjects words of warning and encouragement, to be heard by His people of that day, that they may watch and keep their garments of white raiment, with which they have been clothed (cf. Rev. iii:18). He will come to the world as a thief, unexpected and unwelcome, but to His people as their deliverer. It is not the rapture of the church here, that has taken place between chapters three and four; this is His coming as in Matt. xxiv:29-31, when He will come as the "Son of Righteousness," and the day will dawn.

We have one more passage to consider, in which it revealed to us the result of the battle of the great day of Almighty God, and the doom of the beast and the false prophet, or antichrist.

“And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war with him who sits on the horse, and with his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet who wrought the signs before him, by which he misled those who received the mark of the beast, and those who do homage to his image. The two were cast alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone; and the rest were killed with the sword of him who sits on the horse, which sword goes forth out of his mouth; and all the birds were filled with their flesh” (Rev. xix:19-21).

This will be the result of the battle of Harmageddon. It is not a long continued war, but one decisive battle; the world on one side, and Christ and the armies of heaven on the other. The beast and the false prophet are taken and have a doom peculiar to themselves. They are cast alive into the lake of fire without passing through death.

We have that revealed to us, in holy scripture, what the present defection from the faith is developing into and the judgment that will be its end. The Lord's words of warning to His people of that time, may well be heeded by us also now. “Blessed is he that watches and keeps his garments, that he may not walk naked, and they see his shame.”

CHAPTER XIV

Unfulfilled Prophecies and the World Wide Preparations for Their Fulfillment

AT the close of the forty-sixth chapter in Isaiah the Lord says: "I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." And again, "I have spoken it, I also will bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it." A sovereign and omniscient God can alone speak such words. His counsel and His purposes are eternal. He has the power to put them all into execution. His counsel and His purposes are not hidden from our knowledge. He has made them known in His Word, in that portion of it which we call prophecy.

The prophecies of the Bible may be classified under three heads:

Prophecies which have been already fulfilled. These are very numerous. They are literal and most striking. When we think of fulfilled prophecy our faith is strengthened. Hope and assurance come afresh to our hearts. We are convinced that the God who has fulfilled His Word, and carried out His purposes in the past, will do the same in the future and accomplish all His purposes.

Among the fulfilled prophecies we mention the literal fulfillment of the predictions relating to the humiliation of the Son of God, His life on earth, and His vicarious suffering, as well as prophecies concerning His physical

resurrection, His ascension and His presence at the right hand of God.

Many prophecies concerning the Jewish people have found their literal fulfillment also. These are the predictions which speak of their world wide dispersion and their physical sufferings among the nations, their judicial blindness and the condition of their God-given land.

The judgments which were pronounced against ancient nations such as Chaldea, Assyria, Egypt, Edom, Ammon, Moab, and cities like Babylon and Nineveh, have been fulfilled.

Prophecies which are now in process of fulfillment. Many of the predictions as to the dispersion of the Jews, while already fulfilled in part, are still in process of fulfillment. We also see predictions as to world conditions in process of fulfillment. The times of the Gentiles are not yet ended, and we witness many things preparing for the very end of our age. Then in the New Testament we find predictions as to the professing Church on earth, what should happen in the professing sphere of Christendom, apostasy from the faith and a corresponding moral declension. These prophecies are in process of fulfillment today.

Prophecies which are still unfulfilled. Though hundreds of prophecies have found their literal and often startling fulfillment, there are hundreds more which await their fulfillment. It is with these unfulfilled prophecies and their near-fulfillment we shall be occupied. These unfulfilled prophecies are prophecies about our Lord, His people Israel, the nations of the earth, the coming Kingdom and its rule, the deliverance of the earth from the curse which rests upon it and the glorious consummation of God's eternal purpose.

The Great Event

The great event around which all unfulfilled prophecies must be grouped is the second, visible, personal and glorious coming of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. He is the center of all unfulfilled prophecy. All unfulfilled prophecy in both Testaments is linked with His glorious Appearing. In the Old Testament all future events, Israel's promises of hope and glory and the world's hope, the nation's submission to the worship of Jehovah, the kingdom and its universal dominion, are all linked to this coming event. And it is so in the New Testament. The promise of resurrection for the Saints and their entrance into the Father's House is unthinkable, yea, impossible, without the Return of the Lord.

His first coming in humiliation was a great event, announced by the prophets. But all the prophets have much more to say about that future event, His second coming. The New Testament also magnifies the coming event of His return. Our Lord Himself spoke of it frequently and prophesied certain things to happen, and so does the Holy Spirit in the Epistles.

Unfulfilled Prophecies as Related to His Coming

There are unfulfilled prophecies which must be fulfilled *before* His Coming. In fact, according to Scripture, there are certain predictions which must find a fulfillment before the Lord can come in power and great glory to establish His Kingdom here.

In the second place there are many unfulfilled prophecies which can only be fulfilled *in the very act* of His Coming. That consummating event of the ages is minutely described in prophecy. We read of physical

phenomena and of visible glory, of the manifestation of angels and similar events to take place at His coming, as well as judgment. All these prophecies await their fulfillment the day of His visible manifestation.

And finally there are prophecies which can only be fulfilled *after He has come*. Here lies one of the saddest mistakes expositors have made. The mistake is more than sad, it is *disastrous*. They have taken these unfulfilled prophecies and have taught the professing Church to look for their fulfillment *now*. And worse than that! They try in every possible way throughout Christendom to use all means possible—such as federation of churches, legislation and reform measures, to bring about these unfulfilled prophecies. Take but one for an example. The Bible prophesies that a time will come when wars end, when there will be universal peace. And so by a league of nations, by world court measures, by disarmament and other schemes, the attempt is made to fulfill these prophecies. An intelligent study of the Bible would soon convince these misguided, well-meaning religious and political leaders, that the task is hopeless, that the warless world comes after His return.

What Must Be Fulfilled Before His Return

As stated above, there are many things which must be fulfilled before the Lord can come back to this earth in power and great glory. It is in connection with these unfulfilled prophecies, preceding His manifestation, we see today world-wide preparations. In other words, the signs of the times indicate as never before the fulfillment of predicted events.

The reader will notice that we speak of unfulfilled

prophecies *before* the visible Manifestation of the Lord, that is His personal return. This visible manifestation is revealed everywhere in the prophets of the Old Testament. Our Lord confirmed the visions of the prophets by promising such a visible manifestation. It is often mentioned by the inspired writers of the New Testament. James, Peter, John, Paul and Jude speak of it.

Behold, I Show You a Mystery

But in the New Testament we find a revelation as to the coming of the Lord, which is nowhere mentioned by the prophets, which in itself is most unique and carries with it the impress of divine revelation. The Apostle Paul writing to the Corinthians, in the great resurrection chapter, says: "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. xv:51-52). Whenever the Apostle to the Gentiles uses the word mystery he writes of something unrevealed in former ages. This is one of God's mysteries now made known. It refers us to another passage in which Paul fully makes known this mystery.

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in

the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. iv:15-18).

Where in the Old Testament do we find anything like this? There is not a line or even the remotest thought anywhere of such an event. Certain liberalists have called this sublime mystery, made known by the Apostle Paul, "a quotation from Jewish Apocalyptic writings, a restatement of Jewish beliefs." I wish someone would give us the title of these Jewish Apocalyptic writings, and the pages where anything like this revelation is recorded. They cannot do this, for no such information is recorded anywhere.

Though two men, Enoch and Elijah, left the earth to go to heaven without dying, the hope of the Jew in the Old Testament was to be gathered unto his fathers. At best the Jew looked forward to the days of the Messiah to have a share and part in the promised kingdom on earth. But here is something entirely different. Here is the promise of a resurrection for those who died in the Lord; here is a promise and revelation that a generation of Christians is not to die at all, but to be changed in a moment. Here is the promise of a blessed re-union, and above everything else, here is the promise that all the Saints, raised and changed, shall meet the Lord in the air. This is a different thing from the Lord returning to earth in power and great glory. This mystery made known is "that blessed hope" which is given to the Church, and is an entirely different event from the visible and glorious manifestation of "this same Jesus" (Acts i:9).

Frequently those who have lost loved ones, who passed on to be with the Lord, are anxious to know

how soon the promised re-union may come, and they ask the question, "What has yet to be fulfilled before the Lord can come to make good His promise and take us to Himself?" Our answer is "*Nothing whatever!*" This blessed event may take place at *any moment*, and therefore should we expect Him daily and say "Perhaps today!"

The First Prophecy To Be Fulfilled

The first prophecy to be fulfilled before His visible manifestation is the fulfillment of "that blessed hope." When "our gathering together unto Him" takes place, then the world will face the long predicted conditions of the end of the age and one unfulfilled prophecy after the other will come to pass. And here is the fact which we hope to demonstrate, that *world conditions are such which indicate a near fulfillment of these unfulfilled prophecies, which we shall mention directly. There are things going on throughout the world, which are harbingers of the startling things to come.* These world conditions and world preparations are a solemn warning to the true Church that her time down here is almost spent. They should produce in believing hearts great rejoicing, for they are the evidences that our redemption draweth nigh.

Unfulfilled Prophecy Relating to the Jews

The Jews, or as it is more scriptural to say, the people Israel, are most vitally concerned in the end of the age, in the visible return of Christ and in the kingdom to come. Therefore we discover numerous unfulfilled prophecies, which will find their literal fulfillment before our Lord is manifested from heaven in His glory. He

Himself spoke in the Olivet Discourse a significant word. "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when its branch is yet tender, and putteth forth new leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh. So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors" (Matt. xxiv:32). The fig tree is one of the emblems of Israel. It has stood withered, nationally and spiritually, for centuries. But the Lord predicts a revival. Such a revival is mentioned frequently in the Old Testament. One of the outstanding prophecies is Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones (Ezek. xxxvii). There is first a coming together of bone to bone, an Organization without life. The second stage brings the complete revival through the wind, the Holy Spirit, breathing upon them. Then they have a national and a spiritual revival. In order to have certain prophecies fulfilled it is necessary that a portion of the people Israel must be back in their land. They must have had a national organization. And furthermore there must be amongst those who return a remnant which looks forward to their national hope through the coming of the King, the Messiah. This remnant will be sealed (Rev. vii), to give a witness, and this remnant will suffer severely before their hope is realized.

Is there such a revival among the Jews today? Yes, there is. Zionism is a revival of Jewish nationalism. Jews by the thousands have returned to the land of their fathers. The fig tree is putting forth new leaves. There is a shaking among the dry bones of Israel. And we are told there are strong indications of a corresponding spiritual awakening, showing that the Holy Spirit is already at work amongst them preparing a remnant for what is to take place.

The Great Tribulation

Our Lord announced also that before His visible return takes place there will be a time of great tribulation. Such a time of world-wide tribulation was first announced by the prophet Daniel (Dan. xii:1-4). Our Lord in His Olivet Discourse confirms the Danielian prediction (Matt. xxiv:21). It is to come at the end of the age. As we shall point out later, it will be world-wide, but the greatest trouble will then be for the people Israel. It is called by Jeremiah, "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. xxx:7). Just as it is in a severe storm, there is a storm center where the elements rage the fiercest, so in that coming storm, Jerusalem and Israel's land and the partially restored nation will be the storm center. The clouds for this time of trouble are gathering. It has not been smooth sailing of late for Zionism. There have been severe conflicts and much bloodshed, and fears are expressed that new outbreaks will come. Still more significant is the fact of a great Northern power pressing Southward with plans to swoop down upon Palestine to conquer it.

Another Temple and What Will Happen There

The national revival of Israel demands another place of worship in Jerusalem patterned after the former Levitical worship in the tabernacle and the temple. The erection of such a house in Jerusalem would be the crowning event of Jewish unbelief. It would be a further denial that the true Lamb of God, the true sacrifice has come. In the last chapter of Isaiah the building of this temple is seen in prophecy. God looks on as they bring again their sacrifices, and then He says, because they will reject Him whom He sent: "He that

killeth an ox (in sacrifice) is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations." Then in the same chapter we hear of the God-fearing remnant and what will happen when such a blasphemous worship goes on in Jerusalem. "Hear the Word of the Lord, ye that tremble at His Word. Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my Name's sake, said—Let the Lord be glorified (in mockery—let Him come and be seen again); but He shall appear to your joy (His second coming), and they shall be ashamed." Then He comes. "A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple! A voice of the Lord that rendereth recompense to His enemies" (Isa. lxvi:1-7).

And when this temple stands again in Jerusalem and has been erected by the covenant which the political head of the restored Roman Empire has made with the Jews (Dan. ix:25-27), there will come to that temple the man of sin, the false Messiah, the false King, called Antichrist. Then will be fulfilled what is written in Daniel's prophecy, and to which the Lord calls special attention (Dan. xi:36, etc., Matt. xxiv:15). It is the same which Paul predicts in the second Epistle to the Thessalonians (Chap. ii:1-12).

And here are the preparations. Zionism often speaks of a temple. Many suggestions have been made. But perhaps the most significant fact is that there exists in Jerusalem today a Jewish Theological Institution in which young men whose Levitical descent seems to be assured (all who bear the name of *Cohen* (priest) or *Levi*

are acknowledged as of Levitical origin), are trained to perform the Levitical ceremonies as commanded in the law.

Unfulfilled Prophecies Concerning Gentile Nations

The age in which we live is the age called by our Lord "The Times of the Gentiles." We know definitely when they began. They began with the calling of Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. xxvii:5-8) But there is no prophecy in existence which tells us *when* the times of the Gentiles will be fulfilled. This is another vain speculation with which the writer has no sympathy whatever. He leaves this field to the Seventh Day Adventists, to the Russellites and other delusionists.

While we do not know when the times of the Gentiles end, we know *how* they will end. The prophetic information is given to us in the Book of Daniel and in the Book of Revelation. Daniel beheld the political course of the times of the Gentiles. The last world empire he beheld in vision, typified by iron in the legs of the prophetic image (Dan. ii), is the Roman Empire. He beheld what political form it will take on before the stone crashes from heaven and strikes the feet, which results in the complete demolition of the whole image. He also saw this Roman Empire in the form of a great nondescript beast. And when that beast is here the Son of Man will come in the clouds of heaven to receive the Kingdom from the Father's hands. John in the Apocalypse saw the same political aspect of the times of the Gentiles and beheld the same beastly heads, which will arise at the end of the age, preceding the Coming of the Lord. According to these predictions the Roman Empire as it used to be,

will see a political revival. Monarchies will be in that revival, typified by the ten iron toes in the image, and the ten horns on the fourth beast. But the predominant feature will be the brittle clay, which typifies democracy, the rule by the people. This is seen in the feet of the image, part iron and part clay. Such will be, according to prophecy, the end of the times of the Gentiles. A beastly head will appear, a great emperor who will domineer over this revived Roman Empire, while a second beast (Rev. xiii:2) will be the personal Antichrist.

A glance at Europe today reveals the astonishing fact that these political conditions predicted are now here. Throne after throne has been emptied and monarchies have given way to republics. The last throne which fell was Spain. The people rule! All is ripe for a political union in Europe. The agitations going on now have this decided tendency. The United States of Europe is planned and this plan indicates the fulfillment of these prophecies. Benito Mussolini suggested definitely a revival of the Roman Empire. The dictators which rise up everywhere in Europe are forerunners of the coming great dictator, the little horn of Daniel's prophecy (Dan. vii).

Another Roman Revival Predicted

But there is another Roman revival predicted. It is found exclusively in the Book of Revelation and is recorded in the seventeenth chapter. It is the revival of mystical Babylon. It is a grave error for anyone to go to Revelation, a book so decidedly symbolical, and say that the symbolical term Babylon means the literal Babylon, and that it must be literally rebuilt. The

Babylon of Revelation is Papal Rome. It is to have a brief revival, when political Rome will be revived. It will for a short time have temporal power again.

In connection with this prediction we see a remarkable indication of fulfillment. The Pope has been restored as a political sovereign. His temporal power is a historical fact, though at the present writing the occupant of the pretended Peter's throne seems to be quite helpless in exercising any kind of world control. No doubt the radio will scatter still more his world propaganda. But we surely see things coming to pass.

The Other Confederacy

While there is the Roman Empire Confederacy, there is also a great northeastern combination of nations predicted in the Bible. It is found in the thirty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel. We must refer the reader to a closer study of this great prophecy, and to our exposition of Ezekiel, or our briefer remarks in the "Annotated Bible." That combination of Oriental and semi-Oriental nations is headed by the Prince of Rosh, which all scholars identify with Russia. He controls Turkestan, Persia, Ethiopia, Libya and Gomer. The last has been identified with Germany. As a mighty northeastern confederacy they reach out after Israel's land, as restored to their rightful owners, and there, according to Ezekiel's vision, these hordes find their complete defeat (Ezek. xxxix).

What things we behold today in the great northeast of Europe! Russia as the Soviet world power has reached out towards Asia. Central Asia has fallen, in part at least, in line with the vicious program of Communism. Its bloody hand attempts to grasp the

far East, fomenting strife among the Chinese and in other Mongolian countries. It is much in evidence in Asia Minor and presses southward, as Antiochus Epiphanes did once, towards the pleasant land, Immanuel's land (Dan. viii). Here then we see startling preparations for the fulfillment of this prophecy also.

Predictions as to Christendom

In the New Testament are found the prophecies concerning Christendom. They reveal the fact that this age, in which God offers the highest and the best He has to offer, does not end with a universal acceptance of the Gospel and the Truth of God. The Lord Himself predicted in His kingdom parables (Matt. xiii) that the greater part of the good seed would not spring up; that the enemy would sow the tares among the wheat, and that the wheat and tares should grow together till the time of the harvest. In other parables he predicted the corruption of His Truth by leaven. Still stronger are the predictions given by the Holy Spirit through the Apostles. They spoke of the last days of the age, or the latter times, as being days of spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and delusion. They predicted that men would depart from the faith, and give heed to seducing spirits, and the doctrines of demons (1 Tim. iv:1); that sound doctrine would no longer be endured; the teachers and preachers of God's Holy Word would not be tolerated because an unregenerated church membership would demand teachers with itching ears—"after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth and be

turned to fables" (2 Tim iv:1-4). During the ending days of Christendom, the prophecies say, Christ Himself shall be denied as to His Deity and His Saviourhood (2 Peter ii:1-2). Then instead of the Spirit of God manifesting Himself, the spirit of Antichrist will prevail, not in the world alone, but in the professing Church (1 John ii:18-22). These religious conditions, denying the faith, the truth and Christ Himself, do not improve. There is no hope held out, nor is there hope given of another revival, when the end of the age is reached. On the contrary, the Spirit of God tells us that a complete apostasy will be the condition of Christendom before the Lord comes. There will be *the* falling away. Our Lord asked the question, "Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh shall He find the faith on the earth?" (Luke xviii:8).

Perhaps in no other sphere do we see today such preparations for the fulfillment of prediction as in this. It is true there has been apostasy in every century of this Christian age. The mystery of iniquity began to work in the days of the Apostles. But in our days we see a most astonishing fulfillment of these predictions. Men of God saw this coming. Dr. Martin Luther, in a sermon on "The Return of the Lord," spoke in his own positive way of a coming departure from the faith in Germany. He said that it would not get better, but worse in the world before Christ's return. Over a hundred years ago a so-called "school" came into existence, known by the name of "Higher Criticism." It attacked the reliability of the Bible as the infallible revelation of God. It soon developed into a destructive criticism aiming at the undermining and destruction of the faith. It has had great success.

It has spread like wildfire. This most dangerous and most subtle infidelity is now taught and upheld by the leading institutions of nearly all the larger denominations. It has pushed aside the Holy Word of God and has put it on the level of the spurious, the vile and foolish religious writings of pagan nations. With the rejection of the written Word of God has come the rejection of the living Word. These baptized and sprinkled infidels in cap and gown deny the Master that bought them. Christ Jesus our Lord is blasphemed by them; He is dishonored. They deny His Virgin birth. They ridicule the Cross and its finished work. Resurrection, His resurrection, is no longer believed. God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are theological myths. They still believe that there is a God, but some teach that He is a principle, while others fall in line with Spinoza's infidel Jewish theory of Pantheism. Gradually but surely John's statement is verified: "He that hath not the Son hath not the Father." Professors of the stamp of Elmer Barnes, and preachers too, become outspoken Agnostics. The increase of Agnostics is the result of departure from the faith. Everything in professing Christendom is making for the complete apostasy.

And the Moral Conditions

The moral conditions prevailing in the world before Christ's Return are also clearly predicted. They are fully described in 2 Timothy iii:1-5. In this passage it must be noticed that the lovers of pleasure, the lovers of money and lovers of themselves, who live out and out a self-life, are not heathen, but they "have

the form of godliness (church-members) and deny the power thereof.”

Such a moral slump was also predicted by our Lord, who has told us that when He returns He will find the age in the same conditions “as it was in the days of Noah,” and “as it was in the days of Lot.” He predicted also an increase of lawlessness and unrighteousness (Matt. xxiv:12). Crimes and vices of all kinds are to increase till finally the lawless one appears in God defiance and God opposition. We find in the Old Testament a prophecy which predicts these lawless and God defying universal conditions preceding His Coming.

“Why do the nations rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed (His Christ), saying—Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us” (Psa. ii:1-3). This is a picture of a coming world-revolution, when all laws of God and all laws of men are cast away.

How near the fulfillment of all these predictions is! Do we not see a constant increase of all forms of violence? Each year during the last fifteen years has brought increased burglaries, bold highway robberies and all forms of vices and immoralities. The erstwhile saloon with its degrading influences has been substituted by night-clubs and speakeasies with vices far worse than those practiced by the saloon. Suicides and divorces increase year by year. The sinks of iniquity and viciousness today are not pagan, or half-civilized nations, but the nations which claim culture and civilization. The cry for a world revolution is

heard on all sides and every continent is facing this agitation, which aims to tear from a boasted civilization the last rags of decency and lead humanity into a shameless condition.

Distress and Perplexity of Nations

“Upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken” (Luke xxi:25 and 26). And what does He, the infallible witness, say shall happen right after these conditions are here? “And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.”

Do we need to enlarge upon this? Is there not today world wide distress and world-perplexity? Is not the whole world approaching bankruptcy? Has not all Europe trembled this past summer? Are there not increasing signs of still greater distress and greater perplexity? Yes, it is all with us, and even some of the deluded, and almost hopeless, religious optimists of the modernistic persuasion begin to fear and tremble.

Tribulation and Judgment are Coming

The announced great tribulation with which our age ends is not only in store for Israel. It has a world-wide character. All nations will be affected by it. It will go from nation to nation, with wars, kingdom against kingdom, famines, pestilences and earthquakes. As soon as the true Church is gathered home to glory the Lamb of God will receive from the hand of God the seven sealed book. He will break its seals;

He will send forth the seven angels to trumpet and other seven angels to pour out the vials of God's judgment. At the end of these things He will appear as Judge and King upon a white cloud.

World conditions show that the harvest time, the end of the age, cannot be far away. All is at hand! The fulfillment of these unfulfilled prophecies related to His Return looms up bigger and bigger on our horizon.

The Great Message

Reader! God speaks louder and louder in these world conditions, so fully in accord with His Word. Do you hear His message? His message to His true Church is to be ready. Are you ready, beloved reader? Cast aside the playthings of the dust. Present yourself afresh as a living sacrifice! Yield yourself to Him in a new self-surrender! Arise anew to go forth as His witness. Yet a little while—and then face to face with Himself! Unsaved Reader! The door is still open! Pass in through Him who is the door! Accept Him today! He waits for you still to be gracious unto you. Perhaps tomorrow it will be too late!

CHAPTER XV

The Future Fulfillment of the Promises to Israel

THE word "Israel" occurs about seven hundred times in the Bible. In a number of passages of the Old Testament it is employed to designate the ten tribes which separated from Judah and Benjamin in the days of Rehoboam. In a larger number of passages this name is applied to the entire nation, the twelve tribes. Israel, therefore, means everywhere in the Scriptures of the Old Testament the literal descendants of the sons of Jacob. The same word is frequently found in the New Testament, where it has the same meaning.

Many Bible dictionaries and commentaries, however, advance a different view as to the New Testament use of this word. They tell us it means in the Gospels and Epistles those who constitute the church of Christ; that the Church is the Israel of God now, and that in the Church the hundreds of promises given to the literal Israel are now spiritually fulfilled. This mode of Bible interpretation has been called the spiritualizing method. According to this interpretation Israel means the Church; Jerusalem in prophecy is no longer the earthly Jerusalem, but the Heavenly city; the literal promises of an earthly kingdom all find a spiritual fulfillment. Thus all literal meaning of Israel's promises in the Old Testament has been changed into a spiritual meaning. In other words, we do not need to look for a literal fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies¹ as far as the literal Israel is concerned.

Now, it is no small matter whether the Word of God, especially the word of prophecy, is allowed to stand for just what it declares, according to its plain meaning, or whether its plain, obvious reading is to be discarded and another substituted. Christendom has been taught for centuries to consider itself a spiritual Israel, and to regard all the glorious things which Israel's inspired prophets spoke of their land and nation as being now spiritually fulfilled in the growth and development of the Church. However, it is difficult to make the prophecies fit, even spiritually, actual conditions in Christendom.

Let us see, first of all, what the spiritualization of the prophecies of Israel's future really means. It is an impeachment of the wisdom of God; it is wisdom to employ means adequate to accomplish a desired end. For centuries there have been in the possession and keeping of Israel pages upon pages of their own Scriptures filled with prophecies relating to their future. These prophetic promises give glowing and minute accounts of a glorious, national regeneration and restoration of the literal Israel under Messiah, their King, which, in the true sense of these predictions, have never yet taken place. Yet history proves that nothing but the hope drawn from the literal sense of these prophecies has enabled that wonderful people to endure all manner of persecution without surrendering their own distinctive being. Furthermore it is an undeniable fact that millions of Jews and Christians today still hold fast to the belief, that He who scattered Israel literally will just as literally gather them back to their own land (Jer. xxxi:10). The spiritualizing method claims that God never intended to preserve or to re-

store Israel as such. Those who hold it declare that with the death of Christ, or perhaps the destruction of Jerusalem, at the latest, Israel had fully accomplished the purpose of their existence, and that they are never to come into action again as the literal Israel. The eggshell of Israel and Israel's hope was forever broken when the Church was born to assume Israel's place.

If this is right, then what does God mean to do with Israel as a nation and with their land? Not only this, but why has He failed to get them out of the way after, as is being said, He was "forever done with them as a people?" God knows well how to make an end of nations after they have served their purpose. Have the people of Israel survived as a nation in spite of Him? Their preservation, one of the great outstanding miracles of history, either serves an object, or it serves none. If it serves an object, if Israel's preservation, which only God could accomplish, is for a great, ultimate purpose, the spiritualizing method is wrecked completely. If Israel's preservation serves no end at all, then God's wisdom, as well as governmental dealings stand forever impeached. Still more serious is this spiritualizing of prophecy when we consider that it impeaches God's veracity and faithfulness. It amounts to nothing less than this—God in His Word declares one thing, but He means quite another thing. Even if it should be proved that the other thing was infinitely superior to the thing clearly and distinctly promised, it certainly could not and would not atone for the deception practiced. Thousands, yea millions, believed those national promises in a literal sense, but God deceived them, by meaning something spiritual, and not at all what the plain meaning of those prophecies indicated.

So far from giving us a higher and nobler, a more exalted conception of God's character, the spiritualizing method plays fast and loose with God's veracity. How can He be trusted if He does not mean what He says? If He did not mean literally what He promised to Israel in oath bound covenants, how can we know that He really means what He has promised to the Church in the New Testament?

But are there not certain New Testament passages in which the word Israel is used in a spiritual way, and where it does mean the church? Let us see. We confine ourselves to the two texts which are most frequently quoted to uphold this view. The first is Romans ix:6, "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." This statement was not made to teach that believers generally, without respect of nationality, now constitute the true Israel. The Israel in this passage is still the literal Israel. By it is meant the believing remnant of that people. The Pauline statement is fully demonstrated in Old Testament history. There we find two Israels. There was proud, stiffnecked, rebellious, and idolatrous Israel, circumcised in the flesh but not in the heart, serving other gods, to whom God spoke in words of bitter complaint. And there was also the faithful remnant, the inner circle, like the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal, or the remnant in the days of Malachi. Isaiah xlv:9-13 contains a remarkable contrast between the nominal and the true Israel, the God-fearing, promise-believing, and Messiah-expecting portion of Israel. This true Israel we find on the threshold of the New Testament. Simeon and Anna belonged to this remnant. They were the sheep which did not follow

the false leaders, the thieves and robbers, who came before our Lord. These true sheep knew the Shepherd's voice and followed Him out of the Jewish fold (John x). Nathanael was one of these true Israelites, and so were the one hundred and twenty. When Paul writes that "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel" his meaning is very obvious. He speaks of the literal Israel, that not all of them are the real, the true Israel.

Another passage is Galatians vi:16: "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon all the Israel of God". The Israel of God, it is claimed, means the church. It does not. Paul distinguishes between Gentile believers and Jewish believers. The latter are the Israel of God. Saintly Bengel in his comment says correctly: "The Israel of God are believers of the circumcision or Jewish nation."

Let us ascertain what the promises of Israel are. It is significant that the Apostle to the Gentiles in the Epistle to the Romans, addressed to a Gentile church, gives such prominence to the literal Israel. "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and *the promises*; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever" (Romans ix:4-5). In the same Epistle he deals in a masterly way with the future of the national Israel (Rom. xi).

But what are the promises which belong to Israel? We classify them under two heads:

1. The promises of a Messiah-Redeemer-King. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." The prophets testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. They re-

vealed the two advents of Christ, one in humiliation, to suffer and to die, and the other in exaltation and glory, to reign as King supreme. It is unnecessary to point out how literally all the predictions relating to the sufferings of Christ, Israel's Messiah, were fulfilled. Here we must quote another Scripture: "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to *confirm the promises* made unto the fathers" (Rom. xv:8). His coming into the world was a fulfillment of prophecy. His coming, as predicted by the prophets, also confirmed the promises made unto the fathers. Now a *confirmed* promise does not mean a *fulfilled* promise. The prophecies relating to His sufferings, as already stated, were fulfilled, but this fulfillment also confirmed all the other promises made unto the fathers. His coming in humiliation vouchsafes that other coming, His coming in the glory of His Father. While His coming as the suffering One, to die the sinner's death, was a *confirmation* of all the promises made unto the fathers, the *fulfillment* of the promises which still belong to Israel comes in the future, and their literal fulfillment is inseparably linked with His future, personal, and visible coming in glory.

2. What are Israel's unfulfilled promises? They are the many promises of regeneration and restoration, promises of an earthly kingdom, promises of great spiritual and material blessings, promises relating to the earthly Jerusalem, and promises of universal peace and world conversion. My assertion is, that all these hundreds of promises have never seen their fulfillment, that they are not being fulfilled in a spiritual sense in the Church today, and that they will never and can

never be fulfilled in the Church of the future. Why not? Because they are the promises made to Israel and not to the Church.

Before I demonstrate the harmonious testimony which we find, throughout the entire Old Testament, as to the order of the fulfillment of Israel's national promises, I wish to make a few observations on the Kingdom promises, which are written so large in all prophecy. The final question which the disciples addressed to their departing Lord concerned the Kingdom: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts i:6). That these Jewish disciples had a perfect right to expect such a restoration seems very clear. Their expectation rested upon the promises of God. Did our Lord correct their expectation? Certainly not. He rather confirmed it, when He answered: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has set within his own power."

But here we meet the challenge of Matthew xxi:43: "Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you (Israel), and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." We are told that here is decisive proof that there never will be an earthly kingdom of Israel. They have lost it. The Kingdom is here now and the Church is that Kingdom. In other words, our Lord, when He spoke of the nation to receive the Kingdom, meant the Church. But where in Scripture is the Church of Jesus Christ ever called a nation? The Church is symbolized as the body of Christ and the bride of Christ, the habitation of God by the Spirit; she is also called a house and a holy temple; but there is no verse of Scripture in which the

Church is called a nation possessing the Kingdom. True, Peter says, "Ye are an holy nation," but his Epistle is not addressed to the Church, but to the true Israel of God, His own believing brethren in the dispersion. What then is the nation which is to receive the Kingdom in the future? It will be converted, Spirit-filled Israel; in fact Israel becomes the first nation which will be all holy.

The fulfillment of the Kingdom promises is impossible apart from the believing acceptance of Israel's Messiah-King, our Lord. In the book of Daniel are recorded two great Messianic prophecies. We read of the Messiah in ix:26: "After threescore and two weeks (434 literal years dated from the building of the wall of Jerusalem) shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself." The Hebrew *Ykores Moschiach v'ein lo* means literally, "Messiah shall be cut off and have nothing."* He was entitled to the Messianic Kingdom, but when the nation rejected Him and He died on the cross He did not receive that Kingdom. Nevertheless He had come as their promised King and was presented as the King, for we read in Matthew xxi:4-5 in connection with His entrance into Jerusalem: "All this was done, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold *thy King* cometh unto thee . . ."

We turn next to the seventh chapter in Daniel for the other Messianic prophecy in this much neglected book: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like

*The late Sir Robert Anderson, K.C.B., in his masterly work, *The Coming Prince*, has shown that 483 years of the famous Danielian prophecy in chapter ix were fulfilled on the very day our Lord entered into Jerusalem, for the last time and that the seventieth week (seven years) awaits a future fulfillment.

the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and *a kingdom*, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and *his kingdom* that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. vii:13-14). What coming of the Messiah is predicted here? It is His future, second, coming. We are aware that some Bible interpreters teach that our Lord fulfilled this prophecy when Jerusalem was destroyed in the year 70 A.D., and that the destruction of Jerusalem was the fulfillment of His promised return as given in Matthew xxiv:29-30. But one should read the context to discover how faulty such an interpretation is: "And he (the returned Christ) shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Who are the elect? Whenever we find the word "elect" in the Gospels it always means Israel and not the Church; whenever this word occurs in the Epistles it always means the Church and not Israel. In the year 70 A.D., when Jerusalem was destroyed, the people Israel were scattered into the four winds and not gathered.

Standing accused before the High Priest, our Lord confirmed the prophecy of Daniel when He said: "Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and *coming in the clouds of heaven*" (Matt. xxvi:64). He is still as our great High Priest at the right hand of God; but as surely as He is there now, so He will come in the clouds of heaven. It is at that time the remnant

of Israel will look upon Him "whom they have pierced" (Zech. xii:10). They will accept Him as their King, and the result of His return will be the fulfillment of all the Kingdom promises given to the literal Israel. Not till then can the promises which belong to Israel be fulfilled.

In conclusion I desire to show, as I have done more fully in my monograph on *The Harmony of the Prophetic Word*, the events of unfulfilled prophecy witnessed to by all the prophets and the Psalms. This harmonious testimony as to things to come is one of the strongest evidences of the divine authorship of all Scripture.

1. *The day of the Lord (Yom Jehovah)*. Many times that day is recorded by the prophets of God. That day frequently has a near significance in Israel's history, but it generally means the great coming day of consummation. On that day Jehovah appears in majestic glory. He appears to deal in judgment with His enemies. He comes to deliver His waiting people and save them with the promised salvation from their enemies. "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Isa. xxv:9). Our Lord, in speaking of His return, makes use of prophecies describing the physical phenomena of that day. He confirmed the promises of that day. Compare, for instance, Matthew xxiv:29-30 with Isaiah xiii:10-11 and Joel iii:15. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and all the pre- and postexilic prophets speak of this day of consummation. (See Isa. ii:12-21, xiii:9-13; 24-27; Jer. iv:23-26; Joel ii:3; Micah v:15; Zech. 12-14; etc.).

2. *What precedes this day?* According to Old

Testament prophecy this day is not preceded by a converted world, nations at peace with one another, and Israel dwelling in safety in their own land. The prophets give us a different picture. That day is preceded by lawlessness, increasing unrighteousness, by nations forming confederacies to oppose God's purposes, and by a great tribulation. (See Psa. ii:1-3; 43-44; and many others; Hos. v:14-, vi:1-3; Jer. xxx:4-8; Hab. iii:16). See especially Daniel xii:1: "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people (Daniel's people) shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." Our Lord confirmed this promise when He said in His great eschatological discourse: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. xxiv:21). Some may contend that the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies brought this great tribulation, but the context in Daniel and in Matthew shows that it is future.

3. *What follows that day?* The events of that coming day and the events which follow are over and over announced by God's holy prophets. The Lord executes a judgment of nations (Joel iii:1-2). This also is confirmed by our Lord, for He repeated what Joel predicted: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations. . . ." (Matt. xxv:31-32).

When our Lord ascended on high He took His place

upon the Father's throne. There He waits till it pleases the Father to give Him His own throne, the throne of all the earth. Speaking from His place of glorious exaltation, He promised to the overcomer a share in His own throne. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. iii:21). His own words, quoted from Matthew, assure us that He receives His own throne when He returns. It will mean the fulfillment of the promise Gabriel gave to the Virgin Mary: "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his Father David." The many promises concerning the King and His Kingdom will then find their literal fulfillment. We quote but one: "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our righteousness" (Jer. xxiii:5-6). Then follows in this prophecy the promise of regathering. They will be brought back from the north country and all the countries into which they were scattered. Israel's true restoration always follows the day of the manifestation of Jehovah. Read and hear what the prophets have to say—Isaiah xi:10-12; Jeremiah xxx; Ezekiel xxxvii; Hosea iii:4-5; Joel iii:20; Amos ix:14-15; Obadiah, verse 17; Micah iv:6-7; Zephaniah iii:14-20; Zechariah x:6-10. And these are but a few of the restoration promises. Let us remind ourselves that Christ also confirmed all these promises made unto the fathers in His Olivet discourse in

Matthew xxiv:29-31. Verse 31 is a confirmation of the literal Israel's regathering.

We single out Ezekiel 37, the vision of the dry bones, to demonstrate the utter impossibility of explaining away the literal meaning of this great vision. It is impossible to make these dry bones, which experience a resurrection, mean the Church. Nor is it possible to say this vision found a fulfillment in the return of the small Jewish remnant from the Babylonian captivity. The divine commentary in verses 11-28 shows that the future, literal fulfillment is the only possible interpretation.

Linked with the regathering of the literal Israel we find the promises of spiritual blessings. In that day takes place Israel's rebirth. The nation will be born again and saved, not by the law, but by grace. Their sins will be forgiven and remembered no more. The Holy Spirit is bestowed upon them, and they become the Spirit-filled nation. (See Ezek. xxxvi:25-38; Joel ii:28-32; Isa. xxxii:15). What wonderful things are promised to the remnant of Israel in that day, when "all Israel" living in that day will be saved! (Rom. xi:26). Isaiah 54, 60, and 62 contain the great promises which will come to pass in the glorious days of Israel's literal restoration and spiritual regeneration.

Our Lord confirmed this likewise—"Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, *in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory*, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. xix:28). What is the regeneration (*palingenesia*) of which our Lord speaks and which is connected with His own throne? Let Spirit-filled Peter answer this question. Preaching to

his own countrymen after Pentecost he said: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts iii:19-21). What light these apostolic words shed upon the whole question! The restitution of all things means what the prophets predicted as to Israel's future of glory. It comes with the return of Christ.

And what more follows? Blessings and glory for Israel, the nations, and even creation. The Kingdom which will then be established will be world-wide and extend from sea to sea, even unto the uttermost parts of the earth (Psa. ii and lxii). Jerusalem, where Heaven's King once suffered and died, becomes the glorious capital of the King (Psa. xlviii; Isa. ii:1-4; Zech. ii). Idolatry will be abolished. No League of Nations, world court or disarmament conferences are needed then, for war will be outlawed. The Prince of Peace will speak peace to the nations, and they will learn war no more. Spears will become pruning-hooks and swords plowshares. Righteousness and Peace will kiss each other. Groaning creation will cease its groans and enjoy once more its original Edenic condition (Isa. xi:6-9).

We must not overlook Paul's great testimony to the glorious future of Israel as we find it in Romans xi: "Hath God cast away His people?" Far be that thought! What people? His people Israel. God's gifts and calling are without repentance. He has not

cast away His people whom He foreknew. They were set aside for a season. By their fall salvation came unto the Gentiles. But does it end here? Let us listen to the Apostle of the Gentiles: "Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; *how much more their fulness?*" (Rom. xi:12). There is coming for the literal Israel a time of fulness. When it comes it means greater riches to the world than the riches of the Gospel, which was preached to the whole world, because Israel rejected it. "Their fulness" means their regeneration and restoration as revealed in the Old Testament. And again: "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, *but life from the dead?*" (Rom. xi:15).

Would to God that Christendom in its present divided and unbelieving condition would understand and heed Paul's great prophetic parable of the two olive trees! The good olive tree is Israel; some of the branches were broken off on account of unbelief. The wild olive tree represents Gentiles. They are grafted in upon the root of the good olive tree, to partake of the covenant blessings as promised to Abraham. These grafted in branches are exhorted not to boast against the broken off branches. The solemn warning is given that, if the grafted-in branches are unbelieving and high-minded, God, who spared not the natural branches, is not going to spare the grafted-in branches. He threatens to cut them out. Then follows the assurance that God is able to put back the broken-off branches into their own olive tree. Yea, He will do it in the day when they no longer abide in unbelief.

When they are put back it will mean their restoration,
their fulness, life from the dead.

God is not a man to lie;
Nor son of Adam to repent.
Hath he said and will he not do it:
Or spoken and shall not make it stand
(Num. xxiii:19.)

“UNTIL THE DAY SHALL BREAK”

“Until the day shall break,”
For while the Sun is gone
It must be night.
Soon, soon shall pass the night,
Soon break the glorious dawn
Upon our sight.

“Until the day shall break,
And shadows flee away.”
We wait for Thee.
The shadow of Thy cross
Lies heavy o’er the way,
But faith can see.

“Until the day shall break,”
And we shall see Him crowned
In majesty,
Yea, crowned by God’s own hand,
The King whom earth disowned
Despisedly.

Then shall the morning break,
And we with joy arise
Thy face to see.
And then forevermore
The glorious day shall break
For us, and Thee.—*H. McD.*

CHAPTER XVI

Conversion of the World and the Jews

THE term, the conversion of the world, is nowhere used, in the Bible. That there is, according to the predictions of God's Holy Word, a wonderful future in store for this earth, when nations will learn war no more, but learn righteousness instead, and worship Jehovah as King and Lord, is too well known to every intelligent Christian to need restatement. When that jubilee time comes the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the deep; the groaning creation, now so sadly sharing in the curse of man's sin, will be delivered from its groans. It is noteworthy that there are no promises in the New Testament which would authorize the Church of God to expect the accomplishment of these predictions as the result of her testimony and activity. If this were her work, to convert the world, to lead nations to know God, to abandon the most horrible result of sin, war—we would have to confess that she has failed miserably. Nor is it true, as some now say, that this world war will, when it ends, bring about these blessed things by man's renewed efforts. If it is the work of present agencies, the expected world conversion lies in an unreachable distance.

According to Prophecy

It is in the Old Testament Prophetic Word where we find the promises that the nations of the world will be brought to know God, that all the ends of the earth

shall turn to the Lord and that all kings shall fall down before Him. It is written that "All nations shall serve Him"—"All nations shall call Him blessed," and that the whole earth will be filled with His glory.* Nor is the Old Testament Prophetic Word silent as to how and when all this is to be brought about. As the writer has shown in his "Harmony of the Prophetic Word," before this glorious future can come for the nations of the earth the Lord's return must have taken place; and this event is preceded by judgments upon the nations, and partial restoration of God's ancient people to their own land, the calling of a God-fearing remnant amongst them, and by the great Tribulation. When these things have come to pass, immediately after the days of that Tribulation, our Lord will appear in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory. The Day of Vengeance has come, but in wrath mercy will be remembered. All Israel living in that day will be saved, and His Kingdom will be established upon this earth. The nations of the earth are then gathered into this Kingdom. They will not be gathered into the Church, as is often said, for the Church is no longer here, but has entered into glory to reign with Christ over the earth.

Daniel in his vision beheld the Son of Man coming with the clouds of Heaven, "And there was given Him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be de-

*We give a few of the many passages which predict these things, Read them carefully with the context: Psalm xxii:27-28, xlvii:7-8, lxvii:4-5, lxxii; Isa. lx:2-9; Dan. vii:13-14; Zech. ii:11.

stroyed" (Dan. vii:13-14). As the result of the first coming of our Lord in humiliation and His sacrificial death He receives the Church, which is now forming during this age. When He comes the second time He receives this world-wide Kingdom, in which the nations of the earth will be subjects. When that time comes, and not before, the kingdoms of this world become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, "and He shall reign forever and ever" (Rev. ii:15). So much for the conversion of the world, and the blessings promised to the nations and to the whole earth. It is inseparably linked with the second coming of Christ.

The Nations Which Enter Into the Kingdom

In Matthew xxv:31 our Lord speaks of what will take place when He has returned, "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left." We are aware that this passage is often looked upon as teaching a universal judgment of the whole human race; but it is not that. Not a word is said by our Lord concerning the resurrection of the dead. (The dead are not included in this judgment. This judgment can therefore not be identified with the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation xx. Nor is the Church in any way connected with this judgment, because when that takes place the saints are with the Lord in glory. (It is judgment of the living nations which the Lord finds on earth at the time of His second

coming.) This judgment will cover the first part of His reign as King, when He will first rule like David in subduing His enemies, when Gog and Magog, under the leadership of the Prince of Rosh, will also be dealt with in judgment (Ezek. xxxviii and xxxix), and that will be followed by His reign as Prince of Peace, as foreshadowed by the reign of Solomon. Now, at this judgment of the nations, when He divides them as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, there will be nations which He puts at His right hand, and to which He says, "Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." These nations are therefore converted nations, righteous nations, declared to be fit for that Kingdom over which He will reign. The question arises, When were these nations converted? Though the Gospel has been preached for about 1900 years yet we do not know of any converted nations on the earth today. The nations which we term Christian nations are at present engaged in the most bloody war of all history. Yet in as much as the Lord finds converted nations on the earth when He comes back and receives His throne, these nations must have been converted previous to His coming. It is therefore an important and interesting question. When and how were the nations converted which the Lord at the judgment of nations called blessed, and bids to enter the Kingdom on earth? They were not converted by the preaching of the Gospel as it is done today, for if they were converted as the result of the testimony of the Church they would share in the glorious destiny, "Caught up in clouds to meet the Lord in the air." The only alternative then is that they will be con-

verted after the true Church has been completed and taken into glory.)

Sometimes before our Lord is manifested from Heaven with His holy angels, a turning of nations to God must therefore take place. It will be during the time when God deals with this earth in mighty judgment, when the earth and the heavens are shaken (when Antichrist, Satan's masterpiece, is on the earth), and produces the Great Tribulation. It will be one of the startling events of the end of the age, after the Church has been removed from the earth. During these years of trouble, judgment, and great tribulation, God will give a final witness to all nations. Of this our Lord speaks in Matthew xxiv:14, "And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come." Though the Gospel of Grace is being preached world-wide, the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom as a witness unto all nations has not yet taken place. It falls into the seven years preceding the visible coming of our Lord.

Who Will be Used in the Conversion of These Nations?

But who will be the preachers who proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom if all true Christians have left the earth and the true Church is no longer here? The apostates and destructive critics of today, with the mass of professing Christians who received not the love of the Truth will surely not take up the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom, for we read in the Word of God that those who received not the love of the Truth that they might be saved will follow the strong delusion of Antichrist and believe the lie (2 Thess.

ii:10-11). Who then are the preachers? An elect company of God's ancient people, Israel. They are now scattered among all the nations of the earth, judicial blindness is upon them; but it will not be always so, for God has not cast away His people.

When the Church is gone the Lord will not leave the world without a witness. He will raise up a company of God-fearing people, Israelites; take away the veil from their hearts and use them as heralds. As it was in the beginning of this present dispensation, so will it be at the close. The first preachers were Jews, and the last heralds before the Lord comes in visible glory will again be Jews. To them will be given the last evangel of God's mercy to a lost world. "To every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Rev. xiv:6); and the message, "Fear God and give glory to Him for the hour of His judgment is come, and worship Him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Rev. xiv:7). They will preach the Gospel of the coming Kingdom, that the Kingdom is about to come, and then call upon all nations to repent and turn to God.

It would be intensely interesting if we could follow the calling of this remnant of Israelites for this testimony as revealed in different portions of the Old Testament. Such a remnant of believing Israelites is anticipated in the Psalms, which speak of the coming final deliverance of Israel. There we read of their persecutions, their prayers, and their expectations. The reader will please turn to Psalm xlv:10-26; Psalms lv to lvii; Psalm lxiv, lxxix and lxxx; Isaiah lxiii:15 to Isaiah lxiv. And how well this remnant is fitted to give a world-wide testimony among all nations, for

they are scattered amongst the nations and acquainted with the different languages. Therefore the Preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom to all nations will be accomplished before the real end comes.

Revelation—Chapter Seven

We call attention here to the seventh chapter of Revelation. In this chapter we read of the sealing of one hundred and forty-four thousand. How much confusion might have been avoided if expositors and Christians had not lost sight of two facts in connection with this sealed company. First, this sealed company cannot be called now, nor are they in connection with the Church of God, because the Church according to the scope of the Book of Revelation is no longer on the earth when this takes place; and secondly, the Word states clearly that these sealed ones are “of all the tribes of the children of Israel.” This sealed company therefore is of Israel, and will be called after the Church has been removed to her heavenly destination. (Compare with Ezekiel, chapter x.)

In the second half of this chapter in Revelation we read of another company. John writes, “After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands.” When one of the elders had asked, “Who are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?” he told John, “These are they which came out of *the* Great Tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” We learn that this multitude of all nations comes out of

the Great Tribulation. It is not the Church, for the Church is not in *the* Great Tribulation. This great multitude represents the Gentile nations who heard the final testimony and who believed. They turned in repentance to God and were then washed in the Blood of the Lamb. This great company does not stand before a heavenly throne, but it is the millennial throne which is in view here, and their blessedness throughout the millennial kingdom, after having suffered in the Great Tribulation, is described. They are the nations which the King calls blessed, and which will inherit the Kingdom. They are the fruits of the faithful witness of the elect Jewish remnant heralding the Kingdom before the Lord comes.

“These My Brethren”

When our Lord addresses from His throne these converted nations He says, “In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me.” Who are His brethren? He means by this term His brethren according to the flesh, from whom as concerning the flesh He came (Rom. ix:4-5). The nations who listened to their testimony when they appeared with the Gospel of the Kingdom, and who believed that message, manifested their belief by treating the messengers with kindness, giving them to eat and to drink, and clothing them. They did what the Gentile Rahab did to the Jewish spies, the advance guard of the victorious host of Israel. And the other nations who despised the final offer of God’s mercy in the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom showed no kindness to the Jewish messengers; and these nations which spurned the last offer will pass away from the earth.

What Else Converted Israel Will Do

When the Lord comes all Israel living in that day will be saved, except the apostates (Ezek. xx:38), those who have worshipped the Beast and followed Antichrist. "They shall look upon Him Whom they have pierced, and mourn for Him" (Zech. xii:10). This converted nation will be a kingdom of priests, and become the nucleus of that Kingdom into which the nations converted during the Tribulation, and all nations throughout the Millennium, will be gathered. Beautiful are the words of Isaiah, speaking of that time (Isa. lxi:6-9): Then the Gentiles shall come to the light which has risen among that nation, and kings to their brightness. Read the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah. In fact the entire prophetic Word witnesses to the fact that Israel, so long a curse among the nations, will be a blessing to all the nations.

It seems from another passage that when the Millennium begins with the coming of the King, that certain portions of the earth must yet be reached, and that work is to be done among different nations to make known the great events which have taken place. And God will use Israel for this work. Isaiah lxvi:19: "And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles." The last sentence of this prophecy, "they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles," tells us that they will have a work to do after His glory has been manifested. There is another

passage in Zechariah which also speaks of how they will be used, Zechariah viii:23: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirts of him that is a Jew saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you." This necessarily also comes after the Lord has come and set up His Kingdom.

Israel will therefore be definitely used in bringing the nations of the earth into the Kingdom. In that coming Kingdom, converted, Spirit-filled Israel will be the head of all nations, and be used in world-wide ministry and blessing. Then will be fulfilled what the Lord said through Isaiah: "Ye shall be named the priests of the Lord; men shall call you ministers of our God; ye shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves." What blessing is in store for the whole world, when that time comes, may also be learned from Romans xi:12-15. Let all true believers pray as never before, "Even so, come Lord Jesus."

CHAPTER XVII

Why Is It So?

THOUSANDS of Christians the world over say, and sigh, in view of the things which are going on in the world—why is it so? Where does it come from? What is the source of it?

Why are the prisons of countries, called the most enlightened, the most progressive, the most civilized—why are the prisons over-crowded, and millions more must be expended for houses in which thousands of human beings are put under restraint and deprived of their liberty? Why is there a constantly increasing need to put up new buildings for institutions in which many thousands are confined whose reason is dethroned, who are mental wrecks? How is it, that in spite of a boasted progress the most civilized nations show an alarming increase of suicides, cold blooded murders, crimes against women and small girls, banditry and burglary, and many other crimes? What is the source of the increasing immoral and unspeakably vile practices, which flourish among all classes in civilized countries as they never flourished in the vilest days of pagan Rome? Why are the masses today self lovers, money lovers, pleasure lovers, blasphemers, boasters; why are they proud, heady, high minded, traitors, despisers of those who are good and holy? Why is it that youth lives without restraint? Why are they disobedient to parents? Why do women and girls abandon all decency, dress in a vulgar way, smoke cigarettes and give themselves over to the lust of the flesh? Why

is it that in so-called Christian countries companionate marriage is strongly advocated, which means the direct road to free love and harlotry? Why is such a vicious system and its kin, "birth control," advocated by so-called "religious" leaders? Why have we a society for the advancement of atheism, one of the most contra-natural efforts (on the road to complete defeat and eternal ignominy)? How is it that the whole world is in perplexity, in distress, filled with fears and forebodings of evil? And why is it that a spectre of world-revolution and universal anarchy stalks through every nation and threatens to wipe out all government, all morality, all laws and all religions?

Why is it so? The Christian believer answers by saying—it is on account of sin. But sin has always been in the world since the first man transgressed. The things which are present in the world in our generation have been here in former generations. But let us remember in former generations there was less light, less of civilized life, less of everything which we possess, and our generation with all the inventions, discoveries, with all the philanthropies, charities, beneficial institutions, higher education, culture and material wealth, has plunged into the depths of moral degradation as no other generation of this age has done. While the pages of history record revolutions in every century, confined to certain nations, our generation faces world revolution. Former generations had their enemies of the Truth, the Bible, the Church, but our generation witnesses the most widespread and systematic effort to fight the truth, to destroy the Word of God, and to end the history of God's Church on earth.

Yes, sin is responsible for it. But there must be a

direct source, another cause why these things are with us and threaten to bring about a moral, religious, social and political catastrophe. Yes, there is something in the world which is directly responsible for these conditions.

Our finger points to yonder man. Look at him! He is dressed in a clerical fashion to distinguish him from others as a religious leader. He has been well educated and carries a title or two as the evidence of his intellectual achievements. Naaman, the Syrian Captain, was a nobleman, an honorable man, a kind hearted man, *but he was a leper*. So this man with all his education, his mental capacity, with his philanthropic spirit and his assumed religious leadership, is a leper. His leprosy is a disease in the heart and mind. His leprosy is a most subtle, a most dangerous and a most destructive infidelity. It is true he speaks of a God, but he denies the manifestation of the unseen God in the person of Him who came to make the invisible God visible. He denies the Virgin-born, the Holy Son of God and the display of God's attributes in His life of humiliation. He denies that that Holy One came to be the Lamb of God, that He died for the sin of the world, that His death has a sacrificial meaning and that his blood alone can wash our sins away. He still keeps Easter, because that is part of his bread and butter, for he makes a good living by maintaining in a hypocritical manner the religious terms of the profession into which he entered without the call of God. He keeps the Lenten season and has an Easter show, but he sneers at the idea that the Holy One of God left the grave and arose in His physical body. According to his infidel thought, He remained in the grave.

Christ Jesus our Lord, according to the teachings of that man, has come and gone. He no longer lives. All that lives of Him is His personality, His character and His teachings. What angers that preacher the most is when Christians speak of the Second Coming of Christ. To that man this is akin to insanity. For him it is—as a certain one expressed it—frantic nonsense. In this at least that man is logical, for if Christ is non-existent how can He ever re-enter human history in a personal way?

We see that man stepping into a pulpit on the Lord's day, and after a religious show called "worship," he opens the book. He must needs give the whole performance at least a religious atmosphere. He does not do so always, for many times his text is the latest novel, or some political event, or something else taken from nowhere. But he has opened the book and read a portion of it. Then instead of explaining it as the Word, the Revelation and the Will of God, he tries to explain it away. He tells his hearers with a show of learning, with natural eloquence, branded by the Spirit of God "great swelling words," that much of it is folk lore, mythical and legendary. He speaks of the Hebrew prophets as Jewish dreamers and patriots. He loves the word science. You can count it a score of times in his twenty minute sermonette. He believes in the science of evolution. With it he teaches that which degrades man and puts man, created in God's image, on the level with the beasts. He excuses sin as an animal trait in man. It has to work itself out in some way. He does not believe and will not believe in the fall of man, and therefore he has no use for redemption.

He avoids preaching about life after death. Sometimes he may allude to the old fashioned beliefs, which he calls exploded, as "a fire escape," but he has nothing to say about that of which our New Testament has so much to say. He is wholly occupied with earthly things. He wants to make the world better and mumbles something about "self-improvement." To believe in a heaven, which is a locality, where the saints gather to sing and to praise, where they carry the victor's palms and where all tears are wiped away, is too material, and he calls it unessential. He is concerned about this life only and doubts and questions all which the Spirit of God has recorded in the Scriptures of Truth concerning the Glory of God's Children. And Judgment to come or future retribution? Nothing of that!

All these things he must avoid, for he must appear up to date, intellectual, learned and cultured. Did not one of these men say recently in his New York pulpit "that the man and woman who still believes in the religious dogma is fairly outlawed from intellectual society"?

But he is very amiable. He takes with unsaved, worldly-minded youths. He is such a fine talker. He is so charitable! When these detested fundamentalists and conservatives criticise him for some unorthodox utterance, he is so "Christ-like"; he folds his hands piously and says he is not going to revile again; he says "I follow the master" (the Master who bought him and whom he denies).

And here is that man's brother. He does more harm than the occupant of the so-called "sacred desk." This one is seated in the easy chair of a professorship

in some college or university. One of these men who taught the young in a certain womens' college of New England, taught them his pernicious infidelity, has now cast the mask aside and has become one of the directors of the "Society for the Advancement of Atheism." What the liberal professor teaches the young, denial of the Bible, denial of the Truth of God and the Christ of God, is the seed from which springs the harvest of immoralities and licentiousness. What he teaches points to the road of out and out infidelity and atheism.

We point to that man, the man in the pulpit, the man in the professor-chair. Call him a modernist, a liberalist, a new religionist or a critic, and we say to him "Thou art the man!" Religious infidel, this is the Word of God to you, though you may deny it—"Thou art the man!"

"Thou art the man!" You are responsible in greater part for what has come upon our generation in demoralization, in vice and in crime! You are responsible for the prevailing lawlessness, the spread of atheism, and the threatening anarchy and world revolution! These things are found at your door.

This is a serious charge, but we can prove it.

The Bible, in spite of all the sneers and denials, is the revelation which God has given to the human race. It is the supernatural authority for man. Here by revelation God has made known the truth concerning human existence and human destiny. Here God reveals, what cannot be discovered by searching, that man is the offspring of God, and not the product of an evolutionary process covering millions of years. Here God shows that man became a sinner and the race was

plunged into sin and death. In the Bible God reveals the ravages of sin and tells man that there is a judgment to come. The Book of God reveals that man has endless being, that there is a heaven and a hell, a truth which is written in every human breast. God also reveals Himself, in His character, in the Bible. Here are the records of His Omnipotence, His Omniscience, His Righteousness, His Holiness, His Love, His Mercy and His Grace. In His holy law He makes His demand of man. His righteous laws have become the foundation of all civilized governments. But the greatest of all the messages of the Bible is not the law, but the revelation of a redemption which man needs and which God has provided in the unspeakable gift of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. That redemption is provided not in the ethical teachings of Jesus, but in His sacrificial death as the Lamb of God. Through His blood alienated man can be reconciled to God and be changed from an enemy to a child of God, forgiven and cleansed. It means more than that. In this redemption God provides for man the spiritual and eternal life he needs, the power in that life to live soberly, righteously and godly in a world of evil; the power to overcome sin. That the redemption in Christ has all this power, and can do all this, has been demonstrated the world over, in every continent, among all races, in every century.

And here you come and sweep it all away. The earliest revelations of history as given in Genesis you brand as folklore and legend. The law, you say, was not written by the finger of God upon tables of stone; it was concocted by Moses as the result of his Egyptian training. All the manifestations of God in

visible Glory are denied by you as unscientific. The Prophets of God with their majestic "Thus saith the Lord" were but Jewish-Oriental dreamers. But worst of all, ye liberalists speak well of Jesus as a teacher and leader, but you betray Him in a way that Judas never did. You make of Him at best, a man who brought something of God and about God to the human race; but you deny Him as God. You stab with your daggers of finite reasoning at the heart of all God-revelation, and reject the Christ of God and His blessed redemption work.

What does all this mean? It means that you destroy the foundation of righteousness. It means that you rush human souls into the darkest night of materialism. It means that you rob man of the only light, the only hope, the only comfort, the only peace, the only joy and the only assurance, possible.

You take away the Bread of Life, come down from heaven, and you give instead a scorpion. Your modern denials set the souls of men adrift to follow the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life to the full.

It was thus on a smaller scale in the eighteenth century. For a time infidelity seemed to prosper. In Great Britain the Bible and the Truth of God being denied produced a horrible moral declension, brought with it crime upon crime. But what a change when the Wesleyan Revivals broke out and God's Truth was proclaimed afresh!

Will it Always Be So?

As far as this present age is concerned no improvement can be looked for. If the Lord graciously would

send another great revival there might be a change for the better for a brief time, only to be followed by new declensions. But the predictions of the Word of God are very explicit. This age ends in exactly the conditions which we are facing today. And if the end of the age is here, as it seems to be, these things will not only continue, but they will become worse.

Yet it will not always be thus. Another age is coming! The true Church waits for its dawn and the Morning Star. When finally that coming Day dawns the shadows which are here now will flee away. That coming age will be the age of righteousness. It will bring a righteous government vested in the King of Kings. All lawlessness will forever be ended. All forms of infidelity, whether the deluded Atheism, or the equally deluded Modernism, will forever be ended, when that age is here. It will bring peace on earth, not through political combinations and political readjustments or pacts among nations, but through the Prince of Peace. For this age, when all shall be changed, everything is now waiting. Conditions are here which make one cry out, "vain is the help of man." But we look up and know He is coming, who will bring order into the present chaos and light into the darkness which is settling upon the world.

CHAPTER XVIII

God's Answer to Modernistic Thought and Prevailing Infidelity

THREE thousand years ago the inspired pen of David pictured a world revolution.

“Why do the nations rage, and the peoples imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His anointed (Christ), saying, Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us” (Psa. ii:1-3). The first reported prayer meeting of the Church, which began on Pentecost, applied this passage to the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ by Jews and Gentiles (Acts iv:24-29).

The present age had a significant beginning. It began with the rejection of God's Anointed, His Son and our Lord. Inasmuch as this age lieth in the wicked one, and Satan is the god of this age, this rejection continues throughout the age, and it assumes in its close the aspect of world revolution, out and out opposition to God, to His Anointed and to His Word. While the final world revolution is not yet here all is preparing for it. The world and its politics ignore God and His revealed purposes. Christendom is in revolt against the Christ of God. It may speak of Jesus, but it disbelieves His Deity, His supernatural person, His bodily presence at the right hand of God. And while the Romish “Church” claims loyalty to Him, it displaces Him and His Saviourhood, obscuring Him by man-made ordinances, by the worship of saints and by pagan customs and observances.

But the full world rebellion is only in the making. It will break out at the very end of the age. How near it is may be learned from the increase throughout the world of Atheism; from the onward rushing apostasy in declining Christendom. It may be learned from the attitude of the nations of today.

That such a world rebellion is not a theory, that it is ahead of our times, may be learned from the fact that when it is here it will be ended by the enthronement of the King, our Lord, upon the holy hill of Zion.

God's Present Answer

And while all this is going on, and has been going on throughout this age, while the world and Christendom is getting ready to write its final page of history, heaven is silent. The Lord looks on and sees the mad, the sinful actions of His creature, the creature of the dust. He laughs and He holds them in derision. But this has a deeper meaning than mere laughter and irony. He lets man go on in his endeavors so that man may learn the fruitage of his rebellious and unbelieving heart.

What is going on in the world today is really the answer of God to the modernistic religious thought and the prevailing infidelity. God permits such world conditions as are existing today to rebuke man on account of his unbelief and to reaffirm His own truth. A few illustrations will suffice.

God bears witness in His Word that this age is an age of restlessness, of conflict and not of peace. The greatest prophet, our Lord, gave His infallible forecast, that this age would not bring peace, but the sword. He said that during this age, down to its end, nation would lift up sword against nation, kingdom against

kingdom. Other Scriptures show that wars will persist to the end of the age and at its close there will be the greatest outbreak. Furthermore, the Word of God gives also a revelation as to the manner in which a world of war will become a world of peace, how nations will lay down arms and learn war no more. Not by human endeavors, not by pacts of nations, by a nine power pact, by world courts or disarmament schemes. World peace comes with the enthronement of Christ as King, the Prince of Peace. He will speak the word of peace and make wars to cease unto the ends of the earth.

But Christendom ignores all this. They have no use for prophecy. They sweep aside all God has said and then as deluded Pacifists, as all the modernistic infidels are, they invent scheme after scheme; they do things contrary to God's plan and try, without Christ and without God, to bring in a better day for the world.

What is God's answer? Look to the Far East. Behold the horrors of war again! Look at restless Europe and its nations hating each other, filled with jealousies and the spirit of revenge! Look at the failure, the ignominious failure, of such an idealistic, yet unscriptural attempt as the League of Nations! God permits all these things as an answer to infidelity baptized and unbaptized. He permits it to confirm His Word and show man that His Word and His purposes stand and cannot be overthrown by man.

Look at it from another side. Unrighteousness, immoralities and every form of wickedness increases. Drunkenness and every other form of the fruit of the flesh, down to the most unspeakable corruption, once rampant among pagans (Rom. i) are sweeping over

what is called "our Christian Civilization." Man tries to curb it. He brings in all kinds of legislation to make man more righteous, to stop certain evils. But the more legislation the more the evidences of increasing crime and demoralization.

There is only one power in the world which can effect a change and *only one*. That power is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes. That Gospel is written not in the teachings of Jesus, but solely in the blood of His cross. There is the power of God for man's salvation, the power for personal regeneration and the power for a life of righteousness.

But that Gospel is not believed any longer. A number of years ago a well known Y. M. C. A. worker and evangelist came out with the statement that the evangelistic method of preaching the cross was too slow a scheme. Society has to be saved, and he and others hailed the prohibition legislation as the method by which the world would become better and be ultimately saved. And others substituted legislative measures for the preaching of the cross of Christ and its unlimited power to save.

And God permits the increase of crime, the corruption among the young, the increase of all kinds of moral evils as a rebuke to Christendom, which abandons the highest and the best He has given to man. And in permitting it all, with heaven's silence, He shows man that the rejection of His Gospel is bringing now its awful harvest. And there are other dreamers, who dream their dreams of world brotherhood, cementing nations together, bringing them to a realization of oneness as a great family. This is also revealed in Scrip-

ture. We know there is coming a Kingdom. In that kingdom poverty and unemployment, want and nakedness, all the social evils of today will no longer exist. But that kingdom is not created by man. It is set up from above. It comes with the coming of the King, who will fill earth's empty throne.

But that is not believed. The Gospel is abandoned, the teaching of God's Word as to the Kingdom to come is even sneered at, and then such men as Sherwood Eddy and scores upon scores of others, see salvation and the kingdom in socialism. They can even laud the Soviet Republic, the foundation of which is steeped in the blood of millions of innocent victims, as showing progress in the right directions. One of these apostates, an enemy of the cross of Christ, yet miserable hypocrite he is! still maintaining the name of honor "Christian," came back from Russia declaring that they succeed better (those murderers) in putting the kingdom of God in the earth than we do with all our churches. What horrible blindness!

But what happens? Rejecting God's true Kingdom and its coming King, instead of the world becoming settled and content, lawlessness increases. Communism lifts its slimy head and threatens well ordered governments. It sows its dragon seed in the hearts of the young and forges ahead with its program of world revolution and its satanic cry, "No God! No Church! No Religion! No Law!"

God permits these lawless conditions as an answer to the unbelieving rebellious spirit of man. And as these hundreds of preachers and our colleges and universities turn to socialism as the remedy of the world's ill, God will permit the leader to come who is yet to

plunge the world into great tribulation, that lawless one, the masterpiece of Satan.

Reader! make your applications of other world conditions as the *permitted answers of God* to modernistic religious thought and infidelity. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision."

The Coming Answer

But this is not God's final answer. Heaven will not always be silent. God will not always laugh and hold the puny efforts of man in derision. He will break the silence of the ages. "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall call to the heavens above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people" (Psa. 1:3-4).

And this coming answer from above is written in this Psalm which gives us the picture of world rebellion.

"Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure." That will be God's final answer. It will be an answer by judgment. Now God speaks to the world still by His Son; He speaks through Him in love. But in the future He will speak to the world in His wrath, through Him whom He has appointed to be the Judge, His Son, our Lord.

He will speak in judgment, revealing His wrath and His sore displeasure. It is for the world, and nowhere will His wrath and sore displeasure be felt more than in professing, apostate Christendom. God's true Church, composed of all true believers, born again and members of His body, is exempt from these judgments. The true Church will no longer be on earth when God

gives this answer to world rebellion. We are delivered from the wrath to come. Our future is not to taste of wrath, but "the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

God's answer will be given in judgment in a twofold way. There will be judgments in the earth before Christ as the Kingly Judge appears. These judgments which precede His coming are written in symbolical language in the Book of Revelation. When the Church is gathered home the Lord Jesus Christ receives the seven sealed book and He begins to break its seals. As a result the apocalyptic riders will gallop over the earth. They will bring as judgments a false Christ, a satanic counterfeit of the true Christ, new and universal wars, pestilences unheard of before, famines and world wide distress. But the judgments become severer when the seven apocalyptic angels sound their dreadful trumpets. Then prosperity will cease from the earth; thrones will crash; governments will disappear; all law and order will be abandoned; anarchy is triumphant, and worse than that, demons will be permitted to come out of the pit of the abyss to torment man. Judgment after judgment will strike down from above. All hope of better times are abandoned. Despair takes hold of everything. The ungodly world and the Christ rejectors reap their harvest.

And the wrath of God will be complete when the seven angels, who follow the trumpeting angels, pour out their vials. What all these judgments will be is hard even to imagine.

Modern religious thought and infidelity deny the supernatural. Like the Sadducees of old they do not

believe in good and in fallen angels. But when these judgments come there will be a manifestation of the supernatural, and God permits demons to torment. Like of old when the sorcerers of Egypt had to confess "this is the finger of God," by these judgments the infidel world will have to acknowledge the finger of God.

Then draws near the day itself on which the Judge appears. Then the modernistic infidel clergy with Atheists, college professors and presidents of universities, evolutionists of every description, infidel Jews, the reds and the pinks, with the kings of the earth which are left, and all others will hide themselves in the dens and the rocks of the mountains and say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand" (Rev. vi:15-17).

The stone then strikes, the political conditions of the earth as they prevailed during the times of the Gentiles pass away. He comes to judge nations and modernistic religious thought, and with it all forms of infidelity will pass away forever.

What Follows

Then follows all the Scriptures predict. God will put His Son as King of kings and Lord of lords upon Zion's holy hill. There His theocratic throne will be established. His return is the conclusive evidence that He is, what He always was, the Son of God, the One who died on the cross and who became the Firstbegotten from among the dead. He will ask for His inheritance, and the Father gives unto Him the nations for His

inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession.

There will be no need then of a League of Nations, nor of naval or nine power pacts, no need of a world court, the Prince of Peace will Himself teach nations to learn war no more. Peace on earth becomes a blessed and glorious fact through His redeeming power. Righteousness will become the foundation of all and it will be the true righteousness, not enforced through legislation, but produced and kept by the power of His grace. Nations will be regenerated. All evils with us now, the curses of sin, will be abolished, and all the world will worship the Lord.

Blessed are you, my reader, if you are the Lord's and know Him as your Saviour Lord. You and I can look on in calmness what is going on in the world today. We know, yes, we *know* that He shall call us to meet Him face to face 'ere He speaks in His wrath to this fast closing age.

CHAPTER XIX

The Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks (Daniel ix:24-27)

WE DO not propose to give a full exposition of this important prophecy. For that the reader is referred to the editor's book on Daniel. But as the prophecy is one that has been partly fulfilled, and partly remains to be fulfilled, a brief consideration of its contents may help us to see what is past and what is future.

For the sake of clearness we quote a translation which keeps a little closer to the original than the Authorized Version.

Seventy weeks are apportioned out upon thy people and upon thy holy city to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins, and to cover iniquity, and to bring in the righteousness of the ages, and to seal the vision and prophet, and to anoint the holy of holies.

The seventy weeks are not weeks of days but of years. They cover a period therefore of 490 years; at the end of which time the six things named will come upon Daniels' people and holy city. The first three are, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to cover iniquity. In Psalm xxxii we read of the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, and whose iniquity is not imputed. This becomes true of each believer when he believes. It is the effect of the death of Christ. It will be true of Daniels' people when they look upon Him whom they have pierced, and receive Him as their Saviour (Zech. xii, xiii).

Then we have three other things. "To bring in the righteousness of the ages." This we take to be God's justification, by which the believer is made to be righteous. It is the righteousness of the ages, for it is eternal, being founded upon Christ's death, it will never pass away. The death of Christ is the death of every one who has the life of Christ in him, because he possesses the life that has been through death; so that all his vileness, all that he was in his unconverted state, has been judged in the death of Christ, for the life by which he now lives has been through death and has come out in resurrection. It is his identification with Christ because of having Christ for his life. It is the eternal life received at new birth; the portion of each one when he believes. It will be that of Daniel's people *when they believe*.

The fifth thing is "to seal the vision and prophet." All that the book of God contains relating to Israel up to that time, will have been fulfilled, so that the seal of accomplishment can be put upon it.

There remains but one thing more. "To anoint the holy of holies." What can this be but to set apart to God the holy place in the new temple at Jerusalem, as revealed in Ezekiel xl onward? Completing the restoration of Daniel's people and his holy city.

Know therefore and understand: From the going forth of the word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem unto Messiah, the Prince, shall be Seven Weeks and Sixty-Two Weeks. The street and the wall shall be built again, even in troublous times. And after the Sixty-two Weeks shall Messiah be cut off, and shall have nothing; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with an overflow, and unto the end war, the desolations determined.

The angel then told Daniel to "know and under-

stand, because what he then went on to reveal would seem to conflict with the proviso that his people should be restored to the favor of God at the end of seventy weeks. He divides the period into seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. The seven weeks were occupied in building the street and the wall of Jerusalem. Then after sixty-two weeks, or sixty-nine weeks in all, "shall Messiah be cut off and have nothing." This is what we must "know and understand," that Messiah was cut off after the period of sixty-two weeks, or sixty-nine weeks in all, *but not in the seventieth week*. The sequence of the weeks had been interrupted, and the seventieth week does not come to pass then.

But what is meant by Messiah having nothing—shall be cut off and have nothing? Nothing of the earthly kingdom. Israel's hopes were the earthly kingdom, and Messiah brought nothing of that into existence at His first advent; as the angel told Daniel would be the case long before; so that, while their house was left to them desolate, the hidden purpose of God were then brought to light. See Acts i:1-9.

But consequences follow. The prince that shall come will be a Roman prince; the people of that prince therefore was the Roman army under Titus, that, seventy years after they had crucified Christ, destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. The "overflow" we take to be the scattering of the Jews from their own land, among the Gentiles, while war and desolations continue to the present time.

And he shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease and because of the protection of abominations there shall be a desolator, even until the consummation and what is determined shall be poured out upon the desolate.

He that shall confirm a covenant with the many—the majority of the Jews, not all of them, will be the Roman prince that shall come. It was the Roman army that destroyed Jerusalem in the past. The same people, the Jews, will make a covenant with a Roman prince in the near future. The covenant will be for one week. It is the remaining seventieth week, which they get under Antichrist, instead of the week their true Christ would have given them.

But in the midst of the week he breaks the covenant, and stops all sacrifice to God, and seeks the protection of abominations. That is he forces idolatry upon them, which, as we know from the Revelation, is judged by the Lord Himself when He appears. To the godly remnant of the Jews this is the seventieth week, and the days of their deliverance are counted from the middle of the week, when the sacrifice will be taken away. See Daniel xii:11-13.

There were sixty-nine weeks to the first advent of Christ. Then they rejected Christ and crucified Him, and the present period of unknown duration began. "The end of the age" (Matt. xiii:40, 49) will be the seventieth week. The date of it is known only to the Father (Acts i:7, Daniel xi:35).

The last half of the seventieth week is the time, times, and a half, or three years and a half of Daniel xii:7, in which the power of the holy people, that is the believing part of Israel, will learn the lesson of their own weakness, their own power being scattered. A very universal lesson for believers of all times.

With regard to the interpretation of prophecy, we need to remember the warning of the apostle Peter, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture

is of any private interpretation, for the prophecy came not at any time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter i:20, 21).

Although different men have been the writers of prophecy, it has only one Author—the Holy Spirit. There is a divine unity in it therefore, which must not be broken by an application of any part of it to what has no connection with it, although some points of resemblance may be worked in to make it appear to fulfill it. But it not only robs us of the Divine purpose in the prophecy, but it consequently evacuates it of any practical value or use. For instance, what is the effect of saying that the prophecy of "the king," of Daniel xi:36, has been fulfilled by Herod the king, but to cancel the value to us of all that follows in the chapter, because, in that case, it has all been fulfilled, and is of no further use; when it really gives us the features of the coming Antichrist for our warning? This is easily seen when, in verse 35, the speaker leaves the past, and goes on "to the time of the end." It is given to us in order to let us know "that which is noted in the scripture of truth" (Daniel x:21).

It is also said that the seventieth week followed the sixty-ninth without any interval, and has been fulfilled. In which case the six things of Daniel ix:24, should already have come upon Daniel's people and city, and the Gentile rule over them should have ceased.

But what did the Lord say of the future of Israel? "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke xxi:24). This is

proof that the seventieth week has not been fulfilled. When it is fulfilled the prophecy of “the times of the Gentiles” (Dan. ii:45), and that of the seventy weeks, will be fulfilled at the same time. Let us not forget the warning of the apostle Peter.