

THE  
OBJECT AND MANNER  
OF  
OUR LORD'S RETURN.

By C. T. RUSSELL,  
PITTSBURG, PA.

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*"Take heed to yourselves lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with . . . the cares of this life; and so that day come upon you unawares,"—Luke 21: 34.*

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# OUR LORD'S RETURN.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE OBJECT OF THE SECOND ADVENT.

That our Lord intended us as His disciples to understand, that for *some purpose*, in some manner, and at some time, He would come again, is, we presume, admitted and believed by all familiar with the scriptures. But the object of that coming is viewed from widely different standpoints, and seen in as various colors as there are glasses ; each observer honestly and sincerely desirous of seeing and understanding the subject correctly. We shall not attempt in these few pages to give all that can be presented upon this subject, but simply offer a sketch of what we understand the events and their order to be ;—giving as far as space will permit, the scriptural evidence favoring it. In doing so, we shall endeavor to exercise christian courtesy, when referring to the views of brethren who differ with us.

The writer believes that in order to an understanding of this subject, it is necessary for us to have some clear conception of God's plan for the salvation of the world of mankind. If we can obtain this, it will unquestionably give us information very valuable, in the consideration of our subject ; for, in that plan,

not only the first but also the second advent has an important place. Here a vital question arises, viz.:

#### HAS GOD A PLAN ?

Or, did He in an idle moment frame this world, and bring us, His creatures, into existence simply to exercise His creative power ; entirely unmindful, or uncaring, what should be the result to us of that existence ? Many who love the Lord with all their hearts speak of Him and His work as though this were the case. They think of the fall of Adam, by which " Sin entered the world and death by [or, as a result of] sin," (Rom. 5 : 12) as an emergency entirely unexpected and unprovided for by the Creator.

Such naturally regard the salvation provided through our Lord Jesus Christ as an after-thought. God, having been thwarted by an agent of His own creation,—the Devil,—now sought to repair the mischief by providing a way by which a few of these creatures could be saved. They regard the present and past contest between good and evil, as a race between God and the Devil, in which, so far, the Devil has been the most successful. They hope and trust, however, that before the winding up of all things, the numbers of the saved will be greater than those of the lost: and so God, even without any plan, come off conqueror.

But, christian friends, He who would rebuke a man for building a tower without first counting the cost, shall He build and people a world without counting the cost ? Nay, verily ; God has, and always has had, a plan—a purpose ; and all His purposes shall be

accomplished. He works "all things after the counsel of His will."

Not only is this true, but He has revealed His plan to us in "the Scriptures, which are able to make us wise," and given us His Holy Spirit to enlighten our understanding, "that *we might know* the things that are freely given unto us of God." (1 Cor. 2 : 12.) Which things, neither the world nor carnally minded christians can see (v. 14); they are revealed by the spirit in answer to diligent search. "If thou seekest after wisdom, and liftest up thy voice for understanding, yea : if thou searchest for her as men search for silver ; then shalt thou find the knowledge of God." When He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He shall guide you into all truth.

The Spirit does this as we have seen through the Word—the lamp. But God's word, the Bible, is a revelation not intended for one decade or century, simply ; but, to the conditions of His people, at all times and in every age. It is continually unfolding to us some new, fresh beauty, of which but a short time before we had not even dreamed. It is because of this continuous unfolding of truth, as it becomes "meat in due season" to the household of faith, that under another figure the same word is compared to "a lamp to our feet ;" for, "the path of the just shines more and more until the perfect day." It shone some away back in Enoch's day, and has been increasing ever since ; not, that light yesterday is darkness to-day ; but, there is more light to-day, by which we can still better appreciate that of yesterday.

Have we, as a church, all the light now ? Cer-

tainly not ; nor will we have until the " perfect day." Whilst we remember, then, that

" God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform ;"

we should be ready and watching for the earliest glimpse of the next unfolding of His revelation of Himself and His plan ; remembering that

" His purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour."

We will now see what we can find of God's plan revealed in His word, therefrom to judge of the object of our Lord's return.

We lay down as a foundation, then,—whether the plan is so far unfolded that we can fully comprehend it, and see the connection which must exist between the past and present dealings of God and that plan, or not:—First, God has a purpose or plan. Second, That plan is based and founded upon love, for "God is love." (I John 4 : 8.)

We do not cast aside God's justice, etc. ; but, whatever His plan it must comport with His character—Love—for, " He cannot deny Himself."

The christian church is about equally divided upon the question of Election vs. Free Grace, or Calvinism vs. Arminianism ; a small number, proportionately, believing in Universalism or the final eternal salvation of all mankind. Doubtless, all familiar with Scripture know that each of these positions are supported by much scripture ; and yet, can they all be true ? Must there not be some connecting link which will harmonize and reconcile them ? Surely this is the case, for God's Word is not yea and nay.

Let us examine the first two, Calvinism and Arminianism, separately ; the last, Universalism, is so flatly contradicted by much direct scripture, that we shall measurably pass it unnoticed. And what we have to offer on the others is not designed as a fling against any of the "branches of the true vine ;" but strongly expressed, to call special attention to the more uncomely features of those doctrines which their strongest advocates will concede are weak points.

Calvinism virtually says : God is all wise ; He knew the end from the beginning ; He had a plan which was to save a few, *not from any merit in them*, but of His sovereign choice He elected these to eternal life,—all others to eternal death. He could as easily save all men, but He does not want to : He is able, but unwilling, to save any but a few.

Armenianism virtually says : God loves all His creatures ; His tender mercies are over all His works. He is trying His utmost to save them all, but is not able : only the very few, the "little flock." Sin slipped past Him, entered the world at the outset, and has gained such a foothold that only by the aid of His children can it be overcome, even in ages.

As before suggested, each of these, although apparently, antipodes, have some scriptural basis, and we believe, when properly arranged, are in harmony with each other.

We will now look at the Bible ; first at a dark picture, then at a brighter one. Here we find that though little light was given as to man's salvation and future happiness at the first unfolding of the

plan, even that little was not given to the world at large—the masses—but to a few Patriarchs, among whom were Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These were chosen,—elected,—not alone from the world, but from among the other members of their families, as it is written: “Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated.” [loved less.] Isaac alone of all of Abraham’s children was the child of promise. Of Abraham it is written, “Thee only have I chosen of all thy father’s house.”

At Jacob’s death, the principle of election changes, but the fact remains. All of Jacob’s children are thereafter recognized as God’s representatives,—His church, or people. There on his death bed, the old patriarch blesses each of his sons and gives to Judah the sceptre,—symbol of nationality,—saying: “The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come.” This was fulfilled to the letter. That tribe represented the nation until Christ came. To this one nation God gave the Law, in which was shadowed forth the Gospel. This shadowy light, the Law, was given to no other nation or people; it was exclusively to Israel, as we read: “You only, have I known of all the families of the earth.” We will therefore designate this the Jewish or Law age.

At the death of Christ another change takes place. The Law ends. He made an end of the Law, “nailing it to the cross,” and introduced a new dispensation,—the gospel of grace, under the law of the Spirit. This is not restricted to one nation, as was the law, but is free to all, to be “preached in all the World,



for a witness" before this age ends. (Matt. 24 : 14). But although we are to know no difference in our presentation of it to all people, God has been guiding and directing its course. Under that direction, we of Europe and America, have been more favored than the inhabitants of other parts of the earth. Why did the light of truth and salvation, started by our Lord and His apostles in Palestine, travel northward and westward through Europe and America, rather than southward and eastward through Africa and Asia ? Did it happen so ? oh no ! Our Father is at the helm ; He is guiding His truth.

True, now the bible is published in the language of every nation. It is *now* being "preached to every nation" : (not individual) but this we may say, has all been done during the present century. Yet to-day, four out of five of the inhabitants of earth know not that Jesus died for them. Here is a sense in which God is even now electing. He elected to send the gospel to you and me and our fathers, and He chose not to send it to yonder Hottentot and his fathers. But says one, God works by instrumentalities. He has been wanting His people to come to the work, and by giving of the money and talents which He so freely bestowed on us, we may, through missions, which He will bless, have the privilege of being co-workers with Him.

To much of this we can heartily assent. We believe that through us God is working ; that He is pleased with our zeal in His service. But we cannot for one moment suppose that the *eternal welfare* of four-fifths of the human family is made to depend

entirely upon the zeal and liberality of the other one-fifth. No! No!! The God of love, is not experimenting at the expense of the eternal happiness of the great mass of His creatures.

We see, then, that in some sense God has so far been electing the church. But why. He must have a purpose and object in so doing. He has a plan, and doubtless it is far greater and grander than ever entered into the heart of man to conceive. What saith the scriptures?

In the promise of God to Abraham: "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed," God's plan and purpose is stated in one sentence. Paul, in an inspired comment upon this promise, (Gal. 3), says, "He saith not to seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ." Is it Christ Jesus individually that is here referred to as the *one seed*? No; the apostle continues (vs. 29) if ye [the church] be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to *the promise*, (as originally made to Abraham). We learn that God had us comprehended in His plan when speaking to Abraham. Not only Christ Jesus, the head of this seed, but they that are Christ's—the little flock—as members of His body; and this *one seed* will not be complete until the last member of that body is perfected. This thought is maintained throughout the Epistles—Christ, "the head of the body, the church." (Col. 1: 18. Eph. 1: 23; 4: 12; 5: 25-32. I Cor. 12: 12, 27. Rom. 12: 5, etc.) The figure is carried yet further. We, His disciples, are spoken of as filling up the measure of Christ's sufferings. (Col.

1 : 24. II Cor. 1 : 5. II Tim. 2 : 10.) And we have the promise, "that if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him."

The promise, to which we are heirs, declares that when this seed is complete, all nations shall be blessed in it. A promise made away back in Eden, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, crush evil and sin, is another to which we are joint-heirs. But did not Jesus do this—bruise Satan—when he died? No; the death of Christ and the subsequent persecution of the church are the "bruising of the heel." Paul says, "Satan is to be bruised *shortly* under the feet of the church,"—*head and body*, (Rom. 16 : 20). Again, the same thought is expressed under the figure of

#### THE BRIDE AND BRIDEGROOM.

The church is represented as a chaste Virgin, *espoused* to Christ (II Cor. 11 : 2). As such we are now betrothed, and have received the seal of that engagement,—the first fruits of the Spirit. Not married, not the bride yet, but waiting and longing for that union with the Bridegroom. When He went away He said, "I will come again and receive you unto myself. He expressed it so in the parable of the "Ten Virgins." When "the Bridegroom came, they that were ready went into the marriage." There and then we shall enter upon the full realization of the "things which God hath in reservation for those that love Him."

All, we presume, will agree with us, when we say, that no matter how much enjoyment we have prior to the resurrection, we certainly wait until then for the

full measure. The whole church or body is complete before the final rewards are given. Hence, when recounting the ancient worthies, the Apostle says : (Heb. 11 : 39, 40), " They received not the promises that that they without us should not be made perfect." And, of Himself, when about to die, He said, " I have fought a good fight....henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto all them, also, that love His appearing." (II Tim. 4 : 8.). True, we now have and enjoy many blessings in Christ. Now we have the peace that the world can neither give nor take away. But all this is but a foretaste ; the weight of glory comes over there. We now, in a certain sense, have begun our office, as Kings and Priests, conquering self and the lusts of the flesh, and " offering up spiritual sacrifices unto God ;" but it is only in the same sense that we are now spoken of as being risen with Christ, and seated with Him in heavenly places. By faith in His promises we anticipate the glory and the rest that remains ; and although beset with trials and troubles in life, we have a peace to which the world is a stranger.

When the Lord promises, saying, " To him that overcometh, I will give to sit with me in my throne," and " to him that overcometh I will give power over the nations." does He mean it ? Is he to " sit on the throne of His glory ?" Will He take to Himself His great power and reign over the nations ? Surely, His word cannot fail ; it will be as real a reign over

the nations for us—the church—as for Him. God gave “Christ to be the head over the body;” and “He that hath freely given us Christ, will He not with Him also freely give us all things?” Yea, verily, brethren, we have not realized “our *high-calling* which is of God in Christ Jesus.” We are called to sonship of God, and not this alone, but to be joint-heirs with Christ Jesus our Lord. This is the little company whom God saw away back in Eden, through whom He is shortly to bruise Satan and “bless all the families of the earth.” It is this company to whom Peter refers, (Acts 15: 14) saying, “God did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.” We are the Virgin, soon to receive the name of our Lord, “a new name that no man knoweth save he that receiveth it.”

It was for these Jesus prayed: (John 17) “I pray not for the world” but for them thou hast given me, and “not for these only but all them also which shall *believe* on me through their word, “that *they all* may be *one* in me.” This oneness and unity the Lord did not expect in this present time. He says He came to bring division. Consequently He is not disappointed nor thwarted in His plans. In the parable of wheat and tares, He tells us that the enemy would sow tares among the wheat, and they look so much alike that we cannot separate them. “Let both grow together until the *harvest*,—the harvest is the end of the world” [*aion—age*] then He will have them separated by angels.

Yet, as Jesus says “the Father heareth me always,”

we may know that at some time they all will be one in Him. When? At the resurrection, when we are united to our head, becoming the "one seed," at the marriage when we are *united* to the Bridegroom and they twain become ONE. But although this prayer was mainly for the church, yet Jesus loved the whole world. Yes, he died for the World, and they have a place in this prayer. But notice where. He prays for the church first, that they all may be made one in Him; then the object of the union is "that the world may believe." But the believing of, and prayer for, the World, is after the marriage of the chaste Virgin. For this marriage, "we ourselves, that have the first-fruits of the spirit, groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, to wit: the redemption of our body"; this one body of which we each are members.

When we (the gospel church,) are redeemed, is God's plan accomplished? No. It is only begun. It is a grander, a more lofty plan. Not only do we groan for this consummation, but we have seen from our Lord's prayer that the world has an interest in it, and Paul positively asserts, that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together." What are they expecting? Certainly not what we are looking for. They do not expect to form part of the body. No: "the earnest expectation of the creature, waited for the manifestation of the sons of God." (Rom. 8: 19.) Not Son of God, but sons. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God."

What interest has the world in our manifestation or shining forth? Simply this,—Until we are mani-

festes although we are the "light of the world," and it is blessed by this light, which we are to let "so shine that men may glorify Our Father in heaven," yet how much more will it be blessed, when we "shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom,"—when separated from the world as well as from the tares in the harvest. (Matt. 13 : 43.) If we now are a blessing to the world as light-bearers, poor and weak though that light often be, are we surprised that the hope of the world is this shining forth of the church? Paul tells us why they wait and groan for our manifestation. "Because the creature itself *also* shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God." That is, when the church has been delivered from the present condition—subject to death—the bondage of corruption, then the world at large will have an opportunity in the same direction,—“that the world may believe” and as many as do so “shall be delivered into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.” Sons, but not *joint-heirs*. This will be the only distinction between them and us,—the gospel church.

God loves all his creatures, not because we love Him, but from pure benevolence. “God so loved the world” — while we were yet sinners. But He is a God of order. He has a plan, and is carrying it out. During the past six thousand years, He has been getting ready,—preparing the instrumentality through which to bless the World. The time seems long to us mortals, but not so with Him who is from everlasting to everlasting.

This “little flock” who receive the Kingdom are

but "the *first-fruits* unto God of His creatures. (Jas. 1 : 18. Rev. 14 : 4.) If there is a *first-fruits* there must of necessity, be more of a harvest, else the language is senseless. Eph. 2 : 7, declares the object of God in our salvation to be, "That in the ages to come He might *show* the exceeding riches of His grace."

But let us follow the church,—the first-fruits. We last saw her as the chaste virgin going into the marriage, when the bridegroom came. We next hear the great voice of a multitude saying (Rev. 19 : 7.) "Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to God, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. We have heard of the marriage—listen ! the angel says to John (Rev. 21 : 9, 10). "Come hither, I will *show thee the Bride*, the Lamb's wife." We want to see her, let us follow. "And he showed me that great city, the Holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." Are we to understand that this city is a symbolic representation of the church ? Yes, just as in another symbol she is the "Temple of God." But what of the precious stones of which it is built ? These are the same as the stones of the spiritual Temple ; i. e., living stones, —the same that Paul speaks of as "Precious stones" (1 Cor. 3. 12), or the jewels of Mal. 3 : 17.

When this city "shines" the nations will walk in the light of it. Now they are blest by the feeble light of the church ; then they will walk in the perfect light which will shine from her. (Rev. 21 : 24) There flows a river—from under the throne—"a river of the water of life." Not the ordinary kind of water. No, this is "water of life," the kind the Lord



promised to give us, and which He does give now to every one begotten. It shall be in you a well of water." This kind of water would not flow in a natural river bed, but this same sort is here brought to our view as flowing a broad, deep, mighty river. No longer the little well, no longer confined to the few, the "little flock," but "whosoever will" may partake of it freely. There the Spirit and the Bride will say come, and he that heareth will say come. It will be free to all. But, notice when, it is in the new heavens and new earth, (Rev. 21 : 1)—in the next dispensation. The church is not the Bride now, but a chaste Virgin. When she is married—united—she will be the Bride, and then it is that she says come to whosoever will.

Oh, can we not pray from the depths of our hearts, come, Lord Jesus ! come quickly ! Shall we not, since we and all creation wait for it, rejoice at the sound of the Bridegroom's voice, as He nears our dwelling ? We do rejoice and lift up our heads, knowing that our redemption draweth nigh.

This is a glorious prospect for both the church and the world. But how about those who died, not having heard the name of Jesus, who did not enjoy the privileges of light ? Must these all suffer the loss of eternal life and happiness with not even an opportunity to lay hold on it ? Must they all go to hell, simply because they lived before God's plan had so far developed as to embrace them ? Or, shall we go to the other extreme and say, God will save all those who have never had light and truth ? If this be true, we have made a great mistake in sending mis-

sionaries with this light to the heathen. We know that when it is presented to them they do not all receive it and become christians, and if in ignorance they would all be saved, we not only do them a positive injury but waste numbers of valuable lives and millions of money. And further, if God can consistently give these eternal life without a *trial*, or probation, why did He not give us all as good a lot, and save us all without our coming into the present probationary condition ; or why did He not kindly leave us all in the dark, and thus save all ?

Neither of these lines of human reasoning will stand the test. We must see what God's plan-book, the Bible, has to say on the subject. But first let us take a glance backward, and see about what proportion of our fellow creatures have a personal interest in the matter. We have seen that during the first 2100 years only a few Patriarchs were chosen. This brings us down to the time that the nation of Israel became God's representatives, at the death of Jacob, the last patriarch. Of all others Paul declares, "death reigned from Adam till Moses,"—or, until the Law, which was given to but one people ; and of these only a very few were saved ; only those who could rise above the type and discern the antitype. The value of the Law in saving men may be gathered from St. Paul's teachings. He says—"that no man is justified by the Law is evident." (Gal. 3 : 11.) "By the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His [God's] sight." (Rom. 3 : 20.) "For if righteousness come by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain." (Rom. 2 : 21.) "If the Law given could

have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the Law." (Rom. 3 : 21.) "For the Law made nothing perfect." (Heb. 7 : 19.) "Wherefore then serveth the Law? It was added because of transgressions, till the *Seed* should come, to whom the promise was made." (Gal. 3 : 19.) That is, the seed of Abraham not the fleshly descendants, for says Paul, "the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God : but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." (Rom. 9 : 8.) Children of faith, Christ, and the church. (Gal. 3 : 29.)

Thus we learn that nearly all of the "little flock" is being gathered during the gospel age. To-day, about one individual in five knows that Christ Jesus died for him. Until the present century, and during the dark ages, probably one in forty knew it. A fair calculation of the numbers who have never heard the Gospel, from Creation to the present time, would be about 120,000,000,000 souls.

Whether we can understand God's dealings or not we may rest assured, "the God of all the earth will do right." But we are anxious to have the matter cleared up, if it can be, from God's word. For, unquestionably, the facts already obtained from the Bible *appear* to clash directly with some of the plainest statements of Scripture. For instance, we read of Jesus, this is the true light that lighteth *every man* that cometh into the world." How shall we understand such a statement? Thousands of millions have not even heard of Him. Are we certain that hearing of Christ is essential? May they not be saved by living up to the light of nature? It is

certain that they must hear of Christ before salvation, for, says Paul, "How shall they believe on Him of whom they have not heard?"

The conditions of salvation are "*Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.*" Again, "there is no other name given under heaven or among men, whereby we *must* be saved." *Must*; if saved at all, it *must be in Him*. If they could even do by nature many things contained in the Law, we have seen that "the Law could not give life;" "for by the deeds of the Law shall no man be justified." Again we read, "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man." But if they never hear of it, and are never benefited by it, how can it be said to be "*for every man*?" Again, "There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all; to be testified in due time."

Ah! here we have it. God is a God of order. He has a "due time" for everything He does, and when His "due time" comes, it will be testified to all men that "Christ died for the ungodly." That true light shall yet lighten every man that ever came into the world. It certainly was not *His plan* to have it testified to them in the ages past, else it would have been done. But it will be testified in due time.

Now we see a meaning in the statement, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." I know that that these are texts used by Universalists, (but I am not a Universalist), but shall we not use them simply because they do? No; "all Scripture....is profitable." This is the time

"of restitution of all things," mentioned by Peter, (Acts 3 : 21) of which he says "God hath spoken by the mouth of *all* the holy prophets since the world began. This is not for the church, but for the world. The church gets something far better than a restitution. The whole human family get back in the second Adam all they lost in the first Adam. They did not lose eternal life or a spiritual existence in the first Adam, for he was a probationer for these himself, and as a stream cannot rise higher than the fountain we could not lose more through his disobedience than he possessed. There are two lives\*—natural and eternal; and two deaths, temporal and eternal. He lost natural life and obtained temporal death. Consequently the restitution through Christ would only give to the world natural life and a natural body, at their restitution, such as Lazarus and Jairus' daughter had when brought to life again. Of the church—the dead in Christ, at His coming—alone it is said, "Sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body." All others rise fleshly, natural bodies and liable to die again.

The Law contains no higher promise than that of natural life. "That thy days may be long upon the land;" and no threatening more severe than temporal death. They "that disobeyed were to be stoned or thrust through with a dart." Eternal life or death are not mentioned in it. The Jews had an *idea* of a future life in Christ's day, but not from the law. The

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\*We of course recognize the fact that in the Scriptures both Life and Death are used metaphorically.

heathen had an *idea* also without any revelation,—simply a guess. For “Christ brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” (II Tim. 1 : 10.) If he brought it to light, it was not brought to light by Moses.

We find the matter clearly stated in Rom. 5 : 18, 19 ; “as by the offense of one [Adam] judgment came upon *all men* to condemnation ; [death] even so, by the righteousness of one, the *free gift* came upon *all men* unto justification of life ; for as by one man’s [Adam’s] disobedience *many* were made sinners, so by the obedience of one [Christ] shall many be made righteous,” (i. e., justified to life as above).

They rise simply to have during the millennial age what *we* have had during our lifetime, viz. : To hear of the love of God and death of Jesus for them, and to have an opportunity to accept of Him. They will not all receive Him, for we read of “a great company being cast into the lake of fire, the second death ;” even at the end of this millennial age (Rev. 20 : 9), when they have had a knowledge of the truth, which will then have been testified to every man.

Now we can understand I Tim. 9 : 10. “We trust in the living God, who is the *Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.*” All men are to be saved from all they lost in Adam ; while those that believe—the church—have an *especial* salvation—the *eternal*.

Not a second chance ; it cannot be another or a second chance unless they have had one, and we have just found that so far the masses have had

none; no! We advocate no second-chance for any man, but refer to Heb. 6 : 4, 6, and 10 : 26, 28—If we sin wilfully, turn our backs upon God's salvation and the blood of the covenant, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for such. Christ died *once* for all, and it will be testified *once*, but He will die a second time for no one. "He dieth no more."

To the justice and mercy and love of this plan of God, when realized, we think the church and world can say "Amen. True and righteous are thy judgments, Lord God Almighty." It makes a harmony out of the various, heretofore conflicting texts of scripture; we can see, now, how and why some were chosen or elected in Christ; how and when God is no respecter of persons, and the grace for all who will receive it with ample place for all the scripture supposed to teach universal eternal salvation, and with it all, begin to see a depth and scope to God's plan we never before dreamed of. With Cowper we would say—

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
But trust Him for His grace;  
Behind a frowning countenance  
He hides a smiling face.

"His purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will be the flower."

When will this grand, glorious age of restitution begin? Peter says, at the coming of the Lord; "whom the heavens 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 3 : 21 ) We read of the restoration of Israel and other nations in Jeremiah, Isaiah, and the minor prophets : and also of the earth being restored to Edenic beauty, when the wilderness shall blossom as the rose, &c. ; and the church, in general, believe in the restoration of a living remnant of Israel to their own land and to God's favor, but as a rule they have never thought of the prophecy embracing the dead as well as the living, and other nations as well as Israel. But these things are mentioned in the same Bible.

In Ezekiel 39 : 21-29, God tells how He has cast off Israel into captivity for their sins ; and " there fell they all by the sword ;" (v. 23) but He promises to bring the whole house back into their own land. Then speaking of the gathering as accomplished, He says, " I have gathered them into their own land, and left none of them any more there" (v. 2<sup>o</sup>). They fell by the sword, died, and He brought them all back again into their own land.

But Israel was a peculiarly favored people, says one. We remember Paul speaks of their restitution in Rom. 11 : 25 to end. (Read carefully.) " They are beloved for the father's sakes ;" therefore, they are all concluded in unbelief that God may have mercy upon *all*, and they are to " obtain [this] mercy through your [the church's] mercy." Perhaps this restitution refers only to this people ; not to all nations. David says : " All nations which thou hast made shall come and worship before thee;" [Christ] Numbers of nations never yet worshipped, either



from love or fear. The Sodomites were such a nation. Let us consider their case next. Surely, they were a sample of the ungodly ; there was no special favor of God ever manifested toward them as a people, neither was there any remnant of them left, when God rained " fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them *all*." And yet, of these Sodomites we read, (Exek. 16: 48 to 63) that Israel shall return to *her former estate* at the same time that Sodom and Samaria return to their former estate (vs. 53 and 55). In verses 49 and 50 we are told what Sodom's sin was ; and, says the Lord, " I took them away as I saw good." He saw good to take them away without their coming to a knowledge of Christ ; it was not *due time* for that *to be testified* ; but it will be in the future. God proposes to bring them back to their former estate ; what they lost by sin and death entering the world through the first Adam is to be restored in the second, and they will have the same opportunity that he had, and better, in that the old serpent, the devil, Satan will be bound [or evil restrained] that he may deceive the nations no more until the thousand years are expired. But some one, not yet satisfied, says, perhaps God is speaking ironically, and means that he would as soon think of bringing Sodom and Samaria back as Israel. Friend, read carefully vs. 60-63, and you will no longer think so ; remember also that Sodom had been destroyed nearly a thousand years before this prophecy was made.

This helps us to understand—" God is His own interpreter"—what Jesus meant when He said it would

be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment than for the Jews whom He addressed ; He declares that if the same mighty works had been done in Sodom, she would have repented long ago. Well, Lord, why were such mighty works not done there, so that they had repented ? It was not their due time ; they were not on trial. In (their day of trial, when they are on probation for eternal life) their "day of judgment" (not a 24-hour day, but the millennial or judgment age) they will fare better than the Jews—have fewer stripes. "It will be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."

All must be judged or tried, and "judgment must begin at the house of God"—the church. It did. Christ, the head, was tried in all points, yet without sin. We, the members of that house, are now on trial. We will not come into the judgment—or trial with the world. "We shall not come into condemnation, (judgment—Krisis) but are passed from death unto life ;" because of faith we are covered by Christ's righteousness ; because of the blood of Christ, our Paschal Lamb, sprinkled on our hearts and having that Lamb in us, we, the *first born*, are *passed over*.

But after the House, all the world will come into trial for life (judgment, Krisis). Those who accept of God's conditions will be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, (Rom. 8 : 21) ; those who will not have the gift of God must die the second, the eternal death.

When the world is on trial we shall be the judges; for, "know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" It is here that the parable or the sheep and goats is laid, when the son of man shall sit on the *throne of His glory*. It is during the millennial age that He does sit on the throne of His glory; and the overcomers sit with Him in the throne. *Then* before Him are gathered all nations, and the sheep will be separated from the goats; they do not stand in rows nor all at once any more than the church has while she has been on trial; the separating being a gradual work dependent upon their acceptance or rejection of God's grace and truth. The things of their past lives for which they must answer being inasmuch as ye have or have not done unto "the least of these my brethren" (the church seated in the throne).

We conclude, then, that it was necessary that evil should enter the world, so that by contact with it and its results—misery and death—we might forever know good from evil. In no other way, perhaps, could God so fully make known to His creatures His various attributes—justice, mercy, love, etc.

In the age which ended with the flood, God measurably left mankind to themselves, without law or control. In the results—degeneracy and corruption, demonstrating to us, that unassisted our tendency is downward. During the Jewish age, the law was given—not to give life, "For the Law could not give life" but to show them and us how far short we come of perfection, even at our best; that so we might realize the necessity of salvation as a "gift of God" which we could not merit by the works of the Law.

## OUR LORD'S RETURN.

It was given "because of transgression *until* THE SEED should come" (Gal. 3 : 19 and 29). It was simply a system of types, etc., "a shadow of good things to come"—the gospel,—and served as "a schoolmaster to [educate] bring us to Christ," in whom alone we can receive eternal life. This brings us to the Gospel Age, when although the scope of the Law—in spirit, is broader, deeper and more comprehensive than the letter, yet we can be justified through faith ; "For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh ; that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." (Rom. 8 : 34.)

All these various parts of God's great plan we find working in harmony with each other, and with His own nature. In no other way could our minds recognize the justice of God in utterly destroying many nations before Israel—men, women and children—except that He "slew great kings, for His mercy endureth forever." "He overthrew Pharaoh and his host, for His mercy endureth forever." Yes, the fact that "His mercy endureth forever" explains all this ; and it is twenty-six times repeated in this 136th Psalm. Now we can realize more fully than ever before, His wondrous love ; and as we kneel alone before Him we can feel that He is worthy of all homage and worship, for not only "God is *Love*" and "His *mercy* endureth forever," but when our substitute tasted death for all, "He is *just* to forgive." Our feelings are well expressed by St. Paul, when writ-

ing on the same subject (Rom. 11 : 33)—“ O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ; how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out ! For who hath known the mind of the Lord ? ”

Truly the plan of God does show us the object of our Lord's return. He comes to organize the *one seed* by which Satan is to be bruised—evil restrained and in which “ all the kindreds of the earth shall be blessed.”

He comes to glorify or set up His kingdom—the church—that as we have “ suffered with Him we may also reign with Him.” “ That the saints of the Most High may take the kingdom under the whole heavens and possess it forever.” In taking possession, it “ consumes and breaks in pieces all these kingdoms [not the people but the governments] and it shall stand forever.” “ Wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, for my determination is to gather the nations that I may assemble the kingdoms to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger, for the *whole earth shall be devoured* with the *FIRE of my jealousy*. For then will I turn to the people a pure language that they *may all* call upon the name of the Lord to serve Him with one consent.” (Zeph. 3 ; 8). This chastisement of the world is not because God takes pleasure in human suffering, for “ He doth not willingly afflict the children of men,” but for their good ; and it is gratifying to learn that “ when the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” When He hath made wars to

cease unto the ends of the earth, by the desolations which He hath made. (Ps. 46 : 8, 10). When He has established His kingdom ; then "peace shall flourish." "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Now "The devil is the prince of this world." Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world," but when "He shall take unto Him His great power and reign," when "the kingdom is the Lord's and He is *the Governor among the nations* ; [then, and not till then] all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship Him."

He comes now as "the desire of all nations." At the first advent there was no beauty in Him that they should desire Him.

He comes to bring about the great restitution which was so beautifully represented and shadowed forth under the Law in "the year of Jubilee," in which every man was restored to all His possessions, and to personal liberty. (Lev. 25 : 13.) The millennial reign is the great antitypical jubilee, (the substance which cast the shadow in the Law) in which every man will have restored to him in the second Adam just what he lost in the first Adam, and have an opportunity to know God and to learn of that only name by which they can be saved—Jesus ; who tasted death for every man, to be testified in due time. Then the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose, the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, they shall see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God. (Isaiah 35 : 1, 2.)

Now we all suffer from the sin of Adam, and the errors of our ancestors, even the innocent babe of an hour old, but "In those they shall say no more, the fathers have eaten a sour grape and the children's teeth are set on edge; but every one shall die for his own iniquity; every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Jer. 31 : 29; 30; Ezek. 18 : 3.)

Shall we not, then, take up the strain which employed the apostles and prophets of old! Will the hope of the coming of the Bridegroom, which inspired with zeal the early church, not now energize us to strive for the prize of our *high calling* which is of God, in Christ Jesus? Verily He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself. (1 John 3 : 3)

Lift up your heads, desponding Pilgrims,  
Give to the winds your needless fears;  
He, who hath died on Calvary's mountain,  
Soon is to reign a thousand years.

Tell the whole world these blessed tidings,  
Speak of the time of rest that's near;  
Tell the oppressed of every nation,  
Jubilee lasts a thousand years.

What if the clouds do for a moment,  
Hide the blue sky where morn appears;  
Soon the glad sun of promise given,  
Rises to shine a thousand years.

A thousand years earth's coming glory,  
'Tis the glad day so long foretold;  
'Tis the bright morn of Zion's glory,  
Prophets foresaw in times of old.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE MANNER OF CHRIST'S SECOND COMING.

Having considered the object of our Lord's return, the manner in which He will come becomes to all "who love His appearing" one of great interest, and invites your attention. The reader will please bear in mind that the subject is here treated abstractly, without the least reference to the time of the event, whether it be nigh, even at the door, or thousands of years future; and further, that these pages were not written for the world, but for "the household of faith" for those who accept the Bible as God's word, and "who by reason of use have their senses exercised." (Heb. 5 : 14.) Experience has proven what Scripture so plainly declares, viz. : that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God;" he can understand the arguments but "they are fooli-huess unto him. Neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned." (I Cor. 2 : 14)

In order that we may have a good foundation, and as a basis for further investigation, we will first enquire, what is a spiritual body?—what powers are theirs, and by what laws are they governed? We are here met by the objections—we have no right to pry into the hidden things of God; and, "Eye hath not seen, ear heard, neither have entered into the



heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for those that love him." To both of these propositions we assent, but believe we cannot find out by studying God's word—and our investigation will be confined to it—what He has not revealed. The above quotation of scripture, (I Cor. 2 : 8) refers to the natural or carnal man, and by reading it, in connection with the three verses following it, the objection vanishes ; for, says the apostle, " God hath revealed them unto us by His spirit," which was given to us that " we *might know* the things freely given unto us of God ;" and in the last clause of vs. 13, he gives us the rule by which we may know, viz. : " Comparing spiritual things with spiritual." We are very apt to invert this rule and compare spiritual things with natural, and thus get darkness instead of light. Let us now use the apostle's rule.

There is a spiritual body as well as a natural body ; an heavenly as well as an earthly body ; a celestial as well as a terrestrial. They are distinct and separate. (I Cor. 15 : 38-49.) We know what the fleshly—natural body is, for we now have such a one ; it is flesh, blood and bones ; for " that which is born of the flesh is flesh," and as there are two kinds of bodies, we know that the spiritual is not composed of flesh, blood and bones, whatever it is made of. It is a spiritual body, and " that which is born of the spirit is spirit." But as to what material a spiritual body is made of, we know not, for it doth not yet appear *what* we shall be ; but we shall be like Him.' [Christ]

Angels are spiritual bodies. Christ was raised

from the dead a spiritual body ; this was His second birth. First, born of the flesh a fleshly body—for, “as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same.” (Heb. 2 : 14) He was “Put to death in the flesh but quickened [made alive] by the Spirit.” He was raised a spiritual body. This resurrection was His second birth. He was the “first born\* from the dead,” “the first-born among many brethren.” The church are those brethren and will have a second birth of the same kind as His, viz. : to spiritual bodies by the resurrection, when we shall arise in His likeness—being made “Like unto *Christ's glorious body*.” But, this second birth† must be preceded by a begetting of the spirit—conversion—just as surely as a birth of the flesh is preceded by a begetting of the flesh. Begotten of the flesh—born of the flesh—in the likeness of the first Adam, the earthy ; begotten of the spirit—in the resurrection born of the spirit into the likeness of the heavenly, the second Adam. “As we have borne the image of the earthly we shall also bear the image of the

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\*The first raised a spiritual body. Lazarus and others arose, natural, fleshly bodies and died again. The next to be raised spiritual bodies are “They that are Christ's at His coming.”

†The words translated *begotten*, *begat* and *born* in our English Bibles, are all represented by the one word in the Greek, *Geneto* ; consequently we must judge as to which is the proper word, by the connection in which we find it. “Now are we the Sons of God ;” although not yet born, we are begotten sons ; so in the natural the embryo is a son before birth.

heavenly." All who are begotten of the spirit are in a sort of embryo condition waiting for the birth. The *head* [Christ] has been born ; we are waiting for the adoption, to wit : the redemption of *the body* ; and, "the whole creation groans and travails in pain," waiting for the birth of the church of the *first-born*. We hope, then, by examining facts recorded of angels, and of Christ after His resurrection to gain general information with regard to spiritual bodies ; thus "comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

First, angels can be, and frequently are, present, yet invisible ; for, "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that are His and delivereth them ;" and "are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation ?" (Heb. 1 : 14.) Are you an heir of salvation ? Then, doubtless, they have ministered to you ; have they ministered visibly or invisibly ? undoubtedly the latter. Elisha is surrounded by a host of Assyrians, his servant is fearful ; Elisha prayed to the Lord and the young man's eyes were opened and he saw the mountains round about Elisha full of chariots of fire and horsemen of fire [or like fire]. The Lord also when raised a spiritual body was *present* but *unseen* for thirty-three days and forty nights (only appearing seven times to His disciples).

Second, Angels can and have appeared *as men*. The Lord and two angels appeared to Abraham, who had a supper prepared for them, of which they ate. At first, Abraham supposed them to be "three men," and it was not until they were about to go that he discovered one of them to be the Lord, and the other

two angels, who afterward went down to Sodom and delivered Lot. (Gen. 18 : 1.) An angel appeared to Gideon as a man, but afterward made himself known. An angel appeared to Samson's mother and father ; they thought him a man until He ascended up to heaven in the flame of the altar. (Judges 13 : 20.) The angel of the Lord appeared to Moses as a flame of fire : and, " behold the bush burned, yet was it not consumed." The angel of the Lord appeared to the children of Israel in the wilderness as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. (Exodus 13 : 21 and 14 : 19.) And doubtless many similar cases will recur to the mind of the reader. In some of these cases given, they appeared as men ; but " the Lord is not a man," neither are angels men.

Third, spiritual bodies are glorious in their normal condition ; frequently spoken of as glorious and bright. The countenance of the angel who rolled away the stone from the sepulchre " was as the lightning." Daniel saw a glorious spiritual body whose eyes were as lamps of fire, his countenance as the lightning, his arms and feet like in color to polished brass, his voice as the voice of a multitude ; before him Daniel fell as a dead man. (Daniel 10 : 6.) John, on the isle of Patmos, saw Christ's glorious body, (Rev. 1 : 14) and describes the appearance in almost the same language—His voice was as the sound of many waters, His eyes as lamps of fire, His feet like fine brass as it burns in a furnace, (so bright that you can scarcely look at it), John falls at His feet as dead ; but He said to Him fear not ; I

am He that was dead ; behold I am alive forevermore. Saul of Tarsus saw Christ's glorious body. It shone above the brightness of the sun at noonday. Saul lost his sight and fell to the ground, &c.

We have thus far found spiritual bodies truly glorious ; yet, without a miracle, either the opening of our eyes to see them, or their appearing *in the flesh as men*, they are invisible. This conclusion is further confirmed when we examine the more minute details connected with these manifestations. The Lord was seen of Saul alone, "they that journeyed with him....seeing no man." (Acts 9 : 7.) The men that were with Daniel did not see the glorious being he describes, but a great fear "fell on them and they ran and hid themselves." Again, this same glorious being declares : (Daniel 10 : 13) "The prince of Persia withstood me one and twenty days." "Daniel, the man greatly beloved" of the Lord, falls as dead before this one whom Persia's prince withstands one and twenty days ! How is this ? Surely, He did not appear in glory to the prince ; no ; either He was invisibly present with him, or else He appeared *as a man*.

But Christ is also a spiritual body since His resurrection. During the forty days of His presence before ascension, He appeared some seven or eight times to His disciples ; where was He the remainder of the time ? Present, but invisible. Notice also, that in each instance He is said to have *appeared*, or He *showed Himself*, language never used of Him before His change from a natural to a spiritual body ; now as angels He *appeared*. Not only so, but He

appeared in different bodies : as the gardener to Mary ; “ after that, He *appeared in another FORM*, to two of them as they went into the country.” (Mark 16: 12.) Afterwards He appeared in a body, either the same or like the one crucified, having the marks of the spear and the nails. “ He came and stood in their midst, the *doors being shut*.” On these various occasions He *appeared*, talked with them, then vanished out of their sight as the wind ; they could not tell whence He came nor whither He went. “ So is every one that is *born of the spirit*.” When we are born of the spirit, (at the resurrection) we can do so also. All spiritual beings exhibit this same power. But Jesus said : “ handle me ; for a spirit [*pneuma*] hath not *flesh and bones*, as ye see me have” and He ate with them. True ; I believe it. So did the angels [*pneuma*] (Heb. 1 : 7), appear *as men in flesh and bones* ; they ate also ; their spiritual bodies did not eat, nor were they flesh and bones, but the body in which they *appeared* was flesh, and it ate. The disciples did not see Christ’s glorious spiritual body ; but as He *appeared* in a fleshly body. St. Paul teaches us distinctly that Christ was raised from the dead a life-giving spirit, [*pneuma*, the same word used by our Lord.] (I Cor. 15 : 44, 45.) But where did He get the various bodies in which He appeared ? I cannot answer you ; but I believe, and you do also, other things which we cannot understand. I cannot understand *how* that grain of wheat grows. Yet I know it does. I know not *how* Christ turned the water into wine, or healed the sick, or raised the dead. Yet I believe that He did these things. Can you

tell me where He got the clothes He wore after His resurrection? "They parted His raiment among them, and for His vesture they cast lots"—the old were gone, and the linen cloths lay in the sepulchre. Is it more difficult for spiritual beings, with their powers, to create a covering of flesh than a covering of cloth? No; the same power can and did do both.

Thus we have found Christ's spiritual body like those of angels; glorious, yet invisible to mortals, with power to manifest the glory, or appear as a man or in any form He may choose. In the resurrection we shall be like the angels; and "like unto Christ's glorious body." We shall be like Him; for, [not 'til then] we shall see Him as *He is*," for though we have known Christ after the *flesh*, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." [after the flesh.] (II Cor. 5: 16.) Such a spiritual being was Christ, at the time of His ascension, and with what we have learned of the powers of that spiritual body, we are now, we hope, prepared to enquire:

#### "HOW WILL HE COME AGAIN?"

Briefly stated, we believe the scriptures to teach, that, at His coming and for a time after He has come, He will remain invisible; afterward manifesting or showing Himself in judgments and various forms, so that "every eye shall see Him."\*

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\*This scripture does not necessarily teach that every eye will see Him at the *same moment*. A similar statement is made of the Resurrection. "All that are in their graves hear the voice of the Son of Man and come forth." Taken by itself this seems to teach of the resurrection *all at once*. Yet we

"Every eye shall see Him" as *He will appear*; but "*without holiness no man shall see the Lord*" as *He is*. "We shall see Him as *He is*, for we shall be like Him."

#### SOME OF THE SCRIPTURE PROOF.

"Behold, I come as a thief" is the way He frequently spoke of His coming to His disciples. He comes "as a thief" for the church—the waiting virgins; both "they that sleep in Jesus"—the first resurrection—and "we, who are alive and remain," "shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air; so shall we ever be with the Lord."

"Forever with the Lord,  
Amen, so let it be;  
Life from the dead is in that word,  
'Tis immortality."

"In that day two shall be in the mill, two in the field, two in bed; one be taken and the other left"—like Enoch, who "was not, for the Lord took him." The world will go on with its affairs, unconscious of the great changes of dispensation. But will they not miss the church? So many? Nay, but so few of the church. It is only *the overcomers* that sit on the throne. It is but a "*little flock* to whom it is the

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learn that "Blessed and holy are *all* they that have part in the first resurrection." So all shall be cognizant of His presence though not all at the same moment. "He will be revealed in flaming fire taking vengeance;" whether this refers to the "fire of His jealousy—wrath—by which the whole earth is to be devoured," (Zeph. 1: 18 & 3: 8) or an appearing in a visible flame as the angel appeared to Moses in the bush, is not clear. We incline to the former.



Father's pleasure to give the Kingdom." These are "the Temple;" these "the Bride;" "these follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth;" "these are redeemed *from among* men, and are a *first fruit* unto God and the Lamb." (Rev. 14: 6.) These have obeyed the Master's injunction: "Take heed, lest your hearts be overcharged with the cares of this life, and so that day come upon you *unawares*; for as a snare shall it come upon all them [who are over-charged] that dwell upon the face of the whole earth." (Luke 21: 35.) These are "*accounted* worthy to escape all these things ('the day of wrath on the world;'" "the time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation")—They "stand before the son of man." But there are numbers of over-charged christians who will not be counted worthy to escape (caught up to meet Him); servants, but not overcoming servants; not hypocrites, but "they shall have their portion with the hypocrites." They did not build "with gold, silver, precious stones," and do not have the abundant entrance; but they built upon the *rock* and "themselves shall be saved, as by fire." Many will be purified of their dross in that fire. "When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."

These, doubtless, constitute a part of the "great company that no man could number," who "come up out of [ek, after] great tribulation." This countless company is not the "little flock," "the temple," nor do they "*sit in the throne*," but these "serve God in His temple," and are *around the throne*;

these "*washed* their robes," (Rev. 7: 9-17) while the "little flock" have *white robes granted* or given to them, Christ's righteousness. (Rev. 19: 8.) No; the "little flock," — the bride, — is a very select company. There will be so few taken from the present generation that they will not be much missed. True, the foolish virgins will miss them; (virgins, undefiled, but not wise); they will recognize the fact that the others have gone into the marriage, when they say "Lord, Lord, open unto us." But Christ has but *one bride*; the door to that marriage is forever closed. Christian brethren will know, but the *world* will not believe in translation; and in the time of trouble which follows the taking away of the "salt of the earth," newspaper reporters will have little difficulty in accounting plausibly for their disappearance; for "not many great, wise, rich, or mighty, hath God chosen, but the poor of this world, rich in faith, *heirs of the kingdom.*"

The second advent, like the first, covers a period of time, and is not the event of a moment. The first lasted nearly thirty-four years; and the events connected with it — His birth, baptism, sorrow death, resurrection, etc., as mentioned by the prophets, all took place *at* the first advent. The second advent, as we have seen, lasts much longer. It includes the millennial reign, and prophecy covers all the prominent features of that reign. He comes to reign — must reign until He has put down all enemies; the last being death. (1 Cor. 15: 25.)

In the application of prophecy to the events of the first advent, we recognize order. Christ must be the

"*child born and son given*" before "*the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.*" He must *die* before He could *rise* from the dead, etc. So also in studying prophecy referring to the second advent we must recognize order; we must judge of the order somewhat by the character of the event. As the wife is the *glory* of the husband, so the Bride is the glory of Christ, for "*we are called to eternal glory by Christ Jesus;*" and are to be "*partakers of of the glory that shall be revealed,*" (I Pet. 5: 1-10.) and as "*the glory shall be revealed in us.*" (Rom. 8: 18.) We know that Christ could not come in the glory of his kingdom [church] until he has first gathered it from the world, and in harmony with this thought we read—"When *He* shall appear, we also shall appear with Him in glory." (Col. 3: 4.)

The prophets foretold the sufferings of Christ [head and body] and the glory that should follow. If the sufferings were of the *whole body*, so is the *glory* we suffer with him that we may be also "*glorified together.*" (Rom. 8: 17.) "Enoch prophesied saying—the Lord cometh *with* ten thousands of his saints." [gr. *hagios*, never translated angel.] (Jude. 14) Again, (Zach. 14: 5,) we read—"the Lord my God shall come and *all thy saints with thee.*" Thus we learn that when He *appears* in glory we are with Him, and of course we must be caught to meet Him before we could appear with Him.

We have further evidence to offer, proving that He comes unknown to the world; but will attempt to answer two supposed objections first; viz.: "This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as

ye have seen Him go into heaven," (Acts 1: 11.) and "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel and the trump of God ; and the dead in Christ shall rise." (I Thes. 4 : 16.) These texts are supposed to teach that Christ will come visible to every eye, while the air is rent with the blast of the arch-angel's trumpet ; at which, mid reeling tombstones and opening graves the dead will be resurrected. It certainly has that appearance on the surface, and doubtless was intended to be so understood until due, [so also at the first advent] but look at it again ; would that be coming in *like manner* as they saw Him go? He did not go with the sounding of a trumpet and outward demonstration. It does not say *you shall see* Him coming, nor that *any one* would see, but—He shall so come. For instance, the Prince Imperial of the French visits Paris under disguise as a civilian ; as he leaves Paris his servant says to you, privately, "this same Prince shall so come again in like manner as you have seen him go from Paris." Whether you or any one will see him is not mentioned, simply the *manner* in which he will return. You would understand the servant doubtless to mean that the Prince would come back privately. If he should return in all the glory of the French Empire, bands playing, trumpets sounding and cannon roaring, with thousands of soldiers in attendance, you would say that his servant had either ignorantly or wilfully misinformed you. Our Prince left the glory which he had with the Father, made himself of no reputation, took upon Him the form of a servant, etc.

When He visited us He went away unglorified ; His servant, the angel, said—"He shall so come in like manner." When he arrives it will be privately. He comes to organize us, as his kingdom; to set us up. He comes to be glorified in his saints in that day. (II Thes. 1 :10.) The world saw him not after His resurrection, they did not see him ascend. As He said, "yet a little while and the world seeth me no more," nor will they see him at the second advent until His church is gathered, for "when he shall *appear* we also shall *appear* with him." What then does the trumpet mean? Let us see. We are to be rewarded "at the resurrection," we surely will not be rewarded twice nor resurrected twice. We conclude, therefore, that the "Trump of God," (I Thes. 4: 16) and the "Last Trump," (I Cor. 15 : 52,) are the same, differently expressed ; the same events are mentioned as occurring at each, viz.: the resurrection and reward of the saints, and for the same reasons we believe the "Trump of God" and "Last Trump" to be the "Seventh Trump" of Rev. II : 15-18. Under it also the dead are judged and the prophets and saints rewarded. Therefore the "Seventh Trump" is the "Trump of God," and the "Last Trump."

These trumpets evidently are the same, but what? The seventh angel *sounded*. A sound on the air? No, not any more than the six which preceded it. They are each said to sound, and Sir Isaac Newton, Clarke, and all commentators of note agree that five

or six of these trumpets are in the past.\* They have been fulfilled in events upon the Earth, each covering a period of time. They certainly must all sound before the resurrection, for that is under the seventh. It is in the *days* (symbolic time, all the other features are symbolic years) of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound [or fore part] the mystery [Gospel Church] of God shall be finished.

If the Seventh trump were to make a sound on the air, it would not only be out of harmony with the other six of the series, but also with all of God's past dealings with the children of men. That it covers "the great day of His wrath," the time of judgments upon the kingdoms of the world and of the pouring out of the "seven vials" of His wrath, the "time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation" seems more than probable, for we are told in the same sentence of the wrath of God coming on the nations.

Each of these trumpets are sounded by an angel, i. e., the events mentioned are directed or controlled by an angel; hence might well be said to be their voice. We know that signs speak, and that sometimes events or "actions, speak *louder than words.*" Of the names of the angels directing the first six of the series we know nothing, but Paul seems to teach

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\*The writer believes that we are now living under the sounding of the *Seventh*, that it has been sounding for more than thirty years, and continues during the time of trouble, and until the Kingdom of the Lord is Universal Empire.

that the Seventh is under the control of the *arch-angel*; and this seems to bring a connection between the time of wrath under the seventh trump, and the "time of trouble" of Dan. 12: 1, under "Michael;" for Jude informs us that *Michael, is the arch-angel*. Verse 2 connects this with the resurrection also.

We see then, that the sounding of the trumpets, and so coming in like manner, do not conflict but rather add force to the fact that He comes "un-awares," "as a thief" and steals away from the world His treasure, His jewels;" remember too that this is Christ the spiritual body, that could not be seen without a miracle, that was present yet unseen during thirty-three days after his resurrection.

But will the world not see the saints when gathered or gathering? No: they are changed (in the twinkling of an eye) from Natural to spiritual bodies, like unto Christ's glorious body, and will be as invisible as He and angels. But those who arise from their graves?—No, they were sown (buried) natural bodies, they are raised spiritual bodies—*invisible*. Won't the world see the graves open and tombstones thrown down? A spiritual body (remember we are comparing spiritual things with spiritual not natural) coming out of the grave will not make any more of a hole in the ground than Christ's spiritual body made in the door when "He came and stood in their midst, the doors being shut."\*

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\*It should not be forgotten that only the church are raised spiritual bodies, all others, natural fleshly bodies as Lazarus, &c.

### THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST BEFORE THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH.

Christ's personal presence and ministry of three and a half years at the first advent, He terms—"*The harvest.*" It was the harvesting of the Jewish or Law age. Christ was present as the chief reaper. His disciples as under-reapers; their work was the gathering of wheat into the higher or Gospel dispensation;—that harvest ceased at His death, and was the end of that age. Jesus said to His disciples, "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest." "I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor, other men have labored [the prophets] and ye are entered into their labors" (John 4: 38.) That this work was not general, nor to the world we might presume from the fact that He confined His labors to Judea, but it is settled beyond doubt by the commission given to the disciples, viz: Go not into the way of the Gentiles and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go ye rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, (Matt. 10: 5) for "I am not sent save to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and the work to them did not cease until five days before His death, when he rode on the ass into the city, wept over it, gave them up and *their house* was left unto them desolate. Where God's favor toward them as a nation ceased, it began toward the world (Rom. 11: 30) for "Jesus Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man," and after His resurrection He sends the disciples to "preach the Gospel to every na-



tion." But it is no longer a harvest; the church does not reap but sows the seed. Paul plants, Apollos waters, God gives increase, etc. But there is to be a harvest in the end of this age, as *illustrated* in the parable of the tares and wheat, and *taught* in the explanation of the same. Notice that both wheat and tares, are in the kingdom of heaven,—the church—and that this parable, as also the other six of the series, refers not to the non-professing world, but to two classes in the church.

The Son of Man planted the church pure, all good seed. During the days of the Apostles there were special "gifts of the Spirit" such as "discerning of spirits, etc.," by which they were able to prevent *tares* getting in among the *wheat*—hypocrites getting into the church. (Instance I Cor. 5: 3.—"Simon Magus"—"Anannias and Sapphira," etc.) but when the Apostles were dead, "while men slept"—the enemy began to sow tares, among the wheat. Paul says that the mystery of iniquity had begun to work even in his day; now, they grow side by side in all our churches. Shall we separate them, Lord? No, (we might make some mistake, pull up wheat, and leave tares,) "let both grow together until the *Harvest*," (Matt. 13.) The harvest is the end of the world" [*aion, age.*] In the time of harvest I will say unto the reapers,—the reapers are the angels—"gather together *first* the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn."

Notice, this *Harvest* is the end of this age, yet, like the one ending, the Jewish age, it is a period of

time,—“In the *time* of harvest;”—secondly there is order,—“gather *first* the tares.” There will come a time, then, in the end of this age, when the reapers—angels—will be present doing some sort of a separating work in the church; and yet it is an invisible presence, for when the wheat is gathered (after the binding of the tares)—translated, when we which are alive are caught up to meet the Lord—when taken they are in the field, mill and bed; would they be so engaged if they had seen angels going about gathering tares? No; it is an invisible work, done by beings invisible without a miracle.

Again, before the living are gathered, the *dead in Christ* must have risen, whether it be but a moment before; “the dead in Christ rise *first*, then we which are alive, &c.” (I Thess. 4: 16.) This harvest is not of the living only, but also of “the dead in Christ”—“those that sleep in Jesus.” The angels gather the living, but our Lord, who is the chief reaper here, (as He was in the Jewish harvest) gathers or raises the dead. “I will raise him up;” “I am the resurrection and the life;” and in harmony with this thought the harvest is brought to our notice in Rev. 14: 15—“One like unto the Son of man, seated on a cloud,” reaps the earth. Here, two harvests, or two parts of one harvest, are shown, the second being the casting of the vine of the earth into the wine-press of His wrath; doubtless the parallel to the burning of the bundled tares (time of trouble) after the wheat is garnered. The special point to which your attention is called, however, is the fact that the harvest will go on without outward

demonstration, the chief and under-reapers being present but unseen.

#### THE PRESENCE (PAROUSIA) OF CHRIST.

Some may have confounded our remarks on the presence of Christ in a spiritual body, with the presence of the spirit of Christ ; but they are quite distinct. The latter never left the church ; consequently in that sense He could not "come again." Of His spiritual presence He said : "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." We refer to the personal presence which did go away, and will come again,—a *spiritual body*.

The Greek word generally used in referring to the second advent—*Parousia*, frequently translated *coming*—invariably signifies *personal presence*, as having come, arrived\* and never signifies to *be on the way*, as we use the word *coming*. This fact is recognized by many who are looking for the Lord, but the error under which the church in general is laboring, is that of supposing that presence implies sight, manifestation, appearance. In the Greek, however, other words are used to express revelation, appearing and manifestation, viz. : *phaneroo*—rendered shall appear in "when He shall appear, &c.,"—and *apokalupsis*†—rendered, shall be revealed—II. Thess. 1 : 7.

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\* "The emphatic Diaglott," a very popular translation from the New Testament from *Griesbach*, we believe makes no exception, always translating this word *Parousia*—presence.

† A ministering brother in the M. E. church has just called my attention to the following facts especially interesting to readers familiar with the Greek : *Apokalupto* is formed from

"When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed." But we have Christ's own words to prove that He will be present in the world, and the world will know not of it. Matt. 24: 37. We read: "As the days of Noah were so shall also the *parousia* (presence) of the Son of man be." The presence of Christ is not compared to the flood, but to the days of Noah, the days that were before the flood, as verse 38 shows; as then they ate, drank, married, etc., and

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the verb *kalypto*,—which means I cover, conceal,—compound-ed with the preposition *apo*, i. e., *apokalupto*; it means, I uncover, I reveal. In the middle voice it signifies, *I uncover, or reveal myself*. References: Luke 17: 37,—middle voice,—“when the son of man uncovers or reveals himself.” If it is claimed that the verb here is in the passive voice, it does not alter the argument any, for then we should read, as in our version, “when the son of man is uncovered or revealed.” The idea is the same in either case, viz.: something covered up or invisible, is present and has been present for some time, but now it is uncovered or revealed. So in the following references: Matt. 10: 26—here both the simple and compound form is used: “There is nothing covered (*kalypto*) that shall not be uncovered (*apokalupto*).” Matt. 11: 27; 1 Cor. 2: 10; Gal. 3: 23; Eph. 3: 5; 11 Thes. 2: 3, 6, 8. In this last passage it will be noticed that the man of sin is in existence, and just as much “the son of perdition” before as after he is uncovered or revealed. But the day comes when he is stripped of his disguise, the sheep-skin is removed, and he is shown to be a wolf; he is uncovered, revealed.

The ordinary word used for come, in the Greek, is *erkomai*, meaning I come. It occurs over three hundred times in the New Testament. But the word *eto*, also translated come, has a different meaning; it signifies completed action, as *I am come, am here, am arrived*. With this in mind, examine Matt. 24: 50:—The lord of that [evil] servant shall come [shall have come] in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of.” Also, in Luke 12: 46. These servants are saying my Lord delayeth. There is no harm in this so long as He does delay, but there will come a time when He

*knew not*, so shall also the presenee of the Son of man be. The resemblance here mentioned is that of *not knowing*.—they will *not know* of the *presence* of Christ. They may have been wicked then, and doubtless were and may be similarly wicked in His presence; but wickedness is not the point of comparison, as then they ate, drank, married—proper enough things to be doing, not sins; so shall it be in Christ's presence. Now, look at Luke 17 : 26. "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man." Verse 27 tells how it was in the days of Noah; they were eating, drinking, marrying, etc. "So shall it be in the days of the son of man." Surely the days of the son of man are not *before His days*, any more than the days of Henry Clay could be days before he was born. No; the more we examine the more we are convinced that the world will go on as usual, and know not, until "the harvest is past, the summer ended, and

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no longer delays, and the servant who says He delays is called wicked. For "yet a little while, and He that shall come—(*erkmui*, will come—*abo*, shall have come) and will not [longer] tarry." Heb. 10 : 37.

Another brother, also of the M. E. church, and for several years a professor in one of their principal colleges, being convenient to me, I called his attention to the above. After examining the text critically, he endorsed the above rendering, remarking that it was very peculiar; then happening to glance at the 46th verse of Matt. 24, he called my attention to the fact that the word there translated *cometh* is *elthom*, and signifies *after He has come*. Read verses 45 and 46 with this thought in mind. Is it possible that there will be faithful servants giving meat in due season *after* the Lord has come? It is so stated, and at that same time the evil servant will not be aware of His presence, (verse 50).

they are not in the ark, not with the little flock "accounted worthy to escape." There will be no outward demonstration of the second advent having begun, and Christ being present, until the church is gathered, whenever it takes place—soon, or in the distant future.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

The Scriptures everywhere recognize the church as the kingdom. The kingdom of heaven is likened to "Ten Virgins," to "Wheat and Tares," to a net in which are caught both good and bad fish, etc. These figures or parables represent the church in the present time, good and bad mixed, in the nominal church of Christ; they so continue to represent the kingdom until the end of this age, [world] the "harvest" time, then the wise and foolish virgins, good and bad fish, and wheat and tares are separated. This kingdom is now "subject to the powers (governments, kingdoms) that be," for "the powers that be are ordained of God." This kingdom has promise of all authority and power, and the time will come when "The kingdom (ruling power) under the whole heavens shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, and they shall possess it forever." "The little flock" to whom "it is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom" is now being tried, being made perfect through suffering, being prepared by contact with suffering and sin for the position to which they are to be exalted, that as "kings and priests" they may be able to sympathize with those over whom in the mil-

lennial age they are called to rule. We are to be joint heirs with Christ in His kingdom and throne, and cannot enter upon our reign until "He takes His great power and reigns." That will not be until the end of the world or age; for Jesus says, "My kingdom is not of this world," "The devil is the prince of this world." Christ's kingdom and ours is of the next age; then "the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory." Now He is "seated at the right hand of God," "sat down with the Father on His throne." The setting up of the kingdom is our separation from the world, foolish virgins and tares; the glorifying of the wheat which then shines forth as the sun. But how will this kingdom rule over the world? Will it have Jerusalem for its capital or seat of empire? Will Christ sit in Jerusalem upon the throne of David? "Jerusalem shall be rebuilt upon her old heaps as in the former time," Israel after the flesh will again be the chief nation, and "a praise in the whole earth;" for "the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." But fleshly Israel is not and never again will be "the kingdom of God." They were once, but it was taken from them and given to another people, children of Abraham by faith—the church. Under the sounding of the seventh trumpet all the kingdoms of the world (now under the control of Satan) become the "kingdoms of our Lord." (They pass into the possession of Christ and under the rule of His kingdom—the devil being bound.)—Rev. 20: 2. Israel, with their capital at Jerusalem, will doubtless be chief of these fleshly nations, but it will no more be the *Heavenly kingdom* than they.

Jesus says unless a man be born again, born of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God neither enter into it. (John 3: 3-5.) The kingdom of heaven is a spiritual kingdom and cannot be seen by mortals, any more than Satan's kingdom at the present time. We

never see Satan's kingdom nor his throne, but we realize its power. This accords with our Lord's statement when He was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come. He answered and said unto them: the kingdom of God cometh not with observation, [margin, outward show] neither shall they say, Lo, here! or Lo, there! For behold the kingdom of God is within you [in your midst]—certainly not in the hearts of those Pharisees. The kingdom will be present in the world, controlling it, yet unseen. How, then, can Christ sit upon the throne of David? None will argue that the throne of David, which is cast down and is to be raised up, means the pieces of wood, etc., on which David sat. What then? The word throne is there used as the representative of power—ruling authority, (we use it so to-day). When God's kingdom was on the fleshly plane, David represented Him. The throne was then the Lord's and "David sat upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord." So also of his son it is written, "Solomon sat upon the throne of the Lord in the room of his father David." It is not the piece of wood that is here referred to; words are but symbols to represent ideas. The one here represented is, that the control once vested in David, afterward thrown down, [removed] and the affairs of the earth given into the hands of the Gentiles, (Luke 21: 24) is to be restored in Christ, on a higher plane; first, the natural, afterward, the spiritual, seems to be God's order in everything.

Jerusalem, when rebuilt, will not be the kingdom of God; for all, whether born again or not, could see it. It would have outward show; men would say: Lo, here! and Lo, there! The heavenly city Jerusalem itself is the bride, the church. Come hither and I will show thee the bride; and He showed me the "*Holy Jerusalem*." In Scripture a city is frequently used as the symbol of a



government or institution. (See Isa 14: 31; Jer. 33: 5-7; Rev. 11: 2; 14: 8; 16: 19; 17: 18)

But will the world not see Christ on His throne when they shall "say to the mountains and rocks fall on us and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come." Will they see nothing? "The day of the Lord so cometh [on the world and foolish virgins] as a thief"—a snare. The class here referred to are represented as recognizing the fact, that "the great day of His wrath has come," the time of trouble; they now realize it. "He shall be revealed [to them] in flaming fire, [terrible judgments] taking vengeance, etc." What sort of rocks and mountains do you suppose they will pray to have fall on them—literal mountains? No; few saints have the faith to pray for mountains to fall, while the wicked have not faith to pray for small things; besides what would we think of a man who wanted to die and could think of no more simple method than to be crushed by a mountain. But these do not seek destruction: they want to be *covered*—protected—in this time of trouble—day of wrath—"when every man's hand is against his neighbor," when "the mountains [kingdoms] are moved out of their places;" for "all the kingdoms [mountains] that are upon the face of the earth shall be thrown down." The mountains [kingdoms] shall melt and flow down like wax *at the presence* of the Lord. During the time of commotion and general national destruction, the "dashing in pieces" of governments, men will seek protection—covering—hiding in the great and strong kingdoms of the world. Men will say there is Great Britain, Russia, etc.; they are strong, they protect their citizens, let us become citizens of such. They will seek hiding, also, in such great rocks of worldly society as Free Masoury, Odd Fellowship, etc., but none of these

(can protect fully) shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's anger. Every mountain shall be moved out of its place. Then the "stone [church] becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth." Although invisible it will be real; for, as Paul says, "the things which are *seen* are temporal, but the things that are *not seen* are eternal. It will be a peaceful kingdom: for "He maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth." Peace is established on a sure basis, by the breaking in pieces of the worldly governments. "Every man may then sit under his own vine and fig tree, with none to molest or make him afraid."

"Now the world is full of suffering,  
 Sounds of woe fall on my ears,  
 Sights of wretchedness and sorrow  
 Fill my eyes with pitying tears;  
 'Tis the earth's dark night of weeping,  
 Wrong and evil triumph now;  
 I can wait, for just before me  
 Beams the morning's roseate glow."

If this is the character of the kingdom of God, spiritual, invisible, how can we be "kings and priests," or in any way teach or minister to the world? If we are of this high order of beings, spiritual, glorious, like Christ, men in the flesh would fall before us, as Saul, Daniel and John did before glorious beings. True; but as in past ages, angels, when it was necessary, appeared *as men* under the veil of the flesh, (Heb. 10: 20) so we in the next age will appear to men. Now and in the past ages angels have been the ministers, (Heb. 1: 14) but "unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, (Heb. 2: 5) but unto Christ," head and body. (Compare Rev. 2: 27, Psalm 2: 8 and 8: 4.) Moses, as a type of Christ, illustrates this. The first tables of the law were broken in pieces, and now a second was to be given. When Moses with two tables came down the mountain,

from the presence of the Lord, his face shone, so that the people could not look at him. Afterward he put on a veil; then they came to him, he conversed with them and delivered to them the law of God. Afterward when he talked with the people he wore the veil, but when he went into the Lord's presence he laid it off. (Exod. 34: 30.) Moses was the minister in the type. We are the ministers of the new covenant—the antitype. If the type “was glorious, how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather [more] glorious?” (II Cor. 3: 9). As he did so will we do. When ministering to and teaching the people we will wear a veil,—“the flesh”—the glorious body will be covered, tho veil of flesh seen. We will appear *as men*, but when we go into the presence of the Lord we lay it off—“enter into that within [beyond] the veil.” As in the type, Moses first appeared in glory, and the people trembled and feared, so, during this time of trouble, which introduces the New Law, New Age, the Millennium, there will be outward manifestations of the power and glory of the new kingdom;” at which “all faces shall gather paleness, and their knees shall smite one against another.”

“He'll rule the world with truth and grace,  
And make the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness  
And wonders of His love.”

## CHAPTER IV.

## WHAT I SAY UNTO ONE I SAY UNTO ALL, WATCH.

The positions taken we believe to be strong. They commend themselves as strong to thinking christians because of the vast amount of scripture which favor them. Because they harmonize what has been to many minds contradictory statements and teachings in the Bible; show a harmony between the character of God and his works; and display His attributes, *mercy, justice, love, etc.*, to perfection. We believe that the real object of the second advent has been presented.

The manner we think, equally well established, whether it be an event of our lifetime or not. But for the church to be left without light on so important a subject, would seem strange, would it not? It would be contrary to precedent. Noah knew of the flood; Lot of the fire, etc. They may not have known the DAY AND HOUR, but they certainly had some knowledge of the nearness of the events before they came. Are we who expect to be gathered utterly at sea without means of knowing anything whatever about the time? Did Jesus not say, that day should not come upon those who watched, unawares? [without their knowing]. He did; but he also said "ye know not when the time is; what I say unto one I say unto all, watch." Yes, but shall we suppose that He meant watch, because you will never know, or because you know not? watch *that you may know*. Let us look at the strongest of this class of texts; "Of that day and hour knoweth no man; no not the angels in heaven; neither the Son, but my Father only: Watch ye therefore." Now notice: This does not read of that day and hour no man shall ever know—but no man *knoweth*. Jesus said that He himself did not know *then*; will he never know until he comes? Will he not know the hour before he comes—at least? (The writer does not think the *day or hour* of our translation is or

will be known; but believes the scriptures to teach that we will have a *general knowledge* of our whereabouts before that event occurs, if we are walking in the light which shines from the word). Let us look at Bro. B's illustration of

#### THE BESIEGED FORT.

The fort is besieged. The General commanding the attack sends word to all non-combatants living in and dangerously near it, that as he is about to undermine and blow up the fort; they must remove or take the consequences. But it will require some time to accomplish the work. He therefore gives them certain signals by which they may know, and says: I will display a blue signal when the excavation is complete; a red one when the powder is properly arranged; and when the fuses are laid and everything ready, a green signal; and ye may know that at four o'clock of that day, the explosion will occur. But of that day and hour knoweth no man; no not the engineers who will do the work, nor myself; God alone knows the future. What I say unto one I say unto all, watch, for ye know not when the time is. Now what would those people look for? Not the explosion—but the signals. Did the General mean for them to watch because they could never know, or in order that they might know? Undoubtedly the latter. So our captain told us to watch. Not to watch the sky, but our chart. "We have a more sure word of prophecy to which we do well to take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn," says Peter. Now, hear Paul: turn to and read carefully, I Thes. 5:1-9; try to distinguish between the church and the world; ye and you vs. they and them. "Ye brethren know that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night [on all? No, on the world and over-charged servant]—when *they* shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon *them*. The next clause tells how sudden. Not sudden like a flash of lightning, but as—and *they* shall not escape.

"But ye brethren are *not* in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief." Although in the presence of the

Son of man the world will not know, yet the church, ye brethren, are expected to know; not from outward sign but from the light shining upon the pathway. Our Father undertakes to furnish the light as fast as it is due, but we must walk in it if we would not be in darkness.

The day of the Lord is frequently referred to as a snare or trap into which those without light go unawares. *As a thief it comes stealthily.* But some think as a thief means suddenly; we think not, but if it does, then "ye brethren are not in darkness that that day should come upon you *suddenly.*" When Jesus said: "If therefore thou shalt not watch, thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." It seems as though he meant, if you are watching you shall know. Does it not?

But it is not my object in this pamphlet to call your attention more fully to the *TIME* of the second advent than I have above, in answering some of the chief objections to the investigation of it. (Those interested in knowing the evidences as to the time, I would refer to Dr. N. H. Barbour, editor of the "*Herald of the Morning*," Rochester, N. Y.) I simply add that I am deeply impressed, and think not without good scriptural evidence, that the Master is come and is now inspecting the guests to the marriage. (Matt. 22: 11.) That the *harvest* is progressing, the separation (mental) between wheat and tares now going on, and that the two in the field, mill and bed may be bodily separated at any moment, the wise virgins go into the marriage, and the door to the *high culling* be forever shut.

Even the outward signs seen by the world seem to point to the fact that a great dispensational change may be near. From their stand-point the last century would seem to be the "day of [God's] preparation." Improvements and inventions progress as never before. Now we are beginning to realize that these inventions, which in and of themselves are blessings, are, under present conditions of society, a curse. Every machine made, after a certain limit, tends to decrease the demand for each mechanic's labor; supply and demand regulates the wages he receives. To-day there is employment for less than three-fourths of the industrial labor of this as well

as other lands, and even this number average but half time; what will it be a few years hence? The prophet, describing the time of trouble, implies that it will be brought about by lack of employment. "There shall be no hire for man nor hire for beast, every man's hand against his neighbor," etc.

Yet all these things which tend to decrease the necessity of manual labor, and many more, yet undeveloped or unknown, will in the millennial age minister to the comforts and necessities of the world. In fact, humanly speaking the Millennial Era would be an impossibility without them. When the kingdom is the Lord's, right and justice will hold the reins, oppression and strikes will alike give place to equity. These inventions will be used for the benefit not alone of a class but of the whole, they will serve not merely to the accumulation of dollars, but to the intellectual enrichment of all classes, and "a 1 shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest."

Beloved, if it now fills our hearts to overflowing even to think of the many, great, exceeding precious promises made to the bride, what will the realization of them be? They all centre in and have their fulfilment when we shall be like Him, and see Him as He is. These are "good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people." (Luke 2: 11.)

Reader, are you Christ's servant? If so, are you a faithful, watching servant? Are you building on Christ, the rock? If so, with what? gold, silver, precious stones, or wood and stubble? Are you a virgin? a wise or a foolish one? You was called and accepted to run a race; so run that you may obtain. The Master saith "to him that overcometh" the prize shall be. Surely, that prize could be no greater; it is the grandest that even God can offer; to make us His sons and give us a joint-heirship with Christ. Like Paul, let us count all things as loss and dross, while we press toward the mark for the prize of our high calling.

What can you do? Believe His word; walk in the light which shines from it; live up to what you have and look for more. It will sanctify you; set you apart; separate you from the world; your thoughts, your talents, your influence and your purse. This is the Lord's rule for our sanctification:

"Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth." If you fully realize how select this "little flock" is, and how desirable a matter it is to attain it, your thought will probably be, it is too high for me: I am unworthy; I have never done anything to merit such high honors. Brother, sister, there will not be one of that bride company there because they merited it, nor because of their works. Their robes are not their righteousness; they could not appear in those. The wedding garment is Christ's righteousness—imputed—given unto us because of faith. We must believe God if we would be accepted. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." We must come to Him as little children, anxious to know and do His will if we would enter the kingdom.

The overcoming which is rewarded with a seat with Him on His throne, is not of *works*, but of *faith*. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." I would not speak disparagingly of works, except as *the ground of our acceptance*. A fountain or living stream must have an outlet; living faith will always produce works. We do not serve God to merit eternal life, but accepting it of Him as a free gift, and realizing His loving kindness, we desire to express our thanks and find an outlet, not only in speaking His praise but also in *doing* those things which are pleasing to Him.

"Behold I come as a thief: Watch!"

"Ye brethren are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief!"

"Take heed lest *your* hearts be *over-charged* with the cares of this life and so that day come upon you *unawares*."

"If thou shalt *not watch* thou shalt *not know* what hour I will come."

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