

"He Shall Appear the Second Time"

Theology, *base*  
doctrinal

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OFFICE

HIS ✓ ✓ ✓  
SURE RETURN

*The* Proof  
Purpose  
Period  
Protestants  
Prospect  
of Christ's Coming Again

by  
NORMAN B.  
HARRISON

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# HIS . . . SURE RETURN

—By—

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Author of

His Salvation as Set Forth in the Book of Romans

His In Joyous Experience, Paul's Epistle  
to the Philippians

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"He Shall Appear the Second Time" Heb. 9:28.

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PASTORS, OFFICERS AND PEOPLE  
FOR THEIR FAITHFULNESS  
TO THE  
FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROOF OF CHRIST'S COMING AGAIN

#### THE SURE TESTIMONY OF THE SCRIPTURES

Our purpose in this brief series of studies is to exalt a great and greatly needed element of Christian revelation and faith to the place of importance it occupies both in the Scriptures and in the life of the Church.

It would seem late in the day for men to scoff at the Coming of Christ, yet there are not wanting ministers of the Gospel, set to study and give to the people the true meaning of Scripture, who characterize it as "all wild fire." Such scoffing is the outcome of the combined ignorance and prejudice of unbelief.

Yet this scoffing attitude is to be expected. It is foretold. It is a milestone, divinely set in Scripture, whereby we may know how far we have travelled, namely to the borderland of the predicted age-ending Apostasy.

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of (wilfully forget)" etc. (2 Pet. 3:3-5a).

This scoffing becomes a boomerang, an added proof of the truth of Scripture concerning the Coming of Christ and concerning its near approach. To hear one deriding His coming is to have Biblical warrant for saying, "He must be coming soon. Such are the sayings of men 'in the last days.' "

Two texts come strongly to mind—Acts 1:11 and Hebrews 9:28.

"Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

These words are monumental. They mark the moment of Jesus' leaving the earth for His age-long heavenly High Priesthood. What do the Scriptures have to say to us at this juncture? Do they say He is gone forever? Never to

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return again to earth? Just the opposite. They confirm the repeated teachings of Jesus concerning His Second Advent and arouse His disciples to a vivid, expectant awaiting of His Appearing.

"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time apart from sin (bearing) unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28).

These words are the complement of Acts 1:11, in that they mark the far boundary of His heavenly ministry. (Joined with 9:24 and 9:26 they portray His three Appearings—on earth, for Salvation; in heaven, for Intercession; again on earth, for complete Redemption.) They couple the First and Second Coming in a manner most characteristic of Scripture. They carry us forward from the "sin-bearing" of His First Coming to the crowning purposes of salvation in His Second Coming.

Three lines of evidence present themselves as constituting conclusive proof of the assured return of our Lord.

### **I. The First Element of Proof is the Constant Testimony of Scripture.**

All that is needed to prove that Christ is coming back is the acceptance and acknowledgment of the Authority of Scripture. Being thoroughly satisfied that the Bible is God's book, conveying His mind, past, present, future, our next step is to sit down and read it. What does it say? If I find one clear, unequivocal statement that Christ is coming back, that settles it—else the Bible is not true. I have such a statement in Acts 1:11. It says Christ will come again in person, in bodily, visible presence. There are many more, it is true, but they only serve to confirm, with added detail, what is proved to me by this one. E.g., Heb. 9:28, above, "He shall appear the second time."

But some one says, "It means something different from what it says." Then language is valueless, and God becomes chargeable with duplicity, in using language to conceal thought rather than reveal it. The child's query is insistent: "If God didn't mean what He said, why didn't He say what He meant?"

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But I read further and find my New Testament makes reference more than three hundred times to His Coming. (One verse in every 25.) Every writer not only teaches it but brings it to the fore to such an extent that "there are more verses in the New Testament that are occupied with His second advent, than those which set forth any other truth whatever."\*

The Old Testament is yet more fully occupied with it. We think of the First Coming of the Messiah as the peculiar burden of the Old Testament. Yet this is not so. It has far more to say about the Coming, known to us as the Second, which is yet future.

This sure testimony of Scripture has always been accepted by the Church. She has embodied it in her creeds and embedded it in her hymns of praise. In the Apostles' Creed she says, "He ascended into heaven; and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead." In stately Te Deum she sings, "We believe that Thou shalt come, shalt come to be our Judge." In the more popular hymns of the Church the fact is heralded with fervent anticipation: "There'll be no dark valley when Jesus comes, To gather His loved ones home." "When He cometh, when He cometh, to make up His jewels." "Jesus, I hang upon Thy word, I stedfastly believe Thou wilt return and claim Me, Lord, And to Thyself receive."

### II. The Second Element of Proof Is the Double Prophetic Picture of Christ in the Old Testament.

This double portraiture of their Messiah was puzzling indeed to the Jews, but not to us for whom history separates the picture into two appearances. We look into the past and see the one; we must turn to the future to see the other.

1. The Suffering One, the meek, lowly, despised, the "Servant of the Lord," giving Himself in service and sacrifice. E.g., Psalm 22; Psalm 69; Isaiah 53.

2. The Kingly One, royal in person, power and prestige, subduing His enemies and those of His people. E.g., Psalm 2; Psalm 45; Psalm 72; Isaiah 11. Here He is por-

\* James H. Brookes.



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trayed successively as (1) the Son, (2) the King, fairer than the children of men, (3) the King of universal peace, (4) ruling in righteousness.

These portraits do not harmonize. Studying them the Old Testament saint found himself in a quandary. Even those who penned them cast about for the solution. They "inquired and searched diligently, searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Pet 1:10,11).

The word here used for "time" means "season," the same word Jesus used in His parting reference to the future kingdom—Acts 1:7. We know that the season of His "sufferings" and that of the "glory that should follow" are widely separated by the intervening Church Age. The one was the Feast of the Passover—the seeding of the springtime; the other will be the Feast of Tabernacles—the harvesting of the fall (so set in the Jewish calendar by the Lord Himself).

The Jews had considerable excuse for failure to discern their Messiah in His First Coming. They followed their natural desires, goaded by the galling circumstances of their political servitude. They wanted a King. In the hour of popular enthusiasm they would make Jesus King in spite of His purposes otherwise (John 6:15). Hence their rejection of the Lowly One, coming as their Kinsman-Redeemer, to ransom them into His realm of spiritual freedom.

We, who accept His First Coming, the sufferings that spell Salvation for us, have no such excuse concerning His Second Coming, in "the glory that should follow." For us the pictures are clearly and historically separated. We stand between the two. Moreover, the former having been fulfilled in exact literal detail, we are the more culpable if we treat the latter with spiritualizing unbelief.

Further, let us remind ourselves, Jesus, Peter, Paul, James, John, Jude—all whose teachings constitute the New Testament Scriptures given specifically for our admonition and guidance—all add definiteness of detail in urging us to an attitude of faith and expectancy concerning this yet future event.

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The Old Testament seer beheld on his horizon two prophetic mountain peaks. They were more or less blended in perspective, off in the distance. He scarce discerned the valley between, much less did he know what it was to contain. (The Church, brought into being by Christ's sufferings and out-poured Spirit on Pentecost—Acts 2—was a "mystery" hidden from view in Old Testament times, whose revelation was committed to the Apostle Paul—Eph. 3:1-12).

It is as though one took a position of vantage in Forest Park, looking across the city of St. Louis to the waterfront. He would see some buildings on the Missouri side of the Mississippi River and others on the Illinois side. He could not well say with certainty which is which. But now, by taking his position on Eads Bridge, over the river, everything is changed. The two water-fronts stand out distinct and separate, by no possibility confused, because the viewer and his viewpoint are between the two.

Just so with the Church. We stand between the First and Second Comings of our Lord. We cannot confuse them. For the one we must needs look back into the past; for the other we turn our gaze into the future.

The Son of God having been promised certain definitely defined glories, only Satan would rob Him of His unfolding future program. Shall His followers join hands with Satan, to conspire against Him whose right it is to reign?

### III. The Third Element of Proof Is Scripture's Significant and Inseparable Linking Together of the Two Comings.

The two uniformly fill the prophetic picture. It knows no First Coming without the Second. It does not offer one without the other. If one is true, so also the other. If one is certain, so likewise the other. From this logic, in the light of the following Scriptures, there is no escape.

Let us take our stand with the seer of Scripture and with him look down the corridor of time through the prophetic telescope.

#### 1. Genesis 3:15—The Seed's Heel and the Serpent's Head.

"It (the Seed of the woman) shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel."

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**The First Coming** saw the fulfillment of the last clause of this, the first of prophecies. Satan bruised our Saviour's heel at Calvary.

**The Second Coming** will bring to pass our Lord's bruising of Satan's head (cf. 2 Thess. 2:8). In Rev. 12:1-20:3 the whole drama is enacted. It opens with Satan's murderous attack upon Christ at His Birth (Rev. 12:1-6; cf. vs. 4 with Matt. 2:13-16). The closing act opens with Satan's casting down to earth, preparatory to the bruising of his head (Rev. 12:7-12). In the heavens his headship has been unassailable. Now the Coming of Christ brings matters to a swift climax, securing the "bruising of Satan's head" through the undoing of his two agents (19:20) and his own binding in helplessness (20:2,3). (In passing, we should note that all this has a necessary ANTECEDENT and CAUSAL relationship to the millennium of righteousness and peace (20:3-7). Until this takes place no millennium is remotely possible.)

### 2. Genesis 4-6—Four Typical Characters in Two Couplets.

**The First Coming** is typified by Cain and Abel. Abel points to One whose blood "speaketh better things than that of Abel"; Cain, to the murderous hatred of His brothers—"They hated Me without a cause."

**The Second Coming** is typified by Enoch and Noah. Let us recall that it has two phases: the rapture of New Testament saints before the Tribulation; the deliverance of Old Testament people through the Tribulation. (See, e.g., 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Zech. 14:1-4.) Enoch is the Scriptural type of the one (Heb. 11:5), taken to be "with the Lord" before the Flood; Noah, delivered through the waters of judgment, typifies the other.

### 3. Genesis 22, 24—Isaac, the Father's Son.

**The First Coming** is portrayed in Isaac, the "only son," supernaturally born and well-beloved, being offered in sacrifice by the Father (Gen. 22:1-14).

**The Second Coming** is typically set forth in chapter 24 (while the intervening chapter contains the death and burial in a Gentile grave of Sarah, mother of the nation, which is buried in the graves of the nations during

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this age (Ezek.37:11, 12)—the sending of the servant (Holy Spirit) from the Father, his securing of the bride's acceptance, his bringing her to the Son, the Son's going out to meet and take her to himself.

### 4. Psalm 2—The Son's Rejection and Reign.

**The First Coming**, in its climax at the Cross, brought a fulfillment of Psa. 2:1,2 as quoted by Peter—Acts. 4:25-28:

"Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the nations rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth against Thy holy Child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done."

This was but an initial fulfillment, continued indeed in their attitude toward His disciples—verse 29: "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings," and culminating in that which calls forth the remainder of the Psalm.

**The Second Coming**, then, is absolutely required to cope with this continued attitude of rejection—Psa. 2:6-9:

"Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

These are the very words used in the vivid portraiture of His actual future revelation—Rev. 19:15.

"And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

### 5. Psalms 22-24—The Son's Sufferings and Glory.

**The First Coming** finds prophetic portrayal in Psalm 22, in its startlingly vivid detailing of the sufferings of the Cross. It is as though the reader were brought personally into the presence of the Crucified One. We hear His cry "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" We see the attitude of men: they reproach, despise, scorn, shoot the lip, shake the head. He is poured out like water. They pierce His hands

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and His feet and cast lots for His vesture. (Detail as precise and accurate as in the Gospel narrative.)

Then the Spirit of Truth and Inspiration follows with a sequence that completes the story. The living Christ, risen, glorified, the loving, saving, sustaining Shepherd of His sheep is the theme of Psalm 23. Then follows

**His Second Coming** in power and glory, Psalm 24. The city of His rejection opens her gates to receive and acclaim Him "the King of Glory."

### 6. Isaiah 61:1-2—"The 'Year' of Acceptance and the 'Day' of Vengeance."

The **First Coming** found Jesus fulfilling, in the spirit and beneficence of His ministry, Isa. 61:1, 2a, as read by Him in the synagogue of Nazareth:

"And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And He closed the book. . . . And He began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:17-21).

Jesus refused to read further. He stopped in the middle of a sentence. "This Scripture," up to this point, was fulfilled then, and the "acceptable year" of grace is still running.

The **Second Coming** takes us on to the next words, the words Jesus left unread because they were no part of the purpose of His First Coming, "the day of vengeance of our God." This is the oft-referred-to "Day of the Lord" or "Day of Wrath," a name of The Tribulation. Thank God it is short enough to be termed a "day."

The Day of Vengeance of Isa. 61:2 is enlarged upon, with vivid portrayal of His personal coming in the role of Avenger, in Isa. 63:1-6. (Turn to it and read.) The blood here is not His own, as in the former coming, but "their blood."

*flu*  
*The Day of Vengeance is in My Heart.*

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Thus the two phrases of Isa. 61:2, uttered in one breath, are confessedly millenniums apart in their fulfillment. How wondrously does Scripture link the First and Second Coming. Who dare to take the one without the other?

**Corollary.** The above brings to mind a further linking of the two comings in the double use of the one Hebrew word, "gaal." It means "Kinsman-Redeemer," pointing to His First Coming work. It also means, repeatedly, "Kinsman-Avenger," pointing to His Second Coming work. One word is used because the one Person, our Lord Jesus Christ, combines the role of both in His two comings.

7. Matthew 16:21, 27—Jesus Foretells His Sufferings and Glory. *The Son of Man shall come.* 29.20

His First Coming, He tells them, must issue for Him in the suffering of death (21), and for them in a discipleship actuated by the same spirit of self-sacrifice (24-26), only to carry them on in the same breath to the sustaining prospect of

His Second Coming, with the glory and accompanying reward that will more than compensate (27).

ILLUSTRATED BY THE TRANSFIGURATION. In the very next verse Jesus assures them that some of them shall "see the Son of man coming in His Kingdom" (28). For this purpose He led the three up into the mount. But the scene—and this is our special interest—was a strange commingling of the sufferings and the glory. Luke tells us the heavenly visitors "talked of His decease" (9:30, 31), while the earthly observers "saw His glory" (9:32), which Peter interprets as a picturing of "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (see 2 Pet. 1:16-18).

MATTHEW 23:37-39 contains a similar conjoining of the two comings. While Jerusalem causes Him to lament now over her rejection of Him (37, 38), He turns with confidence to their changed attitude at His future appearing, when they "shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (39).

*16<sup>th</sup> coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
but will be witnesses of His Majesty.*

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### 8. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26—The Communion Table.

The **First Coming** is memorialized at the Lord's Table. The same night in which He was betrayed He took the bread and the wine, bidding us partake of them "in remembrance of Me" (23-25). In so doing we "proclaim the Lord's death" (26a). But—

His **Second Coming** is anticipated in this oft-repeated act—"Till He come" (26b). The two comings are the termini of the Table. By divine intent it fills the entire interim.

### 9. Hebrews 9:24-28—The Movements of the High Priest.

These verses portray the Three Appearings: Past, on earth (26); Present, in heaven (24); Future, on earth (28). They are the movements of the High Priest, in accomplishing redemption for the people, as typified on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16).

**His First Appearing.** The High Priest came out to the altar to make the appointed sacrifice. Then, taking the blood he went into the Holy of Holies, into the presence of God, there to present the blood of atonement on behalf of the people. Meanwhile, they stood outside, expectant, almost breathless, awaiting

**His Second Appearing.** When he came forth they were jubilant with the joy of knowing their atonement was accomplished. Their attitude of watching for his return is that also of the New Testament believer:

"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look (wait expectantly) for Him shall He appear the second time apart from sin (bearing) unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28).

### 10. Revelation 21-22—The Concluding Testimony.

In a remarkable manner the two comings are brought together in Scripture's final testimony, standing out in bold relief upon its closing pages.

The **First Coming** is constantly kept before us in the designation, "The Lamb." Seven times Christ is referred

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to as "The Lamb" (Rev. 21:9, 14, 22, 23, 27; 22:1, 3). Then our attention is turned at once to

**The Second Coming**, by the thrice repeated reference: "Behold I come quickly" (22:7); "And behold, I come quickly" (22:12); "He which testifieth these things saith Surely I come quickly" (22:20).

Having discovered throughout the Scriptures an interwoven testimony to the two comings of our Lord, intimate and inseparable, intertwined as the roots of a tree, how shall any man, son of God by virtue of the grace of His First Coming with its Cross, fail to find his heart leaping with joy at the prospect of His Second Coming with its Crown ("My reward is with Me" (12)), or how shall his lips refuse to reecho the Apostle's response on behalf of His redeemed Church, "Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus."

"Even so, Lord Jesus, come;  
Hope of all our hopes the sum,  
Take Thy waiting people home."



## CHAPTER 2

### THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST'S COMING AGAIN

#### WHAT HIS COMING WILL ACCOMPLISH

There is a word of frequent and significant use in Scripture, "Until." It is small but mighty in meaning. This little word is a divider of times and seasons. It marks a time, set in the counsels of God, that man may with certainty look forward to as a turning point in history. A study of this word "until," with its context, sheds much light upon the future purposes of God, especially in the coming of Christ a second time.

But some people profess to see no reason or occasion for Christ's return. Such an attitude evidences:

1. A woeful ignorance of Scripture. The reasoning of God's Book shows clearly why He must return.
2. A woeful lack of historical perspective, the lessons of history precluding the hope of society ever stabilizing itself while dependent upon human nature as it is.
3. A woeful want of insight into the inwardness of our present age and the forces that steadfastly refuse to come under the sway of the Cross.

**Three illustrations** may prove in point, enforcing and making evident to any thoughtful mind the full reasonableness, yea absolute necessity, of Christ having recourse to a Second Coming:

1. **CONSIDER THE INDUSTRIAL REALM.** The clashing of "interests" is common. Then they set about to find a so-called "basis of settlement." But no one thinks this to be a solving of the problem. Who has power to remove the root difficulty? It inheres in human nature. Scripture says the problem will persist until the Lord intervenes. In James we are exhorted, in the face of such occurrences, to "Be patient unto the coming of the Lord" (Jas. 5:7).

2. **TAKE THE MORAL SPHERE,** in its most palpable effect upon human life—the constant recurrence of Death. Death is the mark of man's day. It is universal and inex-

## THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST'S COMING AGAIN

orable. Death demands divine intervention. How are you going to have a millennium as long as the reaper, Death, keeps coming? And who has power to forbid Him? Only One.

Life is a grievous anti-climax. Its beginning, at the cradle, brings joy and hope; every one smiles. Its ending, at the grave, brings lament and despair; every one weeps. And there is no relief short of Christ's return. The Christian doctrine of Resurrection assures us the victory "at His Coming" (1 Cor. 15:23).

3. TAKE THE SUPERNATURAL SPHERE. The greatest power and personality in the world, short of God Himself, is Satan. He is in the heavenlies, occupying heavenly reaches of power and opportunity, right now. Who is in position to pull him down and deal him a death blow? Only One. And until He does it, through His second manifestation, "in power and great glory," Satan can laugh at man's fancied freedom and boasted "better conditions."

Many cannot bring themselves to yield to the logic of the situation. Bent on evading the necessity for divine intervention, they sing,

"O the world is growing better,  
Growing better every day;  
O the world is growing better,  
No matter what they say."

But to be consistent and Scriptural, "the world, the flesh and the devil" being the three enemies to be overcome, they must add two more stanzas to their song of assured betterment:

"O the flesh is growing better,  
Growing better every day;  
O the flesh is growing better,  
No matter what they say."

"O the devil is growing better,  
Growing better every day;  
O the devil is growing better;  
No matter what they say."

The purpose of Christ's Second Coming may be summed up in three general statements:

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### I—To Conclude the Present Age, even as His First Coming Ushered It In.

#### 1. Our age is but one of a series of dispensations.

Historians have come to realize in recent years that history is far more than a mere succession of events, that there is a philosophy of history, calling for insight into underlying causes as a key to interpretation. The Scriptures throughout are written after this manner. To regard them as a spread-out chronicle of events, not detecting the dispensations, is to miss their meaning, rob them of their movement, and leave one's self in the kindergarten class.

The Bible becomes a new book when in it we see God moving from one method of dealing with men on and forward to another, always advancing toward His fuller purposes of Grace in Christ in our age, and the yet fuller purposes of Glory in Christ Jesus in the age to come. Thus Paul orients himself, in this Gospel age, as one "Upon whom the ends of the ages are come" (1 Cor. 10:11).<sup>\*</sup> Also especially in Ephesians and Colossians, he appeals to the advance in revelation over previous ages:

"Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints" (Col. 1:25, 26. Cf. Eph. 3:1-12).

This prepares us to find definite boundaries for, and purposes in, our present age.

#### 2. Our age is bounded by two of God's "Untils."

The Mosaic Age preceding ours was characterized by prescribed sacrifices, to continue until—

"Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation" (Greek, making thoroughly right, i. e., by the better provisions and power of the New Covenant) (Heb. 9:10).

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<sup>\*</sup> The A. V. often, as here, translates the time word, "æon," by the word "world," thus obscuring the dispensational meaning. The student untrained in the original language, should have some means of distinguishing. Young's Concordance will prove most valuable.

## THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST'S COMING AGAIN

The Gospel Age, now present, is characterized by two insignia of its benefits—the Supper (our Salvation) and the Spirit (our Sanctification). Each is to continue **until**—

“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death **until** He come” (1 Cor. 11:26).

“Which (the Holy Spirit) is the earnest of our inheritance **until** the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory” (Eph. 1:14).

When this “**until**” of the far boundary of our age is reached it will end as certainly as the Old Covenant could not continue beyond its prescribed “**until**.”

### 3. The ending of this age Jesus terms a Harvesting.

“The harvest is the end of the age” (Matt. 13:39).

“Let both grow together **until** the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into My barn” (Matt. 13:30).

“And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for Thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped” (Rev. 14:14-16).

Note—(1) while human wisdom suggests the rooting out of the tares (unregenerate) from the world-field as our objective of this age, the divine reply and decree is that “both,” saved and unsaved, shall “grow together **until** the harvest,” the ending of the age by supernatural intervention. (2) This harvest-ending is effected by the personal, visible manifestation of the “Son of Man,” coming “on the cloud,” as He was seen going and as it was then promised He should return “in like manner” (Acts 1:11).

This brings before us a second clear purpose in His return:

## II.—To Deal Sovereignly and Specifically with the Separated Elements of the World-Field.

Considering the entire field it has the three present constituent elements—the Jews, the Nations, the Church.

“Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God” (1 Cor. 10:32).

*Division of Messianic*  
—21—

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Apparently we have passed into a period of preparation for this segregation, partly brought about by problems peculiar to each. The result is: The Nations have experienced a quickened national consciousness. The Jews have experienced a quickened Jewish consciousness. The Church has experienced a quickened Church consciousness. The effect for each is a heightened sense of separate and distinct identity.

In Acts 15:14-18 we have the three set forth in dispensational sequence:

**Church**—"Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name" (14).

**Israel**—"And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up" (15, 16).

**Nations**—"That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (17, 18).

### 1. The Church's "Until"—Rom. 11:25.

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

The expression "fulness of the Gentiles" is a description of the Church, complimentary of the fact that she is derived largely from Gentile sources. When this age-boundary of "fulness" is reached:

(1) Christ will come for His Church, with immediate transforming effect upon the bodies of believers: If they sleep in Jesus their bodies will be raised incorruptible; if living at the time, their bodies will be "changed" and suited to the glorified state.

"But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His Coming" (1 Cor. 15:23).

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not,

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even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1Cor. 15:51-53).

"For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our body of humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3:20, 21).

QUERY: How does one who is not looking for our Lord's return hope to get the bodies of dear ones out of the grave or have them share in millennial joy and glory?

(2) He will judge the works of believers, with a view to the rewarding of service.

"And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

"For we must all appear (be manifested) before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10).

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works" (Matt. 16:27).

"And thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:14).

"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of

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the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor. 4:5).

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 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" (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

### (3) He will claim the Church as His Bride.

"Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him" (Matt. 25:6).

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And He saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And He saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God" (Rev. 19:7-9).

And since the Bride shares the name, inheritance and glory of the Bridegroom, this assures her reigning with Him:

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His Throne" (Rev. 3:21).

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:6).

## 2. Israel's "Until"—Matt. 23:39; Luke 21:24.

"For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, until ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23:39).

"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24).

(1) Israel is to be **spiritually revived**. The blindness which overtook them at the First Coming of their Messiah, leaving their house desolate, is to have an end:

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all

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Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Rom. 11:25, 26).

(2) Israel is to be nationally restored. Jerusalem's plight of being "trodden down of the Gentiles," stretching through weary centuries, her people in captivity in "all nations," can last only until—"until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Then governmental leadership, given of God to Nebuchadnezzar when His people proved themselves unworthy, will be placed again in Israel's hand.

The prophet Isaiah looks forward with exultation to that glad day:

"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shalt thy God rejoice over thee. I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence" (Isa. 62:1-7).

(3) All this is accomplished by the **Second Coming of their Messiah.**

"I will return and will build again" etc. (Acts. 15:16).  
"Ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh" (Matt. 23:39).  
"There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer" (Rom. 11:26).

The first phase of His Coming is for His Church. The second phase is for Israel.

The prophet Zechariah pictures their state of siege, at the climax of the Tribulation, calling for a Deliverer. God uses their condition to cause their hearts to cry out for Him. Then "They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced" (Zech. 12:10); for in that hour He will come to them in person, working their deliverance.



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"Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem, to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall move toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee" (Zech. 14:1-5).

The prophet Amos closes his message with a picture of glory and blessedness for Israel thus restored (it is the basis of the quotation in Acts. 15:14):

"In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by My name, saith the Lord that doeth this. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of My people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God" (Amos 9:11-15).

### 3. The Nations' "Until"—Dan. 2:34ff; 7:9ff; 7:25ff.

Note how replete these passages are with God's recurrent "until."

"Thou sawest "until" that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that

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smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (2:34, 35, 44).

"I beheld until the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then because the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even until the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (7:9-14).

"And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him. Hitherto is the end of the matter" (7:25-28a).

These are awe-inspiring Scriptures. The boundaries of human government are as clearly set as anything in God's revealed Word. In its nation-ward effect:

(1) The Coming of Christ will close their career in judgment. The nations are His inheritance (Psa. 2:8). Since they will not own His sway through the Gospel, He is bidden of God to use another method—that of force:

"Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth

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for Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Psa. 2:8, 9).

(2) The Coming of Christ will **supplant their regime with His own**. See Daniel 2 and 7, quoted above, with many other Scriptures.

(3) The Coming of Christ will **bring spiritual blessing to the nations**.

"And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles" (Zech. 14:16).

From all this the third purpose of His coming naturally follows:

### III—To Bring About the Promised Restoration of All Things from the Curse.

This Age's "Until" is in Acts 3:19-21:

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, that so may come times of refreshing from the face of the Lord, and (that) He may send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."

Note—"He shall send Jesus Christ whom the heaven must receive **"until"**—only until. When that time-boundary is reached and the promised **"times of restoration"** have arrived, no power in heaven or hell, or even the unbelief of earth, could keep Him from being manifested again to human eye. This God has taken pains to affirm "by the mouth of all His holy prophets from of old," beginning with Enoch (Jude 14, 15).

This is His visible manifestation in power and glory, spoken of frequently by Jesus, and confirmed to us by many other Scriptures.

"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:30).

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This "manifestation of His presence" (2 Thess. 2:8; Greek—"epiphany," the breaking forth or clear outshining of glory which no unbelieving eye has hitherto witnessed) no power, man or devil, can withstand.

### 1. His manifestation will banish Satan and Death.

"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:26).

To destroy death, He must "destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14). This undoing of Satan's kingdom, begun at the Cross (John 12:31), is consummated in His revelation and kingdom.

Following His coming (Rev. 19:11ff) the record is largely occupied with its triumphant undoing of the kingdom of evil.

"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh" (Rev. 19:20, 21). Cf. 2 Thess. 2:8—"And then shall that Wicked One be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming."

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season" (Rev. 20:1-3).

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:6).

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev. 20:10).

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"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death" (Rev. 20:14).

### 2. His manifestation will lift the curse from all creation.

"For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom. 8:19-22).

The beneficent effects upon nature, removing all fierceness from animal life and all blight from vegetation, is vividly woven into the prophet's picture of Messiah's righteous rule, quoted below.

### 3. His manifestation will usher in His glorious reign of righteousness, peace, and prosperity.

From many passages we select the most complete—  
Isa. 11:1-10.

The righteous King—"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and the Branch shall grow out of His roots: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears: but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins" (1-5).

The restoration of nature—"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fating together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (6-9).

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Jew and Gentile alike blessed—"And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and His rest shall be glorious (10).

Thus the "Rod" and "Root" of Jesse realizes the glory promised at His birth:

"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His Father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32, 33).

## CHAPTER 3

### THE PERIOD OF CHRIST'S COMING AGAIN

#### THE TIME TERMED "THE GREAT TRIBULATION"

In a day when doubt of the supernatural is deepening into gross materialism there is great need of reminding ourselves from Scripture that in God's revealed program the most startling supernatural events of history are still before us.

The Bible student knows that the future coming of Christ is not a single event, but rather a double: first, for the Church—His Parousia; second, for Israel—His Epiphany or open manifestation. Between these two is a period, known as The Great Tribulation. We have already had occasion to refer to it. Intimately bound up with the Coming of Christ, we cannot understand the one without the other.

A complete study calls for seven things to be said concerning it.

#### I. The Fact of the Tribulation.

"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matt. 24:21, 22).

Note, it is a time (1) definitely determined—"then"; (2) unparalleled in history, never to be repeated; (3) graciously limited in duration.

Equally explicit is Jesus' teaching concerning His coming in glory as to its relation to the Tribulation:

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:29, 30).

In the Revelation, 7:14 (R.V.), it is spoken of as "The Great Tribulation," not merely an experience but a recognized period, well known to prophetic revelation.

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The prophet Daniel refers to it under the same designation as used by Jesus, timing it with equal definiteness:

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book" (Dan. 12:1).

All the prophets, using varying description and imagery, declare the fact of this approaching time—a time of darkness, trial, suffering and sorrow—a "Fast" in the sequence of "Feasts of the Lord"—before the day breaks in light, and joy, and peace.

### II. The Nature of the Tribulation.

This is best known through the name most generally given to it, "The Day of the Lord."

The name marks a change of method, the "Grace" of the Gospel giving way to what He terms "His Strange Work."

"For the Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work: and bring to pass His act, His strange act" (Isa. 28:21).

The historical allusions are to events that strikingly typify a like divine wrath and intervention in the Tribulation.

This is Man's Day. He is left much to his own devices. God seldom protests. Man, in consequence, has come to regard the earth as his own and himself as its permanent, all-powerful possessor, ad libitum.

But now the Lord's Day looms, a day in which God will take a strong hand. Of many Scriptures we turn to Isaiah 2, selecting a few verses, though we urge the reading of the whole chapter:

"The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low" (Isa. 2:11, 12).

"And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols He shall utterly abolish. And they shall go into the holes of



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the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth" (17-19).

"In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth. Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (20-22).

In the Psalms, especially, is a repeated prayer, prophetic of the Day of the Lord, supplicating Him to "Rise up" on behalf of His people. E.g.,

"Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered: let them also that hate Him flee before Him. As smoke is driven away so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God. But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice" (Psa. 68:1-3).

Back of these imprecatory prayers is God's expressed purpose to "rise up" for such a work. E.g.,

"Therefore wait ye upon Me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: 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 all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy" (Zeph. 3:8).

### III—The Purpose of the Tribulation.

Of the troublous events closing this age Jesus uses a significant expression:

"All these are the beginning of sorrows" (Matt. 24:8).

The Greek word, "odin," means the throes of child-birth, birth-pains. The sorrows of the Tribulation, then, are forward-looking. They are aimed at a new order. They purpose a new social life.

The same word and figure are employed by Paul:

"For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day shall overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be

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drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:2-9).

The Day of the Lord is declared to come as an experience of "night" (vs. 2); but the night portion soon gives way before the light portion—the long-enduring millennium. Our "Day" is made up of day and night. But in Scripture the order is always reversed—"evening and morning" (Gen. 1). The Jewish day begins at night fall. It is the prophetic order and purpose; the night of tribulation gives birth to His glorious day.

Take Isaiah 2:4 for illustration. "The Day of the Lord" and "In that day" occur throughout. The first part is dark (Tribulation) from which we quote above. It ushers in the light portion (Millennium), as follows:

"In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain" (Isa. 4:2-6).

### IV—The Reason for the Tribulation.

Answering the question "Why" are at least two reasons:

#### 1. The Sovereign Purpose of God:

- (1) Regarding Sin and Satan. They must receive just punishment at the hands of a just God. Scripture does not indicate that this punishment is reserved for a final judgment, unrelated to this earth or age.

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- (2) Regarding His Son. He shall reign over all the earth, with none above or beneath to dispute His sway.
- (3) Regarding Israel. Solemn covenants await fulfillment. Israel must be purified and restored to faith.
- (4) Regarding the nations. His righteous rule must supplant the misrule of the centuries.

### 2—The Persisting Perversity of Man.

- (1) Man does not turn from sin and idols, though God has been patient and long-suffering.
- (2) Man does not yield heart and life to His Grace and Gospel, as witness the weary centuries of refusal.
- (3) Man does not change his attitude toward the Jew, thereby earning a promised condemnation. (Gen. 12:3).
- (4) Man does not turn over the reins of government to God's Son, or even recognize His claim to be "the Prince of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1:5).

Man and God are in a state of deadlock. This condition of things cannot go on indefinitely. They must be brought to a final issue. Hence in Psalm 2 we note: The wrath of man (1), leads to the wrath of God (6), and eventuates in the wrath of the Son, of which men are fully warned (12).

### V—The Factors in the Tribulation.

1. **The Human.** There are three human factors entering into the situation—Israel, the Nations, the Church.

(1) **Israel** is primarily involved—Jer. 30:7 (note their promise of deliverance):

"Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it."

(2) **The Nations** are equally involved—Ezek. 30:3.

"For the day is near, even the day of the Lord is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the nations."

These two factors are together implicated in the most solemn decree of God, recorded in one of the most tremendous chapters of the Bible—**Jeremiah 25**. The whole

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should be read: The Nations' instrumentality in punishing Israel in the prophet's day (1-14), being a type, a shadowy suggestion, of a similar situation in the latter days (15-38). We quote only in part:

"For thus saith the Lord God of Israel unto me; Take the wine cup of this fury at My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it. And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them. Then took I the cup at the Lord's hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom the Lord had sent me: to wit, Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof, and the princes thereof, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, an hissing, and a curse; as it is this day . . . And all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another, and all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the face of the earth: and the king of Sheshach shall drink after them" (Jer 25:15-18, 26).

"Therefore thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Drink ye, and be drunken, and spue, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I shall send among you. And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Ye shall certainly drink" (27-29).

"A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations, He will plead with all flesh; He will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground" (31-33).

(3) **The Church.** Not the true Church, for to the Church true to Him He has made promise of saving her from this "hour."

"Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3:10).

"Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36).

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That which is left on earth of the Church—unfaithful and apostate, appropriately termed “The harlot”—her part in the Tribulation is portrayed in Revelation 17.

Indications are not lacking that this left-over Church will be made up of a coalescing of the Catholic mother and her returning Protestant child.

**2. The Superhuman.** These are two, sharply opposed, corresponding in their sympathies and alignment with the two above—Israel and the Nations.

(1) **God and His Christ.** These, together with the Holy Spirit, constitute the HOLY TRINITY.

(2) **Satan and his Anti-Christ.** These, with the False Prophet (the double names corresponding; cf. John 16:13), constitute the EVIL TRINITY.

The interplay of these two in the Tribulation, in the last great decisive conflict, is the marvellous story, unparalleled in literature, recorded in Rev. 12:1-20:3. (It should be read at a sitting.)

**3. The Natural Elements.** Nature behaves unnaturally. The elements that have been man's friendly ally seem turned from helping to hurting and affrighting him.

We limit our quotations to Joel. (Compare similar pictures in the Revelation.)

**Drought and Famine.**—“Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come. Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God? The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate, the barns are broken down; for the corn is withered. How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate. O Lord, to Thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field. The beasts of the field cry also unto Thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness” (1:15-20).

**Heavenly Disturbances.**—“And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come” (2:30, 31).

**Earthquakes, Etc.**—“The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The

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Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel" (3:15, 16).

**4. The Greatest War.** The distresses of the Tribulation climax in the greatest war in history.

"Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles: Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up; beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye nations, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause Thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the nations be wakened, and come to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision" (Joel 3:9-14).

We will have occasion to recur to this presently.

### VI.—The Order of Events in the Tribulation.

These are detailed in Rev. 12:1-20:3. The sequence seems to be:

#### 1. War in Heaven—Rev. 12:7.

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels";—cf. also 12:1.

Note the first decisive stroke toward a righting of things has to be struck in heaven. How impotent is man to bring about a solution. This done, however, matters move rapidly to an assured conclusion.

#### 2. Satan Is Angry—Rev. 12:12.

"Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

##### (1) Against Israel (12:13-17).

This is the finality of an enmity displayed at Christ's First Coming—see 12:3,4.

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### (2) Against God and the Nations (Rev. 13).

This is carried on by means of his tools, the Beast and False Prophet, through whom he seeks to inject himself between God and the nations, turning their allegiance to himself. We quote in part:

"And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (Rev. 13:6, 7).

"And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Rev. 13:16, 17).

3. The Nations Are Angry. } "And the nations were angry,  
4. God's Wrath Is Come. } and Thy wrath is come, and the  
time that Thou shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth" (Rev. 11:18). (Cf. Psa. 2:1, 5, 12).

"Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb" (Rev. 14:7-10).

Note—Satan secures the worship of the nations for his "Beast" only to draw the wrath of God's judgment upon them.

"And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for Thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to Him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in Thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully

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ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God" (Rev. 14:15, 18, 19).

"And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God" (Rev. 15:1).

"And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth" (Rev. 16:1).

Then follows the vexing of men through the disturbing of the elements, already noted. Rev. 16:2-12.

Here follows a paranthetical picture of the evil powers moving upon "the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Rev. 16:14). We have reached the closing scenes.

### 5. The Three Dooms—Rev. 17-19.

(1) The Ecclesiastical Doom—Rev. 17.

(2) The Commercial Doom—Rev. 18.

(3) The Political Doom—Rev. 19.

These three are the full and final undoing of the present "system" in which Satan has entrenched himself. The third and last involves the great struggle at arms, the **Battle of Armageddon**, of which Scripture's detailed account is found in Ezekiel 38-39.

### 6. The Binding of Satan—Rev. 20:1-3.

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."

When Satan himself is deprived of his freedom, especially to "deceive the nations," the work is complete and earth's "Golden Age" is ushered in. Praise and bless His holy name!



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### VII—The Outcome of the Tribulation.

#### 1. War Shall Be No More—Isa. 2:2-4.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Many vainly strive for the doing away with implements of war in this age. But note (1) It cannot be until the reverse prophecy of Joel is fulfilled in the last great war (3:10); (2) Nor until "the last days"; (3) Nor until "the Lord's house" is established over all the rulership of earth. It will be the outcome of the Tribulation—not before.

#### 2. Christ Will Be Acclaimed King—Rev. 19:16.

"And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

#### 3. Jerusalem Will Be Freed By Her Deliverer—Zech. 14:1-8.

"For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east" (14:2-4a).

#### 4. Christ Will Be King Over All The Earth—Zech. 14:9, 16.

"And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one. And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles."

## CHAPTER 4

### THE PORTENTS OF CHRIST'S COMING AGAIN THE SCRIPTURES' SIGNS FORETOKENING ITS APPROACH

One of our Lord's significant prophetic utterances, as brief as it is comprehensive, is that recorded in Luke 21:20-36. We venture to reproduce it for the reader, with the briefest exegesis suggested in outline:

#### I—The Beginning of the Age—Luke 21:20-24.

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

#### II—The Ending of the Age—Luke 21:25-36.

1. **The Nations Given Signs.** "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (25-28).

2. **Israel Given Signs.** "And He spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away; but My words shall not pass away" (29-33).

3. **The Church, A Signless Exhortation.** "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life,

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and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (34-36).

The statement is often made that the Parousia, the imminent Coming of Christ for His own, is signless; that it may be at any time; that the manner of His Coming is "as a thief in the night," and it is evident that a thief does not use a brass band to herald his approach.

There is only a measure of truth in this. For the Scripture goes on to say:

"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thes. 5: 4-6).

Not the Church, but the other people are the ones to be surprised and taken unawares. Why? They have no spiritual insight to profit by the signs concerning themselves. Here they are, and they have only themselves to blame for being blind, like the Pharisees, unable to "discern the signs of the times" (Matt. 16:3).

The Church is the only one to truly profit by the God-given "signs", whether they refer to Israel, the nations, or conditions in general.

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (2 Pet. 1:19).

This "sure word of prophecy," lighting the child of God through the ending of the age on into the next, not only foresees the Coming of Christ as an event, but it also foresees and prefigures the conditions leading up to and surrounding His Coming.

The area of time thus made the special subject of prophecy is variously designated: "The Time of the End"; "The End Time"; "The Time of Harvest"; "The Latter Day"; "The Last Days"; "The End (i.e. Consummation) of the Age."

Now, each designation carries a description of conditions that will then obtain. The plain procedure for the student

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of prophecy is to turn to these passages and study the pictures they draw. They are the unmistakable, Scripturally designed portents of His Coming.

And lest there be any in our day who are tempted to treat lightly the signs God has seen fit to give, or the solemn purpose and wisdom prompting their giving, let us recall Jesus' word of rebuke for such in His day, not forgetting that they were living at one of the great focal points of prophecy—the First Coming of Christ—even as most prophetic students believe we are living in another of massed prophetic import, at the close of the age:

“And in the morning ye say, It will be foul weather today: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?” (Matt. 16:3).

The signs gleaned from the description of these age-ending times, range themselves into seven groupings.

And—let no one make the mistake of judging the truth of these signs by what they see or may not see. God fixed the signs centuries ago. They have been true for over nineteen hundred years, and remain true, irrespective of the observation of any generation of people. But if our day should witness their enactment, woe to those who “having eyes see not.”

I—General Conditions. We cite three:

### 1. Multiplication of Organizations—Matt.13:30.

“Gather together first the tares” indicates this to be the first step in harvesting, before the “wheat” is gathered. Therefore we are to look for it as a more or less natural process visible to our eyes, proceeding while the Church is still here.

The process of binding into “bundles” is seemingly a phenomenon of the last 30 years. Men have developed a genius of organization, grouping themselves around special objects of endeavor, thereby cultivating a class consciousness concerning their own common aims and interests. As these interests, good in themselves yet of a secular character, are thereby furthered, men are rendered satisfied and sufficient unto themselves. The net result is that the man thus centered has little taste for a serious consideration of

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the Gospel and its claims. He seldom hears it. His associations and interests keep him on the secular plane of life, bundled with the tares for the harvesting.

Personally we believe this is happening before our very eyes.

### 2. **Staunch Witnessing to Christ's Coming—Matt. 25:6.**

"And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him."

The Church has always believed, taught and preached His Coming. But we are assured that, as the day draws near, God in His mercy will prompt an emphatic acclamation of the fact.

Thirty or forty years ago, while the truth was held by many, reference to Christ's Coming was most occasional and obscure. Today the spoken and written witness is most frequent and explicit. There is a very considerable body of literature. One book alone, Blackstone's "Jesus Is Coming," has been translated into some 36 languages, with a total circulation of some 770,000 volumes.

### 3. **General Unconcern—Matt. 24:37-39.**

"But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Noah was charged with preaching righteousness and an approaching judgment. He was met with general indifference. They were preoccupied with the material pleasures, pursuits and progress of the day. No one repented. Who cared?

Jesus said, by way of warning, that the approach of His Coming, with its judgment upon unbelief, would find a similar condition of unconcern—"As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be." Query: Must the unconcern we witness about us today, so appalling and impenetrable, become any more pronounced, profound or widespread to fulfill the prophetic picture?

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### II—Human Progress. Dan. 12:4.

Dan. 12:1-4a deals with "the time of the end." How shall we know when we reach it? On its borderland is placed a mile-stone, a sign carrying a succinct, two-fold description—the very next clause:

**"The Time of the End: Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."**

If one of our contemporaries should seek to select the two outstanding features of modern life that would best serve to characterize the progress of our day, he would doubtless name these two by which God designated it twenty-five hundred years ago.

#### 1. Travel and Intercommunication.

**Railroads** began in 1828. Today their total trackage, 739,034 miles in 1926, would girdle the globe thirty times. In the United States alone some one and one quarter billion tickets are issued annually, averaging more than ten trips for every man, woman and child. One of our railroads operates 3800 passenger trains daily to care for its volume of travel. Electricity adds another big chapter. It is extending its tentacles over a perfect network of roads, carrying its millions from home to business, and from town to town.

**Automobiles.** Only 25 years ago the industry was in its infancy. In twenty years we had some 4,000,000 in use. In 1925 alone, 4,336,754 new cars were produced. Latest statistics, issued Feb. 8, 1926, tell us that 19,999,436 cars are in operation in the United States; 25,973,928 in the world.

**Aeroplanes.** Swiftest of all is transportation through the reaches of the air. Its adaptation to the carrying of passengers, mail and freight has been rapid and extensive. Regular passenger air service between New York, Philadelphia, Atlantic City, Washington, etc., has recently been installed. This past year more than 200,000 passengers were carried over the United States, while European airways carried still more.

**Wire and Wireless.** This mode of thought-communication, not to mention the tremendous volume of mail matter—probably 40,000,000,000 letters annually in the world's

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mail, besides the printed page—is staggering in its achievements. Man sends his thoughts around the earth, flashed through the air, in a few brief moments. This, supplementing a net-work of telephone and telegraph cables, come capable of carrying as many as 500 telegraphic messages and 250 telephonic conversations at one and the same time. How astounding it all is.

### 2. Increase of Knowledge.

Thirty years ago an educational institution enrolling more than 2,000 students was looked upon as a prodigy. Today universities range from 5,000 to 15,000. Such is the thirst for knowledge that some 30,000,000, or one of every four of our population, are pursuing some sort of study course.

Books have so multiplied (not to mention the number and circulation of magazines and newspapers) that approximately one hundred million volumes are available to the public in the libraries of our cities and towns and educational institutions. Learning itself has advanced so rapidly, almost kaleidoscopic in its changes, that Dr. A. E. Winship, Editor of the Journal of Education, said recently:

“Any book on physics, electricity, or astrology written eight years ago is out of date; any geography or history written eight years ago is spineless; any philosophy of eight years is nerveless; any book on physiology or psychology that is eight years old is a joke; any book on chemistry, biology, or sociology written eight years ago is comedy; any book on economics, industry, or commerce written eight years ago is tragedy.”

The point in all this is that the Bible some 2,500 years ago said that these things that we observe to be the signal characteristics of our day, would be and are the marks of “the time of the end.”

### III—Industrial Unrest—Jas. 5:1-9.

An analysis of this instructive passage yields the following:

#### 1. Amassing of Wealth “in the last days” (1-3, R. V.)

“Come now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver are rusted; and their rust shall be for a testimony

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against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire. Ye have laid up your treasure in the last days."

The "rich ones" have greatly multiplied in recent years. The Spirit long ago singled this out as a sign of the "last days."

### 2. The Wage Question, with the Laboring Classes Crying out (4).

"Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth."

Industrial clashes are a recurrent phenomenon of the relation of employer and employed.

### 3. Warning of "Miseries" and a "Day of Slaughter" (1, 5, 6).

"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Ye have lived in pleasure upon the earth, and been wanton: ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you."

Added to the charge of (1) fraud (vs. 4) is that of (2) self-indulgence in luxurious living and (3) the condemning of the innocent.

### 4. Exhortation to Patient Endurance and Forebearance in the prospect of Christ's Soon Coming (7-9).

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door."

The "latter rain" so essential in Palestine to the ripening of the crop, is the symbolic promise of the Lord's second visitation of His people "in the latter day." No need of Christ's own being led into socialistic agitation over present evils when they await the sure solution in His promised return.

## IV—Physical Disturbances—Matt. 24:4-8.

**The Course of the Age.** "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For



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many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet" (4-6). **The Consummation of the Age.** "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows" (7, 8).

Jesus declares the Gospel Age will be characterized by wars, but none of them is to be taken as a sign of the end—"the end is not yet (6). For" (7)—a distinctive war must come, "nation against nation, kingdom against kingdom," following which "there shall be famines and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places." In these, says Jesus, you will find the sign of the end-time; "All these are the beginning of birth-pangs."

How solemnly we should weigh the fact that we, in our own day and experience, have had a world-war which fits this picture as nothing before it could, and it has been followed, seemingly in accord with the above sign, by (1) Famines, among them the greatest in history; (2) Pestilences, among them the greatest in history; (3) Earthquakes, among them the greatest in history. Yet there are more severe to follow as the accompaniment of His coming in power and glory:

"And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth" (Isa. 2:19; Cf. Rev. 6:12-17).

We cannot enlarge upon these, more than to remind ourselves that nature, with man, is under the curse of sin, and therefore these shakings in nature are in intimate sympathy with the birth-pangs of man's new age, and the glory of the King in His kingdom:

"For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts" (Hag. 2:6-9).

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Note the sequence: (1) Physical Disturbances; (2) National Disturbances; (3) Kingdom Glory. It is precisely the same in the passage we are about to study.

### V—National Distress—Luke 21:25-28.

**Physical Disturbances.** "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring" (25).

**National Distresses.** "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken" (26).

**Coming of Christ in Glory.** "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (27).

**Meaning of the Sign.** "And when these things begin to come to pass then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh" (28).

The significance of all this is the statement that introduces it: "Until the times of the Gentiles (nations) be fulfilled" (24). These things are concerned with the fulfilling of their appointed time and course. The nations, then, are to reach their full, allotted time in an experience of "distress," accompanied by "perplexity" and a relentlessness of the masses, "the sea and the waves roaring," leading to "heart-failure" for fear of what is coming.

Since the world war, instead of promised peace and quietude, there has been continuous distress of nations. A succession of problems has sickened the hearts of statesmen. Conditions keep arising that seemingly refuse to be resolved into a settled state of stability. Europe especially is beset with a "fear of that which is coming."

(This is not to say that a season of gratifying respite will not be reached; quite the contrary may be inferred from 1 Thess. 5:3).

We must remember from the imagery of national and world power, in Nebuchadnezzar's image of Daniel 2, that the end-time calls for the revival of the Roman Empire around the Mediterranean. There will be ten kingdoms, or nations, united as the toes of the image, and these will be made up of the struggling, diverse elements of iron and clay.

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This lends a new intensity of interest to current history. In recent years Europe has insistently swept aside the "iron" of monarchy for the sway of the "clay," for the voice of popular rule. But today, even as we write, they are right now clamoring in Germany, Russia, Poland, Italy, Turkey, Greece, and even in France, for the iron hand, the stronger the better, even to the rule of a dictator.

Says Philip Mauro:

"No recent happening in the world's political affairs is of greater import than the rising up of a Dictator at the seat of the ancient Roman empire. And now we are confronted with the astounding fact that Italy's political reaction is viewed by those who live in the adjacent democracies of Europe, not with horror, or even with aversion, but rather with envy. The civilized and progressive nations of the world are supposed to be passionately devoted to democracy, which commonly is extolled as the final and finished product of evolution in the political department of human affairs. How then can our wise men explain the extraordinary fact, that not only has Italy reverted to the long obsolete form of government by dictatorship, but other countries are envying the benefits that have already accrued to her and are expressing dissatisfaction with their flabby parliamentary systems? It is also observed and frequently pointed out that "premier" (or more accurately, Dictator) Mussolini is ever seeking by his public acts and utterances to revive amongst the Italian people the spirit of the old Roman empire. Moreover, his efforts in that direction are meeting with such success as to justify the belief that we are now not far from the fulfillment of the Scripture, 'And all the world wondered after the beast' (Rev. 13:3)."

It should also be noted that Mussolini has officially changed "the style and title of Italy from kingdom to empire." Also, he has directed that in the next five years Rome shall be restored to her former beauty and glory. He regards himself as in the line of the Caesars.

Europe's distress and perplexity, causing her to cry out for a strong man, will doubtless be answered ere long by a man of Satan's own providing, in accordance with the prophecy of Revelation 13. And, be it noted, not until our own day of world progress and world-unification, including the seeking of unified religion—not until now could this man function as Scripture pictures him, taking over the

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religious, commercial and political interests of men and centering them in himself as a human saviour. (Recent inventions would enable him to place his picture in every paper, transmitted by radio, and to speak in person into the ear of all in his realm.)

### VI—Jewish Revival—Luke 21:29-33.

"And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but My words shall not pass away."

The "fig tree" is Scripture's recognized symbol of the Jewish people (cf. Lu. 13:6-9). As the shooting forth of the tree is the assurance that summer is nigh (30), so the evidence of renewed life in Israel—made possible by the promised ending of her scattered and down-trodden condition (24)—is the divinely authorized token to us whereby we are to "know that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand" (31). And that we may not mistake His reference to Israel and her continuing identity through this age, Jesus declares that "This generation (nation or race) shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled."

No sign in our day is more startling, certain, or significant than the supernatural desire awakened in Jews the world over to leave their "graves" among the nations (Ezek. 37) and get back to their land. And they are going back at the rate of 3,000 a month.

It is said that 75,000 Jews in the country of Poland are ready and anxious to return. The Zionist movement has plans to expend \$5,000,000 this year, 1926 in Palestine, rehabilitating the land and settling as many as 60,000 Jews upon it. This is but one year's program, added to the much already accomplished, including the Hebrew University at Jerusalem. And world-wide Jewry has untapped resources for carrying out a yet more extensive program.

The latest dispatches tell us of the British Government having just granted a lease to Jewish capitalists who propose to build a power plant, at a cost of \$10,000,000. The dam

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across the Jordan will not only supply electricity to the larger part of Palestine, but so elevate the level of water as to irrigate lands now semi-arid and unproductive.

### VII—Moral and Spiritual Decay.

Again, let us remind ourselves that these are signs fixed by God at the beginning of our age. In so far as we see these signals waving over the civilization of our own day, just so far have we the divine token of how far we have travelled and how little of the journey yet remains.

#### 1. Apostasy of Faith—1 Tim. 4:1,2.

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron."

Apostasy is not an attitude of unbelief without the Church—this has always been! but a "falling away" from within the Church itself.

The statements of unbelief which were formerly the utterances of recognized and avowed infidels are today, to an amazing extent and largely without rebuke, on the lips of professed believers in Christ.

Two instances will suffice to illustrate the alarming extent to which infidel ideas are being absorbed and purveyed as Christian teaching. Nor are these the most recent or most flagrant.

Dr. Howard Osgood, of Rochester, one of the Committee of Revision in America, and fully the peer of any other of his fellow revisers, was present at a meeting where "Higher Critics" were ventilating their rationalistic views. He heard them as patiently as possible, and the next morning he arose in the assembly and said: "I wish to ask these representatives of so-called critical opinion to listen to two extracts which I am going to read. He read them.

"Now," he said, "I would like to ask whether they consider these extracts properly and fairly to represent the position of the Higher Critics," and the question being put to them one by one, they assented.

"Very well," he said, "all I have to add is, that the first of these two extracts is from 'Voltaire's Philosophical Dictionary,' and the second is from Tom Paine's 'Age of Reason!'"

My friend Rev. Dr. Campbell Morgan told me that, when preaching in Chicago, he was asked to attend a

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ministers' meeting, where a paper on "The Results of Higher Criticism" was read by a theological professor. He attended, and being asked his opinion, remarked there was no time to discuss the contents of the paper, but he would like to ask the author in a few words what he regarded the latest and most established result of Higher Criticism, and he gave such as these:

- (1) That Moses did not write the Pentateuch.
- (2) That the whole system known as Levitical, with the priesthood and the Tabernacle, did not exist until after the exile.
- (3) That David did not write the Psalms.
- (4) That the Lord Jesus Christ set His sanction upon current and popular error.

Dr. Morgan was very much shocked, and he said: "I would like to ask one more question. Do you believe that on such subjects Professor George Adam Smith, of Glasgow, for instance, knows more than the Lord Jesus Christ knew?" "Yes," he said, "he does, because he has access to sources of information to which the Lord Jesus Christ did not have access!" And this is the kind of teaching to which young men in theological seminaries are subjected, and then are expected to come out and preach the glorious gospel!\*

### 2. Degeneracy of Life—2 Tim. 3:1-5.

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

Our public observers, thinkers and writers, profess to see these conditions very generally developing and most freely express their distress and disquietude because of them. By a general process of attrition the resisting influence of the home is being worn away. The Lord's holy day the majority have turned into a holiday for their own ends. Our large centers are as openly licentious and pleasure-loving as ancient Rome ever was before her fall.

Sherwood Eddy, speaking of the moral "signs of the times," asserts "that nearly 50 per cent of the youth of today indulge in intimacies that are dangerous to the health and morals; that between 15 and 20 per cent indulge in unlimited immorality."

\* From the pen of Dr. A. T. Pierson.

3. Propoganda of Fables—2 Tim. 4:1-4.

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

False philosophies and substitutes for sound Scriptural doctrine have multiplied like mushrooms. Twenty or thirty years ago they would have been laughed out of hearing by all sensible people. Today they are not only taught under the broadly inclusive and illusive name of "Christian"; they are soberly accepted by otherwise right thinking people.

4. Abounding of Lawlessness—Matt. 24:12.

"And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."

The word in the Greek, "anomia," means "the condition of one without law." Jesus foretells a general prevalence of lawlessness, militating against the devotion of many, with consequent debasing of human life.

No honest, discerning man doubts that such days are upon us. The writer picks up the daily paper and reads the following admonition from the lips of R. C. Saunders, manager of the protective department of the Illinois Bankers' Association:

"I want to say to you, gentlemen, that we are getting dangerously close to the edge, and there is no economic problem so serious and of such great importance before the American people today as the question of suppressing crime throughout the country.

"I sometimes wonder if this great government with the privileges we enjoy through it, is not crumbling in the hands of our generation. It is true that no great nation that has gone down, ever has realized it was going down until too late."

Crime has increased 1200 per cent in the last 35 years in the United States. And most ominous is the preponderance of young men and boys, with women and girls increasingly numerous.

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The banks of our country lost \$3,620,000,000 to thieves and crooks in the year 1924. Crime affecting one branch of our business life cost us more than the running of our entire Federal Government for the same year.

Our prison population is now nearing the million mark. But even that tells but half the story. Most of our criminals escape justice. "Not one out of ten persons guilty of a major crime is punished"—(Chancellor Hadley of Washington University, St. Louis). According to the statement of Judge Kavanaugh 135,000 murderers are now at large in the United States, a number in excess of all our ministers and Christian workers.

Mental diseases have shown an alarming increase. The Census Bureau announces (June 5, 1926) that during the 43-year period from 1880-1923 the number increased from 40,942 to 267,617, or 553 per cent, while the number of patients per 100,000 of population increased from 81 to 245, or three times as many in 1923 as in 1880.

The divorce evil has continued to increase in the United States, our open disgrace before the world, until the ratio approximates one for every two marriages. Divorces can be had on the most trivial grounds, really none at all.

Not long since the New York Times published the following:

### "AMERICA LEADS THE WORLD"

"In an address in the General Sessions Judge Talley told Judge Allen, beginning his service on that bench, that 'this country is suffering under an indictment which proclaims it to be the most lawless on earth; and the United States must plead guilty to that indictment.' He added that 'most of the desperate criminals are mere boys. You will be heart-broken at discovering the vast majority of defendants are under 19 or 20 years.' The country has been told of these things again and again. Judges, the American Bar Association, criminologists, prison and crime commissions, chiefs of police, statisticians have recited the sinister facts. Remedies have been proposed rather than applied. Meanwhile the United States maintains its proud distinction of being incomparably first, among civilized countries, in the homicide industry. The rate of homicide has been doubled in twenty years. On the basis of population there are twenty-five times as many murders in the United States as in England and Wales. In Chicago, according to a report of its Crime Commission, there were 205 murders in the first 213 days of this year.



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"The ease with which deadly weapons are obtained, the intolerable defects of our system of criminal justice, have been dwelt on again and again. Are there deeper causes of the frequency of crime? Judge Talley deplures, as Dean Kirchwey and Chief City Magistrate McAdoo have deplored, the number of youthful criminals. In New York State, though first offenders under 30 go to reformatories, half the prisoners in Sing Sing are under 25; 87 per cent under 30. From some fatality of environment or temperament, from neglect or contempt of religious training, in some part from physical or moral defect, from hatred of honest work, from association with other criminals, from a love of sordid pleasures and coarse excitements, from admiration of the tough and the gunman, comes a generation of young criminals, most of whom will never cease to be criminals. Is there any way of lessening the number of their successors?

"Ten thousand murders a year and other crimes of violence in proportion! Does anybody feel like unqualified boasting of our growth, wealth, population, great philanthropies, while this army of murderers is recruited every year?"

Can any sober man fail to ask himself: "How long can we continue thus, seeing we are so supine before these startlingly baleful and ruinous conditions?"

### 5. The Laodicean, Christ-Excluding State of the Church Rev. 3:14-19.

"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art luke warm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

Please note that in this picture, the last of a series of autobiographical sketches of His Church and Himself, Jesus not once intimates that He is in her company or councils. But at its close He adds, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock" (Rev. 3:20). He is on the outside.

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A long, sickening list of Church practices, almost incredible in their character, could be adduced, indicating how far afield she has ventured. Her separation from the world broken down, her separation unto the Lord broken off, can she long continue thus and not invite the writing over her portals, as God's sinning people of old invited, "Ichabod"—The Glory is departed.

It is claimed by a Catholic priest, formerly statistician of the Jesuit Order, that 18,000 were added to the Roman Catholic Church from the ranks of Presbyterians, not to mention defections from other denominations, in 1925.

Can any one give a valid reason why the great Head of the Church should not allow such inroads in even larger numbers, when Protestants, ministers and laymen by the thousands, refuse to be loyal to the great doctrines of Inspiration through God's inbreathing, Incarnation through His Virgin Birth, Salvation through His Atoning Blood? Is our spiritual conscience so seared as not to freely acknowledge that the Church in so far as she refuses not only to believe but to stoutly contend for these things that constitute "the faith once for all delivered to the saints," is betraying a most sacred trust, dishonoring to her Lord and damning to her fellow-men?

Over the entire picture, passing in panorama before the eyes of the present generation, we may write the sad, searching question the Master was constrained to ask:

"I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8).

In the face of the combined testimony of these prophetic portents—how could the Spirit have made them more explicit?—we are told that "scoffers shall come."

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming?" (2 Pet. 3:3, 4).

But when will they come? Note it well. "In the last days." Their very scoffings, then, constitute an added portent. Whenever we hear one deriding the thought of our Lord's return, we may look up and say, "One more sign that His Coming is drawing near."

## CHAPTER 5

### THE PROSPECT OF CHRIST'S COMING AGAIN

#### ITS PURPOSED EFFECT UPON PRESENT LIVING

The Coming of Christ is the next imminent event upon the world's horizon. When we turn the next page of history, He may be here.

It is an event to be held in prospect by every one. So revolutionary to earthly experience, so very wide-sweeping in its effects, no one can afford to disregard it. All should, and must, anticipate it, yet for very divergent reasons. For some it will mean unspeakable joy and blessing; for others the same event will prove a cataclysm of unutterable sorrow and woe.

In each case the prospective effect colors the present attitude of anticipation. No wonder many shun all reference to it. Designed to be a separating and distinguishing experience, it will effect the severation of the wicked from the righteous (Matt. 13:30, 49).

Its dual effect is typically anticipated and illustrated in the manner in which God's people found deliverance from Egypt.

"And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night" (Ex. 14:19, 20).

God who in this age has been so graciously and generously impartial in His treatment of all, thereby to bring to repentance (Rom. 2:4), will in Christ's Second Coming adopt the method of making a difference. Nay, His First Coming has already produced the two-fold experience of Light and Darkness.

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind" (John 3:19; 9:39).

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This already existent light to some and darkness to others will find its fruition and fitting culmination in Christ's Second Coming. To those who are light it will be an experience of light; to those who are darkness an experience of darkness.

"But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him" (1 Thess. 5:1-10).

A survey of the entire field affected by our Lord's return yields a seven-fold Prospect:

### I—The Present Age Has His Coming in Prospect As Its Culmination.

What will be the outcome of this present age, its criss-crosses of conflict and complication? Altogether apart from revelation it is a most absorbing question, of vital interest to the man of the street, of science and of affairs.

A Christian man, speaking with an unsaved fellow-workman of the course and trend of the age, raised the question: "What will become of it in two more generations?" The reply was: "It can't last as long as that." And he did not know his Bible.

From the standpoint of the age Christ's Coming, as we have it in prospect, is but the climax of a series of comings that have preceded. As the Covenant God He "came down" to pass judgment and give a new turn to affairs.

For the ending of the Edenic Age He came down to intervene and exclude the sinful pair from the garden (Gen. 3).

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For the ending of the Ante-Deluvian Age He came down in the Flood (Gen. 6).

For the ending of the Age of Human Government He came down at Babel (Gen. 11); and again when iniquity was more fully ripe, at Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18,19).

For the ending of the bondage and affliction of Egypt He came down to judge the Egyptians and set His people free (Ex. 3-12).

For the ending of the Mosaic Age, under law, He came down to redeem from the curse (The Gospels. Cf. John 6:32-58). *Mal. 4:1-5*

In each case it was His personal, manifested presence, so that, it may be confidently stated, here is His accustomed age-ending procedure. So this Age, no exception to those gone before, has the prospect of the same God, our Lord Jesus Christ, coming as a climax of this long series, to intervene in its affairs, the need for which becomes more and more apparent, and bring to a close His Day of Grace.

### II—The Church Has His Coming in Prospect as the Bright and Morning Star.

It is with this prospect that the New Testament closes:

"I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the Root and Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star" (Rev. 22:16).

The morning star does not bring dawn; it only heralds the approach of day. It appears at the dark hours of un-dispelled night. The night-sleepers do not see it. So when conditions are still dark (as we saw in the signs of our last study) He will appear as Light for His Church. But a yet more dense darkness will ensue for the world.

### III—Israel Has His Coming in Prospect as the Sun of Righteousness.

It is with this prospect that the Old Testament closes:

"But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall" (Mal. 4:2).

To them Jesus, in the hour of their rejection of His first offering as their Messiah, said:

"For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, until ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23:39).

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The "until" finds its fulfillment in His promised return, openly, visibly manifested to them, now sorrowfully repentant and eager to welcome Him as their Messiah.

"Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all tribes of the earth (or land; i.e., Palestine) shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen" (Rev. 1:7).

The wailing wall at Jerusalem, where devout Jews are pouring out a bitter fountain of tears, is a symbol of the nation's broken-hearted lament for their Messiah.

God has promised them one more yet future "week" or period of seven years, the last of the "seventy weeks" prophesied by Daniel (Dan. 9:24-27). At its close He will come, gloriously manifested to their longing eyes, with the brightness of the noon-day sun and with the same converting power with which He appeared to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road. That was a type of this latter-day experience of the nation: *Acts 9,*

"And last of all He has seen of me also, as of one born out of due time (prematurely born)" (1 Cor. 15:8).

"Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me as chief might Jesus Christ show forth all His longsuffering, for an example of them that should thereafter believe on Him unto eternal life" (1 Tim. 1:16, R. V.).

What a glad new day it will be for Israel when they are born as a nation into a new-found faith in their Messiah and pass from their despised down-troddenness to favor with God and man.

### IV—All Government Has His Coming in Prospect as the Realization of Righteousness, Justice, and Peace Among Men.

Supplanting the injustice and misrule of the present age, the Coming of Christ is hailed with joyous enthusiasm in the proclamation:

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast,

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and art to come; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power and hast reigned" (Rev. 11:15-17).

God's prophetic picture of human government is contained in the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Its destined ending is provisioned as follows:

"Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (Dan. 2:34, 35).

The inspired interpretation of this awesome event; how it is to be brought about; the assured certainty of it under divine seal—these are all graciously given to confirm the revelation:

"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure" (Dan. 2:44, 45).

Certain Scriptures should now take on new vividness of meaning for the reader. Realizing the disinclination to break off the reading for the purpose of turning to the Scripture itself, we venture to reproduce three passages, for the purposes indicated:

### THE PROMISE TO THE SON—Psalm 2.

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: The Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure. Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion. I shall declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I shall

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give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

### THE PROMISE FULFILLED IN HIS PERSONAL COMING— Rev. 19:11-21.

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes are as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called the Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

### HIS RESULTING REIGN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS—Isa. 11:1-5.

"And there shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wis-



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dom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears: but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins."

### V—All Nature Has His Coming in Prospect as the Lifting of its Burden and Curse.

"For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom. 8:19-22).

We are all too accustomed to the curse upon nature, having met and experienced it all our lives, till its significance is lost upon us. We accept things as they are, and cease to look for the removal of the curse.

The closing chapter of the Bible—and revelation would be marred with failure if it stopped short of this—contains a picture of a "pure river of water of life," on whose banks is vegetation possessed of healing properties. Note the affirmation of "no more curse."

"And He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as a crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him" (Rev. 22:1-3).

The entire picture, with such a sweep of blessing, is introduced with the declaration that tears, suffering and death will disappear from human experience only when He sets about by His restored presence with men to "make all things new."

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"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful" (Rev. 21:3-5).

Isaiah's picture is now in order. Following the description of the righteous reign of Christ, quoted above, he breaks forth into glad exultation over the beneficence of that rule ramifying into the whole realm of nature:

"And the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:6-9).

## VI—The Believer Has His Coming in Prospect as His Blessed Hope.

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

This hope has two aspects, as indeed all hopes should have:

1. The anticipation of a future realization.
2. The effect of this prospect upon present conduct.

There is not a parent or teacher living but has repeatedly made use of the one to secure the desired results of the other.

1. This Hope Consists Specifically of the Future Realization of the Following, at, by and through the Coming of Christ:

### (1) Our Physical Resurrection, Transfiguration and Translation.

"But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His Coming" 1 Cor. 15:23).

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"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51, 52).

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

"For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our body of humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3:20, 21).

Those who have died before Christ comes will need physical resurrection. Those still living will need physical transformation, changed from mortality to immortality. These two benefits Jesus specifies in His teaching at the grave of Lazarus:

"Jesus said unto her, I am (1) the resurrection, and (2) the life: he that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26 R. V.).

### (2) Our Moral and Spiritual Perfection.

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3).

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3:4).

Thus the goal of the Psalmist, voicing the longing of the human heart, is realized at Christ's Coming:

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"As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness" (Psa. 17:15).

### (3) Our Receiving of Rewards for Service.

"And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10).

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to His works" (Matt. 16:27).

Cf. 1 Thess. 2:19, 20; 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Pet. 5:4. Crowns are promised, but the bestowing of them is not until Christ comes.

### (4) Our Blissful Consummation of Union with Christ.

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And He saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And He saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God" (Rev. 19:7-9).

## 2. This Expectancy Is Everywhere Urged as a Present Incentive to Holiness of Life and Whole-Heartedness of Service.

### (1) To Patience—Jas. 5:7, 8.

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

### (2) To Purity—Col. 3:2-5; 1 John 3:2, 3.

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when

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He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

**(3) To Faithfulness**—2 Tim. 4:1, 2; Luke 12:43.

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."

"Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing."

**(4) To be Sincere**—Phil. 1:10.

"That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ."

**(5) To be Charitable**—1 Cor. 4:5.

"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."

**(6) To be Considerate**—Phil. 4:5.

"Let your considerateness be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand."

**(7) To be Watchful and Prayerful**—1 Pet. 4:7.

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."

**(8) To a Separated Life**—Titus 2:11-13.

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

**(9) To an Overcoming Life**—1 Pet. 1:7; 4:13.

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

"But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings: that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

**(10) To an Abiding Life**—1 John 2:28.

"And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."

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### VII—The Unbeliever Has His Coming in Prospect as an Experience of Judgment, Wrath and Unrepentant Unbelief.

The most solemn aspect of the Coming of Christ is its necessary and inescapable reference to the unbeliever, the man of whose attitude toward Him during His age-long absence Jesus spoke:

"But His citizens hated Him, and sent a message after Him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14).

This narrative continues: "And it came to pass, that when He was returned, having received the kingdom, then He commanded these servants (to whom He had delivered His goods, saying, 'Occupy till I come') to be called unto Him." Having dealt with them He concludes by saying,

"But those Mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before Me" (Luke 19:27).

"Harsh," you say. "Severe." But who will charge the Lord Jesus Christ with injustice at His Coming? He is our Kinsman, as well as our Lord. He has been our Redeemer. At His return He must be our Avenger.

If there is any reason for rejecting this teaching of our Lord, the same reason would lay any other portion of His teaching open to rejection at whim.

The unbelieving, then, have in prospect at the ending of God's Day of Grace by Christ's return, such as the following:

"Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into My barn. The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the Wicked One; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 13:30, 38-42).

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"For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:2, 3, 9).

"And then shall that Wicked One be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming; even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness and unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:8-12).

God will move on to His method of "wrath" only when man has made it evident that no other course is open to Him. Only when He must is it said, "Thy wrath is come" (Rev. 11:18). Only when there is no remedy. Then God will let man demonstrate before angels and principalities that His ways are just, so that in the face of His judgments they praise Him as the Just One:

"And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest" (Rev. 15:3, 4).

The demonstration is this: Having refused to repent under His age-long "goodness" (Rom. 2:4), they are now desperately unrepentant under His severity. Nothing God can do will turn them to Himself. Let the unbelieving read this solemn warning and repent, "change his mind," toward God his Saviour now while the way is open to him. For listen!

"And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts" (Rev. 9:20, 21).

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"And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give Him glory" (Rev. 16:9).

"And men blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds" (Rev. 16:11).

This solemn refrain, a warning so oft reiterated, should not go unheeded by any unsaved, unbelieving reader whose eyes the loving Holy Spirit has led to scan these pages.

Now will you note in a concluding Scripture not only the certainty of these coming supernatural events but the reason for their delay up to the present moment.

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days, scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Pet. 3:3-7).

"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:8-9).

The reason, clearly stated, why our Lord yet delays His Coming, and has continued this age for so many centuries, far beyond the duration of any preceding age, is His great love for the unsaved and unrepentant—"not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Dear unsaved reader, will you not just now take this simple step? As you look forward with fearsomeness, all unprepared, to the certain prospect of Christ's Coming, will you not look back to Calvary and realize that He there included you in the wrath for sin which He experienced, the Just for the unjust. Let that innocent Blood be for you rather than a witness against you. In simple faith act upon His words of invitation:



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"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24).

If the Church of Christ had been faithful in preaching and teaching the assured fact that Christ "shall appear the second time," with all that this involves, its powerful appeal for saving faith, its well nigh irresistible incentive to accept the saving work of Christ in His First Coming, humanly speaking there would be thousands in the ranks of the Church who are carelessly walking the way of indifference and death.

One incident comes to mind. A lad in a certain Western town where the writer gave a special ministry was walking home from service with his parents and a friend. It was a beautiful winter evening. The stars, twinkling so brightly, led them to look up into the heavens. Conversation concerning the Coming of Christ naturally followed. ("Whom the heavens must receive until—"). They retired. In the night the parents were awakened by the lad, saying, "Father, mother, I cannot sleep, I am not ready for Jesus to come; I am not a Christian." They arose, prayed with their boy, and led him to a simple, saving faith out of which has developed a staunch Christian character.

The prospect of our Lord's return, as revealed in God's Word, should lead every one, as it did the Thessalonians, to "turn to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. 1:9-10).

The prospect has in it the prompting to Salvation, Sanctification, and Service—the life that can earnestly breathe the prayer enjoined by our Lord:

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36).

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### THE PERSONNEL OF THE BLESSED HOPE

#### HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE FROM APOSTOLIC DAYS

Doubtless the average reader has never considered the history of the doctrine of our Lord's Return, and even so lacks access to the sources of information; yet to him have come such questions as these: "What did the early Church believe?" and "Why are Christians so divided on this subject today?" To such a brief historical survey may prove informing, reassuring, and be it hoped, convincing.

In all the foregoing we have studiously avoided the terms post- and pre-millennial, so current today, for the reason that they (1) are controversial, (2) are not Biblical, (3) are of very recent origin (about 250 years ago), centering around the modern "theory," and (4) they obscure the real point, namely, the fact of our Lord's Return, as a vivid, vital expectation of the Church, as set forth in the Scriptures. The restoration of the fact to its rightful place of influence in the Church's thought and life is the need of today.

"Millennium" is a Biblical word, the Latin equivalent of the New Testament Greek word "chiliad," referring to the "thousand" years of promised blessedness, righteousness and peace. The early Church, almost to a man, aside from heretics, were millennialists or chiliasts. They were looking for a millennium, according to promise, with never a thought that it could be apart from the personal "parousia" or presence of the returning Lord. They had no expectation of the reign of peace apart from the King of Peace. The one involved the other.

#### Testimony of Church Historians

Now Church historians are numerous, bearing their uniform testimony to the all but universal belief and hope of the early Church during the first centuries. We could quote to this effect: Harnack, Hagenbach, Neander, Dornier, Gieseler, Schaff, Fisher, Mosheim, Briggs. For brevity's sake we cite only the following, and briefly:

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Prof. Harnack, himself of the liberal school, yet in sheer honesty as a historian, says:

"In the history of Christianity three main forces are found to have acted as auxiliaries to the gospel. They have elicited the ardent enthusiasm of many whom the bare preaching of the gospel would never have made decided converts. These are (1) a belief in the speedy return of Christ and in His glorious reign on earth . . . First in point of time came the faith in the nearness of Christ's second advent and the establishing of His reign of glory on the earth. Indeed it appears so early that it might be questioned whether it ought not to be regarded as an essential part of the Christian religion." (Quoted by James H. Brookes in *The Truth*).

Dorner has this to say concerning this doctrine:

"The Christian hope in the Christ that was to come grew out of faith in the Christ who had already come . . . Justin, writing at the time of Papias, says that it was the general faith of all orthodox Christians, and that only Gnostics did not share it" (*Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, p. 145, etc.).

Prof. Briggs, whose theological liberalism makes his testimony as a scholar the more notable in this matter, says regarding the doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith (Presbyterians take notice):

"The current doctrine of a millennium in the future before the advent of Christ is another extra-confessional doctrine, for which there is no basis in the Westminster Standards. . . . The Standards express the faith of the universal catholic church in looking forward to the advent of Christ for the judgment of the risen (?) world as imminent. . . . The current doctrine is one for which Daniel Whitby, the Arminian (he should have added, the Arian), is chiefly responsible. . . . When recent Presbyterian divines go further, and adopt the scheme of the Arminian Whitby, they take a position which suits quite well with evangelical Arminianism, but which is not in accord with Calvinism. They moreover go against the Scriptures, which do not recognize any such future millennium as this theory professes.

"The doctrine of a future millennium is not so innocent as it appears to be on the surface. It changes the faith of the church in the imminency of the second advent of Christ. It makes the millennium the great hope of the future, instead of the presence of the Redeemer Himself. The Messiah is the great hope of the church, the supreme object of our living and striving, the Bridegroom for whose presence the affianced bride prays and

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agonizes. But the current theology pushes the Messiah behind the millennium, and fixes the hope of men upon an illusion and a delusion of human conceit and folly" (Whither? , p. 206).

Bishop Henshaw sums up the case thus:

"The commonly received opinion of a spiritual millennium, consisting in a universal triumph of the gospel, and the conversion of all nations, for a thousand years before the coming of Christ, is a novel doctrine, unknown to the Church for the space of sixteen hundred years."

Even David Brown, the one constructive expositor of the post-millennial theory to date, writes thus:

"Pre-millennialists have done the Church a real service, by calling attention to the place which the second advent holds in the Word of God and the scheme of divine truth. . . . When they dilate upon the prominence given to this doctrine in Scripture, and the practical uses which are made of it, they touch a chord in the heart of every simple lover of his Lord, and carry conviction to all who tremble at His Word. . . . With them we affirm that the Redeemer's Second Appearing is the very pole-star of the Church. (The emphasis is his own). That it is so held forth in the New Testament is beyond dispute" (Christ's Second Coming, p. 21, 22).

### History of the Doctrine

The Doctrine of our Lord's Return, from the Apostles to our day, seems to fall into four periods:

1. It is the post-apostolic, orthodox, all but universal belief of the Church for the first three centuries.

"The common doctrine of the early Church" (Tertulian).

"It was the doctrine believed and taught by the most eminent Fathers of the Age next after the Apostles, and by none of that Age opposed or condemned" (Chillingsworth).

"This doctrine may be regarded as generally prevalent in the second century. Origen, in the third century, was the first who wrote in opposition to it" (Kitto's Encyclopaedia—see "Millennium").

2. The dimming of the Hope, largely through the following influences:

(1) The extravagances and vagaries of the Montanists who caricatured the doctrine by sensuous and unscriptural views, thereby discrediting it with many.

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(2) Philosophic speculation (through the Alexandrian School), Spiritualizing interpretation (introduced by Origen); Ecclesiasticism, fostered by Augustine.

"After the middle of the 2nd century these expectations were gradually thrust into the background. They would never have died out, however, had not circumstances altered, and a new mental attitude been taken up. The spirit of philosophical and theological speculation and of ethical reflection, which began to spread through the churches, did not know what to make of the old hopes of the future" (Harnack "Millennium," in Encyclopaedia Britannica).

ORIGEN, with universalistic notions, substituted a spiritualizing conception of Scripture for its evident, literal meaning. The Church has never rid herself of this leavening mode of explaining away the teachings of Scripture. AUGUSTINE became an ecclesiastic. To the great influence of Augustine Prof. Harnack attributes the overthrow of this early faith.

(3) The union of the Church and State, beginning with Constantine (325), resulting in wide and rapid growth of the Church led her to entertain false hopes of her ultimate triumph. The developing Roman hierarchy repudiated millennial hopes and regarded their own regime as the millennium—in reality the Dark Ages.

"What tended most to work its complete overthrow was the course of events under Constantine. Amid the rejoicings of the National Church as a present reality, interest in the expectation of a future thousand years' reign was lost. . . . Jerome treats it with scornful ridicule" (Kurtz "Church History," p. 184).

(4) Scholasticism, the philosophic effort of the 12th century to adapt God's revealed truth to the world's thinking, served to further obscure this faith and hope.

(5) The Reformation carried over into the Protestant Church many of the Catholic notions of the Church's ultimate triumph, preparing the way for a formulating of her false hopes into a "theory."

3. Daniel Whitby (1638-1726) proposed a "new hypothesis," as he himself styles it, that the Church is destined to secure a spiritual millennium by the triumph of the Gospel, the conversion of all nations, before the coming

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of Christ. Whitby had become Unitarian, discarding the deity of Christ and naturally the Blessed Hope.

"It is a significant fact that the first man who opposed the premillennial advent in the early centuries was Origen, a Universalist; and the first man to start the "new theory" of postmillennialism was Daniel Whitby, a Unitarian! This doctrine was never heard of by the Church Fathers, nor by the Christian Apologists, nor by the Roman Catholics for 1300 years, nor by the Reformers" (A. J. Frost).

4. The revival of Missionary zeal, Evangelism and Bible study, with the beginning of the nineteenth century, brought a renewal of the early faith and hope of the Church.

"Whenever the Church becomes Biblical and spiritual this doctrine of the premillennial advent revives. It seems to flourish in the most devout and religious atmosphere of the time" (A. J. Frost).

Note in the appended list the large number of "witnesses" in this last period; yet those named are but a fraction of the whole.

### Witnesses of the Blessed Hope

Not by way of proof but of confirmation and encouragement for those who hold themselves warranted by Scripture in their attitude of expectancy regarding their Lord's return, perchance in the face of ridicule or persecution, we append the following list of names, by no means complete, of Christian leaders who, like Paul, "have loved His appearing," preaching, teaching, singing, believing it as an ever imminent event:

Barnabas (cir. 71); Clement of Rome (d. 100); Hermas (cir. 140); Ignatius of Antioch (d.107); Polycarp (69-155); Papias (d.165); Justin Martyr (89-163); Iranaeus (120-202); Tertullian (160-240); Hippolytis, (d.cir.240); Cyprian Bishop of Carthage (d. 258); Lactantius, called "the most learned of the Latin Fathers" (d. cir. 330); Nepos, Bishop in Egypt (cir. 262); Victorinus (cir. 290); Methodius (d. 311); Gregory of Nyssa (cir. 332-395); Severus (cir. 418); Paulinus, friend of Athanasius, (353-431); Commodian (cir. 430). [Some Fathers we cannot mention because we have no extant writings by them on the subject.]

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The Waldenses, etc., carrying the truth and hope through the dark ages of Roman Catholicism; Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153); Peter Waldo (d. 1179); Joachim of Floris (1130-1202); Francis of Assisi (1182-1226); William Occam (1270-1347); John Wycliffe (1324-1384); Sir John Oldcastle (1360-1417); William Tyndale (1480-1536); Nicholas Ridley, Bishop of London (d. 1555); Hugh Latimer (1470-1555); John Bradford (d. 1555); Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556); (these four were martyred for their faith); the Moravians.

Martin Luther (1483-1546); Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531); Melancthon (1497-1560); John Knox (1505-1572); Henry Bullinger (1504-1575); John Calvin (1509-1564); (Many Reformers, reacting from Anabaptist error regarding the millennium, held modified views.) John Jewel (1522-1571); John Arndt (1555-1621); Jacob Boehme (1575-1624); Archbishop James Ussher (1580-1656); Joseph Mede (1586-1638); Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658); John Cocceius (1603-1669); Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676); Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661); John Milton (1608-1674); Richard Baxter (1615-1691); John Bunyan (1628-1688); Joseph Alleine (1634-1668); P. J. Spener (1635-1705); Increase Mather (1638-1723); Benjamin Keach (1640-1704); Claude Brousson (1647-1698); William Lowth (1661-1732); Matthew Henry (1662-1714); Cotton Mather (1663-1728); Alexander Pope (1688-1744); A. H. Francke (1663-1727); T. B. Massillon (1663-1742); Charles Daubuz (cir. 1720), both of France; John Gill (1697-1771); Matthew Mead (1629-1699), and many early Puritans; William Twisse and "most of the chief divines of the Westminster Assembly" (1643) (quotation from Robert Baillie, Pres. of University of Glasgow); Peter Poiret (1646-1719).

Johann Bengel (1687-1752); F. Godet (1649-1709); Bishop Thomas Newton (1704-1782); Lord Napier (1550-1617), Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), Michael Faraday (1791-1867), eminent scientists; Count N. L. Zinzendorf (1700-1760) and followers; John Wesley (1703-1791); Charles Wesley (1707-1788); George Whitfield (1714-1770); John Bonar (1722-1761); John Fletcher (1729-

## SUPPLEMENT

1788); Archbishop Newcome (1729-1800); William Cowper (1731-1800); Bishop Horsley (1733-1806); Augustus M. Toplady (1740-1778); Bishop Thomas Cope (1747-1814); Joseph Sutcliffe (1762-1856); J. Michael Hahn (1758-1819); Robert Hall (1764-1831); Lorenze Dow (1777-1834); Wilhelm DeWette (1780-1849); Bishop Thomas F. Middleton (1769-1822); Edward Bickersteth (1786-1850); Alexander Keith (1791-1880); Edward Irving (1792-1834); Nathan Lord (1793-1870); Charles McIlvaine (1799-1873); Adolphe Monod (1802-1856); Theodore Monod (b. 1836); Horatius Bonar (1808-1889); Andrew Bonar (1810-1892).

Among noted theological scholars and commentators of the nineteenth century may be named: Richard C. Trench (1807-1886); J. A. Dorner (1809-1884); Dean Alford (1810-1871); S. P. Tregelles (1813-1875); Franz Delitzsch (1813-1890); John P. Lange (1802-1884); Bishop Ellicott (1819-1905); Rudolph Stier (1800-1862); Izaak Da Costa (1798-1860); J. N. Darby (1800-1882); Arnold Christiani (1807-1886); Herman Olshausen (1796-1839); Francois Gausson (1790-1863); Magnus Roos (1727-1803); Thomas Guthrie (1803-1873); Ludwig Hoffman (1806-1873); Robert S. Candlish (1806-1872); John Cumming (1807-1881); John C. Hofman (1810-1877); Frederick Philippi (1809-1882); Hans Martensen (1808-1884); John Lillie (1812-1867); J. J. Van Oosterzee (1817-1882); C. H. Mackintosh (1820-1896); William Kelly (1821-1906); Joseph A. Seiss (1823-1904); Karl Auberlen (1824-1864); Alfred Edersheim (1825-1889); Andrew Robert Fausset (1821-1910); Adolph Saphir (1831-1891); Theodor Christlieb (1833-1889); John C. Volck (1835-1904); Rudolph Grau (1835-1894); Christoph Luthardt (1823-1904); Anton Koch (b. 1859); Prof. James D. Cooper (b. 1846); Otto Crusius (b. 1857); Andrew Jukes (b. 1815); William C. Graham (b. 1851); Julius Koestlin (1826-1902); Prof. H. S. Kellogg (1839-1899); Nathaniel West (1794-1864); Prof. James M. Stifler (1839-1902); Prof. D. C. Marquis (1834-1912); Prof. W. G. Moorehead (1836-1914); A. T. Pierson (1837-1911); James H. Brookes (1830-1897); C. I. Scofield (1834-1921).



## HIS SURE RETURN

Among notable missionaries and mission workers: Adoniram Judson (1788-1850); William Carey (1761-1834); Robert Moffat (1795-1883); Alexander Duff (1806-1878); Karl Gutzlaff (1802-1851); Alexander M. Mackay (1849-1890); Duncan Matheson (1824-1869); John E. Vassar (1813-1878); J. Hudson Taylor (1832-1905); John G. Paton (1824-1907); Andrew Murray (1826-1917); H. Grattan Guinness (1835-1910); William W. Borden (1887-1913); Horace Grant Underwood (1859-1916); Dan Crawford (1869-1926); and a host of others; Col. George R. Clarke (d. 1881); Mrs. Sarah Clarke (d. 1917); Harry Monro (d. 1916); Jerry McAuley (1839-1884); Sam H. Hadley (d. 1906); with practically all mission superintendents.

Among other noteworthy exponents of the nineteenth century: ..In Great Britain—George Muller (1806-1898); Marcus Rainsford (1750-1805); Sir Edward Denny (1796-1889); Earl of Shaftesbury (1801-1885); Prebendary Edward Auriol (1805-1880); Henry Craik (1805-1866); Anthony N. Groves (1795-1853); Henry W. Soltau (1805-1875); John Morley (1807-1896); Captain Percy Hall (1804-1844); Lord Congleton (1805-1883); Benjamin Wills Newton (1805-1898); Prof. Thomas R. Birks (1810-1883); Philip H. Goss (1810-1877); Andrew Miller (1810-1883); J. Elliott Howard (1807-1884); Thomas Ryan (1810-1905); J. G. Deck (1807-1884); Henry Heath (1815-1900); Thomas Newberry (1811-1901); Henry Dyer (1811-1896); Robert Murray McCheyne (1813-1843); Earl of Cavan (1815-1887); Canon Edward Hoare (1812-1894); William Collingwood (1819-1903); Dr. F. W. Baedeker (1823-1906); Bishop W. R. Nicholson (1822-1901).

Canon H. P. Liddon (1829-1890); William Lincoln (1825-1888); Dean William H. Fremantle (1831-1916); Lord Radstock (1833-1913); Sir Stevenson Arthur Blackwood (1832-1893); Henry Varley (1836-1912); Frank White; H. E. Brooke (cir. 1878); Sinclair Patterson; Donald Frazer (1826-1892); John Richardson (d. 1878); John Wilkinson (1824-1907); C. J. Goodhart (cir. 1878); W. P. Mackay (cir. 1878); Arthur Pridham; I. B. Baines, C. S. Skrine (cir. 1878); H. H. Snell; Edward Dennett (d. 1897).

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Principal Rainey (1826-1907); James Wright (1826-1905); Alexander McLaren (1826-1910); Charles Stanley (1821-1888); John G. M'Vicker (1826-1900); T. Shuldham Henry (1831-1894); Dr. Robert McWilliam (1837-1915); Earl of Carrick (1835-1892); Daniel D. Buck (1839-1909); J. R. Caldwell (1839-1917); Harrison Ord (1833-1907); Dr. Thomas Neatby (1835-1911); Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-1879); Prebendary H. W. Webb-Peploe (1837-1923); Henry Moorhouse (1840-1880); Archibald G. Brown (1844-1922); Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892); Bishop Handley C. G. Moule (1841-1920); James Orr (1844-1913); Bishop J. C. Ryle (1841-1918); Sir Robert Anderson (1841-1918); John MacNeil (1854-1918); George Matheson (1842-1906); Ada R. Habershon (1861-1918); George H. C. MacGregor (1864-1900).

**In the United States and Canada**—Bishop John P. K. Henshaw (1792-1852); Mark Hopkins (1802-1887); Edward Greswell (1797-1869); Stephen H. Tyng (1800-1885); Bishop Philander Chase (1775-1852); Prof. Joseph T. Cooper (1819-1879); Bishop Thomas Hubbard Vail (1812-1889); Richard Newton (1813-1887); C. K. Imbrie (b. 1814); Prof. John T. Duffield (1823-1901); W. R. Gordon (b. 1811); Bishop Samuel J. Andrews (1817-1906); E. R. Craven (1824-1908); Prof. H. G. Weston (1820-1909); George N. H. Peters (b. 1825); John V. Farwell (1825-1908); H. M. Parsons (1828-1913); William Dinwiddie (b. 1830); Prof. H. Lummis; E. F. Stroeter; Daniel T. Taylor (cir. 1855); A. J. Frost; F. L. Chapell; H. M. Saunders; E. P. Goodwin (b. 1832); L. W. Bancroft; J. F. Grammer.

F. W. Grant (1834-1902); Bishop M. S. Baldwin (b. 1836); J. F. Kendall (b. 1832); Charles N. Crittenden (1833-1909); Harriet Beecher Stowe (1812-1896); William J. Erdman (1834-1923); Albert Erdman (cir. 1895); A. J. Gordon (1836-1895); Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899); John Wanamaker (1838-1917); Major J. H. Cole; Major D. W. Whittle (1840-1901); Henry W. Adams (1835-1918); Rufus W. Clark (1844-1909); Charles M. Morton (1842-1919); George F. Pentecost (1842-1920);

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Among recent hymn-writers: Fanny Crosby (1820-1915); William H. Doane (1832-1915); P. P. Bliss (1838-1876); James McGranahan (1840-1907); Ira D. Sankey (1840-1908); George C. Stebbins (b. 1846); Daniel B. Towner (1850-1919); John H. Sammis (d. 1919); Charles M. Alexander (1867-1920), and many more.

A. B. Simpson (1844-1919); George Soltau (1847-1909); D. M. Stearns (d. 1920); George S. Bishop (1836-1914); Pres. Joseph Kyle (1849-1921); William H. Clagett (1848-1926); Lyman Stewart (1840-1923); George C. Needham (d. 1902); J. Gregory Mantle (1852-1925); E. P. Marvin (cir. 1894); James Randall Pratt (1855-1922); James S. Kennedy (1853-1912); Robert M. Russell (1858-1921); John K. McClurkin (b. 1853); Frank W. Sneed (1862-1923); Louis Meyer (1862-1896); H. B. Gibbud (1857-1901); Judge D. H. Scott (d. 1921); Donald D. Munro (1864-1923); H. B. Dinwiddie (1866-1926); James O. Boswell, Sr. (1866-1922); Harold F. Sayles (d. 1924); John R. Schaffer (1875-1926); Mrs. Cortland de Peyster Field (d. 1922); Julia H. Johnston (1847-1919); Charles C. Cook (1861-1926); Charles A. Blanchard (1848-1925); Clarence Larkin (1850-1924); J. Wilbur Chapman (1859-1918); A. C. Dixon (1854-1924); W. H. Griffith Thomas (1861-1924); W. B. Hinson (1862-1926).

Many, many more who have spoken and written their conviction on this subject, we cannot here name.

We should like to include a listing of present-day, living witnesses of the Blessed Hope. It would include many notable scholars, preachers, teachers, expositors, Bible lecturers, evangelists, missionaries, hymn writers, professional and business men, leading women not a few, totalling a great company. The task is impracticable. May God cause their testimony to abound to His praise and glory.

Note—This list lays no claim to completeness. The author will welcome corrections and suggestions for subsequent editions.

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