

The Second Coming
Of Our
Lord Jesus Christ



Three Sermons—And a Question Box

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PREFACE

This little book contains the substance of three sermons on the Second Coming, delivered at Dallas, Texas, during the summer of 1924, in the course of a protracted meeting with the Peak and Main Sis. Congregation of Christ. For many years the author has made it a rule from which he rarely deviated, to preach at least one sermon on this great subject in every series of meetings. The line followed on such occasions was very simple, and related chiefly to the practical aspect of the "blessed hope;" as the reader will see in the first of these three sermons. But after the delivery of this first sermon, and in response to a number of urgent requests from members of several congregations in Dallas, to pursue the subject further, the other two sermons were given.

Since the appearance in print of these sermons on the Second Coming, I came across the following from the pen of a noted writer (S. D. Gordon) which expresses my thought so well that I will just let it stand here in lieu of any words of my own:

"I was led to pick up the Bible afresh on this subject. Earnestly trying to forget all the books I had read, I went prayerfully and slowly to work to gather out, and gather up, just what the Book itself teaches. The result arrived at has profoundly affected my outlook as a follower of Jesus Christ, my attitude toward the great problems of Christian service both at home and in foreign mission lands, my prayer-life and understanding of numerous passages of Scripture hitherto obscure to me

"I am not concerned so much about any one accepting what is put down here, but I am deeply and intensely concerned that many may make a fresh, thorough study of God's word on the simple plan used here, or any other adequate plan, that its clean, emphatic teachings may be clearly and broadly grasped, and the whole life yielded to their power."

As to "the simple plan" he mentions, it was just the adoption of the three simple rules of John Albert Bengel, one of the greatest and deepest of Bible students, who lived and wrote about two centuries ago:

1. "**Get everything out of the Bible**"—that is let the Bible alone be your authority and source of information.

2. "**Read nothing into the Bible.**"

3. "**Let nothing remain concealed in the Bible.**" The first of these, he thinks, is not easy to follow; the second more difficult still, for we all have bias or prejudice. And the third involves a good bit of labor. Nevertheless these are good rules for the study of any Bible theme.

If this little pamphlet on the Second Coming will stir up any of God's children to an earnest and independent search of the Scriptures on this great doctrine, it will have accomplished much good, and this is my wish and prayer.

THE SECOND COMING

The doctrine concerning the Second Coming of Christ is not a late doctrine, but is just as old as any other New Testament theme. In fact, it is one of the cardinal doctrines of the New Testament. There is the Incarnation—that is the fact that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us," the Passion—that is the fact that the Lord Jesus went to the Cross and carried in His own body our sins there; the Resurrection—that is the fact that He rose again from the dead; the Ascension, and His present Mediatorship and high-priesthood, and His place of sovereignty on the right hand of God; and, ranking with these in importance, the Coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the backbone of the entire Christian doctrine. The Second Coming of the Lord Jesus is one of those cardinal doctrines of Christianity without which the Gospel is not complete.

We believe that there has been an event in the past which shook the world from center to circumference and which has changed the face of the earth, and that was the coming of the Lord Jesus when He was born in Bethlehem, the short life that He lived upon the earth, followed by His death, His resurrection and ascension. If any man would deny that that event of the past has been the most influential event in the world's history, that man would not be an infidel but an ignoramus. For surely the coming of the Lord Jesus has changed the face of the world and profoundly altered the whole course of human affairs.

But there is another event in the future which is destined to change the whole course of human affairs even more profoundly than that event of the past—the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The first coming has been beyond computation in its power, but the Second Coming will have an even greater, vaster, deeper and wider influence upon the affairs of humanity, of heaven and of earth.

It was the Lord Jesus Himself who raised the hope of His Second Coming in the hearts and minds of His disciples. On that evening of His betrayal, when they were all assembled in the upper room for the last meeting with Him, He said to them, "Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14: 1-3). We have here a plain and definite, clear-cut promise of the Lord's Second Coming. He said to them, "I go away." And He said, "If I go"—and that "if" is not a doubtful "if," but an argumentative "if," just as though He had said, "since" I go—"I will come again." Just as certainly, as surely, as literally as He went, just so certainly and literally He will come again. And He said,

"I will come again to receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." That is the promise, and the destiny of His people—that for evermore they shall be with Him, where He is.

Then came the dark hour of Gethsemane, when His sweat as great drops of blood was rolling to the ground, and the Son of God, prostrate upon His face, pleaded that the cup might pass from Him. Then came the betrayal. Then came the trial before Caiaphas, and the clamor of the mob before Pilate, and the sentence of crucifixion, and the Lord Jesus went forth to die for the world—for you and me—and upon the tree of cursing He bore our debts and took our responsibilities upon Himself. On the day that He died, in the evening, He was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, and on the morning of the first day of the week He had risen and, as we read here in the Book of Acts, for forty days He was seen by his disciples and by many infallible proofs he convinced them that He had come back from the dead and was living again. Luke says: "The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which He was received up, after that He had given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom He had chosen: to whom He showed himself alive after His passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the Kingdom of God."

It was on one of those occasions that the Lord Jesus was with them after His resurrection that they put a very important question to Him. Perhaps you know what the Jews expected the Messiah to do? They believed—and their belief was founded more or less justly upon the Old Testament prophecies—that Christ when He came would break the yoke of the oppressor from Israel's neck, that He would restore the kingdom they had had in former days and that as a King He would return to them in power and glory such as never before had been known. When they confessed Jesus to be *the Christ*, that thought was in their minds. They believed that Jesus was the Messiah foretold in the Old Testament. When He died on the Cross, this hope died with Him. They thought He could not be the Messiah because the Messiah was to be a great king who would rule over all the earth; and should not his enemies bow before Him and lick the dust under His feet? So when they saw Him dead on the tree of shame they could no longer believe that He was the Messiah. You remember what the two said on the way to Emmaus about the reason of their sadness? They said, "Are you only a stranger in Jerusalem? Have you not heard the great things that have happened?" And He said, "What things?" And they said, "Concerning Jesus, the Nazarene, who was a mighty prophet and who was crucified, and certain women of our company have reported that they found his tomb empty and had a vision of angels saying that he was alive. But we hoped that it was he who should redeem Is-

rael." You see, their hope was gone. They did not even call Him "the Christ" any more. They called Him "Jesus the Nazarene, *a prophet* mighty in deed and word before God and all the people," because they thought *the Christ* would be great and victorious and break the Gentile yoke and that wonderful days would dawn with His coming. But when Jesus died on the Cross, their hopes were just as dead as that body hanging on the tree, and they had given up in despair.

Yet now He was back from the dead! For forty days they saw Him, heard Him, handled Him with their hands, and by many infallible proofs He made Himself manifest to them. And now they asked Him a very important question. "Lord, thou didst not do it during thy natural life-time: 'dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' He did not say yea or nay. He simply said, "It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within His own authority. But ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." And as this conversation was going on, they had been walking together and had arrived upon the height of the Mount of Olives, and when the last word was spoken the Lord Jesus spread out His hands in a final benediction, and, while they were looking on, they beheld Him go up from their midst. Now His feet no longer touched the earth; now He was out of their reach, going higher and higher, His face still smiling down upon them, His hands still outstretched in benediction. And while they were looking, a cloud wrapped Him round and hid Him from their view. And they stood still, looking into heaven—naturally, as we should have done if we had been there—when their attention was distracted by two men in white apparel who also said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven." And there again the promise of His Second Coming was renewed.

I am glad that this passage is in the Book. It settles a great many questions. Those disciples understood—and we understand—that "this Jesus"—not some other one—but "this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven." I want to say that the doctrine of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ loses its force and value whenever you take the *personality of* Him who is coming out of it. It is Jesus Himself, this very Jesus whom they had beheld going up from them, who "shall so come in like manner."

About two hundred years ago—hardly that long—there lived a man named Emmanuel Swedenborg, who was rather a queer genius. He had peculiar dreams and visions concerning which he wrote books which are still being printed. The claim is actually made that these visions and books of Swedenborg are the Second

Coming of Christ, and that since these books were written a new order has come in. I am so glad that the Lord forestalled such misconceptions. Jesus Christ is not coming back in the shape of a book, but "this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven."

Again, it is claimed for that strange woman—the author of Christian Science—that she and her work is the Second Coming of Christ. I am glad we have a plain statement in the Word of God that keeps people from thinking that Christ will come again in the form of a new theory. He will not come as a new theory or doctrine or philosophy, or movement, but "this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven."

Again, there was a man, but recently dead, whose writings have been scattered all over this nation and have been published in many different tongues, who taught that in 1874 Jesus came back spiritually and has been present spiritually ever since. But I want to tell you that Jesus Christ does not come back spiritually; spiritually He is here all the time. He is not going to come back as a spirit nor as a phantom. He was very particular to assure us of the reality of His resurrection-body. He went to His disciples and said, "See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having." By "flesh and bones," we do not mean *corruptible* flesh and bones, for we are distinctly told that He rose from the dead no more to return to corruption, immortal and glorified—for who can put any limit to the power of God? But His actual body was there and He said, "Handle me and see." See "that it is I myself." And when they still doubted, He said, "Have you anything to eat?" And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and He took it and ate before them. Well, when you see a man eat before you, and handle him with your hands, and hear him and see him, you are pretty well convinced that he is alive. Such was the Jesus who was associated with them after His resurrection for forty days, who went up from their midst into heaven, and of whom it was said, "This Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven." That is the promise of His coming back—just as actually and palpably, just as visibly and bodily, as He went up.

Then the disciples returned to Jerusalem, to the upper room, to wait for the fulfilment of that promise of the Holy Spirit. They went into the upper room where they were abiding, it says, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James; and there they were with Mary the mother of Jesus, and the women, and with His brethren waiting and praying. If you read further you see that "when the day of Pentecost was come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of

the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Then there gathered a great multitude and for the first time in the world's history the Gospel was preached in its fulness, and the man who had the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven rose up, and it was he who opened the door to the multitudes on that day. He preached "Christ crucified." He told of His resurrection and ascension and concluded his sermon by saying, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." It goes on to say, "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him. They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved."

There you have the beginning of the Church of God. The Gospel remained in Jerusalem for a time and then began to spread, just as the Lord had said, into Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. And wherever that Gospel was preached the old primitive hope in the Second Coming of Christ sprang up, just as it will today. Wherever the Church sprang up, there sprang up the hope of the coming of Christ; for instance, Paul went to Corinth and preached Christ to the Corinthians and it says: "Many of the Corinthians hearing believed and were baptized." Now when Paul wrote to them next, he addressed them as "the Church of God which is at Corinth." Now he says to them: "I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus; that in everything ye were enriched in him, in all utterance and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you; so that ye come behind in no gift; *waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" The word *waiting* there is a very strong word in the Greek; it means earnest, anxious expectation of the revealing of the Lord Jesus Christ. This, therefore, was an apostolic church. The apostolic Church was taught to wait and look for the coming again of the Lord Jesus.

We now turn to the third chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians. The apostle is deploring the life that many of them are living. He says: "For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." They are the "*enemies of the cross of Christ*"—"whose end is perdition, whose God is the belly, and whose glory is in

their shame, who mind earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven; whence *also we wait for a Savior*, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself." Now get that. The Apostle says, "Our citizenship is in heaven, Whence also we (that is, I, Paul, and you, Philippians) look for a Savior." He was not expecting a blessed future by some development from below, but a Savior to come from above and that He would "fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself." And he says, "Wherefore, my brethren beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my beloved." So we see that Paul himself and the Church at Philippi, which was brought into existence by his labors, were in an attitude of earnest expectation of the return of Jesus Christ the Lord.

We turn to the ninth chapter of Hebrews. The Hebrews were Jews, the Jewish Christians of Palestine. They were well acquainted with the Old Testament teachings concerning the Temple and Tabernacle. There were two divisions of the Temple; there was the holy place where the priests ministered every day, and then, behind the veil, was the Holy of Holies where the high priest only went once a year to make atonement for the sins of the people. Now Paul writes to the Hebrews and says Christ "entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us." As the high priest went into the Holy of Holies behind the veil, so Christ has gone into the presence of God. Just as the high priest came back, so Christ would come back. "And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment, so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation." He is coming back a second time, from behind the veil, to them that wait for Him. (Heb. 9:28).

The apostolic church was in an attitude of waiting for Jesus. I could continue to multiply passages, but I will bring up only two more on this point which I think deserve special notice. It seems that when Paul was preaching to the Thessalonians the doctrine of the Second Coming came to the forefront more than anywhere else. He was there only three weeks, it appears. It was a heathen city where the Gospel had never been preached. What would you think nowadays of a preacher who would go to an absolutely new place to preach the Gospel and take time to tell them and instruct them so particularly that the Lord Jesus is coming again? I am afraid that some would say: "That man has gone cranky," and he would certainly be considered as an extremist on that point. That is, however, just what Paul did at Thessalonica. When he wrote to them the Apostle said, "Ye turned un-

to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, Who delivereth us from the wrath to come." The preaching of that apostle was of such a nature that they turned to GOD for two purposes—first, "to serve the living and true God," and secondly, "to wait for His Son from heaven." Therein you see the two parts of the Christian religion. The first part is to serve the living and true God and the second part is to wait for His Son from heaven. Not waiting only, nor serving only. I have had people say to me, "Don't you believe that if a man is faithful and serves God from day to day, he will be all right at the end?" Well, it does not say so. The Thessalonians turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God and also to wait for His Son from heaven. The outlook that you hold is going to affect profoundly all of your Christian life. We shall say more of that presently. (1 Thess. 1:9, 10).

In the second passage Paul is writing to a young preacher, Titus. He says that "the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men"—graciously bringing salvation within the reach of all and "instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world"—or "age." "Soberly"—that means with self-control. "Righteously"—that means dealing fairly with our fellow-man. "Godly"—that means in the right attitude towards God. While we are doing all that, we must also be "*looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ*; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works." And Paul says, "Preach that; tell the people that the grace of God tells us to conduct ourselves soberly, righteously and godly, and to be looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." I want to tell you, my friends, that this is an integral part of the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ. The eyes of the church, by God's own word and teaching, were riveted upon that event. It filled the whole horizon of the future for them. (Tit. 2:11-14).

In this passage to Titus there appears a word that calls for a little more consideration—namely, the word "hope." He speaks of the coming again of Christ as the "blessed hope." Most men know that hope is a compound thing; it consists of two elements. Just as water consists of two elements, oxygen and hydrogen, combined in chemical proportion, so hope consists of two spiritual elements—one is desire, and the other is expectation. You have to have both of these in order to have hope. If you have a desire for a thing but no reasonable expectation of it, that is not hope. I might ask a man if he would like to have a million dollars?" And he would say, "Yes." "Well, do you hope for a million dollars? No," he would say, "because I have no show on earth of getting that much money." Or, you may expect some-

thing that you don't want. See a little boy going home, looking anxious; he is expecting something, but that is not hope! It takes both elements to make hope. I have made the statement—and I am not unwilling to make it again—that the professing Church has virtually lost its hope of the Second Coming. If I could prove that she has ceased to expect Christ's coming again, it will be apparent that she has lost this hope. If I could prove that she has ceased from the desire of His coming, I could *prove* that hope has gone. If I could prove both, I should prove it twice over. Expectation and desire make up the hope of the appearing of our blessed Savior. They were hoping for Him and they were looking for His return in the days of the apostles. When persecution raged, when the Christians were slain for their belief—were put to death in all kinds of cruel fashions—they kept alive the hope of the coming of the Lord Jesus. Then the Emperor of Rome nominally professed Christianity. It was one of the devil's schemes; what he could not do by opposition and persecution, he now attempted to do by flattery. The Emperor Constantine made Christianity the state religion. Then Christians came out of the holes and caves, the whole world joined in, and the great leaders of the church were rejoicing. Even Augustine, nearly a hundred years after, said, "Let the heavens be glad, for the Lord reigneth." He thought the Millennium had come because the emperors of Rome had acknowledged Christianity; but instead of the Church converting the world, the world was swamping the Church. The hope then died out except for a fanatical flare-up now and then. But when Martin Luther called men back to the Bible and they began to study it again in their own vernacular, the hope of His coming revived. In the 18th Century, however, there came a man named Daniel Whithy. Daniel Whitby had a new theory. He was very modest; he never thought his theory would live for hundreds of years, but it is known yet as the post-millennial theory. He taught that the Gospel would spread and spread until the whole world would be converted, then would follow a thousand years of blessedness and peace, and after all this Jesus would come and wind things up. Then the hope of His coming died again everywhere as this doctrine became the general teaching.

I am afraid it is that doctrine that chiefly controls the Christian world today—the Whitby doctrine of post-millennialism. If I have to wait till the world is converted, and then another thousand years till Christ comes, I might as well stop teaching about His coming. It will be a very remote contingency, because, since the Gospel has been preached, it has never been known that an entire nation has turned to Him. I do not know of any community that ever became wholly Christian, and in the places where the Gospel has been preached most it begins to corrupt like the manna kept overnight. The only way to keep the gospel is to keep it going. There is nothing now but darkness and superstition in those Eastern lands. And in this land, where the

Gospel has been preached so long, it is beginning to lose its welcome. In heathen lands more than 100,000 heathens are born to every Christian. At that rate how long will it be till the world is converted? If you have to wait till then, and then a thousand years before Christ comes, of course you will lose your hope. But that is the way a great many people look at it. The thought of His coming has faded out of the minds of men. They are now looking forward, rather, to death. Yet the Bible does not tell us to look forward to death or to get ready to die. You hear this taught in the pulpit constantly. It is not wrong for preachers to point out the fleetingness of human life, but you never get an appeal in the New Testament to turn to the Lord on account of the shortness of human life. You are never told to get ready to die, but often and often you are reminded that you know not the day nor the hour that the Son of Man shall come. In fact, I believe that the whole present-day theology is unfavorable to the doctrine of the coming of Jesus Christ. Most theology has no room for it. They believe that when a man dies he enters into his bliss. That does not leave any essential place for the coming of the Lord Jesus. Take that song we sing sometimes:

"There is a land of pure delight, where saints immortal reign,
Infinite day excludes the night, and pleasures banish pain;
There everlasting spring abides, and never-withering flowers:
Death like a narrow sea divides this heavenly land from ours."

If that is so, what is the use of Christ's coming again? What essential place is left for it in the scheme of doctrine, if that is so? Now I believe that when a Christian dies he is "with Christ, which is very far better," but the day which is the real object of our hope will never come till Jesus returns. That is the time of our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body—the day when the servants of God shall be crowned even with that crown which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to them at that day, and "to all who have loved His appearing."

So much for the expectation of the coming of Christ. As an expectation it has ceased to be a vital factor in our Christianity. Let's change that. Let's learn to look for Him again.

Turn to the other element, which is desire. I think if you were to take any average congregation and tell them—if a man could do so truly and authoritatively—that Jesus was coming tonight, they would turn pale and begin to tremble. Well, what is the matter with you? If a husband has been away from home and somebody tells the wife that he is coming home and she at once begins to tremble and turn pale, it is reasonable to suppose that something is wrong. You remember what James says: "Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" I tell you that if you had to change Your way of living because Jesus was coming tonight, then your way of living is wrong. That is the thing that God wanted us to keep before our eyes all the time. He wanted us to long for Him, to look for Him, to wait and watch for Him, "to love His appear-

ing." When I get back home, my little children will be waiting and watching to hear the first footfall. I usually go in at the back-alley gate (by which I came in for the title "alligator"). They will listen and look and run to meet me, and they will be so glad to see me coming because they love me. If we love the Lord Jesus, ought not we to be glad at the thought of His coming? If you must say, "I am not glad," then get right today! And then if He comes, well and good; and if death comes first, well and good. The man who is looking for the coming of Jesus will be all right at the coming of death, but the man who is waiting for death may not be, because there is something procrastinating about the thought of death.

I want to bring out the three attitudes that can be taken towards the coming of Christ. First, there is the attitude of the scoffer. Turn to the third chapter of the second epistle of Peter and find: "In the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." That is, these are scientific scoffers. They believe in the constancy of natural law. They believe that nothing miraculous is going to happen. They do not believe God or Christ is going to do anything "arbitrary." A certain preacher said every time a new orphanage or hospital is built, and every time a step in progress and advancement is taken, that is Christ coming again; so Christ will come more and more till the perfect day has come. That does not sound like this Second Coming that we have been reading about. Yet men are teaching that from day to day. The scoffers say, "All this time has passed and He has not come!" The Apostle said, "Don't mind that. When you hear that, you may know that the last days are at hand." "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness; but is long-suffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." He is waiting and biding His time. When He gets ready He will come. Just as once, hundreds of years ago, He came when no one was looking for Him except a few devout persons, so He will come in that day.

The second attitude is that of the unfaithful servant. He does not deny that the Lord Jesus is coming, but says in his heart—maybe not out openly and publicly—"My Lord delayeth His coming. He will come but it will be a long time before He does come." So he looks for the coming but puts it in the indefinite future. What will he do? In order to be faithful men need the spur of a constant motive. If I had a farm and left someone in charge of that farm, told him that I wanted everything done in such and such a way—and then said, "Now these are my orders, I am going away, but I am liable to come back any time"—what would the man do? He would keep that place just as I told him—that is, if he were interested in his job. If, however, I were to say to him, "I am going away for ten years," the man would

be hardly human if he didn't fudge on my orders sometime. "What's the harm in leaving these implements in the field?" the man might say to himself. "I shall have everything straightened up nicely by the time he gets back." And in just this way the hope of the Second Coming keeps the Christian alert, keeps his spiritual tone up to the level. It makes him unselfish and unworldly, helps him to realize that he is a pilgrim on the earth and has nothing to expect down here except what the Lord Jesus got. It will help him to endure, because after the suffering, he knows, comes the glory; after we have borne the burden, then comes our reign with Him. For He said, in regard to the Church, "And he that overcometh, and he that keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give authority over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to shivers; as I also have received of my Father: and I will give him the morning star"; and that we "shall reign with Him a thousand years." If this is contrary to your theology, yet God said so. The unfaithful servant says in his heart, "The Lord will come sometime but not soon," and then he begins to get careless, he begins to eat and drink with the drunken, to beat the men and maidservants and to be unkind to his brethren. When the man is not expecting it, that Lord will come—"the Lord of that servant shall come in a day that he expecteth not, and in an hour when he knoweth not, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth." That is the unfaithful servant's attitude.

And finally *the true servant* also has an attitude to the coming of Christ and this is given in the last chapter of the book of Revelation. The apostle John was exiled upon the lonely Isle of Patmos amid the waves of the Aegean Sea. In his loneliness he is wrapt with visions of Heaven. God unfolds the future before him. He sees the dreadful conflict of the last days; sees the vast delusions that sweep the world; sees the blood of the martyrs flowing; glimpses finally the glory of His Coming and His kingdom and at last, the New Jerusalem with her battle-merits of gold, and hears above all the voice of Jesus saying, "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with Me, to render to each man according as his work is." To that cry John made his response. Out of the depth of his soul came the counter-cry, and he said, "Even so come, Lord Jesus!" That is the last prayer in the Bible—"Even so come, Lord Jesus!" This is the cry of the Christian who is bearing the cross and his Lord's reproach. It is the hope of every redeemed soul—"Even so come, Lord Jesus!" Can you say it tonight?

We had a little sister who loved the Lord Jesus, a sweet, pure, tender, gentle, Christian girl, with large, soulful brown eyes. Sloe was stricken with disease, and we saw her wasting away. I went to see her one day and I said to her, "Do you know you are very sick?" "Yes," she said. "Do you expect to get well?" She shook her head and said, "No." "Do you expect to die

then?" I asked. "Yes," she said simply. "Don't do it," I said, "you may die of course, but again the Lord Jesus might come first. At what hour He will come we do not know. It is the Christian's privilege to look beyond death and to wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus." She took that in. It was sometime after that that they thought she was dying, and when I went in, she recognized me and said, "Brother Boll, I am so glad of what you told me. I am not looking for death any more, but I am looking for the Lord Jesus." The next night she closed her eyes and "fell asleep in Jesus." Do you think her looking was to no purpose? "But we would not have you ignorant, brethren concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen 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 that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up 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).

Yes, we may look for the coming of Christ. Then shall all tears be wiped away. The sad past will be forgotten. Then shall be our adoption, the redemption of our body. Then all nature shall rejoice; the hills shall clap their hands; the waves of the sea shall shout aloud for joy. The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. It will be a glorious day for this earth after the coming of Jesus. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." But to us God hath revealed them by His Spirit.

II

"THE PURPOSE OF THE LORD'S RETURN, THE MILLENNIUM AND THINGS TO COME."

The theme on which I am to speak tonight is *The Purpose of the Lord's Return, the Millennium, and the Things to Come*. This subject grew out of the sermon preached the other night on the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. There were a number of the brethren not only of this faithful congregation but also of other congregations in the city, who were much interested to hear the sequel and to learn the background of the teaching concerning the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ as I presented it last Saturday night. Now I have not been in the habit of preaching on these things. I have spoken on them on a few occasions. These topics have frequently arisen in private conversation and were brought out by questions at one time or another, or in the study of the text of the prophecies in the Bible-class, but I have rarely preached on them, especially not in protracted meetings. But since it is a part of the Word of God that is under discussion, and since God has spoken on these matters, I feel under a sacred obligation to present such things as I have found in the Word of God when asked to do so. Therefore I shall endeavor to be faithful in my presentation of this subject. I remember that the Lord Jesus said concerning the Holy Spirit, "*He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you.*" Well, if that is the way to glorify Christ I shall attempt to do that. I shall try to present to you the things to come as faithfully as I am able. I am not infallible. Every human being must take into consideration that not he, but the Word of God, is right. All of us must concede that, whatever the subject on which we may be speaking. Furthermore, we know that the Word of God is inspired. Our conclusions are not inspired. They may be true and correct for all that, but they are not inspired. The facts that we glean from the testimony of God in the Scriptures may be true and righteous altogether, but perhaps our arrangement of these facts and the sequence in which we conceive of them may not be correct. All things must be weighed in the light of God's Word. This is the privilege and a heart exercise for every Christian, and all of us, like the Bereans, must finally turn to the Word of God to see if these things be so.

CHRIST COMES FOR HIS PEOPLE.

Now, as to the purpose of Christ's return from heaven. The first fact that I wish to set before you is that the Lord Jesus is coming back from heaven *for the purpose of receiving His people to Himself*. On the evening of His betrayal He said to His disciples, "*If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again,*" and then He states one purpose—and, no doubt, one of the chief purposes—of His return: "*If I go and prepare a place for you,*

I will come again to *receive you unto myself*, that where I am, there ye may be also." Here we have one of the prime purposes of the Lord's return. He is coming back to receive us—that is, His disciples, those who believe on His Name, the members of His Body—to Himself, and from that time on they will be with Him in inseparable union, as long as all eternity shall endure.

More detail of this is given us in I Thess. 4:13-18. In that passage we see that *the very first thing that shall occur* when the Lord Jesus descends from heaven, "with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God," is that "the dead in Christ shall rise first." He especially tells us that those who are living on the earth at that time "shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep," but, he says, "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall *together with them*"—that is, simultaneously—"be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Now one of these times that is going to happen. At the very time when even His disciples might be least expecting it, when it would seem least probable, suddenly, unexpectedly, unannounced, and swiftly as "in the twinkling of an eye," "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 that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

OUR ADOPTION, THE REDEMPTION OF OUR BODY.

Now the Book tells us furthermore that that will be the time of our full redemption. Up to the hour of the Lord's return, His own will not be fully redeemed. The sentiment that when a Christian dies he enters into his final glory and his eternal habitation is not Scriptural. The Christian, indeed, at his death goes into the presence of the Lord. As Paul said, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain," and again, "Having the desire to depart and be with Christ, which is very far better." Nevertheless, the Christian's redemption is not finished, and he is in a condition of happy waiting and rest, a state of abeyance, until the day the Lord Jesus comes to consummate His victory. As the Apostle says in the eighth chapter of Romans, we are "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Not until this old body is redeemed from the dust and from the power of death, and we stand anew in the image of the glorious body of our Lord Jesus Christ, will our redemption be complete, and not until then shall we fully have entered the state of sonship. We are the sons of God now, but we shall be fully installed into the high position of sonship—and that is what the word "adoption" means in the New Testament—at the time of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. "We wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that

it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself." (Phil. 3:20, 21).

Though already too limited, and probably unable to handle my whole subject, I cannot resist the impulse to try to bring home to the Christian's heart the exceeding great and glorious privilege wrapped up in these words. You know how people will go hundreds and thousands of miles and spend their last penny in search of health, for just a little recuperation, a little patching up of the poor, imperfect life that we have in our natural bodies. But, oh, what it will be when Jesus comes and fashions anew our bodies and makes them like His glorious body! Have you ever gotten up some morning and breathed the fresh, morning air; and the skies seemed so blue and the world was so wonderful and it seemed as though there were springs under your feet, and you felt glad just to be alive? Then you knew what it is to be well. The doctors say that we are never perfectly well, that there is always something slightly out of order, but at such times we are approximately well. They say that health is the most wonderful possession and that without it everything else is valueless. But what is health but the normal functioning of our poor earthly life? What then will it be when that new life will course through our bodies and we shall be beyond reach of sickness or pain for evermore, gladly alive with the Lord Jesus, with a body like unto His, endowed with capacities and powers that transcend all our conception at the present time? We shall be like Him when He shall appear. The dead shall be raised incorruptible and the living shall be changed; for "this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality"; and the dead and the living shall be caught up to meet Him in the air, simultaneously. Then is our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

THE TIME OF THE CHRISTIAN'S REWARD.

Every Christian's reward also waits for that blessed day. You hear sometimes that "so-and-so has gone to his reward." It is a mistake. There is a preliminary foretaste before the coming of the Lord, both for the evil and the righteous—the story of the rich man and Lazarus gives us an indication of that. But to speak of reward—no, that does not come till the Lord Jesus comes. "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is." (Rev. 22:12). That certainly involves *the judgment of His people* according to the works they have wrought. The apostle tells us (1 Cor. 4:5) "judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and *then shall each man have his praise from God.*" Our talents are committed to us to occupy until He comes. When the Lord Jesus comes, those that have well and faithfully used their talents will receive rank and rating according to the diligence they have put into their work. The

one man who had made ten pounds received jurisdiction and control over ten cities, in the parable of the "pounds." (Luke 19). The other man, who made five pounds, received authority over five cities, but the third, who had hidden his pound, was rejected altogether. So there will be a judgment of Christ's servants in accordance with the work they have done. Furthermore, there is some indication that a Christian's work may even be burned up, and yet if he has put faithful—even if blundering—efforts into the work, he himself shall be saved, "yet so as by fire." (1 Cor. 3:10-15). So there will be judgments and rewards.

Moreover the Christian will receive his crown only when Jesus comes. Wherever you find the crown and crowning spoken of it is always connected with the coming of the Lord. Paul, writing to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:8) says, "Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me *at that day*; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved *His appearing*." Again when Peter speaks to the elders (1 Pet. 5:2-4) and tells them to take up the work of the Lord "not of constraint, but willingly," he adds, "and *when the Chief Shepherd shall be manifested*, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away." The "crown of life" also is promised to us after we have been tested out and approved. (Jas. 1:12). So we see that the crown comes to the Christian at the time of the return of the Lord Jesus.

GRACE TO BE BROUGHT TO US.

The Lord Jesus is now doing a work in His church. He loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might cleanse it by the washing of water and with the word. He is dealing with every single Christian and is disciplining them, working with them, looking forward to the time when He can present them spotless and without blemish, in exceeding joy, in the presence of the Father. Now that is the thing to look forward to. We could never have any happiness apart from perfect holiness. But the time is coming when His church shall be presented in the presence of God without blemish. (Eph. 5:27; Jude 24). That will be a time of exceeding joy for His people. The presence of God strikes terror into the hearts of those unfit to face Him. If we are permitted to face Him through the work of our Lord Jesus, how happy we shall be to look into the face of God! "His servants shall serve Him and they shall see His face and His name shall be in their foreheads." Shall we ever be able to arrive at such a bliss—we, so weak, so miserable, who have so many defects, who are so continually failing, however hard we try? Well, you have come to the Lord for salvation; cleave to the Lord with all your heart and He will see you through. We are told in I Peter 1:13, to set our "hope perfectly on *the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ*." Now, you know what "grace" is, don't you? Grace is the undeserved favor of God. By the grace of God we have been saved. It is His

grace that makes us strong in weakness. By His grace we are justified. Now Peter tells us that we have not only been saved by grace in the past, not only are we today standing in the grace of God, but *there is grace yet to be brought to us*, and even urges us to set our entire hope on that. If it were not for that we could have no hope in the coming of Christ. What man is there who could face the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ on the ground of his own merit and worth? But we are not told to rest our hope on that. "Set your hope on the grace" of God. That very motive will help you to live a life that is pure and holy—"as children of obedience; not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in the time of your ignorance: but like as He Who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living."

SALVATION FUTURE.

One more item. The Lord Jesus is coming back to accomplish our final salvation. Just as our original salvation demanded His coming from heaven, taking the form of a servant, going to the Cross and bearing our sins there, so our ultimate salvation in the future is dependent upon Christ's coming again in glory and power. We cannot be ultimately saved unless Jesus comes back. That is why the New Testament puts such an emphasis on the doctrine of the Second Coming. In Hebrews 9:27, 28, we read, "And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, *unto salvation.*" *He* is coming back for our salvation; which means that unless He came back there could not be any such thing. We have left it out of our theology, haven't we? We have got things all fixed up without that. Why should Christ come back? If you have no essential place in your theology for the coming of Christ, your theology is wrong. In the New Testament we find that it filled the Christian's whole horizon. They were longing for it, and taught to yearn and wait for it. And your very salvation depends upon it. It requires His coming to bring about that salvation. Peter calls it the "salvation ready to be revealed at the last time"; and Paul says, "now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Jesus is coming for the salvation of His people.

THE COMING IMMINENT, BUT A COMPOSITE EVENT.

This is the first great object of the coming of the Lord, the very first thing to be expected. This is the hope of the Church and as far as the New Testament teaching is concerned we are not taught to look forward to anything else. Well and good for us to observe the course of times and developments and circumstances. Yet the Christian is taught to look forward to this one first event of all, an event that is liable to break in upon us at any time—that our Lord Jesus "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 that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." That is the one future thing set before us, and it is *imminent*. When I say "imminent," I do not mean "immediate." I have no inside information that it will be today or tomorrow or within the next two or three years. But an imminent thing is one that may happen at any time; it may bide quite a while, and yet again it may occur the next moment. The coming of the Lord Jesus is imminent. The very first thing that will happen—not to be heralded by anything, not necessarily preceded by any fulfilment of prophecy, as far as I have been able to ascertain, is this aspect of the Coming. In this stage of His coming, He comes down from heaven with the shout and the voice of the archangel, the dead are raised and the living are changed and caught up, with the :resurrected dead, to meet the Lord in the air. That is the very first event to be looked for. It may be that tomorrow's sun will not dawn till that thing happens.

Now, a thing may be simple or it may be complex. The first coming of the Lord Jesus was not a simple event, it was a complex event. The Lord Jesus came when He was born in Bethlehem. Again, He came when He was baptized of John for "John preached before the face of His coming." Again, He came when He made His triumphal entry. "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee!" Again, when He died on the Cross He came: "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood." (1 John 5:6). Again, He came when He came back from the dead. All these features of His first coming constitute the first coming of the Lord Jesus upon the earth. It was a compound event—not a single act, but an event made up of many different features. Now I want to tell you that all the passages of the New Testament about the Second Coming cannot be explained upon the theory that it is a simple event, that the Lord Jesus will just come down at one single act and that will be all. There are a number of features to it that we must recognize. One, as we have already seen, is that the Lord Jesus is coming to receive his saints to Himself. However, we read again that He comes "with His saints." Now evidently it cannot be that the Lord Jesus comes to receive His saints and at the same time comes *with His saints*. That cannot be; it is just as impossible as to say that you can make two mountains without a valley between. There are some things that are just not possible. Here is one of them: the Lord Jesus is coming to receive His people, and that He comes and His people come with Him! In Colossians 3:4, it says, "When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory." Well, before that can happen, the Lord Jesus must have come for his saints; they must have been caught up to meet Him in the air; that apportioning of rank and place and position must have taken place—and *then* shall ye also with

him be manifested in glory." Then the whole world shall admire Him in His saints—"When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at in all them that believed." (2 Thess. 1:10).

There is coming then a time of the appearing of the Lord Jesus when He, *with His saints*, shall return. That is a very important point. In Revelation 19:11 and onward, we see the heaven opened and the Lord Himself, the King of kings and Lord of lords, coming forth, riding upon a white horse; and on white horses following Him, arrayed in white raiment His saints, the "called, chosen and faithful"; a great retinue, coming down with Him from heaven to the earth. That is the second stage of His coming. It is not a different coming, but the same coming. If, for example, I were coming to Texas and some of my friends had met me in Texarkana, and then I came on to Dallas with them, you would not say that that was two comings. So, the first stage of the Second Coming is when the Lord Jesus comes down and receives His own up. Then, after certain affairs have been attended to, He comes with them and the whole world sees His coming.

HE COMES TO OVERTHROW THE WORLD POWER.

That leads us now to the second point, to the second purpose of the coming of the Lord Jesus. When the Lord Jesus comes again, He will come to overthrow His adversaries; *especially the last world-power*. Now this calls for a little research into Old Testament prophecy. In the thirteenth chapter of Revelation, you read about a very remarkable beast, unlike anything that lives and breathes upon the earth; a beast that has seven heads and ten horns and upon the horns are written the names of blasphemy. The beast has a mouth like a lion, a body like a leopard and feet like a bear, and it is a ten-horned beast. To that beast Satan gave his authority. Probably all of us understand that Satan is the Prince of the World and has his throne upon the earth right now. You remember what the Lord Jesus said to the Church at Pergamum (Rev. 2), "*I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's throne is.*" It is true that the Lord Jesus over-rules and that God over-rules. But Satan still rules. You remember the time on the mount of temptation when Satan offered to the Lord Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them and he said, "All this authority hath been committed to me and I give it to whomsoever I will. If thou wilt bow down to me, I will give it to thee." The Lord Jesus utterly refused, and said, "Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Now it may be objected that Satan is a liar and that Satan did not have that authority. If Satan had been lying the Lord Jesus would have known it; if Satan had been lying about that point it would not have been any temptation to Him. If Christ had not known that Satan had that authority, He would not have been tempted. But this was one of the Lord's tempta-

tions and He turned it down with indignation, and said, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" So that power was left in Satan's hands. But there is coming one in due time who will accept at Satan's hands that which the Lord Jesus refused. And that particular person, whoever he is, called the "beast" in the thirteenth chapter of the Revelation—accepts at Satan's hands the sovereignty of the earth and the rulership of all nations, tribes, kindreds and tongues. "And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon" —who is previously defined in the chapter as being the devil—"gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority"—how great authority is shown in verse 7 :—"there was given to him *authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation.*" This beast, therefore, is either a universal kingdom or a universal ruler. In fact, he is both. He both represents the kingdom and himself as its head.

THE FOUR BEASTS OF DAN. 7.

Turn back to the prophecy of Daniel recorded in chapter 7 of that book. Daniel saw four beasts coming up from the sea, diverse one from another; the first beast was like a lion, the second like a bear, the third like a leopard, and the fourth unlike anything that could be named. That latter beast comes snarling across the earth, trampling everything under his feet; and through one of its horns raises the voice of blasphemy against Him that sitteth in the heavens. It continues persecuting the saints until something happens. The thing that happens is a sudden judgment from heaven. But till the beast is crushed, the beast rules. *Then*, it says, the saints shall receive the kingdom—not up in heaven, but "under the whole heaven." That is the picture in Daniel 7.

Now in the Book of the Revelation you find the last beast of Daniel again, yet embodying the characteristics of all the four.

Now the four beasts of Daniel's prophecy were four kingdoms. it is a parallel prophecy to that of the Image in Daniel 2. The parts of that Image represent the four world-kingdoms—the head of gold, arms and breast of silver, belly and thighs of brass, the legs and feet of iron mixed with miry clay. That Image also comes to its end by a judgment from above, a supernatural judgment from God :—a stone cut out of the mountain without hands smote the image on its feet; and reduced it to fragments which the wind carried away like the chaff of the summer's threshing-floor. Then, (and not until then) the stone grew and became a mighty mountain and took possession of the earth. (Some say that this has already come to pass. We have not noticed that it has.)

The four beasts of the seventh chapter of Daniel, corre-

spond to the four parts of the Image of Dan. 2. These are the four world-kingdoms: the head of gold, and the first beast, both represent Babylon; the second part of the Image was Medo-Persia, and the second beast represents Medo-Persia; the third part of the Image represents Greece and the third beast in the vision of beasts also represents Greece; the fourth part of the Image, and the fourth beast represent Rome, exceedingly strong and fierce. "Forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise."

"Well, that settles it," says someone, "because Rome has come and gone." Yes, Rome has come and gone, but we have had her equivalent ever since. So that does not help us much. Furthermore, we read here in Revelation that that beast, at the time of its supernatural destruction, holds control over the whole world. Is that then still another world-power? No, it is bound to be one of those four of which we read in the 2nd and 7th chapters of Daniel. The beast that re-appears in Revelation is called the beast which "was and is not, and is about to come." (Rev. 17:8). That beast has three stages in his career: a time when he flourished, a time when he went out, and a time when he came back. Here he appears in his latter stage, when he comes back in all his force and embodies all the features of the other beasts in himself. Thus John beheld him when he rose up out of the sea. As in the prophecy of Dan. 7, that fourth beast met with supernatural destruction from on high, just so this ten-horned beast also meets with judgment from on High. What is that judgment? Turn to the 19th chapter of Revelation: "And I saw the heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. And his eyes are as a flame of fire, and upon his head are many diadems; and he hath a name written which no one knoweth but he himself. And he is arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood; and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and pure. And out of His mouth proceedeth 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 of the wrath of God, the Almighty. And he hath on his garment and. on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords." And while John was beholding this magnificent vision, he saw standing in the sun an angel who was beckoning to all the vultures to come to the great supper, that they might feed upon the flesh of kings and mighty men, captains, and of high and of low, because the great supper of God was about to be prepared for them. And what happens? The Son of Man comes with His armies and clashes with that beast which has back of him "the kings of earth and their armies." Don't think that there will be a fight. Someone said once that somebody taught that the Lord Jesus would lead forth His saints

in carnal warfare! But there will not be a struggle, nor hand-to-hand conflict. All that will happen will be that He will speak the word and the armies will be slain by the sword of His mouth. They will fall under His sentence and the Lord Jesus will take control. The beast and the false prophet will be taken alive and cast into the lake of fire, and as far as the Book shows they are the first beings to go into that awful place.

"THE MAN OF SIN."

This then marks another purpose of the Lord's return. He will come to take control of the situation and destroy that final world power and its great ruler. In 2 Thess. 2, you will find a picture of a remarkable personage, with whom the Lord Jesus clashes at His return. Jesus at His coming destroys him. That being is called "the man of sin he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped." We read as follows:

"Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him; to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is just at hand."

In every translation known to me except the Douay, the King James and the American Revised Version, this reads "the day of the Lord is now present." Someone had made those Thessalonians believe that the day of the Lord had already broken in upon them.

"Let no man beguile you in any wise: for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season. For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming."

That wicked one will have set himself up as the greatest of all, as God, and he will employ that blinding delusion; he will have come "according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." No doubt, he will be an attractive character in many ways, a man of great power and ability to whom Satan will lend all of his authority. He will have sway all over the earth. The majority of human beings will have absolute faith in him; they will hardly tremble when they see Jesus coming to clash with him. But the Lord Jesus will bring him to nought by the brightness of His coming.

When, therefore, the Lord Jesus comes down with His saints, He will find a certain one in control and his hosts marshaled against Him. This head of the world-power is not to be distinguished from the "man of sin" in 2 Thess. 2. The Lord Jesus, at His coming, will clash with him. There will be no encounter with carnal weapons, but the outshining of His glory will be sufficient. Thus will the last world-power come to its end. It is evident, then, that whatever the power that holds sway at that time, it will come to its end when Jesus comes with His saints. He finds him here in full possession and authority, and in a moment He sweeps him away and destroys him and his armies. Turning back to Revelation 19:19, we read:

"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought the signs in his sight, wherewith he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast and them that worshipped his image: they two were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone: and the rest were killed with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, even the sword which came forth out of his mouth: and all the birds were filled with their flesh."

The sequence then is this, that after having caught up His Church to Himself, the Lord is coming down with His saints, to take possession of the world, and to receive, added to His many crowns, yet one, the crown of all the earth, which indeed has been His all the time. And this is precisely the hour and time announced in Revelation 10:7, "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God"; and in 11:15, "And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said, *The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ: and He shall reign for ever and ever.*" I believe it. I believe this world is yet to see an exhibition of perfect government. Satan will be put down. Antichrist will be destroyed. The "man of sin" will meet his doom. I believe that the beast will be cast into the lake of fire. And, as Daniel shows us, just as soon as that beast is destroyed, the saints will possess the kingdom that the beast had held—namely, the sovereignty over all peoples and nations. I believe that. That is the reign of the saints as it is taught in the Bible.

THE FINAL SCENE OF OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY.

Well, I should like to be able to take more time with that. There is a vast background of prophecy behind it. I should like to be able to show you that that clash between Jesus and the beast and the armies described in the 19th chapter of the Book of the Revelation is the great battle of Armageddon mentioned elsewhere. I should like to show what will happen when that beast is cast into the lake of fire and "His saints shall reign on the earth." But I cannot take hold of that just now. We must go back once more to the Old Testament.

In Old Testament prophecy there are many things—different bits here and there—characteristic of Old Testament revelation. God spoke in divers ways and manners and at various times, here a little and there a little. It may be difficult to combine all the pictures given to us in the prophetic vision, but there is always one *final scene* that you find in the Old Testament prophecies. This final scene represents Israel—the nation descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—in the greatest trouble and tribulation, such tribulation as has never been known since the world began; and when that trouble is at its height Israel is threatened with extermination. There is no help anywhere. Then something occurs :—The Lord descends from on high with His saints, delivers Israel and rescues Jerusalem. Israel is restored and the Lord is king over all the earth. That is always the final vision. In the third chapter of Joel, at the 9th verse, we read:

"Proclaim ye this among the nations; prepare war; stir up the mighty men; let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Haste, ye, and come, all ye nations round about, and gather yourselves together."

Here they are, then—gathered together. For what purpose? Their purpose is to exterminate the Jew from the face of the earth—a thing some people would like to do today. If you turn to the 83rd Psalm you will see a combine gathered together for the purpose of exterminating Israel. There is a tribulation such as has never before been known on the earth. But the darkness is suddenly lightened with an announcement of relief: "Jehovah will be a refuge to his people and a stronghold to the children of Israel." When a man tries to exterminate Israel, he encounters God, he beats out his brains against the thick bosses of the bucklers of God the Almighty. Because God has said, "If the foundations of the earth can be measured and if the ordinances of the stars can come to an end, then shall come to an end my people Israel." It never shall be accomplished. In fact, God has never yet given up His purposes regarding Israel.

Here, then, you find the nations gathered together.

"Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision for the day of Jehovah is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. And Jehovah will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but Jehovah will be a refuge unto his people, and a stronghold to the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am Jehovah your God, dwelling in Zion my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more."

JERUSALEM'S FUTURE.

Jerusalem is the one city on earth with a career before her, The Lord has promised that He will cleanse her by the spirit of justice and the spirit of burning. (Isa. 4:4). No stranger shall pass through her any more. She shall be made glorious with the glory of the Lord Himself, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it. The 14th chapter of the book of Zechariah shows Israel in

her great final distress: "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 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 listen—"and His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives"—the place He went up from! I hear people say, "The Lord is never going to set His foot upon the earth again. But that is only a technical point. As long as you concede that He is going to *come back*, it would not matter whether or not He set His foot upon the earth. If the Lord Jesus comes to the air that does not mean that He is going to stay up in the air for ever. Here you have the statement that the Lord will stand upon the Mount of Olives. It goes on to say, "And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem" that same Jerusalem, which just a little while before had been in the greatest distress! Immediately follows the issue: "And Jehovah shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall Jehovah be one, and his name one." (Zech. 14:9).

You see that is the final scene. And what is the scene? It is the Lord coming to take control of the wicked world and to destroy the power that is trying to exterminate Israel. From that day on He rules as King: "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ."

* * * * *

We have found three things tonight—three purposes of the Lord's return. The first is His purpose regarding His own people. Secondly, there is His purpose regarding the final world-power, the anti-Christian power that controls the earth and is governing when Jesus returns. Thirdly, there is His purpose of deliverance of the people of Israel—who shall be delivered from the power of the enemy by the returning King. How glad they will be to see Him! When Jesus left them, He said, "Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." They will be so glad then that they will cry out, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" And Jerusalem shall be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more, and Israel shall be restored and righteous; and a new era shall begin upon the earth.

There is a hope held out in the Scriptures, that there will yet be a future for this old, downtrodden world, this creation which is suffering and groaning in pain together until now. It will be when the Lord Jesus comes down from heaven to assert His great power. The power is His now, but He has not asserted it. Some say the Lord is reigning today. You are right. He is reigning in the hearts of those who have willingly obeyed Him. But He has not taken in hand the rule and the government of the world.

There is a day coming when He will rule the nations with His rod of iron. (Of course, you understand the phrase, "rod of iron." The rod is the scepter and iron signifies strict unyielding justice). It will be a great day when He comes down to take possession of this much-abused earth, Lord of lords and King of kings, with power and great glory, and following in His wake, the armies of heaven, the called, the chosen, the faithful, who have been glorified with Him!

"The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain,
His blood-red banner streams afar—
Who follows in His train?"

Yea, who shall follow in His train? In these days the Gospel is being preached and it is a question of accepting or rejecting the King of kings and Lord of lords. When Jesus comes, He will take vengeance in flaming fire on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Those who take their stand against Him have nothing to hope for in that day. But those that come to Him now with their burden of sin and to obtain healing and cleansing, shall have their share with the saints, and when Jesus comes will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. I think this is an appeal to every responsible human being. If you are not in Christ, what are you waiting for? What do you expect? The claims of the Lord have been presented to you. The Cross has been held up before your eyes—the one hope of the sin-sick soul. The way of salvation has been taught. *"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."* "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins." Once you line up for that great King, you share in His rejection in this day while He is still absent and people despise His name; but at that day you shall appear with Him in glory. For if you share with Him in His rejection you shall also share in His glory, and if you suffer with Him, you shall reign with Him. If you flee to Him for refuge now, you shall be numbered with His saints when He comes again. Is it worth while and will you submit to the power of God?

III

"THE MILLENNIUM AND THINGS TO COME."

The theme before us now is The Millennium and Things to Come. This belongs to the doctrine of Christianity. When the Lord Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to His disciples, He said to them, "He shall teach you all things, and guide you into all truth, and He shall show you the things that are to come." We are inclined sometimes to think that these "things to come" are supernumerary and unimportant, and that they can just as well be left out as preached. We are apt to think that these matters concerning the future do not really come within the scope of the gospel, which is "the power of God unto salvation." I heard a man make an argument that the preacher should confine himself to the preaching of "Jesus and Him crucified." But Paul did not depart from his theme of "Jesus and Him crucified" when in 2 Thess. 2, he gave us an account of the Antichrist. John did not depart from the theme of "Jesus and Him crucified," nor abandon the Gospel, when he gave us the book of Revelation. The same Holy Spirit that showed them the truth concerning the first steps of salvation, also taught them the truth regarding Jesus' coming, and the things to come of which we read. Neither does it behoove us to say that these things have nothing to do with us. Even if we admit that these things have no essential bearing and that a man might be saved without a knowledge of these things (just as a man might live without his hands or his feet) that is not saying that these things are unimportant or useless. So let us not feel tonight that we are studying only an "interesting subject." Let us not go home and say, "That was very pleasant and interesting to listen to," but let us listen as unto a theme pertaining to the truth of God.

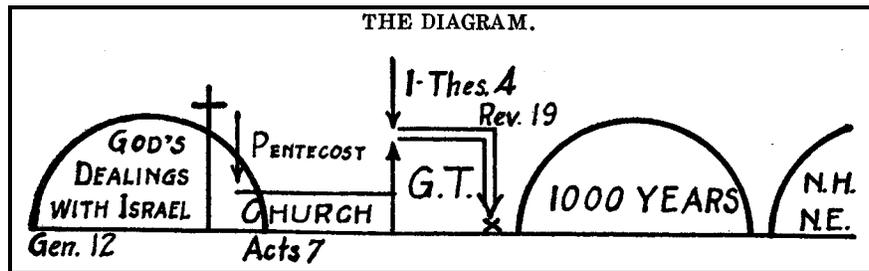
There has, in all times, been in the heart of humanity the deathless dream of a golden age. In all the centuries there were men who longed and dreamed of some happy time when all burdens would be lifted, when man should dwell without fear, when the inhumanity of man should no longer make the countless millions mourn; when oppression and corruption; misery and evil should have ceased, and, somehow, Paradise would be restored upon earth. Plato mapped out his ideal in his "Republic"; Sir Thomas Moore wrote his "Utopia." Poets, philosophers and statesmen have dreamed of some *ideal* day to come.

In strong contrast to that dream of humanity have been the actual facts all the time. Alas, since history has begun its record, human beings have toiled and suffered and have been bowed down, many of them under burdens too heavy to bear. Life is hard enough for us in this good country, and yet I want to tell you that there is not a country on the face of the earth in which, taking it all around, people are as well off; yet even here life is

not merely a song, is it? The oldest brick that has been dug from the mud of Mesopotamia tells the same story of corruption and greed and oppression that is making mankind unhappy in the present age. The oldest records of history are records of blood and tears; and the sorrow of humanity has been bitter as far back as research can trace it. Even nature herself seems to have shared in the sufferings and toils of humanity. Everywhere you see the bitter struggle for life, and competition for existence. There runs a minor note through all the songs of nature—when the winds murmur through the woods, where the rivulet flows along, and in the voices of animate being. Everything has a touch of sadness. "There is sorrow on the sea, it cannot be quiet." All nature, in sympathy with humanity, seems to be afflicted. Mankind has always felt that that burden was not natural and therefore has ever dreamed of a better day.

It is of that better day that I am to speak tonight. The passage that I read in your hearing from the 8th chapter of Romans gives a glimpse of it. Paul says, "the Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit"—and it is wonderful how he begins *with us* and looks into the far future, showing that there is an intimate connection with what you and I are and do today and the glory that is to come—"that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together with him. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to usward." And then he tells us something of the glory that shall be revealed in us, the children of God. He says, "the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God." The Greek word for "waiteth" is very impressive: literally translated it would mean that the creation stands with outstretched neck, waiting for the revealing of the sons of God. The creation is in earnest, anxious, almost breathless, expectation of a future event. And what is that future event? The revealing of the sons of God. For, he says, the creation was made subject to vanity. Vanity means fleetingness, nothingness, profitlessness. "Vanity of vanities," saith the preacher, "all is vanity." "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." Now, he says, "the creation was made subject to vanity, not by its own will, but by reason of Him who subjected it in hope." God, then, had a purpose, in doing this. He looked down the vista of the ages to the day when the creation itself should be "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." "*For,*" he says, "we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Look about you and on every side you see its suffering and distress; even the lower creation is afflicted as with some mysterious malady. The very earth shakes and trembles; the very heavens jar and convulse; and every great thing and little thing in nature shares in imperfection. There is something wrong with the whole world.

The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but we ourselves, even we, the children of God, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, "even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting ;" as all creation is waiting, so are we. And for what are we waiting? We are "waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body"—which, as we saw last night, comes with the coming of the Lord Jesus. So, in other words, all nature, all creation, the Church and every living thing —everything in this world except disobedient man—stands in earnest expectation of that glorious event of Jesus' coming. And the promise is that when that day comes, nature shall be loosed from its bonds of corruption, and she also will be restored, and be brought back to her condition of primitive blessedness. That. is what Peter speaks of in Acts 3:19-21, when he says, "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets that have been from of old." That day is coming, and all creation is waiting for it, "and we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting."



I want to call your attention to the simple diagram on the board. Let this base-line represent the course of human history. We are not beginning at the beginning, but with God's dealings with Israel. You know that God suffered all the nations to go their own way, but Israel, the nation He made for Himself He prepared for a channel of blessing to others. They were the people whom He had formed to show forth all His praise. With them He dealt exclusively for a long time. He began with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and Jacob's family developed into a nation in the land of Egypt, and then God brought them out by the hand of Moses, and they were settled in the land which God had sworn to give them as a heritage; and their history goes on to the time of their captivity and their return; and after centuries, came Jesus their Lord, whom they 'rejected. Finally God ceased to deal with them as a nation; but even today He still receives them individually, as some here tonight are glad to know. The point where He ceased to deal with Israel nationally is found at the

close of the 7th chapter of Acts. A short time before, the Lord Jesus died on the cross—you see I put the Cross into prominence. God's scheme for the future hinges on the Cross. Whatever glory shall be revealed, whatever wonder and beauty the future holds, all points back to the Cross. "Worthy is *the Lamb that was slain* to receive the honor and glory!" The Cross comes in the history of Israel. Fifty days after the Passover and Crucifixion, comes Pentecost. From that time began a new order of things—namely, the Church came into existence. The Holy Spirit came. On that day Peter preached the gospel for the first time in the world's history ".by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven," and told inquiring sinners the way of salvation. The Holy Spirit was God's crowning gift to the Lord Jesus. God had granted Him the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus sent Him forth. It was the evidence that the Lord Jesus was seated on the right hand of God and that the Kingdom of .God had begun.

The Gospel remained for a certain time with the Jews. It began in Jerusalem and continued there for some time. Then it went out to Judaea. Stephen was the man to whom it had 'been committed to deliver the final indictment against Israel. (Acts 7). Immediately after the gospel went out to Samaria, then to Gentiles, and to the uttermost parts of the world, God had ceased to deal exclusively with Israel as a nation and was beginning to visit the Gentiles. In this present day He is electing from the Jews and Gentiles a people for His own name. (Acts 15:14; Rom. 9:24). This people it is that is forming that wonderful body which is called the Church, which has a destiny so glorious that I am sure none of us has a fair conception of it.

THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH.

Now the Church has been in existence throughout these centuries, but one of these days—and at what hour we do not know, at some unexpected time—this state of things is going to terminate. The Lord Jesus 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 that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord"—inseparably united with Him from thenceforth. This is the one great hope of the Church. That is the "morning star' that she is looking for, the only prospect the Church has definitely in view. Israel's hope is somewhat different, but we are going to concentrate attention on the Church at this moment.

The Church, then, is looking forward to that event. It may happen tonight. I don't know that it will, but, on the other hand, I don't know that it won't. In fact, that is the one event which is absolutely dateless. We do not know anything about its date. The Apostle Paul was looking forward to it in his day. He taught the Thessalonian brethren and others to wait and look and long for it, and to expect it, and the Apostle Paul knew as

much about God's plans as any man on the earth, for he was an inspired apostle and he knew no more than that the coming of the Lord Jesus was continually to be expected. Let conditions on the earth be what they will or may, the coming of the Lord Jesus *for His Church* is the thing always to be expected.

After the Church has been caught up to meet the Lord in the air, there comes a moment, as we saw last night, when it shall also come down with Him. Moreover, we saw that, when the Lord Jesus comes back with His saints—I have made a double line to represent that—He will find on the earth a condition of rebellion. You remember that I read from the 19th chapter of the Book of the Revelation and also from some Old Testament prophecies in regard to Israel's last distress. We saw that down here on the earth He will find the Beast in leadership and another beast as his assistant, and the armies of the kings of the earth gathered together to make war against Him that sitteth upon the horse; and that then He will execute judgment against that rebellious host. The beast is taken, and the false prophet, and they are cast into the lake of fire, and the armies are destroyed by the sword that cometh out of His mouth. I want to call your attention especially to this time of interval between the taking up of the Church to meet Christ, and His coming down with her. Here is a space of time between the taking up of the saints and the Lord's coming down with them. It might be conceivable that when the saints are caught up to meet the Lord in the air, that the Lord Jesus will come down to the earth with them immediately and the tribes of the earth will see them—as indeed sometime they will. But we read that, after they are taken up, there is the marriage feast in heaven, the judgment of the saints, with the apportioning to them of their reward and the placing of them in their respective positions, and then, when all this is done, all His redeemed and glorious saints will come in glory with the Lord Jesus Christ to take possession of the earth. It would follow, then, that there is an interval between those two events. We are bound to see facts in something like logical sequence. Now these facts themselves are indisputably true, but the sequence in which we arrange them might not always be correct. It behooves us to be careful. Yet we know that the Lord Jesus will come *for His saints* and *with His saints*. We also know that when He comes for His saints, He will apportion their reward to them; then the marriage feast takes place and the final nuptials are concluded between the Lord Jesus and His Church, when the Church is presented without spot or blemish. For she shall be "spotless and without blemish before Him in love." Then the Church comes down with Him; His armies follow Him, and down here they find that state of rebellion.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

Now there is also coming a time—the old prophecies tell us about it, as also the New Testament—to which I want to call at-

tention next. It is on the diagram, marked "G. T.", which stands for Great Tribulation. The Bible tells us that there is going to come before the end of things a tribulation such as has never been and will never be again as long as there are men upon the earth. Now that must be a pretty bad tribulation. There was terrible tribulation in the days of the Flood. That was pretty bad, but this will far exceed it. There was a day of tribulation when fire and brimstone rained down on Sodom and Gomorrah and Lot left the doomed cities. There was tribulation when Jerusalem fell under the murderous hands of the Roman soldiers. So terrible was the bloodshed, so awful the distress of the city, that the Roman general himself, though long used to blood and carnage, turned his face away in horror and exclaimed, "I cannot bear more; it sickens me!" There has never been a siege as terrible as that siege of Jerusalem as described by Josephus, the Jewish historian. In the recent great war there was more distress and agony and tribulation than any of us know—I do not believe that any one human being can have more than an inkling of the tribulation that reigned there. But all the tribulations that have been on the earth pale into insignificance in comparison with that day that is to come. It is mentioned a number of times, very plainly and prominently. For instance, in Daniel 12:1, we read, "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 he tells us, furthermore, that, in connection with that time of trouble, Daniel's people shall be delivered. Turn to the 30th chapter of Jeremiah, beginning at the 4th verse, for another account of that great tribulation. The prophet says, "These are the words that Jehovah spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah"—the whole nation of Israel—"For thus saith Jehovah, We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child: wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble." If "there is none like it," it must stand unparalleled and must be the same as that which Daniel speaks of the "time of trouble such as never was." "It is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." When Jacob's trouble rises to its climax, the whole world will share in that trouble, and "except that day had been shortened, *no flesh* would have been saved." Furthermore, in the 24th chapter of Matthew we read concerning this same tribulation—it is bound to be the same because there is no other like it; it stands by itself, unsurpassed and unsurpassable: a "great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be"—evidently the same hour of tribulation—that "*immediately after* the tribulation of those days the sun shall 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 on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." (Matt. 24:29f).

Immediately, then, after that great tribulation—not separated from it by any space of time heavenly portents will herald Christ's appearing and they "shall see the Son of man coming." Evidently, that great tribulation is still in the future. The Great Tribulation immediately precedes the coming of Jesus in glory with His saints.

WILL THE CHURCH PASS THROUGH THE GREAT TRIBULATION?

There is a question that comes to the minds of many people; I have been asked that question by earnest Bible students. They want to know whether the Church will have to pass through that great tribulation. Some maintain that she will. That would re-arrange this chart altogether. Now I want to give you three reasons why I think that the church is not going to have to pass through that tribulation. In the first place, if God had taught that the Church would pass—through that tribulation, we would not need to look for the coming of Jesus until the great tribulation had set in. But God tells us to look for the coming always and at all times. Paul would not have told those Thessalonians to wait and watch for that day, if he had known that that great tribulation had to come first. If tonight someone were to convince you that the great tribulation would come and the Church must pass through it, you would say, "There is no immediate prospect of Christ's return, evidently, because that great tribulation has never broken in on us." It would put that period of the tribulation between the Christian and his hope.

The second reason why I believe that the Church is not to pass through that tribulation is that it would introduce something worse than death itself between the Christian and his hope. I would rather die if I knew that I had to go through that tribulation. I would say, "Let me fall asleep peacefully in Jesus and be raised up at the latter day, and so escape that tribulation." When God wanted to show favor to a penitent sinner, He would sometimes say, "I will not let the evil come upon him in *his day*, but he shall die in peace." (1 Kings 22:29). That tribulation will be worse than death. It says that men shall seek for death and will not find it, cry for the rocks to fall on them and for the hills to hide them. I would far rather be asleep in Jesus than go through that trouble. If the Church had to pass through that great tribulation, that would make death more desirable than the coming of the Lord. Therefore I do not believe that the Church will go through that tribulation.

The third reason is that the Lord has made some very definite promises in regard to it. In Luke 21:34-36, we are told (it is a solemn exhortation to careless Christians)—"Take heed to

yourselves, lest haply your hearts be overcharged with suffering, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come on *you* suddenly as a snare: for so shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of all the earth. But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Something is coming to pass down here that they will want to escape and they are to watch and pray that they may be permitted to stand before the Son of man ere that thing happen. Again, speaking to the faithful church at Philadelphia (Rev. 3:10,) the Lord Jesus says, "Because thou didst keep the word of

my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." That hour of trial cometh upon the whole world, but He will not only keep them out of the trouble but out of the very hour of that trouble.

So here are three reasons why I believe that the Church of Christ is not going to have to share in that tribulation.

But evidently somebody is going to have to face it. It is especially "the day of *Jacob's* trouble." When the Lord Jesus comes 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 that are alive, that are left, shall, together with them be caught up to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." In the meanwhile, down here on the earth breaks loose the final rage of Satan, because he knoweth that his time is short, and there, will ensue this day of tribulation such as has never been known. It will center upon Israel but will involve the whole world.

"THE DAY OF JACOB'S TROUBLE."

It will be the day of Jacob's trouble. Israel, the nation hitherto disobedient, will be brought to realize her condition and will be brought to her senses in her distress. But someone may say, "You do not believe, then, that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation?" Yes, I believe that the Gospel, and it alone, is the power of God unto salvation, but sometimes people have such a good time that they won't listen. The Prodigal Son did not think seriously about his father's home until he was perishing with hunger in the far country. Israel will not till the great distress comes upon her. "*In their affliction they will seek Me earnestly.*" In their final state of distress they will turn to the Lord Jesus and when they turn they will turn like everyone else. There is only one way of coming to the Lord Jesus, one way of salvation. What puzzled you all the time is the idea that when Christ comes it will settle the destiny of every soul living. When the Lord Jesus comes in the first stage of His coming, there will be certain ones caught up to meet Him. The rest of men are not just then dealt with. When Jesus returns with His saints there will be those who are found disobedient, and He will execute judgment upon the Beast and his devotees.

THE NEW ERA: SATAN BOUND.

The next thing he tells about is of the utmost importance. He says, "And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand." What is that angel coming to do? "And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years." That is the first thing: Satan will be bound. God has tolerated Satan a long time. Originally he was created pure. God did not create him the Devil; he fell to that estate. There is an indication that his fall was due to pride. "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven." Still in the present day he is the prince of this world, the God of this world, a being of such great authority, dignity and power that Michael the Archangel, when disputing with him about the body of Moses, dared not bring a railing accusation against him, but said (Jude 9), "The Lord rebuke thee." Satan is a wonderful being and all his force has been turned for evil: he was the deceiver of the whole world. But now he has played out. The Lord let him play out. He played the game and played it to the finish, and as you remove a dead ball from the croquet ground, so it is now time to remove him. He is chained. Someone says he is bound with "a chain of *evidence*." Satan's greatest work begins when evidence has been presented. Evidence does not bind him. Here it not only says that he will be bound but the pit sealed over him for a thousand years. The angel "cast him into the abyss, and shut it, and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished." For that period the great deceiver is removed. Well, you know what the Devil has been doing? He has been blinding the minds of the unbelieving, veiling the gospel from them. When a man does not see the beauty and glory of Jesus Christ and of the gospel, it is because Satan has veiled it from him. As we read in 2 Cor. 4:4, "in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them." If some man tells me that the sun is not bright, I know there is nothing wrong with the sun, but something is the matter with that man's eyes. And if a man tells me there is no beauty in Christ I know there is nothing the matter with the Christ but something very wrong with that man's vision. And the Bible tells us that Satan has been doing that kind of work. Imagine what will happen when Satan is put in the abyss and chained. All people will see clearly, won't they? No wonder that in those years the knowledge of Jehovah will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea! You say, "*Who* will be on the earth?" There will be somebody here because the Bible says, "He shall rule the nations with a rod of iron." Therefore there will be nations here. If you cannot figure it out, believe it anyway. There will be nations upon the earth after the storms are passed and the tribulation is over, and after the Lord gets through with his vengeance upon the rebell-

ious ones. Did He not say to the Church, "To him that over-cometh and keepeth my works to the end, I will give authority to rule nations."? What nations? The only idea that some have of the Kingdom of God is that of Christ ruling over the Church. But when the Kingdom has come in manifestation Christ will be on His throne, and the Church will be alongside of Him, ruling the earth with Him and administering justice and judgment. (Rev. 3:21). The Church is not going to constitute the subjects of the Kingdom in that day, but will rule with the Lord Jesus, administrating the government. She will have a part and share in the administration of the government of the Kingdom of God. "For if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign together with Him."

THE MILLENNIUM.

For a thousand years, therefore, the Lord Jesus with His saints shall reign over the nations. That will be the time of the reign of the righteous King and also the time of the restoration of nature. Nature shall be restored to her primitive condition and all the wounds of the curse are going to be healed. "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

"And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit. 2 And the Spirit of Jehovah 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 Jehovah. 3 And his delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears; 4 but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide 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. 5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins. 6. And the wolf 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. 7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. 9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea. 10 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, that standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto him shall the nations seek; and his resting-place shall be glorious."

This "*resting place*" is the city He has chosen, the centre of government. Psa. 132:13, 14.

11. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord will set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, that shall remain, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. 12 And he will set up an ensign for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. (Isa. 11.)

In the 65th chapter of Isaiah, we read:

"There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die a hundred years old, and the

sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed. 21 And ,they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. 22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat; for as the days of a tree shall be the days of my people, and my chosen shall long enjoy ,the work of their hands. 23 They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for calamity; for they are the seed of the blessed of Jehovah, and their offspring with them. 24 And it shall come to pass that, before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. 25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith Jehovah.

This affords a glimpse of some of the circumstances and conditions of that day. In the 72nd Psalm we have a picture of the reign of the righteous King and of that glorious kingdom of the Messiah of Israel in the day of His undisturbed reign, when He has control of the world, when the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ. "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth."

KINGS AND PRIESTS OF THE FIRST RESURRECTION.

Let us turn back to the 20th chapter of Revelation. We read at verse 4, after they had bound Satan and put him in the abyss, "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them." Now "they" that sit upon the thrones represent in logical sequence the company that comes down with the Lord Jesus clad in white raiment. And it is not only they, for he says, "and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus" (during the days of the great tribulation) "and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

Now mark: the rest of the dead will not be raised until the thousand years are finished. Whoever was raised from the dead before the Millennium belongs to the first resurrection. John says, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." Now a priest was never appointed for his own sake, but as a go-between with God and someone else. So there will be people here on the earth during the Millennium over whom Christ shall reign, and on behalf of that people those of the first resurrection will be priests. The Church has a wonderful destiny, for she shall share the throne and prerogatives of the Lord. "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?"

AFTER THE THOUSAND YEARS.

Now comes the final act in the drama. During all this time these nations have enjoyed the most exceptional, wonderful opportunities and privileges. Satan has been chained, powerless to deceive them. They have had every opportunity to know right and truth. Mankind has lived in happiness and prosperity. It

ends with a failure, like every other dispensation. At the close of this dispensation God sees fit that Satan shall be loosed for a little season. This people, who have enjoyed such advantages under the reign of the saints, this people must now have a chance to see and choose the other way, if they prefer. So Satan is loosed and what does he accomplish? He goes about to deceive the nations, and with considerable success, because it says, "And they went up over the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city"—(evidently situated on the earth). The Lord deals with him in half a sentence: "and fire came down out of heaven, and devoured them."

There it says, "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." Someone asks if this means a renovation of the old heaven and earth. The language is very strong: it says, "heaven and earth fled away, and there was no place found for them."

Now appear the rest of the dead that did not rise, before the thousand years. "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life"—*God's records*; they are perfect and complete—"and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire."

Now the last enemy is destroyed. The work is finished, the mediatorial and restorative work of the Lord Jesus is done, and He restores the Kingdom to His Father. He continues to reign, but in the new order. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more. And I saw the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband." One of the angels said to John, "I want to show you the Bride, the Lamb's wife. There she is, clad in all the glory of God." And her light was wonderful; like as the light of a jasper stone. Her gates were of pearl and her streets of gold. In the midst of the street John sees on either side of the river the Tree of Life, no longer one tree but a grove, springing up on both sides, "and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." There are nations of resurrected people and redeemed upon that earth, never again to fall a prey to the work of sin.

WISDOM AND LOVE.

Let me say this in conclusion. God is love. All of His judgments are in accordance with this fact. God is righteous because He is love. If He deals with a strong hand and with it-

repressible justice against those who have sinned before Him, it is because it must be so. On the other hand, if He has made a way of salvation and sent His own Son into the world, if Jesus has gone to the Cross to bear in His own body the burden of humanity and all our sins—that is evidence that God is love. We shall never see it or know it until with unclouded face in the light of the morning we shall behold the work of the Lord. Trust in the Lord.

"Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs
And works His sovereign will."

And when the work is finished every soul will see the beauty and righteousness, and the redeemed will never cease to praise Him.

Don't you want to have a share in it? Shall you be cast out from among the company of the redeemed? Shall you be refused in the presence of the Lord Jesus? Shall He have to say to you, "You were ashamed of Me and would not confess Me in this world! now I am going to be ashamed of you and turn you down." Oh, my friends, you have to choose Him or reject Him. You will have to take the path that leads to everlasting darkness or the road that shines more and more to the perfect day. Won't you turn to Him for His salvation? Let Him forgive you and cleanse you tonight. Oh, let Him write your names in the book of life. Come to Him tonight, and may He help you to such a choice.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

The positions set forth in these three sermons are not new. In their main outline they were held by the whole primitive church for three centuries. Nobody undertook to deny or change them until Origen, the spiritualizer and allegorizer, and first infant-baptism advocate. And after the "conversion" of the Roman emperor Constantine, and especially through the influence of Augustine, other ideas were substituted for the primitive hope, which have prevailed more or less ever since.

This teaching is not new. But so little real attention has been paid to these themes, and so different an outlook has been held up for many generations, that the old seems new and strange now. Some seem to regard it as a heresy lately sprung up. And naturally the teaching provokes questions. To ask questions is always easier than the answering. In connection with any familiar Bible doctrine questions can be asked which nobody can answer. So long as the preacher of the Word is asked what God has said, he should be able to answer clearly and fully. But when the question is *How?* and *Why?* perhaps he can answer; perhaps he cannot. So it is in regard to the teaching on the

Lord's second coming: to set forth just what the Lord has said is easy; but when one is asked to fit certain things together, and to explain how certain things can be, and why it will be just thus and so—we can hardly expect satisfactory answers to such questions. In fact, I am suspicious of the teacher who has woven out such a perfect doctrinal system that he has a complete answer to every difficulty. I have more confidence in the man who presents what God has said and lets the questions and difficulties stand as they may.

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Does not John 5:28, 29, teach that all the dead will be raised at one time, in the same hour'?

Ans. If you had only John 5:28, 29, such would be the natural impression; but when we have other scriptures distinguishing between resurrections, it leads to a re-examination of the statement in John. A close reading shows that John does not say that both the wicked and the righteous will be raised *together, at the same time*. It does say that the hour will come when the dead—all the dead—shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and they who have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment. But the very words which would be required to make it a simultaneous resurrection are not found here. For both the righteous and the wicked, for each and all, will that hour come; but it will not necessarily be the same hour for all. That a distinction in resurrections does not contradict the Savior's statement in John 5:28, 29 is evident from the fact that a limited resurrection of saints has already taken place (Matt. 27:52, 53), while the rest still await the resurrection. If John 5:28, 29 had meant that all the dead must necessarily be raised at once and the same time, the event of Matt. 27:52, 53 would have proved that false; but if that partial resurrection in Matthew near 2000 years ago did not clash with the statement in John, neither does the fact of a "first resurrection" at Christ's return, and another a thousand years after.

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Does not Matt. 25:31-46 show a general resurrection and judgment?

Ans. There is not a word about a resurrection in Matt. 25: 31-46. Nor, in the light of the particular point on which the judgment turns (their treatment of "these my brethren") could this judgment apply to the nations of the long ago and of far away lands. This is a judgment of living nations in regard to the attitude they assumed toward Christ during the Tribulation, as shown by their conduct toward His brethren.

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Is not the book of Revelation a highly figurative book? How can we know that "the first resurrection" and the thousand years' reign in Rev. 20:4-6 is not figurative?

Ans. If such is to be our attitude toward the book of Revelation, it would indeed mean anything, everything, or nothing to us—or just whatever the "interpreter" may wish to make of it. But the case is not so. In the book of Revelation, as in the other scriptures, we are not at liberty arbitrarily to assume that this or that is figurative or symbolical, and then proceed to fix it up to suit our ideas. There is much in Revelation that is simple literal truth; and even where a thing is shown to be figure we are not even then left to our imaginations to interpret it: there is law and reason even in that. Rev. 20 tells a rather plain story, and there is no reason or evidence that the "first resurrection," and the thousand years' reign are to be figuratively understood.

Here I would commend as noteworthy the comment of Alford, one of the greatest of English scholars and commentators, on this passage:

"I cannot consent to distort its words from their plain sense and chronological place in the prophecy on account of any considerations of difficulty, or any risk of abuses which the doctrine of the millennium may bring with it. Those who lived next to the apostles, and the whole church for 300 years, understood them in the plain literal sense; and it is a strange sight in these days to see expositors who are among the first in reverence of antiquity, complacently casting aside the most cogent instance of unanimity which primitive antiquity presents. As regards the text itself, no legitimate treatment of it will extort what is known as the spiritual interpretation now in fashion. If, in a passage where two resurrections are mentioned, where certain souls lived at the first, and the rest of the dead lived only at the end, of a specified period after that first,—if in such a passage the first resurrection may be understood to mean spiritual rising with Christ, while the second means literal rising from the grave ;—then there is an end of all significance in language, and scripture is wiped out as a definite testimony to anything. If the first resurrection is spiritual, then so is the second, which I suppose none will be hardy enough to maintain; but if the second is literal, then so is the first, which in common with the whole primitive church, and many of the best modern expositors, I do maintain and receive as an article of faith and hope."—(Alford, "New Testament for English Readers," on Rev. 20:4-6)

For strength and clearness on these points the following remarks of Daniel Sommer (Editor of *Apostolic Review*) do not leave much to be desired:

"What may we say to those who declare that Christ will not come again till at the end of the Millennium Age? We may say, 'Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.' All such, by implication, deny that the resurrection mentioned in I Cor. 15:12-54, and in I Thess. 4:13-17, means the first resurrection, mentioned in Rev. 20:5, 6; this involves them in hopeless confusion, and fatal error. Neither in 1 Cor. 15th chapter, nor in I Thess. 4th chapter, do we find the sentence against the wicked set forth; but only the resurrection of the righteous dead, and the changing of the righteous living, do we find there mentioned. The same is true of Rev. 20:5, 6. Then when John declares, in contradistinction from the righteous dead, 'But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished,' the testimony on this subject is complete. Then when we read Rev. 20:12, 13, we should feel overwhelmed with testimony. Bible readers should always consider I Pet. 4:11, and never bend nor twist scripture to suit their theories. They ought not to have any religious theories."—*"Questions, Answers, and Remarks,"* pp. 592, 593.

On, the Thousand-Years Reign, the same writer speaks as follows:

"The word 'millennium' is composed of two Latin words, which together mean—a thousand years. That God intends to introduce such a period is as plainly stated in this chapter as that he intended to bring a flood of waters on the earth is set forth in Genesis 6th chapter. Mankind will live on the earth then, even as they are now living, except that they will not be tempted by the devil. The worst enemy they will then have will be their human natures. **Does some one inquire where the people will come from who will be on the earth during the Millennium?** That is not our side of the question. Though God will take the righteous away, and destroy those who have worshipped the beast, or received his mark, yet we need not be in doubt. God knew how to overthrow Pharaoh and his army, yet spare a residue of the Egyptians who were not responsible for his sins. He knew how to overthrow the rebellious Israelites in the wilderness, yet save three millions, or more, to enter the land of Canaan. He knew how to destroy Jerusalem, and the Jew as a nation, and yet save a remnant of that people. On the same principle, we may feel assured that he will know how to overthrow all his enemies among mankind in the last days of the Gospel Age, and, yet, will be able to save sufficient of mankind to people the world in the Millennial Age. Besides, from the time of the event mentioned in Rev. 11:13, God will have the Jews as his people, for the promise in Isa. 66:22 cannot fail. In view of all this we need not to be disturbed about God's side of the question, nor of any other. He knows how to manage it, and will manage it to his honor and glory. All that we need to do is to believe and obey the Lord in the present, then believe and trust him with reference to the future.

"But will people then live on the earth as they do now, and how long will they live, and will everybody be righteous then? In the 8th and 9th verses we learn that when the time will come for the devil to be released from his 'prison' he will find multitudes ready to listen to him, and to be marshaled in his army. This settles the question in regard to the righteousness of some who will live in the end of the Millennial Age. How long they will live in that age, as well as the two kinds of characters that will then be cultivated, is implied in Isa. 65:20. But all this pertains to the Divine side of this great question, and our business does not extend that far." "Questions, Answers, and Remarks," pp. 592, 593.)

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In I Co r. 15:23, 24 it says that at His coming Christ will "deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father." How then can he reign on earth a thousand years?

Ans. Though He deliver up the kingdom to the Father, then or at any other time, He shall reign on for ever and ever, and His saints with Him. (Rev. 22:5). The Kingdom of the Lord Jesus, whether He holds supreme sovereignty, or reigns under the Father, is eternal (2 Pet. 1:11).

But I Cor. 15:23, 24 does not say what the questioner thinks it says. The word "then" is not the Greek word "tote" which means "at that time," but, "eita," which means "next" or "afterward,"—how long after must be gathered from the context. The order is: Christ first, *then* (next) they that are His at His coming. *Then* (next in order) the end when all is subdued, and the last enemy shall have been destroyed (which Rev. 20:7-14 shows to be *after the 1009 years*). He delivers up the Kingdom to the Father. (For a fuller note on this see book, "*The Kingdom of God*").

"If Jesus went to heaven, in the body of flesh and bones, which he had upon eating with his disciples after his resurrection, undergoing no change as he ascended, is he having to eat and drink now, to sustain that body of flesh and bones?"

"What about the language of I John 3:2 saying: 'When he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.'"

Ans. This questioner has evidently misconceived a few things. For example, that Jesus *had to eat and drink* to sustain that body of "flesh and bones" after His resurrection; and that the "flesh and bones" was just the common, natural, corruptible flesh and bones of our present bodies. And, laboring under such ideas, the gratuitous assumption that Jesus' body, after His resurrection, underwent another change as He ascended. In the first place, when Jesus rose from the dead, it was indeed the very body that was laid in the tomb that was raised; but in new and glorious life and power, immortal, incorruptible, endued with qualities and properties of which we cannot conceive. He could be seen when He chose, or He could be invisible; He could be palpable to the touch—his very flesh and bones might be handled, and His wounds be seen and felt. (Luke 24:39, 40; John 20:20, 27), and, again, He could pass through solid walls; He could walk as other men (Luke 24:15), yet He did not have to walk; He was not bound to laws of space and gravitation; He could be here or there with the swiftness of thought. He could eat, and did so (Luke 24:41-43) in order to give His disciples convincing proof of His actual personal presence, and the reality of His body; yet He *did not have to* eat. His body was neither dependent on earthly life, nor on material sustenance; nor was it corruptible. He rose from the dead to die no more nor to return to corruption. (Rom. 6:9; Acts 13:34). There is not the remotest evidence that He changed bodies again, or that His body was changed at His ascension. As He is so shall we be—endued with like powers, and with immortality and incorruption when He shall appear.

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"Does not the prophecy of the great tribulation in Matt. 24:21 refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70? Most commentators say so."

Ans.—The commentators who say that Matt. 24:21 had reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70, are obliged to destroy the meaning of the word "*immediately*" in verse 29; for we read there that "*immediately after the tribulation of those days,*" the signs in sun and moon and stars should usher in the coming of the Son of man on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. According to Matt. 24, then, that great and unequalled tribulation immediately precedes the glorious appearing of the Lord. That settles that.

The destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70 was also foretold in the same discourse, and recorded by Luke (21:20-24). That

has been literally fulfilled. The simple and perfect fulfilment of that prophecy is itself an instance showing how plainly the Lord speaks and how He meant just what He said. But Matt. 24:15-31 has reference to another, similar, but a more far-reaching crisis concerning Israel and Jerusalem, which issues in deliverance by a direct intervention from above. (See the collateral prophecies in Jer. 30:4-10; Dan. 12:1, 2; also Zech. 14:1-9, Joel 3:9-17; Isa. 29:1-8). Then indeed they shall see Him and welcome their Christ with the glad acclaim, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Matt. 23:39). In the present resettlement of Palestine by Jews, and their crowding back into the old Land and into the City things seem to be shaping themselves for the final event foretold by the Lord Jesus.

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"Will anyone have opportunity to be saved during the Great Tribulation if Christ comes to take up His saints before the Great Tribulation?"

Answer. When God's severe judgments are on the earth the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. (Is. 26:9). It will be a terrible school, but great multitudes will come to their senses and "wash their robes." (Rev. 7:14). During this time Israel also will nationally turn, and flee to God for refuge. They will suffer terribly and will be greatly reduced in number (Zech. 13:9); but the remnant that will come out of those fires will be pure gold. (Zeph. 3:13). This is not, however, a "second chance"—except as men may have a second chance, or a third and fourth, while *yet living*. None of this lends any support to any teaching of *a chance after death*. Those who during the Great Tribulation turn to the Lord will have to face a far severer test of their faith and constancy than any of us today. There will be no occasion to envy them.

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"What is meant in Matt. 24:34, 'This generation shall not pass away till these things be accomplished'?"

The word "generation" (Greek, *gehnea*) means not only the people living on the earth at any one time, but quite as often means a stock, a race, a breed, a sort, a set, of people having common origin or traits. See for example, Deut. 32:5, 20 where disobedient Israel through all their past and future history are in view, and are spoken of as a "perverse and crooked generation," "children in whom is no faithfulness;" or, Ps. 24:6, the faithful of Israel, "This is the generation of them that seek after him even Jacob." Compare such expressions, "There is a generation that curse their father...., that are pure in their own eyes...., oh how lofty are their eyes whose teeth are as swords, etc." (Prov. 30:11-14). Here "generation" means a certain kind of people. In Matt. 24:34 the Lord certainly did not mean the generation then living on the earth; but the race of Israel, who have been so marvelously preserved, and will be preserved even until Jesus comes.

"Will Christ come to earth and live and reign here personally ?"

Ans. Most assuredly. When you say "live" here, you do not mean of course that He would have to have the necessities of common earth-life—shelter, food, clothing, chair, bed, table, room, etc. That would be too childish to think of or to require denial.

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"If the Day mentioned in Zech. 14:1 has not been fulfilled why should it be necessary for Christ at His coming to instruct the nations to go up to Jerusalem to worship from year to year?" (Zech. 14:16-18).

Ans. 1. As to whether that Day has ever yet come, read verses 1-11 and see for yourself. It is a poor principle of interpretation to deny the plain meaning of what God says because we cannot make things fit.

2. As to the requirement to go up to Jerusalem to the feast of tabernacles, let that stand as it is. It will be a national requirement in the millennial earth. The three feasts of Israel had a typical meaning. The Passover typified the sacrifice of Christ, and was fulfilled at Calvary. Pentecost and the feast of the first-fruits, was antitypically fulfilled on Pentecost following Christ's crucifixion, and is in process of fulfilment, while the "firstfruits" are yet being gathered in from among all nations. But the third feast, the feast of Tabernacles, the great and joyful feast of "harvest home" is yet future, the age of the great ingathering, when the nations as such will turn to the Lord, and the knowledge of Jehovah shall cover the earth as waters cover the sea. That will come after Israel's restoration. (Rom. 11:15). During that whole happy period the nations will be called upon to celebrate this feast in Jerusalem, in the light of its antitypical fulfilment.

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"Will the Lord ever set His foot on the earth again?"

Ans. That question is hardly worth discussing. Does it matter whether the Lord Jesus actually touches the earth with His foot or not, so long as it is certain that He is *coming back*? Yet it does matter, because Zech. 14:4 says that "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives," which is the place from whence He ascended. The event and circumstances described in Zech. 14, have reference to Christ's return, and His reign after the final deliverance of Israel.—1 Thess. 4:17 states that we shall *meet* the Lord in the air, and thenceforth shall ever be with Him. It does not say we shall forever stay in the air.

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Is not the Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ the same thing as the end of the world? The third chapter of 2 Peter seems to teach that at the coming of Christ the wicked will be judged and the world burned up.

Ans. If we had only the third chapter of 2 Peter, we would naturally derive such a conclusion. But in the light of other scriptures we see that Peter's prophecy took in the whole wide scope of the "day of God" with all that in the end would be involved in it, including (though not making special mention of) the intervening reign of Christ on earth. This is not unusual, either in prophetic or other parts of scripture. Enoch, for example, before the Flood warned the evil-doers of the final coming of the Lord with His saints to execute judgment (Jude 14, 15), without taking cognizance of the intervening dispensations, Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian. When in some scriptures we find salvation conditioned upon repentance alone, or faith, or faith and confession, (Rom. 10:9, 10); or calling upon the name of the Lord (Rom. 10:13), or faith and baptism (Mark 16:16), we are not slow to point out that the combined testimony of all scripture is needed. So it is here. 2 Pet. 3 is not to be set in opposition to other prophecies, whether in Old or New Testament; nor are we to form our conception of the last things from 2 Pet. 3 alone.

It should be noted that Peter speaks of certain latter-day scoffers of scientific sort (we have them now!) who base their objections to the doctrine of the Lord's return on the stability of the present order of the universe, and the constancy of natural law? (2 Pet. 3:4). In reply Peter points out that the Lord, though He may delay beyond expectation, will come unexpectedly; and that the present heaven and earth are destined to be burned up.