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JOHN MAC NEIL

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EVEN SO, COME.



EVEN SO, COME

BY THE

Late Rev. JOHN ^{OC}MACNEIL, B.A.

Author of "THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE."

INTRODUCTION BY

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Preface

To say even these few syllables is to me a very difficult matter. The hand that wrote that single word at the heading has been called to drop the pen, and now, instead of writing about his Master, my husband sees Him face to face,—saying, I doubt not, over and over again, “The *half* was not told me!”

We can only imagine what he might have written on this empty page; but I believe that, could he send one message to us now, we should hear his voice ringing down from the gates of the city, “Watch,” “Watch,” “Watch.”

For many years he had been living in expectation of the coming of the “Some One” whom it was the joy of his heart to herald; but latterly this expectation had been growing in intensity, and it was laid upon him to witness in every place that “the Lord is at hand.” His own life was a sufficient answer to the objection, that to hold this truth “cuts the nerve of effort.” He used often to say, “I do not expect to die, but if I have to, I intend to be ready;” but when he sang his last hymn,

“I hear Thy welcome voice
That calls me, Lord, to Thee,”

with its chorus,

“I am coming, Lord!”

he was utterly unconscious of the glad surprise that awaited him the very day after, and of the fact that his next song would be, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

Although he did not know that his departure was so near, he was nevertheless "quite ready." God grant that we may all be "ready" too, whether for our "going," or for His "coming."

HANNAH MACNEIL.

"Waverley,"
Sundringham, Victoria,
December 16, 1896.

Introduction

THOUSANDS, I hear, are looking for this little volume, and I am sure that when it reaches their hands they will not be disappointed. It is essentially a Tract for the Times. It is the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." It is a midnight cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom Cometh." It is a loving protest against absorption in the cares of this world, and in the deceitfulness of riches, and in the lust of those "other things that enter in." It is a fresh summons to saints to watch and pray, and to sinners to shelter from the storm.

It possesses the great advantage of being *straightforward*. It begins with the first link in the chain of events, and goes on steadily to the very end. When the stream of history bifurcates at a given point, as it will be found to do at the Rapture of the Saints, the story of what takes place on earth is kept distinctly apart from the story of what takes place in heaven, until that awful moment when the powers of earth and the powers of heaven are brought into direct collision at the Siege of Jerusalem. Then the divided threads re-unite, and carry us on through the Millennium and the "Little Season," up to the Great White Throne and the Eternal State.

It also possesses the advantage of *brevity*. Grace has been given to its author to confine himself to central truths. There is, in a theme like this, so much room for speculation and curiosity, there are fallacies to be combated so many and so

mischievous, the pride of research and discovery is so strong, digression seems so imperative, and the by-ways are so fascinating that the Great Highway is apt to be deserted. A work, therefore, which draws a strong line of demarcation between matters of primary and of secondary importance is an unspeakable boon, both as regards compactness and perspicuity.

Nor must I fail to notice the author's *moderation*. He has been able to resist the temptation to discuss vexed questions such as Chronology, Daniel's Seventy Weeks, and the component parts of the Bride. He does not decide against the literal rebuilding of Babylon, nor fix the religious limits of Babylon-in-Mystery. He does not paint the Beast or Antichrist in colors more fiery than are found in the written Word, nor does he marshal the Historic and Futurist Schools in battle array one against another. In short he avoids minor matters, and keeps with laudable perseverance to the outline only, or to the stronger lights and shadows of the grand mountain range of unfulfilled prophecy. In one thing, however, I must say, and say to his credit, that the author was *not* a moderate man. He was *passionate* in his convictions whenever he believed a thing to be a matter of life and death, so that he mingled all that he said with a vein of intense and continuous personal application.

Best of all, Mr. MacNeil writes in the spirit of *absolute subjection to Scripture*. No man was ever more confident of Divine Guidance in everyday life, and we know that he was divinely and wonderfully guided; but at the same time no man was ever more opposed to human infallibility. All his idea was that his Master could make no mistake, and that the Bible was his Master's

Voice. "The law of the Lord is *perfect*, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is *sure*, making wise the simple."—Ps. xix. 7.

This brings me to speak in conclusion of my last personal relations with the author, and of his most sudden and lamented death. What he was to me and how I esteemed him, I have already said in the earlier pages of "The Spirit-Filled Life." After publishing this, his first literary effort, in July, 1894, he did some hard and heroic service on the gold-fields of Western Australia, and subsequently proceeded far north into Queensland, timing all his engagements so as to conclude on August 30th. He wrote to Mrs. MacNeil to expect him home on Sept. 4th, and to me to be ready to read over the MS. of this little treatise in my own study on the following day. Reaching Brisbane on August 22nd, he was actually engaged in holding a Convention, and in giving afternoon addresses upon the Return of the Lord Jesus Christ, when suddenly, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, without pain, or premonition, or farewell word of any kind, his spirit was caught up into Paradise on Thursday forenoon, August 27th. Instantly the electric current conveyed the tidings all over our island-continent, and devout men everywhere made great lamentation over him. Then his body was embalmed, and then, the voyage over,—back to his widow, and back to his weeping children, they brought the warrior home. On the occasion of the funeral, there was a hush all along the line of procession, and a great concourse at the grave. Soon afterwards I received the Roll which is now being given to the public. The outer sheet contained the one word "Preface," and nothing more. Page 1 was dated "Cooktown, June 17, 1896."

He seems scarcely to have laid down his pencil once during its composition, pouring out his heart in one great tide of love, and truth, and exhortation,—pausing neither to correct, nor even to divide into chapters. In getting ready, therefore, for the press, the greatest care and judgment have been necessary, and I have consulted a very special and beloved friend on a great variety of references.

And now, if a strange, awesome feeling creeps over one when breaking the seal of a last manuscript, when reading the final testimony of a beloved companion-in-arms, how much more should we feel an awe and solemnity creeping over us when we ponder the last utterances of the blessed Holy Spirit,—all the predictions, promises and woes of the Apocalypse! And if the love of the Bridegroom is now at a white heat, then what should be the condition of the Bride! May this little book be a ray of heaven's own fire to raise our temperature from below zero to the warmth of the summer's sun! May it stimulate prayer for a Great Revival during the "little while" which intervenes between To-day and the supreme Forever.

H. B. MACARTNEY.

St. Mary's, Caulfield, Victoria.
Dec. 16, 1896.

Even So, Come

CHAPTER I

The Time Unknown

THE aim of this little Treatise is not to fix dates. Much harm has been done by those who have presumed to do so. Their dates have come and gone; nothing has happened; and thus the whole subject of our Lord's return has been brought into disrepute. Those who try to fix the day and even the hour of His Advent, fly in the very face of Scripture; they are prying into "the secret things which belong unto the Lord" alone. "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man" (Mark xiii. 32). But surely, on the other hand, those who allow their minds to be prejudiced against a manifest truth, simply because some other people have spoken without warrant and without Scripture, are not acting wisely or fairly by themselves or by the Word of God. Is the truth that our Lord Jesus Christ is coming again to be found in God's Book? All who accept the Bible as inspired must be agreed about this. God HAS pre-

dicted this event; and it is the bounden duty of every Christian to search out, as far as possible, all that God has been pleased to reveal in special connection therewith. If God thought it worth His while to reveal His will in this matter, it is undoubtedly worth our while to find out what He has revealed. So far every Christian is agreed.

It is our interest, moreover, in order that we may have both our mind and our character perfectly developed, to maintain the exact balance of truth. Some people take hold on one aspect of Scripture, and they make it their hobby, and ride it to death (or at all events they try to ride other people to death with it!) to the neglect of other aspects equally important, if we are to judge from the position assigned to them in the Book. Now is there another truth in the whole of the New Testament to which greater prominence is given than to that of our Lord's coming? Some one has pointed out that in the 260 chapters of the New Testament there are about 300 references to the Second Advent. It therefore goes without saying that every believer should be conversant with a matter to which so much importance has been given by the Spirit of God.

Now where is the "needs-be" for heartburning and bitter words when searching out what is written in the Book upon a topic so momentous? The mere mention of angry strife on such a

theme carries with it its own condemnation.

Our aim is not to exhaust the subject, but to state the fundamental facts in their true order. Dr. Horatius Bonar, who was one of the staunchest heralds of the Coming King, uttered words to this effect before he fell asleep:—"As far as the main leading features of our Lord's coming are concerned I am more than ever convinced; but as regards the detail we must learn to exercise charity one towards another." It is then only to plainly revealed and leading events among "the things that shall be hereafter" that we desire to devote our attention. The nature and object of our Lord's return will be discussed presently; but meanwhile, its certainty being conceded, *What is the reader's attitude towards a fact so stupendous?* "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Tit. ii. 11, 12); and there a great many Christians stop; but the Holy Spirit does not stop there. He connects teaching how to live, with "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." We are not only taught to live righteously, but to live *looking*. Are we so living? If not, then we are disobedient; and we are absolutely inexcusable for such disobedi-

ence. Moreover, if we are not "looking" for Him, how can we "love His appearing"? (2 Tim. iv. 8). We are actually to *love* it, just as the faithful wife loves and yearns for the appearing of her long absent husband, and to remember that it is only to those who so love that the crown of righteousness is promised "at that day." This "looking" is, therefore, of far greater moment than some of us have been thinking.

CHAPTER II

The Dispensation of the Spirit

IN the diagram that is attached to this little book, the line A to B represents the course of time. Now far away back in history the words were spoken, "Until Shiloh come" (Gen. xlix. 10). Through long centuries of weary waiting Shiloh was expected. At last He came, and the promise was fulfilled. This is represented by the first arrow: "Christ Jesus came into the world." After accomplishing His work on earth, "He was taken up"; this is represented by the second arrow. But before He went He said, "I will come again." Through nineteen more long centuries of weary waiting, He has been again "expected" on the ground of this promise. The cry for the long expected Jesus is still going up, while the cheering response rings back from the Heavens that received Him, "Behold, I come quickly." Just as surely as the promise of His first coming was fulfilled in an exact moment of time, so surely will the promise of His second coming be fulfilled also.

Before the Lord Jesus ascended, He gave yet

another promise, "If I depart, I will send Him unto you"—that other Comforter, who was to abide with them forever (John xvi. 7). On the day of Pentecost *this* promise also was fulfilled, as indicated by the third arrow. He *has* come. While Christ "The Head,"—"The Bridegroom," is in Heaven, the Holy Spirit represents Him upon earth. He is in charge of the Church. The Dispensation of the Holy Spirit began when the exalted Christ sent Him down to earth at Pentecost, and it will continue till His coming again. Here arises a question of the greatest importance: What is the precise work which the absent Christ's Vicegerent, the Holy Spirit, is now on earth to accomplish during His Own Dispensation, and before the Savior's personal return? Is that work the Conversion of the World? If so, we must sympathize with those who hold that all this teaching about Christ's speedy Advent being the Hope alike of the Church and of the World is a manifest insult to the Omnipotent, All-glorious Third Person in the Ever-Blessed Trinity. It is just equivalent to saying that the Holy Spirit was unable to accomplish the work which He came to do, and that His mission has been a failure!

Now we cannot help remarking in reply, that if the Holy Spirit came to convert the world, and if the Lord Jesus is not to return till the world is

converted, then certainly the work is progressing very, very slowly! It is perfectly true that there never were so many Christians on the earth as there are to-day; but it is equally and awfully true that there never were so many people without Christ on the earth as there are to-day. At the past rate of proportionate progress we need not look for Christ's coming at all, or at least for Millenniums yet! Hence, this being so, it is really *these* brethren, and *not* those who are looking for the Advent, who dishonor the Holy Ghost. Scripture, we submit, is explicit on these points:—If Christ cannot come till the world is converted, why are we told to “look” for His coming, and to “watch for” it as something that may take place any day? Again:—If Christ is not coming till the world is converted, there must be a mistake somewhere, for He asks, “When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke xviii. 8). Again:—He says, “This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and *then* shall the end come” (Matt. xxiv. 14); *not* “when the world is converted,” but “when the Gospel is preached in the whole world *for a witness.*” Scripture compels us to abandon the idea that the Holy Ghost is here to convert the world. “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” and His mission was a

success. The Holy Ghost came into the world *for what?* His mission, whatever it is, we may be quite sure, is being pushed to as successful an issue as Christ's mission was. It is "to take out of the Gentiles a people for His name" (Acts xv. 14); it is to form "the Church, which is His body" (Eph. i. 22, 23); it is to prepare the Bride for the coming of the Bridegroom.

The very word "Church" itself seems to answer our question. It is in Greek "Ekklesia," which literally means "called out." This is the Spirit's work,—to form a "Church"; *not* to convert the world, but to "call out" a people from the world. Every man converted, whether at home or abroad, is one more "called out,"—is a living evidence that the Spirit of God is at work along the very line of God's purposes; and *we* ought to be "workers together" with Him. Every soul saved hastens the coming of the Master. How encouraging, how edifying, is this knowledge! Every blow struck in the strength of God is telling. No, we are not beating the air! We are working with the Holy Spirit towards a certain and splendid consummation.

Said a Methodist minister to me recently, when speaking with him about this truth, and directing his attention to the meaning of the word "Church" as something "called out," and therefore as indicating the work which the Holy Spirit

came on earth to do,—“You have let more light into my mind on the whole subject by that one word than has ever been let in before.”

It is hoped that thus a very serious and initial difficulty may be removed from the mind of every reader, for until one learns to read God's purpose aright in the mission of the Comforter, it will be impossible for us to advance together in the study of this entrancing and elevating theme.

The Holy Spirit began His work at once, on the very morning of Pentecost; He has been at work ever since; and He is at work to-day. His service on earth is indicated on the Chart where the circle cuts the line A B, concluding with the Rapture C.D. The “Bride,” the mystical “Body,” will then be completed, for the last soul necessary to make up the complement will have been “called out.” How soon this may be, we cannot possibly tell. The moment may come, the hour may strike while the reader is perusing this present page, or the Bridegroom may still “tarry”; but sooner or later that hour will come, and then the Holy Spirit will be able to say, as the Perfect Servant said before Him, “I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do.” What then? “The Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God” (1 Thess. iv. 16). The Lord in Heaven knows what the

Lord the Spirit is doing on earth, and will come down into the air to meet His Bride, as soon as ever she has been made ready for Him. The Bridegroom will not delay the Bridal union one instant beyond the appointed time.

The Spirit and the Bride say "Come" to the Bridegroom; and as to the sinner, "whosoever will" may come. Oh the folly of those who refuse the call! The highest glory of God's universe is within their reach—the glory of forming part of "the Bride, the Lamb's wife." If my reader should not be a truly regenerated soul,—one of those who have "come out" in response to the Holy Spirit's call,—be entreated not to miss the greatest opportunity in life; receive Christ by a living faith *without one moment's delay!* Even while you linger, the number may be made up without you, and the Bridegroom will have come to claim His Bride! Nevermore, then, nevermore, will the offer be extended to you of becoming a part of the Lamb's wife.

The "Bride" will be composed of those, and of *those only*, who are "called out" before the coming of the Lord into the air, or (as we shall see presently) of those "begotten again" *before* the Rapture. Blessed indeed is the condition of the post-rapture saints; but still they attain not to the unspeakable bliss of the saints of the Church period, for the latter only constitute the "Bride."

Now, it must be expressly noted that this coming of the Lord FOR His saints is a *Personal* coming. "The Lord *Himself* shall descend." This is the *Parousia*, which simply means *Presence* in New Testament Greek, as contrasted with "personal absence." This is the word always used of Christ's coming *for*, not of His coming *with* His saints. Note further that He only descends *into the air*—not to the earth, but only into the air. If so, what for? Not to judge the world at the General Judgment, but to meet His own, to "receive them unto Himself" (John xiv. 3). Not to "take" them to Himself, but to "receive" them. Note the difference. To interpret the plain statement, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself," as having its fulfillment in the coming of the "enemy" Death (1 Cor. xv. 26), is to twist Scripture round so as to make it mean anything. At death saints go to Him; He does not come for them. "The sky, not the grave, is our goal!"

In person He is coming, as He said He would; and for this we are looking. What could be plainer than the joint message of the two angels at the Ascension? "This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven" (Acts i. 11).

Could the object of his coming be more explicitly stated than it is in the parable of the Ten

Virgins? “Behold, the Bridegroom!” not “Behold the Judge!” “They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage feast,” and instantly “the door was shut” (Matt. xxv. 1-13, R.V.) It is then for the coming of the Bridegroom that we are bidden to “watch,” not for the judgment of the “great white Throne.” In the clear light of these passages let us read and carefully ponder the other scriptures noted in the chart by the letter C.

CHAPTER III

The First Resurrection

HAVING now seen that Christ's coming is (1) Personal, (2) Imminent, and (3) That the object of His coming is "for" His own, let us next pass swiftly in review the events that will accompany His descent into the air. "The Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God" (1 Thess. iv. 16).

The question may be asked, Who will hear the "shout," the "voice," and the "trump"? Certainly, and first of all, the *believing dead*. "The dead in Christ shall rise *first*" (1 Thess. iv. 16). The circumstances under which St. Paul wrote these words are most instructive. Many in Thessalonica were weeping over loved ones who had "fallen asleep," supposing that those who "were alive and remained" unto the coming of the Lord would have some special advantage—that they would "go before" the sleeping ones, and that the sainted dead would be left behind! But "the word of the Lord" comes in to correct this mistake, and to dispel their ignorance. The sleeping saints are *not* to be left behind. At His com-

ing for His own, the Lord is to bring their spirits with Him; and then their spirits will be reunited to their resurrected and glorified bodies. In this way those who sleep and those who wake will be "together" when He comes. This raises the whole subject of the Resurrection. Those who accept the Bible as God's Word have no trouble whatever in receiving *the fact* of the Resurrection. "All that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth" (John v. 28). But is there not a *second* resurrection as well as a first? Here there is a difference of opinion. But is there any need? What saith the Scripture? Note carefully that in 1 Thess. iv. there is not a word about the dead "out of" Christ. The dead "in Christ" alone are mentioned. If *all* the dead were to rise together, why the limitation "*in Christ*"? The silence of Scripture is as eloquent as its speech, and the story of the "rest of the dead" is told elsewhere. "The rest of the dead *lived not again* until the thousand years were finished" (Rev. xx. 5). "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection."

This takes place when Jesus comes for His people. That there is a resurrection—not of all the dead, but "from among" the dead, is abundantly clear from the Word of God. In Phil. iii. 11 (R. V.) St. Paul says, "If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection *from* the dead." That

was the goal towards which Paul was running with all the momentum of his magnificent nature. "I count all things but loss;" "I have suffered the loss of all things;" "I count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in Him;" "that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection." Why all this hyperbole of language—all this piling of Alps on Apennines? "If *by any means* I may attain unto the resurrection!" If the idea of one resurrection only—a general resurrection—be correct and Scriptural, then this classical passage from St. Paul can never be explained. He might have "taken things easy," as so many to-day might show him how! He might even have gone on living as a Pharisee, persecuting Jesus to the end; and he would still have attained unto the "general resurrection," had *that* been his only aim! But it is most evident that St. Paul had some *special* resurrection in view, even the *first* resurrection; and to share in *that* he was straining every nerve. Even if the passage just quoted stood alone, it is sufficient to overthrow the idea of a universal and general resurrection. But there is more. Even "the resurrection *from* the dead" in the R.V. does not express the full force of the Apostle's vigorous Greek. "If by any means I may attain unto the *out-resurrection from among* the dead" is the literal translation. Now, if *all* the dead are to

rise together at the trump of God, it would be manifestly out of place to speak of a resurrection "from among the dead." The difficulties connected with a "general resurrection" are insurmountable. John xii. 1 furnishes an illustration of what St. Paul is referring to—"Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from (among) the dead." When Lazarus rose, it was a resurrection not "of the dead," but "from among the dead." The rest of the dead lived not when Lazarus rose. This, then, is the plain teaching of Phil. iii. 11; "some" are to awake, to arise, and to go forth, leaving the others behind in their graves. St. Paul's ambition was by any means to attain to a place among the "some."

Again, why does the Lord Jesus, in Luke xiv. 14, speak of "being recompensed in the resurrection of *the just*," if this is not a resurrection "from among" the unjust? Otherwise, He would simply have said, "recompensed in the resurrection." Then again, in Luke xx. 35, we have the plain declaration, "they that are accounted worthy to attain to . . . the resurrection from (among) the dead." Here it is evident that those who are *not* accounted worthy are the dead from among whom the "worthy" are selected. The unworthy are those who will not "live again" until the second resurrection.

Again, what can the "better resurrection" of

Heb. xi. 35 mean, if there are not two resurrections?

The Bible must be consistent with itself, so that all the passages that speak of the resurrection (at first sight) as if the just and unjust were to arise together, must be interpreted in harmony with the plain and only possible meaning of the passages which we have been considering. Now, let my readers "question one with another what the rising *from* (among) the dead should mean" (Mark ix. 10).

CHAPTER IV

The Rapture and its Consequences

HAVING got thus far,—that both the blessed dead and those believers “who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord” are to hear the sound of the trump,—it is often asked whether that sound will be heard by any besides. It is better not to be dogmatic on this point; yet even if others hear a noise, only the initiated will understand the signal, and they only by a supernatural power will rise to meet Him in the air. This will excite the amazement of those that are “left” as to what has become of those that are “taken.” While the “dead in Christ” are being “resurrected,” the living believers are being “changed.” “Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be *changed*, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Cor. xv. 51-53, R.V.). “Our citizenship is in Heaven; from 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" (Phil. iii. 20, 21, R. V.).

The *swiftness* with which this wondrous change is effected is apparent from the expression "*in the twinkling of an eye.*" Then, when the dead in Christ are raised and the living in Christ are changed, "together shall they be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. iv. 17). This is what is called "the Rapture of the saints." The clouds which once received our Beloved Lord *out of* our sight are soon again to be harnessed up as chariots to convey us into His sight. Then "forever with the Lord!" Oh hasten, blessed day!

The coming of the Lord *to the earth* takes place later on; but a powerful horseshoe magnet illustrates what is to take place when He comes into the air to "catch away" His saints. A few steel filings and needles, with a quantity of gold and silver articles, are lying together on a table. Suddenly the magnet is brought down, and lo! the filings and the needles fly up to meet the magnet, while the "valuables" lie on the table utterly still, and insensible to the presence of that force which the steel is so quick to obey. Now, just

as the magnet had not to be brought down to the table into actual contact with the steel, so, when Christ descends into the air, those who have affinity with Him will fly up to meet Him, while very many (including some very important personages) will be left utterly irresponsive to the attractive force that has lifted the others from their side. "So shall be the coming (parousia) of the Son of man. Then shall two men be in the field; one is taken, and one is left: two women shall be grinding at the mill; one is taken, and one is left" (Matt. xxiv. 40, 41).

A worthy elder, who was living in the traditional belief that Christ would not come until the end of the world when He sits upon His great white Throne, said of this passage, "It has always been a difficulty to me; I could not understand it, and could not make it fit in anyhow; so I just *put it aside!*"

How many there are who treat this and similar passages in connection with our Lord's return very much in the way an old Highland Catechist used to deal with some hard portion of Holy Writ:—"Ma freens, this is a deeficult passage, a *vera* deeficult passage; let us boldly face the deeficulty and—*pass on!*" Surely steeple-chasing through Scripture after this fashion on a subject of such paramount importance is not according to the mind of the Spirit. Indeed, as

the elder said, this passage will not "fit" the accepted view as to the end of the world; but looked at in the light of what has been said about the Rapture of the Church, it is all plain sailing. Those that are "ready" will enter in; while to the unready the Bridegroom says, "I know you not." Ponder again those words in Heb. ix. 28, "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time." Possibly, therefore, these whose gaze has habitually been turned not heavenward, but earthward, will not see Him then. They never had eyes for Jesus; therefore they are "left."

What a stir and commotion there will be on this earth of ours some day soon! Skeptics and scoffers and unbelievers who have been crying so long and so loudly, "Where is the promise of his coming?" will find themselves face to face with the greatest problem of their lives. "Search parties" will be organized to seek for missing friends, and they will meet with just the same success as the band that searched the mountains and the valleys for Elijah! As it is written of Enoch, he "was not *found*, because God had translated him," so will it be true of millions on that great day. "They are not, for God took them." "Reporters" will not require to go far afield for "copy" when the Rapture takes place. "Mysterious disappearances" will be sufficiently

startling for the lovers of sensation, and for once there will be something in the daily papers more universally important than the "latest" from the betting and share market. Never before has the press been so unanimous in giving precedence to strictly *spiritual* concerns. How many will be going about that morning with white lips, and a nameless terror gnawing at their hearts—"We're left!" "We're left!" The husband, who used to boast in his swaggering way, "My wife does enough religion for herself and me; you know I haven't time for these things," will drive up in hot haste to his house, because of some rumor he heard "down town," to find that his wife "is not," and that his only daughter, who, unhappily for herself, has been following in her father's and not in her mother's footsteps, is paralyzed with fear. Mother and daughter were sitting together in the room, when suddenly, before her eyes, the mother was "changed," "transfigured," and had instantly vanished from sight! The girl that had deliberately chosen the world and its pleasures in preference to her mother's God will now have a little more of the world than she bargained for when her choice was first made! So hardened, however, may the hearts of some become, that they are positively glad that the earth is rid of "those canting hypocrites;" they can now enjoy themselves to the full, they think,

—no one interfering with them! But of how short duration will that joy be!

There is another point which must be noticed here. To the question, Who are they that will be “taken”? two answers are given:—

(1) It is generally held true that *all* true believers will be taken,—all who are “joined unto the Lord” and who have His Spirit, whether they believe in the doctrine of the second advent or not,—all who are truly converted to God, whether or not they are technically “looking for that blessed hope” (for they will all rejoice to see Him),—that *all* these will participate in the Rapture and will be caught up.

But (2) there are some Bible scholars, and among them some names that are held in universal esteem, who say, “Not so; it is only to those (of his own people) that look for Him that He shall appear; it is only for those who ‘wait’ for Him that He is coming; it is only the virgins whose lamps are burning that are qualified to go in; that there is a just suspicion in Luke xxi. 36, that those Christians who do *not* watch will not escape all those things that are coming to pass!” It is devoutly to be hoped that the first answer is the correct one, and yet some attach great weight to the second answer. In view of this bare but awful possibility, what attitude should we take up towards this whole question? There is but

one position—habitual expectation. “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.” In this case, even if the first answer should be right, it will be better for us, for we will meet Him as obedient children; but should the second answer prove to be correct, it will then be well with us indeed.

Here let us definitely face the question, Is our attitude towards the truth of Christ’s second coming the attitude we are commanded to assume? How often are we commanded, yes, *commanded* to “watch”! (Matt. xxiv. 42, xxv. 13; Mark xiii. 33, 35, 37; Luke xii. 37, xxi. 36). Let us pause as in the Master’s presence, and ask, “Am I thus watching?” Not to watch is to be disobedient, and disobedience on this point may be attended with woeful consequences, as we have already seen. “To be forewarned is to be forearmed.” The early Christians were turned to God on purpose not only to serve Him, but “to wait for His Son from Heaven” (1 Thess. i. 10), and were praised for their waiting (1 Cor. i. 7). Can we win similar commendation? St. Paul writes as if every one whose “citizenship is in Heaven” lived at that early hour of the Dispensation “waiting for a Savior” (Phil. iii. 20, R. V.); how much more should those of us who enjoy the same “citizenship” be found “waiting,”

seeing that "the night is far spent, and the day is at hand"! But—*are we?* The grace of God taught the early Christians to live looking unto Jesus as their "Hope." Has this same grace altered its lesson? Are latter day Christians to look for something else? or is it that our hearts have waxed heavy, and that our ears are dull of hearing? "Be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their Lord," is the Master's own injunction. But how can we be like such men if we do not believe that He is coming? or if the fact that He is coming does not cross our horizon day in day out?

What an incentive to faithfulness in the discharge of God-given duty does this truth become! "Why do not preachers keep to practical truths?" said a minister once about a brother who was preaching on the Lord's return. Practical? Why, within the wide range of God's big, practical Book, there is no more blessedly and severely practical truth than "Maranatha." "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find *so doing*" (Luke xii. 43). It is the servant who quiets himself with "My Lord delayeth His coming," or who asks with scoffers, "Where is the promise?" who is more easily tempted to unfaithfulness, and is most likely to be overcome. Woe be to him on the day of the great surprise! (Luke xii. 46).

What an incentive moreover to holiness in heart

and life does this truth become! "Abide in Him . . . that we may not be ashamed before Him at His coming" (1 John ii. 28). How many faces, for one reason or another, will be covered with shame and confusion before Him at His coming! But "every one that hath this hope set on Him purifieth himself even as He is pure" (1 John iii. 3). What words of dazzling, blinding brightness does the Master speak of the servants whom he shall find *watching!* "Verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and shall come and serve them!" (Luke xii. 37). They almost stagger faith. Blessed indeed, thrice blessed, are those servants! Blessed also is he whom his Lord when He cometh shall find "*doing.*" "He will set *him* over all that He hath" (Luke xii. 44).

There is still another most precious aspect of this truth,—how it touches the heart of Jesus. What joy it must give Him to see His loved ones on earth cultivating the stranger and the pilgrim spirit within them, refusing to set their affections on things below, stilling and quieting their soul, and schooling it until they can say, "Like a weaned child with his mother, my soul is with me as a weaned child"! They *know* that He is coming, and they are wearying after Him, and crying, "Come, Lord Jesus: come quickly." Then when at last He actually does come, and the

long waiting days are over, what a joy to His heart to find the state of preparedness into which they had brought themselves, and in which they had kept themselves in anticipation of that supreme moment! On the other hand, what a grief to our Beloved Lord to arrive, and to find some of His people in an utterly unprepared state, just as if He had never uttered one word on the subject of His return at all! "Be ye also ready: for in an hour that ye think not the Son of Man cometh."

"They tell me a solemn story,
 But it is not sad to me;
 For in its sweet enfoldings,
 The Savior's love I see;
 They say that at any moment,
 Upon mine ear may fall
 The summons to leave our homestead,
 To answer the Master's call.

"They say I may have no warning;
 I may not even hear
 The rustling of His garments
 As He softly draweth near;
 Suddenly, and in a moment,
 The Lord of life may come,
 To lift me up from this cloud-land
 Into the light of Home."

CHAPTER V

The Great Tribulation

WE now come to consider what will take place on earth immediately after the Rapture of the Saints. The arrow marked E on the chart indicates "The Jew's return to Palestine in unbelief." It is as a nation that the two tribes are to return to their own land, but as a nation in unbelief. Some, however, will believe *when in the land*; and these constitute the godly Jewish Remnant all through the tribulation period. The God of their father Abraham, however, has them all in hand; but it will not be until the Redeemer comes to Zion that that inspired word will be fulfilled, "and so all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. xi. 26). The way the Jews are flocking back to their own land to-day as families and individuals is most instructive to students of Prophecy,—preparatory, as it undoubtedly is, to that national restoration of which the Prophets so fully speak. (See the passages marked E in the chart).

The "Jewish Question" is too large to be included within the limits of this little elementary treatise; but it is most important, and those who

desire to make themselves masters of it are referred to the published writings of teachers who have made it their life-study, notably "ISRAEL MY GLORY," by Rev. John Wilkinson, one of the greatest living authorities. But what will be of more practical and general interest is the study of "The Great Tribulation," through which all who are "left" behind at the rapture of the saints will have to pass. "I also will keep thee from the hour of trial (Greek, *the* trial), that hour which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. iii. 10). This is a definite, specific trial which is yet to come, and which is to be universal. It is "*the hour of the trial*" through which "the many" will have to pass; but *some* will be "kept" from it. How? By being "caught up" to meet Him who says, "I come quickly." Then of *others* it is said, "These are they which came out of *the* great tribulation,"—not as if tribulation in general were alluded to, but "out of *the* great tribulation,"—a tribulation marked off from all other tribulations by way of pre-eminence as "*the* great tribulation," that is, the hour of "*the* trial" just alluded to.

Next comes the question, "How long will the period of this tribulation be?" There is no difference of opinion among pre-millennial students as to the *fact* of the great tribulation, and almost all

agree (1) that it takes place in the interval between the rapture of the saints and Christ coming with them in "power and great glory"; (2) that in its severest intensity it will cover a period of $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, the second half of Daniel's Seventieth Week. Of this, however, we may be quite certain, that, short as it may be, it will be far too long for the unhappy people who will have to pass through it. The Tribulation will occur some time between the point D on the chart, where Christ comes into the air *for* His people, and the point H, where Christ returns *with* His saints to execute judgment on the living. The things that are coming upon the earth during those days of darkness and sore travail are "the things which shall come to pass hereafter," and are written for our "admonition." What a maze this Book of Revelation is to many of us! and yet the clue to this maze has been placed in our hands by the Divine Spirit.

According to chap. i. 19, the book falls into three parts:—(1) "things which thou sawest;" (2) "things which are;" (3) "things which shall come to pass hereafter." Where did John write the "things which he saw"? In chap. i. 9-18. Where did he write the "things which are"? In chaps. ii. and iii., in the form of Epistles to the seven Churches. Where did he write the "things which *must* come to pass hereafter"? In chap.

iv. and onward. Chapters ii. and iii. cover the CHURCH PERIOD, and deal with the "things that are"; Chapters iv. and onward deal with the WORLD PERIOD after the Church period proper has been closed by the catching up of the saints. In 2 Thess. ii. 8, we learn that Antichrist, "the Lawless One," shall be destroyed "by the *Epiphany* of His coming," *i.e.*, when Christ comes down to earth, and is manifested with His people. It is at the close of Rev. xix. that we read of the destruction of the Beast and the False Prophet, when Christ appears to introduce His millennial reign. Now as "coming events cast their shadows before," so according to the Historical School Rev. iv. to xix. 20 has had a certain protracted application to what has already transpired in the Nineteen Christian centuries; but these Chapters will have their full and real fulfillment in the crisis period, which intervenes between the "Coming of the Lord" and "the Day of the Lord." Bearing this in mind, how much of the tangle is at once disentangled! Let the reader now search these chapters, and see for himself what those who are left behind will have to suffer, not having been "found worthy to stand before the Son of Man." Let him also search Matt. xxiv. 21, 22, and see what the Lord Jesus Himself says about it:—"For then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning

of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

Who that reads will not join in the prayer, "From all this may the good Lord deliver me and mine"? The only way of escape is for us to be spiritually "joined with the Lord," to say "Yes" to the invitation of the Holy Ghost, and thus to become one of the "called out," being knit to God by a living faith, and to be ever on the "watch tower" as He commands.

By referring to F in the chart the reader will find some other scriptures bearing upon the Tribulation Period between the coming of Christ *for* His saints and His coming *with* them; and when he comes to the words from Rev. vii. 4, 9, showing the people converted during the great Tribulation, he may very naturally ask, But *will* people be converted during the tribulation? Surely. In Rev. vii. 4 we read that there were "an hundred and forty and four thousand sealed of all the tribes of the children of Israel." These Jews were upon the earth during the great tribulation, and it was upon earth that they were "sealed" (v. 3). Then the Seer of Patmos beholds in prophetic vision a great multitude which no man could number out of every nation—a Gentile

throng—standing before the Throne. “Whence came they?” “These are they which came out of *the* great tribulation.” They have now “washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb;” but this was not true of them at the time of the Rapture, or they would have been among those “taken.” It was *after* the Tribulation began to rage, and under the fearful pressure then brought to bear upon them, that they yielded to Christ, and did what they ought to have done long before. But, it is objected, if all the Christians were “taken” at the Rapture, how have these been converted, seeing that no one was “left” to preach the Gospel? The answer is very simple:—THE CHURCH being taken away *first*, God Himself will begin to deal with THE JEWS *second*, and they will be God’s chosen evangelizing agents during that period. Conversion work will progress by leaps and bounds, for during the short time of the tribulation the blood-washed multitude, as we have just seen, will be absolutely countless. Notice on the chart that “The Times of the Gentiles” is marked as being “fulfilled” towards the close of this period, and just before the Son of Man comes “in a cloud with power and great glory,” *i.e.*, just before His manifestation *with* His saints. The whole passage in Luke xxi. 20-28 seems to point to this

interpretation of the expression "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." The "world-powers" will be broken up by the "appearing" of the Son of Man.

CHAPTER VI

The Judgment Seat and Marriage Supper

THE next point in our inquiry is (*vide* G on the chart), While the tribulation is raging upon earth, what is happening meantime to the believers who have been taken away from the trouble to come? Answer, They have been "made manifest" before the "Bēma," the Judgment Seat of Christ. "We must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. v. 10).

It is strongly insisted by many that the "we" here referred to is applicable only to believers. The context, however, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men," gives some color to the belief that he is speaking broadly of the manifestation which every man, whether believer or unbeliever, has to undergo. However this may be, it is probable that the uppermost thought in the Apostle's mind is the manifestation which every servant of God, as such, is to experience. Believers will not be judged in the

sense of a prisoner being tried for his life; but the judgment seat to them will be an unrolling of their lives, showing in true colors and in true perspective all the motives that governed them. It will be a dividing of the false from the true, a separating of the gold from the dross. "The wood, hay and stubble" will be consumed; nothing but what is absolutely pure will remain, be it little or be it much.

As "the Bride," believers will be caught up; as "servants," they will have to give account. Should we be dreading this ordeal? No and Yes. *No*, because the Lord is our Righteousness, and because the Lord, who is also the Bridegroom, will be the Judge while we are being "manifested." In the hands of Him who loved us even unto the death, we need fear no harshness, no unkind exposure. He will deal tenderly, although nothing can escape His searching eye. We are to give account "to God;" and it is only before Him that we will feel shame or otherwise at what is revealed. To those then who have prayed in all sincerity, "Search me, O God, my actions try," this will be no new experience. Surely, instead of a season of dread, it will be a time of marvelous joy when, for the last time, we shall unfold to His pure eyes the story of our chequered life. *Yes*, because the account of stewardship has to be rendered up, and unfaithfulness will

show itself to be an ugly thing in the light of Those Eyes that are like a flame of fire. We shall sorrow because of the small amount of righteousness remaining after the consuming; we shall rejoice in the fact that what does remain, though it may be little, is genuine. Let us see to it that we become acquainted with the refining fire before that day, so that the loss may not be too great then, for this loss is an eternal one; and though it will not affect our happiness, it will and must affect our position in the Kingdom. What a revelation to ourselves our own lives will be when we see them in that radiant light! What a clearing up of misunderstandings! What marveling at the grace that has worked in us! What praise to God for His deliverances and His restraints! How our gains and our losses will exchange places! It will not be shame for ourselves that will then overwhelm us. Our very sins and shortcomings will but serve to throw into more striking relief His matchless love; and we, with David and with Peter, and with those who have sinned not only grossly, but publicly, will sweep our harp-strings and cast our crowns before Him whose grace has brought us to our present bliss, whose blood has blotted out all the sin, and to whom we are presented "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

And now the Bride is thoroughly prepared for

her marriage; she has "made herself ready." The harlot's day is over, Babylon has been set aside forever, and Heaven is called to rejoice because of the judgment of evil. But Heaven rejoices for another reason. The consummation of the Bride's blessing is come. "O day, for which all other days were made!" "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready" (Rev. xix. 7). For a bride a bridal dress is a necessity, and here (for the first time) we read of it. "And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright and pure: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints" (ver. 8). Our robe for God's presence is God's righteousness. What is the robe for the bridal day? "The righteous acts of the saints." That is to say, that all the good that has been wrought by the Spirit in the saints, as He brought them through life to glory, is to be used to weave a beautiful wedding garment. What grace is this! She is to be given credit for all the good that He Himself produced in her, and to be clothed in it and made lovely for His own eyes. This is the last touch of tenderness and the crown of it.

And He saith unto me, "Write, Blessed are they that are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb" (v. 9). To the one who had shared

the Lamb's path on earth is to be given the fullest joy and the highest glory. Note that this marriage scene is not described; we can let our imaginations run riot as to what takes place on that day of days. The Bride has made herself ready, and there are others invited to the marriage. As at any ordinary marriage nobody confounds the bride with the guests, so here we have the Bride who is "most blessed" and the guests who are "blessed." At the same time, it is not made absolutely clear to us who these guests are to be. It is chiefly of importance to us that we note the distinction.

CHAPTER VII

The Son of God “riding” to vengeance, and “sitting” in judgment

SUDDENLY, abruptly it seems, while the Apostle is gazing at the shut doors of heaven, lost in wonder because of the “blessedness” which he can imagine but cannot see or can only see indistinctly, the doors are thrown wide open, and all the scene is changed. Forth comes an army, a Warrior at its head! “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 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” (Rev. xix. 11-13, R. V.) There can be no doubt as to who this rider is. The name “Word of God” makes it plain that this is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself coming forth,—it soon appears with what intent. He is followed by the armies of heaven in linen white and pure. These take

no part in the destruction to follow, but accompany the Lord to share in His conquest. This judgment must precede that of Matt. xxv. 31. Here we have the judgment of the Warrior. His enemies have been raging against Him; at this time their armies are gathered together near Jerusalem,—not an “army,” but “armies.” Jerusalem, so often besieged, so often captured, is now in throes more desperate than ever before, when suddenly her Deliverer appears, clothed in all the majesty which He had laid aside when as a man He suffered without that gate. This time He comes not to suffer but to avenge. Enoch’s prophecy is now fulfilled (Jude 14,15). In all the terror of His Godhead He comes to destroy the foes who have actually banded together to make war against Him (Ps. ii.), and with Him come the companions of His rejection to be the companions of His judgment. “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 wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God”. (v. 15). To make us doubly sure who is to execute this, it is written, “And He hath on His garment and upon His thigh a name written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.”

We have been reading of a supper, and of an invitation to that supper. Here again is a sup-

per, and here also is an invitation, but the contrast is terrible. "An angel, standing in the sun, cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in mid-heaven, Come and be gathered together unto the great supper of God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of them that sit thereon, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, and small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat 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 worshiped his image: they twain 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: and all the birds were filled with their flesh" (vv. 17-21).

There have been two men whom God selected from all others for special mercy and glory. "Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." Elijah also was translated without dying. But here, in most miserable contrast, two others are singled out for signal and tremendous judgment,—the beast and the false prophet, the political and religious heads of wickedness,

who had worn out the saints and had overcome them. Before Satan himself falls, these two men are cast alive into hell. Their followers too are judged with a terrible judgment.

Quite apart from the symbolic language of Rev. xix., this is what is plainly stated in Thess. ii. 8-12: "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness (or Epiphany) of His Coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." We have the same thing in 2 Thess. i. 7-10. "And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe

(because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." Observe that the judgment is on living people,—the armed followers of Antichrist, and has to do with those who obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These are they who have heard the Gospel as it is preached now, and have scouted it. This judgment is executed *at* His "glorious appearing," and *before* He sits upon "the throne of His glory."

This brings us to the next stage, which is the

SESSIONAL JUDGMENT

of Matt. xxv. 31. This is the Son of Man sitting in calm judgment on the living nations. It must be clearly understood that the first judgment dealt with the Allied Armies gathered under the banner of Antichrist, and that this second judgment deals with the Nations. There is not a word or a thought of resurrection here; on the contrary, there is everything that is incompatible with it. On what principle is this judgment carried out? What is it that makes the difference between a "sheep" and a "goat"? All is made to hinge on this,—"How have you treated 'my brethren'?" His brethren! who are they? The Jews, His kinsfolk according to the flesh. Observe the three parties—the "sheep," the "goats," and "my brethren." Has this one been kind "to the least of these my brethren"? He is placed on the right hand; but if otherwise, on the left.

But why should such tremendous issues hang merely on the treatment of His people? Because, as their hearts were towards Christ's brethren, so they were towards Himself. Had He been in their place, they would have treated Him accordingly. "Ye did it unto Me." "Ye did it *not* to Me." "These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

CHAPTER VIII

The Millennial Reign

THIS is indicated on the chart by the letter I. Two things are essential to any Scriptural Millennium,—the coming of Christ in Person, and the binding of Satan; the personal presence of the King, and the personal absence of the Usurper. We have seen how Antichrist has been brought to nought by the *epiphany*, the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. ii.),—he and the beast having been taken, and both cast alive into the lake of fire,—their adherents likewise having met with a terrible but adequate doom (Rev. xix). We have also seen how, subsequently, sitting on the throne of His glory, the King of Glory judged the living Gentile Nations, saying, “Depart, ye cursed” to the “goats” on His left hand and “Come, ye blessed” to the “sheep” on His right (Matt. xxv). But Satan has yet to be accounted for, being still at large on the earth, and we know him to be the instigator of all the mischief. The devil’s last final terrible judgment is not just yet, for there is “a little season” in which he is to be let loose after the Millennium. In order, however, to the blessedness of

the Thousand Years, he must be restrained and shut up. For this we turn to Rev. xx. in the prophetic vision.

An angel is seen coming down out of heaven with the key of the Abyss, and a chain hanging on his hand. He "lays hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan;" and now the use of the key and the chain is explained, —the chain to bind him and the key to lock him in. Figures, but how expressive! "And bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season." Thus for a certain specified time the earth will be freed from his falsehood and malignity.

In verse 4 we get the three classes which compose the first resurrection; (1) those who sit on thrones, *i. e.*, the saints who rose and were changed at the rapture; (2) those who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God (chap. vi. 9), and who only get their bodies now; (3) those who refused to worship the beast, and were martyred in consequence (xiii. 15). These last two classes are raised from the dead, join the others already glorified, and all reign together with Christ. These last two companies, notice, are distinct but connected classes. When first

seen they are only "souls" in the separate state; but here it is said that "they *lived* and reigned with Christ a thousand years,"—that is, they were re-united to their bodies, for this is what is meant by "they lived." Thus, the beast and the false prophet having met their doom, and Satan being now a prisoner in the abyss, the Millennial Reign of Christ, in company with his risen saints, is about to commence. He waits, as it were, to the very last moment, that not one of those holy sufferers may lose their special reward. The beast had persecuted up to the last, and therefore the full statement of the first resurrection was delayed till now, not having been given when the previously risen saints were translated to heaven. The antichrist-martyrs are now raised to join the others, their resurrection having been put off till just before Christ's reign. The divine comment is, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. *This is the first resurrection.*" The first resurrection comprises all the *righteous* dead; "the rest of the dead" are the *wicked* dead. Let it not be forgotten that in the Millennium the saints are to live and reign with Christ; they are *not* to be confounded with those who are reigned over. The spheres of blessing are twofold,—the celestial and the terrestrial.

Rev. xx. passes only cursorily over the Mil-

lennial age, as far as men on the earth are concerned, so that if that aspect of the thousand years is to be studied we must go to the Old Testament. *There* it is constantly spoken of as a time when the Gentiles will be brought in and blessed, when God's name will be exalted, when there will be an end of warfare and strife, when the wilderness shall rejoice and blossom like the rose, when the ransomed of the Lord shall come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, when sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

When the Second Adam, exalted above the heavens, shall return to reign, and when all things in heaven and earth shall be put under His glorious sway, there will not be a single spot or creature in God's universe that will not feel the effects of His power in blessing. Throughout the tribulation man's cup of woe has been filling up; now God will reverse the history. How blessed will be the time when God's Own Son, no longer rejected and despised, shall fill the throne of His earthly and heavenly glory! During the Millennium many will be brought to the knowledge of the Lord; it will be the great Harvest Time of blessing, spoken of with such rapture in the Psalms and Prophets, when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. This does not necessarily imply that every person who then knows the *glory* of

Jehovah will know his *grace*, and turn from the love of sin. Its characteristic is *not* that every one is to be converted, but that no open sin is to be permitted. It may only be a "feigned obedience" which is rendered by a large part of the people of the earth, but still it will be obedience,—even from "the sons of the stranger." This is the true thought of the Millennial reign. Evil will be present, but, the tempter being absent, the Lord's rule will be absolute. If evil ever shows its head it will be immediately suppressed. The veil having been taken away from the Jewish people, they will own and celebrate the Lord Jesus Christ as their King, and "in the midst of their congregation" He Himself will lead their praises. "In that day shall there be one Lord, and His Name one." For a description of the glory of this time read Ps. lxxii.

CHAPTER IX

The "Little Season"

THIS is shown on the chart after the Millennium and before the Great White Throne. We saw Satan bound and imprisoned in the abyss for a thousand years, and thus for a time deprived of his power of seducing the nations, but after that time "he must be loosed a little season." We have seen how that during the thousand years, while Satan is bound, and Christ with His glorified saints is reigning on the earth, evil whenever it appears will be repressed by power. Human nature, however, is human nature still, and though there will be no temptation from without, and everything will conduce to obedience, still, wherever the new birth has not taken place, there will be something in unregenerate nature for Satan to work upon when he regains his liberty. The Millennium, therefore, although a time of marvelous blessing, will nevertheless be imperfect. There will be men in their natural bodies upon the earth, many of whom will be unconverted, and so we read that, after the termination of the thousand years, "Satan shall be loosed out of his

prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea" (Rev. xx. 7, 8).

"Gog and Magog" are expressions borrowed from Ezekiel when describing the Restoration of Israel. There Gog, "prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal" (xxxviii. 3, R.V.), is the last great enemy who attacks the favored people after they have been established in their own land. Undeterred by the fate of the allied armies whom the Son of Man slew at Jerusalem at His glorious appearing, these countless swarms will again "compass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city." This of course means the earthly Jerusalem, it being now the City of the great King. But they perish in the attempt, for "fire comes down from God out of heaven, and devours them." Thus the nations who have become the victims of Satan's delusions arrive at their final end. By this summary judgment, however, Satan is still untouched. A worse fate is reserved for him; for "the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever."

Thus Satan's turn surely comes at last. Satan,

after a thousand years' imprisonment, is Satan still. It was Satan who deceived our first parents in Eden; it was Satan who corrupted the world before and after the flood; it was Satan who was Israel's great adversary through all their history; it was Satan who sowed tares among the good seed which the Son of Man had sown; all the evils which have polluted and afflicted the Church are the result of his malign influence; and now, lastly, the rebellion of the "little season" after the Millennium is instigated by him, but proves the occasion of his doom. Is it to be wondered at if he would keep us from reading the Book of Revelation? There is no book in the Bible which he fears so much, and not without reason. It is true that there we see the magnificent height of power to which he will rise before the end; but when his downfall begins, he is cast first out of the heavenly places down to earth, next from the earth to the bottomless pit for a season, and finally is consigned to the lake of fire forever and ever.

CHAPTER X

The Judgment of the Great White Throne

THIS is the next event of Revelation, and is represented by J on the chart. The scene is one of awful solemnity, whether we look at the Throne, the Judge, the Place, or the Parties at the bar. "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Rev. xx. 11, 12). The throne is "great," telling of awful majesty; "white," suggesting spotless purity. The Judge we have seen before when He took account of His own servants at His judgment-seat in heaven, and when He judged the Gentiles, "the sheep and the goats," before the throne of His glory; but the peculiarity of this judgment is, that His aspect is such that heaven and earth flee away at

the sight of it. The place of this judgment is the most remarkable of all, and as to the Time of it, there can be no doubt. It must be post-Millennial. It is *not* the time of Christ's coming, for His coming is pre-Millennial. The popular belief is, that when the Lord Jesus comes, He comes from heaven to judge the earth. Now, if that be so, it *could not be the judgment of the Great White Throne*, for, when it is set up, both earth and heaven are gone. The entire system of earth and heaven, as they now are, will have vanished from the scene. The great white throne, therefore, as to its place, is not on the earth at all,—the earth has “fled away.” To make assurance doubly sure, lest it should be thought that this fleeing was a mere figure of speech, it is added, “and there was found no place for them.” The fact is, we saw His *coming* to earth in chap. xix., and His *reign* on earth in the early part of chap. xx.; but at the close of this chapter, when the *great white throne* appears, the earth is gone, and so there is no earth to come to! How perverse is man! He blots out His coming from chap. xix., where it *is*, and imagines it in the end of chap. xx., where it *is not*, and cannot be.

But there is a Resurrection here as well as a Judgment. Not, however, a general resurrection, any more than the judgment here is a general judgment. It is specifically confined to the

unconverted dead. It is the resurrection of the unjust,—the resurrection of the just having taken place at least a thousand years previously. This is the resurrection of *judgment*; the other was the resurrection of *life*. “They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” “The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.” The former was the *first* resurrection; *here* the “rest” of the dead live. “I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.” Hence the two main points to be borne in mind in connection with the great white throne are, (1) that it is the judgment of the dead; (2) that it is the judgment of the *unbelieving* dead. “And the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

As already shown, we fully believe that the saints of God will have all their works examined; whatever they have done in the body must come out; they will have praise or censure according to their faithfulness or unfaithfulness. But when you come to the “rest of the dead” before the great white throne, they have done nothing but evil, and when the book of life is opened no name of any standing there is found therein. They are to be judged “according to their works” as written in the other books, but their works being

evil, there can be only one result. There may be a difference between "small and great," but all are alike in this,—not one is found written in the book of life, and whosoever was not found written therein was "cast into the lake of fire." This is the resurrection and the judgment of those who have no part in that book. The record of their works calls for judgment, and it is as though the question were asked, "Is there nothing to be said in defense of these parties at the bar?" The book of life is accordingly opened, but not one name is found there of all this mighty multitude; their last hope is gone; "whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire." Even the depths which man could but imperfectly explore are now no hiding place! "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it." The unseen world is also forced to give up its miserable inmates: "Death and Hades delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works." These works themselves condemn them, and not a word being said about them in the book of life, they are cast into the lake of fire. "This is the second death." They are raised from their first death to be cast forever into that Gehenna whence there is no escape. They had no life, and they had no Christ. Death and Hades, being now no longer needed, are personi-

fied as the enemies of God and man, and, in the vision, as such, find their final place likewise in the lake of fire.

This judgment is so often confounded with that of the sheep and goats in Matt. xxv., that we must point out the differences. This judgment is at the end of the thousand years; the great white throne is set up after those years have run their course. That in Matthew is before the Millennium, and has to do with the *living* nations; this in Revelation has to do with the *dead*. That concerned good *and* bad; this concerns the *wicked* dead only. There they were judged according to their treatment of Christ's "brethren"; here it is a solemn scrutiny of what is written in the books. There the scene is this earth; here the earth and heaven are "fled away." The contrast is complete. The wonder is, that the two could ever have been confounded.

How serious is the description of the judgment of the dead before the great white throne! Has God spoken and shall he not do it? How many deride these solemn but sure warnings! We began our study at the Cross of Christ, where sinners may find salvation; we close it with this terrible assize, ending in the "lake of fire" into which the beast and the false prophet were cast alive, into which Satan himself was cast, and into which every child of Adam will be cast who

neglects and refuses Christ and His so great salvation. From all of which the Good Lord deliver us.

To recapitulate:—the Lord may come at any moment to catch up His saints; the Bridegroom may come for the bride, the Head for the body, to meet Him in the air. Then follows the apostasy on earth, and the revealing of the Man of Sin, and the time of the great tribulation; the saints meanwhile are with the Lord; their “manifestation” is before the judgment seat; the Marriage of the Lamb is in heaven. Then Christ appears in flaming fire, destroying the allied armies with the brightness of His coming, and hurling the beast and the false prophet into the lake of fire; then the judgment of the living nations (Matt. xxv.); the blessed reign of a thousand years; the “little season”; the judgment of the great white throne; then the old heaven and earth pass away, and are followed by a new heaven and a new earth; lastly the eternal state, where God is ALL IN ALL.

It only remains to point out some distinctions, and to refer to a few objections, and my task is accomplished.

CHAPTER XI

Distinguishing Things that Differ

IN the consideration of this whole subject, too great care cannot be exercised in the application of the different passages of Scripture. The following extract may be helpful: "Our hope is a Person, the Coming of a Person, and is neither the event itself nor the future display. For that reason I prefer the expression 'The Coming of the *Lord*' to 'The *Lord's Coming*,' because the latter might occupy me with the event, the other emphasizes the One who is coming and engages me with Himself. All that is revealed to us concerning the coming of Christ is gathered round three terms:—1. The word translated 'Coming' or Parousia. 2. That usually translated 'Revelation' or Apocalypse. 3. That generally translated 'Appearing' or Epiphany. If you take these three words and group all the passages in their order which refer to the return of our Lord around them, what will you find? That they are all connected with a Person. The Parousia is the Parousia of a Person; the Apocalypse is the Apocalypse of a Person; the Epiphany is the

Epiphany of a Person. If you make it the coming of a truth, the revelation of a doctrine, or the appearing of a principle, you empty the words of their meaning. Parousia or Coming, taken by itself, is a general term for the whole, including all the aspects, private or public, whether *for* the saints or *with* the saints, since the same Person may come, or be present, to different people, at different times, and in different ways. But Apocalypse and Epiphany are only used of the Coming of the Lord *with* His saints, and are never applied to the Coming of the Lord *for* His saints. St. Paul alone uses the word Epiphany, for as he only formally distinguishes the Rapture of the saints before the Appearing, so he only gives the full display in contrast with something undisplayed; that is, he not only gives the *private* Coming to meet His friends, but the subsequent public appearance before all. The Revelation or Unveiling is common to St. Paul and other New Testament writers; and the 'power and great glory' coming in St. Matthew is equivalent to St. Paul's Epiphany."

Again, no end of confusion has been occasioned, for instance, by taking the "Day of the Lord" (2 Thess. ii. 2) as identical with the "Coming of the Lord" in verse 1 of that same chapter; whereas the Apostle is beseeching by the "Coming" that they would not be troubled about the "Day" which

could not come till they were caught up. Neither could the "Day" come till after the falling away, the removal of the One who was hindering, and the coming on the scene of the man of sin. *All that* had to transpire before the "Day"; but there was nothing before the "Coming" and our gathering together unto Him to meet Him in the air. The mystery of iniquity goes on till it reaches its climax in the Antichrist, and just as the highest exhibition of grace and goodness was seen in God becoming man, so the highest exhibition of lawlessness and wickedness will be seen in a man,—the man of sin pretending to be God. The texts marked H on the Chart are some of the leading passages bearing on the "Day of the Lord," that day of which it is written, "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him" (Rev. i. 7).

Now what is the idea attached by Christians generally to the expression "Day of the Lord"? Is it not that of a literal, actual day of twelve or twenty-four hours? And it is supposed that the literal day is at the end of time, at the final dissolution of all things! An examination of Scripture shows this to be a mistake. "The Day of the Lord" is, like "the Day of Salvation," a lengthened period. The latter has already lasted

for nearly nineteen hundred years, and the former will last at any rate a thousand years. "The Day of the Lord" is ushered in by the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Savior when He destroys Antichrist—it covers the whole Millennial reign, and ends with the "great white throne." Peter gives us the winding up, but it is "in the which." He does not say in what part of the day the "burning up" will take place, whether at its dawn, or at its close; but other Scriptures inform us. The whole day is given in Revelation xx., which tells us that it lasts for a thousand years, and that what Peter refers to transpires at the close of the day. Just at the dawn of the day the righteous dead are raised to live and reign with Christ during the entire Millennial period, while at its close the wicked dead, "the rest of the dead that lived not till the thousand years were finished," as we have seen, are raised from their graves and judged before the great white throne. Then it is that the heavens and the earth pass away. How simple it all is when the Word of God itself is considered as it is given, and how much is lost by inattention to what it says!

A minister once said, "Many people wrest the Holy Scriptures in three most fatal ways:—(1) by *dislocation*, *i. e.*, taking a passage out of its context; (2) by *misinterpretation*, *i. e.*, taking a

meaning out of the text which the Holy Spirit never put into it; and (3) by *misapplication, i. e.*, applying texts to the wrong persons, places, times, and things." This witness is true, especially in reference to the Second Advent and all connected with it.

CHAPTER XII

Conclusion

MANY objections might be taken up and their hollowness exposed; but the most of them are simply difficulties, and when any one exalts a mere difficulty into an objection we fear it only shows the will to object. When the thing is fairly put before them and they are obliged to face it, how often you hear the admission, "I cannot get over that"! But why do they want to get over it? I will content myself with noticing a very common misconception—that, in accepting this doctrine of our Lord's return, we cut the nerve of effort, that we will be tempted to rest on our oars and say, "We will wait till Jesus comes, when He will put right the things that are now wrong." A sufficient answer to such an objection would be the challenge to produce one case in which this evil result has followed. There lives not on earth to-day the believer who has accepted the truth of Christ's premillennial Advent who does not feel like doing double the work he did before he knew his Lord was coming. Doing less?—when we know that He is only wait-

ing until His reapers have brought the last sheaf in! Doing less?—when we know that each soul saved is most certainly bringing His coming nearer! Doing less?—when we know what those who are left will miss and will have to suffer! Nay verily, but we would do more than ever to increase the number a hundredfold of those who will be ready. Those who see that the world is doomed and going to ruin, will pull all the faster to get souls saved off the wreck before the break-up!

Dear fellow Christians, you alone possess the two blessings necessary to prophetic study—the assurance of salvation, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Without the assurance of salvation, how can we contemplate with calmness the solemn events which fill the future? If we look at the glory in which they who are Christ's will be revealed as His co-heirs when He comes, how could we enter into such a subject with joy, if we had any doubts as to whether we are of those to whom that glory through grace belongs? But resting in Christ and assured of the Father's love, we can afford to survey the entire field depicted by the pen of prophecy. We shall not only read of, but behold the glories of that day when heaven shall open and the Rider upon the white horse come forth to judge and to make war, for we shall witness these events, not as spectators merely,

but as actors in the scene. All the glory of the opening heavens, and the unnumbered hosts following in the train of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, is a glory which, ere that day, will have become our home and dwelling place. "When He appears, we shall appear with Him in glory." The Comforter shows us "things to come." They are the things of God. They are the unfolding of His purposes and the development of His ways. They intimately concern us. Has God brought us so near to Himself that He entrusts us with His secrets—hiding nothing from us! And shall we requite such love as this by utter indifference as to what He has been pleased to communicate? Far be the thought!

Nor can I close without a word to my unsaved reader. Dream not of the certain intervention of a thousand years. Christ says, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man." Do not be deceived. Think not of a millennium before He comes. There will be no such thing. No one can assure you that the day of which we speak is at any great distance. For aught we know, your eyes may behold its terrors. Within the period of your natural life, its thunders may burst upon your ears. Unless you embrace the Savior, on *you*, as yet alive here below, the terrors of the day of God may fall. *You* may be among those who shall be trodden in the wine-press. Christ is the

Ark of safety that will outride the coming storm. His arms are open to receive you. What is before the world is the Coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven,—*not* a thousand years hence, but, for anything you know to the contrary, your own eyes may see heaven opened and the Son of Man robed in light and majesty descending with ten thousand of His saints to execute judgment on the ungodly living, of whom you may be one. A day of universal peace and blessedness for this oppressed and groaning earth is to come, but it will succeed His Advent. It will not come to pass through the progress of society, the march of intellect, the advancement of science, nor even through the Gospel, but by the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven. For every Christless soul, that Coming in the clouds will be judgment and destruction. Hasten to the Savior. Delay not to flee to Christ, the only refuge. He says, “He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death unto life.” Once more, “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” God loved and God gave, you believe and you have.

