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GLIMPSES OF THE COMING.

GLIMPSES OF THE COMING.

“Yet, Jesus said not unto him—He shall not die; but—If I
will that He tarry till I come.”

BY

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PREFACE.

PREFACE.

THIS little book is large enough. To have right to be larger it would need to be a more thorough treatment of its great theme, concerning which it is only a series of hints. And for the arrangement of these, while a natural order has been sought, no attempt has been made toward a scientific method.

It enters on no history of doctrine concerning the Second Coming of The Son Of Man; it gives no analysis of any of the various systems of interpreting the prophecies, such as have been learnedly argued under the designations of literal, normal, figurative, spiritual, symbolical; it attempts nothing on the seductive field of a specific reference of specific prophecies, each to its nation or its person on the scene of history—a field elaborately traversed by innumerable explorers through paths interlacing or colliding; it is not even devotional or practical in form, though it is hoped that a devout mind may find in it most practical suggestions; it attempts no thorough exe-

genesis of prophetic texts, which may be deemed a serious defect, though indeed it does seek to make audible at least the constant undertone of the grand Scriptural Anthem of The Coming, and to voice its one pervasive strain and to mark its rhythmic and unflinching time.

Certain principles herein stated can be shown to be grounded solidly on the Word of God: these must stand, whether with or against any learned theories of the Second Advent. Where, as at many points, this little treatise takes the form of an explorative hypothesis ranging out upon a vast mystery, the single question is—how closely the main lines of guidance and the holding-points revealed by The Holy Spirit, are adhered to?

If the right or profit of hypothesis on this theme be questioned, the answer is instant—that Holy Scripture leaves us herein not without some ground of formulated thought, and in numerous passages invites us to search for it; and that our search being tentative must be in the manner of hypothesis; and that for us to speak slightingly of a reverent study of the prophecies, is to follow the fashion of an easy and shallow and not ancient piety, rather than to copy the Apostles and our Lord Himself, Who con-

stantly hold up to view the Final Coming as the strong practical rebuke to worldliness and an inspiration to faith. The Church of our time stands in line of battle on the field of thought. It can not afford to discard this keen weapon of The Spirit. The Great Coming of The Lord, plainly taught in Holy Scripture, scoffed at by unbelief, and half-doubted in vast sections of the very Church whose business on the earth is to wait for it and to hasten it, must be not only replaced in its rightful rank of truths, but must be newly set in such presentment and array as shall confront the unbelief of the times—unbelief which doubts the Lord's Coming as it doubts The Lord.

The reason therefore for probing this theme in part with hypothesis is valid, even should any given hypothesis be found untenable. This treatise is an attempt to suggest a possible harmonizing of the two sharply divergent interpretations under which the Church has set forth the future Advent—thus a humble contribution to unity among the Christian forces: it is also an attempt to set the Advent in terms of thought which can take their place not only in arbitrary creeds, but in a cognizable system of history and of Nature—a system of unfailing laws. Let the theory now suggested be found as faulty on certain

points as it is confessedly incomplete in presentation : what then? The failure is of small moment : at least some minds will have been stirred with suggestions, and the need will have been emphasized of some attempt which shall *not* fail, to set the Great Coming in such a harmony of Christian thought as shall suffice to bring its immense practical power to bear on individual experience and on the general thought and life.

Since all our unity is in Christ, the Final Epoch which is our theme is herein treated as conceivable no other wise than as centralizing all its elements, principles and developments around and in the living and mighty Person of The Son Of God, The Eternal Word in Whom stands the whole life of humanity, past, present and to-come. For, it is possible that a treatment of the great Event not in the well-worn lines of either of the two great theories upon it, which have had such learned advocacy—but only as vitally and naturally connected with the Living Christ—may bring around it a fresh atmosphere favorable for thought. Those writers on the Second Advent seem most helpful to us who, with whatever theories, open it to us in its vital dynamics rather than as an outward mechanical operation.

The author, undertaking this difficult theme not of his own motion, will be permitted to say that this treatise is published only by reason of the unexpected and urgent request of a large company of ministers in the city of New York, before whom a general outline of the views here given had been (also upon special request) privately read by him. Let this, however, be plainly understood: he is not aware that any one of the many ministers before whom this view was presented in outline assents to it in detail; he is not definitely informed that any of them accept it in even its general principles: he deems them responsible only for the judgment that in the present state of discussion, this view would be suggestive and helpful to further thought by other minds.

In the main, the writer rests in the views advanced, deeming them agreeable with the Word of God and honorable to Christ. On the single point of the Resurrection, however, for the sake of a complete presentation of the hypothesis, some statements are made—somewhat positively in form—which while thought to be reconcilable with the general tenor of Holy Scripture, are confessed to be open to questioning. Only the thorough criticism and exegesis

of a vast range of Scripture passages by those given to that special work can show the validity of these statements on the Resurrection.

“TO THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY!”

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THE SON OF MAN AS THE COMING ONE.

PART I.

THE SON OF MAN AS THE COMING ONE.

I.

THE SON OF MAN—THE LIFE IN THE WRITTEN WORD.

WE testify that the Holy Scripture is the Word of God.

This is the unchanging testimony of Christ's Church to the changing centuries. The Church which has seen the rising, the fading, and the fall of all the greatest earthly things, has tested this one thing and found it permanent; wherefore, it sets to its seal—That the Word of The Lord abideth forever.

When we seek for the hiding-place of such enduring power, we find it where we find the secret of all power, in A Personal Life. Nothing but life can live. We think rightly of Holy Scripture, not when we consider it as a cabinet of precious abstract truths or as a code of high moral precepts; but when we take it

as the sure self-registering testimony of the progress with which that Life of God which is Personal in His Son, has been revealing itself through the long successions of human history.

Thus, the Word comes to us, not as an oracle imperiously uttered out of a mystery, an intrusion upon man's nature and upon the whole flow of the world; not even as an arbitrary Divine declaration for practical benefit; but as the living testimony of The Living God uttering itself *through and in the life of man*. From the beginning of the Old Testament to the closing of the New, the Word is the written Revelation of Jesus Christ Who is the Living and Eternal Word of God made manifest in our Flesh; it is His continuous translation of Himself as the Personal Divine Life, into human consciousness, perception, affection and action; it is one ever-growing story of His Incarnation; it is the panorama of the Coming of The Son Of Man—of His first, and final, and countless intermediate, comings. For, as Christ came in the Flesh by The Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, so—as the Universe at last shall see—by the power of the same Spirit He is to come in perfect glory, as the final issue and fruit from the long travail of the collective humanity: wherefore from the beginning of

the Gospel until now, and till The End when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God even The Father, His own chosen Name—Who might have called Himself “Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father” [Is. ix. 6], is this instead—

“THE SON OF MAN.”

II.

THE SON OF MAN—THE DIVINE LIFE IN HISTORY.

The Son Of Man is The Son Of God—God in His whole unsearchable and eternal relation to humanity. We know man well enough to know practically, whatever may be our theories, that the absolutely perfect and ideal Man must be necessarily and essentially Divine; for though we deem our day the best, we have never seen that Man among those born of human parents. We know God sufficiently to know, that, while we may theorize concerning Him, we cannot *know* Him at all except as He presents Himself to our thought in relations and through a whole type of Being developed from our own humanity. What nation, what soul, has ever conceived of a God that was not in some sense a God-Man? Rid theology of a Christ viewed as essentially God; make Him only a high creature or a second God; prove His proper Deity to be a logical impossibility, which can be done by any reasoner as easily as four-hundred years ago any philosopher could prove it absurd to say that the world is round: and you have simply removed the

logical frame-work for man's conception of Deity, so that if man were to be limited by your arbitrary premises he would find it impossible to think of any Deity at all beyond a high creature or a second God; but since man cannot permanently avoid framing a conception of *God*, you have done nothing after all but to confuse his mental machinery for an unavoidable conception; and sooner or later, a Christ as The God-Man is sure to return into human thought; as has been proved in history over and again. For He *is* God in manifestation. Jesus The Christ is God as known; we have not seen beyond Him: and He says to us—"He that hath seen Me, hath seen The Father" [Jn. xiv. 9]. The Apostle Paul [Col. i. 15-17] declares Him to be "the Image of the invisible God," and that "by [*Greek*, in] Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in [on] earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things and by [in] Him all things consist [subsist]." Also, it is written [Heb. i. 3] that He is "the express image of God's Person—upholding all things by the word of His power."

The Apostle John, opening his Gospel with sen-

tences which in their measureless mystery and grandeur are like echoes rolling in from Eternity, declares—"In the beginning was The Word, and The Word was with God, and The Word was God: the Same was in the beginning with God: all things were made by [through] Him, and without [except through] Him was not anything made that was [hath been] made. In Him was [is] life, and the life was the light of men. . . . That was the true Light which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world. . . . And The Word was made [became] Flesh, and dwelt [tabernacled] among us" [Jn. i. 1-4, 9, 14]. In Holy Scripture the Person of Christ is a mystery; but concerning Him this one thing is made known to us with perfect plainness—that the human race, whether in the body or dwelling in whatever spiritual sphere, and the whole moral, social, even physical world, are utterly given into the hands of Him Who called Himself The Son Of Man; so that the creating of us is through His agency, and the Providential keeping and directing of us is His office, and the redeeming and saving of us is His work, and the suffering with us and for our sins is claimed by Him as His strange privilege, and the supreme Kingship and Headship over us is His prerogative, and all judging of us is in Him, and

except through Him is nothing made or done that is made or done concerning us.

The Christ is thus the operative force in all human history. History is, in its essence, the record of His continuous coming to man through innumerable Divine approaches, material, intellectual, moral; with the record of man's active or passive reception of this personal Divine Life, or of man's repulsion or neglect of it. For while from the first moment of creation Christ comes to set up a Kingdom in love, man nevertheless stands in moral liberty: hence are the tumultuous dashings, the refluxing tides of good and evil, "the eternal outflow and recall" as of a throbbing ocean, the seeming retardations of the Kingdom, the world's memorable disasters when against the patient rock of Infinite Love the world mis-using its liberty and massing its ungodly power, flings itself as a billow only to find itself broken and cast back in spray. Meantime with silent, but ceaseless augmentation Christ rears His Kingdom; and

"THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS IS THE SPIRIT OF
PROPHECY."

III.

THE CONTINUOUS COMING OF THE SON OF MAN.

“The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Since Christ’s personal energy, vitalizing the moral, social, material world, and stirring as a deep life within all events, has been human history from the beginning, it is to be history till historic time shall end. Christ marshals the ages, future as well as past. Prophecy is history in the future tense. Therefore whatever great things of the Kingdom are written in the prophets for our learning, are to be known by us only as seen in the light of the personal Presence of The Son Of God. Whether we contemplate Creation, Incarnation, Resurrection, Advent, Millennial Glory, or Final Judgment, we are looking not at epochs or events arbitrarily appointed and to emerge mechanically as by celestial clock-work when their hour shall strike; but at certain natural processes or results of Christ’s living energy. Each either is, or flows from, some manifestation of His Divine-Human personality on the field of man’s character and career. These

manifestations themselves are conditioned on a certain moral readiness in men to receive them; also they correspond with a certain ripeness in the time and preparedness of all the accompanying events.

In the eternal Counsel of God, which is mystery, are appointed these various conjunctures of outward events, of human action, of material, mental, moral forces; still though thus rooted—rather, because thus rooted, in the Divine Sovereignty, they stand in an infinite fitness with the whole frame of things, and with the whole flow of history. Thus no coming or manifestation of Christ, from the least to the greatest, is ever hurried or hindered and so thrown out of time; none is ever unnatural or disorderly however it may seem to us. Since all things were created through The Son Of God and subsist through Him, all things are administered by Him in perfect accordance with His own nature, and so in perfect adaptation of each part to every other. “He is the Head of all principality and power” [Col. ii. 10]. And since, as He affirms [Mat. xxviii. 18]—“All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth,” we are to think of the invisible world as always moved from Him through all its immeasurable bounds with action perfectly consentaneous and correspondent *in its sphere* with that

which in this material world proceeds from His ever-flowing, all-controlling Life.

“ It pleased The Father that in Jesus Christ should all fullness dwell,—and by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; even by Him, whether they be things on earth or things in heaven ” [Col. i. 19, 20]. Wherefore the Confession which The Master saith was revealed to His disciple Simon Peter not by man, but by The Father in Heaven, and on which as a Rock He would build His Church [Mat. xvi. 16–18], is our key for history and our light for prophecy, and links the Church on earth in one glorious hope with the Heavenly Jerusalem, while with united heart we cry—

WE CONFESS JESUS THE CHRIST,
THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD!

IV.

THE KINGDOM OF THE SON OF MAN.

Jesus The Christ, The Son Of The Living God, is King. A King has a kingdom. What, where, and when, is it?

Various answers are heard. It is said to be a present kingdom in the hearts of His saints alone—its scene the true and vital Church below and above. It is said to have its present scene in the visible Church. It is said to be not present, but future ; He is waiting His appointed time to bring it in. It is said to be present in the Heavens, but future on the Earth when He shall be manifested in a glorious Presence here, and every eye shall see Him. It is said to consist in the willing obedience of His friends : it is said to consist in the submission by, or subjugation of, His foes. Is it not possible that each of these answers conveys, while it limits and reduces, the truth?

The Scriptures seem to show that Christ's Kingdom viewed not as a *display*, but as a *reality*, is in its scene and nature, universal ; and that as to its time, it em-

braces all the Time there is, all epochs, ages, æons, past, present and to come, of which man can conceive. [Eph. i. 20-22: 1 Peter iii. 22: Heb. i. 2, 3, 8: Col. i. 16-19: ii. 9: 1 Cor. xv. 25: Phil. ii. 9, 10.] All nature is Christ's, all powers, all materials and elements, all bodies and all souls, all His friends and all His foes, all spiritual forces and physical laws. Nature, matter, space, time—these things that are so real to us, are real, but only as they are framed into the dimension, the order and sequence, of His Kingdom. Space is nothing but the extent of His domain: Time is nothing but the continuance of His dominion: both are conceptions mediated to our thought by The God-Man. The Son Of God is King in every way, everywhere, and all the time. Where His Kingdom seems incomplete, is only where our vision of it is incomplete: while it seems to us to be waiting to be set up, *it* is already set up of old; only *we* are waiting for the spiritual illumination to see it. Its *methods* indeed change with the changing epochs; it projects itself upon an evil world through dispensation after dispensation, and these grow in a glory of Divine manifestation; but the Kingdom is something more than its manifestation to men's eyes, and is as real when ungodly hearts reject it and tempt the long suffering

of the patient King, as when they accept it, or as when they are crushed beneath it.

Christ, "the Same yesterday, to-day and forever," is always the Coming One, always the Reigning One; using all diverse methods of approach and governance; not indeed recognized in His Kingship when aforetime He meekly tabernacled in the Flesh; not recognized even to-day save by the men of faith; yet none the less The King when He stood before Pontius Pilate's bar (where also He confessed Himself The King), none the less The King when He was throned upon the Cross (which also by its title confessed Him King)—none the less than He shall be when, manifested in awful glory on the great white Throne, He shall come on the clouds of heaven in the final Day.

From an ancient wall in Siena, a marvellous fresco looks forth. It shows The Christ Desolate. Weary and worn, He is bound to a pillar, bleeding from the scourge, fainting, with no friendly uphold- ing save that of the cords that bind Him. The igno- minious pillar seems His only friend. In prospect is the Cross. With utter physical exhaustion and agony, there is absolute loneliness and desertion as of One Forsaken on the earth and in the heavens. Yet the beholder finds prevalent through all the unspeakable

sadness, a mysterious majesty in The Man, visibly such as may be conceived of in One throned at the right hand of Power. Meekness and majesty, suffering and glory, earthly shame and eternal might—these are not incongruous except to the eyes that are so filmed with the material that the soul of fact remains unseen. The picture is no proof, but it is an illustration. If Art can conceive, if hands can trace, such Kingship in such weakness, then surely a spiritual faith may cry even at front of Calvary, This Man is The Son Of God, therefore The King, Prince of a power that knows neither beginning nor end.

If to this whole view it be objected that our Lord and various inspired men spoke of the Kingdom of God as “to come,” as “near,” as “at hand”—either affirming that it could not be entered except in a child-like character and a life of Christian discipleship—or pointing to it as to be brought in with power in latter days—thus showing it as not yet established in such present and universal dominion as is claimed above; the answer is not difficult. To examine the passages of Scripture which refer to the Kingdom, requires a thoroughness which this little treatise does not attempt. But it is thought that any one examin-

ing them all *in their general harmony* may see that those Scriptures which require a certain character of discipleship for entrance into the Kingdom, make this requirement not as a condition for the existence of the Kingdom, but as the condition on which men may share in its glorious power and blessing; and that those Scriptures which seem to remit the Kingdom to the day of Christ's future coming to introduce the Millennium, are naturally and completely explicable as referring not to the reality of the Kingdom or to anything essential in it, but to its heightened manifestation and to its consummating development under the later and fuller revelation within it of its King. Not in its substantial fact, but merely in a certain specific form is it represented as delayed: and if it be alleged that this future specific form or visible development of the Kingdom is so mighty as to be the very Kingdom itself to which prophecy refers; it is to be replied that while prophecy may indeed refer to a form, we have no warrant in the character of Christ for reducing to any external form or visible development however glorious, a *fact* which He Himself plainly sets forth as spiritual in its origin and nature: for He saith [Lk. xvii. 20, 21] when inquired of by the Pharisees what time the Kingdom

of God should come—"The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or Lo there! for behold the Kingdom of God is within [in the midst of] you."

And if it be alleged that certain Scriptures show a Kingdom of Christ as beginning in the course of history—dating only from His Ascension above all heavens as the crucified Son Of Man risen from the dead; then without disputing such a Scriptural presentation as to the *form* of the Kingdom, we may reply that even this shows the Kingdom as already set up. We are not awaiting it now.

It is sometimes said in the use of an analogy drawn from human governments—as though they were delicate and exquisitely perfect or quite satisfactory images of God's dominion—that Christ is King *in law*, but not yet *in fact*. This only confuses the Divine authority and power with the human love and willingness. In Scripture Christ appears as Supreme in law, and in fact, and in every other conceivable range of relations: even the demons are subject unto Him. But if it be alleged that the Kingdom as to a certain form is in Holy Scripture expressly conditioned upon a coming of Christ; then it is to be conceded that this is true; and that Christ's comings are represented

as repeating themselves along all the path of human history—each advent bringing in a new historical development of His kingly judicial power [Jn. xii. 31: ix. 39]: wherefore, as it will be attempted to show hereafter, His final Coming will indeed consummate His Kingdom in its highest form and its grandest scope.

But in fully conceding this, nothing is conceded as to the Kingdom being not yet set up on earth in all its essential majesty and dominion; and nothing is conceded as to any setting aside of the work of The Holy Spirit and putting in its place Christ's bodily presence, in establishing Christ's dominion among men, before the final judgment-hour: for nothing of this sort is either naturally involved in Christ's Coming, or warranted in Holy Scripture. The Spirit of God convicts of sin, shows Christ to men, gathers the Household of faith, and convinces of Judgment to come, until in Christ's final utmost manifestation through the same Spirit the last Judgment that was to come shall have fully come [Jn. xiv. 16, 26: xvi. 7-15].

We look for a Kingdom to come: it is well; every eye shall yet see it: but let us not fail to see also that the Kingdom already is. It always *is*, and always it

is *coming* more and more; only its manifestation is delayed. Why, except to prop some theory as to the scene or manner of Christ's Advent that cannot stand on Holy Scripture alone, should those who have learning and ingenuity use them to show that the Kingdom of Christ is not to be on earth until some later Advent sets it up? Because foes and rebellion are rampant, shall we therefore say that there is no government in the land, while we behold the law always invincible in its might, and the vast marching armies of justice, and the domain of peace steadily broadening, and the hostile noise and fret all vain, and the civil power ready when its own chosen time shall come to crush all opposition into dust? Because the morning Sun casts only level beams through the Eastern gate of its coming, shall we deny that there is yet sun-rising or day, and teach that no great achievement in affairs is possible till noon?

Against all these our human theorizings, hear The Lord Jesus saying to His disciples after His Resurrection—"All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth" [Mat. xxviii. 18]; and then proceeding [19, 20] to issue His commands in instant exercise of the supremacy which He claimed. Hear Him saying to His Apostle John in Patmos—"I am set down with

My Father on His throne" [Rev. iii. 21]. Against the theory that Christ's Kingdom is not to be a Kingdom on the earth until it shall have fully come into its manifestation which can be only at His personal coming to destroy His foes, let Paul the Apostle speak [1 Cor. xv. 25]—"He must *reign till* [not *after*, but "*till*"] He hath put all enemies under His feet:"—"Then cometh The End, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God even The Father: when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" [24: also see verse 28]. The Apostle's view is very plain: he saw Christ as reigning 1800 years ago: he expected Him to reign till the consummation of all things concerning man: thus instead of dating the *beginning* of the Mediatorial Kingdom at Christ's subjugation of His foes, he dates the *end* of the Kingdom at that subjugation.

The Mediatorial Kingdom—or let us say, the Kingdom of Christ on earth, is in full flow of power today: it is administered as the dispensation of The Holy Ghost Who works in human hearts the ever-progressive revelation of The Son Of God: its very genius and idea is not absolute undisputed triumph, but struggle after struggle issuing in victory ever rising and spreading, under Christ's meek majestic leader-

ship: it is a Kingdom of efforts, conflicts, growths: its parables, from the King's own lips, are the sowing of seed in the field—even a grain of mustard seed, and the hiding of leaven in the meal. So far is it from waiting for the full manifestation of The Lord in triumph over all hostile powers, before it begins to be, that thereupon instead it shall merge itself, as a specific administrative form, into that mystery of Glory, the ultimate "Kingdom of God even the Father," "that God may be all in all." Soon as it gains its ultimate triumph it ceases by its own inevitable law. The Mediatorial Kingdom—likewise the Kingdom of Heaven on earth—stands in the sweet similitude of its King, The Man Christ Jesus: to the very last it shall be true to the mind that was in Him: cradled in meekness it shall prove that meekness is might; winning through suffering it rises to power; it rules all through serving all; unselfish, it shall not rest in its own glorification as its object, but shall claim and take its glory only as mediative and transitional to a glory beyond all glory in the unsearchable deep of the Divine Being; at last ascendant above all heavenly powers, in the very instant of its consummation it shall vanish from all created sight, and all the hearts that, winged with love, are borne up

with it on its strong ascent, shall find themselves and it transfigured, in the Eternal Light, and God The All In All.

So Christ shall bring His People home.

V.

THE CONSUMMATE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN.

That Christ may bring His people home, He will come for them. For He saith—"I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" [Jn. xiv. 2, 3]. So we are, or we should be, looking for an actual personal as well as for a comprehensive constant Coming of The Son Of Man. [See Scripture references near the beginning of VII.]

But if we make this plain promise of a *personal* Coming, to be predictive of a *material* manifestation of Christ, or of any coming which is to be *visible in form to men's bodily eyes*, it is our own promise that we hear, not Christ's. This point awaits fuller statement; but it may now be noted that if The Lord, consoling His troubled Twelve with these words in view of His "going away" from them, promised them that He would return in *a form visible to their bodily eyes* that He might take them (the twelve) to

be with Himself, He did not fulfill the solemn promise: He has broken the hope which He gave. Some other style and sphere of His personal Coming must therefore be assigned; seeking for which, we may strike upon this oft-forgotten truth—that *full personality does not at all depend on, or in any manner require, a material visibility, though it does tend to produce immense results in the material realm.*

As to the personal Coming, we must hold it in its fullest and most real sense, if we hold the New Testament. The final Advent is nothing other than the consummated personal presence of The Son Of God in, with and through the whole humanity and all the spheres with which man stands in organic connection. In this directly personal and fully manifested energy of the King, first to His people, through them to the Race and even to the outward world, stands that final development of the renewing, sanctifying, governing and judicial forces of the Gospel which we are wont to speak of as the Kingdom to come, the Millennium, the Glory of the Latter Day.

VI.

THE APPROACH OF THE SON OF MAN.

The Glory of the Latter Day is the far-shining light in prophecy. The promise of the great Kingdom is Zion's steadfast hope. The Church waiting for her Lord, while the unbelieving world has been revelling or sleeping through the long night of history, has trimmed the lamp of this Divine promise whose flame often flickering in rude winds has never quite gone out. "What of the night?" has been the cry upon the walls of Zion, age after age: "The night passeth; The Lord cometh!" has been the answer of the watchmen on the eastward towers that stand facing the hope of dawn.

As there must be dawn before day, so—speaking now according to the eyes of men—The Lord's approach must be before His arrival. It is His nearer coming that in these last days is kindling the Church to new hope and effort. Perhaps we mistake the signs of the times: wiser men than we, in other days, have mis-read them, and have thought that

they heard the footstep of the Beloved at the threshold of the door, when it was only the eager throbbing of their desires within them. They have now gone up to higher courts of the same great Zion—courts invisible as yet to us—in which as those that have been brought part-way to meet and greet their King, they have a nearer, earlier vision of His Coming. Far through the night and on swift-wing, as led of angels, *they* have been borne, until, though not yet in the full Day, but only in its faint morning flush, they nevertheless find their horizon brimming with a light from the presence of The Lord, which doubtless makes more than all the Heaven which they ever had conceived while in the Flesh.

Meanwhile on earth the Kingdom grows with the constant coming of the King. Its last grand manifestation advances. The earthly times are flowing toward it as all the rivers are flowing to lose themselves in the measureless sea. To it Providences have been working and histories converging since God began to develop man's redemption close upon man's first fall. Great changes in preparation for this consummation are going on before our eyes. We are so accustomed to material achievements that have been crowding the last half century, that we

take small note of things which, four-hundred or one-hundred years ago, would have covered the world with amazement. Matter is being steadily subjugated to the uses of man's spiritual nature. Whereas the ancients dealt with force mostly in its gross material forms, we summon to our service the subtlest, most ethereal agencies—steam, magnetism, light: we are gradually transferring our life at least in possibility to a sphere not nearer to, but in nearer symbolism of, the spiritual. Laboring men of to-day are served by more delicate machineries of comfort and use than any monarch in Europe could have commanded five centuries ago.

All this progress, under a general law moreover of acceleration, is *toward something*. Toward what? Doubtless to mere material achievements as the nearest stages of advance, but necessarily to somewhat beyond these. Matter is not ultimate. The way of The Lord is being prepared; how or precisely whither we may not know: but the mountains are being brought down, and the valleys raised, and the highway of the King is being cast up, and His salvation shall go forth thereon, and all Flesh shall see it together. Even man's selfishness is being over-ruled for this work; and though as yet we see

only the confused materials, the disjointed preparations, and often a present growth of evil availing itself of that very increase of powers which God had prepared for good—though as yet refinement may mean selfishness, and science may foster pride—nevertheless these are but incidents of God's great plan for the coming of that Kingdom of His Son which is surer than the revolution of the Planet.

Christ The Light has come to more hearts and wider lands since this century opened than in all previous centuries since the Apostles left the earth. All national doors stand open now for the heralds of the Gospel; old barriers crumble; the idols tremble in their shrines; the social and moral foundations of heathenism are being undermined. The Gospel as a leaven has been cast into the social life of many lands. The nations are being fused together as never before. The very winds carry ideas abroad like winged seeds. Ships heavy laden on the seas bear heavier and more forceful moral cargo. The ancient abuses of Christendom are being brought into sterner judgment than of old: there is cleaner private sentiment; there is nobler growth of laws. The common man grows somewhat kingly and judicial. The long-dismembered Church of Christ is visibly drawing

toward unity. Multitudes of souls in many lands are rising to Christian faith. It is computed by those who study statistics that such rate of progress as has been made in these few years past, if continued (a mere supposition) would in much less than a century spread Christianity over the globe in as full power as that with which it now holds nominal Christendom. And we are to expect greater things than these, knowing that it is in the gift of The Holy Ghost to give vast increase of faith and prayer and so of Christian power and success above all that is known by the Church to-day.

There are those who think our day degenerate, the type of piety feeble, the Church a vast worldly compromise, all institutions and society itself eaten at the heart with an incurable moral decay, the world staggering to its last convulsive fall—the only hope a bodily coming of Christ instead of the worn-out Dispensation of The Spirit. Those who thus condemn our times *in comparison with any that have preceded*, are safe from all argument, and absolutely impregnable to reason; for such assertions are not in any sphere in which *reason* can conceivably move. But the question is one of *fact*, which any man can decide for himself. There are many things which this little

treatise desires to assert modestly ; but as to this easy, pious, cheap condemnation of the manhood and of the Christian faith and labor of our times, let it be declared a wholesale mis-representation of the Church of God. We would declare it a calumny on the whole Household of Christ, were we not afraid to bring railing accusation. May The Lord in love rebuke it ! The brethren whose zeal for a certain interpretation of prophecy has led them into this most un-Christlike judgment of their brethren and distrust of the power of The Holy Ghost, deserve that they should have been compelled to live in some of those centuries past which they hold so superior to our own.

Whether the latter glory be near to or far from this our day, we know not ; but that it comes, and comes with Christ in some grander and fuller development of His personal life ministered by The Holy Ghost to the Church, and through the Church to the whole humanity, we know. That Kingdom, meek and unobtrusive, but therefore mighty ; coming not with observation ; decked in no vulgar pomp or cheap bedizenment, ritual, ecclesiastical, political ; rising as the Summer comes on the broad lands with a growing and all-pervasive and irresistible presence

—that Kingdom preparing over the earth and in the skies; urged forward by all faithful hands of the children of God; upbuilt by the ministrations of angels—its foundations deep in God's eternal Grace—its walls rising to the sound of Divine harmonies, and towering with an immovable and everlasting strength—its dimly glorious outline hanging since the earliest ages like a beautiful dream on the horizon of the world's hope, and glowing in these last days with more substantial light in our more favored skies—drawing by invisible most potent attractions all elements that are noblest and divine from all the ages of our thronging, many-colored humanity—that Kingdom is gathering its citizens and establishing its order and evolving its universal power, through every moment in every land beneath the sun, in the mighty Name of Christ its King and by The Spirit of The Living God.

If it tarry, wait for it, and work. For we are workers in it, together with God. Its tarrying is only a seeming :

ITS GOING FORTH IS PREPARED AS THE MORNING.

VII.

THE UNKNOWN DAY OF THE SON OF MAN.

The going forth of the morning is from the very point of midnight. From the deep of the dark a new day begins, and expectation kindles.

Nothing appears with more positiveness in the letters of Christ's Apostles to the churches than their expectation of a Second Great Coming of their Lord—His final Advent to His Church and to the World. The Master had unequivocally announced it to them, and amid their trials and persecutions it was cherished as the precious hope. Often they assert it with circumstantial and unqualified prediction; while in countless instances they frame their thought and order their argument and point their appeal with reference to it. Were they not assured of such a personal Coming large portions of their epistles would be nonsense. [Mk. xiii. 26: Acts i. 11: 1 Cor. iv. 5: xv. 23: Phil. ii. 16: iii. 20: 1 Thess. i. 10: ii. 19: iii. 13: iv. 15-17: v. 23: Tit. ii. 13: Heb. ix. 28: x. 37: 1 Pet. v. 4: Rev. i. 7: xxii. 20].

Yet with all this positiveness, the result of a vision by which their spiritual eyes were continually opened upon that Day of The Lord, there is a restraint of statement as to particulars, and a plain limitation of knowledge regarding the time of the great Event—thus making good The Lord's own word, that of that Day and Hour knoweth no man, or angel in the heavens [Mat. xxiv. 36]. The utmost that we can gather from the New Testament as to *time*, enables us only to discern indications of the *order* in which the grand closing scenes of the world's history are to emerge; and for even so little as this we have no clear revelation, but only a dim outline pictured on the skies of the vast hereafter—outline wavering, vanishing, re-appearing, bewildering our gaze. Yet we may know that God would not have caused so much, or so little, to be revealed to us, if He had not purposed thereby to draw our thought to these stupendous themes and to call into exercise our faculties of reason and investigation and even imagination, all which faculties we are to employ humbly, modestly, reverently, though earnestly—being cautious not to label our wise theories knowledge, and not to assert our probable conjectures as teachings of Holy Scripture—being further cautious to frame no theories

which to our best judgment are not direct inferences from the Word of God. For there is great danger which has again and again been encountered by the Church, that in dealing with scenes so fascinating by their grandeur, their mystery, and their relation to each of us who are to have some share in them, the imagination unduly excited may break loose into vagaries and drag us into that fanaticism which is the fever of faith as it is the paralysis of common sense. We are to "know this first" [2 Pet. i. 20]—applicable primarily to the prophets interpreting their utterances to themselves; still more for us—"That no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation."

VIII.

GROUPS AND CYCLES OF COMING EVENTS.

The prophecies are to be interpreted not each privately, but each in harmony with the whole body of revelation; and those which refer to epochs future to us, are to have an interpretation consonant to that which is supplied by the fulfillment of those that have been fulfilled.

Before proceeding to that general view of the Second Coming in its main epochs which is all that is now proposed, we need to recognize some principles as to the mode of prophetic revelation which, rightly applied, will relieve our minds of difficulties otherwise unmanageable. These principles are well-known by all students of the Bible: only the extent of their application is in question. They pertain to the *grouping* of events in prophecy.

We are to bear in mind that what Stier calls "the perspective of prophecy" is not given us in the Word, but is for the most part left for us who read it to supply for ourselves by comparing one part of these mys-

terious Scriptures with another. The prophets saw and revealed the future with a vision which usually took small note of the element of *time*, or of the intervals which were to separate the successive events. To their eyes the things so distantly seen were often *grouped* as though all occurring at one crisis; whereas the different events in such a group are in their occurrence separated by great spaces of time. This has been well compared to the view which we have of a distant mountain range, which, seen afar, shows against the sky as but a single broad-swelling and towering eminence: whereas when we journey to it and begin the ascent, we find hills upon hills with deep chasms or smiling valleys between, and mountains piled beyond mountains among which rivers thread their way while villages nestle at their feet. So the grand final events stand as lofty mountain-barriers on the horizon of our world's history, black with storms, or smoking with the nether fires, or snow-white and gleaming with the light which they catch from the infinite heaven beyond and fling to our straining eyes afar in the paths of this pilgrim-life.

To the prophets themselves it was given to see, at least to reveal, not the precise order, proportion, perspective of that long vista down which they gazed:

wherefore as the Apostle Peter declares concerning those of the old Dispensation, they were ever “searching what, or *what manner of time* the Spirit of Christ Who was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow” [1 Pet. i. 10, 11]. This leads us to recall those elder prophecies of the Messiah that was to come, in which He was pictured in His humiliation at the first Advent and in His glorification at the second Advent both at once as though the two Advents were but one (as indeed in a profound philosophical sense they are), with no note whatever of all these centuries of ours that are intervening in parenthesis between the two—a grouping of events and a disregard of time which, as we know, the Jews of Christ’s day mis-interpreted in their hasty pride and their trust in the external and visible, so that they looked not at all for a meek and suffering, but only for an instantly and outwardly glorified Messiah. This may suggest to us the possibility of our making a similar though less momentous mistake in reading the prophecies of Christ’s Second Advent—viewing it as all to be completed in one great crisis, when perhaps it may consist of crises separate and cumulative—viewing it as all to be limited within one sphere, the earthly, when

perhaps it may develop itself also and even originally and far more mightily in the Heavens. Concerning this we have this suggestive thought from that noble Christian scholar, Dean Alford, of whom we joy to think as now a member of the Church on high, who says—"The coming again of The Lord is not one single act, as His Resurrection, or the descent of The Spirit, or His second personal Advent, or the final Coming to Judgment ; but the great complex of all these, the result of which shall be His taking His people to Himself to be where He is. This receiving is begun in His Resurrection, carried on in the spiritual life, . . . further advanced when each by death is fetched away to be with Him [Phil. i. 23], fully completed at His Coming in glory, when they shall forever be with Him [I Thess. iv. 17] in the perfected Resurrection state."

We are further to have in mind a feature of these prophecies cognate to the one above indicated, which consists in their combining in one prediction *recurring cycles* of events. One event is prophesied and no other may be in terms alluded to ; yet that one event is the picture or type of another event somewhat similar in its principles or its bearing, which is to follow the first after an interval of hundreds or thousands of

years. Sometimes one predicted event is thus the symbol of many events that are to occur in cycle after cycle of history—each successive cycle repeating the fundamental principle of the first, but with varying and often with augmenting grandeur and scope. It has been noted from of old that history moves in circuits which involve essentially the same deep moral and social elements over and over again with circumstantial changes; and since prophecy is history anticipated, prophecy must move by the same great law. It is a far-reaching law with scope too vast for our present tracing: suffice it to say that *in a certain sense* with careful restrictions on our errant fancy, we may conceive of cycles of minor Advents of The Son Of Man, of cycles of minor Apostasies, of cycles of preparative Resurrections, of cycles of preliminary Judgment Days—all which events, minor, and not consummate, are yet real enough and resemble the final in source and principle sufficiently to stand for types and premonitions of those which shall be ultimate and shall exhaust the full meaning of the prophecy.

As was remarked above, *our application* of this principle of viewing great prophetic events in cycles, is in danger of being fanciful; but the principle itself

is indisputable, standing squarely on the authority of The Lord Jesus Himself, who predicted to His disciples the two analogous yet widely separated events—the end of the Hebrew theocracy in the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, and the end of the world itself in His last judicial coming—combining the two as though they were but one, in terms which until He explained them were actually taken by His hearers as indicative of but one crisis.

This feature of a cyclical and recurrent reference in the prophecies is so important by reason of its wide range and of the possible number of the instances in which it is applicable that it may be helpful to trace in some detail the illustration of it which is furnished by our Lord's wonderful prediction above referred to [Mat. xxiii., xxiv., xxv. : Lk. xxi.].

The Master stood in the Temple discoursing to the multitude, the third day before His Crucifixion, while the rulers were plotting His death. The hour had come for Him to announce the end of the dispensation of types and shadows and to unveil the spiritual nature of His Kingdom. Upon the Scribes and Pharisees He denounces the awful judgment of God for their hypocrisy—"Verily, I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation."

“Behold, your house [the temple, ‘your house,’ no longer My Father’s House] is left unto you desolate” [xxiii. 36, 38]. He turns rejected, and leading His few disciples forth, departs forever from the sacred courts.

The little company, amazed and saddened at His predictions of terrible desolation for their venerated national sanctuary, hoping perhaps to intercede for its safety amid the approaching ruin, stay His departing footsteps that they may turn His attention to the wondrous pile forth from whose courts He goes. It was the last and grandest of the three successive temples which had now for a thousand years, with intermissions of national disaster, cast their consecrating shadow from Mount Moriah, and centralized within their precincts all the visible earthly worship of the One Living God. It had been the spot of God’s visible glory: it was the memorial of a national history whose source was in the remote antiquity of the Patriarchal ages, and whose progress through the long centuries had been led by God’s most stupendous Providences; it was the organic centre of the Theocracy; it was the symbol of that revelation of Jehovah to man which alone in the generations had proved itself able to withstand the idolatry that had made of every

other nation under heaven first an unendurable pollution, then an awful desolation. Around its innermost shrine, the Holy of Holies, which probably reproduced with enlargement the Asiatic architecture traditional from the previous temples of Solomon and Zerubbabel, Herod the Great holding the Jewish Kingdom in the name of Rome, had reared upon the terraced height, courts, cloisters, colonnades, inner and outer porticoes, and walls of fortification, adorned with Grecian and Roman art—grand, vast, beautiful, beyond all that could have been achieved in the simplicity of the ruder ages that had gone before. Josephus, to whose eyes it was a daily sight, gives as dimensions of some of its stones, seventy feet in length, eight feet in height, nine feet in breadth.

And Jesus of Nazareth stood, the plain, meek Man Who had not where to lay His head, and said—“See ye not all these things? Verily, I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down” [xxiv. 2]. Amazing prediction! For, the temple though garnering the memories of a far antiquity, was yet in its material structure, new. Nearly fifty years had it now been building, and it was not completed till about fifteen years after Christ spoke these words.

It was a time of profound peace; no speck of war was in the skies of the Holy Land: yet The Lord, after a brief interval in the dialogue, testified that Jerusalem and its sacred House should be destroyed before that generation should pass away [xxiv. 34]. Multitudes of those who thronged the temple-courts on the day that Christ uttered this prediction to four of His disciples, lived to see Israel's light quenched utterly in blood, the Theocracy abolished, the palaces of her princes crashing in conflagration, and the temple, her glory and her pride, heaped into indistinguishable ruin, at the close of a siege whose suffering and horror it is scarcely in the human imagination to surpass.

“Tell us, when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of Thy Coming and of the end of the world?” Thus the bewildered disciples questioned, privately, when shortly afterward they had come to the Mount of Olives [xxiv. 3]. The Lord then opens to them that the end of all things is not yet; that the temple is to be laid waste by war [Lk. xxi. 20]; that the end is only then to be begun [Mat. xxiv. 6, 8]; that Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled [Lk. xxi. 24]; that first the good news of

the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come [Mat. xxiv. 14]. He proceeds to amplify the prophecy with details now of the destruction of Jerusalem, now of His final Coming [xxiv., xxv.]: He interweaves the two in one fabric of anticipation: the two events so widely separate in point of *time*, He unqualifiedly co-ordinates in point of their source, their meaning, their fundamental principle; making the first and least of the two to be the token, the type, even the actual beginning, of that great Day when "shall appear the Sign of The Son Of Man in heaven, and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn [as with funeral lament or the lament for an expiring world], and they shall see The Son Of Man coming in [on] the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" [xxiv. 30: also 31, 34, 36, etc.].

Thus in a sense, "Judgment was to begin at the house of God"; and Christ's Advent in its minor developments, in the far-off world-shaking steps of its approach, was to be during that generation [Jn. xii. 31: xvi. 11]; and from that time on, He was to be coming nearer and ever nearer, till His coming should consummate itself in the Day of His full and ultimate judicial manifestation in a glory of spiritual

power and of celestial life, before which the earth and heavens should vanish as a dream. He seems to have held the chosen people, the Jews, as representative of the human race, epitomizing the world's history in their own; so that the downfall of the Divinely-founded Hebrew institutions was type and earnest of the downfall of all human social and material structures, and of all things that *could* fall, in the Great Day when God should be fully revealed through His Son in fiery and final judgment.

The approach of The Christ Who ever comes, will emerge to view in history through continuously recurring crises, until in the crisis of crises history shall end.

IX.

CRISES AND EPOCHS OF THE FINAL COMING.

Our vision, seeking the great End, ranges down a far-drawn vista of historic crises, among which Holy Scripture seems to light up into prominence, the following—of which some are partially simultaneous—simultaneous at least to a degree which serves to group them all under two main Epochs, hereafter to be more fully considered.

FIRST GREAT EPOCH.—THE MILLENNIAL COMING OF THE SON OF MAN.

1. *A Personal Coming of Christ to His waiting Church*—the manifestation of His Presence, first, to His Church waiting in all the Heavens [Rev. xix. 6-14]; then (transmissively perhaps through them) to His Church waiting in the Flesh; then, still in the transmission of His spiritual forces, to the whole out-lying humanity on earth, and even to the infernal spheres, the Abyss [Rev. xix. 6—xx. 6: Also, see Scriptural

references near the beginning of VII]. Even the natural world shares in the effects of this new Divine disclosure. This is not a manifestation of Christ in any form visible on earth to bodily eyes; but is His actual personal, therefore spiritual, coming, and revealed Presence, ministered to the Church, so far as the Church is in the Flesh, by The Holy Spirit *Whose office it is to show Christ to men.* This coming is cumulative from its era of beginning till its culmination in the Judgment. Numerous Scriptures show that The Lord comes first to His people, gathers them into one, and brings them with Him in His final Coming [Zech. xiv. 5: Col. iii. 3, 4; I Thess. ii. 19: iii. 13: iv. 14: II Thess. ii. 1]. Of that final Coming, this is the last grand approach, as it is the last grand prefigurative type, or rather the actual beginning: and by such personal force from Christ exerted through His Church, vast moral and social movements must shake the world.

2. *A Millennium*, or æon (age) of blessing and victory for the Church of God [Is. ii. 2, 3: xi. 6-9: Mic. iv. 1, 2: Hab. ii. 14: Heb. viii. 11: Rev. xiv. 6: xx. 1-6]. This stands solely in the spiritual might of Christ's new disclosure of Himself, and is correspondent as an æon or period in both the earthly and the heavenly

Church—its first development being necessarily in the vaster, mightier Church above. On earth the Gospel shall move swiftly to control all lands, under the outpouring of The Holy Spirit.

3. *A Resurrection*, through the power of the same coming (personal spiritual manifestation) of Christ Who is The Life: a true Resurrection or enduement with the perfected "spiritual body" [I Cor. xv. 44: I Thess. iv. 14, 16: Phil. iii. 11], certainly of eminent departed saints, and conceivably of the departed saints in general [I Cor. xv. 23], "every man in his own order" [τάγμα]; and a presentation of them all as living with Christ. This is "the First Resurrection" [Rev. xx. 4-6: Heb. xi. 35: Lk. xx. 35, 36: Phil. iii. 8-11, 14, 20, 21], involving a certain instituting or enthroning of the risen ones with Him as leaders and governors of the whole humanity [Rev. xix. 6-xx. 6]. It is quite inconceivable that the risen ones should be in any form visible to mere bodily eyes; "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God" [I Cor. xv. 50], and the "spiritual body" cannot be seen by eyes that are only of the Flesh. This Resurrection though not without great effects on the earth, has for its scene the spiritual world which is far more profoundly real than this world of

the visible, real as we know this to be. It is to be thought of as progressive resurrection, developing itself outward from Christ as the Centre, through widening circuits of spiritual being according as men are ready, or shall be made ready to meet Him with joy. It culminates in the General Resurrection at the end of the thousand years.

4. *The Great Apostasy*; the last short desperate rally of all the spiritual powers of evil, correspondent in both the earthly and the infernal spheres though originating in the latter; and a "falling away" from the holy to the evil company, of some who had externally submitted to Christ's Kingdom [Rev. xx. 7-10: II Thess. ii. 2, 3, 6-8]. Great Divine disclosures in all time tend to rouse evil into greater antagonism: the Millennial coming of Christ thus calls forth the most terrible and the last.

LAST GREAT EPOCH.—THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN IN FINAL JUDGMENT.

5. *The Final Coming of Christ*—the ultimate Manifestation of the Personal Son Of God from the Heavens, in an awful Glory of love, life and power, beneath which the hosts of the Apostasy sink as under lightning-stroke; while by His Presence the

very elements of external Nature are dissolved [Heb. xii. 27: II Pet. iii. 7, 10-13: Rev. x. 5-7], and matter vanishes instantly into that deeper spiritual reality of which it had been but the symbol and the agent; and all humanity on the earth, and in all infernal spheres, and in whatever celestial spheres, which has not as yet gathered unto Him, is drawn in before Him in Whom it lives and has its being, and presents itself in general Resurrection and perfect revelation under the absolute Light and Truth of Him Who even in the Flesh could say—"I am the Light:" "I am the Truth." This Final Coming is not, and cannot possibly be, in this visible material sphere: it is *unto* the material, which instantly fades and passes from before it, fleeing "as a dream when one awaketh." The frame of Nature is too weak to be the stage of such stupendous action and movement. Therefore no *bodily* eyes shall see it: they that are in the Flesh shall be changed "in the twinkling of an eye." It is said above, and elsewhere in this treatise, that Matter, at Christ's Final Coming, fades, passes, vanishes, is dissolved into its deepest spiritual reality. This fully accords with Holy Scripture: but there may be difficulty in deciding whether the fact thus revealed is to be taken as the historical and actual end of the

matter itself of our world, or as the final instantaneous transfer of the human race out of all relations to the present material sphere. If any minds find the latter most manageable by their thought, it may be taken as fully meeting the Scriptural statement; as we speak of the world, as fading, vanishing from around the dying, while *they* are passing away from *it*. This possible alternative for our thought regarding the final disposition of *matter*, is to be noted at all those points in this treatise where it is not duly stated. As to matter, since we know not yet what it is, how shall we say what is to become of it when man has outgrown it?

6. *The Final Judgment*; not any manner of trial, but instant judicial manifestation, discrimination of all men as by a moral polarization, *according as their inmost life joins itself to, or revolts from, the Holy Son Of God* [Mat. xxv. 31-46: Rom. xiv. 11, 12: Acts xvii. 31: II Pet. ii. 9: Rev. xx. 12-15; II Cor. v. 10]: thus, the final, absolute, moral decision concerning every act of every man, as all the acts of each having ultimated in his character, shall then unveil themselves instantly and utterly in his essential life opened to its inmost under that infinitely sea ching light of Christ; which moral decision instantly registers and

executes itself [Jn. xii. 47, 48]—each soul flying irresistibly to that whether good or evil, and giving itself over to that, to which its supreme choice and love correspond [1 Cor. iv. 5].

7. *Recompense*; the reaping of that which has been sown; the gathering and continuance of all moral harvests under Divine law; the consummation of character under the judicial administration of God's own holiness, whereby godliness—the gift of God through faith—inevitably confirms itself into an inward heaven and configures heaven outwardly around itself and enters the actual Heaven; and ungodliness inevitably tends from the first to confirm itself into an inward hell and to configure an outward hell around it, so creating and entering Hell [Rom. vi. 23: Gal. vi. 7, 8].

Then, THE END, ineffable, unsearchable [Rev. x. 5-7]: end of times, utmost boundary of histories, limit of present revelation, close of predicted Divine comings to Man by The Son or The Spirit; farthest verge of thought, since it marks the farthest reach of Mediatorship, as made known to us, between God and our humanity; merging and transfiguration of the blessed and Glorious Mediatorial Kingdom into

that inconceivably grander Blessing and Glory, of which the Revealing Spirit testifies only this [1 Cor. xv. 24-28]—

“GOD SHALL BE ALL IN ALL.”

THE MILLENNIAL COMING OF THE SON OF MAN.

PART II.

THE MILLENNIAL COMING OF THE SON OF MAN.

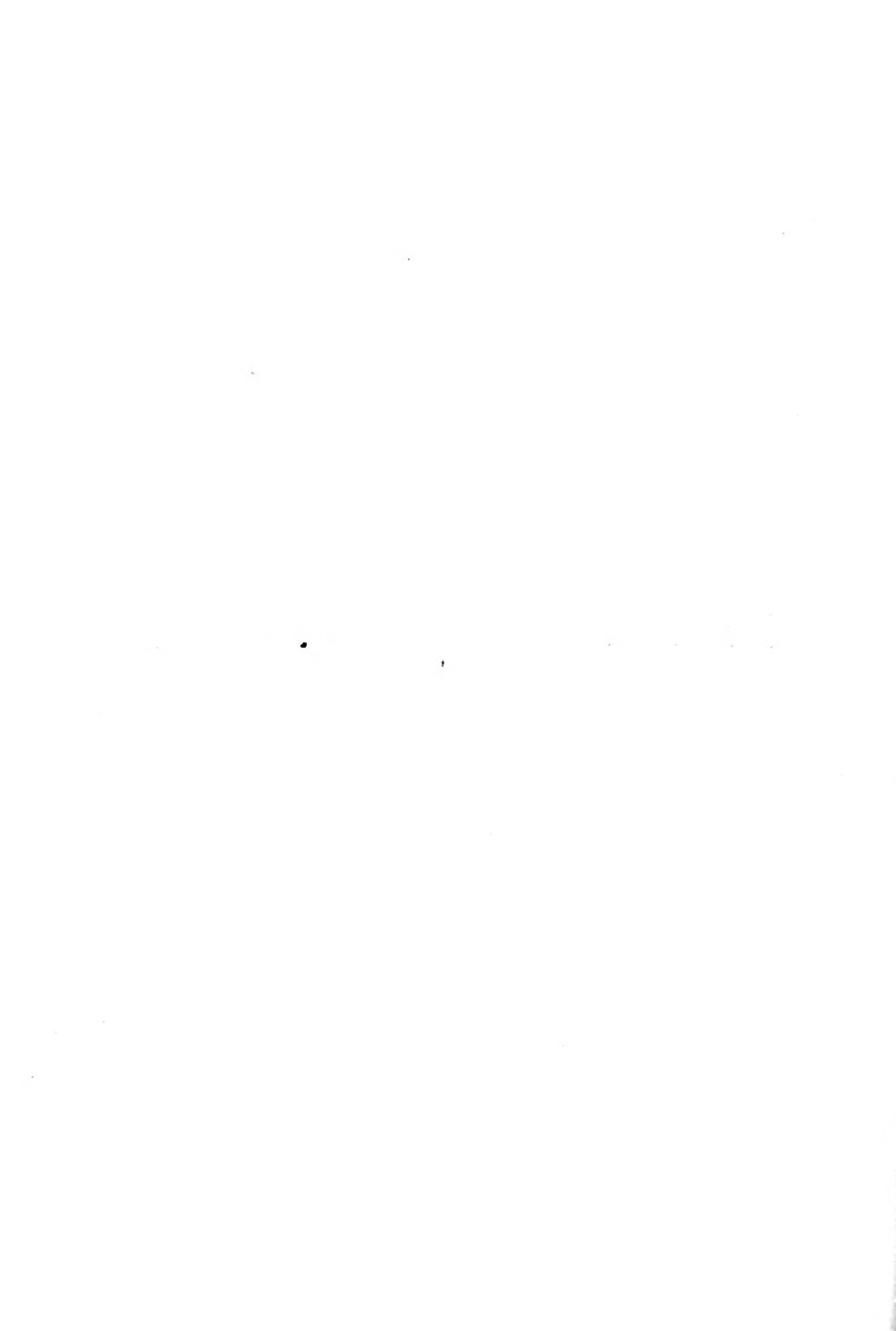
LIFTING up our eyes toward the vast future which is veiled as well as unveiled in Prophecy, we have discerned, if we mistake not, two main epochs to which are assignable in two several groups all the events for which in Holy Scripture we are taught to look.

These two epochs are two comings of The Lord, yet not two separate comings—at least not separate in their nature. The First, which we may call Christ's Millennial Coming, grows into the Last, which is His Final Coming in Judgment: the First is directly transitional to the Last, and is preparative, as also prefigurative of it; yet the Last carries the elements of the First onward and outward with an altogether transcendent power and scope. Still, we shall follow Holy Scripture if while we separate the two for con-

venience of treatment, we remember that they are essentially One Coming.

Taking the two in their order, we will discuss the First under a series of Questions; thus gaining those glimpses of it in its many connections and bearings, which are all for which this little treatise makes any attempt. A due modesty on this broad and profound and difficult theme (and this especially as concerns the Resurrection), makes it proper to say again what was said in the preface, and what any reader may see—that our glimpses are at certain points glimpses through a *hypothesis*, whose validity must have its ultimate test in Holy Scripture.

QUESTIONS ON CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL COMING.



QUESTIONS ON CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL COMING.

I.

In the history of the Church of Christ and of the world, is there an epoch recognizably distinct, such as may be termed THE MILLENNIUM?

There is: it is abundantly revealed in Holy Scripture, and it is the inevitable result of the Gospel. Is. ii. 2, 3: xi. 6-9: Mic. iv. 1, 2: Hab. ii. 14: Heb. viii. 11: Rev. xiv. 6: xx. 1-6.

II.

Through how long a period does the Millennium continue? Rev. xx. 4-7.

There are three theories.

1. *A prophetic thousand years*—a day for a year—thus 360,000 years. This is to be rejected; as attaching to the simple round number, 1000, an arithmetically precise value of which it is nowhere else in the prophecies found to be the symbol; and

as giving the number this meaning with the result only of making it almost unmanageable by our thought.

2. *A literal historical thousand years.* This is to be rejected, as interjecting a piece of bald literalism into a vast pictorial symbolism; for symbolical certainly are the Rider on the White Horse out of Whose mouth comes the sharp sword [xix. 11-16]; likewise the key of the Abyss, the chain, the seal, and the Dragon, the huge swinish serpent monster who is bound [xx. 1-3].

3. *An æonic thousand years*—the 1000 symbolical, but in a general, not an arithmetical sense; declarative of an entire æon of history, one of the great ages, long enough to develop its own special elements into their distinct natural and moral grandeur. Note: if this æonic thousand shades in our thought naturally and without dogma toward the literal 1000, we need not refuse such help to our conceptions. Ps. xc. 4: II Pet. iii. 8.

III.

Is that Manifestation of Christ predicted in Holy Scripture as His Second Coming, before or after the Millennium?

Neither: The Millennium is simply the whole epoch of Christ's Great Coming; that Coming in its beginning begins the Millennium, and its culmination in the Judgment ends the Millennium. Because and as Christ's continuous coming in all history develops itself into its last stages, the distinct features of the Millennial epoch are developed.

IV.

In what manner or degree is the Millennium a distinct æon or epoch?

1. It is recognizably distinct: it is an epoch.
2. It is distinct not to the degree of disconnection: it is truly historical, not thrown out of the natural order, as though the material were submerged in the spiritual. It is distinct, as each great epoch is, in the sense of being a transition from the period

preceding to the period subsequent. And as transitions, social and moral, are not noticed by the masses of men till they have revealed themselves at large in outward results, The Lord's Millennial Coming may not only, like His Coming in Judgment, find men unexpectant, but it may even have fully begun as a distinct operative force while men are yet asking—Where are the signs of His coming?

3. It is distinct to a degree beyond the nearer previous epochs, as being a grander transition, in the ripeness of the historic times, under the sway of heightened forces from The Son Of God, and but one æonic step from the consummation of all things.

V.

Is the Millennium a new Divine Dispensation as to principles and procedure; or is it a prolongation and the consummation of the Dispensation of The Holy Spirit?

It is none other than the Dispensation of The Blessed Spirit, The Dove, Sanctifier, Comforter, Who convinces of sin, Who renews into penitence and love through faith, Who shows the Living Christ

unto men. As a historic æon differing not in nature, but in degree, from the preceding, it is the splendid consummation of the promised gift of The Holy Ghost—than Whose revelation of Christ *we have absolutely no knowledge from Holy Scripture* of any mightier, until Christ's utmost revelation ending Time itself. [Jn. xiv. 16, 26: xvi. 7-15]. Speaking historically and after the manner of men, we cannot say that the Millennium began with the descent of The Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost; but in a deep spiritual sense this is true [Jn. vi. 62, 63]; as the Apostles signify, when they speak of their days as "the last time," of themselves as living "in the end of the world," of the Coming of The Lord as "nigh." These men, indifferent, as were the elder prophets often in *their* visions, to the march of mere planetary time, and instead deeply mindful of stages of moral and spiritual advance; beholding that their age was that of God's last great gift to the world of His Son and Spirit, of which gift the future could be only a development—a gift whose very nature it was to introduce the general restitution and consummation—these men felt that all the air of their time was full of the coming Christ. It is our fashion now to speak kindly of their mistake through a too eager

hope for the Day of The Lord ; we have much charity for them : charity is good ; perhaps we may need it exercised toward us. It is a pity for us that *we* do not recognize the Christ coming. It may be that the Apostles knew as much of the Second Advent as we know ; at least what they knew, they knew in its spiritual bearings ; while we are apt to know things with a sharp, rattling wisdom, and measure God's æons smartly on the dials of our patent clocks. The Apostolic Church "themselves knew perfectly that the Day of The Lord so cometh as a thief in the night ;" they stood in grand affirmation of the fact. With them, Time was a mere incident. We are strong in negations of the items of their belief ; our testimony to the fact is faint. Could we be disentangled from the temporal in our judgments, we might find ourselves joined with them in testimony to the spiritual, and sparing our pity.

VI.

Is the Millennium introduced, or does it proceed, by catastrophe, social, historical, material ?

It so appears in Holy Scripture, though not to

the extent of any cosmical overthrow. It is the epoch of spiritual forces brought by The Son Of God in the beginning of the day of His Great Coming [Rev. xiv. 6, 7]. These cannot be brought to bear on the world through the mightier workings of The Holy Ghost, without profound and tremendous crisis (Greek, κρίσις, judgment), moral discriminations, stimulations and antagonisms of character in souls and communities; whence vast upheavals, disintegrations and re-formations of society and institutions must result. These are eminently to be looked for as the Millennium opens. Christ comes to send fire on the earth: what will He if it be already kindled? [Lk. xii. 49]. But the Millennial crises shall be the blessed hastenings of man in a new faith and power, to meet the King. [Is. ii. 10-21: xxv. 7, 8: xxvi. 21: Lk. xxi. 25-28].

VII.

Is the Millennium ended by catastrophe, and by what?

Most plainly, by the catastrophe of catastrophes, social, moral, spiritual, historical, cosmical, universal,

shaking and dissolving the earth and heavens, the consummation of all things in the awful glory of the utmost Coming of The Son Of Man. Not the earth alone, but the spiritual heavens also [Mat. xxiv. 30, 31: Col. i. 20], so far as they have had association with this world of humanity, shall be searched and cleansed in the universal flame of His Presence, Whose mere Presence shall make, shall be, the very light and atmosphere of the Great Day, under which all things on earth and in the heavens that can be shaken, shall dissolve as with fervent heat. The Millennium is the mighty approach, above and below, of this growing consummation [Mat. xxiv. 27, 37-39: Lk. xvii. 26-30: 1 Pet. iii. 7, 10-12: Rev. xxi. 1].

VIII.

What is the binding of Satan in the Abyss during the Millennium? Rev. xx. 1-3, 7, 8.

Satan: The archaic spirit of evil concerned in the fall of Man; the Abaddon (*Hebrew*, Destruction) [Job xxvi. 6, etc.], the Apollyon (*Greek*, Destroyer) [Rev. ix. 11] who is the Angel of the Abyss; the

Great Dragon [Rev. xii. 9] who with his angels was “cast out from heaven into the earth, that old serpent [Gen. iii. 1, 2, 4, 13–15] called the Devil (*Greek*, Διάβολος, Calumniator) and Satan (*Greek*, Adversary) who deceiveth the whole world;” the Accuser (*Greek*, κατηγορ) [see in Rev. xii. 10; also Job i. 9, 10]; “the Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” [Eph. ii. 2]. Although the *names* given him in Holy Scripture may have in part a mythic origin, or may refer to that in him which was apparitional (as the Serpent in Eden), yet he appears plainly as a being real, active, cunning, mighty, the chief enemy of God and Man; and, as it would seem, a celestial Angel fallen of old. His natural place is the Abyss; there is the region which, as fitted to him, may be said to be his home; yet seeking mischief, he wanders to and fro in the human moral and social world. Satan may here be taken as symbol of the whole Satanic crew of spirits.

The Abyss (*Greek*, ἄβυσσος, bottomless): This term is used as possibly, but not necessarily, disconnected from the idea of guilt and misery, only once [Rom. x. 7]—“Who shall descend into the Abyss? that is to bring Christ up again from the dead.” In general its meaning seems vague and indeterminate—equivalent

not to the Hell of the Christian dogma, not to the Sheol or Hades or realm of the dead of both the Old and the New Testaments; but designating in general that portion of the unseen world in which demons were supposed to have their proper habitation, thought of, perhaps, as a godless emptiness—an unfathomable “outer darkness,” but to which they were not as yet finally banished, and of which the ever-kindling and increasing fires had not as yet flamed fully into the everlasting burnings. The term, drawn from the ancient geocentric cosmogony, and implying a shadowy immensity of sin and misery, is evidently used throughout Holy Scripture in a meaning capable of being shaded upward toward Hades, the abode of the dead (viewed in this connection as the abode of only the wicked dead), but always naturally tending to shade downward into the final perdition.

An angel descending out of the Heavens, having the Key of the Abyss [Rev. xx. 1]: Not to be confounded with *the star* [Rev. ix. 1, 2] under the Vth Trumpet, “fallen from the Heaven upon the Earth, to whom was *given* the Key of the pit (or mouth?) of the Abyss” (*i. e.*, he was permitted to open the Abyss), so that smoke ascended thence, out of which smoke came locusts upon the Earth. *Angel* here is doubt-

less a symbolical term, personifying to the seer the irresistible personal energy now put forth by Christ Himself Whose special prerogative it is that He possesses the keys of Death and of Hades [Rev. i. 18], and of the Abyss [Lk. viii. 31]. The angel's descent out of the Heavens, taken with the picture in Rev. xix. 11-21, plainly marks the action in this whole Millennial scene as originating in the Heavenly sphere, and as propagated thence to the earthly-human sphere to which the Great Dragon had previously been cast; and as reaching even to the pit (mouth?) of the bottomless infernal realms. The "great chain" in the Angel's hand [Rev. xx. 1] symbolizes the natural and spiritual forces and processes of Divine restraint; and together with his violently seizing the Dragon and binding him therewith, and the shutting him into the Abyss and sealing it over him for a thousand years [xx. 2, 3], implies an intensified and utterly inviolable confinement remote from the whole sphere in which humanity abides, and this for the space of one entire æon in human history. It involves the removal from man of that whole demoniac temptation to sin with which from the beginning the infernal spheres have invaded and infested the region of man's life in the Flesh.

IX.

What are the chief moral and social characteristics of the Millennium?

“That he [Satan] should deceive [seduce, mislead] the nations no more” [Rev. xx. 3]: this points, first, to a great cessation of *public* evils and crimes, to a cleansing of those reservoirs of moral power which are found in laws, institutions, society itself. The restraint of all influent evil from the Abyss, leaves free course for the Gospel and for the mighty working of The Holy Spirit, which will first gloriously illumine and empower the Church, and radiate thence with resistless light and force over all the world. Well may nations then be born in a day, and Christ reign from the River to the ends of the Earth. It is not revealed that the human nature will then cease to be a sinful nature, or that any man will then find salvation independently of redemption by The Son and regeneration through The Spirit Of God. A pure spiritual faith and love will not characterize every heart. But the Church, largely freed from worldly entanglements and no longer poisoned and enfeebled by infernal pride, will cast aside its old

hierarchism and ecclesiasticism, and therefore its sectarianism—one of the chief works of the Devil, and will gather joyfully into its one-ness in The Lord Jesus: whereby it shall rise to control the world's grandest forces; inheriting the Earth not for the pomp and splendor of an externally organized Kingdom (we must remember that nothing in Christ favors any externalism, any display in the outward machinery of government), but inheriting the earth through a surpassing meekness, which shall carry in itself the very presence of The Lord Jesus, and shall therefore be recognized as that Divine childlikeness which alone can bear rule as in His Name and administer His Kingdom [Mat. xviii. 1-4]. In that day shall be fulfilled the prophecy, beautifully enfolded by our Lord in a beatitude [Mat. v. 5]—"The *meek* shall inherit the Earth." The Millennium is waiting patiently for Christ's Church to learn meekness. Soon as the Church, having learned, is ready to reign with Christ, it will reign over the world; and no power can either give it kingship before this meekness and unity, nor prevail against it when, having gained these, it is seated with Christ on His throne.

X.

What are the physical characteristics of the Millennium?

Death will not have ceased, nor physical evil have become unknown. The Millennium finds and conducts the world, in the same natural, material and historical sphere as the present.

Yet, parallel with the ripening of the moral and spiritual nature of Man, and sympathetic with it, as the material must always of necessity follow and serve the development of the moral, there will be a ripened state of the whole system of outward Nature relative to Man; whereby physical evil must be much reduced from its fierceness and its perversity.

The whole epoch being transitional and verging toward the spiritual and the consummate, appears in Holy Scripture as characterized by Heavens more opened correspondent to the sealed Abyss; thence as richer in spiritual forces, as in closer converse with the holy realms of Angels and of the departed Saints, and especially as marked by a consciousness in human hearts of a more profoundly and mightily real Presence of The Son Of God. While not clearly revealed, it yet seems indicated in the Word, that

the primitive and natural visitation of celestial beings to our world, so often brought to view in the earlier history of the Old Testament, so long lost out of our experience and almost out of our possible belief by reason of that unnaturalness which is in sin, may be restored, not to the Church promiscuously, but to select Saints. We may expect its restoration so far as the Church on Earth shall have been lifted through its sufficient receiving of the inflow of The Holy Spirit to bring it into intimate and conscious communion with the Church in the Heavens.

XI.

Is Christ's Millennial Coming and Reign, real and personal—an actual efficiency on His part; or does it consist merely in an increase of faith, love and zeal on the part of His Church?

It is a real and personal manifestation of the real and Personal Christ as in a newly-developed nearness to His people and rulership over the world. No coming or kingdom can be conceived of more real or more directly personal than this shall be. Upon this

point light may be thrown from consideration of some subsequent questions. [See also Part I, v.] The increase of faith, love, power and zeal in Christ's Church is only the result of the increased degree in which He manifests His glorious Personality *whose revelation to men is always by The Holy Ghost, never profoundly or characteristically by the bodily senses* [Jn. vi. 62, 63.]

XII.

In Christ's Millennial Coming and Reign, is He in a body of flesh and blood?

Is He in any such body (not flesh and blood, but "glorified") as is visible to the bodily eyes of men?

Not pushing our statement to its full allowable scope, we may say at the least, that it is impossible to substantiate the affirmative to either part of the above question. No man is in a position to affirm that the Glorified Body of The Christ will *ever* be seen by the eyes of any mortal body whatever. If it be said that "every eye shall see Him" in the Judgment-Day, it is not to be forgotten that no bodily

eyes or mortal bodies will then be in existence to see Him. The consummate manifestation of The Son Of God in the full glory of The Father is itself the instant resolution of matter into its ultimate spiritual substance—at least its utmost dissolution from all connection with man. When the heavens and the earth melt as with fervent heat, and all the fabric of Nature dissolves away from before His face so that no place is found for it any more at all, the eyes that shall see Him cannot be the eyes of any such body as had lived on, and had been organized with, the vanished earth.

The utmost which we can affirm as to Christ's visibility in the Millennium, whether in His coming or His reign, seems to be this: as in olden days some godly souls have, through faith under the special upliftings of The Holy Ghost, been favored with visions (not dreams or phantasms, but actual spiritual *seeing*) of the personal Christ in His Glory [instance, the Apostle Paul, II Cor. xii. 1-4: the Martyr Stephen, Acts vii. 55, 56], so in the latter days many men of faith may be qualified through the opening of their *spiritual* eye-sight by The Holy Spirit to a degree enabling them to see the King in His beauty. Yet this uplifted state can scarce'y be thought of as con-

tinuous and universal in the Church, but as vouchsafed at selected times, to certain elect souls when their experience rises into the full celestial harmony. But even should the whole Church stand, as is conceivable, in this opened spiritual vision, that fact would involve no material manifestation of Christ, or manifestation to eyes of the Flesh. For though Christ Jesus is now glorified in a human body (He was not in His *glorified* body during the forty days before His Ascension), and whenever He is seen at all by men (and "every eye shall see Him") will be seen in that real body of His Humanity, still His Glorified Body is not an *animal* human body, an organism of flesh and blood; it is not revealed as in any form of matter of which we can now conceive; but it is that primal, real, essential human body which the Apostle Paul calls the "spiritual body." And a "spiritual body" is in its nature invisible to mere fleshly eyes: it can be seen only by the soul's eyes, and never even by these (if the soul be ensphered in matter) except as the soul is spiritually quickened and endued. Nor does this lack of materiality (in the sense of invisibility to bodily eyes) in the least invalidate the great elements of reality and personality in Christ's Presence and Reign. Nothing is more real, nothing de-

velops itself in a realm of more perfected Personality, than the Kingdom of God ; yet “ flesh and blood,” says St. Paul, “ cannot inherit ” that Kingdom, of which also our Lord says—It “ cometh not with observation.”

Objection.—“ *But Christ can ANIMATE a body of flesh and blood if need be ; He can take to Himself an animal body as when on earth before, so making Himself visible to all eyes.*”

Answer.—Undoubtedly He *can* ; but it is not now a question what Christ *can* do ; the only question is what does Holy Scripture give us reason to expect that He *will* do. And there is no revelation that there is to be any second *Incarnation* of The Son Of God. He has had His Resurrection, which issued after forty days, into Glorification : resurrections do not go backward. Nothing in Holy Scripture even intimates anything of the nature of a re-incarnation, a re-investiture in flesh and blood. No analogy in all that we know of Him favors the theory of any such retrocession in the glorious pathway of The Son Of God. Therefore while not presuming to limit the *possibilities* which may attach to Christ’s Millennial Coming, we may return to our first statement, that *it cannot be affirmed* that that coming and presence will be in any form that is visible to fleshly eyes.

Yet, on the other hand we must deal honestly with the clear utterances of the New Testament: we have no right to evaporate away Christ's *Personality* in His Coming, changing it into a mere moral influence upon the world, and a mere *idea* of Him entertained by men. We must rid ourselves of the notion that nothing is *real* which is not *material* as we know matter. We must remember that our Savior was indeed "put to *death* in the flesh," but that He was "quickened [raised to life] in the *spirit*," and that His Body as a spiritual organism presents in that fact of spirituality a far higher and deeper realness than if it were flesh and blood [1 Pet. iii. 18, 22]. On this point some light may come to us with a subsequent Question.

XIII.

Is the Millennium an epoch in the Church in the Heavens as well as to the Church on Earth; and if so, what are the bearings of that fact? Which is the sphere of its original and chief development? [Rev. xix. xx.]

The Millennium has a heavenly as well as an earthly scene: it is correspondent in both spheres; and this correspondence is one of its fundamental

elements. The epoch originates, and has its mightiest development, in the Church in the Heavens.

There is but one Church of Christ on the Earth and in all Heavens. Any mighty crisis in either sphere must necessarily re-act upon the other. Also the higher sphere of the Church must necessarily take the lead in originating the crises of blessing and victory. The departed saints are never for one moment out of the Church, or dissociated from its communion. Such a true spiritual communion must involve the two spheres in mutual action and reaction, by inevitable natural laws of our common humanity. Of this reciprocal action, it is natural that the Church in the fleshly sphere should to a great degree be unaware—following therein almost unconsciously—their eyes holden by the Flesh; while the Church on high may well be conceived of as far more consciously and mightily moved therein, and as taking the initiative under Christ's more direct leadership.

In the Heavens to which the departed saints have been received, they are in much nearer relation to The Lord Jesus than are those remaining on the Earth; and this, whether as concerns any of them who may be thought of as detained in any heavenly sphere

nearest in its nature to this of the Flesh, or as concerns any of them who may have received such gifts of The Holy Spirit that they have had ministered unto them "an *abundant* entrance" into the Heavenly Kingdom, and have already passed on into the higher Heavens and into an unspeakable nearness to Christ. Doubtless the lowest ranks of the saints in glory have a vision of Christ which to us is inconceivable.

Now, any coming of Christ, any refreshing, revivifying presentation that He may make of His Glorious Personality to His saints, will necessarily communicate itself *first* to those saints who are with Him in Glory. To them that have, shall be given. Those already most filled with His Infinite Fulness, and most in unity with Him, will be the most open, and the first open, for still larger gifts. Thence the mighty wave of such new developing glory of The Son Of God, rolling and descending through the vast gradations of the Heavens, will involve rank after rank of the glorified Church: the new disclosure of the Infinite Christ will be recognized as a new coming of The Son Of Man to spiritual sphere after sphere: the highest Heavens shall seem to be descending to flood with hitherto unimagined light all

the lower celestial boundaries: Christ's whole Heavenly Church must needs be stirred into intenser and more joyful life in His more manifested Presence. At last, this quickening must overflow (since the Church on Earth and in all Heavens is one)--must overflow with its spiritual stimulus, and along the lines of Christian sympathy must transmit the same stupendous impulse from the very Personality of Christ, to His Church waiting in the Flesh.

Thus, *the Millennium must begin with Christ, and it must begin in the Heavens*: its *first* and chief developments of all manner of force and result must be *there*: thence it must project itself as the epoch of a great and real advent of Christ into the whole Church below; thence further, since the Church holds Christ in stewardship for a lost World, it must project itself through the Church to the whole outlying humanity, as a savor either of life unto life, or of death unto death: thence even further, it may be (we know not; but *it may be*) this great wave of Christ's all-conquering power is to reach the painful regions of the un-Christlike departed, carrying a strange excitement thither—a premonitory tremor of the final Judgment Day—as they shall behold Satan, Prince of all ungodly Powers, the Angel of the

Abyss, withering from before this new Presentation of Christ's Glory, as though seized by a great Angel from on high and cast like lightning into the Abyss, and shut and sealed therein.

On the importance of a view of the Millennium which shall present it as originating and centering *in the Heavens*, much might be said. Any other view seems narrow, flat, provincial. We think of our little earthly Church as though it were central and commanding in the Universe. We *are* mighty, but only as we are an organic part of a far vaster and more splendidly equipped army. For the immense majority of our force is on high: we are a mere detachment here holding the outmost passes. What august and powerful and innumerable hosts are gathered there, and continually gathering! What shields of the mighty hang in the halls of the upper Zion! Jerusalem which is above is the mother of us all. We keep no census of the saints below or above: but we know well, when we think of all the centuries past which have contributed to the Heavens their unnumbered multitudes—when we think of the myriads of little ones of whom Christ has said, "Suffer them to come unto Me on high," and whom He then has taken up thither as in His arms—that

when The Lord comes to His Church, it will be eminently a coming to His Great Church which joyfully awaits His final manifestation through the Heavens, as we hopefully await it here.

The world has some time since broadened its ideas sufficiently to discard in physical science the old geocentric cosmogony which set this planet at the centre of the Universe. Why should the Church cling to the geocentric theory of Christ's Spiritual Kingdom? It is privilege enough for us that we are an integral part of the blessed Commonwealth, and that with consentaneous action we respond to the same Divinely personal force by which it is swayed, and keeping tune with the echo of its song, march with it to victory. This world is not the "own country" of Christ's Church: we are pilgrims here; we seek another country, even a heavenly.

XIV.

THE FIRST RESURRECTION.

1. Is the Millennium introduced or accompanied by a Resurrection known as "the First Resurrection?"
2. Is the First Resurrection a true resurrection of personal men, or a mere re-establishment on earth of neglected moral principles and spiritual forces?
3. What is the scene of the First Resurrection, and who have part in it?
4. Do all who have part in the First Resurrection rise instantaneously and simultaneously, and are they on the earth through that epoch in material bodies, or in any bodies visible to fleshly eyes?
5. Is there a real and personal reign or governance on the earth exercised with Christ by these risen ones? [Rev. xix. 1, 11-16: xx. 4-6].

These five divisions of the Question are interlacing, and must be answered in common. In general and for preliminary, we may answer sections 1 and 5, affirmatively: we may affirm the first alternative in section 2: we may answer section 4, negatively; while reserving section 3 for an answer balanced with various considerations.

The Millennium opens with a resurrection: called the First Resurrection, a whole æon in advance of

the final Resurrection; and this is properly a resurrection—not on the one hand a mere rising again from long quiescence or neglect, of certain moral principles, forces, or abstract elements of character—not on the other hand a *re-incarnation* of souls in bodies of flesh and blood or in any bodies that are visible to mere material eye-sight. It is a resurrection in the sense that it concerns personal beings, to-wit a certain number (and conceivably, all) of the departed servants of Christ; and in the sense that it involves a manifestation of these persons in their profound and ultimate fellowship with The Lord Jesus, and therefore as endued through Him Who is The Resurrection and The Life, with their true and proper spiritual bodies fashioned in the image of the body of His Glory.

To know what is this resurrection, we must consider what is *resurrection* in general—the Resurrection which Holy Scripture represents as wrought through Christ Jesus upon the whole humanity?

It is not a mere *re-animation*—the speedy return of the departed spirit into the unchanged body, as in the case of Lazarus. That is indeed a resurrection, but wrought in the lowest and most outward sphere

of human life—the bodily sphere; and only as the visible symbol and evidence and occasional overflow of that deeper resurrection life which proceeds from Christ. As such evidence, the historical bodily resurrections are important, and that of Christ is indispensable; but, not as developing the full meaning of the resurrection-life [Jn. xx. 17].

It is not any *re-incarnation*—the re-investiture in flesh and blood of the spirit long gone thence (the new body being supposed to have some organic identity with the old whose substance and form have vanished in decay). That would be a resurrection; but, like the preceding, operative on only the lowest plane. This fact indeed does not prove it inadmissible. But it is not revealed that one such case of resurrection (after utter decay of the body) has ever occurred: and we know that the great future Resurrection is to be not in any such fashion: “flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God:” not the “natural [material] body,” but the “spiritual body” [I Cor. xv. 44, 49, 50] is the body of immortality.

It cannot be affirmed to be a *re-investiture in a body of any conceivable kind of matter* (not flesh and blood, but “etherealized” or “spiritualized” or “exquisitely refined” matter). While we cannot so posi-

tively deny this supposition as the previous one, because it instantly takes us into a realm of utter ignorance, we may boldly say that no man is in a position to affirm it; because to affirm it is to invent a kind of matter which seems to be not matter and which has never been discovered, but only imagined to exist as matter; and because to affirm it is to countervail the general drift of the Apostle Paul's teachings [1 Cor. xv.] which is strongly away from all the material and toward the spiritual. If in some Scriptures the Resurrection seems to be revealed as in a material sphere, we are to remember that Divine truths are always revealed to men as men are able to receive and bear them [Jn. xvi. 12]; and that it is the usage of the Bible to present the purely spiritual facts either in their material relations or through their fitting material emblems. Undoubtedly it is much nearer the truth to believe in a resurrection of the material body, than to disbelieve in the Resurrection; and we must not deny that God has *power* to work such a material resurrection; though we find the great Resurrection as revealed, something far higher.

It is not a *return to life* of persons whose *life* had become extinct. If the *life* of any *person* ever became extinct, or ever will or can become extinct, it is not

revealed to us. What we know as death is not personal life extinguished, but personal life transferred into new relations. Thus Christ refers to the dead Patriarchs, as *not* dead, but living [Lk. xx. 37, 38].

Is it a *mere awakening to consciousness* of those who have been as in slumber of all the faculties? No. It may in part be an awakening to *full* consciousness (especially *moral* consciousness): but we *cannot affirm* as even possible, the complete slumber of *all* the faculties; wherefore we cannot affirm, nor is it revealed, that resurrection by Christ is a mere return to natural consciousness.

What then is the Resurrection? It is a mystery. We must be content to confess it so. It is not necessary for our present purpose to say much more than to indicate the above things which it is *not*, by guarding our thought against which we may clear our vision for glimpses of the Millennial resurrection.

So far as the Resurrection for the future life is revealed to us, it is certainly something wrought by Christ's power alone; and it appears as *that ultimate consummation in fact, and that full manifestation to the consciousness of the man himself and to the cognizance of others, of his inmost moral and personal being,*

with its plenary equipment for activity in the spiritual world—which consummation and manifestation *are wrought only under Christ's complete manifestation of Himself* to the man and throughout the sphere in which the man abides. For He saith—“I am The Resurrection and The Life.” It involves the perfect investiture of the man with whatever organism (“spiritual body”) may be fit to his personality, and may serve him for conveyance, expression, or action, in the mighty sphere of spiritual and immortal being. Thus, the General Resurrection-Day *must be*, as it appears in Holy Scripture, the General Judgment-Day.

Now those who are so perfectly and actively joined to Christ, that they live in a blessed consciousness of His Presence, may be conceived of as close to the Resurrection-state; as therefore earlier in awaking to their consummate life in Him, in the *Morning* of the Resurrection when He begins His Millennial Manifestation to His Church above and below. These therefore have their blessed rising in the Heavenly sphere, in the First Resurrection, a whole æon in advance of the mass of humanity; for even while on the earth they may have so received Son-ship and life that they had almost broken the bonds of death.

When Christ comes to the world in final judgment, these come with Him—"the myriads of His saints" [1 Thess. iv. 14: Jude, 14, 15]. Hence we are to think of the Resurrection-life as beginning *in its essential and vital principle*, in the New Birth of the soul by the power of The Holy Ghost; which also seems fully intimated in Holy Scripture [Jn. xi. 25: Rom. viii. 1-23: Gal. vi. 8: Eph. ii. 6: Col. iii. 1-4: 1 Jn. iii. 2].

"They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead lived not till the thousand years should be finished. This is the First Resurrection" [*From the Greek*, Rev. xx. 4, 5]. This shows "the dead" in two classes: the first class, "the dead" that "lived;" the second class, "the dead" that "lived not" then. Thus it is evident that "dead" is here a term of mere appearance, indicating only a death that is phenomenal as viewed by men's outward eyes, not a real death or cessation of being, not necessarily any cessation of consciousness. Equally is it evident that "lived" does not here mean merely existed, continued to exist, began to exist, returned to existence, or even returned to consciousness: the word is "lived," not rose again, or were raised; but "*lived.*" "The dead" therefore are simply those whom the world, always superficial, com-

monly thought of as not living, because they had ceased to animate a body of flesh and blood: "the dead" that "lived," were those whom the seer saw alive in the Heavenly sphere, first moving in magnificent procession with Christ [xix. 1, 6-9, 11-14], then [xx. 4-6] throned and regnant with Him: thus, those equally "dead," so far as the word of this vision characterizes them, who "lived not till the thousand years should be finished," were those who had no part or place in *this scene* of life and action which now gathers and centres around Him Whose "Name is called The Word Of God." Not till the end of the Millennial age do these "live" in this sense of gathering themselves together as personal lives in a life-scene of which He Who alone is *The Life* is the centre: and then, for a little season, they also "live" in this sense—being swept in before Him on the resistless current of His all-commanding Life, gathered from every nearer and lower sphere of the Abyss, and from every darkness and shadow of death in which they may have hidden, and from whatever remotest infernal bounds to which any of them may have sunk, and standing alive in His Presence Who executeth judgment because He is The Son Of Man.

It is of some moment to notice that St. John here records no *act* of resurrection, *i. e.*, no act of rising from tombs or graves or from the sea, no enduement with bodies spiritual or otherwise, no trumpet of the archangel; by all which points of omission this scene is differenced from the usual Scriptural symbolic scenes of the Resurrection of the Dead. Those eminent saints, martyrs, confessors, whom he is to see enthroned with Christ, he sees first in the Heavens already following Christ: he does not see them raised or rising. This would seem as though these had already been raised into the spiritual body, having (it is not affirmed, but possible) previously "attained unto the resurrection from the Dead" [Lk. xx. 35: Phil. iii. 11]. It is no burden on our Christian thought, no strain upon any utterance of the Word of God, to conceive that every human being sinks or rises in the spiritual spheres exactly as far and exactly as soon and as fast as he is inwardly fitted to do by virtue of his profound individual relationship to The Son Of God. If he be made ready for the resurrection, he will have resurrection, and as soon as he is made ready. If he be as yet unready, but have a seed of faith, the implantation of The Holy Spirit, his development may be hindered by infirmity, or

may be hastened by special grace of God; but until he *is* developed and ripened in the deep moral and spiritual essence of his being into the Resurrection-Life, he will not, he can not carry that life except as a life partial and expectant. Nothing in God's dealings is arbitrary, nothing unnatural: in especial the heavenly estate is to be thought of as the state of all normal natural processes. The Resurrection, the Coming and manifestation of The Son Of Man, the binding of Satan, the General Judgment, all are harvests of that which is profoundly, internally, spiritually *ripe*.

To the question then, Who are these enthroned ones? or to the wider question—Who are the subjects of the First Resurrection?—we may answer thus. It is not directly revealed, but seems a legitimate conjecture, that, in general, the departed who belong to Christ will have part in this Resurrection: at least we may say that all of them from the beginning who through The Holy Spirit shall have been made ready then to meet Him without spot in the company of His Saints, shall be of the number.

Of the sharers in the First Resurrection, we may distinguish (but only by intimations in the Word of God) five classes.

1. Some may have received such measures of grace from The Holy Ghost even while they tabernacled in the Flesh, as to have had Christ perfectly formed within them, and therefore to have had need to wait for the Resurrection Life no longer than till death had freed them from the infirmities of the body: these may have passed through death as through a mere door, instantly entering—with the “entrance ministered abundantly” [II Pet. i. 11], through their instant vision of Christ and perfect union with Him, into the enduement of the Resurrection Life. To this number may we not assign the Apostle Paul? who seems to have been hopeful that he was not to be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life [II Cor. v. 1-8]; who speaks also of his intense desire “by any means” to “attain unto the resurrection from the dead” [Phil. iii. 11], not *of* the dead, for all the dead must come to that without effort to “attain unto” it; but “from” (*ἐκ*, *out of*—in all the best Greek MSS. though not appearing in our version); who also expresses confidence that if he depart it will be “to be with Christ” [Phil. i. 21, 23]. It is to be remembered that “to be with Christ,” and to “see Him,” implies in all Apostolic usage, the Resurrection Life: “when Christ Who is

our life shall appear [be manifested], then shall ye also appear [be manifested] with Him in glory" [Col. iii. 4]: "We know that when He shall appear [be manifested], we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" [1 Jn. iii. 2]. Also, we may remember Christ's word [Lk. xx. 35] when He speaks of those "that shall be counted worthy to obtain that world [Greek, *αἰὼν*] and the resurrection from the dead" (not *of* the dead, but *ἐκ*, "from"). To the same class with the Apostle Paul we may perhaps assign Moses who appeared in a spiritual *body* of glory, therefore already in a Resurrection Life, on the Mount of Transfiguration in converse with The Lord Jesus.

2. Others—for instance, Enoch and Elijah—may have attained the Resurrection Life, even without the mediation or transition of death; so that, by immediate translation out of their mortality, which being from Adam is a body of death, they rose into their spiritual bodies, in which one of them, Elijah, appeared with Christ in transfiguration.

3. Still others—eminent Saints of the Old Dispensation—may, with no long delay in Hades under the power of death, have had *their* resurrection—"every man in his own rank" and at his due time.

4. Still others—possibly much the largest number

of the godly from under *the Old Dispensation*—may have had their resurrection at the period of the Crucifixion, through Him Who declared Himself The Resurrection and The Life, and Who, dying, genuinely dying as a man, went where dead men went (of old it was called Hades or Sheol) and there gathering to Himself the whole remaining company of those who had prevalently in their characters belonged to God, but who through various infirmities seem to have been held in some sort under the power of Death, drew them after Him, a glad newly-awakened company, and breaking through the barriers of the dark constraint ancient as man's sin, "led captivity captive," and brought them to glory and victory on high [Eph. iv. 8-10]: to this number we may perhaps—though there is much room for doubt—assign those (not few) who evidently had a resurrection, some kind of resurrection, in some companionship with that of The Lord Jesus, concerning which we read that "many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His Resurrection, and went into the Holy City, and appeared unto many:" these seem to have been saints but recently departed—perhaps of the number of Christ's followers—since they were *recognized* in Jerusalem [Mat. xxvii. 51-53].

5. Still others—and these dying *since Christ's death*—may have been detained from that full vision of Him which is granted only to a perfect faith, and though happy in a far clearer vision of The Son Of God than they had known while in the Flesh, may have failed to awake *fully* into the new life: these, probably an immense majority of believers from all lands under the preaching of the Gospel through the eighteen centuries (eighteen, and will there be any more?), dwellers in some lower heaven, still somewhat bound and entangled with the old sphere of their mortality—these, far more “conscious” than when on earth—shall be awakened to full consummation and consciousness in the whole region of their higher spiritual nature under the stimulant light of the Millennial Coming of The Son Of Man. Christ, revealed from the highest Heavens of His Glory shall flood with the brightness of His approach all the spiritual spheres. He knows His Sheep; they will know Him, and arise to follow Him: seeing Him at last as He is, they too at last shall have their resurrection. And all this, viewed as one concrete fact, long-progressive and at last accomplished and made known at the epoch of Christ's new Millennial Manifestation, and by the power of that Manifestation—is the First Resurrection.

For aught that we know, the First Resurrection may be both cumulative in its power, and progressive as to the number of persons who share in it, from the instant of its first grand manifestation in the Heavens, through the whole Millennial æon, till the final hour when in the fullness of Christ's revealed Life, Death itself shall be destroyed and Resurrection be general and consummate.

The First Resurrection then, so far from being a re-incarnation, a re-animation of bodies of flesh and blood, is even an antithesis to that; it is the final putting off of the mortal and the putting on of immortality. Therefore, its main and proper sphere cannot be this of the material and the mortal. Its chief scene is not on the earth. Yet its *results* on the earthly scene must be immediate and mighty. It is the last approach of the Heavenly Powers with Christ at their head, before the final consummation. It brings indeed the beginning of that consummation: it is the drawing nigh of Christ with ten thousands of His saints: it is directly mediative and transitional to the Judgment. On the earth, the First Resurrection will manifest its efficiency as the glory of the Latter Day, under the vitalizing revelation of Christ.

GENERAL SURVEY OF CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL COMING.

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GENERAL SURVEY OF CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL COMING.

THE fore-going Questions on the Millennial Coming of The Son Of Man, may now be framed in a General Review, and, as it were, fringed with a General Survey of the historic scene in which the complex action is laid.

The human race now exists, as to a small part of it, in this material sphere, which, for that part, circumscribes all its spiritual developments, while it frames its needful probation. As to the other and immensely larger portion of it, it may be thought of as existing in various lower spheres of a spiritual world, which spheres, as Scripture reveals, are not as yet fully disconnected with this of our mortality. "Spheres:" it is not revealed to us that the spiritual world is arranged in literal spheres; so while we may allow ourselves the help which such a conception may give, we must refrain from affirming it as a fact. We may use the word as equivalent to the unknown regions, organized in gradations correspondent to the

different grades of being whose abodes they are. [I Cor. xv. 41, 42 : II Cor. xii. 2]. A moment's computation will bring us to the conjecture that beside our fifteen-hundred millions here, there cannot be less than fifty-thousand millions of men now living *somewhere* in the spiritual world. The sphere of the completely spiritual which is the ultimate and immortal sphere for man, supervenes not until the consummating judgment of Christ's Great Day. To this consummation all earthly things, character, organisms, forces, all the spheres also that are abodes of human souls, even the very *cosmos*, grow from the beginning. Everything ripens: each character, fact and force is garnered at its proper harvest time.

Yet as all material things exist merely as the transient vehicle for the spiritual, they are by natural law subordinate in growth and ripening to the spiritual. The material furnishes the spiritual with form indeed, but it is not an arbitrary form; the spiritual by a law of its own development configures to itself the external; and matter and all its frame can ripen no faster than the soul. "For the earnest expectation of the creature [creation] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God—For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until

now—waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body” [Rom. viii. 19, 22, 23].

The Coming of The Son Of Man begins when Man begins, *i. e.*, it begins as a germ its ever-developing process. The Judgment by The Son Of Man also begins in its essence, when Man begins. All human history is the unveiling, the coming, and the judging, of Him “Who is and Who was and Who is to come, The Almighty.” Thus, Crises (in the Greek sense, *judgments*) are continuously recurrent. They make, they are, history. They move in cycles vast and countless, tending always to inner and still interior lines of elimination and moral separation. Their cycles repeat themselves; but if narrowly watched, are seen to be continually drawing into their issues, new and higher elements, and touching points of finer, more recondite, therefore more stupendous moral moment. Hence from the beginning, the great historic crises, depending on the ever recurring advents of The Eternal Son Of God, move in lines which may be roughly said to whirl upward, through ever widening ranges, till the last great cycle attendant on the last and grandest coming, the consummate Coming of The Christ in Judgment, shall involve the

whole Humanity, in its deepest character, in its completed history, in its every deed and thought, as also in all its abodes whether in the flesh or in the heavenly and the infernal spheres. When the last Great Day has fully come, it will be because the Christ always steadily coming shall have at last so fully come, that His Presence shall have become as the very light and atmosphere of all the immeasurable regions in which Humanity may then exist. Wherefore, in that last crisis or judgment, the heavens and the earth must flee away from before His face, and no place be found for them.

Meanwhile there are transitions, ages of delay "as *men* count slackness," but ages in which are being prepared the great historic bursts of visible results which mark and divide the changing æons. The faithful are not in darkness that such days overtake *them* as a thief: they are waiting and watching; they have seen the sign of The Son Of Man in the Heavens. The worldly and unwatchful are always overtaken and overwhelmed: so in the days of Noah, in the day of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the destruction of Jerusalem, and in the last Great Day [Mat. xxiv. 27, 37-39, 42, 44, 50: Lk. xvii. 28-30].

Inasmuch as the Lord's comings grow morally mightier and nearer to the centre of man's being and history, as they draw on toward the consummation of the ages, they may naturally introduce an æon of transition between the material and the ultimately spiritual. We may conceive of that as the Millennial era, in which Christ shall have brought His Race to the threshold of the Eternal. Then vaster powers of evil and of good are stirred into activity. There is higher moral pressure, intenser development: all the Heavens bend more closely down to kiss and embosom man, brother of the angels, younger brother indeed of The Son Of God: Hell heaves and crawls from beneath with demoniac energy. A great "falling away" prefiguring the last and greatest Apostasy, some wide and severe tribulation, seems to be predicted for the opening of the Millennium.

But Christ has come forth upon the field not to be defeated. He is the conquering Savior. Behold! a mighty Advent of Him Who is called Faithful and True, and Whose Name is The Word Of God, and from Whose mouth issues the sharp sword piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit [Rev. xix. 11-16: xx. 1-4]. The great Dragon is bound and shut in the Abyss, to seduce the nations no more for

a thousand blessed years. All the infernal spheres are sealed ; no more effluent evil from the Abyss : all the heavenly spheres long shut, begin to be opened ; they rain down righteousness : salvation like the dew distills from them upon the earth through the influent Spirit Of God.

As the Apostle John saw the "holy and blessed" company of "the first resurrection" in the Heavens before he saw it on the Earth, so if we mistake not, he saw Christ's Advent to introduce the Millennium, and he saw the Millennium itself as an æon, begun in the spiritual spheres before it was developed on the Earth [Rev. xix. xx]. Indeed he says nothing definitely of its bodily and visible, but only of its personal, spiritual, moral, social, development in this mortal sphere. He sees thrones, and Christ and His glorious escort exalted on them as Princes : he does not say that these thrones or these persons were on the material earth, or on the earth in any sense. The authority from them was indeed exercised upon the earth, through whose whole aspect their governance effected results of mighty change ; but we know that the Empress of the Indies from her island-throne fast-anchored in the stormy German Ocean, governs 200,000,000 of subjects who never saw her face or the

land of her abode. Indeed as to the enthronement of the risen saints, it is written [Rev. xx. 4] that they shall be throned with their Lord; therefore we are not compelled in our thought to see them Mayors, Governors, Chief Justices, Presidents, Kings, Kaisers, Arch-bishops, Priests, or even Deacons, unless we be compelled in thought to see a bodily visible Christ glorified and enthroned in a visible Kingship above all Kings. Holy Scripture does not so compel our thought: it is not here argued, though it might be, that its mere words do not permit such thought. There may be a question whether such thought can get full permission of itself.

Yet we must not evaporate away the meaning of God's Word. The pre-millennial protest against a prevalent dissolving of revealed future facts into figures, and against the drowning of sublime Scriptural Personalities in an insatiable sea of symbolism, must be listened to as a protest in the interest of faith; and while we may reject its terms which seem to us unscriptural, we must heed its admonition.

Thus, when it is revealed that with The Lord, living and reigning through the Millennial æon, were the blessed and holy of the First Resurrection, we have no

right to change these persons into principles or historic forces. Nor are we to hold them in our thought remote from the earth in the highest Heaven (the "third heaven" of Saint Paul's vision [II Cor. xii. 2]) to which Christ, exalted far above all Heavens (*i. e.*, to the highest conceivable Heavenly state) passed when, having ascended, He sat down at the right hand of God [Heb. vii. 26]. For, we see a procession in the heavenly spheres [Rev. xix. 11-16]: The King of Glory comes with ten-thousands of His saints who have gathered to His supreme attraction. The vast multitudes, it may well be, of those who are His, yet had not up to this time been prepared for the body of their glory, but in exceeding comfort and felicity and in such heightened vision of Christ as made their abode all the heaven of which we can now conceive, had been awaiting His fuller Millennial disclosure, to enter into their full glorification in Him, are now at last made like unto Him, because at last they see Him as He is. His mighty Advent brings a resurrection-crisis through all the lower Heavens, the Heavens which are *spiritually* nearest this earthly scene. He comes, drawing near His earthly Vineyard, His heritage, bringing His saints with Him—in a certain sense bringing with Him the whole Heaven down again into

nearness to His redeemed Church on earth. Great judgments attend His approach : it is the beginning of the thousand years which with The Lord are as one Judgment Day [Ps. xc. 4: II Pet. iii. 8]. The Heavenly and the Earthly Church grow more conscious of their unity with each other. The Church on Earth is replenished with the celestial fellowship. It beholds itself the veritable out-court of the Heavenly Temple. There is communication, not miraculous, not unnatural, but according to the ancient and most natural law by which faith is itself the highest law. Evil withers and flees from before this heavenly reinforcement ; hearts yield ; the nations bow, or if they will not bow are dashed in pieces as in a moment like potter's vessels ; the very Earth travels an orbit of peace.

History is full of minor premonitory comings of The Lord Jesus Christ. The dawn of the Millennium marks His *last grand* premonitory coming. Already The Master seems drawing near His purchased possession. He comes from farthest Heavens, girded for war, His vesture dipped in blood, travelling in the greatness of His strength, mighty to save. Gradually as He advances, welcomed by each successively unfolding sphere, the hosts of the holy ones awaking

to a more full and mighty life, stir themselves, and gather to Him Who draws all men unto Him. "His going forth is prepared as the morning." Behold, He is about at length to enter what have been our near bordering Heavens—the first and lowest abode of those who have fallen asleep in Jesus—hereafter to be *lower* Heavens no more, but flooded with the same Eternal Light and Life that have made the Glory of the Presence of the Throne of God and The Lamb, and overflowing with that Life and Light and Music upon this mortal sphere. Vast moral and spiritual, therefore also social and national upheavals, must herald and attend His steady approach to our sphere of earth and time; both the good and the ill shall be aroused; affairs shall take on a more spiritual aspect, character shall be quickened with profounder impulses, and grow electric with higher spiritual forces. Great tribulations may first arise, out of which Christ's purified people shall emerge in splendid victory.

Are not the armies already gathering? do not our skies already darken with the signals of the battle which must issue soon? Let us watch! For even now, it may be, the royal standard of the Great Captain of our Salvation is being lifted up on high, and all the heavenly armies are gathering and about to

set forward on their victorious march, attendant on the course of Him Who comes, the Mighty Conqueror, to set up the Kingdom that shall have no end.

For He saith—"YEA! I COME QUICKLY."

Let His waiting Church respond—

"AMEN! COME, LORD JESUS!"

THE

COMING OF THE SON OF MAN IN FINAL JUDGMENT.

PART III.

THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN IN FINAL JUDGMENT.

I.

THE CULMINATION OF HISTORY.

ON the far horizon of man's thought there floats always some scene of final Divine Judgment. Man's conscience and natural reason have discerned its dread through vague outline, and, catching its faint echoes, have whispered their syllables in the soul or thundered them forth in law.

Holy Scripture plainly announces such a final scene; and—more convincingly—everywhere involves it, quietly refers to it, adjusts itself with reference to it: so that we find the beams of that last Hour weaving themselves in with the light of the Apostles' day, darting through the skies of the earlier and the later prophecy, piercing the dark of the Patriarchal ages, and gleaming in awful fire from the sword that turned

swiftly every way to guard the gates of man's lost Eden. The downfall of Jerusalem was the Judgment Day in miniature; the fire that fell on the cities of the plain was but as the spray from its vast surge; the Deluge was its watery emblem; the trumpet and thunder of Sinai were its distant reverberations; the darkness that drifted in on Calvary, a mystery enfolding a Mystery, was the rolling of its black clouds.

Since the first sin, Judgment has always been preparing itself, always waiting, always drawing all doings and all persons in upon itself, as the Sun is resistlessly swinging every planet in slowly lessening ellipse till the last and outmost shall crash to the imperative centre. Or, changing the figure, we may say—it is the *Coming* Day. Not a moment since Adam's first undoing, in which any man of us who would stop to listen and would hush his noisy life and shut out the vulgar clatter of this little world, would not hear its never-ceasing, far-resounding, steadily advancing foot-fall.

Enlarging on the suggestion of an admirable Christian thinker, we may outline the ever proceeding and cumulative Judgment, somewhat thus:—1) The Judgment Day, in its essence, began with the beginning

of the world ; and, for each man, begins at his birth, working in hidden laws, yet evidenced and announced by conscience and declaring itself in all his higher moral nature which is a certain Presence within him of Christ The Eternal Word, the "true Light which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world :"

2) The Judgment Day continues in this undeveloped state through the man's life, administered within by God's Spirit and through conscience, and without by God's Truth and Providence ; wherefore it is written that the sinner "is condemned already," and that the righteous "hath (not only *will have*) eternal Life :"—3) The Judgment Day rises into a higher stage of development for each man at death :—4) The Judgment Day declares itself more fully, and in general throughout both the earthly and spiritual spheres of Humanity at Christ's Millennial Coming to open the thousand years, which period shall be as one distinct and growing Day :—5) The Judgment Day rises to its consummation in the great and final Coming of The Son Of Man at the end of the Millennium, which Coming and its sentences and discriminations are but the manifestation of a Judgment already internally ripe :—6) The Judgment Day projects itself as an era of final decision, into the mystery of

that eternity which shall fulfill its sentences of recompense and reward.

Thus the Great Day is gathering itself from all days that precede, and it comes carrying the flashing consummation of them all; like a cloud that first faintly gathers its small mass of the size of a man's hand in the distant heavens, then grows slowly and takes on motion as of a hand stretching forth for power, and with each instant's increase accumulates from the surrounding air an electrical force, till at length by such gradual enlargement of volume it has gathered all the skies within its mighty sweep and has massed the whole electric energy of the atmosphere—when instantly its silent blackness bursts into awful voice and flame, and by a hand not that of man is launched from its depths the irresistible bolt of fire. In all the air of Time the Judgment-lightnings are being accumulated, and "that Day" is massing itself in all the broad heavens that arch the whole Humanity, with the gathering together of all the moral powers and of all the judicial forces that have had their place in each separate day of earth's long history. Schiller sees certainly the near, whether or not the far, horizons when he writes—"The history of the world is the Judgment of the world."

Hence, those minor Judgment Days which we behold scattered along all the path of our Race, days in which nations or men have been brought to the bar of God's awful Providence and there adjudged and visited with doom, are in their sternness yet their incompleteness, signals and proofs of that Day of God whose very air shall be as flame. Making a beginning, these days point to a completion. We hear the Great Day denied: it is said—men are visited in this life for their deeds; therefore there is no Judgment to come: but the proper statement is this rather—men are visited even in this life, for their deeds; low, incomplete, unspiritual, temporary as this life is; thence it is evident that a perfect Judgment awaits them in that spiritual sphere which is to be freed from all fleshly entanglements, and balanced in the perfect holiness of God, and finally adjusted for immortality. The philosophy of history shows a process of Judgment; common observation and experience reveal the same: now a process is a process to some point of ultimatum; and this utmost point, the culmination of all histories, is the General Judgment revealed in Holy Scripture.

II.

THE SUPREME CRISIS VEILED IN SYMBOLISM.

The General Judgment is revealed in Holy Scripture as a fact, but not as to its methods. Descriptions are not given or pictures drawn except in an outline grand and awful, dimly traced through figures and metaphors taken from material things, shadowing rather than showing the tremendous scene. Prophets and Apostles seem to have been dazzled and overwhelmed by their vision of it: they crowd symbol on symbol that they may bring it to our thought; while our Lord calling men to note its moral bearings, frames the Day in the Divine simplicity of His speech.

Indeed, the Personal Manifestation of The Son Of God in fulness of glory and power as final Judge of all mankind, involving the Resurrection of the dead, and the instantaneous change of those then living from their natural into their spiritual bodies, brings nothing less than the dissolution (so far at least as concerns all connection with the human Race) of the

whole system of material nature: thus it lies utterly outside all the possible reach of our present knowledge and quite transcends description. Yet since the great Event must be cast into some form by which it may be grasped by the human mind, it appears in the Bible under the figure of a Day of Assize with its seat of Judgment and its solemn assemblage, adjudication and sentence: though we must remember that in the use of this whole figure we are seeing "through a glass darkly" facts too vast and too remote from all our present knowledge to be either set forth in our words or comprehended in our thought. The Scriptural figures of the Judgment are addressed mainly to the imagination and to the moral sense: thence it may be that a literal acceptance as the ultimate truth, of that which is given us only as a figurative intimation of the unutterable, has generated some thoughts that have solidified into doctrines about the Judgment Day, which beside being without warrant in the Word have been made stumbling-blocks by unbelief.

Multitudes who cannot fully disbelieve the final general Judgment are trying to disbelieve it, and are succeeding so far as to weaken its power upon their consciences, by dwelling on the absurdities and magnifying the difficulties which a critical thought easily

discovers in some of the common declarations concerning it. But he who, because men, good men, have strained into an absurd literalness of doctrine the figures of God's judgment, thinks himself philosophical in losing his faith in it as a certain fact, is indeed far more unphilosophical than if he had taken the most indefensible statements of it which are accepted by the most ignorant minds and had held them with the firmest clasp of his conviction: at least he would not then have sunk out of vision of the grand fact itself in some sea of cold criticism or of a boisterous arrogance that called itself reason. Faith may degenerate into credulity; but a materialistic unbelief begins in a credulity which seems almost a miracle of folly.

Yet the errors on this theme are harmful: we should strive to cast out of our minds all fallacious and degrading notions concerning it. These false notions seem to originate mostly in a materializing of the Event, as though it were to occur somewhere on the earth's surface, or in the atmospheric region, or in the visible heavens, or in some place such as can be marked and bounded by matter with which we are familiar.

Let it be considered then, that in the Judgment

scene no flesh and blood shall be present, no mortal bodies, no form of matter of which we now know anything. The vast populations of the earth will not be gathered on one geographical spot, or upborne on such clouds of vapor as now float in our skies: the whole realm of visible nature shall have been dissolved—the very earth and skies having fled away so that no place was found for them; the elements themselves having melted as with fervent heat, and all the heavens having rolled together like a scroll and vanished like a mist.

The scene of Judgment will undoubtedly be a *place*, and a place more real than any place of which we now know; but because of that higher and interior realness it transcends all our present thought: it will be a place in a spiritual world—in that spiritual world which surrounds and interpenetrates this sphere of visible matter, and which is the real world of which this material is the real emblem—in the spiritual world in which all force originates and from which all life proceeds, and from which by continual inflow along the channels of natural laws this outward sphere in which our bodies transiently live is maintained in that duly systematized force and action which we call Nature, our name for an unsolved secret.

The processes of the Judgment will be not those of a trial at any earthly bar: no formal accusers there, or legal advocates; for the great Accuser shall have no voice in that august Presence of holy Love; and the Great Advocate shall have at last ascended His throne of glorious power and light, to discriminate with final, penetrating, instantaneous decision, His foes and friends: no witnesses summoned to reveal the facts of character which shall reveal themselves in the all-pervading light that shall lay open the secrets of all hearts—facts which indeed shall burst into self-revelation according to spiritual laws which we now faintly conceive: no arguments, debates, excuses, appeals, legal formalities of any sort; in short, no *trial*, since *life* has been the trial; but simply *Judgment*, the ultimate discriminations and decisions of that perfect Justice which is perfect Love.

The Day of Judgment will be not a day of earthly Time and planetary revolution; for Time shall then have begun to be merged and whelmed in the Eternity of whose measureless ocean the years are but as the flying spray; the earth, great pendulum of the solar clock whose swing through space marks off the passing periods, shall then have been clean re-

moved away: therefore when the Word tells us of the "Day" of Judgment, its meaning is as when we speak of the Day of sorrow or of joy, the Day of grace, the Day of probation: it means simply the *period* of Judgment—a period which no man shall measure by the hour-hand of his watch; a period which, for all that we can know, may be absolutely instantaneous, or may seem indefinitely prolonged.

It is sometimes said that the Judgment will be open before the assembled Universe. Surely it will be open infinitely, and there will be an assembling; but he who talks of the assembled Universe—all inhabitants of all the countless worlds from the beginning, with all angels, and all demons—must use his words in that loose figurative and poetic sense in which they may be allowable; since the Word asserts no such thing, and we are not in any knowledge which enables us to assert it. The human Race shall gather to the Coming of its Head and its Judge on Whose glorious state holy angels shall be attendant: these things we know, for Christ asserts them: what man knows more?

The Judge will be The Son Of Man, the Eternal Word Of God in Human Personality, Whose Being stands in the profoundest personal relation to every

human soul. This is a glorious mystery, which has full assertion from Christ's own lips, and which gives to the Judgment scene which centres in Him, that strange mingling of power and gentleness, of magistracy and brotherhood, and that surpassingly awful majesty of meekness, which everywhere pertain to the Presence and Person of The Son Of Man. The Judgment is His. "That Day" is

"THE DAY OF CHRIST."

III.

THE CONSUMMATION OF NATURE.

The Day of Christ is the point of Christ's utmost Coming. It can be no other than the point of final restitution of all things. It is the manifestation of the judgment of God; therefore the crisis of consummation. For Christ is God manifest in judging as He has been God manifest in creating, as He is God manifest in redeeming. He who questions how Christ can bring the very judgment of God, needs to take note of the fact that it is impossible for a man to conceive of any Judgment scene whatever in which there shall be any manifestation before men of God as the Judge, without clothing God in His thought in some shape of Humanity; and the name of God when He reveals Himself as shaped in human thought, is Christ. Wherefore it is the word of our Lord Himself [Jn. v. 22, 27]—"The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all Judgment unto The Son, that all men should honor The Son even as they honor The Father:" "And hath given

Him authority to execute Judgment also, *because He is The Son Of Man.*"

This ultimate Coming of The Lord—as it must bring the culmination of human history, and end the long procession of the ages, and overwhelm Time as with the in-rushing ocean of Eternity—so must it bring the restitution of all things. It is the very "regeneration" [Mat. xix. 28: Acts iii. 21: Col. i. 20] of the material earth and of the heavens as well, so far as these have been the abodes of human souls. Like all great acts of restitution or renewal after long delay, it shall come to all unready souls as catastrophe, with amazing suddenness. Yet, like all catastrophe under God's government, it shall be the absolutely natural Event; and through all its awful grandeur it shall shine as blessing and as beauty to Christ's Flock; for it shall be the coming of the Restorer to rebuild all things on enduring foundations [Lk. xxi. 28]. Its burst upon the world will kindle some midnight into flame, or drown the pale thin sunshine which makes our brightest day, in that infinite deluging light which is the Presence of The Son Of God.

The Son Of Man in His former Advent, was mani-

fest in the Flesh, veiling His glory, restraining His power. Therefore the wheels of outward nature still moved on: matter was not greatly disturbed, or the system of natural laws; for He made Himself to be "under the law" like His brethren whom He came to save. The earth indeed gave some signs of an unusual Divine Presence; Nature seemed standing as though somewhat doubtful, and waiting for His word which then at any instant might have summoned the angelic legions, and loosed the seven thunders, and dissolved the earth and heavens, and opened the abodes of departed spirits, and brought into Judgment the quick and the dead. The waters of Galilee knowing the tread of "Him Whose goings forth had been from of old, from everlasting," set themselves for a highway to His feet; bread multiplied itself to feed the thousands at His hands Who was Himself the Bread of God, the Manna in the wilderness; at His touch the sick were healed and at His word the dead came forth. The heavens could not quite restrain themselves; angels burst into song above His little Bethlehem; from their tabernacles in the Paradise of God came Moses and Elijah in dazzling glory on the mount of His Transfiguration; at His hour of dying the sun was darkened, the earth quaked;

and many of the Saints that had been sleeping in death, arose at His rising and appeared to many in the holy City; the angels of His power came to attend and declare the glory of His Resurrection and Ascension. Thus Nature—the whole frame of things—seems to have felt some slight shock or tremor in that first surprising coming of The Son Of God in a personal Humanity, and to have been continually looking toward Him in expectancy, awaiting His word, His mere beckon, to yield itself back into His creative hand and to flee away into its proper nothingness before His face; while the throngs of evil spirits whom He dislodged from the bodies of men their victims, and whom He ordered back to their restraint in the Abyss, loudly confessed His Glory even while they blasphemed it. But He, The Son Of Man, standing serene and wonderful amid the wide disquiet, soothed, calmed, as it were encouraged Nature and the material world, assuring them that not yet was the time ripe for the departure of the earth and heavens, while He straitly sternly charged the demons that they should not too fully make Him known. This was the self-restraint and the self-veiling of the Divine patience.

But when He shall come the second time, it shall

be the Day of His Glory, in which He shall be not veiled, but revealed from the highest Heaven, and the material things shall vanish and be as though they had never been. What we call Nature, real and indispensable as it is for the purpose for which Christ now administers it, is evidently a transient organism correspondent to the body of man which it enspheres and conveys. It is a beautifully adjusted system of check and balance and flow, through which may pass and act with limitations needful for our mortal existence, that *supernatural life* which, given at first from The Son Of God, and moment by moment continued from Him, is ever working through all the immense mechanism of visible things; so that the most common and familiar facts in all the world around us, are yet the hiding-places of an eternal mystery, and the most ordinary natural processes are full charged with a supernatural and immeasurable power. All the course of Nature is but the course of the Divine manifestation in the sphere of Humanity: in the Day when that manifestation shall stand complete, Humanity will have no farther use for such materials and forces: they shall have reached their ultimate. Christ comes: they vanish away:

LO! THE NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH!

IV.

THE ULTIMATE OF RESURRECTION.

In the same Day when it shall be said—"Lo! the new Heavens and a new Earth!" The Son Of Man shall bring Resurrection to its ultimate point. It is revealed, not that He Who is always "The Resurrection and The Life" *begins* the work of resurrection then, but that in that Day He *completes* it. That is the Day when Death, long dying, dies; and Destruction is itself destroyed. In the brightness of His manifestation of Himself as The Life of Humanity, all Humanity to its last, most backward portion, awakes into full moral and natural self-consciousness; and in the case of each individual, takes on such appropriate organism as evidently belongs to each as its own "spiritual body." Each rises into his own full moral and natural personality as a human being, with all which that involves or needs for its full development.

Resurrection through Christ shall have been proceeding for the thousand years, or through the Millennial æon, before the final Day. For, multitudes of

Christ's followers will doubtless pass from earth during the Millennium which is to open with a glorious Coming of Christ in His Spiritual Personality to His Church in the Heavens, gathering His departed saints in "the First Resurrection," assembling them as rulers with Him in the heavenly spheres, and preparing the ten-thousand times ten-thousand of them to come with Him in glory in the grand consummating Day. Thus already the Church on high is with Christ in Resurrection, already blessed and holy and beyond the reach of death; and to their number death transfers from the Millennial Church below, which also has begun to feel the mighty stir of The Lord's approach, myriads of believers to whom death can be only the instantaneous beginning of their Resurrection Life in the presence of Christ. The Millennial era may be conceived as from first to last one grand progressive cumulative Resurrection Day, rising toward the fulness of Christ's Manifestation when in the Last Revealing Hour, He shall reach with His awakening light the last and weakest and most remote and least conscious of His sheep [Mat. xxv. 37-39], and draw them unto Him, together with every other soul of man from earth or from the infernal spheres that shall not already have heard and

known His voice and sped on wings of love to meet Him. But most blessed are they who wake and rise to meet their Lord in the *Morning* of the Resurrection.

But the Millennial æon ends, merging into the final Judgment. In that Day all tribes and hosts of Earth shall gather to The Son Of Man, willingly or unwillingly, swept in upon the current of a resistless law of life which plays from Him through all the possible bounds of humanity. It is written [Hag. ii. 6, 21 : Heb. xii. 26, 27 : Mat. xxiv. 29, *etc.*,] that the trumpet of that Day shall shake not the earth only, but also the heavens; and the heavens and the earth, the fleshly and spiritual spheres alike shall dissolve at the sound, and yield up all their dwellers to The Lord. Hades—region of the dead under the old Dispensation (we have no *revelation* of its occupancy as an intermediate state of souls since Christ's Resurrection)—shall be broken up: Hell shall be searched as with living flame: no darkness or shadow of death shall there be in all the Universe where one soul may hide. Christ's all-pervading Presence shall fill the universe of human existence; and in His piercing and insufferable light, each soul shall instantly appear unshielded, undisguised, struck through and through to the in-

nermost haunts and lurking-places of character and motive by those infinite beams of truth which are to be as a limitless atmosphere of glory proceeding forth from The Son Of God.

As a scene or as an event, in all features, elements, forces, personalities, the Judgment Day centres in the infinitely dominating Person of The Christ.

V.

THE CONSUMMATE PERSONAL DISCRIMINATION.

Inasmuch as the Infinite Person of The Christ of God dominates the Day of Final Judgment, each human person shall then be discriminated according to his profound moral and voluntary *relation to Christ*. In that Judgment, nothing whatever shall be decided on any mechanical, formal or legal ground: the decision and the sentence shall flow from a vital sphere—the sphere of the real and personal *life*. The *Book of Life* of The Lamb Of God Who was slain from the foundation of the world shall be opened [Rev. xiii. 8 : xx. 12]: is the man's name written therein? is his life at its inmost in union with the Life of God, the Eternal Lamb, the Eternal Sacrificial Love?

Vain therefore is our questioning how all deeds of a long life shall then be remembered and recounted? Nothing whatever shall be remembered then, and everything then shall recount itself. Everything of the past shall be *seen*, because under that stimulant light, the whole history of each soul shall flash into

instant revelation; whereby memory itself shall no longer be memory, as in the dull twilight of this world; but shall be changed to be a *vision* of all the past of action and of character as present because indelibly wrought into the being of the soul which now blazes into manifestation. Each soul shall find itself in the presence of Christ, not for questioning, not for testimony, but in total revelation of its inmost self—all its past having ultimated and come to final fruit in a certain character and a certain relation to the Divine Person, which character and relation shall then appear, emerging from all clouds, hiding no longer in any labyrinth of self-delusions. To the Right-hand—to the Left-hand: Christ's award to each soul shall be the soul's spontaneous award unto itself. The Divine Judgment will be so perfect a registration of fact and of life, that every man will seem to be judging himself.

To the Right-hand—to the Left-hand: this shows the central Personality of The Judge, as it shows all persons as discriminated then according to their relation to The Son Of Man, under the touch of Whose supreme light of truth, all character shall spring to follow its long-concealed affinities—moving to the right, to the left, self-discriminative, self-decisive, self-

consummating. The point of division for all men, to the Right, to the Left, to the golden gates of glory, to the iron gates of doom, shall be for each on the answer to this single question—How does this soul stand in reference to Christ, as it stands in His searching Presence, with all its past made present, with its hidden life unfolded?

This will be the test for the heathen as well as for the nominally Christian; for it is not at all a question as to intellectual knowledge or doctrinal view: it is the far deeper question as to the heart and character. Those from Christian lands, who from their infancy found themselves surrounded by Christ as by the air, who saw Him historically revealed in His Word and in His Church—how did they regulate themselves in reference to Him as a recognized Person? Those from heathen lands who never heard even His Name—how did they regulate themselves in reference to that Eternal Christ Of God Who though unrecognized by them in His historical Person, might yet have been recognized by them, and must unavoidably have been in some sense known to them, in that deep pervasive life in which He lives in all Humanity of which He is the Head? For since Christ is in the world from the beginning; since all man's higher reason and

moral faculty and spiritual vision, is but the mysterious Presence in him of The Eternal Word; since this natural Presence of The Son Of God belongs to every man that God ever made, as God's birth-day gift to him; since, though a man might know not God's written Word or law, or the historical Christ of the Gospels Who came in the Flesh in Judæa, nevertheless he could not avoid knowing this earlier law unwritten, this manifestation of Christ in *his own* being, and must have been able to recognize the same in his brother-man—therefore he also, though in darkest heathenism, must have come at some time into a certain personal relation toward the Christ Of God, and must have either fulfilled or refused such duties as were known to him in that relation.

It is to be considered that no man shall need to have Christ pointed out to him in that Day: every man shall recognize Him as One either familiarly or dimly seen before, or at least as One Who *might* have been seen had not the soul refused to look toward the Light.

“From the East and the West and the North and the South,” from the wide heathen realms, it may well be that many shall come to sit down with Christ in His Kingdom [Mat. xix. 30: Mk. x. 31: Lk. xiii.

29, 30]. Many to whose *conscious* vision The Lord shall then for the first time be revealed in His distinct Person—many whose hearts nevertheless, awakened and led of The Holy Spirit, had sought for Him and groped after Him in pagan darkness; and who not finding Him in any clear manifestation had yet become aware of that half-seen Presence with which He manifests Himself in every man that lives; and then glad in even that dim sight of their majestic Lord, had showed their love for Him by giving bread to their brother-man in hunger, and drink to one athirst, and sympathy to one in sorrow—to their brother and to His—these, heathen though they outwardly were, were in their deep and real life, the lovers of Christ and the followers of Christ: they loved all the Christ that they knew or could find in their own souls or in their brethren. At last in the Day of Christ's full disclosure to all souls, these shall recognize Him as none other than that Son Of God and Son Of Man Whom they had sought, not knowing Whom they sought, and Whom they in their poor fashion had served in the dark: in a half-unconscious response to His supreme discrimination of them, they find themselves gathering to the company at the Right-hand [Mat. xxv. 32, 33]; yet they

scarce know who or where they are, so late in the Resurrection Day has their full spiritual awakening come: this they know—they are in a new, amazing and yet most natural light: but this is the time not for debate within themselves; it is the instant for supreme decision: to the Left? one glance thither shows them that nothing there has any right in them or claim upon them or fitness to them: to the Right? behold, their hearts are drawing them thither, and the angels are welcoming them there, and The Lord Himself smiles on them there, and says—“Come, ye blessed of My Father”: “for I was hungry, and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink.” Then their thoughts answer and say—“Lord! when saw we Thee hungry, or athirst, or sick, or in prison, and ministered unto Thee?” For these souls are judging themselves—so charged with judicial forces is the very atmosphere of that Day of The Lord Jesus, so naturally does that Last Judgment proceed from and exercise itself through the action of the persons that are judged. But the face of The Son Of Man over-rules their self-judging, beaming on them with that dimly remembered sweetness, which they feel that somewhere they have seen before, on some upturned face of one in trouble

whom they have comforted, or of worn wayfarer whom they have helped on earth's dusty paths: through the gate of that memory The Lord leads them into full spiritual consciousness and self-possession; and with their whole souls bursting into glad surprise, and all the secret springs of character within them flaming into a Christ-like revelation before unknown even to themselves, they hear Him say—"Verily, I say unto you: Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." And these also enter into the Life Eternal, because The Lord Who searches narrowly that He may lose no one man whom He can save, is not ashamed to own any one such poor soul long kept in blindness by the Devil, belated in the Resurrection by reason of ignorance and infirmity, yet from of old longing after God, feeling after Him, obeying and trusting such Christ as he knew, and now at last bursting into the sudden blossom of love and trust on this long-hindered harvest-day. And the angels shall rejoice with singing.

In the same all-revealing Day of Christ, one whose birth and training and life were amid the great Divine gifts which cluster in Christian lands around the Gospel of the crucified and risen Son Of God—finding

himself borne in swift and sudden presentation before the Judgment Presence, shall awake as in Resurrection under the light of Christ, to the fact that he has not believed on, loved or served The Son Of God Whom he has seen in historic Personality in the written Word. Was he a confessed disciple of The Lord Jesus? or was he an open neglecter of Christ's whole offer and claim? Whatever he may outwardly have been, he is in this Light to show whether his inmost character is in accordance or at variance with that of Christ. He is here to be made conscious of himself—of his real self, to be made aware where he belongs, and to be put in full possession of himself in his accomplished probation. Behold! he judges himself: if he begin with the old self-deceptions, these refuges fail him at the revealing word of Christ. If forgetting that this is Resurrection Day, he fall to rehearsing those spiritual dreams with which he soothed himself when in the Flesh, lo! they flit away like dreams at the blaze of day. What though his character was varnished with a charity whose substance was selfishness, or perhaps with a devoutness whose essence was hypocrisy? These and all disguises shrivel in the consuming glare of truth. Can he with his heart fully disclosed in all its deep selfishness, its unchastened

pride, its carelessness of God, its unlikeness to Christ, claim that he belongs in the company at the Right-hand? A horrible fascination—that sorcery of evil to which he has habitually yielded his will—draws him resistlessly toward the company of the Christless. Make way for him, ye heathen! who having sinned without the written law perish also without law, and whose iniquity and therefore whose doom are far lighter than his: Make way for this soul for whom Christ died, ye evil Spirits! to whom no Savior came: *he* can teach you a sin you never knew: this man rejected The Son Of God, and even now and here rejects Him. To the Left-hand! and thence through awful gates sealed evermore against any return which is revealed or which we are able to foresee—dread portals in essaying whose passage, hope itself whose nature it is to try all flights, and which spreads its wing to follow even this strange career of an immortal soul, falls stifled and dead, and so far as we can trace, seems to have its resurrection into despair.

That final Day is incomprehensible; but its work and its results shall be fully recognizable. When it has passed, it will be seen to have been the Day in which every man has executed upon himself the Judgment

of Christ, by perfecting and fulfilling his own deepest moral choice, and by going exactly where he belongs in the vast spiritual spheres. The men that here have not received within them The Son Of Man Who is the Christ Of God, and have refused to follow Him, are the men that shall there refuse to follow Him and shall not be with Him: the "outer darkness" is more a Heaven to them, than it would be Heaven to them to be with Christ as to their inmost and constant life. The men that here have been drawn after The Son Of God in love and faith, shall be manifested there as His Sheep: they shall know His voice as of old: they shall hear Him calling them in love, and shall follow Him, that where He is, there they may be also.

It is Heaven.

The Judgment Day passing and closing, merges into the Everlasting. Jesus The Christ, The Son Of Man, The Son Of The Living God, shall say—"It is done: I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End." The Coming of Him "Who was, and is, and is to come," shall have consummated itself so far as concerns the history of man in this world—consummated itself, and man with it, in "the new Heavens and the new Earth."

“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear!”

“Behold! a great multitude which no man could number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the Throne and before The Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and they cry with a great voice, saying—

“THE SALVATION TO OUR GOD WHO SITTETH UPON THE THRONE, AND UNTO THE LAMB!”

“And all the Angels were standing round the Throne and the Elders and the four Living Ones, and they fell before the Throne on their faces and worshipped God, saying—

“AMEN!”

“THE BLESSING AND THE GLORY AND THE WISDOM AND THE THANKSGIVING AND THE HONOR AND THE POWER AND THE MIGHT, UNTO OUR GOD TO THE AGES OF THE AGES!

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