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MARANATHA

REV. E. P. MARVIN



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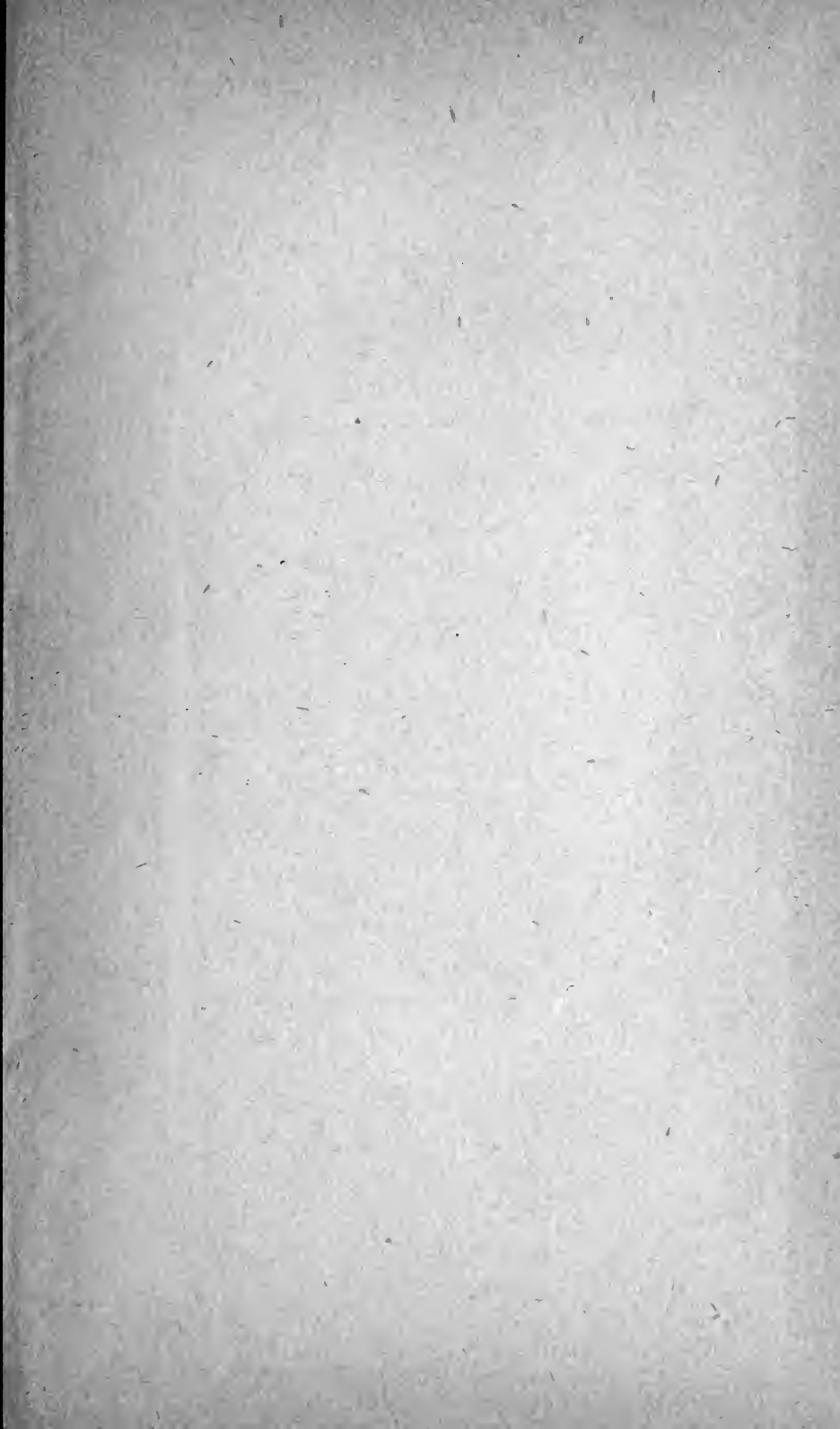
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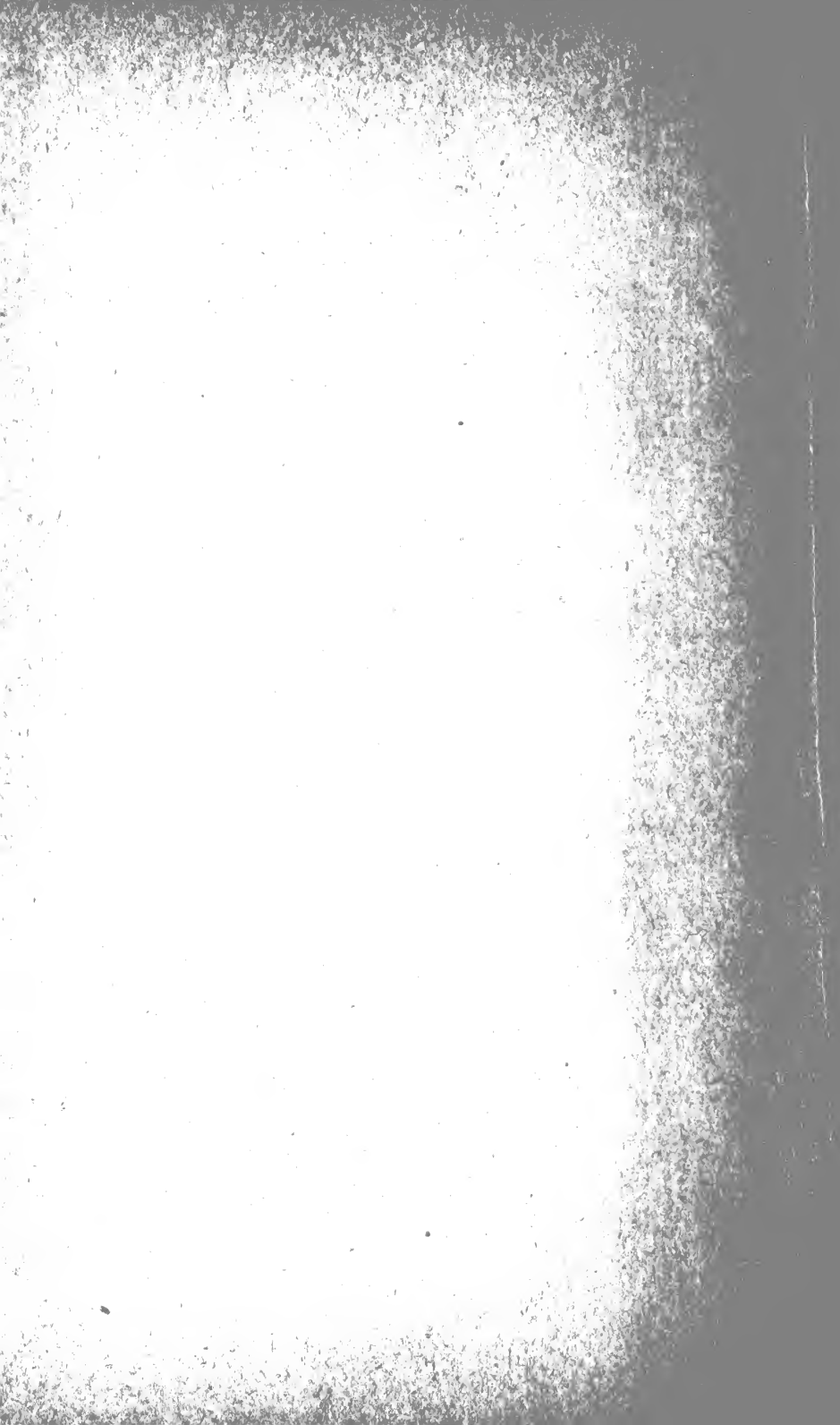
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MARANATHA.

BY

REV. E. P. MARVIN,

Author of "History of Redemption," "Ecclesiastical
Amusements," Etc.

"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ let him be
Anathema, Maranatha."—1 Cor. 16:22.

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MARANATHA.

CHAPTER I.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT.

We make much of the Blessed Hope of the Lord's Coming because of its transcendent importance. As His First Coming was the great and blessed hope of the old Dispensation, His second coming is the great and blessed hope of the New.

What a marvelous contrast! He came first as a gentle lamb. He will come again as a royal Lion; first as a suffering Saviour, next as a reigning Saviour. He came first to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, next without a sin offering unto triumphant salvation. He came first as a "Man of Sor-

rows" overpowered and brought to a robber's cross; next as

"A mighty Conqueror,
Who spoiled the powers below,
And ransomed many captives
From everlasting woe."

He came first as an accused convict at Pilate's bar, next as an awful Judge; first as a mild light to lighten the Gentiles, next in flaming vengeance fire; first as the lowly Son of man, next as the imperial Son of God. Man gave Him a cruel crown of thorns; God will give Him a royal crown of Glory. Man gave Him a gory Cross; God will give Him a divine Throne. This exaltation will be a fitting reward for His lowly and sacrificial obedience.

The chief end of God in all the dispensations of redemption is the exaltation of His Son with His fellow-heirs, His Bride, in visible majesty and glory in the New Creation.

I am profoundly convinced that the Lord's Coming, with its close prophetic correla-

tives, is becoming more and more the doctrine of a standing or a falling Church. The Church under Constantine, assuming the Kingdom form, and grasping for the wealth and empire of the world, in the absence of its rightful Potentate, brought in the greatest apostasy of the ages.

All Scripture is given by inspiration and is profitable, but some truths derive special and extraordinary importance because of "the times and seasons." Upon these seasonable and special truths the Holy Spirit lays special emphasis from age to age.

When dispensations are about to close God sends men like Noah and John the Baptist to herald the change with timely appeals.

Now, as the present dispensation is closing, and a great epoch is at hand, Maranatha—The Lord Cometh! is the timely Watch-cry for the Church and the world. Never before has so much clear light been thrown upon eschatology, correcting former mistakes and testing the souls of men.

Leaders who shut their eyes to this light will suffer loss in their spiritual life and service, and they have reason to fear the Coming of the Lord. Men must have light and walk in it, or lightning and fall before it.

The Church turning away from the blessed and purifying hope of the Lord's Coming, is becoming the nexus of a confederation of social and dramatic clubs, a house of merchandise and a bureau of amusements, in competition with the world. The oyster, the strawberry and ice cream, are employed as indispensable to the life of the Church. Gay and giddy butterfly saints seem to join it for fun in this life and insurance for the life to come. They seem to expect the Church to be a merry-go-round of juvenile dramatics, a purveyor of vaudeville, and they would like to have Christianity set to music and dancing.

This culinary clatter and dramatic razzle-dazzle, called "Church Work," is worse than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

The leaders are chiefly to blame for this untimely frivolity, and serious times are rapidly coming. Churches should be fasting, confessing and praying.

Thus comes in the apostasy of the "Institutional Church," in which the body is married and keeps house with the world in the Broad way. Formalism increases, celebrations and holidays multiply, wealth and social functions are worshipped, spiritual life declines, conversions diminish, debts for proud temples increase, but boasting prevails galore. How different from the word. Rom. 12:1,2. Whenever the Church ceases to be the expectant Bride of Christ she becomes the harlot of the world.

"And they of the Church and they of the world,
Walked closely hand and heart,
And none but the Master who knoweth all,
Could tell the two apart.
Thus her witnessing power, alas, was lost,
And the perilous times came in;
The times of the end, so often foretold,
Of form, and pleasure and sin."

All intelligent and spiritual Christians behold this scene with unspeakable sorrow but many are cheered by these signs of the near coming of the Lord.

It is a gigantic absurdity to try to reconcile this unbelief and worldliness with Christianity. We should all know that the popular religion of the day is not the Christianity of Christ. The world well knows it. Its votaries ought to discover, like a monk of the sixteenth century in reading the New Testament, "Either this is not the Bible or we are not Christians." Paul prophesies of this defection in 2 Tim. 3:1-5, and it is increasing with accelerated velocity, especially in the larger and wealthier churches.

Now let me assert with emphasis that one leading cause of this defection and worldliness is the desire and saying of the evil servant, "My Lord delayeth His coming."

As this "Blessed Hope" wanes in the Church, unbelief and worldliness will prevail. Men will try to keep one hand on the

world and the other on Christ. When the Church keeps a sacred bridal heart she is blessed and made a blessing to the world. Matt. 24:48-51.

More and more is the sad saying true where this doctrine is neglected or rejected, that "We look for the Church and find it in the world, and we look for the world and find it in the Church." The faithful preaching of a quickly-coming Lord, will call out the Bride and hasten the coming of the Bridegroom. Matt. 24:14. The prophecies of the coming King and Kingdom furnish our light for the last days.

The spiritualizing and allegorizing of Scripture, and especially the interpreting of it by way of "accommodation," has done much to impair and confuse it as a positive and reliable testimony. It is apt to make the Bible like a fiddle on which you can play any tune you please.

All along, the post-millennial Church has been promising to convert the world and bring in the Millennium, the Golden Age.

It has not done it. It has made too big a contract, and it cannot deliver the goods. Hence many men of the world lose confidence in the Church, and even in the Bible itself, and turn away to wild schemes of sociology and reform.

Besides this, when the world does not come to the Church according to this fond theory of taking the world for Christ, how many Churches imitate Mohammed, who went to the mountain, when the mountain would not come to him. Alas, how many popular churches the world has thus converted.

Prophecy is a head-light and not a stern-light, shining through the window of revelation like a sunbeam through Venetian crystal. Through prophecy it is given us to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. Matt. 13:11. Not to know prophecy is to be always a child, and progress without this head-light is like speed in a blind horse. 1 Chron. 12:32.

The Christian dispensation is an elective

age throughout, and it is a signal fact that from the great professing Church a choice elective class is being drawn out and together by the Spirit to hopes and services specially relating to the Coming of the Lord and the end of the age. While the great nominal Church flaunts its banners and proudly boasts of numbers and the conquests of the world, this inner circle humbly and sweetly sings, while earnestly engaged in soul-winning work,

“Are you ready for the Bridegroom,
When He comes, when He comes?”

This special out-calling is the Spirit's latter-day work, and it will continue till the end. These “Little Flocks” gather to the Name of Jesus, ignoring petty denominational differences in fellowship and work, and they will enter the Kingdom through the chastening earnest of the Great Tribulation. They have more to do with crosses than crowns now, and they are separated from the world both inside and outside of the Church.

The "Blessed Hope" of the Lord's Coming grows in importance as we near the end of the age and see the day approaching. The neglect of prophecy and of watchfulness for the Lord is one great cause of the general defection of the Church of Christendom to-day. The Jews were reprov'd for not discerning the prophetic signs of the times, and this neglect led to apostasy and the rejection of their Messiah. Matt. 16:2,3.

How vain and unscriptural to boast of the great numbers in this worldly drift, as if the voice of the people were the voice of God, and the thronged way were the way to heaven. Beware of smart ecclesiastics who try to bulge the "needle's eye" and broaden God's "narrow way." Beware of those who tell us that "the doubters are the best men we have," and by inference that "the unorthodox" are the worst. Beware of those who proudly teach "the universal Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man." Matt. 7:13,14; John 1:12.

The seasonable antidote for this unbelief, pride, frivolity and worldliness, and the stimulus to faith, holiness and missionary effort, is the now crescent doctrine of the near Coming of the Lord, with its practical connections. The fore-gleams of our pole-star of hope pierce the confusing clouds around us, disclose the divine program, and open up before us a shining way. Anchor your faith to the impregnable, immovable rock of divine truth, hitch your chariot to this pole-star of hope, and you will soon see which way the world is drifting, and what your commanding duty is.

Maranatha! is the watch-cry of the times. It is the supreme appeal for separation, holiness and missionary effort. Christ, the Receiver of this bankrupt world, is coming soon to settle up its affairs. A great epoch is at hand. The Church should wake up, sober up and be ready.

O, Church of Christ, redeemed by precious blood,
1 Pet. 1:18,19. Eph. 5:25-27. Eph. 3:10.

Break this alliance, glorify your God!
1 Cor. 6:20. 2 Cor. 6:14-18. Eph. 3:21.

Forsake the Christless world that lures to ill;

Rom. 12:2. Heb. 13:13. Rev. 18:4.

Thou mayest be blest and prove a blessing still.

Gen. 12:2. Ps. 128:5. Eph. 1:3.

Away with ease and dalliance and play,

Isa. 32:9. 1 Cor. 10:7. Rom. 13:11.

The Great Commission now in haste obey;

Mark 16:15. John 17:18. 2 Tim. 4:1,2.

In holiness and zeal thou canst excel,

1 Pet. 1:15,16. Rev. 3:19. Gal. 4:13.

And save the perishing from sin and hell.

Luke 14:23. Jas. 5:19,20. Jude 22,23.

Gird on thy robes with purity impearled,

Rev. 7:14. Rev. 16:15. Rev. 19:8.

And keep thyself unspotted from the world.

Jas. 1:27. 1 Jno. 3:3. 1 Tim. 5:22.

Humbled in dust and ashes, sin no more;

Isa. 60:1. 1 Cor. 15:34. Jno. 5:14.

Repent while Christ stands knocking at the door.

Rev. 3:20. Jas. 5:9. Rev. 2:16.

O, let thy heart be true to Him alone,

Jas. 4:4. 1 Jno. 2:15,16. Jno. 21:15.

For lo! the Heavenly Bridegroom cometh soon!

Matt. 25:6. Rev. 3:11. Rev. 22:20.

CHAPTER II.

THE LORD'S COMING PREMILLENNIAL.

It is the general belief of the Church that the Lord Jesus Christ will come again, personally and visibly, as He ascended. Those who carefully and candidly study the Word also know that the promises of this advent do not refer to the descent of the Holy Spirit, the destruction of Jerusalem, nor to death.

Christ promised another Comforter, not Himself. In no proper sense did Christ come when Titus overthrew Jerusalem, or at Pentecost. Indeed, many promises in Revelation were written nearly thirty years after these two events occurred. Death stands in stronger contrast with the Lord's Coming than any two prophetic events in scripture. Let us then dismiss these fictitious interpretations and remember that

when Christ promises to come back again, He means just what He says, and says just what He means.

Now some good Christian people and teachers of the Word believe that this advent will occur after the millennium, and others before. The only true way of settling this "Post" and "Pre" question is by a correct exegesis of the Word, especially the New Testament.

Allow me to assert kindly, but positively, to my dear brethren in the Gospel Ministry, that no one has a right from God to preach or teach the Post-millennial doctrine, unless he can establish its fundamental principles with plain texts from the New Testament. I will here outline its three fundamental principles, and ask any student of the Word to prove them from the New Testament.

PROPOSITION I.

No Advent Till After the Millennium.

1. The Lord will not return visibly and personally as He ascended for at least one thousand years. (Proof Texts.)

2. We are not to be watching for this as an event imminent to our knowledge. (Proof Texts.)

3. The world will be converted before He comes. (Proof Texts.) Who will undertake this exegetical Bible reading?

Now for the statement and Scriptural warrant for the Pre-millennial Doctrine.

PROPOSITION II.

No Millennium Till Jesus Comes.

I will present seven series of proof texts from the New Testament, selected from many:

1. The purpose of God through this dispensation is distinctly declared to be witness-bearing and the out-calling of a people for the name and Bride of Christ

The Jews rejected Christ and the Kingdom, and the erection and manifestation of the Kingdom was postponed until God could visit the Gentiles and call out from them a people to take the place which they lost. The Church is an elective body, called out of the world as an election of grace. The Greek word for Church signifies this and also a minority. It is irrelevant to discuss the question of God's power to convert the world in this dispensation. It is not a question of power, but of plainly revealed purpose and experience. Matt. 24:14; Acts 1:8; Acts 15:14-17.

2. The Coming and the Kingdom are plainly revealed as contemporaneous. The Kingdom of which we are heirs and for which we pray, comes with the King. We should be careful not to interpret Scripture in the way of "accommodation" to our notions. The New Testament never speaks of a Kingdom of Grace, a Spiritual Kingdom, nor of a Kingdom in the heart. Christ's words, "The Kingdom of God is

within you," was spoken to the Pharisees, in whom no one believes there was a spiritual kingdom. Besides, scholars know that the reading should be, "The Kingdom of God is among you," that is, The King is here, representing the Kingdom. Luke 19:12,13; Acts 3:20,21; 2 Tim. 4:1,2. The Nobleman goes to a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. Luke 19:12.

3. Antichrist and Satan will be alive and active until the Lord comes. The writers of both the Old and New Testaments predict for the end of this age the coming of a great and malignant foe of God and man. Satan will set him up against Christ, and in power and malice he ranks next to Satan himself.

He is the supreme foe of human kind, concentrating the evils of the last times in himself, as Christ concentrates the good in Himself. This Beast will be destroyed at the Coming of Christ, and his body given to the burning flame, and Satan will be

bound and cast into the bottomless pit. There can be no millennium while these two great enemies are on earth. Gen. 3:15; 2 Thess. 2:8; Rev. 20:1,2.

4. The true Church made universal and spiritualized would still lack the Kingdom form. Constantine corrupted it by attempting to give it this form.

The true Church is not the promised Kingdom erected and manifested. The Greek words for Church and Kingdom are never interchanged in the New Testament. Elders and Deacons are not the officials of a kingdom. We pray "Thy Kingdom come," not thy Church come. Saints are not heirs and not possessors of the Kingdom. In Daniel, second chapter, the God of heaven sets up a kingdom "in the days of these kings, the ten kings of the divided empire, and not the one king, Tiberius, reigning at the time of Pentecost.

The Church is a humble, suffering, swordless body; the Kingdom is a triumphant, reigning and armed body. You may see the

error of confounding these two bodies by interchanging these two words in reading the scriptures. Isa. 32:1; Matt. 6:10; Luke 1:32,33; Rev. 20:4.

5. It is plainly prophesied that the Church will continue in its present imperfect, mixed and humiliating condition, until the Lord comes. The bad fish remain in the net till the end of the age, the fowls in the great tree, and the leaven of evil in the three measures of sound doctrine. In the Sermon on the Mount Christ warns us against the false teachers and formal professors of the last times.

The Spirit speaks expressly of a signal departure from the faith, and Paul tells us that that day will not come until there is a falling away. In his epistle to Timothy he gives a sad forecast of the characteristics of these perilous times in the Church. Luke 18:2-8; Matt. 7:22,23; John 16:33; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-8.

6. Jew and Gentile will continue in unbelief and sin until the Lord comes. A veil

hangs before the heart of the Jew until the fullness, the elect body, of the Gentiles come in. Jerusalem is trodden under foot until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Christ tells us that the tares are to grow in the world until the harvest at the end of the age, and He distinctly declares that the days immediately preceding His coming will repeat the times of Noah and of Lot. Unbelief, worldliness, sensuality, pleasure-loving and violence will abound. Therefore we are not to conform to this age, but be separated from it. Rom. 11:25,26; Matt. 13:30; Luke 21:24; Luke 17:26-30.

7. Finally, we are repeatedly commanded to watch for His coming with expectancy, as for an event always imminent to our knowledge.

Can we fulfill this plain and repeated command, if we know that at least one thousand years of millennial reign will intervene? Are not these samples of Scripture testimony sufficient to prove that there can be no Millennium till Christ comes?

Every great creed since the Reformation teaches the imminence of the Lord's Coming. Young converts who take to the study of the Word generally receive this doctrine and learn to watch for His coming. I have never known one to embrace the Post-millennial theory, except through the traditions of men. The early Church, as a body, held this doctrine. Matt. 24:42-51; Matt. 25:13; Mark 13:35-37; Luke 12:35-40.

Nebuchadnezzar's image of worldly dominion is smitten to powder by the grinding blow of the mighty stone, and the Fifth Kingdom comes in by catastrophe. Daniel saw the nations as wild beasts, having intelligence, but not conscience, and practicing the ethics of the jungle. Most of the history of nations through these times of the Gentiles, is written in the blood of man and the tears of woman. And thus prophecy declares it will be among the nations until the end of Gentile times. No nation on earth fully acknowledges the Crown Rights of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There can be no Christian State nor Millennium until Jesus comes.

The Church should keep a holy Bridal heart and pray unceasingly, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Read the last promise and the last prayer of Revelation. What comes from heaven in a promise, should be wafted back to heaven in a prayer.

"E'en now let my ways, Lord,
 Be bright with Thy praise, Lord,
 For brief are the days,
 Ere Thy coming again.
 I'm waiting for Thee, Lord,
 Thy beauty to see, Lord;
 No triumph for me
 Like Thy coming again."

How then will the Millennial Kingdom be erected and manifested? Five distinct prophetic events are recorded, which must conspire to bring the world to the feet of its rightful Sovereign. Christ refused to take the Kingdom from Satan, the god of this world, but He will come and take it for

Himself and all the glory of it. These five events are as follows:

1. The personal and visible appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ in great power and glory. We know something of the personal influence of a great military leader in the crisis of battle, and we may anticipate this tremendous influence when our Lord shall descend with a shout and the voice of the Archangel and the Trump of God.

In the crisis of a great battle between Scotland and England, the poet cries out:

“Where was Roderick then?
One blast upon his bugle horn
Were worth a thousand men.”

Ps. 2:8,9; Luke 19:15; 1 Thess. 4:13-18.

2. The destruction of the last great Antichrist by the brightness of His coming. The “Mystery of Lawlessness” has long been working, and many antichrists have appeared, but this last Wicked One will work and deceive with satanic power until Christ comes to destroy him. Dan. 7:11; 2 Thess. 2:8-10; Rev. 19:18-21.

3. The binding and outcasting of Satan so that he can deceive the nations no more. "Old Satan is too strong for young Melancthon." This strong-armed man can only be bound and cast out by the one who is stronger than he. Probably few now realize the tremendous influence of Satan upon the hearts and minds of men. Isa. 24:21-23; Rev. 12:10; Rev. 20:1-5.

4. The conversion, testimony and missionary effort of the Jews. God chose Abraham to be a channel of blessing to the world. His covenant was unconditional. His gifts and callings are without repentance. The Jew defaulted at the cross, and for a time he is left in unbelief, but when Christ comes as a King, they will say, "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him and He will save us." Jonah, who produced the greatest revival the world ever saw, is a forerunner of the converted Jew. Study the Book of Jonah and the Eleventh of Romans. Isa. 25:5-10 and 26:1-4.

5. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit in

complete fulfillment of the Pentecostal blessing, amid blended judgments and mercies.

Thus Christ will take the world for Himself, and to Him be all the glory. Ps. 72: 6-8; Hos. 6:2; Joel 2:28-32.

CHAPTER III.

SIGNS OF HIS NEAR COMING.

The exact time of our Lord's return is absolutely unrevealed and unknown, so that we may be always watchful and ready. Matt. 24:36. The chronology, which pertains primarily to the Jews, is uncertain, especially as God does not take pains to mark time when His first chosen people are out of fellowship with Him, and the various signs are intentionally a little indefinite.

The near approach of this grand event, however, may be discerned by certain prophetic signs, increasing in number and clearness. Certain fig-leaf signs mark that summer is nigh, though they do not define the exact date. Luke 21:29-31.

God's dealings with the world in all great judgments of the past, like the flood, foreshadow His dealings concerning "that

great and notable Day of the Lord" yet to come. He has enlightened His own people, and through them warned the world. Believers, as "Children of the light," have heeded His warnings and escaped, while the wicked have neglected them and perished.

So of the great catastrophe and triumph now just before us. We are not in darkness that that day should overtake us as a thief. Study carefully First Thessalonians, fourth and fifth chapters.

I cannot here take time to distinguish between the first epoch, His coming for His people, and the second epoch, His coming with them—both simple stages of the one great event—but will unfold mainly the signs of His coming for His people.

□ 1. Physical signs. The powers of heaven will be shaken, the sun and moon clouded, the earth swept by cyclones, shaken by earthquakes, and distressed by pestilence and famine.

Earth and man are connected in ruin and

redemption, and nature has always been affected by great moral catastrophes. The sun was veiled, the rocks were rent and the dead were raised at the crucifixion of Christ.

We have seen many of these physical signs. The sun has been clouded, causing a dark day; stars have fallen in multitudes; cyclones that have utterly confounded all scientists in their destructive work have prevailed; strange climatic changes have come, and pestilence and famine have devastated large portions of the earth. Luke 21:25; Mark 13:8; Acts 2:19,20.

2. Intellectual signs. The inventions of genius will give rapid transit and increase of knowledge, making better and worse men than ever lived before. Civilization will prove a powerful source of good and ill. Scoffing scientists will assert "the uniformity of nature" and deny the supernatural, especially the promise of His coming.

Evil servants will postpone His coming, in the desire of their hearts, and signal

apostasies will occur, especially among men who have too much education for their brains.

We need not look far to see such signs. Our splendid commercial, intellectual and materialistic civilization bewitches the people with a frenzy of money making, pleasure seeking and monumental egotism. In such a civilization the Church is apt to become spirit-wed to the State and to partake of its pride and vainglory. Man is almost deified and Christ is crucified between two thieves, business and pleasure.

Our education is secularized, if not heretical, in popular theories of evolution that deny creation and all the supernatural. Our most popular literature is fiction, and is of the earth, earthy. Man has done his uttermost, and Christianity never dominates the masses in such a civilization.

These "Times of the Gentiles" seem to have culminated, and we now wait for the golden age of the Kingdom. Dan. 12:4; Matt. 24:48; 2 Pet. 3:3,4.

3. Commercial signs. Marts of trade and business will be filled with the intense frenzy of worldliness as never before. Monumental fortunes will be heaped up far exceeding all the past. Men and women will be overwhelmed with business and politics, fashion and pleasure, and Great Babylon will be in her boom-time of glory.

This influence of the Church will be almost resistless, and reaching out for the wealth and scepter of the world, her spiritual sovereignty and glory depart.

Christianity was more powerful and victorious on the altar of sacrifice than on the throne of the Cæsars. The Church was greater in the Catacombs than in the Cathedrals. She was purer in the humble homes of the Pilgrims than she is now in the marble Church palaces of the millionaires. When the humble "herb" of the mustard in the parable grows to a great "tree" of human glory, "fowls" lodge in the branches.

God chose at first the weak things of the world to confound the mighty. One of the

strongest points in the early Church was that it had so little money; one of the weakest points in the modern Church is that she has so much. This is an age of commercial secularism, such as was never seen before. Luke 17:28-30; Luke 21:34,35; Rev. 18:11-13.

4. Political signs. There will be great national jealousy and distress, heart failure, and fear of things coming on the earth, the bombs, bullets and knives of anarchists, seditions and wars, but a delusive "peace and safety" with reference to any judgment from God.

The egotistical stage of civilization leads to the idiotic. The maddest, merriest time of social success in cities is often when ruin is impending. When the streets of Paris were running with the blood of revolution in 1791, seventeen theaters were thronged day and night with the gay and giddy crowd. Through the fascination of things seen, and luxurious methods of living, Satan blinds the minds of men to the life to come.

We have to-day in Church and State the courtly Herodian, the rationalistic Sadducee, and the formal Pharisee, agreeing in supreme optimism for both Church and State.

More than forty years ago Buckle, a powerful errorist, asserted that civilization would soon make war impossible. Since then we have had war constantly, and some of the most stupendous and destructive wars of all history. The proudest inventions of human genius become the mechanics of depravity.

God demands moral worth, rather than the intellectual and material values of man's boastful civilizations, and He warns us against the many hurtful things of man's invention. Worldly prosperity was the promise to the Jew, but worldly adversity is rather the promise to the Christian. Some one even says, "To die rich is to be damned." Luke 21:25,26; 1 Thess. 5:1-3; Rev. 11:18.

5. Social signs. Lawlessness against authority in the family, Church and State,

and treasonable combinations to throw off all wholesome restraints. The anarchist opposing all law and government is born of the Lawless One. The masses cry, "We are governed too much," and demand "liberty." Christendom is full of "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."

The frenzy of pleasure in worldly amusements, and the functions of hypocritical and hollow-hearted society with its ungodly fashions, is doing more to injure the spiritual life of the Church than all the saloons. The popular religiousness of the day is gay, flippant and reckless.

This social frivolity and pleasure-loving is absolutely incompatible with the religion of the Bible. It is self-indulgence, and not self-denial. It is a marked characteristic of the last times.

In short, the times of Noah and Lot are reproduced. Ps. 2:1-3; Luke 17:26-28; 2 Thess. 2:7,8; 2 Tim. 3:4.

All rules to keep church members from dancing, card-playing, theater-going, and

other worldly amusements, are called by popular preachers "futile interdictions." Indeed, some preachers give no other reason for not indulging in these things themselves but professional policy. Of course they give no testimony against them. The social life of Christendom fulfills the prophetic signs of the last times.

6. Spiritual signs. A sad apostasy of unbelief, delusion, doctrine of devils, lukewarmness and formalism among the professed people of God. False Christs and teachers deceiving many with such delusions as Spiritualism, Christian Science and Theosophy.

Ordained men in pulpits, professors' chairs and press are now doing more to undermine faith in the Bible than all outside infidels. Although generally reticent on the final doom of the wicked, they seem to expand love to the larger hope of universal salvation. Sinners do not fear hell, and saints show but little anxiety for them.

Howard Crosby said: "The great bulk of the Protestant Church is identified with the world. It has a name to live while it is dead. It has turned its doctrine into naturalism or rationalism, and its life into selfishness. The pulpit is made a stage on which to strut and pose before a gaping world. We must look to ourselves and our families, that we go not with the multitude of professing Christians to do evil, and so perish when Christ shall come as a thief."

This prophetic falling away demands a jovial ministry and brief, pretty preaching to make religion attractive and easy and bring in a revenue from the world.

It calls for pleasing pulpiteers,
Modern and brilliant and fast;
Who will show how men may live as they list,
And go to heaven at last.

But woe to these unfaithful, man-pleasing stewards when the Master comes. It is no wonder that His Coming is unpopular among them. Gal. 1:10; Matt. 24:12; Luke 18:8; 2 Thess. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

7. Evangelistic signs. A great revival of evangelistic zeal in spreading the gospel, and fulfilling the Great Commission in all lands, together with the return of the Jews to their own city, and even a partial restoration of Apostolic gifts and power.

Never since Apostolic days has there been such facilities for the spread of the gospel, nor such zeal in the work. The Church realizes that she has a hurry order to fulfill the Great Commission. Spiritual Christians are realizing more and more that this is the greatest work in the world, and that when it is fulfilled the grandest event in all the future will occur, the glorious Coming of the Lord. Looking upon our side we "hasten His Coming" by our speed in this work.

No former generation had our facilities for finishing this work in haste.

It is true that many of these signs have appeared in all ages, but they were never before so numerous and signal. How important that we, like the Sons of Issachar,

should understand these signs of the times, and thus know what we ought to do. If they were clearly seen and appreciated by all of God's professed people, what a marvelous change would soon be seen. Matt. 24:14; Mark 16:15; Rev. 14:6,7.

CHAPTER IV.

OBJECTIONS TO THE DOCTRINE.

Some good Christians find difficulties and objections concerning the Blessed Hope of the Lord's Coming, which should be fairly met and kindly answered. Ridicule and reviling call for little notice. Scoffers will soon enough have occasion for repentance and terror. Their unbelief is inexcusable and their escape impossible. I Thess. 5:1-3. I suppose that an Apostle would doubt the piety of any one who should speak lightly or indifferently of the subject, for it was a universal characteristic of saints that they "loved His Appearing." 2 Tim. 4:8.

"Well we know that all men must die, and death is the Lord's coming to me."

Two mistakes, my Brother. It is repeatedly taught in the New Testament that we shall not all die, but a whole generation of

saints will go without dying, like Enoch and Elijah, in the highest form of redemption. And again, the Coming of the Lord in the New Testament never means death, but an event that presents the strongest contrast with it of any two events in all the eternal future. Death as an inspiring, cheering and comforting motive can never take the place of the Lord's Coming.

“But there has been a great deal of error and fanaticism connected with it.”

Yes, and more or less with every doctrine of the Christian religion. This objection might lead us to abandon all the doctrines of the gospel. “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” Sift out the error and hold fast the truth.

“The Church is in danger of heresies from these unlearned and ignorant lay preachers who are teaching this doctrine.”

So far, all the great heresies that have distracted the Church have come from ordained ministers and theological professors.

These spiritual and candid students of the Word seldom go far astray. Unsanctified learning coming out of our schools and blending with worldliness in the churches is falling as a fearful blight upon the cause of Christ. Humble Bible Schools are taking the place of some of our apostate theological seminaries.

“Well, if I am only a Christian when the Lord comes, I shall be saved and all will be well.”

You will be saved, but it is not all right if you do not love His Appearing and obey the command to watch. You will be ashamed before Him, suffer loss in your reward, and perhaps be saved only as out of fire. Your life is a gift, but your reward is earned. You are as plainly commanded to watch for His coming as to repent, or to believe on Him.

Indeed, if you do not watch, the following texts ought to warn you of failing to share in the first resurrection. Matt. 24:42-51; Luke 21:36; Rev. 16:15.

If you think this is a pretty good world, and growing better every day, God may leave you behind to get better acquainted with it in the great Tribulation, until you are willing to be separated from it.

“The prophecies are mysterious, and I do not get time to study this subject of the Lord’s Coming.”

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and about one-third of it is prophecy. Will you neglect all this part? The main facts concerning the Coming of the Lord are plainly revealed, and they do not require long and intricate study. The first and great fact is the Imminence of His Coming. We do not need to know all the minutia of prophetic events upon which the light is dim.

Unlettered mechanics, with little help but the Bible and the Holy Spirit, working ten hours a day, find time to study and learn the main facts of prophecy, and surely ministers ought to do it. Without some knowledge of prophecy we shall err in

some important doctrines and timely duties. Take time, dear brother, from some less important occupation, perhaps the reading of fiction or the functions of worldly society.

The Jews were reprov'd for not studying and understanding their own prophecies. Indeed, it was on account of this neglect and blindness that they rejected and crucified their Messiah. A special benediction is pronounced upon him that heareth and readeth the great prophetic book of the New Testament. Rev. 1:3.

“Does it not paralyze missions and cut the nerve of Christian endeavor?”

The vague notion of it in the mind of an outsider might, but the vital knowledge and experience of it does not. How can truth paralyze the cause of truth? We “Hasten the coming of the Lord” by our speed in fulfilling the Great Commission, and calling out the Bride, and the ever-living thought that He may come at any moment is a divine inspiration.

But the most practical answer to this objection is found in the lives of men and women who embrace it. These are certainly among the most spiritual, active and zealous missionary workers in the world. They often constitute most of the spiritual life and activity of our churches.

I may cite in evidence such men as Spurgeon, Guinness, Muller and Hudson Taylor, in England, and Gordon, Pierson, Erdman, Dixon and Brooks, of the United States, and nearly all the evangelists in the world, from Moody on down. Most of our foreign missionaries, laboring zealously to fulfill the Great Commission, are pre-millennialists.

“Well, it makes the gospel a failure.”

If the gospel had promised the conversion of the world in this dispensation, preaching would have been the most dismal failure on record. After eighteen hundred years we have about thirty millions of evangelical Church members, out of a population of fifteen hundred millions. More

than fifty pagans are born to every one converted to God. Never has any country, city, town or hamlet been "taken for Christ." The old Bible lands are now missionary ground.

An enemy might claim that Post-millennarians make the gospel a failure by unfulfilled promise. Were all past dispensations failures because they did not transform the nations? Did Christ and the Apostles make a failure because they did not convert the world?

The gospel is not a failure, because it accomplishes just what it purposes and promises, an election of grace, a Gentile Bride called out of the world for the Son of God. It is a matter of purpose and promise through this elective dispensation, and not one of power and pride. Therefore the gospel is a success. See the divine program in Acts 15:14-17. All who labor faithfully in fulfilling the Commission will attain a triumphant success and a glorious reward.

“If you are right in this, why are so many mistaken?”

Why were the priests and rulers of the Jews blinded when spiritual life was dead and judgment hung over the beloved city? Read the solemn and pathetic words of the Saviour. Luke 19:41-44. Why were the Antediluvians and the cities of the plains careless in the face of God's warnings? No doubt the Caanite cities were optimistic, with fine arts and splendid civilization. Perhaps Lot himself, though a preacher of righteousness, sat on the sunlit peak of progress, often dilating upon social advancement, “the larger religious hope,” “the ascent of man,” and the certain rise in real estate in view of “the larger Sodom.” It is natural for most men to be optimistic, and to believe what they desire rather than to study the Word of God for truth.

“But I do not believe in making the Lord's Coming a hobby.” How many times have you ever preached upon it? “Well, I do not know as I ever did, but I have re-

ferred to it." Do not fear, then, you are in no great danger of making a "hobby" of it.

I submit, in conclusion, that the only valid objection to any doctrine is that it is not true. That does not lie against this doctrine.

CHAPTER V.

WHY IT SHOULD BE FAITHFULLY PREACHED.

This doctrine should be faithfully preached, first of all, because it is a part of the gospel. Indeed, it is a very prominent and essential part.

The second coming of Christ is spoken of in the Old Testament ten times as often as His first coming. It is a strange fact today that scarcely any subject is made more of in the New Testament than this, and scarcely any made less of in the popular preaching of the day.

It is a seminary canon that we should deal out truth in the relative proportions found in the Bible, and especially in the New Testament. Now, as this subject is spoken of more than three hundred times in the New Testament, let public preachers

and teachers follow this canon. They will then preach upon it more than ten times as often as on death, more than forty times as often as on ecclesiastical organizations, and more than forty million times as often as on politics, science, literature and social evolution combined.

Christ and the Apostles made this doctrine prominent in their preaching. They connected it with every doctrine of the Christian system, and every duty of the Christian life. They used it for every motive that could influence saint and sinner. The Apostolic Church followed this faith and example.

Christ and the Apostles commanded us to preach it. After writing of this to Titus, Paul says, "These things teach." We sin at a dear rate if, for fear of unpopularity or any other motive, we neglect to obey this command.

It is high treason against God Almighty for an ambassador to change the emphasis from eternity to time, and from the great

themes of Ruin, Redemption, the Coming of the Lord and a rapidly approaching Judgment with its stupendous issues, to any secular themes, and especially the glories of an intellectual and materialistic civilization. The Word never promises social or civic regeneration in this elective age.

This is "present truth" of ever-increasing moment and adaptation, as "we see the day approaching." Many ministers are very zealous for good government, why do we not hear more from them about "bringing back the King?"

Some truths are always equally important, while others have a special, temporary or local importance. The ministry of Enoch, Noah, Jonah, Lot and John the Baptist pertained to the latter class. As God heralded coming Judgment and Deliverance through them, so in these "last days" no small part of our ministry should herald

“The King that comes in mercy;
The King that comes in might;
To terminate the evil,
And diadem the right.”

Preaching the imminence of the Lord's Coming is a vehicle of reviving power for the Laodicean Church, and of salvation for sinners. Paul and Peter used it for this purpose, and Enoch, the first Millenarian on record, warned the antediluvian sinners of a coming Lord. Jude 14,15.

If the professing Church had been blest with a faithful ministry and leadership in this, it would not have been in its present condition of unbelief and worldliness. It is emphatically a separating and a purifying hope. It separates, consecrates and concentrates its devotees. If anything now, by the blessing of the Holy Spirit, can arouse the Bride from her slumbers, or from dallying in the lap of the Christ-rejecting world, it must be the advent cries of the coming Bridegroom, Judge and King. And nothing else can arouse the

sinner like the solemn proclamation of that day of wrath which will come as a snare, like a thief, like a flash of lightning. Luke 21:34,35; 1 Thess. 5:1-3.

This theme comes to us with double-acting power, presenting both a blessed and a dreadful phase. Surely, "Maranatha" should be our holy watchword in these last and perilous times.

This proclamation is a prophetic means of hastening the coming, the crowning and the Kingdom. It helps to bring in the Gentile Bride by stimulating the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Matt. 24:14; 2 Pet. 3:12.

Directly contrary to the theory of some who oppose us, or fear evil from the doctrine, the preaching of it by pastors, evangelists and missionaries is used of God as the chief means of reviving the missionary spirit of the present generation. Its rare and reviving power is filling Christendom with flaming evangelists and consecrated missionaries, who are making all men hear the gospel at home, and sending mission-

aries to pagan lands annually by hundreds. Pre-millennialists are found everywhere in the van of Bible study, orthodoxy and gospel enterprise. I have never known one to lapse from orthodoxy into the destructive criticism of the day. Wonderful progress is made in these days in the study and interpretation of prophecy. The pastors and evangelists who love and preach that "Blessed Hope" are most richly blest in winning souls and edifying the Body of Christ. They preach a full, rich, orthodox gospel. Study prayerfully Matt. 7:22-27; Matt. 24:48-51; Heb. 9:28 and 10:25-37.

Let not man-pleasing or any other sinister motive lead us to neglect to study and preach this doctrine, when so much light is thrown upon it and we are so near the grand event. We may well fear a blight on our ministry for this neglect, and we shall suffer loss when the Lord comes.

Beware of self-inflicted blindness; nothing is so dark to such eyes as the bright light of prophecy.

All who are willing to study the uses made of this doctrine in the New Testament will find such lessons as follows:

We are exhorted by this purifying hope to assurance, brotherly love, heavenly affections and the pilgrim spirit, over and over again. Many texts in this relation teach us to be watchful, sober, patient and on guard against unjust judgments, in view of the coming of the Judge. We are exhorted to be pure and holy in heart, separated from the world, consecrated and abiding closely in Christ, in imminent expectation of His coming.

We are stimulated to confess Christ boldly at any cost, to endure affliction, rejection and all earthly loss with fortitude and cheerfulness, in view of the coming day of triumph and crowning. We are comforted in bereavement by the blessed hope of resurrection, rapture and reunion with those that we have loved so long and lost awhile.

“Our loved ones before, Lord,
Their troubles are o’er, Lord,
We’ll meet them once more
At Thy coming again.”

We are charged to be self-denying, faithful and diligent in service, regardless of the fear or favor of men, and to solemnly warn the wicked of that “Great Day.” If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ let him be Anathema, Maranatha. 1 Cor. 16:22. In short, we are taught to regard this as the supremely important event of the future, to live in expectancy and watchfulness, be witnesses of it and to live in its blessing and power.

Then, brethren, let us preach faithfully this Blessed Hope. Let us cease trying to run the world, and run as many out of it to Christ as possible. Let us cease to boast of converting the world, which we cannot do, and which is not commanded nor promised, and emphasize its evangelism, which is commanded and which is possible in the present generation.

What splendid themes this blessed and glorious hope affords for preaching, especially to the dear saints of God. Suddenly the first trumpet sounds and the sleeping saints rise in glorified bodies. Then at the sound of the last trump the watching saints are thrilled into immortality in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and all are caught up together to meet the Lord in the air.

Then comes coronation day, when all are crowned together. The work of prophets and Apostles, and "the glorious company of the Martyrs," is not yet finished. We still hear their testimony and they rule us from their graves. Abel being dead yet speaketh. Heb. 11:14. Now the spirit is reunited to the once entombed but now spiritual body, perhaps endowed with a thousand senses and a thousand avenues of delight before unknown. Gold dust is not to be compared with the precious blood of God's saints. The Holy Spirit stands sentinel in the marble-planted yard, until that

glorious morning when He shall raise and glorify these dismantled temples of God.

On that fair morn of morns we meet again, never to take the parting hand, the loved ones whom we have entombed with many tears, for the night of the grave. We parted in tears of heart-rending grief; we meet with songs of triumphant joy. Isa. 26:19.

“And with the morn those angel faces smile,
That I have loved so long and lost awhile.”

Beloved friends long parted by continents, by seas, or by cruel death, broken and scattered families, now meet in a charmed circle of everlasting love. And these golden links of affection, once sanctified and now glorified in Christ, are imperishable.

“Our love here tried and purified
Will find in heaven its perfect rest.”

Now the once sleeping and the watching ones sit down together at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, of which the Lord's Supper now is a miniature rehearsal. Rev.

22:16. The Lord's table spans the Cross and the Crown. It revives our memories of a suffering Saviour and our hope of a coming Saviour. We "do this until He comes." What foregleams of this we have in such passages as Rev. 7:16,17 and 21:3,4. Do not try to comfort people with the illusion that death is a bright angel. He is an enemy to be destroyed. I weave no garlands for the King of Terrors; I hate him as I do the devil who has the power of death,

Mary and Martha well said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died." No one ever died on earth in the presence of the Prince of Life, a blessed forecast of the time when He shall come again, and the inhabitants shall never say I am sick, neither can they die any more.

Then in due time, after the prelude of millennial glory, this old earth, the great tomb of man, will be the restored Paradise of "man all immortal." The diamond that blazes from the diadem of a queen, is only glorified charcoal, and thus resplendent

will earth come forth from her fiery trial. As a mantle of effulgent light covers the glorified body, so the radiant glory of God will enshroud the new earth, Redemption's Star, with perpetual light.

This earth, redeemed and glorified in immortal garniture, will be the fairest, brightest world in the universe. It will be the masterpiece of that great Being who "In the beginning laid deep the foundations of the universe, reared its high pillars, and poised its resplendent dome." The old creation has no place good enough for God's redeemed saints. Behold how He loves us!

The wonderful Capital City of this new creation will be the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, adorned as a Bride for her husband. This four-square Bridal City will be built, not of perishable wood or brick, man's imitation stone, but of all manner of precious stones, pellucid gold and shining pearls. Rev. 21:10-27.

This is that city for which the pilgrim Patriarchs looked, comforting themselves with the prospect and the assurance that God is not ashamed to be our God, or He never would have prepared for us such a gorgeous and golden city. Heb. 11:10-16.

Cicero exiled could never look toward the beloved imperial city of Rome except through tear-lensed eyes. So when the eye of faith views this fair prospect we sing:

“For very love beholding
Thy happy name we weep.”

Here the Redeemer and the Redeemed dwell together and share in eternal bliss and glory. The wildest dreams of transcendentalism fall short of this manifest destiny. The half has never yet been told, but we shall then see and enjoy the larger half. We have the alphabet now; we shall have the epic poem then. Our precious faith, blessed hope and goodly fellowship here is only a little heaven for beginners. For all our toils, sufferings and tears here

we shall have an overpayment of rest, joy and glory.

Let us choose these themes to cheer and comfort God's dear saints in the trials and afflictions of their pilgrimage. Let us stimulate them to heavenly-mindedness and courage in the severe conflicts of this strenuous life. Let us study and unfold these exceeding great and precious prophetic promises, strewed like jewels through the whole Word of God.

Let the ear of faith always be open to the little golden bells of promise, dependent from the robe of our Great High Priest, who in the heavens is waiting for us as we are waiting for him. "Behold I come quickly! Behold I come quickly." "For yet a little while, how short, how short, the Coming One will come and will not tarry."

CHAPTER VI.

FINAL APPEAL.

Dear Brethren in the Gospel Ministry, let us be brave and faithful at any cost or peril. Unspeakable responsibility rests upon leadership in these last perilous times. Defection and revival both begin at the head.

Mr. Spurgeon, on his sick bed, said: "If I ever preach again, I will leave out every bit of flourish and preach nothing but present and pressing truth, hurl it at the people with all my might, live at high pressure, and direct all my energies to the salvation of souls."

But little good and no transformation can be effected unless men and women are clean vessels and possess the genuine martyr spirit. It costs dearly now to be true and faithful, and we must count the cost. Min-

isterial pride and all earth-born ambitions in a world that has rejected and crucified our Lord, and never repented of it, must be surrendered. Do not try to make any kind of worldly gain of godliness. Trust God and toil for bread as the Apostles did, rather than sell the truth.

Brave unpopularity and ring out the New Testament watchword, "Maranatha!" Let us wake up and sober up the Church, so full of soft theology, sporting, festivity and dalliance in the lap of the world. I know of no truth now more powerful to purify and empower the Church for soul saving, and to produce a "clearance revival." This condition of frivolity, worldliness, rapidly increasing celebration days, and apostasy, cannot be found in any orthodox premillennial Church in America.

The pulpit, with its "thus saith the Lord," is a throne of blended grace and judgment. It is the highest summit of power, authority, discipline and responsibility under heaven. If you are a preacher, magnify

the royal ordinance of preaching. Do not minimize preaching and magnify ceremonials. Preach a modern gospel, but the everlasting and only gospel, with no additions nor subtractions. Do not deliver cheap editorials and hashed magazine articles. You need not be scholastic or artistic, and you should not be metaphysical. Science is for experts, but the gospel is for sinners. You are an oracle, rather than an artist. A gospel sermon is not an oration. God wants holy men more than brainy men in preaching, and heart more than art in worship.

Away with dilettante preachers and sermonettes with their artistic proportions of shortness and shallowness. God wants apostolic men in the pulpit. We need not be confused as to the mission and method of the ministry and Church by the multitude of miscellaneous societies and clubs that are splintering up society and superceding the Church. Away with them all.

The greatest thing in the world is the soul. The greatest evil is sin. The greatest work is salvation. The only remedy for sin is the gospel, and the only society that God has ever organized to apply this remedy is the Church, but a higher type of piety is needed before God can do any mighty works.

Says Edward Irving: "The missionary after the apostolic school is a man without a purse, without a scrip, without a change of raiment, without a staff, without the care of making friends or keeping friends, without the hope or desire of worldly good or fear of worldly loss, without the care of life or fear of death; of no rank, of no country, of no condition; a man of one thought—the gospel of Christ; a man of one purpose—the glory of God; a fool and content to be reckoned a fool for Christ; a madman and content to be reckoned a madman for Christ."

"Occupy till I come" is our Leader's command. Let the cross be the tombstone

between us and the world, and the counter-sign of our crusade.

“His dying crimson like a robe,
Spreads o'er His body on the tree;
Then I am dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me.”

Let us disencumber ourselves of the impediments of the world; crucify the flesh and resist the devil; beware of the spell of our splendid materialistic and ungodly civilization; ring out the three great R's with trumpet tones—Ruin, Redemption and Regeneration. Let us exchange secular themes for divine, drop our piping fish horns and seize the old Gospel Trumpet, pealing forth God's imperative voice against unrighteousness, and calling for repentance, holiness and faith in the sacrificial work and the crown rights of the coming Son of God.

We are to preach rather than to prove the gospel, and that not with wisdom of words. The anointing of the Holy Spirit gives it self-evidencing power. Let us dare to send away sad rather than glad audi-

ences of sinners. Let our closet air be freighted with intercessions and our nightly pillow be bedewed with pitiful tears for perishing sinners.

“Courage, brother, do not stumble,
Though thy path be dark as night;
There’s a star to guide the humble;
Trust in God and do the right.

“Some will hate thee, some will love thee,
Some will flatter, some will slight;
Cease from man and look above thee,
Trust in God and do the right.”

The Apostles never undertook municipal reform or legal process in any city, by lecturing or by “Law and Order Leagues.” When we take up the cudgel of civil law we may as well law down the commission of the gospel. These two methods in the same person are incompatible. As preachers, not as reformers or policemen, Luther, Chalmers, Wesley, Finney, Spurgeon and Moody wrought divine wonders.

The preacher is a Specialist; he has one thing to do, the best thing, and that is

enough. Gal. 1:10; Phil. 3:20. "Questions of the day" are but questions of a day, forgotten to-morrow, but we deal with the great pending concern of eternity.

Will my brethren who are stung with the gad-fly of an all-round reformer, candidly consider the Great Commission? Let not God's Ambassadors blunder, scatter and waste, and have a great bonfire of wood, hay and stubble at last.

Some one may say, "Was not Isaiah a statesman as well as a Prophet?" Yes, under a Theocracy, when God appointed and anointed the rulers, but Paul was not a statesman and an apostle, after this Theocracy passed away and the Times of the Gentiles came in.

Lyman Beecher, at Litchfield toiled heroically with the politics and laws of Connecticut for some time. At length Joel Hawes met him with the question: "Well, Brother Beecher, how are you getting along at Litchfield?" He replied: "O, first

rate, first rate, since I have quit trying to run the world."

Let us try to make the Church what it ought to be. When it becomes a house of merchandise, a social club or a bureau of amusements, it ceases to be evangelical or evangelistic. Turn out the caterers from the Church kitchen, the showmen from the parlors, and the ungodly leaders who are shouting lies to heaven, from their choirs. Better be "up to duty" than "up to date." Most of our proud "Progressionists" and "Advanced Thinkers" know very little of the sure word of prophecy, and much of things that are not so.

Our doctrine, of which the central truth is the imminence of the Lord's Coming, so prominent in the New Testament and in the Apostolic Church, and always so important, is still more important in this end of the age, as we see the day approaching. If the Church does not watch, Christ will come to her as a thief. No man is fully up to duty unless he "loves His appearing"

and is watching for it, especially when signs of His coming fill the earth and cloud the heavens. The speed of the times is frightful; the axles are hot, and they will soon set the train on fire.

Outside of revelation there are many echoes, but few original voices. Churches, like individuals, chameleon-like, often follow the worldly customs around them. God is now raising up some independent churches, without denominational affiliation, to abate this ecclesiastical conformity. Many feel constrained to do as the rest do, and take ready-made thought, forged in the mind of others, and never prove or digest it. Many in our churches are so engaged in keeping up with the procession that they fail to see where they are going.

The great trunk lines of prophecy are now luminous and they may easily be traced. To the call of the pilgrim, "Watchman, what of the night?" we may reply with speedy emphasis: "The morning cometh and also the night." Isa. 21:11,12. It

is now man's day and way; it will soon be God's day and way, but the night of doom awaits the wicked.

Saints shine brightest in the midst of these fiery trials of the last times. Be not too spiritless but too spiritual to retaliate the charge of "troubling the Church." Who was to blame for the trouble in Israel in Elijah's time? 1 Kings 18:17,18. The world did not know Christ and it will not fully understand us. 1 John 3:1.

The opprobrious epithets of modern "professors," "Fault-finder," "Old Fogey," "Pessimist," "Long-faced Religion," a "Relict left over," etc., are etherial mildness beside those hurled at John the Baptist, Paul and Christ.

Deluded ecclesiastics may make a devil a Christian and a Christian a devil. They said that Paul was mad, and that Christ had a devil. The formalists of England called the Blue Beard Henry the Eighth a saint, and John Wesley in his "Holy Club," a "heavenly-minded little devil."

Keep out of the pink miasma of sloth, stagnation and confusion; be a preacher militant. Keep your standing good before the Master, whatever it be before men; count all else but loss and dross, and let none of these things worry or weary you. When disaster comes, some of these serene and silly optimists will wonder why you did not tell them beforehand, or remember with shame and self-reproach that you did.

Creation is now passing through her *Via Doloroso*, and these latter-day groanings are the prelude to songs of jubilee and festal glory. Although attacked at every weak point with consummate skill and infernal energy, the Captain of our salvation walks before us with a drawn sword and the assurance of victory. Josh. 5:13. And God is raising up more and more able and scholarly defenders of the faith, especially against traitors in the camp. We look out of the surrounding night into the eternal day. The sky, and not the grave, is our luminous goal.

Put on a shining morning face and keep on the watch, as men of the girdle, the staff and the lamp, fired with the sacred passion of the second life. We are marching to victory and to millions of ages of bliss and glory for every moment of toil and suffering.

Let us labor to make the Church a rallying and radiating center for all consecrated workers. Christ for the world is our motto. God has fired the hearts of many saints to fulfill the great Commission in this generation, gather out all that can be saved and "Hasten His Appearing."

"The hearts of men are kindling, on mainland and
on sea,
With visions of the Holy Seers, unfolding far and
free."

Let our hearts beat time and our feet keep step with the inspiration of this "Joint High Commission" and bright prospect. Let us pray and work all the year round, and not give the devil the monopoly of the summer. "The King's business demands

haste," and we have no time for vain formalities or protracted palaver. Luke 10:2-4. We are filling a hurry order, and lost opportunities have no resurrection.

"We are living, we are dwelling,
In a grand and awful time."

Let us add to the "societies" a new order of men, inspired of God to be just as earnest, self-sacrificing and enterprising, in winning souls, as worldlings are in pursuit of gold, fame and pleasure. Blend learning, virtue and holiness.

Dear Brethren in the Gospel Ministry, our day is momentous, our position sublime, our opportunity grand. We are in the toes and toe nails of Daniel's image. While we gladly fellowship all orthodox post-millenarians and work shoulder to shoulder with them, yet with our eyes open to the stellar headlight of prophecy, we must faithfully testify that God is making this Blessed Hope more and more the doctrine of a standing or a falling church.

Idleness is a sin and cowardice a crime amid the final perils and awful grandeur of these last days. The War of the Roses was but children's play compared with this superb service.

Thank God, the densest darkness is just before the dawn, to which all the shadows point. The gloom time of the Old Creation heralds the bloom time of the New,

“Where the faded flowers shall freshen,
Freshen never more to fade.”

Walk closely, work earnestly and watch constantly, remembering that crowns are hanging in the sky for all the faithful. Already has this gospel age continued longer than any preceding dispensation. Keep a sacred Bridal heart and spotless robes through this “little while.” Amid these stirring times and closing scenes, never preach the gospel in cold blood, but shake your heart out at them. Deliver the stored energy of the truth and Spirit from your heart like thunder and lightning.

We need not shout, wear plumes nor flaunt banners yet, but it is supreme honor to live and be faithful amid these closing scenes. War makes heroes and the combat deepens. Crowns are won in battle, and the last battle is on. It is better now to be a faithful Son of God than to be the son of a hundred kings.

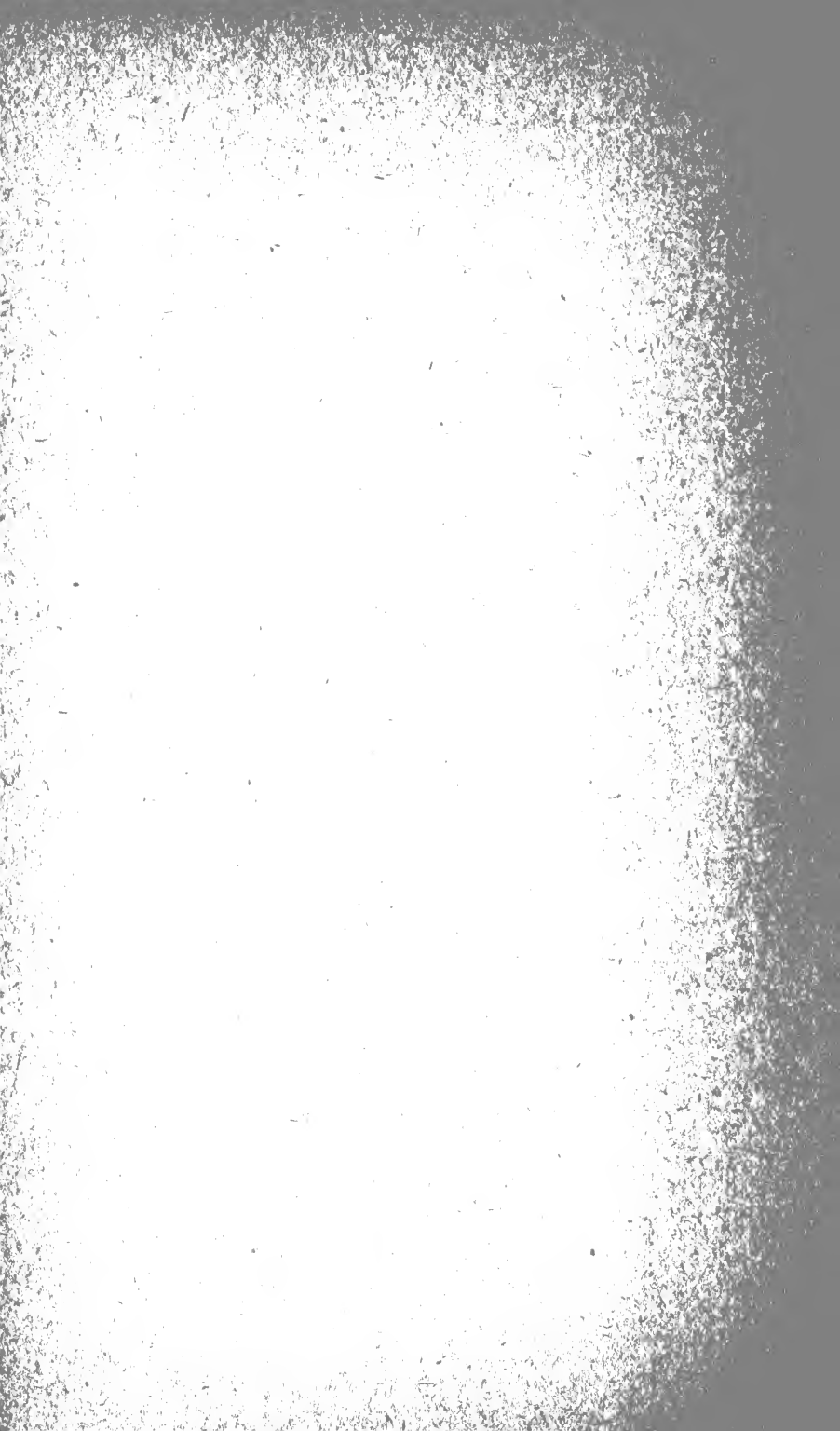
“Be robed and ready when the Bridegroom comes.”

If like some of the old prophets you stand with a heroic minority and receive a solemn burden from God to find fault and renounce, as well as testify to the truth, you must have their invincible courage, utter self-sacrifice and divine strength. If you stand between the devil and the deep sea, your way out is perpendicular. Any coward can praise Christ, but it takes a royal hero to follow Him. The truth will test you like martyrdom, but your highest privilege, and one never granted an angel, is to suffer for Christ. Acts 5:41. Your scaffold sways the future.

Alone, alone, alone, you may feel, like the Prophet Elijah; your testimony rejected and yourself despised, but do not look around to catch the smiles or shun the frowns of the world, nor let dollars stand against duty. If the world is against you, you must be against the world, and if no friendly faces shine upon you, look heavenward and forward. A setting star may rise again, but a falling star never. You need not defend your reputation nor keep your head on your shoulders. Paul kept the faith and lost his head, but God will ere long give it back to him crowned.

Restore to the pulpit the lost motive, and point every eye to that grand impending event on which the age hinges, and which dazzles contemplation. Heaven will not hold back our glorious Redeemer much longer. "Non amat qui non zelat," he does not love who does not burn

When comes the King, in royal might,
To crush the wrong and crown the right;
When all the saints in glory meet,
No more to die, no more to weep;
When thrones are set and crowns are given,
With all the rich rewards of heaven;
O, in that glorious by and by,
What's done for God can never die.



THE BLESSED HOPE.

BY GEO. C. NEEDHAM.

It is Purifying—Pacifying—Comforting—Glorious—Promised Glories—What Should be our Present Attitude?

Whatever meaning we may put on the prophetic event introduced in the Scriptures as our Lord's second coming, we must observe that it is frequently specified as A HOPE. And as hope implies expectation, the conviction of something unfulfilled, that term alone designates the Advent as a future thing.

Hope is the opposite of despair. It has a definite object in view, and as that object is apprehended at hand or remotely, the soul is swayed by delight or discouragement.

ment. The blessed hope and coming in glory of our Lord Jesus Christ should not be relegated to the regions of mystery. How can it be a hope of any value if it be some uncertain, indefinite, far-away and non-essential theory which happened to drop into the Bible? In fifty-three places where hope is referred to in the divine Word, it has special relation to future blessings which are to crown the Christian believer at the appearing of Jesus Christ. A few of these we might examine:

1. IT IS A BLESSED HOPE.

“Looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

A blessed hope means a happy one. The word refers to inward enjoyment apart from external environment. The expectations implied in such a hope make all present circumstances of trial or depression “not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward. For

the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestations of the sons of God.”

2. IT IS A PURIFYING HOPE.

“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”

As linen bleaches under the sun, the light of this hope cleanses the life from world-stains. It loosens the grasp from the things of earth.

The man who has a magnificent mansion in some beautiful locality, and is only tarrying in a city hotel for a few days till he can journey home, will not care to spend his time and money in elaborately decorating his temporary lodging in a strange city. If he purchases bric-a-brac or pictures, the thought in his mind is, “I will take them home.” So the Christian, who reckons himself a “pilgrim and a stranger” here, will have little heart to spend energies on things pertaining merely to the earthly. His city and his home lie beyond. His

great concern will be to "lay up treasures in heaven."

3. IT IS A PACIFYING HOPE.

"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God." "Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

In the power of this hope all questions of provocation can be patiently laid aside for the Lord to settle on His arrival. The child of God who is pervaded with this hope will be willing to waive all rights of self-vindication, knowing that his "labor of

love and patience of hope" will not go unrewarded.

4. IT IS A COMFORTING HOPE.

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope."

The lustre of this hope shines most conspicuously in the consolation it brings to those who are called to part with their loved ones by death. The unbelieving bury their dead without any certain or definite expectation of reunion. For in no human scheme of philosophy is the truth of a resurrection even hinted at. But the Scriptures definitely promise this. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." The Apostle Paul, after explaining all this to the Thessalonian Christians, and showing them the immense advantage they had over the heathen who

knew nothing about the advent in majesty of Jesus Christ, or of the resurrection, adds finally, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

5. IT IS A GLORIOUS HOPE.

"For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of His glory according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself." "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called; accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure. . . . Women receive their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection."

This hope would be meaningless apart from the locality and the circumstances where it anchors itself. It leaps over time and space to the period when Jesus Christ shall Himself be glorified as King of kings according to the eternal purpose of the Father.

PROMISES.

This blessed hope embraces several promised glories:

1. *We shall be with Christ.* Not as in death, when we are said to be “unclothed” and “waiting to be clothed upon with our house from heaven.” In an actual sense we shall “see Him as He is,” and be ourselves like Him, personally and morally.

2. *We shall be beyond sinning.* Now we groan for deliverance. Pain and the curse encompass us. The consummation of that hope will bring full redemption to the body.

3. *We shall know as we are known.* “Now we see through a glass darkly; but then

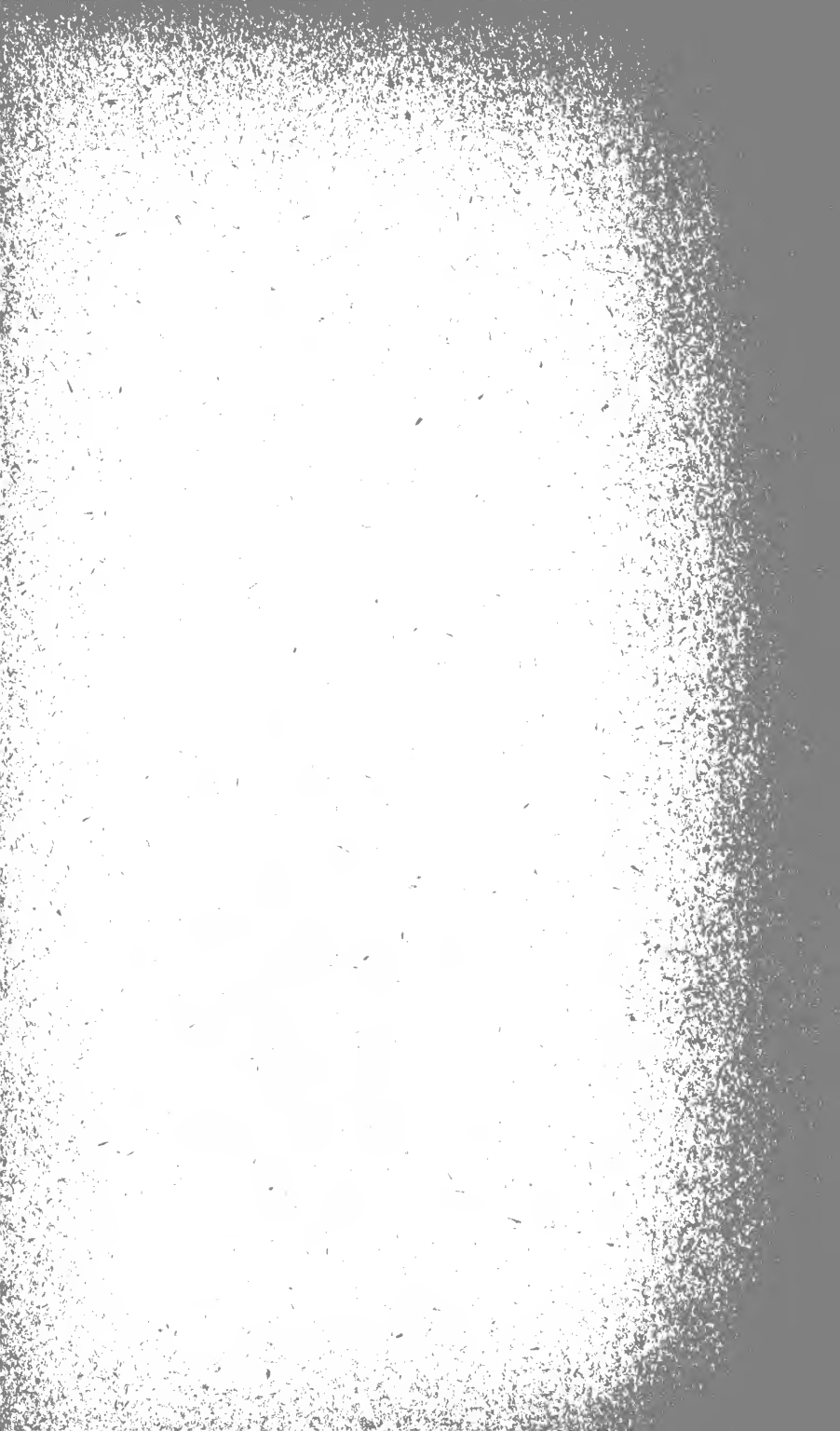
face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

What joy to have the hope of one day being masters of all knowledge; to understand the mysteries of science, the marvels of astronomy, the secrets of nature, and the profound depths of the soul!

WHAT SHOULD BE OUR PRESENT ATTITUDE?

We ought to be *looking* for the blessed crisis. That is, expecting it with desire. We should be *praying* for it and thereby seek to hasten it. We should anticipate its consummation by our endeavor of personal faithfulness toward all that it involves. We ought to be *loving* it. If we love the seed of Abraham, if we love the burdened brute creation, if we love the heathen Gentile nations who know nothing of a Saviour, we shall joyfully welcome this hope, for their sakes also. For it is the hope that shall bring to the Jew his Messiah; to the creature his emancipation from man's ex-

acting dominion; to mute nature her freedom from thorns and thistles; to the heathen idolater a knowledge of the true and living God; and to the waiting Bride the personal presence of the heavenly Bridegroom. Yea, it will bring to Jesus His Kingdom, Crown and Throne.



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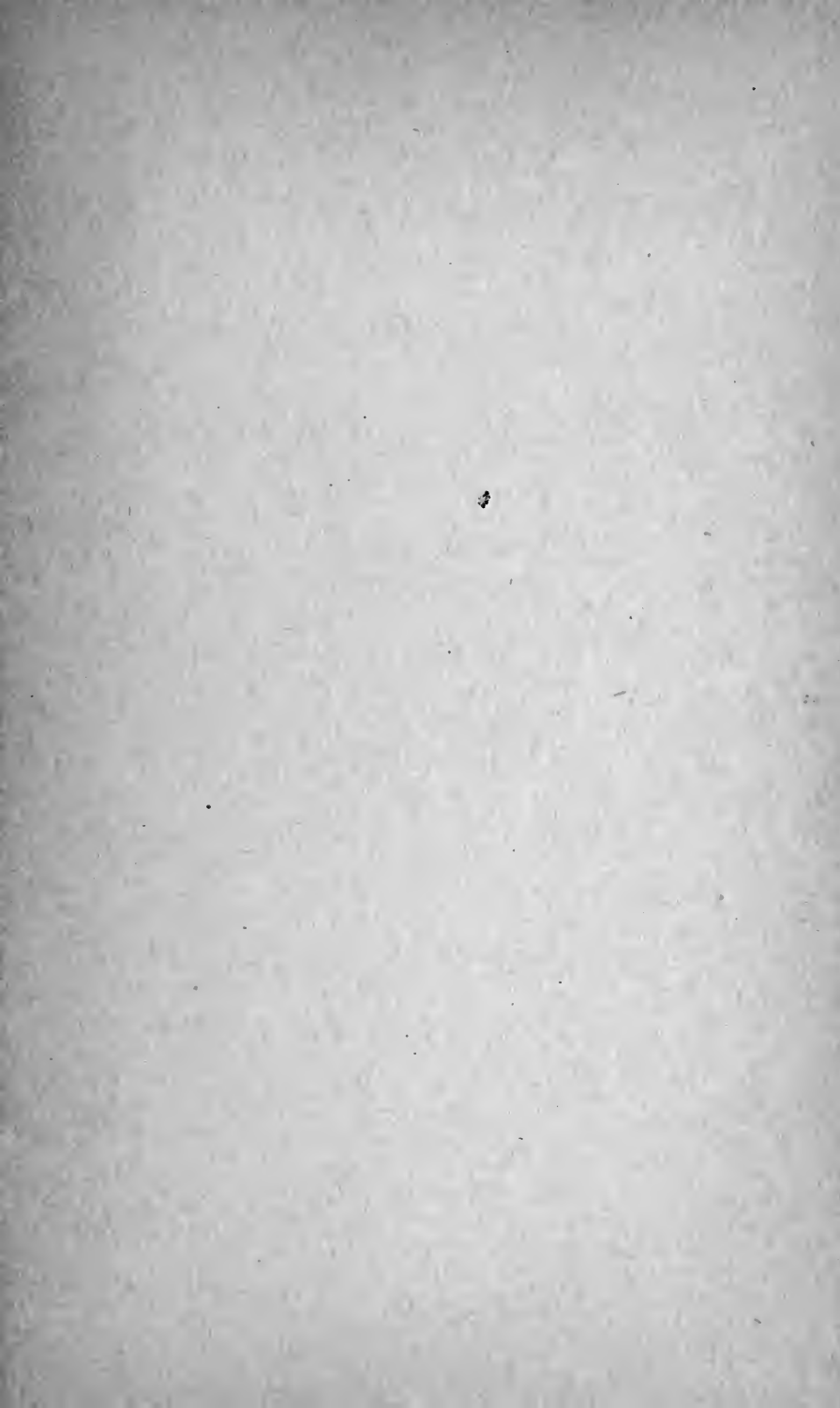
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