Jesus is Coming Again

H. M. Riggle

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FAITH PUBLISHING HOUSE

Digitally Published by
GOSPEL TRUTH PUBLISHING
www.churchofgodeveninglight.com

Originally Published by Gospel Trumpet Company 1943

Preface

Jesus is coming again! The thunder of all the long wars of the past and the present are but the rumble of his approaching chariot wheels. The stars that flash in the night sky are but sparks from the hoofs of his chariot's steeds. Jesus is coming again! That message is the theme song of the multiplied millions of saints of the immemorial past who, in pain and persecution, have lifted now loud, now low, the song of greeting to the Beloved who but tarries His coming for the brief moment of history, yet will come again. No message is more prominent in the New Testament, no faith is stronger in the heart of the church, than this—that Jesus is coming again. Yet, if we will be perfectly frank with ourselves, we must acknowledge that many of our earnest fellow believers have misunderstood and misinterpreted the details of that message. We know that is true because they have set various dates for the end of the world, which did not end. They have predicted that certain things would occur, but they never did happen. Now, it is not our wish to cast reproach upon earnest brethren who thus in their enthusiasm have overreached, and in their anxiety to chart out the path of the coming Christ have yielded too much to their own imagination. Even these brethren we esteem more highly than the cold, unloving skeptics who have denied that He will come at all.

These in an excessive enthusiasm have misunderstood Him; those in the coldness of unbelief have blasphemed His name. Notwithstanding all this, we believe that harm has come to the cause we love by ardent preaching of extravagant dreams of the imagination put in the place of sober exposition of the sound teaching of the Word of God. And it is an exposition of this sound teaching of the Word of God which is now laid before the public by an honored and faithful minister of the Word of God, who has ministered diligently in this field of service, both at home and on the foreign mission field, as pastor, evangelist, foreign missionary, foreign missionary secretary, author, and earnest preacher of the Word of God for more than half a century. In these pages H. M. Riggle lays before the believers a message concerning the coming of Christ which will not dull their enthusiasm but rather quicken it. Moreover, it is a message which will never disappoint them, for it is founded upon the solid rock of Holy Scripture.

Yours in that blessed hope, —Charles Ewing Brown

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Chapter I

Jesus Is Coming Again

Christ was born in Bethlehem of Judea, lived in Nazareth thirty years, spent three years and a half preaching throughout Galilee, Samaria, Judea, and parts of Syria, was crucified on Calvary and laid in Joseph's tomb. But he rose triumphant from the grave, and forty days later he led his disciples out to Bethany, and from there ascended to heaven and took his seat on the throne, at which time "he was **crowned** with glory and honor" King of kings and Lord of lords. Sovereign of earth and sky, this same Christ is coming back again. He himself declared to his disciples, "I will come again" (John 14:3). It is an undeniable fact that the church in her present state is instructed to look for the return of Christ from heaven as the next great event. To the disciples who stood gazing into heaven at the time of Christ's ascension, the angels announced, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). The writer of the Hebrew Epistle confirms this truth by declaring that "unto them that look for him shall he appear **the second** time" (Heb. 9:28). James declares, "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 5:8). John, writing to newly converted children of God (1 John 2:12), exhorts them to "abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming"

(1 John 2:28). If time and space would permit, I could bring more than one hundred additional clear texts of Scripture to prove that Jesus Christ is coming again. Many of these will appear in the chapters to follow. However, one text is as good as a thousand, for all truth runs parallel and never contradicts.

This Second Coming Is Not His Spiritual Presence With the Church In This Age

That Christ promised to return in the person, power, and presence of the Holy Spirit, is clear. In connection with the promise, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (John 14:18), he said, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:16, 17, 20, 23). He further promised, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5); "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20). In Ephesians 3:17 we read, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." And again Colossians 1:27, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." These texts, with many others, clearly show Christ's spiritual presence with his people in this dispensation. There are some who teach that this is all that is meant by his second coming, but such teaching is absolutely erroneous. His spiritual presence with the New Testament church throughout the gospel age must not be confounded with his personal coming at the end of the world. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations" (Matt. 25: 31, 32.) "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the

voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Thess. 4:16). Any candid, honest person can surely see by comparison that Christ's living in the hearts of his followers is not the same as his coming at the end of the world.

There Is But One Personal Coming of Christ In the Future

There are a goodly number of Christian people who honestly believe and teach that there are two distinct comings of Christ yet future. We hear it over the radio, and millions of tracts and booklets have been distributed teaching it. The idea has grown from the scriptural statements that Christ will come and receive his bridechurch, when the saints will be caught up to meet him in the air and to accompany him to heaven. Certain teachers have read, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all" (Jude 14, 15); "At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints" (1 Thess. 3:13). And from these texts they have drawn the conclusion that Christ will come first **for** his saints, and then at a later time with his saints. But a careful study of the subject removes this apparent contradiction. Paul explains it fully in 1 Thessalonians 4:13, 14: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." From this it is clear that the saints who will accompany the Lord on his return are the innumerable host who have died, from Adam to the last one before his coming. This includes the patriarchs, as Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and the saints of all ages, whose bodies are slumbering in earth and sea. All who "sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." That is, the spirits of all the saints who have been resting in paradise will accompany him. The resurrection will then

take place, and these spirits will reanimate their bodies raised immortal and glorified, and then they will all be caught up to meet the Lord, receive their reward, and enter heaven eternally. This all takes place when the Lord "appears the **second** time" (Heb. 9:28). Such a thing as two comings of Christ future is nowhere taught in the Scriptures.

"What shall be the sign of thy coming?" (Matt. 24:3). "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2:1). "Preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:23). "Whom the Lord . . . shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" (2 Thess. 2:8). "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" (1 John 2:28). "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord . . . Stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 5:7, 8). I here call the reader's attention to the fact that in all the texts that refer to the coming of the Lord, never in one single instance does it appear in the plural—"comings"—but always in the singular— "coming." There is just one coming future. I again call attention to Hebrews 9:28. "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time." This text clearly teaches but two advents of Christ to this world. The first in the beginning of this age, when he appeared as a Savior, the world's Redeemer, and was "offered to bear the sins of many"; and then his appearing at the end of this age. Note the language—"He will appear the **second** time." Not a second and a third time, but just the "second" time.

Christ's Coming Will Be Visible

"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which was taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:9-11). This is clear. "This same Jesus" shall come again, "in like manner" as he went up. He went up bodily and visibly. It was a personal ascension of Christ into heaven. They saw him ascend—"a cloud received him out of their sight." "In like manner" shall he descend from heaven. Language could not be framed to teach more clearly Christ's second advent as a personal, visible coming. "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him" (Rev. 1:7). "The powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 21:26, 27).

"Then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory" (Mark 13:26). "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:30). "Ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power; and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Mark 14:62). Pastor Russell, the originator of the Jehovah's Witnesses movement, taught that Christ came in 1914, but only his followers are aware of it. The rest of us have not found it out yet. In the face of all the foregoing incontrovertible texts, how any intelligent person can accept and believe such teaching, is a mystery. Instead of Christ's second advent, the first World War

came upon the world in 1914. Language could not be framed to teach more definitely that the Lord's coming will be personal and visible, not only to the righteous, but "also to those who pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him" (Rev. 1:7).

It has been our privilege on a number of occasions to visit the reputed place where Christ ascended. The last time was during the Easter celebration in Jerusalem in 1923. It was a beautiful day. I just happened to look up, and there right over our heads was a large white cloud, the only cloud to be seen anywhere in the sky. Being naturally of an imaginative type of mind, I had a feast. Just such a cloud was there when our Lord ascended into heaven, and as the disciples gazed upward while he ascended, that cloud received him out of their sight. Then it was that two angels appeared on the scene, and said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in **like manner** as ye have seen him go into heaven." This is conclusive. His coming will be visible. Yes, "every eye shall see him."

It Will Be Unexpected By the Great Majority

"Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth" (Rev. 16:15). "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief" (Rev. 3:3). "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night" (2 Pet. 3:10).

"For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them . . . and they shall not escape." (1 Thess. 5:2, 3). "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you

unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:34-36). "But as the days of Noe were, so shall the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son be" (Matthew 24:37-39).

This is very plain. The coming of Christ is a great and solemn event pending, for which the church is to look and watch and be ready. The day and hour the Father only knoweth. When the rending heavens shall reveal his presence, this world will be in a Sodom state and as the antediluvian world before the flood. The millions of earth will be sleeping in carnal security, thousands dreaming of millennial glory. Oh, the surprise and disappointment of the masses in that great day! Never since the foundation of the world has there been a day like this, in the surprise and terror with which it will break upon the thoughtless millions of the population. Business and pleasure as usual will occupy the minds of men up to the close of the preceding day. The sun will rise and set with the same placid majesty, and as he sinks beneath the western horizon he will fling his smiling radiance in the same bountiful profusion upon an admiring world. Myriads will go to rest dreaming of future years of wealth and happiness; but the loud blast of the "trump of God" will awaken them to sleep no more, and looking up, they will see the heavens on fire.

The worldling, elated with schemes of opulence and splendor, will suddenly find his visions dispelled by the light of eternity and

the despairing cry, "The Judge is come." The astounding senate will suddenly break up at the crash of the conflicting elements and, hurrying away in wild confusion, will see that the great Legislator is come. The ermined judge and the manacled prisoner will hear themselves alike summoned without ceremony to the great tribunal. The miser, counting his gold or reckoning his profits, will be panicstricken by the knell that tells him gold has no more value and that his priceless soul is forever lost, in seeking a bubble that has now burst. The procrastinating trifler, dreaming of mercy after years of worldly pleasure, will be filled with dismay to see that the day of grace is past and the hour of retribution is come. The anxious speculator, the busy merchant, the thriving tradesman, racking imagination with the schemes of gain, panting to reach the goal of wealth and to revel in earthly aggrandizement, without one thought of God or eternity intruding on the vision of anticipated bliss, will be struck with terror to find the delusive mirage break up before the flare of the flaming skies and the catastrophe of a ruined world. The atheist who denied God's being will be appalled at the sight of his person. The Demases who have forsaken him for the world, the Judases who have betrayed him for silver, and all the host of apostates and blasphemers who have despised his name and trampled on his blood will stand aghast when the great day of his wrath breaks upon their sight.

It was an awful night in Egypt when every family rose up to bewail its first born struck with death: it was a day of terrible vengeance when the siege of Jerusalem closed with the crash of a ruined city over 1,100,000 dead bodies; it was a day of anger when the Deluge burst upon a degenerate world and overwhelmed its despairing millions in one common grave—but this day exceeds them all. It is the day when time shall have run its course, when universal retribution shall be awarded, when God himself shall come

down to take vengeance on them that know him not, and when pentup fires shall envelope the earth in a general conflagration. Throughout the New Testament the most solemn charges and warnings are given to the church to be ready for that great and awful event. "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 24:42, 44). While to the masses Christ's coming will be a great surprise, his faithful church will be "looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God." "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thess. 5:4-6).

Angels Will Accompany Him and Assist In the Judgment

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works" (Matt. 16:27). "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him" (Matt. 25:31). "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels" (2 Thess. 1:7). "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven" (Mark 13:26, 27). "So shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:40-43).

These statements of Christ are so plain and positive that comments are not necessary. In view of all this, the supreme question of life with all of us should be, Am I ready for that great event? Christ gave this solemn charge, "Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 24:44). The spiritual state we must be in to be ready is explicitly set forth in the following scriptures: "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4:17). We must be like Christ in moral purity, "even as he is pure" (1 John 3:3), and "righteous, even as he is righteous" (1 John 3:7). We must live upon the plane of his nature and possess his holiness. "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ve to be in all holy conversation and godliness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Pet. 3:11, 14). These texts are very clear and to the point. No person with the least spot of sin will be able to stand in the presence of His majesty and awful glory.

Chapter II

Five Things Will Take Place

On the question of what will take place when Christ returns in his second advent, there are today a multiplicity of beliefs, a great variety of opinions. Scarcely two teach the same. Under this heading, I desire to set before the reader the positive, definite teaching of the Scriptures, showing the true object of the Lord's second coming. I kindly ask the reader to lay aside prejudice and preconceived ideas, as far as possible, and with an open heart honestly listen to the truth presented. There is one thing above all others that is fundamental, and we should stress it above all else. That is the absolute need of being ready. If we are fully prepared for that great event, thank God, it will be all right with us anyway, whatever the technical details are.

This will be the greatest day the world has ever seen. It was a great day when the Deluge engulfed its despairing myriads in a common watery grave. It was another great day when God rained fire and brimstone upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. But this day will exceed them all. It will be the day when time shall end, and we shall all be inhabitants of eternity. It will be "the great day of his wrath . . . and who shall be able to stand?" It is also termed "the great and the terrible day of the Lord." Five things that will take place when Jesus comes again are: (1) The universal resurrection of

all the dead; (2) The rapture, or the righteous caught up to meet the Lord; (3) The general judgment; (4) The reward of the righteous in heaven, and the punishment of the wicked in hell; (5) The utter destruction of the earth and the aerial and planetary heavens that surround it. I will now consider these in the order here given.

The Universal Resurrection of the Dead

The Revelator says concerning Jesus, that when "he cometh with clouds," "every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him" (Rev. 1:7). This shows that both classes of the human family will be raised at that time. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it . . . And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it . . . and they were judged every man according to their works . . . And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:11-15). Here we see the dead—all the dead—coming forth from land and sea, and immediately following are the judgment and the separation of the righteous and the wicked, "and whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." The language clearly implies that in that day of final examination some will be found in the book of life and others will not. Unless all the dead are raised when Christ comes, this could not be true. In Revelation 1:7 it is further declared that when Jesus comes with clouds, "all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." This is another proof that the wicked as well as the righteous will be included in the final resurrection.

"Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51, 52). No one will deny that the apostle here speaks of a resurrection that includes the church; and mark the fact that the trump which calls them forth is called the "last trump." By this we are to understand that all the dead, both righteous and wicked, will come forth at that time; for how could another trump call forth the wicked a thousand years after the "last trump" has sounded? Preposterous. The language is clear. "The trumpet ["last trump"] shall sound, and the dead [all the dead] shall be raised . . . and we [the living] shall be changed." "For the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28, 29). This scripture forever demolishes the theory of an intervening thousand years between the resurrection of the righteous and that of the wicked.

Christ positively declared that all that are in the graves, both "they that have done good" and "they that have done evil," shall hear his voice, and come forth in the same "hour." Daniel, looking forward with prophetic eye to the very end of time, beheld this universal resurrection, and thus described it: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2). In Young's Bible Translation this text is rendered: "And the multitude of those sleeping in the dust of the ground do awake, some to life age-during, and some to reproaches—to abhorrence age-during." Here, again, is the truth that the whole multitude of the dead, both righteous and wicked, will come forth in the last day. In Paul's defense before Felix, he boldly declares "that there shall be a

resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (Acts 24:15). How many resurrections? "A resurrection of the dead." Who are included in that resurrection? "Both the just and unjust." So positively teaches the immutable word of truth, which liveth and abideth forever. "A resurrection there shall certainly be both of righteous and of unrighteous" (Rotherham's Translation). Could language more clearly teach but one literal resurrection, and that resurrection made up "both of righteous and unrighteous"?

Had Paul believed and taught as many modern teachers advocate, he would have said, "There shall be two resurrections of the dead, one of the just, and the other of the unjust." The Apostle, who was led and inspired of God, with Christ his Master, taught but one future resurrection of the dead, and that resurrection includes both "the just and unjust."

That there will be a resurrection from the dead—a coming forth of real bodies that have for ages moldered back to mother dust—is denied by many of the schools of higher criticism today. It is astounding to find almost everywhere a large number of people who are becoming skeptical regarding the resurrection. Some teach that instead of the dead coming forth, the Lord will create new bodies the same as he created Adam in the beginning. In a sense this can be true, and yet not conflict with the fact of a real resurrection from the dead.

In the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians we find an able defense of the resurrection of the dead by the Apostle Paul. He argues—"If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised." There seems to have been some at Corinth who admitted that Christ had risen again but denied the resurrection of the dead. The apostle's argument was that if Christ was raised from the dead, mankind may be raised; if mankind cannot be raised from the dead, then the body

of Christ was never raised. And since the whole structure of Christianity is built on the fact that Christ is risen and is at the right hand of God, ever living to make intercession for us, to deny the resurrection is to strike at the very root of the Christian religion. If it be true that Christ was not raised, then we have no hope and are yet in our sins. But Paul's argument reaches its climax in the bold declaration, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man [Adam] came death, by man [Christ Jesus] came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (vss. 20-22).

The future resurrection of the dead hinges entirely on the fact that Christ is risen. And of his resurrection there is abundant proof. The evangelist Matthew, who was an apostle of the Lord, records the fact that "the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men" (Matt. 28:2-4). One writer describes this scene thus: "A profound, solemn stillness reigns all around, broken only by the tread of the guards as they pace backwards and forwards before the tomb of the crucified Prince of peace. The grave lies mute and closed before us; its seal remains unbroken. It would seem that the reign of the pretended new King of Zion was gone forever. But what now? Of a sudden the earth begins to tremble; the rocks are rent asunder all around with fearful crash; superhuman forms, bright as lightning and in garments white as snow, glide down from the heights of heaven to the garden. They are holy angels. One of these gracious messengers approaches the tomb, touches the mass of rock which held it closed, and in a moment the seals are burst, the ponderous stone is rolled away, and from the open portal of the grave there

steps forth, radiant with heavenly glory, him who was dead!—and, behold, 'is alive forever more.' "

From this angel that rolled the stone from the tomb we have positive testimony of Christ's resurrection. "And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead."

On several occasions before his death, Christ assured his disciples that after his death he would rise again on the third day. We have the recorded testimony of four inspired evangelists— Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—that his resurrection actually took place. Angels from heaven testified the same truth to the women who came early to the sepulcher. Soon after, "When Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene" (Mark 16:9). Paul informs us "that he arose again the third day according to the scriptures: and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (1 Cor. 15:4-8). In Acts 1:2, 3, it is further stated that "unto the apostles . . . he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."

Thus we have the testimony of many witnesses that Christ actually rose from the dead. It is equally certain that they saw him, not as a common man, nor as a ghost, but as their risen Lord—the one only Son of God. Revelation assures us that there will be a resurrection of the body. This hope the Christian church now

possesses; for God has "begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet. 1:3).

In Millennial Dawnism it is taught that Christ's identical body, which was laid in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, was not the one that was raised; but such teaching is utter folly in the face of the plain statements of Scripture. In Luke 24:3, 6 we learn that the women entered into the sepulcher, "and found not the body of the Lord Jesus." The angel told them the reason: "He is not here, but is risen."

Generally, those who oppose the resurrection endeavor to show that such a thing is incredible and utterly impossible. They cite such instances as bodies cremated and the ashes scattered to the winds, evaporating into air or falling to the earth and being assimilated into the vegetable kingdom; bodies drowned or buried in the sea and eaten by the fish, or people that have been eaten by cannibals. They argue that a resurrection of the body in such cases is absurd. We answer them in the language Paul used in his defense before King Agrippa: "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" (Acts 26:8). We maintain that it is reasonable and possible.

In this light, let it be remembered that "the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead . . . shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit" (Rom. 8:11). Again, it is said, "He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus" (2 Cor. 4:14). People seem to forget the power of Omnipotence. The same mighty power that raised up Christ from the dead shall raise us up also. He is the "first fruits of them that slept." On the omnipotence of God we take our stand and defy every attack against the doctrine of the resurrection. We scorn all attempts to wrest from us our hope, through a supposed impossibility of the resurrection, as puny

struggles against the omnipotence of God. "Did he not first construct a human form from the dust of the earth? Did he not breathe into a mass of clay the breath of life? And when he again speaks, shall it not be done? Can he not again bring bone to bone, sinew to its sinew, flesh to its flesh? Fear not, Christian! Thy dust may be scattered to the winds of heaven—but thy God is there. It may repose in the lowest abyss of the grave—he is there. It may dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea—even from there he shall bring thee forth, incorruptible and glorious, like unto that body which now receives the homage of the angels around the throne. Thou shalt be raised at the last day. Let us "comfort one another with these words."

Yes, this is our hope and comfort. "We look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:20, 21). Just as the first fruits and the first ripe sheaf were offered to the Lord, Christ's resurrection is the pledge and promise of a coming harvest.

"Henceforth the grave holds but a lease on the saints: because He rose, we shall rise also. Through Christ, the first-born, I see the grave giving up its dead; from the depths of the sea, from lonely wilderness and crowded churchyards they come—like the dews of the grass, an innumerable multitude. Risen Lord, we rejoice in thy resurrection, and hail it as the harbinger of our own. The first to come forth, thou art the elder brother of a family whose countless numbers Abraham saw in the dust of the desert, whose holy beauty he saw shining as the star of heaven."

In the light of science there is no incomprehensible enigma presented in the doctrine of the resurrection. In fact, the resurrection does not necessarily require that the identical flesh that composed

the body when laid away in the grave shall compose the body raised in incorruption. No fact is more familiar to the student of science than that our present bodies are subject to continual change. As our bodies grow, new matter is added to them, besides the repairing of what is continually spent. In the course of a few years that change is entire. Of the particles which composed the body in infancy, not one remains in youth; of those which filled out the frame in youth, not one remains in middle age; and so on. It is claimed that every seven years the body has undergone a complete change. But mark well the fact that, through this ever-changing process, identity is not lost. Something abides; and this is the most essential thing of all. Call it what you may—the vital principle, the law of assimilation and arrangement, the organic force—it remains permanent, and as the old materials are thrown off they are replaced with new. Paul goes deep into this thought by presenting a similitude in 1 Corinthians 15:36-38. This something, like a germ in the seed, to which it corresponds, may lie dormant for ages, and in God's appointed time, under divinely arranged conditions, awake again from the dust of the ground, from the atmosphere about us, or from the depths of the sea. "With God all things are possible." As truly as Jesus' body, which was laid in Joseph's tomb, came forth a glorified and immortal body—for he "dieth no more," and "death hath no more dominion over him"—so shall we be raised and our "body fashioned like unto his glorious body."

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:42-44). Whatever difficulties may present themselves in connection with the resurrection, whatever obstacles of a miraculous or supernatural nature may to our minds appear—for in these things we are but

limited in understanding—are easily met by remembering the truth enunciated by Christ himself in connection with this very subject when he confounded those who did not believe in it, by saying, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God."

In this connection, there is another important point to consider. In view of the foregoing truths, the question will arise in many minds, What about the first resurrection? "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection" (Rev. 20:6). Since, as we have seen, the final and universal resurrection of all the dead will take place at the instant of Christ's second advent, it follows conclusively that the first resurrection must precede his coming. If an actual resurrection takes place now, it must be the first, for it precedes in point of time the literal resurrection of either the righteous dead or the wicked. To the question, Do the Scriptures teach such a resurrection? I answer emphatically, Yes. "But," I hear some say, "there can be no resurrection except there first be a death." True enough, but death reigns on every hand. Every unregenerated person is "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). Before conversion, "we were dead in sins" (vs. 5). "You, being dead in your sins" (Col. 2:13). "To be carnally minded is death" (Rom. 8:6). "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4). "Sin, when it is finished bringeth forth death" (Jas. 1:15). "Sin revived, and I died" (Rom. 7:9). "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (1 Tim. 5:6). "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death" (1 John 3:14). I could multiply texts to show that spiritual death, as a result of sin, reigns throughout the whole unsaved world.

The ringing message through the gospel is, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and

believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26). The message to all who are dead in sins is, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Eph. 5:14). Now here is the result: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (John 5:24, 25). Could anything be plainer than this? The first resurrection is spiritual; it is personal, conditional, progressive, and operative throughout the gospel age.

Let us consider some examples of those that had actually attained unto this resurrection. Paul exhorted the Roman brethren, "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead" (6:13). He reminded the Ephesians that "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (2:1); and "even when we were dead in sins, [God] hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together" (vss. 5, 6). The moment we are saved this glorious resurrection takes place. "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Col. 2:13). This unmistakably locates the time. The very instant our sins are remitted it can be said, "Ye are risen with him" (vs. 12). "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above" (3:1). Be assured, dear reader, that the writer is one that "hath part in the first resurrection." Hallelujah! "We know that we have passed from death unto life" (1 John 3:14).

While the teeming millions quickened to life throughout this entire gospel dispensation all taken together compose the "first resurrection," it can also be said that there have been two great

periods of this resurrection, namely, the time before the Dark Ages, when a mighty host was raised up; and the second period, the hundreds of years since that time. Through the pure gospel in the primitive church great multitudes were raised from sin to salvation. They were a "royal priesthood," a "holy nation," and they reigned in life over Satan, sin, and the world. But soon the darkness of the great Apostasy crushed out the splendent light of truth. I quote from Goodrich's **Church History**, p. 478: "What are termed the Middle Ages commenced with the fifth, and terminated with the fifteenth century. Of these, the first six are denominated the Dark Ages; but throughout the whole period, Christianity suffered a long eclipse of a thousand years." During that dark period salvation work, with a few exceptions, ceased; and the "rest of the dead" of Adam's fallen race "lived not again until the thousand years were finished." The kingdom of God was largely hidden under the human rubbish of men. The reign on earth ceased, and the only reign enjoyed by the people of God was enjoyed "with Christ" in paradise by that host who had taken part in the first resurrection. But the Reformation brought the resurrecting grace of God again into action, and thousands of the "rest of the dead" have been, and are being, made alive in Christ. Hallelujah! (See Rev. 20:4-6).

The Rapture, or Righteous Caught Up To Meet The Lord

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a

shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:13-17). I will here introduce three other translations of this portion of the scripture. First, Emphatic Diaglott: "The living, who are left over to the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who fell asleep. Because the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a shout . . . and the dead in Christ will be raised first; then we, the living, who are left over, shall at the same time with them, be caught away in the clouds, for a meeting of the Lord in the air; and so we shall be always with the Lord" (vss. 15-17). Second, The **Emphasized Bible,** by Rotherham: "The living who are left unto the presence of the Lord shall in no wise get before them who have fallen asleep . . . The dead in Christ shall rise first, after that we the living who are left together with them shall be caught away" (vss. 15,16). Third, the translation by Conybeare and Howson: "We who are living, who survive to behold the appearing of our Lord, shall not enter into his presence sooner than the dead" (vs. 15).

The apostle here is writing exclusively on the future hope of the church. The wicked are not even considered. The language is clear and conclusive. When the Lord returns in his second advent, there will be thousands of saints living on the earth ready to meet him. These will not taste death, but "shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump" (1 Cor. 15:51, 52). However, these living saints shall not enter into the presence of the Lord before the dead saints are raised. "The dead in Christ will be raised first; then we, the living, who are left over, shall at the same time with them, be caught away in the clouds, for a meeting of the Lord in the air." Amen. Some modern teachers think they find here a proof that the righteous will be raised one thousand years before

the wicked. But the whole account clearly shows that the expression "the dead in Christ shall rise first" means that the Christians will be resurrected before those living on the earth at Christ's coming will be caught away to meet the Lord and to receive their reward. The central thought is that they will all "be caught up together." This scripture positively refutes the teaching that the Lord will secretly take the saved up to glory and the rest will not find it out until later. The resurrection takes place before anyone is caught away to meet the Lord. These righteous saints will be caught up on the right hand of Him that sitteth on the throne of his glory. Next, the wicked will be gathered on his left hand, and the general judgment will follow.

The General Judgment

"The Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom" (2 Tim. 4:1). Thank God for this clear testimony. Instead of the Lord setting up a thousand years' reign on the earth when he returns in his second advent, and then at a later time judging the wicked, as many teach, he will "judge the quick [those living on earth at the time of his advent] and the dead [all the dead, who are raised from their graves] at his appearing." Then the righteous will enter his eternal kingdom of glory in heaven. That is what is meant by the expression "and his kingdom." The apostle enjoins upon us to "judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor. 4:5). Notice that the time of the judgment will be when the Lord comes.

There are those who teach that the righteous will not be included in the final and general judgment; but their teaching stands in square contradiction to that of the Apostle Paul. Hear him: "For

we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:10-12). "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Cor. 5:10, 11). How clear this testimony! The dead, all the dead—"small and great," "good and bad," "shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" in that great day. Yes, dear reader, whether saved or unsaved, "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

Let us now consider the nature of the final judgment. Paul in Acts 24:25 terms it the "judgment to come." Christ will be the Judge. God "hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). While the teeming millions of all ages will be summoned before the great tribunal, yet there will be an individual sense in which "every one of us shall give an account of himself to God." Each one must stand or fall on his own merits. It may be possible to cover up sin and iniquity in this world, as many do, but all will be uncovered in that great day. "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:14). In our earthly courts, many times favor is shown to the rich and influential, to members of fraternal societies and others. Sometimes shrewd lawyers influence jurors and retard and defeat justice. But the final judgment will be impartial. There will be no trickery there, no favors given. Justice will be meted out to all. Influence won't count. Kings and men of

high standing, the rich and the aristocrats, will have no better chance than tramps and beggars.

The judgment will be a heart-searching day. The Judge knows every secret of our lives. In his book of remembrance is the complete record. He sees you in the dark as well as in the light. Think of it! Jesus said even "the very hairs of your head are all numbered." This shows how closely he observes us. Again, the Lord said, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matt. 12:36). No wonder Wesley said in the old familiar hymn,

How careful then ought I to live,
With what religious fear!
Who such a strict account must give,
Of my behavior here.

And must I be to judgment brought,
And answer in that day,
For every vain and idle thought,
For every word I say?

Yes, every item of our lives here, we will meet at the judgment. Secret ambitions, covetous thoughts, worldly, selfish, angry, proud, jealous, sensual, impure meditations, all will be revealed in that day. "EVERY SECRET THING."

Not only will the actions, words, and thoughts of people be revealed in that day, but the motives that lay back of all these. While I was visiting the U. S. mint in Philadelphia, the guide said, "I will demonstrate to you how near perfection we have attained in scales and weight" He took two pieces of tissue paper the same size (about six inches square) and laid one on each side of the scales. They balanced perfectly. Then he handed me one of them with a lead

pencil, and asked me to write my name and address on it, which I did. When he laid it back on the scales, the side went down. "You see," he remarked, "these scales weighed the little bit of lead that adhered to that tissue paper by the writing of your name and address on it." I was astonished. But I got a lesson from the incident I shall never forget. The judgment scales will weigh closer than that. Our motives will be weighed. People may do a good act with a wrong motive, and also an apparently wrong thing (not having clear light and understanding) with a pure and good motive. We naturally judge from the "outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." He sees and knows the motive. That will help decide our eternal destiny in the last great day. Oh, how many will be "weighed in the balances, and found wanting!"

Before closing this section, I wish to consider the necessity of the judgment to bring man to account for his stewardship. For example, in America we have banks in every community. People deposit their hard-earned money in these institutions. To protect these depositors, the states have men called bank examiners and state auditors, who visit these organizations and carefully look into their books and accounts. Sometimes they come when least expected. So God has deposited with us, entrusted in our care, talents, gifts, qualities, means, and opportunities, all to be used to his glory. He said of man, "I have created him for my glory" (Isa. 43:7). Every power we possess should be fully dedicated without any reserve to the service and work of God. For the proper exercise and use of all these we must give account in the day of judgment. That is what is meant by the scripture, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12). Oh, the multitudes who are wasting their time, talents, and opportunities, in sin! This very thing will rate the measure of their punishment in hell. And here let me say to every saint of God, to every divinely-called

minister of the gospel: a great responsibility is ours; God wants our best, our all.

The Reward of the Righteous In Heaven and the Punishment of the Wicked In Hell

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set his sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels . . . And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. 25:31-46). These are words of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. They must be authentic. Note the fact that "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him," then the judgment is set and the righteous will be rewarded and the wicked sentenced to everlasting punishment. Not a thousand years after he comes, but "when" he comes. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works" (Matt. 16:27). "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Rev. 22:12, 11). These texts are a blast of warning to all men. Christ will come in the glory of his Father, "and then [at that time] he shall reward every man according to his works," and there will be no more escape from sin;

the wicked will have forever lost their souls. We have sufficiently proved that the moment of Christ's coming will be the time of the general resurrection of the dead, followed immediately by the general judgment, at which time "he shall reward every man according to his works." The revelation of Jesus Christ from heaven will be a day of wrath, when God will render "to every man according to his deeds." The instant of Christ's coming will eternally fix the fate of all men, whether pure or sinful. The fact that all, both righteous and wicked will be judged at the same time is fatal to millenarianism. But such is the plain testimony of Scripture. All the dead, small and great, will stand at the same time before the throne of judgment, and whosoever is not found written in the book of life, will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:12-15). This proves that in the final examination some will be found in the book of life and others will not.

"When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe . . . in that day" (2 Thess. 1:7-10). This text also clearly proves that both the punishment of the wicked and the reward of the righteous will be given "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven." Instead of setting up a kingdom and reigning a thousand years here upon earth for the conversion of the millions who in life rejected his offered mercies, he will come "in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Whosoever teaches otherwise contradicts these scriptures and the many other texts already cited.

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (Jude 14,15). "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead" (1 Pet. 4:4, 5). "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:5, 6).

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened" (Dan. 7:9, 10).

It would seem that the foregoing description of the final day of judgment is so plain that comment is unnecessary. There is absolutely no intimation of a literal kingdom being established and a reign of a thousand years on earth being inaugurated. No offers of salvation are given. With the lightning flash and the pealing thunders of Christ's coming, instantly appears the great white throne of his glory, and before him is gathered all nations. The dead, small and great, shall then stand before God. That is, they shall stand before the throne of his judgment. This throne is described as a "great white throne," "like a fiery flame." Paul no doubt speaks of the same thing when he says that the Lord Jesus "shall be revealed"

from heaven . . . in **flaming fire**." What a sight this will be to the millions of the unsaved who will stand on the left side of the great Judge in that awful day of final wrath! What an inspiring sight to the hosts of redeemed ones who will be gathered on the right side to hear the Master say, "Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom."

"The judgment will be a scene of extraordinary interest to saints, angels, and devils. All these classes of intelligences shall be there." The glorified saints will be present, as appears from what is said in Revelation 11:18: "Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great." This text proves that the day of judgment will be the day of God's wrath upon the ungodly and also the day of reward to the saints. There is not the slightest hint of any offers of salvation to be given to anyone after the ushering in of that great and notable day of the Lord.

It is evident that Satan, who is the prince of devils, and all his host, look forward to the judgment with anxious foreboding. Jesus informs us that the everlasting fires of hell were prepared for them. The Bible also clearly states that the devil himself shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. That these demons are aware of the doom that awaits them is clear from the conversation Jesus had with the legion confronting him at the tombs. "And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" (Matt. 8:29). From this it appears that a greater degree of punishment awaits the devils than they have yet endured, and that they know there is a time determined by the divine Judge when they will be sent into greater torments. It seems they are well acquainted with the great doctrine of Christ's coming in the glory of the Father, with all his holy angels.

Hence their consternation at meeting him so unexpectedly and in such a manner. These devils well knew that the time was coming when they would be cast into the bottomless pit, but they also knew that the time had not yet arrived; and they seemed to dread the presence of Christ lest they should experience the agony of everlasting burnings before their time.

The Bible is full of warning and exhortation with reference to this great and eventful day. It portrays to us the terrors of the wicked as they seek for death and find it not. Then will the prophecy of the Wise Man reach an awful fulfillment—"Because I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer, they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices" (Prov. 1:24-31).

"According to the Bible, the final judgment has in view the following objects: To convince the ungodly of the justice of their doom (Jude 14, 15); to impress upon the intelligent universe the perfect righteousness of God in making an eternal distinction in the final allotment of the righteous and the wicked. Christ taught this object of the judgment, as recorded in Matthew 25:31-46. Now, obviously both these ends are best secured by a general judgment in which the case of each class is investigated and decided, at which

the countless hosts of all the intelligent beings in the universe of God are present. Oh, it will be an august day!"

Since final reward and punishment follow the judgment, the need of such a day of trial and reckoning is made clear. A similar order is followed in the courts of our land today. When a crime is committed, enlightened citizens do not believe in lynching the criminal. He is arrested and put into prison, where he is held over for trial. On a certain stated day he is arraigned before the judge, the evidences are given in, and if he is proved innocent, he is acquitted: but if he is proved guilty, he is sentenced to be punished. So with God's arraignment. Death, like an officer, arrests us. Next we pass into the intermediate world of spirits—the righteous to paradise, where they rest from their labors in bright anticipation of their future eternal reward to be given at the judgment; the wicked to chains of darkness and pits of gloom, reserved "unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2 Pet. 2:4, 9). They are like prisoners awaiting trial who already know that the evidences are all against them. Having closed their lives in rebellion against the throne of God, with "a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation," knowing that it is a "fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:27, 31), they are already, like the rich man in Hades, tormented by the flames of a guilty conscience.

The works and influences set in motion during our lifetime continue to live after we are dead. For example, the life and teachings of Paul have an earthly immortality that is influencing millions of people during all the centuries of the Christian era. Thus he sowed in time and will reap in eternity. Full reward could not be given at death because his influence for good still lives, and his reward shall be "according to his works." So with each one of us. I shall not be rewarded merely for what I do while I live, but for the

accomplishments of the influences I set in motion in life, which will live and work for good after my departure. This should be an inspiring thought to Christians who have not the opportunities to accomplish much in a visible way while they live.

The Christian mother with a large family of children, who is and responsibilities daily burdened with cares discouragements that others know little about. Sometimes she is tempted to think that her life of drudgery and hard work is spent simply in vain. She lives, nevertheless, a prayerful, devoted life to God and sets a godly example before her children. Often in the still hours of the night she pours out her heart to God for the salvation of her sons and daughters. She does her best to instruct them in the ways of the Lord. But it seems with all her efforts they continue in sin. Finally, she dies without realizing her hope in seeing her children brought to Christ. But she has left to her family the legacy of a mother's prayers, a holy life, and a Christian example. She "rests from her labors, and her works do follow her." Before long that wayward boy, like the prodigal, comes to himself. Something is brought to bear upon him that awakens in him a realization of the utter folly of a sinful life and the profitableness of serving God. As these thoughts fill his mind, memory goes back to childhood's gleeful hours spent at Mother's knee, and to his boyhood days around the family fireside at home. Mother's godly example and life and earnest prayers come before him, and with tears streaming down his cheeks, and with penitent soul, he cries, "Mother's God and Mother's religion shall be mine!" In that man's heart and mind lie talents that will perhaps shake the world. These have long lain dormant or have been exercised in a wrong direction. Now he consecrates them to the service of God, with the result that many are brought to Christ. They, in turn, bring still more, whose influence and work continue to widen until time ends. But where did this

mighty stream start? What was the spring from which it emanated? The meek and quiet Christian life of a saintly mother in her home. In the day of judgment that mother will see sheaves of golden grain brought into the great heavenly store as the result of the life that she lived. This will add greatly to her crown of rejoicing. It also shows the necessity of a future judgment and day of awards.

The disorders of society require that there be a future judgment. There are disorders which strike the senses, astonish reason, and subvert faith itself; yet these things go on unpunished. Many times the innocent suffer and the guilty go free. Human laws often fail to mete out justice; in fact, right judgment is sometimes perverted and the wrong triumphs. All this demands a final reckoning, when justice will be meted out to all.

The oppression of the poor by the rich and arrogant necessitates a future judgment. And in view of this fact, James assures us that the cries of the oppressed of earth have "entered the ears of the Lord of sabaoth." He also says, "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord . . . stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." That will be a day when justice will be meted out to those who have "condemned and killed the just," a day when rich men will "weep and howl," for the miseries that shall come upon them (Jas. 5:1-8).

Our attitude toward those who persecute and maltreat us is to be one of love, forbearance, and endurance, with this assurance, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." God's people have always been a persecuted people. During the Dark Ages, millions of them "were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held." But a day is coming when God will judge and avenge their blood on them that dwell on the earth. (See Rev. 6:8-10.) Thus again we see the necessity of the judgment.

With this very thought in mind, Paul says: "So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished" (2 Thess. 1:4-9).

The words of the apostle are certainly to be understood as teaching that the sufferings of the just and the triumph of the wicked in this life are a sure proof that there will be a future judgment in which the wicked shall be punished and the righteous rewarded.

The Utter Destruction of the Earth And the Heavens That Surround It

Both the Old and the New Testament scriptures teach that this earth will have an end, that it will finally pass out of existence. "Of old thou hast laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure" (Ps. 102:25-26). "The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage . . . it shall fall, and not rise again" (Isa. 24:19, 20). "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment" (Isa. 51:6). "Till heaven and earth pass" (Matt. 5:18). "Heaven and earth shall pass away" (Matt. 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33). This

planet on which we now live, called the earth, shall "wax old" and "perish." It shall be "clean dissolved," "shall pass away," "it shall fall and not rise again." So positively teaches the Word of God. These texts also teach that the atmospherical and planetary heavens that surround this earth "shall pass away," yes, "vanish away like smoke."

We shall next notice the manner in which they will pass away. "But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? . . . Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation" (2 Pet. 3:7-15). How clear this testimony! Not only will the works in this earth be consumed, but the earth itself "shall be burned up," "dissolved," and "melted with fervent heat." That day of fire which shall consume this earth, "the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men," will be the day of the Lord's second advent (vss. 4, 10).

Here I quote at length from an able exposition of this scripture by D. S. Warner:

Instead of conveying an idea that this last destruction will only be similar to that of the flood, a contrast is drawn between the two. The first was only by water; the next shall be by fire, and surely God knew that we understand the difference between the action of these two elements. Floods of water may carry away buildings, and wreck them, and wash the earth over cities, etc.; but they have no power to take out of existence a single stone or piece of timber. Whereas fire actually consumes, and changes things from a visible existence into a small bit of ashes and vapor, and reduces even earth and stone back to a melted mass, as it was before the completion of creation work; and we are plainly told that this very destruction will come to pass. Again, observe the contrasted extent of the two destructions. "The world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." But the next time both the heavens and the earth shall be dissolved. So we see clearly that the 'end of all things' does not mean a renovation of this earth; but an utter consuming, and melting of the same into the same chaotic state in which its matter existed before the completion of creation.

Again, right in the seventh verse we have a positive overthrow of the whole millennial theory. They tell us that this destruction by fire will only renovate the earth, and that then there will be an earthly reign of one thousand years, after which will come the resurrection and the judgment of the wicked. But the fire which millenarians locate before the thousand years, the Word identifies with the "judgment and perdition of ungodly men," an event which they say will take

place after the thousand years. Do you see the point? The very thing which they think will prepare the earth for their fancied millennium, God associates with that which they say will come after the millennium. So they are mistaken, or the Word of God is wrong. But the Word of the Lord is right, and every contrary doctrine is false. Behold the harmony of divine truth!

The Scriptures very clearly teach that Christ will come in the end of the world, in the last day of this last age of time. The Scriptures also inform us that this last day will be the day of judgment. And here Peter tells us plainly that on that very day of His coming and the judgment, the heavens and the earth will be consumed, melted, and destroyed. So this time will indeed be the end of the world, the close of all time allotted to this earth. On the eighth verse theological speculators have taken the authority to say that the earth will stand in its present condition just six thousand years, and the seventh thousand will be a millennial rest. But no such thought is found in the text or context. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." The expression is used simply to assure us that the promises of God do not become doubtful because of long delays; that the word of God that is deferred two thousand years is just as sure as that which is fulfilled in the same week or month it was spoken. Just so the Apostle Peter applies his words in the next verse, saying, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promises, as some men count slackness." How do men count slackness? When men make promises, leaving the time indefinite, it is natural for us to lose confidence in proportion to the delay. Men actually count others slack in their word, if long deferred.

But God is not slack in his promises, as men count their fellow men slack; nay, in this respect, a thousand years is with the Lord as one day. In other words, his promises are just as sure to come to pass though deferred ten thousand years, as if it were fulfilled in ten days. For two reasons this is so: he says, "I am the Lord, I change not"; and, "I will remember my covenant." He never forgets the words he has spoken.

In this chapter the coming of Christ, the day of judgment, and the utter destruction of the earth and its works are all pointed forward to as the events of one great and last "day of God, wherein the heavens [the atmosphere] being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements [that compose the earth] shall melt with fervent heat" (vs. 12).

So let all men take warning that "salvation" is now, and only now, is all on this side the coming of the Lord; whereas his second coming will be the "day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men," the point at which all salvation work will be forever cut off. Is it not one of the most astonishing things that has ever been invented, that men can be so subverted as to teach that now is not the time of salvation, but that this glorious work is "deferred until after Christ's second advent, in the millennial age"? How dare men teach such shocking falsehoods in the face of God's Word? Truth declares that now is the day of salvation . . . "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

Oh, that vain speculators upon the solemn subjects of prophecy, and all their deceived readers, would stop and consider the loud warnings from the Almighty everywhere associated with the second advent of Christ! Instead of

ushering in an age of restitution of souls from sin, and millennial glory, it will consign to eternal despair all who will not be found in peace, "without spot, and blameless." Reader, is that your happy condition just now? If not, rest not until the blood of Christ is applied, which "cleanseth from all sin." All these scriptures teach that we are living in the last dispensation of time; that "now is the day of salvation"; that at the second advent of Christ he will not set up a kingdom, but will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and close his personal reign (1 Cor. 15:23, 24); that at his coming all the dead will be raised, all men judged, the righteous crowned in heaven and the wicked sentenced to "everlasting punishment"; this earth and all the works that are in it will be burned up and pass away, and time and probation will end.

In view of all the truths presented, the incontrovertible facts so clearly stated, some honest souls will ask, What about the everlasting kingdom of God that was to be set up on the earth? That will be considered in the next chapter.

Chapter III

The Nature of Christ's Kingdom

The idea that the Messiah would establish a literal kingdom upon the earth originated with the Jews. Many of them placed literal interpretations upon those prophecies which foretold the coming of Christ, and as a result they expected him to set up a temporal throne, subdue the nations, and restore again the kingdom of Israel. This gross error led them to reject Christ, oppose his spiritual kingdom and consent to his death. Wanting only an earthly kingdom, they rejected and crucified the Son of God. He did not meet their expectation, therefore he became a stumbling block to them. He said to Pilate, "my kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight" (John 18:36). At one time they tried to take him by force and make him a king, but he departed from them.

His kingdom is purely spiritual and divine. If it were of a secular nature, then his servants would have contended. They would have opposed force with force, as the kingdoms of this world do in their wars. But since his kingdom is not of this world, no resistance was made, even when he was arrested. Jesus acknowledged himself a king, saying, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world"; that is, to set up a kingdom and reign as a king. But he

clearly set forth the nature of his kingdom when he declared it to be not temporal, or literal, but purely spiritual—"not of this world."

Through all his teaching he endeavored to show the people that his mission was to establish the kingdom of heaven in the hearts of men and there reign as King of peace. "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, 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 you" (Luke 17:20-21). This positive text stands in square contradiction to the teaching of the modern advocates of a future literal reign upon earth. The Pharisees evidently believed that Messiah would establish a temporal kingdom and set up his throne in Jerusalem. Since Jesus claimed to be the true Messiah, they naturally asked him when the kingdom of heaven should come. The fact that it "cometh not with observation," or outward show, positively proves it to be a spiritual kingdom—Christ ruling and reigning in the hearts of his people. "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). And you will find it in the full salvation of Jesus Christ. Jesus himself likened the kingdom of God to leaven, which quietly leavens the whole lump. Mark well this point; it is another indication of the spiritual nature of the kingdom.

"The kingdom of God is within you! Some render this "among you"; others, "in the midst of you"; but any of these statements implies that since the kingdom was then among men, it is not a future thing. I am inclined to believe that the "Common Version" gives Christ's true meaning. It might be well to notice that the Greek word from which this is taken is entos. This word appears in but one other text in the New Testament—"Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them

may be clean also." (Matt. 23:26). To substitute "among" for "within" in this last text would be ridiculous. Christ was simply teaching that the Jews were looking for the wrong thing. They expected a literal reign, and he was endeavoring to show them that his reign is spiritual and that his kingdom is in the hearts of his people. By the expression "within you," he by no means meant to convey the idea that his kingdom was in those wicked Pharisees, but that his kingdom is not literally located "here" or "there"; but in the hearts of men.

The nature of the kingdom is clearly seen in the five essentials that constitute it. (1) Christ is King. His spiritual domain extends over heaven and earth. (2) His throne is a spiritual throne, called a throne of grace and holiness, to which we can now come for favors from his hand. (3) The subjects of his kingdom are spiritual men and women, who, as "living stones, are built up a spiritual house, . . . to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5, A.S.V.). (4) The law that governs this kingdom is a spiritual law. Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." The unconverted are instructed to seek it: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). (5) It has a spiritual door of entrance.

The moment an individual is saved from his sins, he is inducted into the kingdom of God. "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him and sat him in the midst of them, and said, Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:1-4). The

language of this text is very clear. The kingdom of heaven is a present reality. Jesus was not speaking with reference to a future age, but to the dispensation of salvation. To be great in the kingdom of heaven is to fill a place of usefulness and efficiency in the work and service of God. The way to reach such a place of usefulness and efficiency is to humble ourselves as little children.

In talking with Nicodemus, Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"; "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:3, 5). At another time Jesus said, "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved?" (Luke 18:24, 26). Salvation and the kingdom of God are here classed together. Jesus plainly taught that in order to be saved, people must forsake all, and of course this includes riches. It is hard for those who are wealthy and who have their hearts set upon their riches, to comply with these demands.

Entering the kingdom and getting saved are the same thing. Since it is through the new birth that men enter, there are none in the real kingdom of God but those who are saved. The work of placing men and women in the kingdom belongs to God, "who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13). Since the new birth is a spiritual birth, and the door into the kingdom is a spiritual door, it is further proved that the kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom; for how can a man enter a literal kingdom through a spiritual door?

"For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he" (Luke 7:28). Since the dispensation of the Holy Spirit was fully ushered in at Pentecost,

and the kingdom came in all its fullness and glory in the outpouring of the Holy Ghost and the establishment of the Christian church as a separate, distinct institution for the salvation of the world, the least child of God has greater privileges and higher attainments in the divine life than John had, for he died before Pentecost.

"Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you" (Matt. 21:31). "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in" (Matt. 23:13). These texts also show that the kingdom was present at the time Jesus spoke these words and that people were entering it. When the disciples went forth preaching the kingdom of God, they did not speak of something future, or point people to a millennial age, but they declared the blessings and privileges to be enjoyed in the present. People so understood it, and as fast as they accepted the gospel, they pressed into the kingdom. Paul makes a definite statement on this point in Romans 14:17: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink: but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." This text shows clearly the nature of Christ's kingdom, "which is within you" (Luke 17:21).

When a soul fully complies with all the Bible conditions, then by the work of conversion—the new birth—it enters through Christ the door into the church, or kingdom of God. This is the sense in which the door of the kingdom was opened and men entered into it during Christ's personal ministry. But even after conversion there yet remains in the heart of the believer a sinful nature, the carnal mind. This causes an inward warfare between the flesh and the spirit. Before Christ can reign supreme, this inward foe must be destroyed, the throne of iniquity must be obliterated. This is

accomplished in the glorious work of entire sanctification. So the fullness of God in the baptism of the Holy Ghost and the complete establishment of his throne of holiness in our hearts is something for which the believer must seek; therefore he prays, "Thy kingdom come" (Matt. 6:10). There is a sense in which God's people can pray this prayer in any meeting where they desire the salvation of the lost. Their cry is that the kingdom of God may come into the hearts of the people by the salvation of their souls. The promise is, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly."

When the believer presents himself a living sacrifice upon Christ the altar, when the last condition is fully met in a complete death to sin and self, then the Holy Ghost, with the blood of Christ, destroys the body of sin and moves in, in all his fullness as a personal comforter, to abide with the soul forever. "The reign of God is within you."

Chapter IV

Christ's Kingdom on Earth

Observations in the Holy Land

There are a great many people who honestly believe that Christ's kingdom is literal and that its establishment on earth is yet future. We visited Jerusalem on a number of occasions and were surprised to meet people from all parts of the world, many from our own country, who had traveled there to be present when the Lord would set up his everlasting kingdom. In conversing with them, we found them all enthusiastic over the idea that the Lord was coming back to literal Jerusalem very soon. They wanted to see him on his return and to participate in the establishment of his kingdom and reign over Palestine. In the previous chapter, "The Nature of Christ's Kingdom," I have endeavored to show that all such hopes and expectations are without any foundation in the Scriptures and will result in utter disappointment. Christ's kingdom is spiritual, and present. Instead of being confined to a small country like Palestine (less than 9,000 square miles, about one-fourth as large as the state of Indiana), it is destined to "fill the whole earth" (Dan. 2:35), "the uttermost parts of the earth" (Ps. 2:6-8).

I have photographed the Holy Land from Dan to Beersheba. You can see it all with the naked eye, without even the aid of a field glass. Go six miles north of Jerusalem and climb to the top of Mount

Mizpah. Look northward, and Mount Hermon is in clear view, and that is north of Dan. Look southward, and you can see the Desert of Arabia, south of Beersheba. Look eastward, and just twenty miles from where you stand is the Jordan River and the Dead Sea, and the mountains of Moab and Gilead beyond the Jordan, all in plain view. Westward eighteen or twenty miles from where you are is the Mediterranean Sea. Perhaps this was the very spot where Abraham stood when the Lord said to him, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land **which thou seest**, to thee will I give it" (Gen. 13:14, 15). He saw it all from one place. Not only did he see it all with one sweep of vision, but it is so small that God told him to "arise, **walk** through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee" (vs. 17).

Palestine is not only a small country, but today it is a very poor country. There is more good farming land in one county in the state of Texas than in the entire land of Palestine. The Plain of Sharon is the best, but it is comparatively small. The Plain of Armageddon we hear so much about is only twenty miles wide, and about forty-five miles long. It is being settled by Jewish colonies from Europe. Only a part of it is tilled, for lack of water. Part of the Jordan Plain is being irrigated and is quite fertile. Many of the hills and mountains are barren. At this writing, the total population is 1,418,619. Of this there are approximately 800,000 Arab Moslems, 428,619 Jews and 190,000 Christians. It is estimated that there are between sixteen and eighteen million Jews in all the world. Around one-fortieth are now in Palestine. There are more than twice as many in New York City as in all Palestine. This does not indicate any great return of these people to Palestine as a fulfillment of prophecy, as some suppose and teach. In fact, a Jew does not have to go to that particular spot to find Christ and be saved. Anywhere on earth, if he will accept

Christ as his Messiah and Savior, a Jew can be saved as well as a Gentile, "for there is no difference" in this gospel dispensation. On our return home from Syria in 1923, our ship anchored at Haifa, where several boatloads of Jews boarded the ship for America. One of them expressed to me the sentiments of all the rest when he said, "I am returning to God's country, the United States of America." American Jews will not remain in that poor country.

The Essentials of a Kingdom

The requisites to the complete establishment and existence of a kingdom are: (1) A king as the ruling head, (2) a throne from which he issues his decrees, (3) territory over which he has jurisdiction, (4) subjects in that territory, and (5) laws to govern the subjects. All these are found in the temporal kingdoms of the world. We must, then, look for these essentials in the kingdom of heaven. If in the economy of divine grace—the revealed plan of redemption—and in the future glories of the eternal world, these essentials exist, then we have, here and hereafter, the everlasting kingdom of God. In the language of Dr. Adam Clarke, "The kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory form the endless government of Christ."

The terms "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven" are found more than one hundred times in the New Testament. We also have "the kingdom of Christ" and "the kingdom of God's dear Son." All these refer either to the dispensation of divine grace here or to the future state of the redeemed in the eternal world. The dispensation of the gospel, the dispensation of infinite mercy, and the manifestation of eternal truth by Christ Jesus, is called the kingdom of heaven. Its ruling head is the Sovereign of heaven and earth; its laws, all the moral precepts of the gospel; its subjects, all

who believe in Jesus; its territory and field of operation, the whole world.

Some contend that we do not have the essentials to the kingdom of God, but that we shall have them in an age to follow the present. We affirm that we now have, in this last and best dispensation, every essential to the perfect establishment and existence of a kingdom.

1. A king is the ruling head. Christ is the king throughout the present dispensation. He was not made a king by some legislative act, but he was born a king. When the Wise Men from the East came to Jerusalem, they inquired, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews?" When he stood before Pilate, Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world" (John 18:36, 37). Here Christ acknowledged that he had a kingdom. He terms it "my kingdom." Pilate at once asked, "Art thou a king then?" Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king." This is equivalent to: "It is true that I am a king."

He came to set up and to maintain a spiritual government, and this government is established in and by the truth. All who love the truth will hear his voice and attend to the spiritual doctrine he preaches. Nathanael, who was "an Israelite indeed," and free from guile, addressed Jesus thus: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" (John 1:49); and Christ did not reprove Nathanael for speaking thus.

At the time of Christ's Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem "the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; saying,

Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest" (Luke 19:37, 38). And "much people that were come to the feast . . . went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt" (John 12:12-15). The inspired writer reminds us that the prophet (Zechariah) said, "Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy king cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass" (Matt. 21:4, 5). Thus it is an established fact that Christ Jesus is King.

There is a sense in which Satan robbed man of the first dominion and usurped the place of king, or prince, of this world. Jesus himself called him "the prince of this world." For four thousand long years he held the human family under the dominion and power of sin and death; hence, death reigned from Adam until Christ. But Messiah came to dethrone the devil and to set up an everlasting kingdom of righteousness instead. Before people are saved, they allow Satan to rule in their lives, to make his throne in their very hearts; and when Satan is enthroned there, he holds the reins and rules the man. This accounts for all the unrest, discord, anarchy, jealousy, envy, murder, and, in fact, all the wickedness that abounds in the individual life, the home life, the community, the state, the nation, and the world. The law was given to restrain wickedness, until Christ should come. Satan must be cast out; not out of heaven nor out of the world, as some assert, but out of his place of rule in the human heart.

Jesus illustrated his mission thus: "But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:

but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils" (Luke 11:20-22). The strong man who keeps the palace refers to the devil. The stronger than he, who casts him out, is Christ. Shortly before his death he said, "Now is the prince of this world cast down." Through Christ's death, he destroyed "him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14). Thus by means of his own death, which made an atonement for sin and procured the almighty energy of the Holy Spirit, he rendered useless and ineffectual all the operations of him who had the power, or influence, to bring death into the world by sin; that is, the devil. Christ, by his death on the cross and his triumphant resurrection from the grave, became vested with all power in heaven and in earth. He broke the bands of death asunder, he destroyed the victory of the grave, and extracted the sting of death itself, thus purchasing full salvation from all sin.

Peter says, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5: 30, 31). Christ is called "the prince of life" (Acts 3:15). Hear him: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). Mark well the fact that Christ is now a prince—was raised from the dead a prince. Webster says a "prince is the one of highest rank; a sovereign; a monarch." Thus when we speak of the princes of the world we include emperors and kings. This is why the Revelator was bold to affirm that Jesus Christ is "the prince of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1:5). Just forty days after the resurrection, Christ ascended into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of the Father, "**crowned** with glory and honor" (Heb. 2:9).

That was coronation day. I have met many who are expecting Christ to be crowned in literal Jerusalem sometime in the future. But they are two thousand years behind the time; for when he ascended into heaven, he took his seat on the throne, and was then and there "CROWNED with glory and honor." "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" (Phil. 2:9).

The reader will note that this exaltation took place when Christ rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church" (Eph. 1:20-22). Christ is now king and ruling head, supreme over all, the sovereign of both heaven and earth. "Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:14, 15). We here have the first essential to the establishment and existence of a kingdom—Christ, sovereign and king over all heaven and earth; the ruling head of his church.

2. A throne from which the king issues his decrees. "And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom" (Heb. 1:7, 8). The term "throne" means a seat occupied by one having power or authority; a place identified with power and grandeur; sovereign power or dignity; an elevated position; an exalted state. When Christ ascended into heaven, his Father exalted him and gave to him his throne. Christ says: "I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21). From this lofty throne in the heavens, Christ now executes, through the

agencies of the Holy Spirit, his Word, and his church, the great salvation he purchased upon the cross. From this throne he issues his decrees and rules throughout all the universe.

"Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." It is in both worlds and extends over all time and eternity. "All power is given unto me," said Christ, "both in heaven and in earth." His throne and dominion extend to the consummation of all things. Christ has the same glory, unlimited power, and authority that he had with the Father before the world began (John 17:5).

"A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom." Scepter means an emblem, or badge, of authority; the appropriate sign of royalty. Christ's kingdom is a kingdom of righteousness. In this world righteousness exalts the individual, the community, the nation. It is that which exalts the untold millions to the high dignity and glories of heaven itself.

Christ's throne is called a "throne of grace," to which we are invited to come "boldly... that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16). Here again we have positive proof that Christ's kingdom is present. This is not spoken to people in some future age or time, but to us in this dispensation of mercy and salvation.

(1) There is now a throne of grace, a propitiatory, the place where God and man are to meet; (2) This is sprinkled with the atoning blood of Christ, who taketh away the sin of the world; (3) All men are invited to come to this throne by faith, and obtain mercy and grace—salvation; hence Christ's throne is present.

From this lofty throne in heaven Christ issues the decrees of his kingdom. And he reigns not only in person in the heavens above, he is enthroned also in the hearts of his children. In a spiritual sense his

throne of holiness is established in our hearts, and he reigns in the lives of his people.

3. A territory over which he has jurisdiction. Open your Bible to Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." In the untold ages of the past God said to his Son, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Ps. 2:8). "His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth" (Zech. 9:10). Since he has been exalted above all principality, powers, might, and dominion, "all the angels of God worship him" (Heb. 1:6), as well as all the myriads of redeemed souls in Paradise. (See Rev. 5:9-13).

His territory covers all heaven and earth. The gospel message is to all nations in all the world, and this gospel is the "power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." Christ not only rules throughout his church on earth, but in a general sense he rules even in the kingdoms of men and governs the nations. He is the sovereign over all kings, magistrates, and governors. In the face of all these truths, how unscriptural and foolish is the teaching that his territory and dominion will be confined to the tiny land of Palestine.

4. **Subjects in this territory.** "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (1 Pet. 3:22). This text is conclusive proof that Christ is now king over all heaven. And of his church on earth it is said, "The church is subject unto Christ" (Eph. 5:24). So Christ has subjects in this dispensation, both in heaven and in earth. Wherever the gospel is preached in all the world, there will be found disciples of the Lord Jesus, and wherever those disciples are found,

praise, honor, and glory will be given to Christ Jesus their Redeemer.

5. Laws to govern the subjects. One universal law governs all heaven and earth. This is the law of love to God and to fellow creatures. This is expressed in these two principles, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." These principles have existed from all eternity past, and will exist to all eternity future. Upon these principles the Mosaic law rested; but when the fullness of time came, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds" (Heb. 1:1, 2).

The gospel is an expression of the principles of that higher law. It is this law of love to God and to fellow creatures that governs all heaven, and this same law is revealed and expressed in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the standard of government and rule in the church of God now in this dispensation.

Instead of looking forward to a supposed millennial age, in which the kingdom of heaven will be established upon earth, the Scriptures clearly show that this kingdom is already come, and we who are saved are actually living therein. He "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13). Thus we have abundantly proved that we now have all essentials of the kingdom of Christ, hence it is present.

Chapter V

The Exact Time of the Establishment of the Kingdom

The prophets with one accord pointed to the first advent of Christ as the time when the kingdom of God was to be established. All the predictions which related to its establishment reached their fulfillment at that time.

We shall begin with Daniel's prophecy. In the second chapter we read that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, dreamed a dream, which was afterwards made known to him by Daniel the prophet. In the dream he saw a great image. "This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (Dan. 2:31-35).

These five short verses open one of the most sublime chapters of human history. First in the vision are brought to view four universal monarchies, which flourished in succession in ancient times. The first of these is represented by the head of gold, interpreted by the prophet as follows: "Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory . . . Thou art this head of gold" (vss. 37, 38). By this we understand that the head of gold represented the Chaldean kingdom. It was a golden kingdom in a golden age. Babylon, its metropolis, lay in the garden of the East. According to Herodotus, the city wall was a perfect square, fourteen miles on each side, 335 feet high, and 85 feet thick. It had 100 gates of bronze. This city contained many remarkable things, its hanging gardens being reckoned among the Seven Wonders of the World. I presume it is safe to say that never before did the earth see a city like this. With the earth prostrate at her feet, she sat "the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency."

While Babylon was founded by Nimrod more than two thousand years before Christ, it did not enter the field of prophecy until connected with the people of God, which was about 606 B.C. Here the head of gold began in history, and it continued until 538 B.C. during the reign of Belshazzar, when the kingdom fell into the hands of the Medes and the Persians. (See Daniel 5).

The Medo-Persian kingdom was represented by the breast and arms of silver, interpreted by Daniel as follows: "And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee" (Dan. 2:39). It was not inferior in power nor in the extent to which it carried its conquests, for Cyrus built up the most extensive empire that had ever existed; but it was inferior in wealth, luxury, and magnificence. The

Medo-Persian kingdom, however, was finally overthrown by the Grecians about 286 B. C.

The Grecian Empire is what was represented by the belly and thighs of brass, interpreted by Daniel as "another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth" (vs. 39). The conquests of Greece under Alexander have no parallel in historic annals for suddenness and rapidity. The legs of iron, and the feet part of iron and part of clay, Daniel interprets to be the "fourth kingdom," in its strong and divided condition (vss. 40-43). A careful reading of verses 41 and 42 will show that the feet of iron and clay are termed "the kingdom," though divided. This was Rome.

Thus far in this vision the image represents four universal kingdoms; namely, Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. For asmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold" (vss. 44, 45). This language is so clear that it would seem impossible to misunderstand it. "In the days of these kings"—kingdoms. Only four kingdoms are seen in the image. Only four are spoken of in the interpretation. In their days, or before they should pass off the field of action, the God of heaven would set up his everlasting kingdom. While they yet held the dominion, the stone would be cut out and would smash them to pieces. Ah, beloved reader, how wonderful the fulfillment!

When Rome, the fourth of the above kingdoms, had reached the summit of its glory and power; when its domain was so large that it was denominated "all the world" (Luke 2:1); when Augustus Caesar

was an absolute sovereign, ruling over three hundred millions of people—it was then that there was born in the village of Bethlehem, in Judea, a babe who, though he was cradled in a manger and his infant cries were mingled with the lowing of oxen and the bleating of lambs, was destined to establish this everlasting kingdom. Without fagot or sword, without war or force, with no weapons but the gospel of Christ, the blood of the Lamb, and burning testimony, this kingdom marched onward with conquering power until the heathen kingdoms of darkness were broken in pieces. The lionhearted rulers of nations handed over their scepters to the "Lion of the tribe of Judah," whose throne is forever and ever, and whose scepter is righteousness (Heb. 1:8).

In fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy, "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:14, 15). The dispensation of the glorious gospel of infinite mercy and manifestation of eternal truth by Jesus Christ was now to open up fully to all mankind. He set up a government and kingdom which is eternal. Revolutions may destroy the kingdoms of earth, but the gates of hell and death shall never be able to destroy the kingdom, or church, of Christ. His is the only kingdom that shall never have an end. Dr. Adam Clarke expresses it in this language: "The kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory form the endless government of Christ." This was the stone that smote the image upon its feet and broke them into pieces. And, as portrayed in this prophecy, pagan Rome was broken into pieces under the iron rod of the gospel of Christ, before it finally fell, A. D. 476. That iron kingdom, which once ruled the earth, crumbled to pieces under the hammer of the gospel and holiness, and the church of God triumphed. Christianity became the fifth universal kingdom. Rome was the last earthly kingdom that ever swayed universal authority.

But Christ's kingdom is universal. The uttermost parts of the earth are his possession. In every nation are to be found disciples of Christ. Kings and magistrates bow before him and do him homage.

Before passing from this prophecy, we shall take a little space to consider the erroneous position of millenarians. They argue that since the ten toes of the image represent the ten divided kingdoms of Rome, these were the kingdoms to be in existence when Christ should set up his everlasting kingdom; and since none of these ten kingdoms were in existence when Christ appeared in his first advent, they conclude that the establishment of Christ's kingdom is yet future. Their position is false for the following reasons:

- 1. The ten toes are not called kingdoms in the prophecy. The legs, feet, and toes are all summed up in this prophecy as "the kingdom"—the "fourth kingdom" (vss. 40-43). Only the four universal monarchies, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome—are called kingdoms. The image as a whole represents these four. "And in the days of these kings" (kingdoms) the God of heaven was to set up his everlasting kingdom; that is, while they yet held dominion. As before proved, this prophecy was fulfilled by the coming of Christ and the establishment of his kingdom, or church, during the reign of Rome.
- 2. The time cannot reach to Christ's second coming, for none of the original ten kingdoms is now existing. Three of them fell under popery. (Dan. 7:8, 20, 24). They have all long since passed away. There are in existence today probably twenty fragments of those original kingdoms, but the toes of the image no longer exist.
- 3. The image that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream was evidently a well-proportioned man. His toes were of the proper size. But millennialists would say that Nebuchadnezzar saw a man with toes longer than the man. Let us measure that image from the crown

of his head to his toes. The Babylonian kingdom, represented by the head of gold, came into prophecy about 600 B. C. The first of the ten kingdoms of Rome date from the latter half of the fourth century. This kingdom belonged to the Huns, whose European history began in A. D. 372. Thus from Babylonia to the Huns is a period of 972 years. So the whole image measures less than one thousand years, till we reach the toes. Now, if those toes still exist, as millenarians suppose, they would measure over 1,500 years. **That would make a man with toes 500 years longer than the man.** Such are the absurdities of those who believe in a future literal kingdom to be established upon earth.

- 4. The stone struck the image upon the feet. But since there are no longer feet or toes of that image left, the kingdom of God must be already established. When set up by Christ it was a small stone, but it began to enlarge and finally became so great that when Rome became brittle, Christianity struck her such an awful blow that she flew to pieces.
- 5. The New Testament scriptures teach that the kingdom was set up at Christ's first advent. (See Matt. 3:2; 11:12; 12:28; 16:28; 21:4, 5; Mark 1:14, 15; 9:1; Luke 9:27; 16:16; 17:20, 21; John 18:36, 37; Rom. 5:17; 14:17; Eph. 1:20-22; Col. 1:13; Heb. 1:7, 8; 2:9; 4:16; Rev. 1:5, 6, 9). These twenty-two positive texts surely teach that the kingdom of God is already set up. The only kingdom yet future is the everlasting kingdom of glory above, which we shall enter when time is no more.

The stone cut out of the mountain without hands is no other than Christianity, which constitutes the everlasting kingdom of God. This kingdom is a divine institution because it was established by Christ himself. It began with the preaching of John the Baptist, continued during the personal ministry of Christ, and was fully established on

the Day of Pentecost. Earthly kingdoms have risen and fallen but this one stands unshaken upon the rock of eternal truth.

I shall here quote from the excellent exeges is of Dan. 2 in Adam Clarke's Commentary:

"A stone cut out of the mountain without hands."

That Jesus Christ has been represented by a stone, we have already seen; but this stone refers chiefly to his church, which is represented as a spiritual building, which he supports as a foundation stone, connects and strengthens as a corner stone and finishes and adorns as a top stone. He is called a stone also in reference to the prejudice conceived against him by his countrymen. Because he did not come in worldly pomp, they therefore refused to receive him; and to them he is represented as a stone of stumbling, and rock of offense.

But here he is represented under another notion, viz., that of a stone projected from a catapult, or some military engine, which smote the image on its feet; that is, it smote the then existing government at its foundation, or principles of support; and by destroying these, brought the whole into ruin.

By this stroke the clay, the iron, the brass, the silver, and the gold were broken to pieces and became like chaff which the wind carried away . . . The Roman Empire . . . as represented by the legs of iron, and feet and toes of iron and clay; but as we find that not only the iron and clay, but also the brass, silver, and gold were confounded and destroyed by that stroke, it follows that there was then remaining in and compacted with the Roman government,

something of the distinguishing marks and principles of all the preceding empires; not only as to their territorial possessions, but also as to their distinctive characteristics. There were at the time here referred to in the Roman Empire, the splendor of the Chaldeans, the riches of the Persians, the discipline of the Greeks, and the strength of the Egyptian and Syrian governments, mingled with the incoherence and imbecility of those empires, kingdoms, and states which the Romans had subdued. In short, with every political excellence, it contains the principles of its own destruction, and its persecution of the church of Christ accelerated its ruin.

As the stone represents Christ and his governing influence, it is here said to be a kingdom, that is, a state of prevailing rule and government; and was to arise in the days of those kings or kingdoms (vs. 44). And this is literally true; for its rise was when the Roman government, partaking of all the characteristics of the preceding empires, was at its zenith of imperial splendor, military glory, legislative authority, and literary eminence.

This stone or government was cut out of the mountain . . . Judea being, at the time of the birth of Christ, a Roman province.

It was cut without hands; probably alluding to the miraculous birth of our Lord, but particularly to the spiritual nature of his kingdom and government, in which no worldly policy, human maxims, or military force were employed; for it was not by might nor power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts.

The kingdom of the stone smites, breaks to pieces, and destroys all the other kingdoms.

The stone began to strike the image, when the apostles went out into every part of the Roman Empire, pulling down idolatry, and founding Christian churches.

In verse 44, the kingdom of the stone, grown into a great mountain and filling the whole earth, is particularly described by various characters.

- 1. It is a kingdom which the God of heaven sets up. That this means the whole dispensation of the gospel, and the moral effects produced by it in the souls of men and in the world, needs little proof; for our Lord, referring to this and other prophecies in this book, calls its influence and his gospel the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of heaven; showing thereby that it is a kingdom not of this world—not raised by human ambition, the lust of rule, or military conquest; but a spiritual kingdom, raised and maintained by the grace of God himself, in which he himself lives and rules, governing by his own laws, influencing and directing by his own Spirit; producing, not wars and contentions, but glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will among men.
- 2. This is called the kingdom of heaven, because it is a counterpart of the kingdom of glory. The kingdom of God, says the apostle, is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom. 14:17); righteousness, without any sin; peace, without inward disturbance; joy, without any mental unhappiness. An eternity of righteousness, peace, spiritual joy constitutes heaven; nor can we conceive in that state anything higher or more excellent than these.

- 3. This kingdom shall never be destroyed; it is the everlasting gospel, and the work of the everlasting God. As it neither originates in nor is dependent on the passions of men, it cannot be destroyed. All other governments, from the imperfection of their nature, contain in them the seeds of their own destruction. Kings die, ministers change, subjects are not permanent; new relations arise, and with them new measures, new passions, and new projects; and these produce political changes, and often political ruin. But this government, being the government of God, cannot be affected by the changes and chances to which mortal things are exposed.
- 4. This kingdom shall not be left to other people. Every dispensation of God, prior to Christianity, supposed another by which it was to be succeeded . . . Under the gospel, Christian is the name of the people of this kingdom. Everything in the construction of the gospel system, as well as its own declarations, shows that it is not to be succeeded by any other dispensation; its name can never be changed. . . . All former empires have changed, and the very names of the people have changed with them. The Assyrians were lost in the Chaldeans and the Babylonians; the Babylonians were lost in the Medes; the Medes in the Persians; the Persians in the Greeks; and the Greeks in the Syrians and Egyptians; these in the Romans; and the Romans in the Goths and a variety of other nations. Nor does the name of those ancient governments, nor the people who live under them, remain on the face of the earth in the present day! They are only found in the page of history. This spiritual kingdom shall never be transferred, and the name of its subjects shall never be changed.

- 5. It shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms; that is, the preaching and influence of Christianity shall destroy idolatry . . . It is by his own Spirit and energy that his kingdom is propagated and maintained in the world; and by the same his enemies are confounded. All false religions, as well as falsified and corrupted systems of Christianity, have had recourse to the sword, because they were conscious they had no God, no influence, but what was merely human.
- 6. The kingdom of Christ breaks in pieces and consumes all other kingdoms; that is, it destroys everything in every earthly government where it is received, that is opposed to the glory of God and the peace and happiness of men, and yet in such a way as to leave all political governments unchanged. No law or principle in Christianity is directed against the political code of any country. . . .
- 7. And it shall stand forever. This is its final characteristic.

I have quoted extensively from Clarke because his interpretation and explanation of Daniel's prophecy and its fulfillment in the Christian dispensation are unquestionably **clear** and conclusive.

I quote also from **Abbott's History of Christianity**.

Jesus, the "Son of man" and "Son of God" has introduced a system of religion so comprehensive, that it is adapted to every conceivable situation in life; so simple, that the most unlearned, and even children, can comprehend it.

This Babe of Bethlehem, whose words were so few, whose brief life was so soon ended, and whose sacrificial death upon the cross was so wonderful, though dead, still lives

and reigns in this world—a monarch more influential than any other, or all other sovereigns upon the globe. His empire has advanced majestically, with ever-increasing power, down the path of eighteen centuries. . . .

The Caesars have perished, and their palaces are in ruins. The empire of Charlemagne has risen, like one of those gorgeous clouds we so often admire, brilliant with the radiance of the setting sun; and, like that cloud, it has vanished forever. Charles V has marshalled the armies of Europe around his throne and has almost rivaled the Caesars in the majesty of his sway; and, like a dream, the vision of his universal empire has fled.

But the kingdom of Jesus has survived all these wrecks of empires. Without a palace or a court, without a bayonet or a saber, without any emoluments of rank or wealth or power offered by Jesus to his subjects, his kingdom has advanced steadily, resistlessly, increasing in strength every hour, crushing all opposition, triumphing over all time's changes; so that, at the present moment, the kingdom of Jesus is a stronger kingdom, more potent in all the elements of influence over the human heart, than all the other governments of earth.

There is not a man upon this globe who would now lay down his life from love for any one of the numerous monarchs of Rome; but there are millions who would go joyfully to the dungeon or the stake from love for what Jesus who commenced his earthly career in the manger of a country inn, whose life was but a scene of poverty and suffering, and who finally perished upon the cross in the endurance of a cruel death with malefactors.

As this child, from the period of whose birth time itself is now dated, was passing through the season of infancy and childhood, naval fleets swept over the Mediterranean Sea and Roman legions trampled bloodily over subjugated provinces. There were conflagrations of cities, ravages of fields, fierce battles, slaughter, misery and death. Nearly all these events are now forgotten; but the name of Jesus of Nazareth grows more lustrous as the ages roll on.

Chapter VI

Old Testament Prophecies Relative To Christ's Kingdom and Reign

Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isa. 32:1, 2).

Isaiah has been called the evangelistic prophet of the Old Testament. No doubt this is because so many of his prophecies have direct reference to Messiah and his kingdom. Some have taught that the texts quoted above refer primarily to Hezekiah and his good reign. But a careful reading of the whole chapter seems to make clear the fact that Christ and his kingdom are meant. During the reign of righteousness here predicted, the Spirit from on high was to be poured out upon the people, "and the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places. . . . Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass" (vss. 15-20).

All this refers to the blessings of the present dispensation; nor did the prophet overdraw the picture, for the fully redeemed have by

actual experience proved that when Christ is crowned in the human heart and life, and reigns there in righteousness, this is accomplished by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; and the effect is "quietness and assurance forever"—a peaceful reign. Oh, the glories and beauties of salvation now experienced by all those who are fully saved!

Christ's coming was heralded as producing peace on earth and good will toward men. This does not imply, as some have concluded, peace among the temporal nations; but only among those people of all nations who are saved and redeemed through the blood of Christ. There are many predictions in the Old Testament relative to Christ's kingdom and reign that are used by millennium teachers to prove that there will be a future, literal reign of Christ upon this earth; but a careful reading of each one in the light of the New Testament clearly shows that they all are to reach their fulfillment during the gospel age. A number of these we shall now consider.

"In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Ps. 72:7, 8). "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord" (Ps. 22:27). "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall rise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. . . . The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee" (Isa. 60:1-5). "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee . . . lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass . . . He shall speak

peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth" (Zech. 9:9, 10).

In these texts are foretold the universal domain of Christ and the intent of his coming and reign. The question is. Where shall we look for the fulfillment? A careful reading of each of these predictions shows that the diffusion of light and salvation among the Gentiles is here promised. Under the Mosaic law the true God was known only to Israel; but in the gospel, the offer of salvation is extended to all nations of the world. Under the present dispensation of grace, all nations have the privilege of entering the kingdom of God and enjoying the salvation of Jesus Christ. When we turn to the New Testament, we see clearly the fulfillment of these predictions expressed in such texts as the following:

"Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:78, 79). At the birth of the Savior, the angels announced, "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10). When Simeon took the infant Jesus in his arms, he declared, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel" (vss. 29-32). Paul and Barnabas said to the Jews, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord" (Acts 13:46-48). "On the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost" (10:45). "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (11:18). "Be

it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it" (28:28).

Here, then, we see the fulfillment of the prophecies that promised salvation to the Gentiles and all the ends of the earth. Instead of referring to a future age, they referred to the diffusion of the gospel among all nations during the Christian dispensation, and foretell the privileges and blessings of the gospel age. God is no longer known only to Israel, the Jews, who were favored above every nation of the earth. But Jesus himself said that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). "And ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

We are now living in what is pre-eminently the day of salvation. The age when Christ shall have dominion from sea to sea, and to the ends of the earth is the age ushered in by his first advent. Careful reading of Zechariah 9:9, 10 makes this clear. The earth cannot perish until every continent, island, and people is illuminated with the light of the gospel. There must be a universal spreading of the truth on all the inhabitable globe. This great work began with the ministry of Jesus, was carried forward by the labors of the apostles and the early ministry, and has been more or less progressive throughout the entire Christian era. Before the death of the first apostles it is positively stated that the gospel had sounded out in all the earth. Of course this has reference to the then-known civilized world. Gradually it has spread from hamlet to city, from vale to hill, from continent to island, from pole to pole, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth. Out of all nations of the earth, people are being saved and brought into the kingdom of God. This universal spread of the gospel among all the nations of earth is given by Jesus as a

positive sign of his coming—"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and **then** shall the end come."

This line of thought could be very much drawn out; I have simply given a few clear examples of texts that are used to prove a more propitious age of grace and salvation future, but which, when carefully examined in the light of the New Testament Scriptures, apply to the accomplishments and blessings of Christ during the Christian era.

Chapter VII

Christ on David's Throne A Present Reality

In order to sustain their position, those who hold to the millennium theory claim that Christ is not sitting on the throne of David in this dispensation, and therefore there must be another age, a period of a thousand years, in which Christ will sit upon David's throne. Some of them go so far as to say that the throne of David will be re-established in Jerusalem and that Christ will there reign over literal Israel, who, as a nation, will again be restored to their former glory. To the natural mind this may sound very beautiful, and it may appeal to some as very plausible; but a careful investigation of the truth of the Bible will clearly reveal that such theories are but mere speculations of human minds and are not really found in Holy Writ.

In the first place, the literal throne of David never can be reestablished, for it was destroyed centuries ago. By "throne" is meant sovereign power and dignity. Therefore, as David was exalted to this place of power and government in Israel, so the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the seed of David, was to be raised up and exalted to a state and place of sovereign power; a king to rule in righteousness. This is all that can be meant by Christ's sitting upon the throne of David.

If it can be shown that Christ now, during the present dispensation, fills this place, that Christ now occupies the very place and position that the prophets foretold; then the millennial contention will be refuted.

Open your Bible to 2 Samuel 7:12-16: "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever." If we find clear evidence that it is in this dispensation that Christ was to sit upon God's throne, then why look for another age in which to accomplish that which is being fulfilled in the present one? Note the foregoing prophecy. It was God's promise to David. Primarily it reached its fulfillment in Solomon, who sat upon David's throne; but in it is contained a reference to the government of the spiritual kingdom—the kingdom of the Messiah. "I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." "Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever." These expressions refer to Christ and the spiritual kingdom he came to establish. The "house" in this prophecy refers both to the Temple Solomon built at Jerusalem and to the church which Christ established; for the church is declared to be "the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." Solomon's temple was a type of the New Testament church.

Now, let the reader observe that at the very time this kingdom and throne of David were to be established forever, it was said of David himself, "Thou shalt sleep with thy fathers." So instead of Christ's sitting on David's throne after the resurrection, as some declare, this text proves that it was to take place while David was

still sleeping with his fathers. How beautifully this harmonizes with the New Testament declaration of Peter recorded in Acts 2:29, 30: "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne." Here we have the application of God's promise to David. It referred to Christ and reached its fulfillment at the time of Christ's resurrection from the dead. David himself refers to this promise in Psalm 132:11: "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." It is clear that Christ was meant when he said, "Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." Paul writes "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom.1:3, 4). Instead of pointing to a future age for the fulfillment of these prophesies, the apostles clearly understood them as being already fulfilled in their day; and certainly we are safe in accepting their interpretation.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, the everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this" (Isa. 9:6, 7). This is an illustrative prophecy of the incarnation of Christ, with an enumeration of those characteristics in which he stands most nearly related to mankind as their Savior, and by which his infinite majesty and godhead are shown. He is called Wonderful;

wonderful in his conception, birth, preaching, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension; wonderful in his person, and wonderful in his working. He is the Counselor that expounds the law, shows its origin, nature, and claims. He ever appears in the presence of God for men. He is the mighty God—"God manifest in the flesh." He is the everlasting Father—the origin of all things, the cause of existence, the Father of the spirits of all flesh. The government rests on his shoulder—seated upon his throne, he executes judgment and justice; and the increase of his government and peace shall continue forever. To it there shall be no end.

But when should all be fulfilled? at the beginning of the Christian dispensation or at the beginning of a supposed millennial age? The answer is positive and clear. It was when a "child" was "born" unto us, when a "son" was "given." From this it is obvious that the reign of Jesus Christ on the throne of David began in the days of his incarnation. And this is settled beyond question by the angel's announcement to Mary, as recorded in Luke 1:31-33: "Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Now do we have two dispensations presented in this prophecy? Not by any means. The birth of Christ, his name, his throne and reign, are all connected and must be in the same dispensation; that is, in the present one. This text refers to him as the everlasting head and sovereign. His government and kingdom shall be eternal. Revolutions may destroy the kingdoms of the earth, but the powers of hell and death shall never be able to destroy the kingdom of Christ. His is the only

dominion that shall never have an end. Here we have the glory, extent, and perpetuity of the evangelical kingdom.

All these scriptures clearly locate Christ's kingdom and reign as beginning at his first advent. It was when he was born into the world as a son that he became a king and established his kingdom. And this is identical with his sitting on the throne of David. Christ was "born King of the Jews" (Matt. 2:2). Note Nathanael's greeting to Christ: "Thou are the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" (John 1:49). At the time of Christ's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, the whole multitude of disciples cried out, "Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord." This fulfilled the prophet's prediction, "Rejoice greatly O daughter of Zion: behold thy king cometh unto thee." "Pilate asked Jesus, art thou the King of the Jews?" (Matt. 27:11). In reply, Jesus said, "Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world" (John 18:37). The Jews well understood that Christ claimed to be the king of Israel, for while he hung on the cross in the throes of death, the scribes and elders said, "He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him" (Matt. 27:42). All these texts confirm the fact that Christ began his reign on the throne of David, during the days of his incarnation. Being born a king, and clothed with all the authority of heaven, he began to deliver and to execute the laws of his spiritual kingdom. His authority was supreme. The people were compelled to say, "Never man spake like this man," and even his enemies admitted that "he spake as one having authority, and not as the scribes." But in a much greater and more comprehensive sense are these prophesies fulfilled since Christ has risen from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sent forth the Holy Spirit as his personal representative on earth to execute his

law and to point out the way of full salvation he purchased on the cross.

"Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:29-36).

It would seem that this language is so clear that none could misunderstand it. Peter was preaching to the Jews, and assured them that the promise of God to David, sworn to, and confirmed by an oath, declared that "he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne." Christ is the supreme governor of all things and all persons, Jews and Gentiles, angels and men.

David said that Christ would die. He also foresaw that if Christ were not resurrected, he could not sit upon his throne forever. Since he came sitting upon the throne of David during his incarnation, he must be resurrected in order to continue upon the throne. The prophet "seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell [hades] neither did his flesh see corruption." Had his flesh seen corruption, then the prophecy that

Christ was to sit upon David's throne henceforth, even forever, would have been nullified; but as his body did not see corruption, he continued to reign upon the throne of David. You see, the apostle here quotes the language of David in Psalm 132:11, and he presents the same to us as being fulfilled at that time, which gives us positive proof that this dispensation is the one in which Christ would reign upon David's throne.

"And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things" (Acts 15:13-17). We then have Christ sitting upon David's throne in this dispensation, because it is in this dispensation that the Gentiles are chosen as the people for his name—"that the residue of men might seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord." Thus we find in the Old Testament declarations of this prophecy, and also in the explicit language in which the New Testament citation of its fulfillment is expressed, the clearest evidence that could be desired by anyone, that Christ now sits upon David's throne.

I will call the reader's attention to another fact. A careful reading of many of the prophecies of the Old Testament shows that "David" is frequently a title for Christ. This being true, it follows that if Christ sits upon his throne, it must be David's throne. Since "throne" means sovereign power and dignity, Christ being by the right hand of God exalted "when he raised him from the dead"

clothed with "all power in heaven and in earth," is sitting down at God's own right hand in the heavens, "crowned with glory and honor," "far above all principality and power, and every name that is named, both in heaven and on earth." Surely he exercises greater and more universal sovereign power than David ever exercised during his earthly reign over literal Israel.

The distinctions between nations disappeared at the cross. Since that time, literal Israel is no more the chosen people of God. While the law and its blessings were to one nation, the gospel is good tidings of great joy to all nations in all the world. Speaking with direct reference to Jews and Gentiles, Paul positively declares that "there is no difference" (Rom. 10:12). And Peter said, "God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." The Jews as a nation are no longer more favored than the Gentiles. They have the same privileges in the gospel. Salvation is not a national affair, but an individual matter. Every man and every woman on earth is responsible personally for his or her eternal destiny. So if the Jews will believe on Christ and accept him, individually, the veil will be taken from their hearts, and they will be "grafted in again," the same as the Gentiles. In the beginning of the Christian era, thousands of them did accept Christ, and the rest were blinded because of their unbelief. The Gentiles, as fast as they have accepted Christ, and believed on his name, have been saved as well as the Jews. It will continue thus until the end of time. Both Jews and Gentiles are placed on the same plane; both must come into Christ's kingdom by the door of repentance and faith, both must accept Christ individually, and all those who will not do this, both Jews and Gentiles, will be lost. All who do accept Christ, from among both Jews and Gentiles, constitute the New Testament church, or kingdom.

Paul says that these children of Christ are the seed of Abraham, for "if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29). This is the **true Israel of God**. In the Christian dispensation, the real and only seed of Abraham is the spiritual seed, the children of promise, those who are saved out of all nations through the blood of Jesus. This is the New Testament church. And since Christ is "head over all things to the church," its governor, lawmaker, and king, we see clearly how the Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled during the Christian era.

Chapter VIII

The Christian Dispensation Is the Last

Since the beginning of time, one long age, or dispensation, has followed another, in which God who "at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Heb. 1:1, 2). "These days," then, that make up the gospel age, ushered in by the coming of Messiah, are the "last days." We are now living in "the last days" of time; and since there can be no days after the last, the idea that another age of a thousand years of time will follow the present is utterly refuted. On the great day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the hundred and twenty at Jerusalem, Peter addressed the multitude assembled at that time as follows: "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh" (Acts 2:16, 17). The mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost received at that time ushered in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, and we are still living under its blessings and privileges, praise God! This is the most propitious age of grace and salvation the world has ever seen or will see. "Behold, NOW is the accepted time; behold NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION" (2 Cor. 6:2). Note the fact that the days that make up this Christian era, this gospel day of salvation, are the "last."

Time is a limited portion of duration, and we are now living "in the last time" (Jude 18). The Apostle John was positive on this point. Hear him: "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." (1 John 2:18). We now live in the last measured portion of duration. Nothing remains after the Christian era but eternity. All these texts stand in square contradiction to the theory that a thousand years of time will follow the gospel age. Peter plainly states that Jesus Christ was manifested in "these last times for you" (1 Pet. 1:20). In the direct from the Greek this is rendered "last of the times." In Ephesians 1:10 Paul shows that the present work of gathering "together in one all things in Christ," both Jews and Gentiles, all reconciled in one body by the cross, one family in heaven and in earth, is "in the dispensation of the fullness of times." This is another positive proof that the current Christian era is the dispensation when time is full—complete. In 1 Cor. 10:7-11 the apostle tells us that the lusting after evil things, idolatry, murmurings, etc., of the children of Israel "are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." Conybeare and Howson render this, "were written for our warning, who live in the end of the ages." Since we live in the end of the ages, the age-to-come theory is refuted. Just a step before us is the "end of the world," the "end of all things" pertaining to this earth and time.

The last time is here, and salvation is now or never. Allow me to say here that everything included in redemption that pertains to the soul of man is now fully attainable through Jesus Christ. In Hebrews 9:26 we read that "now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." This is rendered, "at the full end of the ages" in **Young's Bible Translation**, and "completion of the ages" in the **Emphatic**

Diaglott. The sacrifice of Christ, the giving of his life for the sin of the world, was in the last dispensation of time, the "completion of the ages." The present gospel age is the consummation of all time, the completion of all the ages allotted to this world. As probation ends with time, and salvation with probation, it follows as an absolute certainty that right now, under the abounding grace of God, mankind is enjoying the last chance of salvation and this world is moving through its last epoch of time. The next will be the coming of Christ and the general judgment, when we all shall be the inhabitants of eternity.

Chapter IX

Eternity

"The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy" (Isa. 57:15). This is the only text in the King James Version of the Scriptures where the word "eternity" occurs. It is probably one of the most comprehensive words in the Bible and in all language. It embraces everything past, present, and future. It comprehends God himself, who "inhabiteth eternity," for he was before all things. If people would only stop long enough in their mad rush through the rattle of social, political, and commercial events, and world affairs that are occupying their minds, and carefully consider the great eternity to which we are all hastily going, this world in which we live would be different. Eternity cannot be measured nor fully comprehended. No cycle of years can estimate it. It is a boundless ocean, a shoreless sea, a "world without end."

The reward of the righteous in heaven and the punishment of the wicked in hell will be to all eternity. The same terms employed to express and to measure the never-ending bliss, glory, and reward of the righteous beyond the resurrection and the judgment are used to express the never-ending torment and punishment of the wicked. There are three words in the New Testament that express eternity, and they are translated from the same Greek word **aionios**. These are

eternal, **everlasting**, and **forever**. I will consider them in the order given.

First, **eternal**. With reference to the future state of the righteous: "in the world to come eternal life" (Mark 10:30); "eternal glory"

(2 Tim. 2:10); "eternal inheritance" (Heb. 9:15); "a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5:1). With reference to the future state of the wicked: "is in danger of eternal damnation" (Mark 3:29); "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7).

Second, **everlasting**. With reference to the righteous: "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Rom. 6:22); "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:10, 11). With reference to the future state of the wicked the same term is employed; "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous unto life eternal" (Matt. 25:46); "Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (vs. 41).

Third, **forever**. Applied to the future of the righteous; "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever!" (Dan. 12:3). "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever" (Rev. 22:5). Now we turn to the eternal state of the wicked: "To whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever" (2 Pet. 2:17). "To whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever" (Jude 13). Hell was prepared for the devil and

his angels. In the day of judgment they will be cast into it. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented . . . forever and ever" (Rev. 20:10). In the final day of eternal rewards Jesus will sentence the wicked to the same hell of fire and torment (Matt. 25:41). "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation: and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever" (Rev. 14:10, 11).

The same words that measure the life, the salvation, and the inheritance of the righteous in heaven, as well as the punishment of the lost in hell, are used to measure the existence of God himself, the endurance of his throne in heaven, and the existence of the Holy Spirit. Let me call your attention to a few examples: "The everlasting God" (Rom. 16:26). "The eternal Spirit" (Heb. 9:14). "King eternal" (1 Tim. 1:17). "The Son abideth ever" (John 8:35). "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever" (Heb. 1:8). No earthly wisdom can overthrow these solid truths. As long as heaven shall last, as long as the righteous enjoy its felicities, so long will the damnation of the wicked last. I believe it will be profitable to give the definition of these terms by standard authors, and authorities. Everlasting: "Eternal" (Liddell and Scott,) "perpetual" (Young), "without end, perpetual and interminable" (Schleusner), "to eternity" (Cremer), "indeterminate as to duration, eternal" (Baxter), "unlimited as to duration" (Greenfield), "ever-enduring, perpetual, implying eternity, without end" (Robinson, "lasting or enduring forever; endless" (Webster). Eternal: "Of infinite duration; everlasting" (Webster). Forever: "For a limitless time or endless ages" (Webster).

Let us draw some comparisons. Time, the whole period of human history from creation to the end of this world, is but a fragment of eternity. It might be likened to a small island in the midst of the ocean. Gradually its sands are being washed away by the mighty billows which sweep against its shores. At length—God only knows how soon—the billows of eternity will sweep over and wash away the last sands of time and nothing will remain but eternity. Now, reader, your life and mine are but a very small fragment of time. Let us suppose that the average human life on this earth is seventy years and that the future would last only 100,000 years. Would it not pay to be a Christian? Imagine you would have to suffer as much and endure as many hardships and persecutions as Paul did, even for seventy years. You would have 99,930 more years of glory and happiness with Christ, the angels, and the redeemed hosts of heaven, than all your period of suffering here. Glory to God, my soul says, "Press on to glory." On the other hand, I want to appeal to the sinner on the same basis. Suppose for seventy short years of life here, you could enjoy all the pleasure that sinful life can give, climb to the pinnacle of earthly fame and honor, accumulate riches so you could revel in worldly aggrandizement, and then die without hope. You would have 99,930 more years of torment amidst howling demons and the "weeping and wailing" of the damned in hell than all your years of enjoyment in sin. What a fool you are to live another day in sin!

Listen! 100,000 years do not measure the future. It takes ten hundred thousand years to make a million, and a thousand million to make a billion. I heard a speaker say that approximately one billion minutes have passed since the day Christ was born in Bethlehem. This statement interested me, so I began to count. There

are 1,440 minutes in a twenty-four hour day, and 525,600 in a year. Multiply this by the years that have elapsed from the birth of Christ to January 1, 1942, and the sum total is a little over 1,000,000,000. Now think of as many years as there have been minutes since the Savior was born. May we wake up to the realities of the future! It takes a thousand billion to make a trillion, a thousand trillion to make a quadrillion, a thousand quadrillion to make a quintillion, a thousand quintillion to make a sextillion, a thousand sextillion, a thousand octillion to make a nonillion, and a thousand nonillion to make a decillion, written with a 1 and 33 zeros.

Some school teachers of Indiana met a number of years ago and decided to get an idea of how many a decillion is. One of them, Charles H. Hartung, pastor of a congregation in Fort Wayne, Ind., told me the result. They bored a hole in a plank two inches deep and two inches in diameter, filled it with mustard seed, and counted every seed. They found 16,000 of these seeds to a cubic inch. From this they began their calculations. Before they reached the enormous sum of a decillion, they had enough mustard seed to cover the whole earth as deep as the distance from here to the moon. Think of that many years! Let us suppose that a bird comes from a far-distant planet, make one trip in each decillion years, and carries away as much water in its tiny mouth as it can contain. How long would it take that bird to empty a two-gallon pail of water? That bird can transfer to that distant planet all the waters contained in the springs, wells, ponds, rivers, lakes, and oceans, and actually drain this earth dry, and that would not measure eternity. After carrying away all the water on this earth, suppose the bird still continues its journey only once in a decillion years, and carries away in its tiny mouth a grain of sand from the seashore, or a bit of dust. That bird can carry away the entire globe on which we live, and eternity has not been

measured. Friend, YOU are going there. We shall all soon be there. Death is the gateway through which we all must pass, and death fixes our destiny either in heaven or in hell. While you are reading this, your casket may be in some undertaker's room, and the pick and shovel that will dig your grave may be in a tool house. The minute your lungs cease to inhale and exhale, the moment your heart stops beating, you are there. The supreme question of life is, Are YOU READY?

Chapter X

The Reign of God's Saints on the Earth

Much has been written relative to a supposed reign of God's people here on the earth, but the majority of the writers on this subject place this reign in a future age. If it can be shown that the reign of God's saints on earth is a present experience during this dispensation of divine grace, then the contention of a future reign on earth is false. It may surprise some of our readers when I state positively that the notion of resurrected saints reigning on earth a thousand years with Christ is positively without scriptural support. A careful study of the texts used to support any such theory will show that they teach absolutely nothing of the kind.

That the Bible teaches a reign of God's people on earth, we do not deny; but instead of its being in a future age, thank God, it is the present experience of all those who are fully saved. We have proved that in this dispensation God's people are "in the kingdom of his dear Son" and possess its elements in their hearts—"righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost." Jesus plainly taught that "the kingdom of God is within you," or, as some translators render it, "the reign of God is within you." Therefore it is evident that identical with our induction into the kingdom and possessing the kingdom in us, the reign of God's saints takes place. In fact, it cannot be otherwise. Possessing the kingdom and reigning through the grace of God is the same experience.

Paul says, "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:21).

Adam Clarke says on this text: "As extensively, as deeply, as universally, as 'sin'—whether implying the act of transgression, or the impure principle from which the act proceeds, or both—'hath reigned,' subjected the whole soul and all its powers and faculties, 'unto death' temporal, spiritual, and eternal; even so, as extensively, deeply, and universally, might grace reign, filling the whole earth, and pervading, purifying, and refining the whole soul, through righteousness, through this free salvation by the blood of the Lamb, and by the principle of holiness in-wrought in the soul by the Holy Ghost, unto eternal life—the proper object of an immortal spirit's hope. Where God is, where he is seen as he is, by Jesus Christ our Lord, as the cause of our salvation, the means by which it is communicated, and the source whence it springs. Thus we find that the salvation from sin here is as extensive and complete as the guilt and contamination of sin. Here is glorying: 'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

This exegesis beautifully presents the truth concerning the reign of God's grace in the human soul, the result of which enables us, through God's abundant favor and the possession of his own holiness, to reign triumphant in this life. "For if by one man's offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:17). Death is here represented as reigning over mankind; but, thank God, salvation places us in kingly triumph over all the elements of the world. "Whatsoever is born of

God overcometh the world" (1 John 5:4). And not only this, but we reign over Satan himself, who claims to be ruler of the earth: "Behold, I give unto you power . . . over all the power of the enemy" (Luke 10:19).

Peter thus describes the church in this dispensation: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood [kingly priesthood; that is, a priesthood of kings], an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9). The very things that many people are looking for and expecting to enjoy in some fancied age yet to come, are being enjoyed by God's people at this present time. Writing to the churches of Asia in the first century of Christian grace, John declared that Jesus Christ "hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father" (Rev. 1:6). Right in harmony with this, John testifies of himself, that he was "in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ' (vs. 9). God's church in this dispensation is a priesthood of kings who, through the grace and righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, "reign in life." Hallelujah! All who live in sin are slaves to their own lusts, are not able to govern themselves; but salvation makes us "kings," because through Christ we can rule our own selves, our own passions, appetites, and desires. Paul says, "I keep under my body" (1 Cor. 9:27). And a wise man of ancient times said, "He that ruleth his spirit [is better] than he that taketh a city" (Prov. 16:32).

Millennialists are expecting to reign over Satan when he will be cast into a great pit and bound with a mighty chain, so that he cannot harm anyone: that certainly would be such a very easy thing that no one would boast of it. Thank God, we have something better than that; right now, while Satan is loose, going about as a roaring lion "seeking whom he may devour," we have power over him. In the

name of Jesus Christ every demon in hell is subject to the saints of God. We reign over sin. Sin held the whole human family under its dominion for thousands of years, but now, in the Christian era, "sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14). Yes, we reign over sin. The truly saved now possess the very things that formalists are looking for in the future. "Now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness" (vs. 22). A master of the situation of life, with a peace that nothing disturbs—this is now realized in the kingdom of God. Well hath the poet said:

One we hail as King immortal He did earth and hell subdue; And bequeathing us his glory, We are kings anointed, too.

Shall we, then, by sin be humbled? Must we yield to any foe? No, by heaven's gift, we're reigning Over all this world below.

Oh, what grace and high promotion, That in Jesus I should be Raised from sin to royal honor, Even reigning, Lord, with thee!

All this life is blissful sunshine, Earth is subject at our feet; Heaven pours its richest blessings Round our throne of love complete.

I am reigning, sweetly reigning, Far above this world of strife; In my blessed, loving Saviour. I am reigning in this life.

—D. S. Warner

Chapter XI

The Thousand Years Reign With Christ

In Revelation 12, the church is set forth under the double symbol of a woman and her son, in order to show two phases of her existence during the Apostasy. It will be seen that the woman "brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron." Let us consider this woman as presented in the symbol. She represents the church of God, the bride of Christ, in her primitive unity and purity. The blessed union which exists between Christ and his people is expressed by the term "marriage." This is true both of our present spiritual union with Christ and of our future, eternal union with him. The whole church is in Scripture termed "the Lamb's wife," "the bride of Christ," etc. She was "clothed with the sun"—a striking emblem of Jesus Christ, the "Sun righteousness," the light and glory of the church. The church was clothed with his righteousness, which is represented in the Apocalypse by "fine linen, clean and white" (Rev. 19:8). She was clothed with his holiness, with the beautiful garments of salvation.

"And upon her head a crown." Ah! she sat a queen. Her husband, the glorious Lord, is the king of heaven—"King of kings, and Lord of lords." He ascended on high, "crowned with glory and honor," and now reigns a monarch over earth and sky. His wife—

the church—shares this royal honor. With the same glory that the Father crowned him, he crowned her: "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them" (John 17:22). She shares his reign in the kingdom of peace. He testifies, "I have overcome the world"; and we read that "whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world."

The twelve stars in her crown represent the twelve apostles of the Lamb. These adorn her fair brow. Her travail in birth and pain to be delivered represent the earnest labor of the early church for the salvation of the world. Like a true wife, the church joined heart and soul with Christ in the great cause which drew him to earth. The whole church is a unit, made up of "workers together with God" in the salvation of lost souls. Both "the Spirit and the bride say, Come." "As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children."

What does this man-child represent? Some have supposed that it refers to Christ; but for the following reasons it cannot: The woman here referred to is the New Testament church. The church labors and pains to be delivered and suddenly bring forth this child. Christ is not a child of the church of God. She is not his mother. Really, he is her founder, her husband. The prophet calls him "the everlasting Father." Since this child cannot refer to Christ, we shall clearly prove that it refers to the great and mighty host of children brought forth by the pristine church.

This man-child is described in the prophecy of Isaiah as follows: "Before she travailed, she brought forth; before pain came, she was delivered of a man-child. Who hath heard of such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord: shall I cause to bring

forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God. Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all we that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: that ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforted, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem" (Isa. 66:7-13).

The man-child portrayed in Isaiah's prophecy is the same manchild seen in Revelation 12. Isaiah and Revelation both declare this to be "a nation born at once," "in one day." A nation of children, born suddenly, constitutes the man-child. This child "is borne upon her sides, and dandled upon her knees." To what does this refer but to newborn babes, who desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby? (1 Peter 2:2) Paul said to some of these "babes in Christ," "I have fed you with milk" (1 Cor. 3:1-3). Was not this fulfilled in the early church? While Zion was in travail in an upper room in Jerusalem, she suddenly brought forth, and a nation of three thousand children was born into the family in one day. In a few days the number of children increased to about ten thousand. It was but a little while till the number increased to hundreds of thousands. It will be observed in Ephesians 2:15 that the host of Jews and Gentiles born into the church of God, made one in his blood, and reconciled unto God in one body, constitute "one new man."

It may be objected that this child was to rule the nations. This is the same as Daniel prophesied, namely: "The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High" (Dan.

7:27). And in Revelations 2:26, 27, it is said, "He that overcometh . . . to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron." "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). This represents the glorious triumph of the early church. The breaking of the nations into shivers and the ruling of them with a rod of iron corresponds to the stone of Dan. 2 in breaking in pieces and consuming the brass, iron, silver, and gold, until no place is found for them. It was the iron rod of the gospel that broke them in pieces. In Revelations 12:17 reference is made to the "remnant of the woman's seed," which proves that the man-child was not a single personage.

Next is seen a "great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads," standing before the woman to "devour her child as soon as it was born." How true was the fulfillment! This dragon represented pagan Rome, and just as fast as men accepted the Christian faith, the pagans were ready to devour them. Such were the bloody days of the church under the heathen Roman Empire. But Christianity spread so rapidly and the gospel had such a crushing effect, that paganism finally tottered and fell.

But what became of that holy nation, the triumphant throng, the great host of saints who were marching onward victorious over every foe? They suddenly disappeared from the earth. "The child was caught up unto God, and to his throne"—ascended to paradise—while darkness, superstition, and iniquity flooded the earth. The brilliant light of Christianity was eclipsed by the darkness of apostasy. "The woman fled into the wilderness." Here the reader will see the wisdom and necessity of a double symbol, a woman and her son, which was chosen to set forth two phases of the church. If

but a single symbol were used, how could the church thereby be represented as continuing on earth and fleeing into the wilderness, and at the same time be represented as overcome, persecuted to death, and caught up unto God and to his throne?

The phase represented by the man-child, who was caught up unto God, is that part of the church which was cut off from the earth through martyrdom and persecution. The woman who fled into the wilderness represents that phase of the church which continued on earth but was hidden in the great Apostasy. This part in the wilderness was crushed under human authority. The beast's power ruled, and the reign of God's people on earth largely ceased.

Now, we shall follow the mighty host of martyrs who were caught up into paradise. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4, 6).

Notice, that it was the "**souls**" of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus that reigned with Christ.

These were disembodied spirits that had had part in the first resurrection. This first resurrection is not a literal one, but is a resurrection by the power of God from a dead state in sin to life in Jesus Christ. Paul speaks of this in his Ephesian letter: "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins . . . And hath raised us up together" (Eph. 2:1, 6); also, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead" (5:4). To this John adds his

beautiful testimony—"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14). The "first resurrection" of Revelation 20 may have a specific or local meaning created by the context, referring to the exaltation of the martyrs—those who were slain for Christ's sake were caught up to God and to his throne. These souls had taken part in the spiritual resurrection while they were on earth and were blessed and holy. Because of their trueness to God they "were beheaded for the witness of Jesus," after which they ascended into paradise, where we see them reigning with Christ. Not a word is said about people's being literally resurrected and reigning on the earth. This reign was before the resurrection of the literal dead, for the resurrection of these does not take place until after the one thousand years, and it includes both good and bad; for some are found written in the book of life, and some are not. (See vss. 11-15).

It is clearly evident that there is no reign on earth mentioned here at all; the reign was with Christ. This harmonizes with Paul's statement, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you" (Phil. 1:23, 24).

These same souls are brought to view in Revelation 6:9-11, and here it will be clearly seen that they were not literally resurrected and were not reigning on the earth at all. "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as

they were, should be fulfilled." In these texts, we see again the same persons symbolized by the man-child of chapter 12. They were souls in a disembodied state. They were not on the earth, but they were in a state of "rest" with Christ. These scriptures considered together blend harmoniously. First, the church reigns publicly on the earth, but this phase is cut off, by the Apostasy on the one hand and by the persecutions of the beast on the other; and being thus interrupted on the earth, the scene suddenly changes to the realm of paradise, and we behold the souls of martyrs reigning there. They "rest" while they "reign with Christ," and they "wait" for the end of that earthly reign of tyranny and usurpation in which their "fellow servants also and their brethren" shall be killed as they were.

The special time which this reign in paradise brings to our view is that period during which God's people on earth were martyred for the testimony of Jesus. At the end of this period, as we have already noticed, the scene is again laid upon earth, and the triumph of the church and the spiritual reign of the kingdom is again manifested. But as the public reign of the apostolic church ceased gradually, and as its restoration in the last days also takes place gradually, no exact dates for this phase of the subject can be given; therefore, the indefinite period of time that elapsed between the two is stated simply by the term "a thousand years." This is not literally a thousand years, for that would be less than the reign of the papacy, which was twelve hundred and sixty years; moreover, die period under consideration not only covers that period but also extends into the Protestant era; for during its earlier days, Protestantism also martyred some of God's witnesses. In fact, all the time periods mentioned in the Revelation are symbolic, not literal. If a literal period of a thousand years had been meant, the prediction would probably have said a thousand days; just as the twelve hundred and

sixty years was symbolic by a "thousand two hundred and threescore days."

First, we see a glorious reign on earth in the beginning of the Christian era. Next the long reign of Apostasy, when the public reign of God's people on earth ceases. But during that long period, symbolically termed a thousand years, the reign goes on in paradise, by the souls of those who had taken part in the great spiritual resurrection and had reigned on earth. At the end of this time, the saints again possess the kingdom. And in the closing days of the Christian dispensation, God's people enjoy a reign of righteousness on earth again. The idea is not that those souls in paradise reign merely a thousand years, for they shall reign forever and ever; the truth intended is that during the great Apostasy, the time when the beast and the image would reign on earth and have dominion, the endless reign of Christ in his saints would go on uninterrupted. How fittingly the language of Clarke, already quoted, applies on this point: "The kingdom of grace here, and the kingdom of glory above, form the endless government of Christ."

Chapter XII

The Binding and Loosing of the Dragon

Throughout the book of Revelation there are three great religious powers brought to view, symbolized by "the dragon," "the beast," and his "image," or false prophet. The pagan power is symbolized by the dragon.

The first mention of the dragon is in Revelation 12. Here we have "a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads." He had a tail with which he drew the third part of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. In the same chapter, the Christian church is portrayed by the symbol of a woman and her child. It will be seen that "the dragon was wroth with the woman" and "persecuted" her and "made war with the remnant of her seed." A great conflict took place between Michael and his angels, and this great dragon and his angels; but the dragon was defeated, and as a result of this defeat, a loud voice was heard saying, "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ" (vs. 10). This shows that the conflict was between Christ and the dragon. Some expositors have supposed that this dragon is the devil; but it must take a great stretch of imagination to believe that Beelzebub is a monster dragon with seven heads and ten horns and a tail with which he drags after him the stars of heaven. It seems some people forget that Revelation is a

book of symbols and that the language is highly figurative. This dragon would properly symbolize a tyrannical, persecuting government. It was a "red dragon," which carries the idea of bloodthirstiness and cruelty.

It is very easy to identify this dragon by his heads and horns. It will be seen that he had his crowns upon his heads. In the thirteenth chapter we read that John saw a beast rising up out of the sea with the same number of heads and horns, but ten crowns on his horns; and the dragon gave him (the beast) "his power, and his seat, and great authority." So far as the heads and horns are concerned, the only difference between the two is that the crowns—a symbol of supreme authority and power—had been transferred from the heads to the horns. In Revelation 17, John saw the same beast again, and there it is said of the seven heads, "There are seven kings, five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space" (vs. 10). Concerning the horns he was told, "The horns which thou seest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet" (vs. 12). With this explanation it will be easy to identify the dragon of chapter 12 and the beast of chapter 13 and 17 as the Roman Empire; the first under the pagan form, and the second under the papal. The seven heads represent the seven supreme forms of government which the Roman Empire had, which were as follows: The Regal power, the Dictatorship, the Decemvirate, the Consular, the Triumvirate, the Imperial, and the Patriciate. The ten horns of the dragon represent the ten kingdoms which grew out of the Roman Empire during its decline and fall. The casting-down of the stars doubtless refers to the bright luminaries who were martyred during the reign of paganism. Just as fast as men accepted the Christian faith the pagans were ready to devour them. Such were the bloody days of the church under pagan Rome.

The appellations "old serpent, devil and Satan," applied to the dragon, must be understood figuratively. Paganism could well be called "the devil," because its religion was purely of the devil. Paul says, "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils; ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils" (1 Cor. 10:20-21). Paganism is called Satan, a Hebrew word signifying an adversary, from the way it opposed and persecuted the Christian church. It is also called "that old serpent which deceiveth the whole world," from its subtlety against the Christians, and because it made the whole Roman world, as far as was in its power, embrace the absurdities of paganism. At the ushering in of the gospel dispensation, paganism was the universal religion. From a careful reading of the conflicts of the early Christians with this dragon power, one would almost be led to believe that paganism under the Roman government was Satan incarnate. It was through this system that the devil worked his greatest opposition against Christianity. It is a fact that the early Christians called the pagan power "the devil," and they rightly named it; for it was the principal agent through which the devil deceived the world and opposed the church of God in primitive days.

There is but one dragon mentioned in the Revelation. In chapter 12, where he first appears, he is described as **a** great red dragon, and in every subsequent place where he is referred to, he is spoken of as **the** dragon, showing that it is the same dragon. "And I saw an angel come down from heaven having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the

thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season" (Rev. 20:1-3).

Perhaps this scripture has been more speculated upon than any other in the Bible. It is used as a foundation for all the multiplied absurdities and diversities of false doctrines respecting a fancied millennial future. In fact, many will set aside the plain testimony of the New Testament Scriptures and literalize this text. It is certainly a very unsafe mode of interpretation to found a theory upon the metaphorical and symbolical language of Scriptures, and then try to bend all the plain, simple declarations of truth to harmonize with such a theory. Anyone can see at a glance that the safe and right way is to place such interpretations upon the highly figurative language of Scripture as will perfectly harmonize with the plain, simple teaching of Scripture elsewhere. Almost everybody admits that the remainder of Revelation is highly figurative, but when they come to Revelation 20, they insist upon a literal interpretation. Revelation 20:1-9 is as highly symbolical as Revelation 9, 12, and 13.

The prophecies of Revelation are laid out in parallel series, each covering the Christian dispensation. One theme is taken up and carried through until the end, then the narrative returns to take up another theme or a different phase of the same theme covering the same ground and terminating at the same point. Revelation 19:20 ends one series of prophecy, showing the overthrow of certain evil powers in the lake of fire. Then chapter 20 begins a new series of prophecy, likewise covering the gospel dispensation, and ending at the same point, the lake of fire (vs. 15). Note this point carefully. The leading events of this chapter take place before the second coming of Christ and the judgment scene, and not afterwards (vss. 11-15). All the events from verses 1 to 9 lead up to the time when the corrupt powers of earth will be cast into the lake of fire; then

follows the great judgment scene, when the righteous will be rewarded and the wicked punished (vss. 11-15). So the events of Revelation 20:1-9 must precede the second coming of Christ and the general judgment, instead of following it, as many people have believed. Notice, also, that this particular character of Revelation 20 is designated "the dragon." This implies that the object has already been introduced. The dragon of Revelation 20 is identical with the dragon of Revelation 12. Observe how closely Revelation 20:1-3 agrees with Revelation 12. A careful comparison makes clear that we have here two parallel series covering in some respects two separate phases of thought, and yet each sustains and explains the other. The dragon in both chapters signified the great corrupt system of paganism which for centuries deceived the nations.

In chapter 12 we have brought to view the great conflict between primitive Christianity and heathenism under the symbol of Michael and his angels fighting with the dragon and his angels. The power of Christ prevailed, and the Christians overcame the dragon. In Revelation 20, an angel came from heaven, bound the dragon and hurled him from the lofty position which he held to the great abyss from which he emanated.

When Christianity first commenced its warfare with this huge system of error, almost the entire then-known world was under its deceptive influence; but by a long conflict, in which thousands of the noble followers of the Lamb were slaughtered this antichristian public system of pagan infidelity was at last completely overthrown; and the final result was that the civilized world became as completely Christian (nominally, at least) as it ever had been pagan. This great transformation could never have been effected without the undying heroism and wholehearted

consecration of the first disciples of Christ. From this time the dragon as such—as a public deceiver of the nations throughout the apocalyptic earth—was overthrown. This marks the beginning of the thousand years mentioned.

Since many of the principles of heathenism were copied by the Church of Rome, it may be difficult for some to understand at first why it is said that the dragon no longer deceived the nations after being cast down by primitive Christianity; but this becomes clear when we consider what the dragon really was, and what the Church of Rome was understood to be. A time came when the entire civilized world knew that heathenism as such was wrong, and rejected the very idea of a plurality of gods; but they were led to believe that they could adapt many of their former rights and ceremonies to the worship of the one true God in whom they believed and thereby render acceptable service to him, and were sure that the Romish church was the one true apostolic church. It was not the dragon, or heathenism, that then deceived them; it was Christianity a false Christianity.

The manner in which the people were deceived during the time following the casting-down of heathenism in the beginning is brought to view in Revelation 13 and 17. The entire reign of the Apostasy of the Christian era covers the same period included in the one thousand years mentioned in this vision before us.

The loosing of the dragon is no other than the revival of paganism in the closing days of this world's history. In fact, this is going on right now, and it all will end with the final judgment, at which time Satan and all the lost will be cast into the lake of fire and the righteous will inhabit the new heaven and the new earth. (See Rev. 20:10-15; 21; 22.)

Chapter XIII

Three Prophetic Questions Answered

I am aware that many sincere people, after reading all contained in this book so far, will have some questions as a result of former teaching and ideas. It is the purpose of this chapter to give the correct and true Bible answer to these questions.

When Will the Nations Learn War No More?

In Isaiah 2:2-4 and Micah 4:1-3 we have the same prophecy in the same language. I quote from Isaiah: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."

Let us inquire of the prophet when the things contained in this prediction were to reach a fulfillment. He himself tells us in plain unmistakable language that "it shall come to pass **in the last days**." In Acts 2:16, 17 we learn that the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost took place "in the last days." Again we read in Heb. 1:1, 2 that God spoke to us by his Son "in these last days." The gospel age, the Holy Ghost dispensation, then, constitute the "last days." This being true, we are now living in the time when all contained in this prophecy was to "come to pass." We shall now consider the things predicted.

The "mountain of the Lord's house," also termed the "mountain of the Lord," the "house of the God of Jacob," to the Hebrew brethren, "Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God," which he denominates "the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven" (Heb. 12:22, 23). It is in this dispensation that the saints in light dwell in the mountain of God's holiness, and this constitutes the Christian church. "And all nations shall flow unto it." This clearly refers to the accomplishments of the gospel during the current age. Under the law, the true God was known to Israel only, but the gospel privileges are extended to all nations. Literal Zion was the dwelling place of the Jews. Spiritual Zion is the abode of the saved of all nations; for "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." By reference to Luke 24:47, it will be seen that this is now fulfilled in "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Christ himself applied the prophecy thus just before his ascension: "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Now, in connection with this, and among the things that were to come to pass in these last days, the prophet added, "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." Some have thought that this refers to a time of universal peace among the literal nations of earth; and they conclude that since the nations are in a general state of unrest and war, another age must follow the present one when these predictions of universal peace will be realized. The fact is, that the ideal state of society as set forth in these prophecies of the Old Testament does not refer to the political conditions of the world, but rather to the peaceful condition and state of the kingdom of God. There is nothing that can effect universal peace except universal righteousness. Such pictures as the prophet here gives were not intended to describe the condition of the temporal, political kingdoms of earth, but the happy state of that "holy nation" gathered out from all the nations and peoples and kingdoms of the earth—the saints who dwell in Zion. It is descriptive of the glorious peace and unity which exist among the saved of all nations who are gathered into the blessed kingdom of God

This perfectly harmonizes with the angel's prediction that Christ's first coming would bring "peace on earth and good will toward men." In the kingdom of grace, the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, in fact, between all nations of men, is broken down, and through salvation they are brought into one family, where their hearts are knit together in love. And perfect peace reigns in Mount Zion. No more wrangling or quarreling, for war is forever destroyed, and nothing put peace reigns in the hearts of the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ in this dispensation. In Micah 4:17 we have the place of this peaceful reign clearly located:

"And the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even forever."

Two distinct phases of Christ's kingdom are brought out in many of the prophecies of the Old Testament, as well as in the teachings of the New Testament. One portrays Christ as a conqueror, riding forth as a mighty warrior, followed by the armies of heaven, vanquishing all his foes in every conflict. He is seen going forth against the hosts of hell and darkness "conquering and to conquer." With direct reference to this distinct phase of the accomplishments of the kingdom of heaven, the prophet Joel speaks: "Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong" (Joel 3:9, 10). But in the prophecy of Isaiah quoted at the beginning of this chapter and a parallel one in Micah 4, we have Christ's kingdom described from an entirely different point of view—the peaceful reign of righteousness; and Christ is seen as the "prince of peace."

Through the grace and truth of God, the saved of all nations are brought into one fold; belong to but one church, the church of God; are all of one heart and one soul; one mind; all speak the same things; all have one faith, one spirit; all strive together, rejoice together, assemble together, and see eye to eye. God over all, in all and through them all, knits their hearts together in love. Surely the prophet did not overdraw the picture of this.

Instead of sitting idly by, dreaming of the literal fulfillment of these predictions in an age that will never come, the saints of the most High **are now** enjoying the fulfillment of these blessed truths. D. S. Warner said, "About all the false doctrines in the world today can be summed up under two headings: Some other way but Christ; some other time but now."

When Will the Desert Blossom As a Rose?

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them: and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing" (Isa. 35:1, 2). Note the fact that this desert can "rejoice," even "with joy and singing." It is further said that the sands of the desert "shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God" (vs. 2). This could not be said of literal inanimate sand, on a literal desert. I have traveled through the Desert of Arabia, and the Syrian Desert, and I have seen a great expanse of the Sahara Desert in Northern Africa, as well as our own deserts in Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, and other states, but never have I seen sands on any of these literal deserts capable of seeing, singing, or rejoicing. A moment's reflection should convince any reasonable person that the desert of which the prophet is speaking is an intelligent, moral, spiritual desert. "Desert" is used metaphorically to suggest the barren, sterile, unfruitful state of the unsaved. But when Christ saves us, the water of life he gives irrigates and fertilizes our souls, and we become "like a watered garden."

Jeremiah 17:5-8 shows light on the quotation from Isaiah 35: "Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." Here we see that those who depart from the Lord and live in sin are like "the heath in the desert" and inhabit "parched places in

the wilderness." A better figure could not be employed to denote the desolate state of the unsaved. But when such seek the Lord and turn away from their sins, then is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water" (41:17, 18).

In Psalm 63:1 we have this striking picture of a soul seeking God for salvation: "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." The reader can see at once that these texts are to be interpreted in a highly spiritual sense. The wilderness, solitary place, and desert, simply represent the cheerless, wretched, and barren state of the ungodly. Such are said to inhabit a dry land where no water is. This represents the thirstings and longings of the soul that the pleasures, riches, and honors of this world cannot satisfy. Millions all about us are famishing, thirsting, and dying for want of the living waters; and yet, salvation, like a spring of cool, sparkling, refreshing water, has been provided for every human soul. The invitation is, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters" (Isa. 55:1).

Jesus points to himself as the fountain of life, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37). All are invited; no one excluded. "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). Yes, salvation's waters quench all the thirstings of the human heart and fully satisfy. Listen to the announcement, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of water of life freely" (Rev. 21:6). This means there is a great abundance. Hear Christ again, "But

whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). Here are the springs of water that were to spring forth as "streams in the desert."

At the very time the desert was to blossom, "then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped: then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert" (Isa. 35:5, 6). All this was fulfilled during the personal ministry of Christ, for the Gospels record a history of just such accomplishments as are here predicted. The eyes of the blind were opened, the ears of the deaf were unstopped, the lame were made to walk, and the dumb were made to sing. Nor did this cease when Christ ascended into heaven; it was continued under the labors of the apostles. And, thank God, we are glad to say that in these last days there are thousands who can testify that all contained in this prophecy has been fulfilled. Our eyes have witnessed the very things herein foretold. We are living in the dispensation of time when the good things predicted in Isaiah 35 reach their fulfillment.

In verses 8-10 we have a beautiful picture of the highway of holiness lifted up through the gospel, and the happy state of those who are now "redeemed" through the blood of Christ. These are termed "the ransomed of the Lord." Zion is their dwelling place, and "everlasting joy" is their portion. This expresses the state of those who now enjoy full salvation. There is no reference here to a future age, because all these things are now fully provided for through the atonement of Christ and enjoyed through the abundant grace of God.

"Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation" (Isa. 12:3). "The Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt

be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (Isa. 58:11). These texts locate the desert condition and the watered garden condition in the human soul. This is not a millennial dream, but a glorious, present reality. While we pen these lines our soul is made to drink of the river of his pleasures and of that stream whose waters "make glad the city of God." Through salvation, the sterile, desolate soul is fruitful as a watered garden and blossoms as a rose. The fruits of the Spirit, which are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance, and faith, are borne in great abundance in the lives of God's people through the grace of God. The Christian "is like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Ps. 1:3). He stands in the midst of a sinful and wicked world as an oasis in the desert. Surrounded by the desolation and havoc that sin has wrought, he lives like a fruitful vine laden with the ripe clusters of the sweet graces of the kingdom of heaven. In his heart and life there blooms the Rose of Sharon, the Lily of the Valley.

When Will All the Wild Animals Be Tame?

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

dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 65:25).

These texts are used by many to describe the happy state of things during the supposed millennium. Some with whom I have conversed say that the fire spoken of in Second Peter will burn over all the earth, consuming its works and all the present state of things, restoring it back to the Edenic state, at which time all the wild animals will be tame and the prophet's prediction will literally come true. I asked one of these teachers what would become of the animals while the judgment fires were sweeping over the earth, burning up everything therein. I stated that either the animals must be burned up and afterwards resurrected, or else they must be translated and held somewhere in mid-heaven until after the purifying and consuming fire had swept over the earth. He replied, "Well, the Lord can do either." Such betrays the desperate straits to which men are driven when they endeavor to uphold a wrong doctrine.

A careful study of Isaiah 11 clearly shows that the prophet is speaking of the first advent of Christ and the blessings of his kingdom during the Christian era. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots" (vs. 1). This refers to the coming of Messiah, who himself said, "I am the root and offspring of David" (Rev. 22:16). Verses 1-5 (of Isaiah 11) refer directly to Messiah and his work. Then follows the passage concerning the animals (vss. 6-9). And in verse 10 we read, "In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious." In Romans 15:12 Paul quotes this identical prophecy and applies it to the Christian dispensation. The prophet very clearly tells us the exact place where the prediction concerning the animals would be fulfilled: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my **Holy**

Mountain." This shows that the application is spiritual, not literal. In verse 10 we read, "And his [Christ's] rest shall be glorious." Yes, this glorious condition is now fully realized in the mountain of God's holiness.

In foretelling the work of Messiah and the blessings of his kingdom during the Christian dispensation, the prophets with one accord employed figurative language. Various animals are used in the Word of God to represent different characters of men. For example, Jesus said to his disciples, "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matt. 10:16). To Peter he said, "Feed my lambs." Concerning Herod, he said, "Go ye, and tell that fox" (Luke 13:32). False teachers are compared to "ravening wolves" and "grievous wolves" (Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:29). Paul said, "Beware of dogs" (Phil. 3:2). Speaking of the characters of the damned, it is said, "Without are dogs" (Rev. 22:15). Hypocrites are called "serpents" and "generation of vipers." In Matthew 25, God's people are called "sheep" and unsaved, "goats." In Ezekiel 34 God's people are compared to "sheep" and "fat cattle." This is the sense in which we are to understand Isaiah 11:6-9 and Isaiah 65:25. It teaches how the grace of God in this glorious dispensation would destroy the serpent-like, devouring natures of men, and make the most lionhearted sinners, the most ferocious characters, docile and harmless; even so meek that a "little child" can teach and lead them. It also teaches the glorious love and unity that exist among the redeemed in God's kingdom, where there are no wrangling, backbiting, deceit, and devouring of one another, but peace, which offends no one, and where all are helpers of each other's joy, workers together. And the prophet adds: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." This is a description of the happy condition of the people of God in his holy mount, which is the church of God.

It is very clear that the animals were used to represent the beastly natures of men, which are destroyed in holiness; and also that no ferocious character is on the way to heaven. Surely, literal wild animals cannot walk on a spiritual way, the road to heaven, which is the highway of holiness. Again we see that the very things people expect to realize in some future time are now realized and enjoyed.

Chapter XIV

The Future Kingdom of Glory

In speaking of the signs that were to take place before his second coming, Jesus said, "When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand" (Luke 21:31). In 2 Timothy 4:1 it is said that Christ "shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom."

There is no question that these texts have clear reference to the future; but we deny that they teach Christ's kingdom and reign here on the earth as yet future. The promise that we shall someday enter the kingdom of glory above is given to those who here on earth enter the kingdom of grace. Paul said it is through much tribulation we "shall enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

Christ will come with power and great glory accompanied by tens of thousands of his holy angels. It is said that then "he shall sit on the throne of his glory" and at that time every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess to God. This triumphant climax of Christ's great reign may properly be termed the appearing of his kingdom. It is no doubt with reference to this very thing that Paul said, "He shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom." But heaven itself, with all the glories it contains, which will be the future abode of the redeemed, is properly termed the

"everlasting kingdom of God." It is the eternal kingdom of glory, the happy state of the redeemed in the great hereafter. Speaking with direct reference to this future state, Peter says, "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:11). No doubt Jesus referred to this blessed future state when he spoke of "that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26:29). "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:43). To the saints on earth, this encouraging promise is given: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21).

Instead of teaching a future literal kingdom to be set up in this world, all these texts teach the glories of that future kingdom above, the state of the blessed in heaven itself, which will be our future and eternal home. In that world "they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither the light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and **they shall reign for ever and ever**" (Rev. 22:5).