

Peace or War?

OUR GREAT DAY AND ITS ISSUES

15.000 Edition

"He shall speak Peace unto the Nations."
(Zechariah 9:10; RV)

1915

THE COVENANT PUBLISHING CO.

Reprinted 2020
New Covenant Fellowship
www.newcovenantfellowship.org.au

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1.

Peace or War?

During the last few years the political and ecclesiastical "heavens" have been agitated by a variety of questions. The region of influence over the minds of men is at present a scene of conflict between two opposing forces. In times of stress, men often act wildly, without reason or set purpose; especially the hooligan element, which is always ready to take advantage of any occasion to riot and plunder. But there is always a period of preparation of the minds of men before ever the climax of overwrought emotion arrives. And those who occupy positions of prominence and influence have ever to consider not only the effect of their theories and legislation upon the average responsible and well-meaning citizen, but as well their effect upon the lawless element, and also that large class of irresponsible youth which in time of excitement is generally drawn into association with the baser sort. Failure of legislators and political economists to reason out their theories to their full length, and to foresee the effect they will have upon the people, is largely the cause of the zig-zag, backward and forward, course of modern legislation.

The desire of the majority of men is for peace and happiness and business prosperity, in which they shall have their due share. As to how these are to be attained and maintained, the details are left to others (often mere self-seeking politicians) to work out, and they fall in line with any theory which for the time being seems to promise the desired result. It is only, therefore, as the events of our day are classified and recognised as belonging to one or another theory or set of ideas, that their study gives a true grasp of the situation. Several of these sets of ideas may be tabulated as follows:

The Imperial Idea

..... otherwise known as "world power", requiring immense standing armies and large armaments. In ancient times these were frankly confessed to be for conquest, and were so used; in modern times the Peace Idea has so far prevailed among many peoples that these armaments are ostensibly for defence purposes only, but whenever the Imperial Idea finds its position strong enough, it does not hesitate at aggression.

The Colonial Settlement Idea

..... is linked with the Imperial Idea. Instead of allowing the overplus of population to emigrate to foreign lands, there to build up an alien power, it is desired that they people crown colonies, and thus perpetuate the traditions and enlarge the prestige of the home land.

The Commercial Expansion Idea

..... is intimately associated with the previous two. The conquests of trade are represented as more desirable than those of territory; yet it is observable that the commercial activities are often only the prelude to peaceful occupation and ultimate absorption, peacefully, if possible; violently, if required.

To the credit of these three Ideas may be placed the four largest wars of recent years, as well as the majority of all previous wars: Chino-Japanese; Russo-Japanese; Spanish-American; South African; the establishment of spheres of influence in China by the great powers; the rivalry in Tibet between China and Great Britain; the trouble in Morocco, which threatened to prove the basis of another war, but was settled by diplomacy and mutual concessions, with the result of opening up fresh territory for Imperial Power, Colonial Settlement, and Commercial Expansion. And lastly comes the greatest war of history, now in progress, also to the credit of these three Ideas.

The War Idea

..... is as old as Cain, who, through envy and hate, slew his brother. It is, in fact, even older, for enmity was put between the woman and her seed and the serpent and his seed. There is, and must be, war between good and evil, between the doers of good and the doers of evil. We have then the phrase "justifiable war". Civilization has taken out of the hand of the individual the right to kill his neighbour, but, as represented in the political powers of the world to-day, she maintains her own right to slaughter. Recognizing the universal and necessary conflict between good and evil, each party to a conflict gives out (whether the highest officials believe it or not) that he is fighting "for the right"; "to defend the innocent"; "to overturn oppression"; or for the *blessing* (?!) of the conquered nation or tribe. Those who favour the War Idea have many arguments to bring forward in its defence, most of which are threadbare through long use. Lieut.-Gen. Sir Reg. Hart said in "The Nineteenth Century" (1911):

"In defence of our warlike virtues, I would point out that for some wise, but inscrutable reason, it has pleased the Almighty to constitute all life in this world on a war, and not on a peace basis; and is it wise of the creature to dispute the wisdom of the Creator?"

Here, again, God and religion are brought in as justification for war. Here is a bait to those timid or peace-loving souls who prefer arbitration, but who would not wish to oppose their preferences to the Almighty's. The General has yet to prove, however, that human society, the relation of man to man, was organized by God on a brute-basis; or that, as in the case of the lion and the lamb, "Might makes Right".

The Peace Idea

..... is also a very old one, older than the War Idea; for the Garden of Eden was the home of harmony, peace, and good will. The Peace Idea has many good arguments, and many ardent supporters. It has finally succeeded in convincing

millions of the best element in Europe, America, and Australia that the victories of peace are no less glorious than those of war; but its propaganda has been largely hindered hitherto by the nature of its appeals, which have been usually along Christian and moral lines; doing good to others, following the example of Christ, and so on; whereas the only argument that effectively reaches the ears of the up-holders of the already entrenched military system is that of Self Interest. This argument, Self Interest, has been now advanced in a recently published book by Mr. Angell, "The Great Illusion". In this volume, it is shown that the fruits of conquest are wholly illusory; that small countries, such as Holland and Norway, are more prosperous than large empires; and that for Germany to gain Holland would add nothing to the prosperity of Germany, but rather diminish the prosperity of Holland. War enriches some adventurers and speculators; it does not enrich any people as a whole.

Could the mass of men be convinced that they have been deluding themselves into the continued worship of the War-God, and working against their own best interests, financial as well as social and otherwise, a great step forward would be made in the Peace direction.

The Sinews of Peace

Carnegie's gift of \$10,000,000 as a fund to place the Peace Movement on a war footing was undoubtedly a move in the right direction. Money is called the "sinews of war". Without it, no war could be carried on for a day. A country's interest in Peace or War is not always reflected in legislation, for the war party often makes larger appropriations for military and naval purposes than the people, were they consulted, would approve. The latter are coming to realize that war is not a necessity, but a blot on civilization, and that peaceful pursuits call for as much courage and manliness as the excitements of battle.

When capitalists, whose battles have always been fought by the poor, use their wealth to discourage war, to promote enterprise, and to teach men how to help rather than to destroy one another, then a new era of civilization will have dawned.

The advocates of peace are grieved at the way in which the war spirit is being cultivated among the youth of all civilized countries by the organization of Boy's Brigades, Boy Scouts, Naval Cadets, and so on; and it is hoped that by the agency of Carnegie's Peace Millions many will be taught the better conquests over self and selfishness, sin and disease, and the nobler arts of industry and progressive civilization. A substitute for military training, which will give youth all the benefits of its discipline without its appeal to feelings of revenge and murder was suggested some time ago by the late Professor William James, but the Peace Idea will need to become much stronger before his plan will be universally put into effect.

The breaking out of the great European war in August, 1914, may seem to have put back the clock of civilization and effectually to have silenced the Peace Idea. Among the belligerents the work in hand no doubt absorbs most attention. But the voice of protest against war as a means of settling international disputes grows louder than ever in neutral countries, among humanitarians, and among the masses who suffer most.

In the meantime, the Peace Idea is receiving considerable impetus from

The Socialistic Idea

This idea is also not as new as is generally supposed; having been discussed in ancient Greece and Rome, it has been practised on a small scale here and there by theorists of various nationalities ever since. It has, however, gained great headway since the introduction of the franchise into modern states. It has not, as yet, been tried on a large scale, and it is unlikely that a large number of people will ever be found willing to put

themselves for any length of time under the conditions of semi-servitude required by extreme Socialism. Nevertheless, the dominant idea of Socialism, that the bounties of nature were designed for the benefit of *all* the people, and not for the enrichment of a few, is now generally accepted by all fair-minded people — at least theoretically; practically, the old method, "every man for him-self, and the d.... take the hindmost", is still very much in evidence.

The Individualistic Idea

..... is that under which, in a crude state of society, every man does "that which is right in his own eyes", regardless of the welfare of his neighbour. Anarchists are extreme individualists of a sort, but they are not rightly so named, because they do not give their members the liberty which they wish Society to grant. Every anarchist thinks himself free, yet he is very much a slave to his leaders. The more refined modern Individualistic Idea is that Individual Welfare should be conserved by a Government sufficiently socialistic and paternal to protect and assist, and yet sufficiently aloof not to needlessly interfere with private life and enterprise. Thus, in the Liverpool riots of 1911, the intervention of police and militia, while resented by some, as interference with the rights of "labor", was recognized by others as necessary protection against hooligans, and as much in the interest of the strikers as of any other class.

The Arbitration Idea

..... has been much in evidence in recent years in the settlement of industrial disputes. Now it has become popular as an international institution for the prevention of war. Whether the idea of arbitration with Britain originated with President Taft, or whether it was the outcome of British diplomacy for the sake of an understanding with the United States, which should enhance her own prestige in Europe and the East, that America might be exhibited as a long-lost son now received back into the family, there is no doubt that the lovers of peace welcomed it as a guarantee of the stability of society, and the postponement of war in Europe. The Arbitration Treaty being

extended to France, and in prospect with Japan, both allies of England, undoubtedly further strengthens Britain's position. The Arbitration Idea between nations discountenances the old idea that the only satisfaction for "honour" between nations lies in war; this being the logical sequence to the earlier triumphs of arbitration in settling disputes of "honour" between individuals, which have largely done away with the duel and the vendetta.

The year 1915, when the second edition of this book is published, finds the Arbitration Idea still very strong, but the practice of it in abeyance. This is necessarily what happens with every new idea. It must be believed in and talked up by the few before the many are willing to receive it. And it is only when the many accept it that it can be carried out. Even then the many might sincerely hold the Idea and desire to live up to it, but find themselves blocked by a powerful set of politicians or section of the press. Honour between nations must become a real thing before they will trust each other with Arbitration Treaties, and they must have recourse to a properly-constituted Court, just as individuals have, for final settlement.

General Progress

Each of these sets of ideas has its partisans, its stock phrases, its methods of appeal to popular fears or prejudices, and so on. First one party and then another is in the ascendancy; the defeated party plans and works to regain its lost position; new ideas and parties to represent them arise, and strive for place and power; and so the conflict goes on. It is noticeable, however, that, *on the whole*, certain ideas have been gradually becoming influential during the last twenty years, being accepted by an increasing number of people, and being reflected more and more widely in legislation; for example, "arbitration" and "social uplift" legislation. But a turn of the wheel, and, human nature being what it is, the very opposite set of ideas may any day gain the ascendancy, and undo the work of previous years.

For many years compulsory military training was anathema in Britain, because she had command of the seas, and considered the "tight little island" safe from attack. Twelve years ago compulsory military training in a mild form was introduced into Australia, and now, 1915, compulsory service for the duration of the war has many advocates. The voluntary system in England is thought by many to have failed, while others insist that it has not failed. At the present writing "national service" or conscription is imminent. The previously held opinion that the working man of one nation would not fight against the working man of another proved to have no foundation, and disarmament finds no favour in any country, either belligerent or neutral. But the war has not stopped all progress. Some injustices of the centuries are being quietly removed, such as the supposed right of a father to will away his children from the care of his widow by placing them under guardians. The New South Wales Parliament recently passed a law constituting the widowed mother the natural guardian. One marvels that it could ever have been considered otherwise, even under our very imperfect conditions.

The Co-Operative Idea

..... is another constantly gaining headway, between individuals, between states, between nations — for the betterment of social conditions, and the uplift of the race. Cooperation is also being applied as between states and individuals, to assist in settlement, building homes, the care of the sick, the aged, the weak-minded or "unfit", and the poor. Two striking instances of this latter occurred in 1911 in connection with bread riots in France, and the opium crusade in China. In the former, starving women seized food for their famished children, thus forcibly calling the attention of the Government to the high price of food, and their inability to purchase it. The result was the compulsory reduction of prices. Some day authorities may prefer to regulate the prices of foodstuffs *before* riots rather than after. The present war has made such regulation necessary in all the belligerent countries.

In China, some years ago, the co-operation between the Government and the people in doing away with the cultivation and use of opium, and substituting grain and other more useful crops, was most remarkable. Opium pipes and other paraphernalia of the "den" were publicly burned under the auspices of leading citizens, after the manner in which the people of Ephesus burned their books of magic art under the influence of apostolic preaching.

There must be character and "grit" in a people capable of such a wonderful movement, and their progress in the future will be watched with interest, both as regards moral reform and Christian conversion. Their example should stimulate western nations to similar zeal in the eradication of evil by the peaceful methods of moral suasion and Governmental co-operation. As to whether Englishmen, Americans, and so on would be willing to make so great sacrifices in the interest of their countrymen's moral welfare is another question. Vested interests in Britain and Australia render temperance reform most difficult, even when young recruits are demoralized and their fighting power destroyed.

Co-operation between other bodies is also "in the air", between the different denominations of Christendom, largely due to questions of finance and economical management, between Labor Unions of various trades, between secret societies of various kinds, and so on. When one trade is on strike, another must provide the money to carry it on. A universal strike would soon collapse through lack of means unless the latter were obtained by violence. Co-operation between working men individually and through their unions is the only hope of Labor from their standpoint.

Capital and Labor

Co-operation as between Capital and Labor is still a dream. When both are convinced of the lack of good sense in the present constant bickering and strife they may open their minds more fully to the Ideas which make for peace and goodwill.

Is Democracy a Failure?

Democracy, a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, has been a hundred years on trial. It has succeeded in producing better conditions of labour, higher and more general education, more justice for the masses and for women, and a higher level of general living. Nevertheless, many critics point out that it is a failure in that it has not remedied all evils, such as poverty, ill-health, immorality, drunkenness, and so on.

If it were ever thought that Democracy would make earth an Eden, then it certainly is a failure, for it has not accomplished that end. But it has accomplished this. It has given millions of people a love of liberty and fair play, and made an open arena for the discussion of humanitarian ideas and principles, and for the setting forth of the Gospel of Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men.

It is not to be expected, however, that Peace and Goodwill will become universal and permanent until the great time of trouble has concluded. In the meantime, the people are being enlightened by various Progressive Ideas and will later on be glad to forsake the old arguments of Sin, Selfishness, War, and Aggression. They will then adopt in full the best Imperialism, Socialism, and Cooperation as represented in the Kingdom of God; and will direct their energies to the welfare of mankind and to the subduing and beautifying of the earth as their everlasting home.

Varying Opinions

The part of the Christian, according to the Scriptures, is to look on, but to take no part in the management of this world's affairs, because his citizenship is in Heaven, and the Lord's command is that he shall, for the present, be subject to the powers that be. A Christian may sympathize with all movements that appeal to him as beneficial, but he cannot say positively what political movement is part of God's operation to accomplish His purposes, or what is Satan's work to hinder the

fulfilment of God's purposes. One might be thoroughly convinced, for example, that Scripture lessons in the public schools are a good thing, and yet were they used, he might, after the lapse of a few years, see so many abuses that he would wish they had not been introduced. Contrariwise, one who opposed their introduction might subsequently find many reasons for considering them a good thing, especially when remembering that the Bible is the cornerstone of Protestantism and religious liberty, and that its neglect is bound to react injuriously upon the rising generation. A purely moral training is good in its way, but it can never take the place of heart-communion with God and faith in Jesus Christ as a bulwark in temptation.

The Christian whose God is the God of heaven, and whose Lord is Jesus Christ, upholding all things by the word of His power and working all things after the counsel of His own will, needs to learn to take a large view of things, and also to view events in their *true perspective*. He must learn to judge the relative importance of a local strike or bread riot and an arbitration treaty between two or more great powers; not to exaggerate the meaning of one nor belittle the far-reaching consequences of the other.

By grouping the various happenings under their respective heads, as suggested in this paper, or under other well-defined heads which may occur to him, the Christian will not be like the unreflecting world, in constant terror for the things that are coming on the earth (Luke 21:26; Psalm 46:1-11), nor yet like those who sleep in fancied security, because they think there is nothing wrong, and that all things will continue as they were from the foundation of the world (2 Peter 3:4).

No; he will be the interested spectator of a world-wide Conflict of Ideas, like a non-combatant on a hill overlooking a field of battle; he will be able to note the success or failure of this or that division; the encouragement of this or that battalion by the timely arrival of ammunition and reinforcements; the

decimation of one or other line of defences; the effective fire of sharpshooters and machine guns. And when there is a *lull in the fight*, when Imperialism, Democracy, Colonization, Commercialism, Arbitration, Social Uplift Movements, Universal Labor Unions, have each found their seemingly proper level, when all other devices for "Peace and Safety" seem to have won the day, and all men are fairly convinced that after all Peace is preferable to War. then remember the Scriptures, which say that wars and rumours of wars are not the sign of the end, for they have always been, but, "*When they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh*" (Matthew 24: 6-8; 1 Thessalonians 5:3).

Until then, the Christian's duty is plain, to live soberly and honestly in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation, and to attend to his special commission to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom.

2.

Men's Hearts Failing Them for Fear

The General Strike is Labor's latest weapon for bringing the capitalist to terms, as was recently experienced in Great Britain and at Brisbane, and as will happen again if Labor leaders have their way. The dynamite outrages in America under the auspices of prominent Labor members, if not with the co-operation of the highest Labor leaders, are another feature of the war being waged against the present constitution of society.

Employer and employee have always been in the world; each has his grievances against the other. On the one hand, long hours, hard work, the lowest wages for which labor is obtainable; on the other, risks to money invested, unsatisfactory workmanship, lack of faithful service. But the real difficulty lies deeper than dissatisfaction with mutual relations; it lies in the instinctive desire of every human being to have his own way, to get the most for himself, to be his own master, and to rule others instead of being ruled.

Yet when put to the test every man is not able to be an employer; many men are good, capable craftsmen, but poor managers, and when they do try a business of their own, they go to the wall, for the simple reason that left to themselves they have not the "grit" to make themselves work the requisite number of hours to insure a living, or the capacity to grapple with the forces of nature and of man which operate against them.

Business in this age is based on the competitive system, and no other system is possible among men in their present selfish state. Even the enlightened operations of the Wages Boards and Arbitration Courts of Australia, which have done so much to improve living conditions among all classes of workers, have not relieved the spirit of antagonism between masters and men.

But the chief difficulty, and that which will become increasingly manifest, is the lack of moral responsibility and humane sentiment in the rising generation, and the large numbers of young men "spoiling for a fight" of some description. This is true on both the capitalistic and the labor side. Time was when great wars drew off thousands, rather millions, of able-bodied men, mostly young fellows of an adventurous spirit. True, this left many fields unfilled, many factories idle, many families destitute, but the industrial situation was relieved by the fact that the adventurous spirits either killed each other or were sobered by the horror of the carnage and their own physical sufferings, so that, returning once more to conditions of peace, the survivors were constrained to take what offered and to "settle down". Having relieved the exuberance and practised the folly of youth, they were absorbed by society as tamed and more or less useful citizens.

But not so to-day. Resisting with all their might the regular warfare of yesterday between nations, now generally recognized as a waste of life, energy, and especially of money, the more serious and responsible men of families with homes to maintain, and hence desirous for a settled state of society, are *playing into the hands* of the above class of adventurous youth, and forging a weapon for their own destruction, by agitations against the present order without imposing on the larrikin and irresponsible class the necessary restraints. In the adventures of war some discipline at least was maintained, and when the men broke loose, they preyed on the enemy, and so hastened the triumph of their own cause. But in the class war at present being waged, the hot heads do not exterminate each

other: the irresponsible, the moral delinquents, and self-seeking agitators all continue to flourish and make the maintenance of discipline by the older and more sensible heads all the more difficult.

There is no doubt that the Scriptures blame the capitalistic class for depriving their employees of the fruits of their toil, devouring widow's houses, and so on; and there is no doubt that vengeance must and will be meted out to them, as it was against the frivolous aristocrats of France during the Revolution. But a dispassionate view of the whole situation shows that now as then the overthrow of law and order is the result of the irresponsible and the vicious getting out of control of the better element, and making the latter a party to violence they would not themselves attempt, and only partly approve of in others. And as after the French Revolution the great Napoleon arose to an autocratic power almost unparalleled, showing the reaction of the people from anarchy, and also drawing off to the aforementioned usual conflict between nations the subsequent generation of sports and braves, so there will be a strong reaction against the general strike and the dynamitards and in favour of an autocracy able to deal effectively, not only with the larrikins, the degenerates, the vicious and other of the rough element, but with those of a higher station in life who find no better use for their intelligence than to direct and use these elements for their own advantage.

Whether the reaction against the general strike and against violence generally will lead to the adoption of other more conciliatory methods of negotiation between Capital and Labor, or whether Labor will use this weapon continuously till the social order all over the world is upset, remains to be seen. In the meantime, we who know God, and who understand Who it is that is directing the affairs of men to the overthrow of the last of the four universal empires and the blowing away of the remnants like the dust of the threshing floor, can rest in the assurances and promises of His Word;

"When they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh ... But ye brethren are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief." (1 Thessalonians 5:3-4). The world in its ignorance knows not the meaning of the present unrest; its future is dark and uncertain; its wise men are perplexed. But God's people do understand, they rejoice that the Kingdom is near, and they lift up their heads because their redemption draweth nigh, and they acclaim earth's rightful King who shall cause God's will to be done on earth even as it is done in heaven. Long may He reign!

The above was written in March, 1912. In September, 1915, after one year of war, we find a member of Parliament threatening that if conscription be introduced in Britain Labor will answer by a General Strike. On the other hand, many influential public men urge conscription because with that weapon in hand the Government can break up any strike, local or general, by ordering the strikers to join their respective regiments, or by compulsorily transferring workmen from one munition centre to another. And they point to the precedent established by the French Government when, with that means, it broke the backbone of the Syndicalist Railway Strike in France (1911). Evidently, then, the General Strike is still Labor's sword, hanging by a thread over the head of the Capitalist class. When and if it falls, there will certainly be a still greater time of trouble than at present.

3.

The Second Coming of the Lord

"But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the presence of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that sleep. 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, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
(I Thessalonians 4:13-18; RV margin)

After leaving Philippi, where the shameful treatment of stripes and imprisonment without sanction of the Roman law was administered to them, and was overruled by the Lord for the conversion of the keeper of the prison, Paul and Silas, having Timothy in their company, came in due course of their journey to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. Following his invariable custom when visiting a new territory, Paul attended the synagogue, and for three Sabbath days he reasoned with the Jews out of the Scriptures. He sought to show them by the inspired Word that it was part of the divine arrangement that the Messiah should suffer and die, and that He should be raised from the dead. He alleged, also, that Jesus, having fulfilled these particulars, is the Messiah; or, as the Vatican manuscript puts it, that *"this is the Christ, even Jesus whom I preach unto you"*.

As a result of these three Sabbath days of preaching, and the explanations which doubtless were given inquirers during the week, accompanied by the signs which most certainly were wrought by the hands of Paul and his fellow-workers, the powers of the Jewish "heavens" in Thessalonica were greatly "shaken". It is related that *"some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few"*. The unbelieving Jews, moved with envy, stirred up the rabble of idlers in the market place, in whose company they would not have permitted themselves to be seen on any other occasion, but who were good enough for the present purpose; they incited these roughs, toughs, hoodlums and larrikins to set all the city on an uproar, and to assault the house of Jason, where the preachers were lodging, crying, *"These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; ... these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king, one Jesus"*. Ordinarily, the Jews hated the Caesars and everything pertaining to them with all the fervour of their very ardent natures; they expected "another king", and all hopes of a revival of their nation were based on that expectation. But they would not have Jesus to reign over them, hence their great carefulness for the decrees of Caesar, not that they hated Caesar less, but Jesus more.

The rulers of the city were somewhat troubled when they heard these things; nevertheless, they did no more than take security of Jason and some other brethren, probably having in mind the general character of the Jews, and being somewhat suspicious of this sudden ebullition of loyalty to a hated throne. The believers promptly sent away Paul and Silas to Berea, a city not far distant. On arrival there, the preachers, undeterred by recent experiences, resorted to the synagogue, and there met with a class of Jews more noble than those of Thessalonica, *"in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so. Therefore, many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men not a few"*. Their searching of

the Scriptures of the Old Testament abundantly substantiated the teaching of Paul and Silas, and they received the truth gladly.

But the Jews of Thessalonica were not content with having made that important city untenable for Paul and Silas. When they heard of what had happened at Berea, they came thither also, and pursued the same tactics as at Thessalonica. Immediately the brethren sent away Paul under escort, and those who conducted him brought him as far as Athens. Undoubtedly they must have profited by the further instruction given by the Apostle on this journey, and would be sorry to part from him; but he required the company of his yoke-fellows, left behind at Berea, and sent the brethren back with orders to them to come to him with all speed, and he would wait for them in what was then the centre of learning and culture of the heathen world.

From the narrative of Acts 17:1-15, it would be gathered that the Apostle's stay in Thessalonica was less than five weeks in length, truly a very short time in which to have accomplished so much. But in that short time he had learned to love the brethren there very dearly; and when he could no longer forbear, Timothy having now come from Berea and being available to act as messenger, Paul sent to know their faith, lest by some means the tempter might have seduced them from the truth. But when Timothy returned, bringing good tidings of their faith and love, and that they had the Apostle always in good remembrance, greatly desiring to see him, as also he desired to see them, the Apostle was greatly comforted in all his affliction and distress. These good tidings put new life into him, as he said, *"now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord"* (1 Thessalonians 3:8).

The disposition of the Thessalonian brethren was in great contrast to that of the Corinthians. The latter had learned much from Paul, for he had been there a long time. No doubt they esteemed him somewhat for the sake of the things they

had learned from him, but they permitted their affection for him, as well as their good manners, to diminish almost to the vanishing point, in that they made light of his affliction and professed that in their sight his bodily presence was weak and his speech contemptible (2 Corinthians 10:10; 1 Corinthians 2:1-5). The Thessalonians, on the contrary, possessed and manifested a great affection for the Apostle, as he had for them (1 Thessalonians 2:8), and as all of God's people should have for those who are honoured by being permitted to act as His messengers (5:12,13). If receiving the messenger is counted as receiving the One who sent him (Matthew 10:40), loving the messenger will be accounted as loving the One Who sent him, and despising the messenger will be viewed as despite done to the One Who sent him.

Overjoyed by the good news from Thessalonica, the Apostle would send a letter, the first to the Thessalonians, to these dear brethren, so young in the faith and yet so strong and fervent. He joins his fellow-workers' names with his own in the opening salutation, but it is apparent from the remainder of the epistle that the letter is from the Apostle himself (2:18; 5:27), and the customary benediction (5:28), written with his own hand, was to be the token in every letter (2 Thessalonians 3:17,18).

Sounding Out the Gospel

In his first letter to these brethren, the Apostle recalls with thankfulness to God their work of faith, their labour of love, and their patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God our Father. This happy condition could only have resulted from the facts mentioned in 1:5. These brethren had received the Gospel not in word only (some to-day do not even receive the Gospel in word, not to say anything beyond words), but also in power (for the work of faith), and in the Holy Spirit (imparting the flavour of love to their labours), and in much assurance or conviction (giving patience in hope). They became followers of the Lord and the Apostle, having received the Word in much *affliction*, with *joy* of the Holy Spirit.

In all this they were notable examples to the believers in Macedonia and Achaia (may we also say Europe, America, and Australia?) because that from them the Word of the Lord sounded out, so that in every place that the Apostle visited the fame of the Thessalonian Church was already known, and he needed not to say anything about them. Many of these brethren had been Jews, many more had been idolators; they turned to God from idols, *"TO SERVE the living and true God, and TO WAIT for His Son from heaven"*. Here is the first mention in this epistle of the Second Coming of the Lord. These brethren were waiting for Him; that great event was longed for; it was the desire of their hearts; it must have occupied a prominent position, in their minds and a large share of their conversation.

But it is worth noting that they were not waiting with folded hands. While *waiting* they were *serving* the living God, Who had raised Jesus from the dead, and Who would at the right time send Him from heaven again. And it is also worth noting that their service, in which they set the example, and as it were made the pace for all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia (not forgetting Europe, America, and Australia) was in **SOUNDING OUT THE WORD OF THE LORD IN EVERY PLACE (1:8)**.

Truly, it is a huge mistake to say as some do that interest in the Lord's Second Coming interferes with missionary zeal. None could have been more interested in the Second Coming than were the Thessalonian brethren; and it is certain, from the testimony of the Apostle Paul, that there were no more zealous missionaries in the world at that time than these same Thessalonians. But how is it with us? Are we following their illustrious example? Are we sounding out the Word of the Lord to every place? Do we appreciate the fact that the Gospel has been committed to us as a trust, even as it was to the Apostle (1 Thessalonians 2:4; 2 Corinthians 5:19), and are we fulfilling our obligations as trustees of the Good Tidings?

It should also be noted that, inasmuch as the Thessalonian brethren were "waiting for" God's Son from heaven, according to apostolic instruction, the Second Coming of the Lord could not have occurred at the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which had transpired some twenty years before ever the Apostle visited Thessalonica; and, by the same token, the conversion to Christianity of the Thessalonians was not in each several instance a manifestation of the Second Coming of the Lord, for these brethren, though converted, were still "waiting". Thus does the Scripture expose the fallacy of two notions concerning the Second Coming of the Lord, which, though decidedly unscriptural, have nevertheless obtained considerable credence in Christendom.

The High Calling Invitation

The object of the Apostle in visiting Thessalonica in furtherance of the cause of the Gospel which was entrusted to him, and in preaching there and elsewhere in every nation "another king, one Jesus", was not to compel the allegiance of the whole world forthwith to the "other King". That phase of the Gospel work will come in its due season. But in the meantime, the whole world is allowed to remain more or less under the power of the evil one (1 John 5:19; RV; Ephesians 2:2), and it is not to be supposed that He Who pronounced the words of Matthew 12:29 would send His servants to undertake a wholesale spoliation of the "strong man's" goods while allowing the "strong man" still to roam at large.

The Gospel is now preached among the nations for the purpose of seeking out those individuals who would be so attentive to it, and so appreciative of it, as to obey it (Romans 16:26), notwithstanding the opposition of the prince of this world. Such renounce the world and its evil ruler, and are delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Colossians 1:13). Being reconciled to God through the one Mediator between God and men, and drawing near to God in this the only way, they have peace with also in the hope of the glory of God (1 Timothy 2:5-7; Romans 5:1,2; John 14:6). Or, as the Apostle wrote to the Thessalonian brethren,

"He called you by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thessalonians 2:14).

"Walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto His kingdom ' and glory." (1 Thessalonians 2:12).

It requires no stretch of imagination to believe that the "strong man" would be in a great rage at the sight of some of his subjects setting out for another kingdom, with the hope of joint heirship in its glory, and that he would do everything possible to make the way difficult for them.

And so he is permitted to do, part of the object in preaching the Gospel under present circumstances being to allow the temptations to come to those who profess allegiance to Jesus, in order that their faithfulness may be fully tested and developed, and the unfaithful thus be manifested. Our King Himself had to suffer many things in the days of His flesh, and those who would become His joint heirs must suffer with Him.

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." (2 Timothy 2:12).

"Heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." (Romans 8:17).

The Apostle had much to communicate to his beloved Thessalonians on the subject of the glories of the High Calling, and the present responsibilities of those who were running for the prize of glory. In fact, this was the greater part of his message to them in both of the epistles. Nevertheless, he did not forget to mention that in the day of our Lord's Second Coming, when He should be glorified in these saints and they in Him (2 Thessalonians 1:12), there would be other saved ones, and that Jesus would *"be admired in all them that believe in that day"* (2 Thessalonians 1:10).

And why should there not be believers in that day? If the testimony of the Apostle among the Thessalonians was believed by some in this day, when the evil one and his numerous deceptions are at large, why should not the Gospel be believed and obeyed by many, even *"a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, ... saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb"*, in that day, when the "strong man" shall be bound, and his deceptions restrained, in order that his "goods" may be taken as a spoil by One Who is stronger than he?

It will be even so. The veil and covering of death that is over all nations shall be swallowed up victoriously ; and the Lord Jesus shall not only be glorified in His saints, but shall also be admired in all them that believe in that day, not having been believers before that day, whether through lack of opportunity or through misunderstanding (Isaiah 25:6-9; Revelation 7:9,10; Jeremiah 12:14-17). The only portion of the "strong man's" goods that will not be taken as a spoil will be the evil systems of his invention, whether political, social, commercial, or ecclesiastical, and those persons who wilfully persist in doing evil after being fully informed as to the consequences, and offered all the aid necessary to effect a complete reformation. These evil systems and persons, accursed, shall depart from the presence of the Lord into the "everlasting fire", prepared for the devil and his angels, and shall there be destroyed, root and branch, destruction being the just punishment of their wilful sinning; *"punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power"* * (2 Thessalonians 1:9).

* For reference to and explanation of all the Scriptures on the subject of the penalty for sin, and its punishment in the present life and in the future, the reader is kindly referred to the book entitled, "Everlasting Punishment".

The Parousia of Our Lord Jesus

The Apostle, being separated in person from the converts at Thessalonica, was in distress, greatly desiring to see them. He would have gone to them time and again, but Satan was permitted to hinder him. He longed for them, as for a great treasure. They were his treasure, and would be manifested as such when, at the Second Coming of the Lord, he and they would be joined to Him according to the Master's promise (John 14:1-3; 2 Timothy 4:8). They should be a crown of glory for him in that day, as he said,

"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? Are not even ye, before our Lord Jesus at His presence? For ye are our glory and our joy." (1 Thessalonians 2:19; RV margin).

This is the first use in these epistles of the word *Parousia*; in the Authorised and Revised Version ordinary texts it is translated "coming", but the Revised Version marginal reading, as above quoted, gives "presence" as a more exact rendering of the word. In this judgment both Strong's and Young's Concordances concur. The word is derived from a present participial form, and is defined as meaning "a being near", or "a being alongside of".

It seems clear that the word "coming" does not express the meaning of *Parousia*, because "coming" implies moving from one locality to another, not *being* in one position or relation. Moreover, coming may be taking place while one is far from being *near* or *alongside* of one's destination.

It seems equally clear that "arrival" does not express the meaning of *Parousia*, because arrival is merely that point of time at which the movement implied by "coming" ends. "Arrival" is not "a *being* near or alongside of", because "*being* near" implies remaining in one position or relation for a space of time, whereas "arrival" implies only a point, not a space, of time.

"Presence" seems thus to be the only English word that suitably expresses the thought in the present participial form of *Parousia*, because "presence" implies *a remaining near* or alongside of, during a space of time.

In order to have clearly before the mind the relations of these three English words to each other, it may be stated that "arrival" occurs at that un-dimensioned point of time which at once terminates the period of "coming" and begins the period of "presence".

It is most important to the study of this subject that the meaning of *Parousia*, "presence", be well in mind. The word *Parousia* occurs in the New Testament twenty-four times, the reference in nearly every case being to our Lord. In the two short epistles to the Thessalonians, the word *Parousia* occurs no less than seven times, being nearly one-third of the total number of occurrences of this expressive word in the whole of the New Testament. Six times in these epistles *Parousia* refers to the presence of our Lord; the seventh time it refers to the presence of "that Wicked".

At nearly every occurrence of this word in the New Testament, the Authorised and Revised Versions translate it "coming" in the ordinary text; but the Revised Version always notes in the margin the more exact rendering, "presence". Following are all the occurrences of *Parousia* in the New Testament. It would be well to look up all of them, and mark the word "presence" in the margin of one's Bible, wherever in any of these references the word "coming" has been used.

Matthew 24:3,27,37,39
1 Corinthians 15:23;16:
1 Corinthians 7: 6,7; 10:10
Philippians 1: 26; 2:12
1 Thessalonians 2:19; 3:13

Thessalonians 4:15; 5; 5:23
2 Thessalonians 2:1,8,9
James 5:7,8
2 Peter 1:16; 3:4,12
1 John 2:28.

Bearing in mind the definition of *Parousia*, "presence", it appears that in 1 Thessalonians 2:19 the Apostle was meaning that his dear Thessalonian converts, if faithful, would be his crown of glorying, not during the time of our Lord's coming from heaven to earth, not at the moment of His arrival, but during all the period of His Presence, including the thousand years of the Kingdom Age. This whole period should always be thought of when the Lord's Presence is mentioned, in order that the full scope of His Second Advent be not minimised in any degree.

It was not a certain moment that the Thessalonians were "waiting" for, nor yet a certain twenty-four-hour day. They were waiting for the time when their prayer and ours should be fulfilled; "Thy Kingdom Come!" (Revelation 20:4). At that time their hearts should be established *"unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints"* (1 Thessalonians 3:13).

The Divine Presence with Believers

But someone will ask, Do not believers in the Lord Jesus Christ enjoy His presence with them at all times? Did He not say, just before His ascension, *"Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the consummation of the age"* (Matthew 28:20; RV margin)?

Without doubt, believers in Jesus do enjoy the presence of the Saviour with them during the time of their running in the race for the prize of the High Calling. Not only so, but they have the presence of the Father as well, as the Lord had promised should be their privilege:

"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 14:23).

This being the privilege of all true believers in Jesus, it must be allowed that the Thessalonian brethren were enjoying it; it must be admitted that the Father and the Son had come

to them, and were abiding with them, with each of them individually, this being a promise to each one who loves Jesus and keeps His words. The Apostle would of course know that the believers in Thessalonica were enjoying this high privilege of the presence of the Father and the Son; yet he says that they were "waiting for" God's Son from heaven (1 Thessalonians 1:10), and he refers to the *Parousia*, presence, of the Lord as still future from that time (1 Thessalonians 5:23); which demonstrates that the presence of the Lord that they were waiting for was not the presence of the Father and of the Son which it is the privilege of believers to enjoy during the time of "waiting". The manner of the presence of the Father and the Son granted to believers prior to the time when we shall be gathered to Him is fully explained in the following Scripture statements, to which others might be added.

"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." (1 John 4:15).

"If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, BECAUSE HE HATH GIVEN US OF HIS SPIRIT." (1 John 4:12,13).

"And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us." (1 John 3:24).

From these statements it appears that the manner in which the believers now enjoy the presence of the Father and the Son is by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, given at Pentecost in fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel, and as promised to the Son by the Father (Acts 2:16-18,33). Finally, the Apostle John distinguishes between the Holy Spirit, by which God and His Son dwell in the believing people and they in Him, and the *Parousia*, saying,

"And now, my little children, abide in Him; that if He shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before Him at His presence." (1 John 2:28; RV margin).

This manner of enjoying communion with God and His Son, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, being dependent upon the repentance and turning from sin of the individual, and being granted only to those individuals who do repent and turn away from sin, is doubtless the blessing that is spoken of in the Apostle Peter's words to the Jews on the occasion of the healing of the lame man at the gate of the temple. All modern versions are in agreement with the Revised Version, from which the following is quoted:

"Repent ye, therefore, and turn again, THAT your sins may be blotted out, THAT so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence (not parousia, but literally 'from the face') of the Lord; AND THAT he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus." (Acts 3:19,20; RV).

The fact that the "sending" of the Lord Jesus here referred to is made to depend upon the repentance and turning again of Peter's hearers, as shown in the arrangement of the clauses of his exhortation to them, indicates quite plainly that he was not here referring to the *Parousia* of our Lord during the Thousand Years. The *Parousia* of our Lord during the Thousand Years will not depend on the repentance and conversion of anyone; in fact, the beginning of it is to be at a time of great unbelief, as our Lord and the Apostles intimated. (Luke 18:8; 2 Timothy 3:1-9; 4:3,4; 1 Timothy 4:1,2). The "*seasons of refreshing from the face of the Lord*", and the sending of Christ above referred to, being made dependent in Peter's inspired address upon the repentance and conversion of his hearers, would be the blessing referred to in the above citations from John's writings, the privilege of dwelling in God and of having the Father and the Son abiding with us, which is granted to believing individuals and only to such, by the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit. May this be the happy portion of each reader of these words!

The Lord's Presence Among His People

The fact that our Lord has been present among His people during the Gospel Age should not be overlooked. John saw seven golden lampstands, and one like the Son of Man standing in their midst. It was explained to John that the lampstands were the seven Churches, symbolic, we believe, of the different states of the whole Church during the age. Thus was the Lord's presence with and care over His people illustrated in the magnificent vision (Revelation 1:12,13,20; 2:5,16; 3:3,11).

The Disciples' Question

About twenty years before the Apostle wrote to the Thessalonians, the disciples of the Lord had come to Him with a question concerning His presence. They asked,

"What shall be the sign of thy presence, and of the consummation of the age?" (Matthew 24:3; RV margin).

This question suggests that the disciples **may have** believed that the Lord would be present and the fact of His presence remain undiscerned without some sign to make it known. For them to have had such a thought would not have been at all surprising. The Messiah was present among His own people, the Jews, and but few of them identified Him as the Messiah, although His ministry of more than three years was attested by such miracles and teachings as had never been known before His time. The disciples had confessed that He was the Christ, and that the Messiah had come; but the majority of the Jewish nation would not be convinced even by His many wonderful works. These things, and the hostility of the rulers of the people to Jesus, would have caused the disciples to anticipate similar difficulties in regard to the recognition of the fact of His Second Presence, and so they would have asked the Lord the above-mentioned question.

The manner of our Lord's answer indicates that the question of the disciples was very appropriate; for no other question addressed to Him has His reply recorded at such length as this

one, which extends through two chapters. Moreover, He intimates that their apprehension that His second Presence might be a fact unrecognised for a time was well grounded.

"And as were the days of Noah, so shall be the presence of the Son of man. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they KNEW NOT until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall be the presence of the Son of man." (Matthew 24:37-39; RV margin).

As in Noah's days the people carried on their ordinary occupations in ignorance of what was coming upon them, so in the presence of the Son of Man the people would carry on their occupations, seeking after food and drink and clothing, which interest the Gentiles more than the Kingdom of God does (Matthew 6:31,32), in ignorance of His presence and of the great dispensational change impending as a result of His presence. For it is to be carefully noted that the Lord's presence does not begin at the moment of the overthrow of the present order of things, any more than Noah's days began at the time the rain commenced to fall. The days of Noah began a long while *before* the deluge came. The Presence of the Son of Man begins *before* the time of trouble which is to overthrow the ecclesiastical heavens and the social earth, *and the time of trouble is caused by His Presence*. A few references will substantiate this statement, as made by our Lord in the verses last quoted.

"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, . . . IT shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and -it shall stand forever." (Daniel 2:44).

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time." (Daniel 12:1).

But as Noah and his family, who had faith to believe God's Word, KNEW the time they were living in, so does our Lord intimate that those of His people who are on the watch would at the proper time KNOW the fact of His Presence, and in advance of others. This is the intimation of the exhortation to "Watch". When the time of trouble is doing its work, the fact of the Presence of the Son of Man shall be made known by that means to the nations and tribes of the earth. *"Behold He cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see Him"*, is the manner of stating this in symbolic language employed in Revelation 1:7; Matthew 24:30. For other allusions to clouds as symbols, see Joel 2:2, Zephaniah 1:14,15; Psalm 18:4-16.

The Pharisees' Question

The Pharisees demanded of the Lord when the Kingdom of God should come. In His reply, our Lord said that the Kingdom would not come in a manner visible to the eye of flesh, neither would it be localised in a geographical sense, but it would be in the midst of the people, invisibly in the midst, one may suppose, as the kingdom of Satan, whom Jesus is to depose, is in the midst of the people but is not localised geographically. He said;

"The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, There! for lo, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you." (Luke 17:20,21; RV margin).

His Presence Like the "Lightning"

"For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming [presence] of the Son of man be." (Matthew 24:27).

It has been thought that these words of our Lord are in contradiction to the thought that His presence is to be for a time in the world while the people are in ignorance of the fact that He has arrived. It is said that His Second Coming is to be as suddenly accomplished as a flash of lightning, and that it must therefore at once be known to all the people on the earth.

But it is to be carefully noted that our Lord does not here tell of His coming, nor yet of His arrival; He speaks of His *Presence*. Moreover, the word here translated "lightning" is used in Luke 11:36 to mean another kind of shining than a lightning flash; viz., the bright shining of a lamp, which is a steady glare.

The Greek word is *astrape*, from the verb *astrapto*, supposed to be derived from *aster*, meaning a star, this word being used in the English language as the name of a star-like flower, with petals to represent the rays. A star does not shine occasionally, like lightning, but steadily.

Astrapto is translated "lighteneth" in Luke 17:24, and "shining" in Luke 24:4. In the latter case the garments of the angels would "shine" steadily and not flash like lightning. The noun *astrape* in the plural is correctly rendered lightnings in Revelation 4:5; 8:5; 11:19; 16:18, because associated with clouds and thunder. In Luke 10:18 "lightning" also conveys the correct thought. But in Luke 11:36 the sense of *astrape* is a steady light or glare, because referring to the light of a lamp. Here *astrape* is rendered bright shining, "as when a candle by its *bright shining* doth give thee light". In Matthew 28:3 the angel's countenance was as the lightning, a steady bright shining seems to be the thought.

Furthermore, the description of the shining mentioned in Matthew 24:27 would seem effectually to exclude the "lightning" interpretation in this case, because it speaks of a shining that comes out of the east, and shines even unto the west. The reference to the sun seems so clear as to require no further comment. The rains of Palestine come from the west and south-west, therefore the lightning would more likely shine from west to east than from east to west (Luke 12:54). The use of "lightning" in Luke 17:24 is suitable, because no points of the compass are mentioned; "*For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part of heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in His day*". But even if the "lightning" interpretation were admissible in

Matthew 24:27, one would require to be awake in order to see the flash and hear the thunder, and it is well known that many in Christendom are not awake. It is well known that in the natural order of things but few people see the sun rise, because they are asleep at that hour of the day. With the most of us, the sun is well started on his journey before we know anything of the fact. If one be awake at the right time, he will see the sun's first rays. If asleep, he knows nothing and sees nothing, but the sun is shining, nevertheless.

Our Lord's words above quoted should therefore not be considered as contradictory of verses 37-39, but rather as adding emphasis to the exhortation to "Watch!" The presence of the Lord is not something done in a corner, so that one may say, Lo here He is! or lo there! It is a universal manifestation of His authority and power, as discernible as the lightning flashing from one end of heaven to the other, or as the bright shining of the sun which rises in the east and shines to the west. Nevertheless, only the watchers will be able to discern the fact of the Lord's presence *at the first*, and to appreciate the beauty of the rising of the Sun.

The teaching of the Lord was quite in harmony with the feeling that must have been in the minds of the disciples when they addressed to Him the question of Matthew 24:3, and His answer to their question gave them and all to understand that His people would need to be on the watch to discern, that He would soon come? No. They would need to be on the watch *to discern His Presence*, just as at the first advent God's people needed to be on the watch to discern Messiah's Presence among them. Then, as now, there were many who fully believed that Messiah would *soon come*; but among that many there were only a few who admitted that Messiah *had come*. The majority denied His Presence, and that denial was followed by fearful consequences to themselves, even the destruction of their city — "*wrath to the uttermost*" (1 Thessalonians 2:15,16).

If we of this time claim to be children of the light and of the day, as were the Thessalonian brethren, it will be exceedingly unbecoming of us to sleep, when we should be wide awake and watchful.

"Let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night, and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and hope; and for an helmet the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thessalonians 5:6-9).

One Taken, the Other Left

Our Lord further explained to His disciples that, in the time of His Presence, associations should be severed; of two who were together, one should be taken and the other should be left (Matthew 24:40,41). This does not refer to the moment of His arrival, but to the period of His presence, as shown by the word "then" at the beginning of verse 40, which connects this statement with verses 37-39, in which the Lord compared the days of Noah with the days of His presence. See also Luke 17:26, where the plural word "days" is specifically used concerning the time of our Lord's presence, in comparison with the "days" of Noah.

A thought which has obtained much acceptance among those who are interested in our Lord's second advent is that those who are "taken" in fulfilment of Matthew 24:40,41 will be suddenly caught up into the atmosphere, while those who are "left" will be obliged to remain on the earth. A little tract has been written describing a "dream" that someone is supposed to have had, in which the great consternation of those who are "left" is depicted. Mother and sister are missing; relatives and friends are gone; the driver has been "taken" from his express train, flying across the country at sixty miles an hour, while the stoker has been "left". One might also "dream" that a surgeon had been "taken" while in the midst of a delicate operation, and the patient "left" to look after himself. All this

seems unduly imaginative, and not in agreement with the explanation given by our Lord Himself, when the disciples asked Him, *"Where, Lord?"*.

"And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together." (Luke 17:34-37).

The answer certainly is enigmatic, yet it is given for our instruction. It would seem that if anything is to be learned from this answer it should be by considering the keen scent and sight of the "eagles" (literally vultures) for the "body" or carcass which is their food. The central thought in our Lord's answer would appear to be the allusion to the eagerness of the eagles for their food, their keenness in discovering it, and the fact that they will, if necessary, travel a great distance to get to it. The Truth is the spiritual food of God's people. Those of God's people who are like the eagles will be very keen for their food, and will go wherever it is, in order to get it. In plain words, the answer to the disciples' question, as to where these should be taken, while the others were left, would seem to be that in the days of His presence the keen, wide-awake Christians would be gathered from every direction to the Truth, while the sleeping ones would be "left". An apparent allusion to this is found in Luke 12:37.

The Apostle Does Not Contradict the Lord

Having gathered that the intention of our Lord was to have His disciples understand that His presence at His second advent would be for a time in the world while the people remained ignorant of the fact, one is confronted with the Apostle's words in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, which are held by most Christians to teach that the fact of our Lord's presence will be made known to both eye and ear at the moment of His arrival; the shout, the voice and the trumpet being relied on to prove this thought. How shall the Apostle's words be understood harmoniously with those of our Lord? And how shall these words of his be seen to agree with his other words in 5:2, which are part of his explanation? He says;

"Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night."

Does a thief come with a shout, and a trumpet, and a great voice? Does not the thief enter noiselessly, and proceed very quietly about his work during his presence in the house? Manifestly, the general thought of a literal "shout", "voice" and "trump" in connection with our Lord's second advent requires to be revised, if confusion is to be avoided. No violence will be done to Truth by seeking such an interpretation of 1 Thessalonians 4:16 as will allow the Apostle to agree with his own other words, and with the words of the Master. This interpretation is found by viewing the "shout", "voice", and "trump" as symbols, as consistency seems to require.

There should be no difficulty in the mind of any Christian to realise that the "trump" is a symbol. In the Book of Revelation there is a series of seven trumpets. It is generally agreed that these are to be taken as symbolic, and it is also generally understood among Bible students that five or six, at least, of these "trumpets" have "sounded". This being so, it would be right to suppose that the seventh of these "trumpets" is also symbolic, and that its "sound" would be no more literal or audible to ear of flesh than the "sounding" of the other six "trumpets" has been. But the seventh "trumpet" is the one which is associated with the presence and reign of our Lord (Revelation 11:15-18).

It is obviously the seventh "trumpet" that is mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, so there is no doubt that the Apostle was using figurative language, which would apply to the "shout" and the "voice" equally with the "trump". The same trumpet is mentioned in Matthew 24:31 and 1 Corinthians 15:52, and is there to be understood as a symbol, as in the passage now under consideration. It is "the trump of God", the symbol indicating that the evil one is deposed, and that the kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord (i.e. Jehovah) and of His Christ (Jesus). In connection with the deposing of the

evil one, there is great wrath among the nations, and an awful time of trouble, as the present order of things, ecclesiastical, political, social and commercial, flees away from the presence of Him Who sits upon the throne. But there is no audible sound of a trumpet of brass.

The "voice of the archangel" is used as a symbol to denote the position occupied by our Lord as the chief messenger of Jehovah, "arch" meaning chief, "angel" meaning messenger. As the chief messenger of the Almighty, the words and commands of our Lord must be respectfully heard and attended to, or serious consequences will follow. All who do not hear and obey His words, being the words of God through Him, will be *"cut off from among the people"* (Acts 3:23).

The "shout" is also a symbol. The word is a translation of *keleuma*, which is defined by Strong's Concordance as meaning a "cry of incitement". This "shout" seems to be a symbol of the events mentioned in Luke's account of our Lord's words,

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look tip, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." (Luke 31:25-28).

Upon the earth there is even now the predicted distress among the nations, and perplexity at the constant "roaring" of the "sea", the persistent demands for their rights that are rising from the masses of the people, which demands have been rising for more than a century, beginning about the time of the French Revolution. The hearts of the wise men of this world are failing them for fear and for looking after the things that are coming upon the existing social order, many of them realising the inevitability of the impending catastrophe. And the powers of the ecclesiastical "heavens" are certainly being shaken as never before, the opinion being freely expressed in influential quarters that the institutions of Christendom are but cumberers of the ground.

These things constitute a "shout" to those who have ears to hear. Our redemption draweth nigh! And as the Apostle tells us that *"the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout"*, a signal shout, according to Dean Alford, the inference is obvious. The signal is being given; the *Parousia* (Presence) is begun; the Lord is here!

The Belief of the Thessalonian Church

That the Thessalonian brethren understood the "shout", "voice", and "trump" to be symbolic and not literal, and that they believed that the Lord would be present invisibly, and that the fact of His presence would be unknown to the people generally, and that they had Apostolic sanction for their belief, seems clear. They evidently thought that the day of the Lord would come stealthily and quietly, *"as a thief in the night"*. They even believed that the day of the Lord might be upon them then, but in this latter they had misunderstood. The state of their minds, with the Apostle's comment on it, is shown in the following words,

"Now, we beseech you, brethren, in behalf of the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him; to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is now present; let no man beguile you in any wise: for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed." (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3; RV margin)

These words show that the Thessalonians believed that the day of the Lord was begun, and that they believed that the Lord was invisibly present. In this they were doubtless mistaken, but the manner of correcting their mistake is most instructive.

The Apostle does not say, Dear brethren, you are evidently mistaken about the day of the Lord having begun and the Lord Himself being present; if He had come, someone would have seen Him in the air descending like a lightning flash, or, someone would have seen Him standing on the Mount of

Olives, or, you would have heard a tremendous blast of a trumpet, or a great shout, or a loud voice, or, you would have seen the dead rising from their graves, or, the faithful among you would have been caught up bodily and alive into the atmosphere to meet the Lord, in which case I, Paul, would not have been left behind, so you may be certain that the day of the Lord has not begun.

The Apostle did not advance any of these things as reasons for believing that the day of the Lord had not begun, and it is obvious that he could not have advanced them; for if these things or any of them had occurred, the day of the Lord would not have come as a thief in the night. The Thessalonian brethren were evidently quite right in their belief that the day of the Lord (and the Lord Himself) would be present in the invisible and inaudible manner that they had in mind, *"without observation"*, as the Lord had said, but they were wrong as to the time, and on this point, and this only, the Apostle corrects them. He shows them that the great apostasy was to come first.

The Lawless One and the Lord's Presence

The "mystery of iniquity" was even then working in the Church, and the only hindrance to its full development and manifestation was the Roman Government. When that was taken out of the way, the lawless Papacy manifested itself, and sat as the claimed vice-gerent of Christ, receiving the worship that should have been offered to God and Christ only. But of this "lawless one" the Apostle further said,

"Whom the Lord Jesus shall consume with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His presence." (2 Thessalonians 2:8; RV margin).

Of this lawless one, that considered himself superior to the divine laws, and to the times and seasons of the Lord's own arrangement, Daniel had written,

"And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end." (Daniel 7:25,26).

The "lawless" one had been severely wounded by the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, at the time of the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century; but his great wound was healed (Revelation 13:3), and he continued for the remainder of the time and times and dividing of time (three and a half years — forty-two months — 1,260 days, fulfilled at the rate of a day for a year), until the close of the eighteenth century, when the judgment sat.

One like a son of man was brought before the Ancient of Days, and to him was given a kingdom and dominion, that all peoples and nations should serve him, and he was empowered to take away the Papal dominion, to consume and destroy it unto the end (Daniel 7:9-14,25,26). This the Lord Jesus has been doing, as the Apostle said He would, by the "breath of His mouth", the giving out of truth on religious and other subjects, which by the year 1870 had taken away the last of the temporal power of the Papacy, and which is still pursuing its work of consuming the entire system with all its appendages and allied systems. And the final *coup*, which will "bring to nought" the "lawless one", and will cast him and his ally, the "False Prophet" or teacher, i.e. Protestantism, into destruction, will be accomplished by the further manifestation of the Lord's presence.

The consumption of the Papacy has been in progress for more than a century, as everyone knows. Can we not open our ears of understanding, to "hear" in this great event the "shout" of 1 Thessalonians 4:16, the "incitement" or encouragement to look up and lift up our heads, the "signal" that the Lord is here, the *Parousia*, presence, begun, the manifestation of which shall shortly bring to nought the mystery of iniquity?

It cannot be gainsaid that the Papacy is being consumed; nor can it be disputed that the consumption was to be accomplished by our Lord Jesus, according to the predictions of Daniel and Paul above referred to. If we see the work going on, can we not, yea, *must* we not, acknowledge the times we are living in?

When John the Baptist sent from his prison to Jesus, to ask whether He was the Messiah, or were they to look for another, the Saviour did not send back the messengers to John with a direct assertion of His Messiahship; instead of doing so, He instructed them to tell John of the works that were being done. (Matthew 11:2-6). So, let no one in this day expect that the Lord will tell him in so many words, "I am here". The disciples asked for a sign of His presence; and the sign of His presence, now as then, consists in the works that are being done. *"And blessed is he",* said the Master, *"whosoever shall not be offended in Me."*

4.

The Resurrection of Dead and Change of Living Saints

The Thessalonian brethren were in a measure of distress and perplexity over the prospects of those of their number who had died, and the tidings of their state of mind were presumably brought to the Apostle by Timothy on his return. For their edification and comfort, the Apostle gives them the instruction quoted at the head of the preceding chapter.

As Jesus died and rose again, so would God also bring with Him the believers who had fallen asleep in Jesus. And those who would remain alive unto the presence of the Lord should by no means precede them that slept. The programme of the Lord's dealings with His saints at His presence would be that "the dead in Christ" should rise first. They would not be raised to enter again into present conditions of imperfection, even for a short time, but, having laid aside the "tent", the human body, and having been "unclothed" in death for a time, they would be clothed upon with the "house from heaven" the spiritual body like that of the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:1-4). There is to be no resuscitation of the human body, in order that it may be changed into a spiritual body, but,

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; 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. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."
(1 Corinthians 15:42-44).

"The dead shall be RAISED INCORRUPTIBLE."
(1 Corinthians 15:52).

Then (literally "afterwards") the living and remaining saints shall be caught up together with the risen ones, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and from that time we shall ever be with the Lord. The word *hama*, translated "together with", means in the first instance, according to Strong's Concordance, "at the 'same' time". But, according to the same authority, it is also freely used to denote any close association. The only other occurrence of this word in the epistle to the Thessalonians is in 5:10, where it denotes association, without referring particularly to time. In 4:17 it also denotes association without special reference to time, the time feature having been already indicated by the statement that the dead in Christ should rise "first", and that "afterwards" the living should be dealt with. "Together with" must in this instance be understood to denote that both the dead saints and the living ones should ultimately be found "together" in the same condition of glory, honour and immortality, with the Lord. The saints raised from death will go there "first"; the living saints "afterward".

"To Meet the Lord in the Air"

The "dream" already referred to mistakenly predicts that the living saints will be caught up bodily into the atmosphere, there to meet the Lord. But this seems not at all remarkable, inasmuch as in these days even natural men who do not claim to be saints can betake themselves to the air, and can ascend far beyond the range of the human eye. Moreover, if the saints were to be taken away in this manner, the people generally could not be kept in ignorance of the fact of the Lord's presence, until the day of great trouble in and by means of which His presence is to be revealed to them, according to the teaching of the Lord and the Apostle, as before cited.

Having found that the "shout", the "voice", the "trump" and the "clouds" are in this passage used in a symbolic manner, it should not be considered altogether strange if a symbolic use of "air" were also found.

"Air" is used as a symbol in the New Testament, as in the following passage;

"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." (Ephesians 2:2).

The empire of the "air" is the *rulership and influence* which Satan is able to exercise in the children of disobedience, "according to the course of this world". It also includes rulership over the "demons", the angels who sinned in the days of Noah. But the kingdom of this world is to become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He is to reign as the prince of the power of the air, the present prince being cast out. In this "air" His saints are to meet Him, to reign with Him for the Thousand Years, instructing men in the way of righteousness, and influencing their minds for good. They are also to rule over or judge angels (1 Corinthians 6:3). There is something majestic and inspiring about the thought of being caught up to meet the Lord in the region of influence over the minds of angels and men. It is indeed a catching UP. Beside it, the erroneous "dream" of an ascent of a mile or two into the atmosphere of our planet is totally without significance.

How will the Living Saints be Caught Up?

This is a question of deepest personal interest to all who hope to become joint heirs with the Lord, and the interest that all such saints take in this question is greatly intensified if they can realise that the day of the Lord has begun, and that He is now present. Consideration of this most interesting question should be in the light of what has been seen in the experience of the Papacy and in the state of the world's affairs to indicate that the *Parousia* has begun, and in the light also of the Apostle's statement that *"flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God"* (1 Corinthians 15:50). If flesh and blood cannot inherit a place in the joint heirship with Christ, there must be a change from human to spiritual bodies for the saints who are alive and remain, just as there is such a change for the saints who have *"slept"*, *"sown a natural body"*, and *"raised a spiritual body"* (1 Corinthians 15:44; 1 John 3:2).

The programme of this great change, as far as those saints are concerned who should be raised from death, was that the flesh-and-blood condition should terminate at death, that the saints should be sleeping until the resurrection, and that then the spirit conditions should begin, for each one of the overcomers would be "raised a spiritual body". Of the other saints it is said that they shall not "sleep".

"Behold, I shew [tell] 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 Corinthians 15:51,52).

Many devout Christians, interested in the Lord's Second Coming but not realising His Presence has begun, indeed, rather disposed to make light of the idea, believe that "we shall not all sleep" means that we shall not all die. They also believe that at some one moment in connection with our Lord's arrival, which they believe to be still in the future, all the living saints will be taken up bodily; their bodies being forthwith altered (some of them think by substituting "spirit" for blood in the veins, though we have never heard of a Bible text which says this) to the conditions appropriate to the new estate into which they will thus be ushered. It is to be noted, however, that the Apostle does not in so many words say that all the living saints will be changed simultaneously, at some one moment of time. It is not necessary to limit the time to this extent, for the "trumpet" under which this is to take place is the "seventh trumpet", whose "sounding" covers the whole of the Thousand Years, though the change of the saints will take place at their beginning. No doubt the experience of each individual of the living saints will be accomplished in the twinkling of an eye; this is not questioned, but only the idea that all of them must be dealt with simultaneously, inasmuch as the Apostle does not say so. The supposition that the living saints are to be caught up bodily into the atmosphere is scarcely dignified enough to be compatible with the Great Event with which it is sought to be associated.

If our suggestions be accepted as Scriptural, it will appear that during the time of our Lord's Presence, and before He shall have arisen to shut to the door of opportunity to enter into the High Calling, a saint living on earth might put off the flesh-and-blood condition by dying, and if immediately "clothed upon" with the spiritual condition, and not left "unclothed" in death (2 Corinthians 5:4) even for one moment, he would have been "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye", and he would not have "slept", because no time would have elapsed between the putting off of the one condition and the being clothed upon with the other.

It is believed that the interpretations here proposed of the meeting with the Lord in the "air", the catching "up" of the saints, and the "change" in a "moment" of the saints who are on earth during the time of the Lord's presence, fully answer to all the requirements of the Apostle's statements, and that therefore these interpretations are perfectly feasible. Moreover, it is believed that these interpretations are the only ones that can harmonise 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and 1 Corinthians 15:51,52 with another passage of Scripture that well deserves to be considered in this connection.

**"Blessed are the Dead
which Die in the Lord from Henceforth"**

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; for their works follow with them." (Revelation 14:13; RV).

The Apostle, when imprisoned at Rome, was in a strait betwixt two, not knowing whether to choose to continue in his life of service and tribulation, or to prefer death as a martyr, being persuaded that either of these would redound to the Lord's glory (Philippians 1:20-22). In any case, he did not long for the "unclothed" condition of sleep in death (2 Corinthians 5:4). He had as his great desire a third thing, namely, the departure from the death conditions and being with the Lord. This

would be far better than either a life of tribulation, or sleeping in death, and it would occur at the resurrection, at the Lord's presence.

Why, then, should it be intimated to the Revelator that the dead who die in the Lord, that is the saints, are blessed? The answer is found in the words "from henceforth". Only from a certain time would it be right to say that a special blessing attaches to the dead who die in the Lord. Is there any way to determine what time that would be? Yes; it seems plainly indicated in Revelation 14:9-12.

In the previously-mentioned book "Everlasting Punishment", pages 53-57, it is explained that the torment of the worshippers of the beast and his image consists in that distress of mind which will come upon them as they realise that the systems to which they are devoted are really being destroyed in the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death. The smoke of the torment of the worshippers is the smoke of the "fire" that destroys the systems, the worshippers themselves in the meantime standing afar off, and bewailing the fate of great "Babylon" (Revelation 18:9,10,15,17-19).

We also recall, in harmony with the thoughts expressed under the sub-title "The Lawless One and the Lord's Presence, that the consumption of the Papal "beast" and its Protestant "image" is even now in progress, while these systems are yet alive, and that this consumption is due to the fact that the Lord is present. If this be correct, Revelation 14:9-12 refers to the time of the Lord's presence; and this is the explanation of the "henceforth" in verse 13. From a point of time in the period thus indicated, those would be blessed who died in the Lord. Their blessing would be twofold: (1) rest from their labours; (2) their works would follow them. Having passed away from the laborious conditions and unfavourable environment of the present life, they would still be active in the Lord's service; their works would not cease, but would accompany them. That is to say, they would have been "changed" in a moment from the present

imperfect flesh-and-blood conditions to those of the divine estate like that of our Lord, and there would not have been a moment's interval of sleep in death.

If the foregoing interpretations are correct, and if the signs of the times have been correctly read (examination of time prophecies being reserved for the next chapter), we are now living in the "henceforth" time. Can we believe it? What a privilege is ours, to contemplate with joy the putting off of this our tabernacle, in full faith and anticipation that there will not only be the blessed rest from labour but also an entrance forthwith into far greater opportunities and activities in the Lord's service, Who did so much for us! The Master has not yet risen to shut to the door to the High Calling, but the time when He will do so cannot now be far distant. Shall we not, while He permits, be imitators of the ardent, loving brethren at Thessalonica, who SERVED God, while "waiting" for His Son to take them to Himself? Shall not we also with joy and gladness sound out the Word of the Lord in every place?

5.

The Time is Fulfilled

Every action takes place in and is measurable by Time. The swiftest flight, the slowest progress, the wink of the eye, the toilsome climb up the mountain, all require time for their accomplishment. As a rule, time is an important consideration in the making of arrangements, and it is often the very essence of the contract. A certain period of time is agreed upon for the performance of work, and penalties are imposed if the time be exceeded; and rightly so, because it generally happens that other arrangements are made in view of the one to be accomplished in the specified time, and much inconvenience, perhaps loss, might result from delay. Who does not appreciate the virtue of punctuality in the fulfilment of engagements? Who that has to do with oversea mails of infrequent arrival does not appreciate their promptness, and feel himself put out by even a day's delay? So generally recognised is the value of time, that the sentiment has passed into the proverb, "Time is Money".

If punctuality be so highly esteemed among men, it should not be surprising to find that the divine arrangements are made with due regard to time, and that they are all carried on with the greatest precision. The Scriptures give us clearly to understand that this is so. They tell us that by or for Jesus God formed the ages (Hebrews 1:2; RV margin); that these ages are arranged in order according to a set purpose (Ephesians 3:11; RV margin); that the Father, by His own authority, has appointed certain times and seasons (Acts 1:7; RV margin); that when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son into the world (Galatians 4:4; RV), Whose first advent was to occur at the end of a foretold period of time (Daniel 9:25), and which was announced as having so occurred when at the beginning of His ministry the Saviour came preaching the gospel of the

Kingdom of God, saying, "THE TIME IS FULFILLED, and the Kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:14,15). Moreover, it is stated that at the time of our Lord's first advent, the day and hour of His second coming were known to the Father, but at that time to Him alone, for He had not yet given that information to any one on earth or in heaven, not even to the well-beloved Son (Mark 13:32).

Besides the above intimations in regard to the divine carefulness as to time, there were certain other predictions made and fulfilled in which time was involved. The Israelites were condemned to forty years of wandering in the wilderness because they believed not God, but believed the slanderous report of the promised land brought by their spies. This was so fulfilled upon them (Numbers 14:33,34). When they had further provoked the Lord by their apostasies, they were condemned to seventy years' service of the king of Babylon, which also was fulfilled (Jeremiah 25:8-13; 2 Chronicles 36:17-23). When this time of captivity was about expired, Daniel the prophet was permitted to understand the prophecy of Jeremiah, whereupon he immediately set his face to the Lord in prayer, in confession of the sins of the people, and in supplication of divine mercy and forgiveness (Daniel 9:1-5).

In the fact that Daniel was permitted to understand the prophecy concerning the seventy years of captivity at about the time of its fulfilment, and in the further fact that he was not permitted to understand certain other prophetic times and seasons (although commanded to write them), because the time for their understanding had not yet arrived, there is a hint in regard to the divine methods which must not go unheeded. For the glory of God, and in order to exhibit His foreknowledge, the token of Divinity according to His own word on the subject (Isaiah 41:22,23), prophecies have been given through the holy men of old in such manner as to be beyond the comprehension of the prophets.

When Daniel desired to know the meaning of some of the things which he had been shown in vision, and particularly when he desired to know about the end of these wonderful things (Daniel 12:8), he was told,

"But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." (Daniel 12:4).

"And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." (Daniel 12:9).

"But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." (Daniel 12:13).

Just as Daniel was permitted to understand the prophecy of the seventy years at about the time they were fulfilled, so the promise was that although Daniel was not permitted to understand these other prophecies, God's people at the time of their fulfilment, "the time of the end", would be given the necessary information. And even among the professed people of God certain distinctions need to be recognised. Some are trying to be friends with both God and the world, which is an impossibility, for the friendship of the world is enmity against God, and one cannot serve both God and Mammon. While these wicked ones do wickedly, those who are rightly exercised by their experiences are being purified, made white, and tried. Of these two classes among God's professed people, only the one would be allowed to understand the prophecies at the right time.

"None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." (Daniel 12:10).

In the previous chapter reasons were given, by referring to the signs of the times, without regard to measurements of time, for believing that we are now living in *"the time of the end"*. It was alleged that the present order of things is drawing to its

close, and that the new order is making a beginning by smiting the old one to its overthrow; and current events were given as reasons for this belief. In making this allegation and citing in its support the events of current and recent history, the example of our Lord at His first advent is followed. He referred the messengers from John the Baptist to current events in answer to their question. (Matthew 11:2-6). And to the Pharisees He said,

"But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you." (Matthew 12:28).

Notwithstanding this, one can well fancy some of the Pharisees and others saying to themselves and to the people that there had been miracles done before, so that to refer to these wonders as proof that the time was fulfilled and the Kingdom of God was come upon them was nothing to them. All these things were as they had been from ancient times. In this they would of course be blinding themselves to the fact that the miracles wrought by the Holy Spirit through Jesus were on a much larger scale and in vastly greater abundance than those wrought by the same Spirit through the ancient prophets. Similarly, and as predicted by the Apostle, some are now disposed to say,

"Where is the promise of His presence (parousia)? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." (2 Peter 3:4).

Have there not always been revolutions in the world? Have not governments, political and ecclesiastical, always been more or less in trouble, and have not many of them been overturned? Why then do you refer to current and recent events as proofs of His Presence (*Parousia*), inasmuch as things are going on as they have done from the beginning of the creation?

The answer to this is that *things are not going on in quite the same way as they have done from the beginning of creation*. Just as the miracles of Jesus at the end of the Jewish age were on a greater scale than those of previous times, and so were to be cited as proof that the Kingdom of God had come upon that people, for its then purpose, so are the revolutionary tendencies of recent and present times on a vastly greater scale than those that have occurred before.

Previous revolutions were local and their effects were limited to the people, countries and times in which they occurred. But the revolutionary tendencies that began to manifest themselves a little over a hundred years ago have not been limited to the countries, peoples and times in which first they manifested themselves. Their influence has been marching on until now the tendency is worldwide, and must soon come to a climax in such a time of trouble and overthrow as has never been known in the world. The grand scope of the present revolutionary tendencies differentiates them from everything of the sort that has happened before now.

Instead of watching the overthrow of the government of one country, we are eye witnesses of the overthrowing of the whole world, the present evil world and all of its arrangements, so that room may be made for the glorious operations of the Kingdom of God, which is to cause the will of God to be done on earth as it is done in heaven. Another particular in which the present revolutionary tendencies differ from those that have gone before is in that all restraint of religion and reverence for authority of every sort are being cast off. It is not a change from one religion to another, but the absolute casting off by the multitudes of all religion.

The worldwide smiting of empires, kingdoms, republics, and ecclesiastical systems is being done by the "little stone" kingdom of God *"in the days of these kings"* (Daniel 2:44,45), and present events are thus seen to be a token that the King of kings and Lord of lords is here in person to take unto Himself

His great power and to reign over the whole earth. These manifestations of the anger of the nations and of the divine wrath against them are precisely the proofs that *"The Kingdom of the world is become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever. "Hallelujah"* (Revelation 11:15-18; RV).

How carefully we should heed the words of the Apostle which intimate that careless walking after our own desires is but the prelude to scoffing on this subject, and how we should stir up our pure minds by way of remembrance! (2 Peter 3:1-4).

Having considered in the previous chapter the weighty evidences of the "signs of the times" as to the days in which we are living, it is now desired to see how the definitely stated prophetic periods agree with what can be seen transpiring about us and with the deductions drawn from these events. The special subjects of this inquiry will be the *"time, times and an half"*, the *"thousand two hundred and ninety days"* and the *"thousand three hundred and five and thirty days"* mentioned in Daniel 12:7,11,12).

Literal versus Year-Day Interpretation

Some students of the prophecies are disposed to interpret all of the times and seasons therein mentioned in a most literal manner, and there has always been more or less controversy between these and those others who see that some at least of the prophecies involving time measurement are to be interpreted on a larger scale, at the rate of a day of the prophecy for a year of fulfilment. Doubtless the prophecies already mentioned, of the wandering in the wilderness and the captivity in Babylon, were fulfilled literally according to the time stated. Nevertheless, when condemning the people to forty years of wandering in the wilderness, the Lord stated that this measure of time was based upon the time spent in searching the land.

"After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years." (Numbers 14:34).

When Ezekiel lay upon his left side three hundred and ninety days, and upon his right side forty days, in picturing the iniquities of Israel and Judah, he was told that each of these days would represent a year in actual fulfilment (Ezekiel 4:1-6). And the seventy sevens, or weeks, of Daniel 9:24-26 could never have reached from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince, unless each day of the prophecy had been counted as a year in the fulfilment. The fact that some at least of the prophecies of time are to be reckoned at the rate of a day for a year is thus established. But it is not stated that all of the time prophecies are to be so reckoned; therefore, the student will consider each of the prophecies for itself in endeavouring to understand whether it does or does not fall under the year-day principle of interpretation.

The So-Called "Lunar" Year

The study of the time prophecies of the Scripture has been unfortunately and unnecessarily complicated by the introduction by some students of the "lunar" year, an invention wholly without scriptural or other sanction. The year, being the measure of time from one equinox to the next corresponding equinox, that is, from vernal to vernal or from autumnal to autumnal equinox, is governed by the sun, and the moon has nothing to do with it. Hence, there is, and can be, no such thing as a "lunar" or moon year.

In the Jewish and some other ancient calendars, the lunation, or period of time from one new moon to the next, was made to be the measure of the month, and the new moon day was the first day of the month. The time from one new moon to the next is generally 29 days, 12 hours and about 45 minutes. The Jewish calendar has its months alternately of 29 and 30 days. Twelve of these moon months make 354 days, and this is the

so-called "lunar" year which has been introduced to no purpose and without warrant by some students of the time prophecies. But as the time from one new moon to the next is not exactly $29\frac{1}{2}$ days, it becomes necessary occasionally to introduce an extra day, or to omit one, so that the new moon may be made to fall on the first day of the month. In such a case, the twelve months make 353 or 355 days. Moreover, as the 354 days that ordinarily make up the twelve months in the Jewish calendar are eleven days less than the measure of the time from vernal to vernal equinox, and as the Jewish Passover feast must be held in the first month of the year, and this first month must be so regulated that a sheaf of the first fruits of the harvest would be available at the middle of the month, it becomes necessary to introduce an extra month about every third year in the Jewish calendar, that is, seven times in nineteen years. These thirteen months may make up 383, 384, or 385 days.

Thus, there are six different lengths of the year recognised by the Jewish calendar, all in the endeavour to secure proper coincidence between the sun and the moon, which is possible only every nineteen years, covering 235 lunations. This nineteen-year period is called a lunar cycle, because in that time the sun and the moon come again to occupy the same relative positions in the heavens that they occupied 235 lunations before. That is to say, if the new moon occurs on the day of the vernal equinox in any given year, nineteen years or vernal equinoxes must elapse before the new moon will again occur on the same day as the vernal equinox, and in that length of time there will have been 235 new moons. As the equinoxes measure the year, and as coincidence between the equinox and the moon occurs only once in nineteen years, the fallacy of supposing that there could be such a thing as a "lunar" year is evident. Its unwarranted and unjustifiable introduction into the study of the prophetic time periods has served only to becloud and make difficult the questions which should be simplified if possible, rather than made more complex.

Therefore, in our consideration of the time prophecies, when interpreting them at a day for a year, we shall adhere to the year as ordinarily understood; viz., the period from vernal to vernal or from autumnal to autumnal equinox. And as we study the prophetic periods, let us pray that He Who constituted them by His own authority, and would not allow them to be understood by His inquiring people because the time had not come when it was intended that they should be understood, may give us power by His Holy Spirit to understand these things, the time having come for that purpose. This is the promise; may we not pray for and expect its fulfilment to us?

"It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father hath appointed by his own authority. BUT YE SHALL RECEIVE POWER, WHEN THE HOLY GHOST IS COME UPON YOU." (Acts 1:7,8; RV margin).

"Time, Times and an Half"

"And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." (Daniel 12:7-9).

Whatever the significance of this prophecy, it is clear that it was given a long time before its fulfilment was to be expected, and that in the meantime the words were closed up and sealed. It was a vision of a great, abominable, desolating power, which should be opposed to the saints of God, and should be allowed to prosper against them for the predicted period.

The same desolating power is spoken of in Daniel 7:25, and the period of its prosperity is similarly measured. It is again mentioned in Daniel 8:24-26, and it is there stated that the vision was to be for many days. The same power is mentioned in Revelation 13:1,5,6, and the period of its persecuting and blaspheming is said to be "forty and two months".

The time during which God's people should be in the wilderness condition of persecution is described in Revelation 12:14, in exactly the same terms as those used in Daniel's prophecies; but in Revelation 12:6 the same period is more definitely stated as "a thousand two hundred and three-score days". This period of time, if literally fulfilled, would not be for the "many" days spoken of to Daniel, for it would amount to but three years and six months.

It is therefore concluded that this time prophecy is numbered among those that were to be fulfilled at the rate of a day for a year, in which case the "thousand two hundred and threescore days" would amount in their fulfilment to 1260 years. This would indeed be a vision "for many days", at the end of which the judgment on the terrible "beast" would sit, and the power of the persecutor should be broken without hand by the presence of Him Who would be empowered by the Almighty to do the work (Daniel 8:25; 7:26,9-14).

Inasmuch as this vision is referred to in the book of Revelation, which was a prophecy of *"things which must shortly come to pass"*, the fulfilment of the 1260 years must not be sought at any time prior to the giving of the Revelation; they would not begin until after the Revelation had been given to John. The prophecy of the 1260 years is therefore a prophecy belonging to the Gospel age, and the desolating abomination, or persecuting power, should be looked for within the limits of the Gospel age. It is not difficult to see in the Papacy, with its doctrine of the Mass, which professes to sacrifice Christ afresh as often as required (and paid for), its engine of persecution, the Inquisition, and its blasphemous claims and pretensions

on behalf of its head, the Pope, it is not difficult to see here the "little horn", "speaking great things", "great words against the Most High" and wearing out "the saints of the Most High" (Daniel 7:8,25); the "beast," or politico-religious system mentioned in Revelation 13.

This view has been so often and so well set forth by so many writers from the time of the Protestant Reformation onward that it seems unnecessary now to go into all the details. Many books on the subject are available. Our present task is to find, if possible, when the desolating abomination was "set up", so that we may know when the 1260 years began, and also the time of their ending.

The Setting Up of the Desolating Abomination

The Bishop of Rome early began to occupy a prominent and influential position in the Christian Church. The emperors Gratian and Valentinian conferred upon the Bishop of Rome the right of jurisdiction over all the churches of Gaul and Italy; this was in the end of the year 378 or the beginning of 379. Under this right, the Bishop of Rome issued edicts, nominated vicars as his representatives and acted in the capacity of governor over all the metropolitans of the other provinces of the Western empire. The edict of Gratian and Valentinian was confirmed and renewed in more authoritative terms in the year 445 by Theodosius and Valentinian 3. But these edicts referred only to the western portion of the Roman Empire; the bishop of Constantinople, the capital of the eastern portion of the empire, was not ready at this time to acknowledge the supremacy of Rome in the affairs of the church, neither were he and the eastern priests required to do so, until 150 years after Gratian's edict.

In the year 529, the Justinian code was published. The preamble of the ninth edict of this code states "that as the elder Rome was the founder of the laws, so it was not to be questioned that in her was the supremacy of the pontificate". The 131st, on ecclesiastical titles and privileges, states, "We

therefore decree that the most holy pope of the elder Rome is the first of all the priesthood, and that the most blessed archbishop of Constantinople, the new Rome, shall hold the second rank, after the holy apostolic chair of the elder Rome." Although this decree was questioned by the bishop of Constantinople after the death of the emperor Justinian, it was never rescinded, but was renewed by Phocas in the year 606. As the Rev. Alexander Keith says, in his book on "The Signs of the Times," published in 1847, "No earthly code of laws was ever more extensive or permanent than his [Justinian's] ; it was published AD 529; it continued to be the base of European legislation till it began to be shaken by the revolution of France and the code of Napoleon." By these decrees the pope of Rome was declared to be the supreme priest of the Christian church.

In the year 533, Justinian took a further step in the direction of establishing the supremacy of the bishop of Rome, in that he addressed the following letter to Pope John:

"Rendering honour to the apostolic see and to your holiness (as always was and is our desire), and as it becomes us honouring your blessedness as a father, we have laid without delay before the notice of your holiness all things pertaining to the state of the church; since it has always been our earnest study to preserve the unity of your holy see, and the state of the holy churches of God, which has hitherto obtained and will remain without any interfering opposition. Therefore, we hasten to
SUBJECT AND TO UNITE TO YOUR HOLINESS ALL THE PRIESTS
OF THE WHOLE EAST. As to the matters which are at present agitated, although clear and undoubted, and according to the doctrine of your apostolic see held assuredly resolved and decided by all priests, we have yet deemed it necessary to lay them before your holiness. Nor do we suffer anything which belongs to the state of the church, however manifest and undoubted, that is agitated, to pass without the knowledge of your holiness, *who are the head of all the holy churches*. For in all things (as has been said or resolved) we are prompt to increase the honour and authority of your see."

In his constitution to Epiphanius, bishop of Constantinople, dated March 25, 533, Justinian acknowledges his epistle to the Pope, and maintains that he is the head of all the bishops, and that "by the decision and right judgment of his venerable see, heretics are corrected". The Pope, in his answer to this letter from Justinian, commends the zeal of the emperor, approves his doctrine, denounces all who reject it as separate from the church, adopts the titles conferred upon him by the emperor, and commends above all his virtues his reverence for the holy see, to which, as truly the head, he had subjected and united all the churches. At this time the bishop of Constantinople acquiesced in the decision of the emperor, and expressed to the Pope his desire to follow the apostolic authority of his holiness. The dates 529 and 533 mark two very important points in the process of setting up the desolating abomination. Yet the setting up was not accomplished by the decree of the emperor nor fully by the subjection of the eastern priests; a further step required to be taken before the Roman corruption of Christianity was "set up" in the meaning of those words as used by the prophet.

The rise of the papal power was represented in Daniel's vision by the coming up of *"another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots"* (Daniel 7:8,20,24). If our understanding be correct, the Papacy should be considered as "set up" only after the plucking up of the three "horns", or powers. The three "horns" that were plucked up in order that papal domination in Rome and ultimately in all Italy and western Europe might be assured were: (1) the western Roman Empire, with its seat at Ravenna, where the western emperors ruled for a time in conjunction with the eastern emperors, who resided at Constantinople; (2) the Heruli, who overthrew the western empire in the year 476; (3) the Ostrogothic power, which "plucked up" the Heruli in 489. The Ostrogothic "horn" was "plucked up" by Justinian himself in the year 539, which we take to be the time when the papal "horn" was "set up" as the "abomination of desolation" mentioned in Daniel 12:7,11, the power which would make war against the saints of the Most High, and would be allowed to prevail against them for 1260 years.

From the time of the plucking up of the Ostrogothic "horn", the supremacy of the Popes in the city of Rome was acknowledged, although for a while the emperors ruled the remainder of Italy, being represented by Exarchs at Ravenna, the imperial rule being later rebelled against by the plucked up Goths, who, though they sacked the city of Rome, never re-established their rule there. The imperial rule in Italy was overthrown by the Lombards, but these recognised the rule of the church in Rome and environs, making no great attempt at overturning it until near the end of the eighth century, their attempt then made being unsuccessful, the Papacy being sustained by the arms of France, under Pepin and Charlemagne.

The dates 529, 533 and 539 are important points of time in the setting up of the desolating abomination, and it is most significant that each of these dates, marking points in the uprearing of the Papacy, has its corresponding date in the tearing down of the system.

The year 529 witnessed the publication of the Justinian code, in which the primacy of the bishop of Rome was decreed. The year 1789 (1260 years later) marked the beginning of the French Revolution, which aimed at the overthrow of religion as well as of aristocracy.

In the year 533, the Pope was formally recognised in his position of supremacy over the affairs of the church, by the emperor and by the archbishop of Constantinople. In the year 1793 (1260 years later), the French Revolution was completed, and the career of Napoleon began.

In the year 538-539, the emperor Justinian "plucked up" the Ostrogothic "horn," in order that the papal "horn" might have room to grow. In the year 1798-1799 (1260 years later), Napoleon "plucked up" the Pope and carried him across the Alps a prisoner to France.

Since then, the papal power has been declining. In 1870, the last vestige of temporal power was shorn from the Papacy, never more to be recovered, we believe; and the determined consumption is going on and shall continue until at last the system shall be utterly destroyed by the *manifestation* (*epiphaneia*) of the Lord's presence; (*parousia*).

What is Implied

It has before been seen that if the Papacy is being consumed, as is now the case, this fact is to be recognised as proof that the presence of the Lord has begun in a manner of which the people generally, including many that profess to be His, are ignorant; that the Kingdom has come "without observation", as the Lord said to the Pharisees it would; that the rulership of the world is changing hands, the "strong man" of the house being in process of binding by a Stronger than he; that the prince of the power of the air (Satan) is being made to give place to the new Ruler of the "air" (region of influence over the minds of men). A perfect agreement exists between all this and what has just been seen in regard to the 1260 days.

If the judgment was to be set, and the Son of man was to be given a glorious kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve Him, and if this was done before the destruction of the "little horn" or Papal power (Daniel 7:9-11,13,14,21,22,25,26); if He Who is called "The Word of God", "Faithful and True", was to lead the armies of heaven in war against the Papal "beast", the nations of the earth and all false systems of the present evil world (Revelation 19:11,13,19-21); if the Lord Jesus was to *consume* "that Wicked" with the spirit of His mouth (His Word), and at last *destroy* him with the *manifestation* of His hitherto unrevealed presence, *parousia* (2 Thessalonians 2:8); if it be found that the period of the Papal supremacy has been predicted in the prophets and accurately fulfilled in history, as above shown, must it not be concluded that our Lord's presence (*parousia*) began no later than in 1799?

We believe so, and we fully believe that the day of visitation is upon Christendom, having come upon them unawares, as it came unawares upon Judaism, the reason for it coming unawares being in each case wrong ideas about the manner and purpose of the Lord's coming.

The 1,290 Days

"And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days." (Daniel 12:11).

The taking away of the daily or continual sacrifice of our Redeemer and Mediator constituted Rome the "abomination". This was done by instituting the sacrifice of the Mass, which claims to offer the body and blood of our Redeemer afresh and as often as required, under the forms of bread and wine, which it is claimed are changed into the body and blood of our Saviour by the words of consecration, which are lawful only for the priest to utter with a view to the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the (it is claimed) veritable body and blood of our Lord. To intimate that the sacrifice of our Lord, offered on Calvary, is not sufficient is most abominable in the Lord's sight. The Apostle said that Jesus Christ offered Himself "once for all" (Hebrews 7:27; 10:10)

The message of the Gospel is that repentance and *remission of sins* should be preached in His name among all nations (Luke 24:47). *"Now where remission of these is"*, says the Apostle, *"there is no more offering for sin"* (Hebrews 10:18). Anything, therefore, purporting to be additional or supplementary to the sacrifice offered once for all on Calvary, for the sins of the whole world, is in the Lord's sight an abomination. The Papacy was an abomination of this sort before it was set up; how long before is not definitely ascertainable. The Mass is mentioned in connection with the proceedings of the council of Constantinople, which was held in the year 381, and originated among the Eastern bishops. But the "setting up" of the abomination came, as already seen, about a century and a half later, in the year 539.

The prophecy does not state what was to be looked for at the termination of the 1290 days from the setting up. At the rate of a day for a year, this period would reach from the year 539 to 1829.

Perhaps no single event of outstanding significance can be pointed to as having occurred in that year; yet it was at about that time that a movement began which in a few years had aroused great interest in the subject of our Lord's Second Coming. The movement had adherents in both Europe and America, and in some portions of the latter country the interest was very great indeed. Owing to wrong ideas on the subject of the manner and the purpose and the time of the Lord's return, that movement collapsed in a great disappointment in 1844-46; nevertheless, that movement may be regarded as the parent of modern movements which since then have sought to arouse interest in the great subject which was its inspiration. In the absence of direct intimation by the prophet, we take it that the reference in this time prophecy is to that pioneer of modern movements which have for their object the increase of interest in the King and the Kingdom.

The 1,335 Days

"Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." (Daniel 12:12,13.

This period, at the rate of a day for a year, would reach from the year 539 to 1874, at which time a certain special blessing was to come to the waiting and faithful people of God. The nature of this special blessing seems to be intimated in the fact that a contrast is made between it and the experience that Daniel should have. *"Blessed is' he that waiteth . . . but go thou thy way; . . . thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."*

Daniel was to rest for a long time in death, until in the resurrection he should be called forth from the grave to his reward, his lot being to become one of the *"princes in all the earth"* (Psalm 45:16). The force of the contrast would seem to be that if Daniel was to rest in death for a long time before receiving his reward, he who would be alive and faithful after the year 1874 would be granted his reward forthwith upon the finishing of his course, and without the rest in death. Rest from his labours no doubt he shall have, while at the same time his works would follow with him. In a word, we understand that the year 1874 is the "henceforth" time mentioned in Revelation 14:13. If this be correct, all those who have made their calling and election sure to a place in the glorious Kingdom since that time have not remained one moment in death, but have forthwith continued their activities in the Lord's service, changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

A further deduction, if this understanding be correct, is that the saints who fell asleep in Jesus, from apostolic times down to the year 1874, are no longer sleeping, but have been called forth from their sleep and made like the Lord, glorious spirit beings. The Apostle said that *"the dead in Christ shall rise first"* (1 Thessalonians 4:16). If we are assured from the prophecy of Daniel that the time has come, since 1874, that the faithful should at once enter into their lot without the long time of resting in the grave that Daniel was to experience, the inevitable conclusion is that the dead in Christ entered into their reward in or before the year 1874; because *"we which are alive and remain unto the presence of the Lord shall not precede them which are asleep"* (1 Thessalonians 4:15).

Has anyone seen the dead saints rise from their long sleep? No; no human being has seen that, nor does the Scripture say that any human being should witness that event. Neither could a human being witness it, because the saints were not to be raised as earthly beings, but as heavenly, in the likeness of their Lord and Master, *"dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting"* (1 Timothy 6:16).

The saints were not to be raised fleshly bodies, but spiritual bodies (1 Corinthians 15:14,49), and this sort of body is invisible to eyes of flesh. The angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear Him. All Christians believe this, though not one of us has ever seen the angel of the Lord. If we can believe that the angel of the Lord is invisibly present for the protection of God's people, it is not one whit more difficult to believe that the Lord Himself is invisibly present and that the sleeping saints have been raised, and are invisibly present with Him, and that those who have finished their course since 1874 have been made like Him without a moment of "sleep", and that these also are present invisibly with the Lord and the faithful, who fell asleep in Jesus since Pentecost. No doubt it requires faith to believe these things, but to the watchful one with open eyes there is evidence for sight, even as there was evidence for sight while a good deal of faith was required at the time of our Lord's first advent or presence.

At the first advent the wonderful works were done publicly, and all the people of Palestine saw them; but it required faith to believe that these works were being done by the Messiah. The consumption of the Papacy and the smiting of the nations are things that can be seen by everyone, and many do see them; but faith is required to believe that our invisibly present Lord is doing this consuming and smiting, as the Scriptures said He was to do. Let us not be hindered by any consideration from believing the united testimony of Scripture and current events.

The Uniqueness of this Position

In times past there have been more than a few attempts made to expound the time prophecies, but more or less misfortune seems to have attended the efforts thus made, in that the expectations of those who made them have failed of realization. It has usually been the case that some point of time in the near future has been fixed upon and predictions have been made concerning events that were to be expected at such time. Invariably these attempted forecasts have been

mistaken, and so the study of time prophecies has fallen into great disrepute. This we must regret, however much we sympathize with those who have sought to elucidate these things and have had to bear the brunt of the failures of their predictions.

But the position set forth in the foregoing is probably unique, in that it makes no appeal to a future date; *all the dates referred to are in the past*, and they are not dependent upon any theories in regard to the age of the world or the lengths of any ages. All the historical information referred to is within the reach of anyone in the public libraries; the historical events are fairly recent, and not difficult to substantiate. In this it has at least the true merit of imitating the blessed Lord and the apostles, who went about preaching "The Time is FULFILLED"; "The Time IS fulfilled".

If we realize that the time is indeed fulfilled, let us preach it with all our power, and let us declare the Kingdom at hand, and the overthrow of the nations imminent, because of the presence (*parousia*) of the King of kings and Lord of lords, who is making war with the "beast" and with the kings of the earth (Revelation 19:19).

If we be asked to say when in our opinion the overthrow of the present order of things will be consummated, we can only say that we can see nothing in Scripture to indicate a date for that. Various dates have been surmised. Some of them are in the recent past, such as 1899, 1906, 1914; but there was no Scriptural authority for any of them, as far as we can understand. Some now predict 1925; others, 1934; but there is no evidence for such prognostications. As for ourselves, we should say, the sooner the better; for then will be fulfilled the promise of the new heavens and the new earth, for which we look and long and pray, "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as in heaven". But this much is certain; the time is short, it daily becomes shorter; what manner of persons then should we be!

Our Duty in the Circumstances

"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 21:36).

These are serious times in which we live, and it is most appropriate that all of God's people reflect earnestly on the situation, and seek to know what is the course that will conduce most to the Lord's glory (1 Corinthians 6:19,20) and therefore to their own greatest advantage here and hereafter (1 Timothy 4:8,9). Some, not sufficiently impressed with the gravity of the times, may innocently or wilfully say that there have always been revolutionary tendencies in the world, and that the existence of something of the sort at the present time is therefore nothing new or unusual.

To those who raise this point in the scoffing spirit mentioned by the Apostle Peter (2 Peter 3:3-5) we fear we could say nothing that would satisfy, because they are not in the mood to be satisfied by anything that could be presented.

But to all others we would mention again that the circumstances of the present are not of the sort common to revolutions of the past. Former upheavals have been limited in their sphere of action and influence, but the present revolutionary influences are nothing less than world-wide; even China is stirred by the prevalent spirit of unrest.

It is precisely this *world-wide* demonstration among the nations that in the prophecies is associated with the seventh trumpet, and with the Kingdom of God taking its great power in the earth, causing a time of trouble and smiting the nations to their overthrow (Revelation 11:15-18; Luke 21:25-27; Daniel 2:44,45; 12:1).

If, then, we see these things coming to pass, with the predicted consumption of the Papacy well on the way, which consumption was to be accomplished by the presence of the

Lord (2 Thessalonians 2:8), it behooves-us to recognize the day of visitation, lest that befall us which befell the Jews who did not recognise their day of visitation, when the Messiah was among them.

In view of the calamities that were to befall the people of Palestine on account of their rejection of the prophets and finally of God's Son, our Lord, as He was being led to crucifixion, uttered some weighty words of warning (Luke 23:27-29). It seems certain that, in view of the calamity impending over Christendom on account of their rejection of the testimony of God's Word, similar sentiments to those uttered by our Lord would be equally entitled to consideration by those who have faith at the present time.

The world goes on with its planting and building, its marrying and giving in marriage, knowing not the time of the Presence (Matthew 24:37-39). Doubtless the Lord's people must also take some part in the affairs of this life, at least as far as the planting and building are concerned; they must work with their hands in order that they may provide things honest and have somewhat to give to the necessities of others (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12; Ephesians 4:28).

This, however, will not be done as by the world and sleeping Christendom, in ignorance of the times we are living in, but in full view of the times and the special circumstances that should influence our activities. Those who are free to give themselves entirely to the Lord in service of the Truth with which He has blessed us, will not, in view of the shortness of the time and the evident call for special self-sacrifice and self-denial, enter into arrangements that would interfere with the privilege of service, but will rather seek by every means in their power to take a larger part in the work of disseminating the Good Tidings (1 Corinthians 7:27-35).

All, whatever their circumstances in life, who have in their hearts the desire for greater activity and usefulness in the service of the Lord, are invited to correspond with us on the subject, as well as to make it a matter of special prayer. It may be that the Lord will permit us to point out some way in which your heart's desire might be accomplished, and you be made an instrument in His hands for the blessing of others.

By the great favour of God, we, dear Brethren, are not of the night but of the day (1 Thessalonians 5:4-8); it behooves us therefore to live as children of the day and not as rioters of the night. We see the predicted distress of nations, all nations, with perplexity, not altogether on account of other nations, but more on account of their own internal perplexities; we hear the roaring of the waves of the "sea", the masses of the people voicing their discontent on every conceivable subject; we know that men's hearts are failing them for fear and for looking after those things that are coming upon the earth, because they realize that the powers of the ecclesiastical heavens (nominal Christendom) have been and are being so severely shaken that they cannot control the masses of the people as once they did. We realise the presence of the Son of Man with power and great glory in this "cloud" of trouble that now is nearly covering the whole earth. We see all these things coming to pass. *"When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand."*

When uttering the solemn words of warning to the weeping daughters of Jerusalem, the Lord did not say just how many years would elapse before the calamity would fall upon them. And now neither can we venture to mention a future date for the consummation of the troubles upon Christendom; but since we see these things, and realize the presence (*parousia*) of the Lord as the cause of them, we have this word of cheer for us of "this generation", doubtless the one beginning since the last of the prophetic dates, when "the time was fulfilled" *"This generation shall not pass away till ALL be fulfilled."* (Luke 21:25-33).

"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).

6.

Second Advent Blessings

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said, The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ: and he shall reign unto the ages of the ages. And the four and twenty elders, which sit before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, which art and which wast; because thou hast taken thy great power and didst reign. And the nations were wroth, and thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, the small and the great; and to destroy them that destroy the earth." (Revelation 11:15-18; RV margin).

Having now seen, it is hoped clearly, the Scripture teaching concerning the Presence (*Parousia*) of our Lord at His Second Advent, that His Kingdom was not to come with outward show, but was to be *among* the people, powerful yet invisible, as that of Satan has been; having also realized that He was to be present for a time while the people generally were in ignorance of the great fact; having realized also that these are the times of His Presence for the purpose of setting up His glorious Kingdom in power, it behooves us now to consider what are some of the blessings that are to be brought by His Presence in the earth for the Thousand Years.

The fact of His presence will be first manifested to the unbelieving world and sleeping nominal Christians by the "flaming fire" and the dreadful "clouds" of the time of trouble that impends at this moment. Not that He will be manifested to the eyes of their flesh, but rather to the eyes of their minds

or understandings. So clearly will He be manifested to the eyes of understanding of the nations, that it is written that they shall see Him coming in the clouds (Revelation 1:7), and that all the tribes of the earth shall be vexed and shall wail because of Him (Matthew 24:30). But it seems not to be intended that He shall be seen by the eye of flesh, because He is now the exact impress of the Father's substance, and no man can look upon God and live (Hebrews 1:3; RV margin; Exodus 33:20).

It is also written, "*Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me*" (John 14:19). "*But ye see me*"; yes, we cherish the hope that we shall some day see our dear Redeemer, Mediator, High Priest and King as He is, in all His glory. But should we have that unspeakable privilege, to look upon the faces of the Father and Himself, it will not be because they will have miraculously made it possible for the eye of flesh to behold them, but rather because we shall have been changed from our present fleshly conditions to spiritual ones according to the promise, so that we shall be like Him, not He like us (1 Corinthians 15:44,49,50; 1 John 3:2).

There is no prospect held out that fleshly beings, as such, shall ever be able to behold the face of our glorified Lord; to the contrary, the emphatic statement concerning our Lord Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of lords, is that He dwells in the light which *no man* can approach unto; "*whom no man hath seen, nor can see*" (1 Timothy 6:15,16). The manifestation of the fact of our Lord's presence to the world will not be to the eyes of their flesh, but to the eyes of their understanding, through the events of the time of trouble that is about to destroy the whole of the present social order.

The first effect of our Lord's taking to Himself of His great power to reign is the anger of the nations as they realize their power declining, and God's greater wrath with them as they resist the divine decree that His Son should reign. There can be but one end to such a controversy, and that is that the resisting political systems should be utterly swept away,

destroyed by the fierce flames of the fire of God's wrath (Revelation 6:17; 2 Peter 3:7,10), in order that the people might afterward have turned to them the pure, divine truth, so that they might also worship God in spirit and in truth, unhindered by the fetters of error and superstition that have prevented them from even knowing that there is a God in heaven, and that salvation is provided for in Jesus Christ His Son, and in Him alone, for there is no other name given.

After the sweeping away of the present social order, the blessings of the Second Presence of our Lord will begin to make themselves manifest. For the present purpose these blessings may be considered under four heads, as mentioned in Revelation 11:18; *"the time to give their reward (1) to thy servants the prophets, and (2) to the saints, and (3) to them that fear thy name, the small and the great; and (4) to destroy them that destroy the earth."*

"To Thy Servants the Prophets"

This class comprises the faithful under the old dispensation, the last member of their honourable company having been John the Baptist. *"The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the Kingdom of God is preached"* (Luke 16:16). *"All the prophets and the law prophesied until John"* (Matthew 11:13). Abel belonged to that company, also Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham, and Sarah, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, and Moses, and David, and Samuel, and all the holy prophets down to and including John the Baptist, already mentioned. Besides these, there were many others less conspicuous, whose names are not even mentioned to us as yet, who were faithful in the midst of great persecutions for the sake of truth and righteousness, and who through their faith obtained promises and did great wonders, some of the faithful women even receiving their dead raised to life again. And some of them were tortured, refusing the offered deliverance, *"that they might obtain a better resurrection"* (Hebrews 11).

They were not perfect, but they were men and women of faith. inasmuch as they believed God, and acted as well as they could upon their belief in what God told them, God was pleased to count their faith to them for righteousness, as He did that of Abraham, in anticipation of the perfect sacrifice of Jesus that was to be offered in the fulness of time (Romans 4:3). On this account, these faithful ones, who all died in faith, not having received the promises, are numbered with the first of the two classes mentioned by our Lord when He spoke of the resurrection of the dead which He would bring to pass; they belong to those that have done good, and they shall be raised at once to the everlasting life and the reward promised them. They have passed their judgment in a manner acceptable to God, and, having obtained a good report through their faith (Hebrews 11:39), no further judgment or testing is required. Those who have done evil will be raised to judgment, to be judged in the next age, and the better resurrection that the Ancients had in view was that they should be raised at once to life and their reward without further testing and trial (John 5:28,29).

Their reward will be earthly. To Father Abraham God made a promise of a certain portion of land which He showed to Abraham, and which the latter saw with his own eyes (Genesis 13:14-17). Although this land was explicitly promised to Abraham, he never was the possessor of a foot-breadth of it, but dwelt in it as a stranger and a sojourner (Acts 7:5; Hebrews 11:9). Did God's promise, then, go by default? No! God is no defaulter; all His promises are sure, and all His purposes are brought to pass. Abraham shall have his land that he saw, and the faithful of the old dispensation shall share the inheritance with him, as promised. How grand it will be when the land perfected shall be the dwelling place of those faithful ones of the old dispensation!

But the influence of these Worthies is not to be limited to the land which God promised to Father Abraham. They are distinguished in the divine purpose by another prediction,

which bespeaks for them the highest earthly positions in connection with the affairs of the Kingdom of God, whenever it shall be fully established in power and great glory.

It seems easy to understand why they should be thus honoured with such great responsibilities in the New Order; as perfect human beings they will be able to set a perfect example of righteousness to the rest of the people of the world, who will be much in need of such example; the Ancients will also instruct the people in the ways of the Lord, and, while holding the positions of authority in the earth in those days, they will be able to maintain a kindly and sympathetic attitude toward the weaknesses and mistakes of those who then will seek to render obedience to Christ, the King of kings, whose delegates the Ancients will then be.

The portion of Scripture which prophesies this great distinction for the Ancients is,

"Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth." (Psalm 45:16).

Instead of being the fathers of our Lord Jesus Christ, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and others shall be His children, because He will raise them from death, and will thus be their father or life-giver. He will give them princely positions in all the earth in the next age, thus constituting them His delegates and representatives in all parts of the earth for the purposes of His government.

Knowing, as we now do, this much of the manner in which the Kingdom of God will be organized when it undertakes to cause God's will to be done on earth as in heaven, and realizing that the Ancients will be the visible representatives of the King *"Who dwells in light unapproachable"*, we are enabled to know and adopt, without vacillation or uncertainty, the correct attitude toward the efforts at social reform which abound in our day. Some of these movements profess to be acting in the name of Christ, and some of them are wholly secular.

But however much we may admire the zeal of these would-be reformers, and however much we may sympathize with the objects they desire to accomplish, we are bound to realize that theirs is not the Kingdom work, because the Kingdom work of social reform is to be carried on under the direction of the perfect Princes, the Lord's own delegates whom HE will appoint, *and the Princes are not yet on the scene.*

We thus have it brought home to us more forcibly than ever, that the work of the Church during the Gospel age is not social reform, but is the taking out of a people for the name of Christ. In this let us persevere, by declaring the good tidings to as many as possible far and near, by word of mouth and by printed matter, for it is by the Gospel message that the people is being taken out for the name of Christ to become His joint heirs. *"He called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."* (2 Thessalonians 2:14).

"To the Saints"

The reward prepared for the saints is most extraordinary, being nothing less than the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, to sit with Him in His throne, and to live and reign with Him for the Thousand Years (Revelation 3:21; 20:4). If the dignity of the Ancients is to be great, the glory of the saints is to be much greater. If God provided for them a very good thing, He has provided for us *"some better thing"* (Hebrews 11:39,40).

We are told that our Lord Jesus Christ was raised from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible and undented, and that fadeth not away, and that He dwells in the light which no human being can approach unto. We are also told that this inheritance of His is reserved in heaven for us who are being kept by the power of God through faith unto the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Peter 1:3-5)

The inheritance of the Ancients is reserved on the earth; the reward of the saints is reserved in Heaven. They saw some of their inheritance; we have never seen ours. In order that we

may see our inheritance, we must be changed from fleshly to spiritual bodies; then we shall be like our Lord in glory, and then we shall be able to see Him as He is (1 Corinthians 15:49; 1 John 3:2). This is the unspeakably glorious reward of the saints who have followed faithfully in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ during this age, having been cleansed by His precious blood from all unrighteousness. This is the salvation that is to be brought to the saints at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

No one who has a true conception of values will deny that this exceedingly great inheritance is well worthy the best efforts that can be made by us on its behalf, so that we might not fall short of the thing promised. Nor will any well informed Christian deny that at our very best we cannot in ourselves be worthy of this wonderful reward. Our sufficiency for this is of God, Who promises the reward, and this sufficiency is in Christ;

"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 1:30,31).

It remains for us, who have been enlightened and called by the Gospel with this "High Calling", to see to it that we give ourselves up wholly to do the will of God, and that we also be exceedingly watchful and prayerful in our efforts to prevent the entrance into our lives of anything that would in the least degree hinder us from wholehearted devotion to the divine will. *"Let no man", says the Apostle, "beguile you of your reward".*

The saints as well as the Ancients are in the first class of the two mentioned in John 5:29, because they "have done good". Not that a single saint has been perfect in goodness beyond his desire to be so; God has been merciful to our unrighteousness with the mercy which the New Covenant provides through Christ Jesus, Our Mediator and Advocate.

And our continued acceptableness to God has been in proportion to our submission to the Holy Spirit's writing upon the tables of our hearts (Hebrews 8:6,10-13; 9:15; 1 John 2:2; 2 Corinthians 3:3-5, 18).

The order in which these blessings should be bestowed is that the saints who have slept should first receive their portion, then the saints who are alive and remaining unto the presence of the Lord should receive theirs. The manner of this has already been considered under the title, "The Second Coming of the Lord, and our Gathering together unto Him". *"God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect"* intimates that the Ancients could not receive their reward before the saints, and suggests that they will be rewarded directly after the living saints shall have been changed. These two classes include all who have "done good" from the beginning of our race down to the time of the second advent of Christ and the change of the living saints, and they, under Christ the King of kings, will constitute the Millennial Hierarchy, the saints as kings and priests on the throne with Christ, and the Ancients as princes in all the earth, the perfect human representatives and delegates of Jesus Christ, Who dwells in the unapproachable light, in the ineffable glory of divinity.

"To them that Fear Thy Name, the Small and the Great"

If the saints and the Ancients together include all who have been acceptable to God to the time of the Second Advent, "What are these . . . and whence came they?" Will there be an opportunity after the Second Advent of Christ to exercise faith and receive a reward? Yes; there will be such an opportunity afforded all who have not had it and wilfully sinned it away.

The number of persons to be granted that opportunity under the favourable conditions which will obtain in the next age must be tremendous; it will include the unenlightened heathen (white and coloured) as well as those who have died before

reaching years of discretion. It will include practically all who are in the graves, and who do not belong to the first class mentioned in John 5:29. And so the Revelator saw a vision of the dead, small and great, standing before the throne in the next age (Revelation 20:12); and he heard the invitation go forth from the Spirit and the Bride to all who were athirst and whosoever would to come and drink of the river of water of life which in his vision he saw proceeding from the glorious throne as ruling in the next age (Revelation 22: 1,17).

Why should there not be believers in the next age? If the testimony of Paul was believed in Thessalonica notwithstanding great opposition, why should not the testimony concerning Christ be believed in all parts of the earth in the next age, when there will be no toleration by the Lord of opposition to the Truth?

Does not the Apostle distinctly mention the two classes of believers when he says that Christ "*shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day*" (2 Thessalonians 1:10)? And will not the believers in the next age greatly admire Christ, when they come to know the truth about Him? Some of them have known absolutely nothing about Him, and have died in that state of ignorance which was no fault of theirs; others have heard something about Him, but that which many of them have heard has not been calculated to attract them to Him; yet others have been so much under the influence of evil environment and other unfavourable conditions of life that the truth about Christ could have no attraction whatever for them.

The publication of the Truth about God and Christ, and the Ransom for all, and the One Mediator between God and men, as it will be fully and properly made known to these in the next age, is necessary in order that God's will may be done, His will being that all men shall come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4-6).

The saints will have their dwelling place in heaven; the Ancients will have theirs on earth, a special portion being held in reserve for them. Those who will become believers in the next age will also dwell on the earth, and it will be their everlasting home, in harmony with the will of God expressed through the prophet Isaiah,

"For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited; I am the Lord, and there is none else." (Isaiah 45:18).

Consideration of this blessing, as taught in the Scriptures, is approached by many Christians with much fear and many misgivings, lest they should believe something that is too good to be true. It would be the greatest folly to believe more than God tells us about these things, and none of us wishes to do that; but it is equal folly not to believe that which God has told us.

If, therefore, it has pleased God to arrange that the next age shall be a time of blessing for those who have not been fully enlightened, and that then they may believe in Jesus and be saved; and if He has told us this in His Word, why should we not believe and teach it? The only question ought to be, Is it so taught in the Bible? If it is, let us believe it with all our hearts, and let us tell it again, launching out in faith upon the divine promises. Limitations of space forbid the presentation and discussion here of all the Scriptural evidence on this subject; the inquirer is therefore referred to "Bible Talks," chapters 3, 4 and 5.

"Destroy Them that Destroy the Earth"

Undoubtedly it will be a great blessing when the wilfully corrupt are finally dealt with and everlastingly destroyed. And all must agree that if God's will is to be done on earth as in heaven, there is no alternative but the destruction of those who wilfully disobey Him. There could be no unity of spirit and purpose between the obedient and the wilfully disobedient, but always

discord and controversy. Were the disobedient allowed to live after their wilfulness had been fully demonstrated in the next age, there would never be a state of harmony and repose. It will therefore be a blessing not only to the righteous, but also to the wicked that the latter should be put out of existence, so that their baneful presence might no longer mar the peace of the Universe. Anyone who refuses to love God with all his might, mind and strength, and his neighbour as himself, and who refuses to acknowledge that Jesus died for his sins according to the Scriptures and therefore is ready to act as Mediator or Reconciler between God and himself, anyone who refuses to do these things after being enlightened, deserves all the penalty that God has provided for such disobedience.

Thank God, there is no reason to believe that He intends to eternally torment these wicked ones. *"All the wicked will he destroy"* (Psalm 145:20). The disobedient *"shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power"* (2 Thessalonians 1:9). When this shall be accomplished there will be no voice but that of praise to God, no desire but that of obedience to His holy and perfect will for evermore. The wilfully wicked are not to be banished to some corner of the Universe, there to spend eternity in pain and blasphemy; they are to be blotted out, never to be heard from any more for ever. It will be an awful punishment that these will bring upon themselves, yet it will be a blessing thus to have them dealt with, and to be relieved of their presence.

Here again we find timid souls fearing lest they should believe something about God that is too good to be true. And Satan, ever ready to impose upon one's fears, seeks to hold God's people in this state of unbelief of truth by the apparently reasonable "argument" that if the destruction of the wilfully wicked were taught, instead of eternal torment, the wickedness of the wicked would be so increased that there would be no living in the earth.

This is only a statement of a supposition, and there is no evidence to support it. All the evidence that is available on the subject points the other way. Eternal torment has been taught for more than fifteen centuries in Christendom, and what is the state of Christendom to-day? Has the world been converted by the teaching of eternal torment? No, and it is not likely to be. Does God propose to convert people to Himself by the teaching of eternal torment? Do we love Him because He will eternally torment us if we do not? No; *"we love because he first loved us"* (1 John 4:20).

Much more might be said on this subject, and many passages of Scripture might be referred to, but as the subject has been fully discussed in the book, "Everlasting Punishment", the reader is referred to that.

Dearly beloved, as we realize the times we are living in, and that we are even now in the days of the presence of the Son of Man, which shall culminate in the day when He shall be revealed, let us seek by all means to make our calling and election sure to an abundant entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. May it be our privilege to inherit the chief blessing!

Comforted in weakness by the Spirit holy,
Waiting for the Son from Heaven
To take us home to Thee;
By the world despised, suffering with Jesus,
Lord, make us holy,
Kings and priests to be.

7.

The Order of Events at the Second Advent

After the publication of the foregoing in the columns of "The New Covenant Advocate" we received the following letter:

'In the November, 1911, issue of the *Advocate*, in an article entitled, "The time is fulfilled", it is sought to prove that the second advent took place in the year 1799. I, as well as other subscribers to your paper, with whom I have discussed this subject, find a difficulty in accepting this teaching.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 and 1 Corinthians 15:51,52, the idea seems to be that our Lord's first work on His return will be to raise the sleeping saints, and on the completion of this work, the saints then living on the earth will be changed from natural to spiritual conditions, so that they may be caught up together with the risen saints, to meet their Lord in the air. It also seems to teach that these saints who are changed will be the last members, none coming after. There is nothing said about others being born after the second advent, then made saints, and changed. It is those saints *living at the time of Christ's coming* who are to be changed.

The apostle Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, "*We which are alive and remain, shall be caught up*" and so on, seem to limit this experience to one generation, those living at that time. Also, the parables dealing with this subject seem to teach that when the Lord comes, the full number of saints will have been found, and that only the work of assembling them remains to be done. If it be true that Christ came in 1799, this would not be the case, for surely many saints have been made since then. If you can more fully explain this subject in some future article I shall be very grateful.

Praying the Lord's continued blessing on your work,
with Christian love,
Yours in the one hope,

England.

Reply

The difficulty in the above would appear to be that the questioner understands the Scriptures to teach that the very first item of the tremendous program associated with our Lord's second advent, His presence of a thousand years, is the resurrection of the sleeping saints, to be followed forthwith by the change and exaltation of the living saints. As a matter of fact, the Scriptures do not so teach, and all should realize this.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 the resurrection of the sleeping saints is put as the *first of two* events, the other being the change of the living saints; but the relation of these events to the remainder of the great program is not stated, nor is it even mentioned in this text that there would be more items. It is therefore not correct to build upon 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 an idea of the order of events which it does not even mention.

The same is true of 1 Corinthians 15:51-54, except that here we have the fulfilment of "*Death is swallowed up in victory*" (Isaiah 25:6-9) definitely put as *following* the glorification of the sleeping and living members of the Church. To cite 1 Corinthians 15:51-54 as evidence in respect to which work would be first taken in hand by our Saviour at His second coming is therefore quite as impossible as to refer to 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 for the same purpose.

If we turn to other portions of Scripture for this information, we find Romans 8:19 telling of the glorification of the church and the relief of the groaning creation, but this passage does not distinguish between the sleeping saints and those "*who are alive and remain*". Its incompleteness in regard to details shows that it is not intended as a statement of the *order of events* in connection with the second advent.

Examining Daniel 12:1-3 we find mention of a time of trouble as well as of the resurrection of the dead, some to life and some to shame and contempt. Here, again, the statement is in such general terms as to indicate clearly that it is not intended as precise teaching concerning the details of these events and their order.

In Revelation 11:15-18 there is what appears to be a fairly complete statement of the program, though even here some important details, such as the change of the living saints and the Lord's dealing with the "man of sin", are wanting. But verse 18 shows that neither is this passage given as a statement of the order of the events, for here we have the rewarding of the saints mentioned after the rewarding of God's servants the prophets, which would contradict the very definite statement of Hebrews 11:39,40, where it is laid down that "they" of the past ages cannot be made perfect without "us" of the Gospel age.

And so other portions of Scripture might be examined, and the result would always be the same, viz., that in none of them is there intended to be a statement in one-two-three order of the events in the divine program concerning our Saviour's second presence.

But while this is admittedly the case, there is, nevertheless, a clue to the order of events, and this is supplied by the chronological prophecies of the 1260, 1290 and 1335 days. At the expiration of the 1260 days, the dealings of our Saviour with the "man of sin" were to begin. He would then begin to consume the Papacy, which consumption would culminate (at a date not stated) in the destruction of the evil system by the manifestation (*epiphaneia*) of His presence (*parousia*), hitherto unrevealed to the world (2 Thessalonians 2:8; Matthew 24:37-39). It is understood that the 1260 "days" ended in 1799. If this be correct, we should understand that our Saviour has been present since then, and that He has been doing the work appointed to be begun at that time.

In any case, some power has been dealing with the Papacy in the last 116 years, doing the very work of "consuming" it which the prophet Daniel and the Apostle Paul foretold would be done by the Lord Jesus. This being so, why should we hesitate to say that the Lord is present and is doing the work? Further explanations on this point are presented in this book, pages 60 to 66.

The 1290 "days" are understood to have ended in 1829. A suggestion concerning this period is given in pages 67 and 68.

The 1335 "days" are believed to have ended in 1874, and at this point of time it would seem that the Lord would take up the work of rewarding His saints, both the sleeping ones and those who would be alive and remain. As to the manner in which this would be done, please see suggestive thoughts in this book, pages 68 to 70, and 47 to 51. On no account should consideration of the strong prophecy of Revelation 14:9-13 and the belief of the Thessalonian church (page 41) be omitted.

It is gathered from these time prophecies that the first item of the great events in connection with our Lord's second presence was to begin the consumption of the Papacy, in 1799. In 1829 it would seem that He proceeded to rouse His people from their lethargy on the subject of His Advent and Kingdom, and it must be confessed that some of their ideas in those days were very indistinct and dreamy. In 1874 and "from henceforth" (Revelation 14:13), would be the time of special blessing to the saints who would complete their course in death, and this without stipulating whether they became saints before 1874 or since then. The prophecy makes no limitation on this point, nor should we.

We can quite agree, however, with the idea that the span of time of a generation of the human race, beginning at 1874, will be the measure of the existence yet to be allowed the present order of things, and we have so stated in preceding pages. But a "generation" is not a fixed term of years. In the ordinary

course of events, the persons who have reached the age of accountability in any given year might not all have passed away from the earth for seventy years or more. It is therefore impossible for us to say that the Scriptures teach that the consummation will occur in such a year. We feel certain that it is wise not to speculate on points not definitely made known in the Word of inspiration. And we do urge all who know these things to watch and pray, and to be ready at all times for the consummation of their hopes, and to give an account of their stewardship. The proper attitude for all, whether the time be long or short, is to serve the Lord with the whole heart.

***“Hail to the Lord’s Anointed,
Jehovah’s blessed Son!”***

8.

The Prince of Peace

To the Jewish people, successively the victims of Assyrian, Egyptian, Babylonian and Median invasions, and of continuous conflicts with their immediate neighbours, the promise of a Prince of Peace must have come with singular pleasure, that is, to those of them who gave heed to Isaiah's prophesyings; for the majority had fallen away to heathenish rites and practices.

"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, Counsellor, 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." (Isaiah 9:6,7).

Luke 2:4-11 tells of the birth of the promised Son, Matthew 3:13-17 tells of his anointing as the Christ, the King, the heir of David's throne, and Acts 5: 31, Romans 14:9, Hebrews 1:8,9 tell when the "henceforth" time of Isaiah 9:7 began. First was necessary the death of "the man Christ Jesus" as the ransom for all; and then, having been raised from death by the power of the Father, He was constituted Lord and King. To Him all judgment was committed, and He was authorized to give eternal life to all that obey Him (1 Timothy 2:4-7; Ephesians 1:20; John 5:25; Hebrews 5:7-9; Isaiah 2:2).

One of the first acts of the new King was to send out the message of peace and goodwill to all nations. As the heir of David He was heir of the throne of Jehovah. In David's case that throne was set over Israel only, but in our Lord's case it embraces all nations, peoples, and tongues. Hence to all He was authorized to send a message, "commanding all men everywhere to repent", and beseeching them to become reconciled to God (Luke 24:47; 1 Chronicles 29:23; Acts 17:31; 2 Corinthians 5:19,20).

The prophet says the government of the Lord Jesus would require to be established, and ordered. Looking back over the past 1800 years we find the facts confirm the truth of the prophecy. Our Lord became King of a world at enmity against God, and in ignorance of the new King, and of the requirements of the new government. The basis of the new government was righteousness and justice, as contrasted with the wickedness and oppression of the world powers, and as opposed to the rule of "the god of this world", whose empire extended over the minds of the children of disobedience (Ephesians 2:1-3; James 4:4).

The message of peace and goodwill sent out by the Lord Jesus Christ gave emphasis to the great truth that no true peace is possible outside of harmony with God. So long as men are opposed to God and indifferent to His laws, they are more or less at variance with those principles of justice on which alone a true peace can rest, and hence are incapable of appreciating, much less acting upon, those principles in their relations to one another. The only way to secure peace between man and man, and between nation and nation, is to arrange a peace between God and individual men. Each man reconciled to God, and submitting his mind to the will of God, will then be in line to adopt a conciliatory attitude toward other men, and to live on a new plane of love and unselfishness in place of the old plane of hate and selfishness (Isaiah 48:22; 57:21; Matthew 20:25-28; Galatians 5:19-23).

The ancients who imposed their religion on conquered provinces, and modern states who consider every citizen of the nation a member of the state church, would be appalled by the labor of dealing personally with every individual, but the Lord Jesus Christ has undertaken that work on behalf of every individual who has ever been born, of every nation under the sun.

So, when we read, "*He shall speak peace unto the nations*", it means more than that the nations should lay down their armaments and live without war. It means more than the gradual permeation of the present governments with humane ideas so that they will enact equitable laws. It means rather, as the prophet says, the increase of HIS GOVERNMENT (Zechariah 9:10; Isaiah 42:4; Daniel 12:1; Isaiah 2:4; Daniel 7:9-27).

For eighteen hundred years His government has increased over the minds of a few, taken out as a people for His name, who have acknowledged Him as King, and sought to live according to His instructions. These are His chosen ones, who will be joint-heirs in His Kingdom when the "powers that be" have fulfilled their allotted span (Daniel 2:31-45). For the past 1800 years, also, a testimony has been given to the nations in general and their rulers in particular that the Lord abominates sin, oppression, deceit, strife, and all other works of the flesh and of the devil which are practised and perpetuated by the governments as well as the individuals of the present order of things. The dissemination of the Gospel has enabled many peoples to *contrast* their earthly rulers and governments with the government of peace and goodwill the Bible speaks of, and to *hope* for the time when such a government would be set up in the world. But these benefits to mankind, or, we should say, a section of mankind, for only a small percentage have heard anything of the glad tidings, and these principally in Europe and America, valuable as they have been, must not be understood as the limit of the "*increase of his kingdom and of peace*" (Romans 8:19-22).

His government must yet *overthrow* and *subdue* all the present human governments, in order that evil institutions of every kind, political, religious, financial, and social, may be destroyed, the people liberated from oppression, and the true knowledge of God and righteousness granted to all. The blessing of living under that righteous Government will be granted to the dead as well as the living, for He will call them forth to judgment, not a judgment of condemnation, but a judgment which means instruction, discipline, and the opportunity of salvation to as many as will believe in and obey the great Prince of Peace.

For more on this subject of the blessings of the reign of the Prince of Peace, the reader is urged to read "Bible Talks for Heart and Mind," where copious Scripture references are given in support of this blessed hope and expectation for all men.

O Come, Lord Jesus!

O come, Lord Jesus, take Thy Kingdom!
Traitors in vain Thy right disown.
Let justice flash, and judgment thunder,
From out Thy cloud-encircled throne —
Till every heart on Thee depending
Beholds the showers of grace descending.

Long have Thy trusting people waited,
Signs of Thy presence to discern.
Let earth and sky, and plain and mountain,
Shake with the steps of Thy return —
Till all who heed the portents nearing,
See through the storm Thy bright appearing.

O come, Lord Jesus, take Thy Kingdom!
Rule with an iron rod Thy foes!
Let righteousness and truth triumphant
Shepherd the meek, Thy grace disclose —
Till all the earth, Thy name confessing,
Finds all Thy judgments rich in blessing.

O come, Lord Jesus, reign forever!
Nations are Thine inheritance.
Let isles which stretch their hands in pleading
Find Thee Completeness for their wants —
Till every haunt of Desolation
Blooms with the fruits of Thy Salvation.

O come, Lord Jesus, show Thy glory!
Stand forth in all-pervading light!
Let Truth and Virtue, Grace and Mercy,
Shine with a lustre still more bright —
Till Light itself glows in reflection
Of Thine unspeakable Perfection.

O come, Lord Jesus, lift Thy standard!
Good men and true will rally round.
Let heralds clear the way before Thee,
And trumpets roll the joyful sound —
Till in one grand, world-wide ovation
Thy travail finds its consummation.