

**Our Lord's Return** ITS OBJECT THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS *Comfort For the Bereaved*

*"Let, the heavens rejoice, and let, the earth, be glad; ... before the Lord: for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth." Psalms 96:11-13.*

*"He shall judge the poor of the people, He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor .... In His days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of PEACE So long as the moon endureth.." - Psalms 72:4, 7.*

*"And He shall send Jesus Christ, which [who] before was preached unto you; whom the heaven must retain until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." - Acts 3:20, 21.*

For centuries past, a considerable number of professed Christian people, in reading the Scriptures on the Second Coming of Christ, have failed to find there, the comfort intended for the truth- hungry. Instead of seeing in our Lord's return the dawn of hope for the groaning creation- the restitution of all the willing and obedient to Paradise- they have seemed to read only a dreadful doom for the masses of humanity, and the destruction of all things mundane. According to this conception, the Plan of God is seen to end in disaster and defeat So far as the vast majority of our race is concerned, and in an overwhelming victory for Satan.

Consequently many of God's people have been offended, "stumbled," as respects the doctrine of the Second Coming of our dear Redeemer, by reason of peculiar, extravagant, unreason- able, illogical, and unscriptural views on the subject, presented by some, who professedly love the Lord's appearing. The doctrine of our Lord's return, as a glorious gem, should be given the first place among the precious jewels of Divine truth, where it can cast its halo and splendor and brilliancy over all connected and related promises and blessings. It should not be left in the imperfect setting which hides its glory and beauty, but should be recovered, remounted, set in its true place, to the glory of God and the blessing of all who are sincerely and truly His people.

We need offer no apology for the interest which we feel in this grand subject, which is the center upon which all the testimony of Divine grace through all the holy prophets, is focused.. Rather do they need to apologize who, knowing that the Second Coming of the Lord and the resurrection of the dead hold the most important places in the Scriptures, next to the doctrine of the atonement for sin, have, nevertheless, neglected these while they have quarreled, skirmished, fought and bled over trifling things of no real importance, doctrinally or otherwise.

St. John, the beloved, in his wonderful revelation was given a glimpse of future events, and in marvelous vision was borne across this dispensation

with the powers of evil still in control; he saw its changing scenes of Church and State and witnessed the final culmination. He saw a great change take place on earth- Satan was bound, the forces of evil overthrown; Christ and the saints reigning in glorious triumph. He saw the world of mankind liberated from the prison- house of death, and their return to their home in Eden- Paradise restored. No wonder the beloved John, as he beheld this heavenly vision of the future blessing of the world, out of the depths of his soul, cried, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

As one of the Twelve who walked with Jesus while upon the earth, St. John remembered the prayer that the Savior taught His followers: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as in heaven." The Apostle knew there could be no more sure guarantee of the lifting of the curse from the earth, and the restoration of humanity, than this promise of the Kingdom at the Second Coming of the Lord.

Thank God, with the clearer light of our day shining upon the pages of His holy revelation, the sincere student reads in fairer lines the Plan of God with regard to our Lord's return and the consummation of all things in the ultimate and everlasting defeat of Satan and in the recovery of a sorrowing and ruined world.- Revelation 21:3- 5; 22:3, 17.

We presume that it is admitted and believed by all familiar with the Scriptures, that our Lord intended His disciples to understand that for some purpose, in some manner, and at some time, He would come again. True. Jesus said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the Age" (Matthew 28:20), and by His Spirit and by His Word He has been with the Church continually, guiding, directing, comforting, and sustaining His saint, and cheering them in the midst of all their afflictions. But though the Church has been blessedly conscious of the Lord's knowledge of all her ways and of His constant care and love, yet she longs for His promised personal return; for when He said, "If I go, I will come again" (John 14:3), He certainly referred to a second personal coming.

Some thinly He referred to the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost; others, to the destruction of Jerusalem, etc.; but these apparently overlook the fact that in the last book of the Bible, written some sixty years after Pentecost, and twenty- six years after Jerusalem's destruction, He that was dead and is alive- the risen Christ- in living tones speaks of the event as yet future, saying, "Behold I come quickly and My reward is with Me," and the inspired John replies, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."- Revelation 22:12, 20.

Quite a number think the conversion of a sinner forms part of the coming of Christ, and that So He will continue coming until all the world is converted. Then, say they, He will have fully come.

These evidently forget the Scriptures on the subject, which declare the reverse of their expectation: (1) that at the time of our Lord's Second Coming the world will be far from converted to God; (2) that "in the last

days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" (2 Tim, . 3:1- 4) ;( 3) that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." - Ver. 13.

They forget the Master's special warning to His Little Flock- "Take heed to yourselves lest that day come upon you unawares, for as a snare shall it come on all them [not taking heed] that dwell on the face of the whole earth." (Luke 21:34, 35.) Again, "All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him," when they see Him coming (Revelation 1:7)- no reference is made to the conversion of sinners. Do all men wail because of the conversion of sinners? On the contrary, if this passage refers, as almost all admit, to Christ's presence on earth, it teaches that all on earth will not love His appearing, as they certainly would do if all were converted.

### **Christ's Reign to Accomplish World's Conversion**

Some expect an actual coming and presence of the Lord, but set the time of the event a long way off. It is their thought that when the world has been converted by their efforts, and Satan bound, and the knowledge of the Lord caused to fill the whole earth, and when the nations learn war no more, then the work of the Church in her present condition will be ended; and that when she has accomplished this great and difficult task, the Lord will come to wind up earthly affairs, reward believer, and condemn sinners.

Some Scriptures, taken disconnectedly, seem to favor this view; but God's Word and Plan viewed as a whole, will be found to favor the view that Christ comes before the conversion of the world, and reigns for the purpose of converting the world; that the Church is now being tried, and that the reward promised the overcomers is that after being glorified they shall share with the Lord in, that reign, which is God's appointed means of blessing the world and causing the knowledge of the Lord to come to every creature. Such are the Lord's special promises: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne." (Revelation 3:21.) "And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."- Revelation 20:4.

### **Only the Church Called in This Age**

There are two texts chiefly relied upon by those who claim the Lord Will not come until after the Millennium, to which we would here call attention. One is, "This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." (Matthew 24:14) They claim this has reference to the conversion of

the world before the end of the Gospel Age. But "witnessing" to the world does not imply the conversion of the world. The text says nothing about how the testimony will be received. This witness has already been given. In 1861 the reports of the Bible Societies showed that the Gospel

had been published in every language of the earth, though not all earth's millions had received it. No, not one-half of the sixteen hundred millions living have ever heard the name of Jesus. Yet the condition of the text is fulfilled- the Gospel has been preached in all the world for a "witness"- to every nation.

The Apostle (Acts 15:14) tells that the main object of the Gospel in the present Age "is to take out a people" for Christ's name- the overcoming Church which, at His Second Advent, will be united to Him and receive His name. The witnessing to the world during this Age is a secondary object.

The other text is, "Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." (Psalms 110:1.) The vague, indefinite idea regarding this text seems to be that Christ sits on a material throne somewhere in the heavens until the work of subduing all things is accomplished for Him through the Church, and that then He comes to reign. This is a misconception. The throne of God referred to is not a material one, but refers to His supreme authority and rulership; and the Lord Jesus has been exalted to a share in that rulership.

St. Paul declares, "God hath highly exalted Him [Jesus] and given Him a name above every name," "authority" above every other, next to the Father. If Christ sits upon a material throne until His enemies are made His footstool (all subdued), then, of course, He cannot come until all things are subdued. But if "right hand" in this text refers, not to a fixed bench or locality, but, as we claim, to power, authority, rulership, it follows that the text under consideration would in nowise conflict with the other Scripture which teaches that He comes to "subdue all things unto Himself" (Philippians 3:21), by virtue of the power vested in Him.

### **Jesus' First Advent to Redeem Men- His Second Advent to Restore the Redeemed**

A further examination of God's revealed Plan shows a broader view of the object of both the First and Second Advents; and we should remember that both events stand related as parts of one Plan. The specific work of the First Advent was to redeem men; and that of the Second is to restore and bless, and liberate the redeemed. Having given His life a ransom for all, our Savior ascended to present that sacrifice to the Father, thus making reconciliation for man's iniquity. He tarries and permits "the prince of this world" to continue the rule of evil, until after the selection of "the Bride, the Lamb's Wife" who, to be accounted worthy of such honor, must overcome the influences of the present evil world. Then the work of giving to the world of mankind the great blessings secured to them by His sacrifice will be due to commence, and He will come forth to bless all the families of the earth.

The Apostle informs us that Jesus has been absent from earth- in the heaven- during all the intervening time from His ascension to the

beginning of the Times of Restitution, or the Millennial Age- "Whom the heaven must retain until the times of restitution of all things," etc. (Acts 3:21.) Since the Scriptures thus teach that the object of our Lord's Second Advent is the restitution of all things, and that at the time of His appearing the nations are so far from being converted! as to be angry (Revelation 11:18) and in opposition, it must be admitted either that the Church will fail to accomplish her mission, and that the Plan of God will be thus far frustrated, or else, as we claim and have shown, that the conversion of the world in the present Age was not expected of the Church, but that her mission has been to preach the Gospel in all the world for a "witness," and to prepare herself, under Divine direction, for her great future work. God has not yet by any means exhausted His power for the world's conversion. Nay, more- He has not yet even attempted the world's conversion.

This may seem a strange statement to some, but let such reflect that if God has attempted such a work He has signally failed; for, as we have seen, only a small fraction of earth's billions have ever intelligently heard of the "only name" whereby they must be saved. We have stated the views and teachings of only some of the leading sets- Baptists, Presbyterians, and others- viz., that God is electing or selecting out of the world a "little flock," a Church. They believe that God will do no more than choose this Church, while we find the Scriptures teaching a further step in the Divine Plan- RESTITUTION for the world, to be accomplished through the elect Church, when completed and glorified.. The "little flock," the overcomers, of this Gospel Age, are only the Body of the "Seed" in or by whom all the families of the earth are to be blessed.

## **The Election and Free Grace of the Bible**

Those who claim that for six thousand years Jehovah has been trying to convert the world, and failing all the time, must find it difficult to reconcile such views with the Bible assurance that all God's purposes shall be accomplished, and that His Word shall not return unto Him void, but shall prosper in the thing whereto it was sent. (Isaiah 55:11.) The world has not been converted nor the knowledge of the Lord filled the earth; therefore the Word has not yet been "sent" on that mission.

Two lines of thought have divided Christians for centuries, namely, Election and Free Grace. That both of these apparently opposite doctrines have Scriptural support, no Bible student will deny. This fact should lead us at once to surmise that in some way both must be true; but in no way can they be reconciled except by observing heaven's law-order, and "rightly dividing the Word of Truth" on the subject. This order, as represented in the Plan of the , Ages, if observed, will clearly show us that while an Election has been in progress during the present and past Ages, what is by way of distinction designated Free Grace, is God's gracious provision for the world in , general during the Millennial Age. If the distinctive features of the Epochs and Dispensations indicated in the , Bible be kept in mind, and all the passages relating to Election

and Free Grace be examined and located, it will be found that all which treat of Election apply to the present and past Ages, while those which teach Free Grace are fully applicable to the next Age only.

However, Election as taught in the Bible, is not the arbitrary coercion, or fatalism, usually believed and taught by its advocates, but a selection according to fitness and adaptability to the end God has in view, during the period appointed for that purpose.

The doctrine of Free Grace, advocated by our Methodist friends, is also a much grander display of God's abounding favor than its most earnest advocates have ever taught. God's grace or favor in Christ is ever free. in the sense of being unmerited; but since the fall of man into sin, to the present time, certain of God's favors have been restricted to certain individuals, nations and classes, while in the next Age all the world, including the dead who will then be awakened, will be invited to share the favors then offered, on the conditions then made known to all, and whosoever will may come and drink at life's fountain freely. - Revelation 22:17.

### **Both the Living and the Dead Share in the Benefits of Messiah's Reign**

Some who can see something of the blessings due at the Second Advent, and who appreciate in some measure the fact that the Lord comes to bestow the grand blessing purchased by His death, fail to see the vast scope of that blessing as applicable to all mankind, and that all those in their graves have as much interest in the glorious reign of Messiah as those living at the time of His return. Is it not because of God's Plan for their release that those in the tomb are called "prisoners of hope"?

We read that Jesus Christ by the grace of God, tasted death "for every man." (Hebrews 2:9.) But if he tasted death for all humanity, both the living and the dead, and from any cause that sacrifice becomes efficacious to only a small fraction of earth's billions, was not the redemption comparatively a failure? And in that case, is not the Apostle's statement too broad? When again we read, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to ALL PEOPLE" (Luke 2:10), and, looking about us, see that it is only to a "little flock" that it has been good tidings, and not to all people, we would be compelled to wonder whether the angels had not overstated the goodness and breadth of their message, and overrated the importance of the work to be accomplished by the Messiah whom they announced. Again, "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all." (1 Timothy 2:5, 6.) A ransom for all? Then why should not all for whom the ransom has been provided have some benefit from Christ's death? Why should not all come to a knowledge of the truth, that they may believe?

### **A Ransom to be Testified "In Due Time"**

Without the key how dark, how inconsistent these statements appear; but when we find the key to God's Plan, these texts all declare with one voice, "God is Love." This key is found in the latter part of the text "a ransom for all, To BE TESTIFIED IN DUE TIME." God has a due time for everything. He could have testified it to these in their past lifetime; but since He did not, except to a small minority, it proves that their due time must be future. For those who will be of the Church, the Bride of Christ, and share the Kingdom honors, the present is the "due time" to hear; and whosoever now has an ear to hear, let him hear and heed, and he will be blessed accordingly. Though Jesus secured our ransom before we were born, it was not our "due time" to hear of it for long years afterward, and only the appreciation of it brought responsibility; and this, only to the extent of our ability and appreciation. The same principle applies to all: in God's due time it will be testified to all, and all will then have opportunity to believe and be blessed by it.

The prevailing opinion is that death ends all probation, but no Scripture so teaches; and all the above, and many more Scriptures, would be meaningless, or worse, if death ends all hope for - the ignorant masses of the world. The one Scripture quoted to prove this generally entertained view is, "Where the tree falleth, there it shall be." (Ecclesiasties 11:3.) If this has any relation to man's future, it indicates 'that whatever his condition when he enters the tomb, no change takes place until he is awakened out of it. All Scripture bearing on the subject uniformly teaches this.

### **All to be Brought to a Knowledge of the Truth**

Since God does not propose to save men on account of ignorance, but "will have all men, to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4); and since the masses of mankind have died in ignorance; and since "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave" (Ecclesiasties 9:10); 'therefore, God has prepared for the awakening of the dead, in order to knowledge, faith and salvation. Hence His Plan is, that "as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive, but each one in his own order"- the Gospel Church, the Bride, the Body of Christ, first; afterward, during the Millennial Age, all who become His during the thousand years of His "presence" (mistranslated coming), the Lord's due time for all to know Him, from the least to the greatest. (1 Corinthians 15:22.) Thus the hope of the world lies beyond the Lord's return.

As death came by the first Adam, so life comes by Christ, the Second Adam. Everything that mankind lost through being in the first Adam is to be restored to those who believe in the Second Adam. When awakened, with the advantage of experience with evil, which Adam lacked, those who thankfully accept redemption as God's gift may continue to live everlastingly on the original condition of obedience. Perfect obedience will be required, and perfect ability to obey will be given, under the righteous reign of the Prince of Peace. Here is the salvation offered to the

world. This will not mean that God will coerce the world into a state of salvation in the future Age. In that Day of full knowledge and opportunity, only those who accept the Message and reform and become obedient thereto, will be restored to everlasting life. Others who wilfully reject the way of righteousness under the reign of Christ, will be judged incorrigible and will be ultimately destroyed in the "Second Death" from which there will be no recovery.- Acts 3:23; Romans 6:23.

### **The Jews Will be Brought Out of Their Graves and Put in Their Own Land-** Ezekiel 37:12- 14

St. Peter tells us that this restitution is spoken of by the mouth of all the holy Prophets. (Acts 3:19- 21.) They do all teach .it. Ezekiel says of the valley of dry bones, "These bones are the whole house of Israel." And God says to Israel, "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I ... shall put My spirit in you, and I shall place you in your own land; then shall ye, know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord."- Ezekiel 37:1,114.

To this, the words of St. Paul agree (Romans 11:25, 26) = 'Blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles [the elect company, the Bride of Christ] be come in; and So all Israel shall be saved," or brought back from their cast-off condition; for "God hath not cast off His people which He foreknew." (Verse 2.) They were cast off from His favor while the Bride of Christ was being selected, but will be reinstated when that work is accomplished. (Verses 28- 33.) The prophecies are full of statements of how God will plant them again, and they shall be no more plucked up. "Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, ... I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land; and I will build them and not pull them down, and I will plant them and not pluck them up. And I will give them an heart to know Me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return unto Me with their whole heart." Per. 24:5- 7: 31:28; 32:40- 42; 33:6- 16.) These cannot refer merely to restorations from former captivities in Babylon, Syria, etc., for they have since been plucked up.

### **Every Man Who Dies Then Shall Die for His Own Sins**

Furthermore, the Lord says, "In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge, but every one [who dies] shall die for his own iniquity." (Jeremiah 31:29, 30.) This .is not the case now. Each does not die now for his own sin, but for Adam's sin- '5In Adam all die." He ate the sour grape of sin, and our fathers continued to eat them, entailing further sickness and misery upon the children, thus hastening the penalty, death. The day in which "every man [who dies] shall die for his own sin," only, is the Millennial or Restitution Day.



Though many of the prophecies and promises of the future blessing seem to apply to Israel only, it must be remembered that they were a typical people and hence the promises made to them, while sometimes having a special application to themselves, generally have also a wider application to the whole world of mankind which that nation typified. While Israel as a nation was typical of the world, its priesthood was typical of the "little flock," the Head and Body of Christ, the "royal priesthood"; and the sacrifices, cleansings, and atonements made for Israel typified the "better sacrifices," fuller cleansings and real atonement "for the sins of the whole world," of which they are a part.

Seeing, then, that so many of the great and glorious features of God's Plan for human salvation lie in the future, and that the Second Advent of our Lord Jesus is the designed first step in the accomplishment of those long promised and long expected blessings, shall we not even more earnestly long for the time of His Second Advent than the less informed Jew longed for the First Advent?

## **CHRIST'S SECOND COMING AND THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES**

"Watch, therefore; for ye know not the day\* your Lord doth come."

"What I say unto you, I say unto all [believers], Watch!"— Matthew 24:42; Mark 13:37.

In view of the foregoing Scripture testimony as to the object and purpose of our Lord's return, we are prepared to recognize the great importance 'that logically attaches to the time as well as the signs or indications which mark the appearing and presence of earth's new King and the exercise of His power in the affairs of men.

The exhortation to watch for an event whose precise time is not stated 'implies that the watching ones will know when the event does take place. Watch, because ye know not, in order that at the proper time ye may know, is the thought; and the intimation clearly is, that those who do not watch will not know; that the events which are to be known in due time to the Watchers will be recognized by them, and not recognized by others, at the time of accomplishment.

The Apostle Paul urges us, saying: "Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night, and when they [the world, unbelievers] shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness. That day should overtake you as a thief" (1 Thess. , 5:24) ; because, being children of the light, ye brethren will be watching and be enlightened and taught of the

"Thus read the oldest Greek MSS.

Lord. The Apostle Peter suggests the means by which the Lord will teach us and inform us respecting our location upon the path of the just which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. He shows that it will not be by miraculous revelations, nor by dreams, but through the Word of testimony, the Bible. He says, "We have a more sure word of prophecy, to which ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light which shineth in a dark place, until the Day dawn and the Day- star arise in your hearts."- 2 Peter 1:19.

The united testimony of these Scriptures teaches us that, although it was not proper nor possible for the Lord's people to know anything definite in advance, respecting the exact time of the , Second Presence of the Lord Jesus and the establishment of His Kingdom, yet when the due time would come, the faithful ones, the Watchers, would be informed. It is in vain to urge, as contradicting this, our Lord's statement, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but My Father only." Those who use this Scripture to prove to themselves and to others that no man will ever know anything respecting the time of the Second Advent find it to prove too much, and thus spoil their own argument; for if it means that no man will ever know, it must similarly mean that no angel will ever know, and that the Son Himself will never know. This evidently would be an .absurd construction to place upon the passage. The Son did not know at the time He uttered this statement, the angels did not know then, and no man knew then; but the Son certainly must know of the time of His own Second Advent, and at least a little while before it takes place; the angels also must know a little while before it takes place, and the true children of God, the Watchers, as we have seen above, are to watch in order that they also may know at the proper season, and not be in darkness, in ignorance, with the world; and that their watching shall be rewarded :s guaranteed: "None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise [in heavenly wisdom] shall understand."- Daniel 12:10.

## **How Are We to Watch?**

Our watching consists not in looking up into the sky" stargazing"; for those who study the Lord's Word to any purpose soon learn that "the day of the Lord So cometh as [like] a thief in the night," and that its dawning cannot be discerned with the natural eye. If the Lord's people would discern anything by watching the sky with their natural eyes, could not the world discern the same thing? If the Second Advent of our Lord were to be an open, outward manifestation, would not the world know of it as soon as the saints, the Watchers? In such event it could not be true that the day of the Lord should come as a thief, as a snare, unawares, upon the world, while the Church would have foreknowledge thereof- not to be left in darkness.

We are to watch the signs of the times, in the light of the Lord's Word. As the Apostle declares, "We have a more sure word of prophecy, ... as a light shining in a dark place, until the Day dawn."

Those who have taken heed to the landmarks, pointed out by the Lord through Daniel and Isaiah and Jeremiah, and all the holy Prophets, realize that we have come already a much longer journey than was expected by the Church when first she started out; but we realize also from these landmarks that we have .approached very close to the end of the journey, very near to the time when the great blessing, for which God's people have So long waited and prayed, is at hand. For instance, the Watchers have noted the Lord's testimony through the Prophet Daniel that "the time of the end" would be a period of time (more than .a century), and that in this "time of the end" there would be a great increase of travel, running to and fro throughout the earth, and a great increase of general intelligence, increased knowledge, as it is written, "In the time of the end many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."—Da 12:4.

Those carefully watching see the lifting of the curtain of ignorance, and the letting in of the light, making ready in a natural way for "the times of restitution of all things, spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began."- Acts 3:21.

Watching intently, earnestly, interestedly, because they know of the good things God hath in reservation (1 Corinthians 2:10- 13), the Watchers note that Daniel's prophecy further points out that, as the increase of travel bring the increase of knowledge, So the increase of knowledge will bring an increase of discontent to the world of mankind in general; and the result will be as prophetically stated that "there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." The Watchers, seeking to note whether these things have yet a fulfilment or not, look about them and behold on every hand discontent, unhappiness; far more than when the world enjoyed far fewer of the mercies and blessings of heaven. These latter- day gifts of Providence, instead of provoking thankfulness, gratitude and love to God and generosity to man, produce in unregenerate hearts ambition, greater avarice, selfishness, envy, hatred, strife and other works of the flesh and of the Devil. Yes; the Watchers can clearly discern the great approaching climax of hu- \ man trouble in which the Scriptures distinctly declare that all the present human institutions will go down in anarchy, in confusion, in chaos. But the Watchers do not lose sight of God and His providence. They see that, while the approaching social and ecclesiastical catastrophe will be the natural result of the operation of selfishness under highly favored conditions, nevertheless they remember that God is at the helm, and that He is able to cause the wrath of man to praise Him and the remainder of man's wrath (which would not praise Him) He will restrain.

## **Parousia, Epiphania, Apokalupsis**

Because not heedless, careless, indifferent servants of the King, but faithful and earnest, the Watchers discriminating carefully, discern that there are three words of distinctly different signification used in respect to the Lord's Second Advent, namely, parousia, and epiphania, and apokalupsis. Parousia is used in respect to the earliest stage of the

Second Advent, while epiphania and apokalupsis relate to the same Advent later- not that apokalupsis and epiphania relate to another or a third advent, but merely to a later feature of the Second Advent. These Greek words, it is true, are somewhat obscured or hidden in the Common Version of the Bible, and probably for a purpose. The Lord's purpose evidently was to keep the world and the wicked in ignorance of His gracious Plan until His due time; nor did He wish the particulars to

be understood by the Watchers until nearly the time of the fulfillment. But now we are in "the time of the end," in "the day of His preparation," in the time in which it was foretold 'that then "the wise [not the worldly-wise but the humble Watchers who are wise enough to take heed to the Word of the Lord] shall understand." (Daniel 12:10.) And hence, since many of the Watchers are not Greek scholars, God has made gracious provision through valuable helps, such as critical translations and concordances, So that the very humblest of His people may have a clear and discriminating understanding of the meaning of certain features of His Word which hitherto have been kept hidden under imperfect translations: and these matters God 'Himself has been bringing to the attention of His people, through special helps in the way of Scripture Studies. These "Helping Hands for Bible Students" have reached many of the faithful Watchers all over the world.

By these helps, the Watchers are rapidly coming to see that the word "parousia," translated in our Common Version "coming," does not mean what our English word signifies- to be on the way, approaching; , but on the contrary it signifies "presence," as of one who has already arrived. The Greek word epiphania signifies bright shining or manifestation. It is rendered "appearing" and "brightness." The Greek word apokalupsis signifies revelation, uncovering, unveiling. Thus these words epiphania and apokalupsis signify "appearing" and "revealing," as of a thing previously present but hidden. The Watchers note also that the Scriptures predicate certain things respecting the Lord and respecting His parousia (His presence), which clearly intimate that He will be present and doing His work, His great work (of setting up His Kingdom and smiting the nations with the sword of His mouth) wholly unknown to the world- "as a thief in the night." The Watchers also notice that the Scriptures clearly indicate that after the Lord has done certain things during His presence (parousia) and unknown to the world, He will later make a manifestation of His presence- a manifestation which will be discerned by all mankind; and the outward manifestation is designated His "epiphania" and "apokalupsis" which signify "shining forth," "bright shining," and "uncovering," and "unveiling."

During the period of the parousia (presence) preceding the epiphania (shining forth) a certain work will be accomplished, unknown to the world, unknown to the nominal Church, known only to the Watchers. The ignorance of the impending trouble in the end of this Age will be similar to that of the people who lived in the days of Noah. "As it was in the days of Noah, So also shall be in the days of the Son of Man."- Luke 17:26.

As "the days of Noah" were not days before Noah's time, neither are "the days of the Son of Man" days before the Son of Man's presence. The days of the Son of Man are the days of His parousia or presence- invisible and unknown to the world, known only to the Watchers and seen by them only with the eye of faith. "As in the days that were before the flood they were eating, drinking, marrying, ... and knew not, ... So shall also the presence [parousia] of the Son of Man be"- the world will go on about its usual affairs and know not of the Lord's presence- Matthew 24:38.

## **In the Days of These Kings**

We have a number of general prophecies indicating that we are living in about the time of the Master's Second Presence. We have already referred to Daniel's testimony respecting "the tune of the end," in which many will run to and fro, knowledge be increased, the wise understand, the time of trouble following. Then we have the inspired dream of Nebuchadnezzar, and its inspired interpretation by Daniel, showing the earthly governments which would bear rule over the earth- during the interim between the overthrow of the typical Kingdom of God, whose last king sitting upon the throne of David was Zedekiah, and the installation of the true King, Immanuel, in His Millennial Kingdom glory. These different governments of earth are here pictured as a great image; Nebuchadnezzar's government, the first universal empire of earth, being represented by the head of gold; the MedoPersian Empire, which, according to history, was the second universal empire, is here shown as the breast and arms of silver; the Grecian Empire, which overthrew the Persian, and became the third universal empire, is represented by the belly and thighs of brass; the Roman Empire, which succeeded the Grecian, and constituted itself the fourth universal empire of earth, was represented in the image by the legs of iron- strong exceedingly; and the later development of the same Roman Empire with the intermixture of Papal influence is represented in the image by the feet, which were partly iron (civil government), and partly of clay (ecclesiastical government- Papacy). These were to constitute the sum total of Gentile dominion; and "in the days of these kings" (represented by the ten toes of the image), Jehovah Himself would establish His Kingdom for which we pray, "Thy Kingdom come!"

We are all witnesses. that the Heavenly Kingdom has not yet come- that we are still under the dominion of the "prince of this world"- the prince of darkness. All the efforts to prove to us that the greedy and unholy governments of Christendom, so- called, are the Kingdom for which we were taught to pray, could not prevail: we could never recognize these as, Immanuel's Kingdom: they are only the kingdoms established and recognized by Antichrist, and named by Antichrist "Christendom." The true Kingdom waits for establishment at the hands of Him whose right it is. He has promised that, when He sits upon His throne, all His faithful ones, the "little flock" of the Gospel Age, shall sit in that throne with Him, and be associates in the work and in the honor of blessing the

world.

The Church is not neglected in the picture of earthly dominion given to Nebuchadnezzar, and interpreted by the Prophet Daniel. She is shown therein as a stone taken out of the mountain without hands (by Divine power). This stone represents God's Kingdom (Christ and the Church), and the inspired dream and explanation show that the disaster which shall come to the kingdoms of this world, represented in the image and in the toes, would come through the impact or smiting of the image by the stone. Daniel says: "A stone was cut out which, without being in hands, smote the image upon his feet .... Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floor, and the wind carried them away that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain [kingdom], and filled the whole earth."

### **The Stone Cut out of the Mountain**

The explanation is that "The great God hath made known to the king [and indirectly more particularly to the Watchers] what shall come to pass hereafter." "In the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; [it shall have no successors] for it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." Here is a prophecy which gives a full delineation of the empires of earth, to which God granted dominion during the interim between the removal of the typical crown from His typical kingdom, and the institution of the crown of righteousness and glory upon the true King in the inauguration of the Kingdom of Heaven. Even the surface evidences are that human empire has nearly run its course, and that heavenly empire is needed to deliver the world from its own selfishness; this next universal empire will be the Kingdom of God's dear Son.

But the scrutinizing Watcher will readily perceive that it is one thing to know the time when earthly dominion shall cease, and give place to the completed Kingdom of God, while it would be a totally different matter to know when the "stone" Kingdom would begin to smite the image upon its feet, preparatory to its destruction. This smiting period is the period of the parousia; the period in which Christ is present, gathering His "jewels," His "elect," and in which He will smite the nations with the rod of iron and with the two-edged sword of His mouth, dashing them in pieces as a potter's vessel, and preparing mankind for the royal majesty of the heavens. Let the Watchers note critically the Prophet Daniel's explanation that it will be "in the days of these kings" (the kingdoms represented in the feet and toes of the image - the divisions of Papal Rome) the God of heaven will "set up" His Kingdom. God began the selection of His Kingdom class in the days of - Civil Rome - represented by the legs of iron; He has continued the selection ever since, and the setting up or bringing of His Church (Kingdom) into power comes toward the close of Gentile dominion, but before it ends; for it is to be "in the days of these kings" and not after. Now note the similarity of the

expressions, "in the days of the Son of Man" and "in the days of these kings," and give both the same significance and remember that, as we have proved, they will be the same days- days before the lease of Gentile power expires, in which the Son of Man will be present to "set up" His Kingdom, which shall a little later destroy all these Gentile kingdoms.

### **His Presence Invisible**

One point which more than any other seems to confuse students of this subject is our Lord's resurrection. They note the fact that He appeared in a body of flesh and bones, after His resurrection, and they therefore conclude that He still has a body of flesh and bones bearing all the scars of Calvary; hence, in thinking of His Second Advent they invariably expect it to be another advent as a human being (in flesh and bones), "a little lower than the angels." These expectations are wrong, as the Scriptures show. Our Lord after His resurrection was a spirit being, and His manifestations of Himself to His disciples in various fleshly bodies, then, were similar to manifestations, made before He became the man Christ Jesus, while He still possessed the glory which He had with the Father before the world was- the glory of a spirit being. For instance, are we not particularly told that the Lord and two angels appeared as men in bodies of flesh and blood and bones, and in ordinary human garb, to Abraham and Sarah? And the record is that "they did eat and talk with Abraham." On another occasion the Lord appeared to Moses, not in a body of flesh, but "as a flame of fire" in a bush which apparently burned, and from which He spoke to Moses. We contend that such a power to appear in any kind of a body is a power which in the past was considerably used in communicating the Divine will to mankind, and that it is only discontinued now because the canon of Divine revelation is complete, so that in it the man of God is thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work, and needs no special message or revelations.- 2 Timothy 3:17.

In reading the narrative of our Lord's appearance to His disciples after His resurrection, the fact seems generally to be overlooked that He appeared only a few times, in all, and that between these visits, which were always brief, there were long periods of days and weeks in which the disciples saw nothing of Him. It is generally overlooked, also, that He appeared in various forms, one of which was identical with the body that was crucified, because Thomas had said he would not believe unless he could have such a demonstration. Even then our Lord rather upbraided Thomas, assuring him that there was a still greater blessing in store for those who ask not for such ocular demonstration. None of the world ever saw our Lord after His resurrection, but merely His disciples, to whom it is said, He "showed Himself." This was in harmony with His statement made before His death, "Yet a little while and the world seeth Me no more."- John 14:19.

The Scripture declaration is that our Lord was "made flesh," took upon Him our nature "for the suffering of death"; and not to be encumbered with fleshly conditions to all eternity. Besides, if our Lord must bear the

scars of His wounds to all eternity, the implication would be that His people would also bear all their blemishes and scars to all eternity. Surely, if such were the Divine arrangement, that which is perfect would never come, for we should be encumbered with the imperfect forever. 1Co 13:10.

When we get the correct view of this matter, every difficulty and objection ceases. As the Scriptures declare, So it was, "He was put to death in flesh. He was quickened in spirit." "Though we have known Christ after the flesh yet now henceforth know we Him no more [so]." (2 Corinthians 5:16.) It was at His resurrection that He became the Second Adam "the last Adam, a quickening spirit." (1 Corinthians 15:45.) "Now the Lord is that spirit." (2 Corinthians 3:17.) After appearing to His disciples under various peculiar conditions after His resurrection, in various bodies, the Lord invariably vanished- as soon as He had communicated to them the appropriate lessons, causing, as they declared, their hearts to burn within them.

Looking about us today for evidence of a change of dispensation and of the Kingdom approaching, we find that many even who are not of the Watchers, are noting the signs of our times and are startled, and led to exclaim, What do these things mean?- This remarkable latter- day advance in science, art, and mechanical invention?- This latter- day unsettling of all the social and economic relations of mankind?- This discontent and general unrest in the midst of plenty and luxury?- This latter- day growth of millionaires and paupers?- This growth of giant corporations of world- wide power and influence?- Why are national policies and public men and their utterances and doings criticized (judged) by the masses as never before? - And what means it that, with an apparent growth in wealth in all denominations of Christians there is a growing dissatisfaction, discontent in them all: a growing tendency to criticize the creeds and the preaching and everything?

The Scriptural answer is, The hour of God's judgment is come; the time when "Christendom," political, financial, social and ecclesiastical is being tried in the Divine balances. And the Scriptures declare that she will be found wanting and will be adjudged unworthy to further administer the affairs of earth, which will be turned over to Messiah and His Bride, the elect "little flock," according to the Divine promise.- Luke 12:32.