

The Gospel Witness

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AND IN DEFENCE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.

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"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."—Romans 1:16.

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Any-Moment Expectancy of Christ's Second Coming: Is It Scriptural?

By REV. JOHN WILMOT, London

If, as so largely held among evangelical Christians, this event is now an any-moment possibility, there must have been a point or occurrence in the history of Christendom which gave that possibility commencement. An examination of the programme of the Lord Jesus Christ for His Church as predicted and presented in the New Testament provides conclusive evidence *against* such any-moment possibility.

In the first place, it was impossible for the Lord Jesus Christ to return from heaven to receive His Church between His ascension and the Day of Pentecost, because He had straitly instructed His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Holy Spirit, which they did, and Who was accordingly given. Those disciples, therefore, did not then expect their Lord to return at any moment.

Secondly, it was equally impossible for that Return to take place between Pentecost and the completion of the New Testament Scriptures which the Lord had purposed for the establishment and direction and edification and service of His Church on earth. Christ promised that He would give these additional Scriptures, His words of description covering the Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles and the Apocalypse; and they would be given from Himself through the inspiring ministry of "another Comforter," the promised Spirit. Therefore, the coming of the Lord from heaven was not an any-moment possibility for the Church during the period of the Apostles who were the inspired penmen of the Holy Spirit.

Thirdly, during this period of the completing of the Scriptures, the Apostles died. Peter and Paul both testified in the Scriptures they wrote that they expected death and not the Lord's Return during their lifetime, though they both cherished in their hearts "that blessed hope," which Paul described as "the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." Moreover, the canon of Scripture was not complete until about twenty years later than Paul's last letter in which he testified, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand," and, in contrast with the imminence of his own death, he looked forward and onward to "that day" of Christ's "appearing" when he, in company with all who loved it, would receive reward. Paul himself "loved His appearing" though in the same sentence he looked for death! Therefore an any-moment

Coming of Christ was never a possibility to the Apostles themselves.

Fourthly, it was likewise impossible for the Lord to return at any moment between His ascension when He gave the missionary commission, for which the endowment of the Spirit was given at Pentecost, and the world-wide missionary witness of the Church; for He had commanded that the Gospel should be preached to every creature, among all nations, to the uttermost part of the earth; and with the commission He gave the assurance of His spiritual presence with them "all the days even until the consummation of the age." The word "until" allows of no interruption in the succession. How could the Lord Jesus Christ remove His people away from the earth at His Second Coming at any moment before the consummation of the age when He had promised His presence with them by His Spirit as they prosecuted their missionary witness in the earth continuously until that consummation? Therefore, an any-moment Coming of the Lord for His saints is impossible at least "until" the end of the age.

Fifthly, our Lord, upon His ascension, took His seat on the right hand of the Majesty on high. He "ascended up far above all heavens that He might fill all things." The Scripture was fulfilled, addressed to Him, which said: "Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." And our exalted Lord is "from henceforth" expecting until His enemies be made His footstool." Now, our Lord Himself, in agreement, of course, with the testimony of the Scriptures, declared that this subjugation of His foes would take place at the end of the age, until which time the Church, while in a hostile world and suffering for her Lord, would continue her witness-bearing. Then, at the consummation, will "He come to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believe in that day." Which day? "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance." This double "until," securing the corporeal presence of the Lord Jesus on the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; and His spiritual presence with His saints on earth, precludes any possibility of an any-moment coming until He returns in power to make His foes His footstool. Consequently, there is no point in the history of the Church and the Divine programme as revealed in the

Bible which warrants the any-moment expectancy of Christ's Second Coming until the end of the age.

Sixthly, the testimony of the prophetic Scriptures is clear beyond question that the consummation of the age will follow upon the fulfilment of certain conspicuous events which are to be observed by Christ's disciples as "signs" of the approaching end and the arrival of the Day of the Lord. He even forewarned His disciples—disciples whom He addressed as differentiating them from the Jewish nation and associating them with the Christian Church; disciples to whom He gave the Church ordinances and the Church's missionary orders—not to expect His return before those "signs" had taken place. He pointed out the dual fact that the Church could indeed be certain of the *season* in which His return was to be expected—"When ye shall see these things, then know that He is nigh, even at the doors"; but the Church must remain uncertain as to the *set time*—"Ye know neither the day nor the hour."

Conclusion: History witnesses that an any-moment expectation of Christ's return has been mistaken hitherto. The Scriptures indicate that, till now, we have no more warrant to expect Christ's return at any moment in our time than the Apostles had in theirs. But when the predicted events of the end-time shall take shape, by which we "see *the day* approaching," and "know that our redemption draweth nigh"; and when the age is about to reach her consummation, and "he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry," then, perhaps, at any moment, that is, in the four watches of that "Day," the Church might expect her Lord, and so it is written of that time and to the saints then living and waiting, "Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not *when* the Master of the house cometh, at *even*, or at *midnight*, or at the *cock crowing*, or in the *morning*."

THREE INTERESTING ARTICLES

Our readers cannot justly complain that they frequently read in this paper what they have already read somewhere else. THE GOSPEL WITNESS uses very little "scissors and paste". This week we publish two articles, one by Rev. John Wilmot, Pastor of Highgate Road Baptist Church, London, England; and the other by Mr. Philip Mauro. Knowing Mr. Wilmot so well, we are daring to publish his article, which came to us in tract form, without asking his permission! We feel sure, however, that he will forgive our presumption. The article on the millennium is reprinted from a tract printed by the Bible Truth Depot (Mr. I. C. Herendeen), Swengel, Union Co., Pa., from whom we obtained permission to reproduce Mr. Mauro's article.

We do not print these articles because we have nothing to say ourselves, but because these brethren say what we feel needs to be said—and say it better than we could have said it. We believe, if they are carefully read, with a sincere desire to know what the Scriptures teach, they will go far to dispel the dispensational fog that has gathered about these subjects.

The article by Mr. Wilmot was published in tract form, and may be obtained from the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony, 9 Milnthorpe Road, Chiswick, London W.4, England, at 1/6 (thirty-eight cents) for one hundred, post free. We suggest that many of our readers might profitably order a hundred, and give them free circulation.

The article by Mr. Mauro is published in tract form, and may be obtained from: Bible Truth Depot, Swengel,

Union Co., Pa. The price is 5c plus postage. We suggest to our readers that they write the Bible Truth Depot and ask for "Number Thirty-eight Catalogue—a select list of sound and reliable bound books, pamphlets, booklets, tracts, etc."

We have not been asked to do this, but we do it because we should like to see many of the books there advertised obtain a large circulation. But we suggest also that it would be well that our readers should at least enclose 5c in stamps to pay for the catalogue—only get American stamps. We write thus because we find so many people who seem to think that things can be printed for nothing. Send for the catalogue now, and then order yourself a supply of tracts and booklets for free distribution.

The article by Rev. W. E. Dalling, M.A., which, to us at least, is equally convincing with the other two, is reprinted from "Watching and Waiting," London.

WHAT IS THE MILLENNIUM OF REVELATION XX?

By PHILIP MAURO

The purpose of this paper is—not to support one or other of the current millennial theories (*pre* or *post*) or to present a new theory but—simply to ascertain what God has revealed in the Holy Scriptures concerning "The thousand years" of Rev. XX, and to state the ascertained facts in "words easy to be understood."

The first step obviously is to scrutinize verses 1 to 10 of Revelation XX, noting all that is stated therein; for those few verses contain the only mention in the whole Bible of "The thousand years."

Although no other scripture refers directly to "The thousand years," it is possible nevertheless that some prophecies do foretell things that were to happen in that era. But we are not warranted in saying of any prophecy that "this will be fulfilled in the millennium," unless there is clear evidence in the prophecy itself that it does belong to that particular era.

This word of warning is needful because, in current teaching on the subject, it is commonly taken for granted *without any proof at all* that certain Old Testament prophecies will be fulfilled "in the millennium."

How then can we know whether or not a particular prophecy relates to the thousand years of Rev. XX? The test is whether the prophecy speaks of one of the topics that are found in Rev. 20:1-10. Thus, the most prominent topic in Rev. XX is *the binding of Satan*; and therefore any scripture which speaks of the binding of Satan may properly be taken as referring to the 1,000 years. But it should be stated at the outset that, so far as this writer is aware, *not one* of the prophecies which millennialists commonly cite in support of their teaching is thus related to Rev. XX. The prophecies to which they refer are *always* those of the Old Testament; the reason being that no prophecy of the New Testament lends the slightest support to their doctrine. For there is no hint in any prophecy of the New Testament that the earth is to enjoy a thousand years (or any other period) of peace, plenty and prosperity before the day of judgment. This is very significant; for if the second coming of Christ were to usher in a millennium of earthly blessedness for all nations, and specially for the Jewish people, it is unthinkable that some hint of it should not have been given among all the prophecies that foretell things that will come to pass at the second advent of our Lord.

If, moreover, the millennium were an era of earthly and world-wide peace and prosperity, ushered in by the glorious appearing of our Redeemer accompanied by demonstrations of supernal grandeur and glory in the heavens above and on the earth beneath—the dead in Christ raised incorruptible, living believers transformed in the twinkling of an eye and all caught up together in clouds to meet the Lord in the air—it is surpassingly strange that the inspired seer caught not a glimpse of those stupendous events.

The undeniable fact is that every prophecy of the Bible, Old and New Testaments alike, that relates to the second

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"JOY UNSPEAKABLE"

A Sermon by the Pastor, Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Massey Hall, Toronto, Sunday Evening, August 21st, 1938

(Stenographically reported)

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

"Receiving the end of your faith even the salvation of your souls."

—I. Peter 1:8, 9.

Of all spiritual graces, none has greater potentialities than faith, because it is indispensable to salvation itself: "Without faith it is impossible to please him." Even the gold that perisheth, with all that it can procure for its possessor, is not to be compared in value with the grace of faith. Faith is the divine medium of exchange. It is the currency of the heavenly city. It constitutes the fundamental element in the inheritance of the sanctified. It is therefore not to be wondered at that faith, which is of such inestimable worth, should be subject to fiery testing, even as all other things of value must be tried. Though a transient spirit of heaviness comes upon us, it is only to deepen and to insure the immortality of that perennial spring of rejoicing which is ever bubbling up beneath all our superficial complaints; and, it is thus grace enriches us and enrobes us with garments of praise, that our faith may be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

We who are Christians, profess that our hope is centred wholly, exclusively, in Christ; and yet we no longer have His visible presence with us. A cloud received Him out of the disciples' sight—and the cloud remains: the Lord Jesus is somewhere beyond. The Substance of our hope, the Object of our faith is within the veil. Meanwhile we must not complain of the mist and the haze. Faith has to do with the treasures of the invisible; not so much with the things that are seen, that can be touched and tasted and handled, rather it enables us to hold commerce with the Invisible, and thus to relegate the things that are seen to their proper place.

Let me give you a few scriptures that are illustrative of that principle: "Now we know in part"; "Now we see through a glass darkly"; "It doth not yet appear what we shall be". We are to "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward"—ah, that is it!—"nevertheless afterward." That spells relation, proportion, perspective. "Afterward" is the arch that spans the eternities. The discipline of life, and the sanctifying processes of the Spirit, are conditioned upon our attitude toward the invisible: they work out for us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" only "while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen."

We hear much to-day about the church's duty in the sphere of economics. It is assumed that the church's chief function is to make the far country habitable for the prodigal, and to get him as good a job as possible in the far country so that he will be under no necessity of coming back to his Father's house. Yet our Lord Jesus, even

in the days of His flesh, admonished us, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." He said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight." He came to tell us of another condition of existence, of a higher life, of a store of infinitely more valuable treasure concealed from human view. He told us how we might establish connection therewith, and receive therefrom our supply.

The children of faith "declare plainly that they seek a country". They confess they are strangers and pilgrims; they "look for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Faith then, I say, has to do chiefly, in its largest and richest significance, with the future. It does something for us in the present, of course, but its largest ministry relates us to a realm beyond. Some day the invisible Christ will be revealed from heaven. The clouds which now hide Him from our view, some day He will sovereignly make His chariots: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him."

But in the present, what have we as Christians? Is it true that, as heirs of glory, here in this terrestrial sphere we are to go about in rags, metaphorically? Are we to await the passage of our nonage before we can enter into the possession even of as much as an earnest of our inheritance? Or is godliness profitable for the life that now is, as well as for the life that is to come? What is included in the earnest of the inheritance which is our instalment of the vast wealth which is ours in Christ; and which we are to use and enjoy until the redemption of the purchased possession?

Our text may be taken as the answer. "Believing" is mentioned here, but only incidentally. It does not speak to us so much of faith in this particular text as of the fruits and advantages of faith. Faith joins us to the invisible Christ, the Invisible Lover of our souls. What benefits are thus conferred?

I.

He becomes to us THE INSPIRATION OF THE HIGHEST EMOTION OF THE SOUL, the inspiration of our noblest affections—"Whom having not seen, ye love." It is an emotion far above the common plane of human affection. It is true we love many people whom we do not see. There is a proverb to the effect that "absence makes the heart grow fonder". Perpetual visibility is not necessary to love's constancy. I should be sorry to believe that it is always true that when one is out of sight, he or she is necessarily out of mind. I hope we all love someone

whom we do not see; but there is a very great difference between loving one whom we do not see, and loving supremely One Whom we have never seen.

Spiritual religion—and there is no religion that is not spiritual—is concerned with this noblest emotion of the soul. It teaches us how to love. And they only really love in the sense in which my text employs the term, in whose hearts love has been begotten and shed abroad by the Holy Ghost.

There is no analogy to this love outside the realm of the moral and the spiritual. There is a sense in which we may love persons whom we have never seen. We hear of a noble patriot who has accomplished some heroic deed, and we are moved to admiration, to an admiration that deepens into a real affection; but it is an affection that is of a spiritual quality. I have read of many men whom I never saw, whose memories I love, of whom I think always with the deepest affection. I never saw them, but I have been the beneficiary of their lives. They left behind them a legacy of goodness of which others have been partakers, and for the sake of what they were, and what they did, we love them. It is the quality of their lives, the moral beauty which characterized them, which inspires our affection.

But our love for Christ is superior even to such an affection as that, because *it is inspired by a transcendent beauty*. How is it possible to describe the matchless, the incomparable, beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ? Men have spoken in prose and poetry, and have struggled for utterance, seeking adequately to portray the incomparable beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"How beauteous were the marks divine
That in Thy meekness used to shine;
That lit Thy lonely pathway, trod
In wondrous love, O Son of God!

"Oh, who like Thee, so calm, so bright,
So pure, so made to live in light—
Oh, who like Thee did ever go
So patient through a world of woe?

"Oh, who like Thee so humbly bore
The scorn, the scoffs of men, before?
So meek, forgiving, godlike, high,
So glorious in humility?"

Can you contemplate the surpassing beauty of His character without feeling your heart warm toward Him in deep affection? No wonder the Psalmist said, "My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord." No wonder the spouse, by prophetic inspiration, describing her Beloved at last exclaimed, "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand . . . yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem."

And what if we were to add to the beauty of His character, for the inspiration of our contemplation, some recognition of His unequalled deeds? How wondrously He wrought! Beholding His works in creation, the Psalmist exclaimed, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches." That is true. "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." Yet it is true also that "God in the Person of His Son, hath all His mightiest works outdone." We have sung His praises, and yet when we breathe, Amen, to our utmost efforts, we feel that we have not described His glory. The half has not been told—because it cannot be told:

"Sing how He left the worlds of light,
And those bright robes He wore above,
How swift and joyful was His flight,
On wings of everlasting love.

"Deep in the shades of gloomy death
Th' almighty Captive-prisoner lay;
Th' almighty Captive left the earth,
And rose to everlasting day."

All the heavenly hosts celebrated His triumphant return. When He had "spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it", they cried, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory."

How can we contemplate His work of redemption, His infinite stoop, His conquest of all the powers of darkness, His payment of our debt, the cleansing of our sins, the severance of our bonds, the breaking of all shackles, the bringing of the souls of men back from banishment to the fulness of the Father's house, without altogether falling in love with Him?

"No mortal can with Him compare
Among the sons of men;
Fairer is He than all the fair
That fill the heavenly train.

"To Him I owe my life and breath,
And all the joys I have;
He makes me triumph over death,
He saves me from the grave.

"Since from His bounty I receive
Such proofs of love divine,
Had I ten thousand hearts to give,
Lord, they should all be thine."

But we have not yet reached the heart of the matter. Ours is an invisible, but not an absent Lover. We do not see Him, yet He is here, nearer to us than the nearest, more real than the most real among our fellows:

"We turn from following Thee afar,
—And in unwonted ways,
To build from out our daily lives
The temples of Thy praise.

"And if thy casual comings, Lord,
To hearts of old were dear,
What joy should mingle with the faith
That feels Thee ever near!

"And not the less shall hearts be pure,
Nor less shall worship be,
When Thou art found in all our life,
And all our life in Thee."

I hope we are more than Sunday Christians. I hope we have learned that the religion of Christ, the salvation that is in Him, is a life which possesses the whole man, and determines all his relationships.

It is in the consciousness of the reality of the invisible, it is in the meeting of spirit with spirit, that this spiritual love is really born. No wonder a great many people do not understand our holy religion. They cannot understand why we should love One Whom we have never seen, for some of them even speculate as to the reality of His existence. Some of them even tell us that He is still in the grave. But those of us who are really Christians, who have been born again, and who have received that divine anointing of the Spirit of God, through which

there is revealed to us the treasures of the other world, which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man"—those of us who have thus been led to believe, find Christ more real than anything else in life. We are surer of Him than of our nearest friend, surer of Him than of ourselves. We may be doubtful of many things, but of Him we cannot be doubtful.

"Jesus, these eyes have never seen
That radiant form of Thine;
The veil of sense hangs dark between
Thy blessed face and mine.

"I see Thee not, I hear Thee not,
Yet art Thou oft with me;
And earth has ne'er so dear a spot
As where I meet with Thee.

"Like some bright dream that comes unsought
When slumbers o'er me roll,
Thine image ever fills my thought
And charms my ravished soul.

"Yet though I have not seen, and still
Must rest in faith alone,
I love Thee, dearest Lord, and will,
Unseen but not unknown."

We know Him, and that is the final test of the reality of faith, the making real of the Invisible.

You remember what is said of Moses: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." The very meanest that the service of Jehovah-God offered him transcended in value the best that the greatest of all earthly kingdoms could confer upon him. He refused the one, and embraced the other—why? "He endured, as seeing him who is invisible." That, dear friends, is the test of the reality of faith. We may have failed in many ways. Conscious of our shortcomings, deeply aware of our unworthiness, we may humbly bow in the presence of the Holy One almost afraid to utter His name; but the great question is, Is your faith real enough to have inspired you to love Him?

You remember how the spouse in the Song says, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon?" She had said, "I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept." She feels herself to be utterly unworthy of so great a prince, and yet she seems to say, "Could he see my heart, he would at least find this worthiness in me: he is the one whom my soul loveth."

Our Lord said to Peter—not, "Simon,—do you believe in me?" He had asked him that question before: "Whom say ye that I am?" Boldly Peter had avowed his faith: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." But Peter had later denied Him; after His resurrection they had had a private interview when no one was present—"He hath appeared unto Simon"—and when later the Lord met him in the presence of others, He did not enquire, "Simon, do you believe in me?" He did not ask, "Simon, have you been faithful to me?" He did not ask, "Simon, have you worked for me?" No!

No! He went deeper than that. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." Again He said, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" That was not enough. A third time He pressed the question: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? That is what I want to know. That is the deepest thing of all. Lovest thou me?" Peter answered, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."

This is the supreme test, whosoever loveth Him, though they have never seen Him, is born of God. "Whom having not seen, ye love."

II.

Let me remind you further that in that realm of the invisible, FAITH FINDS AT ONCE ITS ATTRACTION AND FOUNDATION: "In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing." Faith is born of contact with God; it may be, an unconscious contact. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The breath of God is in the word, and when God thus speaks, He breathes upon the slain, and they live. Faith is the exercise of the respiratory functions of the soul. Faith is not some gigantic achievement: it is the quiet breathing of a babe in Christ. It is native, it is instinctive to the new-born.

True believers sometimes worry about their faith, as though it were something tangible, or ponderable, something that could be weighed and measured and estimated. You cannot see your faith any more than you can see the Object of your faith. Faith exercises itself in the realm of the invisible. You need not worry about trying to see it. The soul's respiration will be tested and proved on many a steep hill before you get to the end of the road. But if you really trust, if you have really established contact with Him, faith will find its proof in works. "Though now we see him not, yet believing."

"The steps of faith
Fall on the seeming void—
And find the Rock beneath."

Did you ever see a man test a path of which he was not certain, saying, "Is there anything to step on? Will it hold?" He sees nothing—like Abraham going out "not knowing whither he went." But as he sets down his foot he finds solid ground to rest upon.

III.

But what I want to make clear to you, for your comfort and joy, this evening, is that THE SOURCE AND SPHERE OF THE CHRISTIAN'S REJOICING IS IN THE INVISIBLE REALM. We are promised here real gladness—and is it not satisfaction which all the world is seeking? What are men seeking to-day? Why do men want wealth? For the sake of what it will buy for them, for the sake of the position to which it will elevate them. Men seek satisfaction, joy of some sort.

True Christianity is a joyful religion. It is designed to make us happy. Happiness is not religion; mere emotional pleasure of any sort is a poor foundation to build upon. But if we are really Christians, we shall know something about real joy. Where is it to be found?

We are not promised that we shall find joy in things or in persons. I do not say there is not pleasure in things. You may have a possession which brings real gladness to your heart. We may find some joy in persons, in those we love. But it is not with that the text

deals. The real joy of a Christian is found in Christ, not merely in the things of Christ, but in His person: "Whom having not seen, ye love in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice."

How can we rejoice in the Lord Jesus? Here is the promise of a joy that is "unspeakable and full of glory". *Is that true to Christian experience?* Do Christian people really rejoice "with joy unspeakable"? Some cynic says, "I have not seen it; I have not heard it." Of course, we have not seen it, nor heard of it. That is what the text says. You have expected to see an overflowing happiness of some sort, an excess of delight, a superabundance of gladness. You have expected to see men in veritable ecstasies—enraptured, transported with joy. You say, "I have met a number of Christian men and women; I have no criticism to make of them. They are upright, honourable people. But very sedate, not particularly overflowing with gladness." Some people expect us to be like those who have imbibed not wisely but too well. There are those who seem to imagine that the only proof of Christian joy consists in noise. I am not particularly enamoured of noise-making people.

The joy promised here is not a joy that is of a superior degree, but of a superior kind—the kind that does not speak. The glories of some fair lands cannot be exported. No refrigeration can preserve its fruits; no moving pictures can reproduce its lights and shades. Its birds never migrate, and none can imitate their music. Hence, you must visit the land to enjoy it—its pleasures are unexportable. Do you know the taste of an orange? Someone says, "What a foolish question! Everyone knows the taste. I am very fond of oranges." Where do you get them? "Out of the store." After they have been picked, and put through an antiseptic bath, brushed with wax, sorted, wrapped, and all the rest of it—and you say, "It is a very delicious fruit." You do not know what oranges taste like. There is something about even that fruit that cannot be exported. Go into an orange grove on a hot day, and push you way under the branches and pull an orange from the inside, hidden away from the sun; peel and eat it. It tastes as though it had been on ice, cool and refreshing. You cannot export that flavour.

Something like that is the meaning of our text. There is no verbal vehicle with which to express the joy of fellowship with the Lord. There is no caravan of speech to bring from the rich interior of this paradise so much as an Eshcol cluster of its fruits, no caravels—no ships of language—no argosies, like Solomon's ships of Tarshish, to bear its treasures from its golden shores. The bliss of fellowship with Christ defies the utmost powers of human speech. It is so in nature and in kind, quite irrespective of measure or degree. We cannot speak of our deepest experiences of grace. The gift and the joy we find in Him are alike "unspeakable". "Oh, taste—taste—taste, and see that the Lord is good."

You cannot know the Lord Jesus from the Book only. He is in the Book, but we must know Him for ourselves. This fellowship with Christ defies the utmost powers of expression. We cannot speak about it. The true Christian possesses a bubbling spring within his breast, an immortal joy that never fails, that underlies all the experiences of life, a joy that is "unspeakable and full of glory".

What is that joy? It has the germ of all glory in it. The student plodding away at his desk, the investigator,

the experimenter in his laboratory, working out some very difficult and abstruse problem, working perhaps all through the night, when at last he reaches the desired end, he knows a "joy unspeakable and full of glory". A physician-friend told me of Sir Frederick Banting, the discoverer of *insulin*. He had a certain theory and was submitting it to laboratory tests. At last about three or four o'clock in the morning, he said, "I have it." He left his table, and outside he went, on to his bicycle—and away he went to one of the abattoirs to get the element upon which he was to experiment, and with which he was to make his final proof that he had solved his problem. Even as he laboured, and as others have laboured, they have had before them in anticipation the joy of ultimate success. You pity them? No! No! There is a joy in their work. They do not shout about it, but quietly labour, and down deep there is a satisfaction—what is it? In its measure, it is a joy "unspeakable and full of glory", the anticipation of a day of achievement.

The "joy unspeakable and full of glory" has in it the germ of the glory which is His, and the glory which shall be revealed in us. There is infinite satisfaction in Christ Jesus.

A woman came to the minister of a church and said she would like to join the church, and he said that he would like her to have an interview with the elders. They met, and put her through a rigid cross-examination on the great doctrines of the church. The woman was quite unable to answer the questions, and at last the minister said, "Well, Mrs. So-and-So, we are very pleased with your desire for fellowship with God, and membership in His church, but we are of the opinion that you had better wait a while, and inform your mind on some of these great matters of which we have been speaking before you come into the church." She bowed and said, "Thank you, sir. I must abide by your decision", and when about to withdraw, she tried to speak further, but was overcome with emotion. Then she turned to the minister and said, "I should like, if I can, to say this one thing. I may not be able to speak for Jesus Christ, but I love Him; and I could die for Him." The elders looked at the minister, and the minister looked at the elders, and then they said, "We think you had better come into the church." "With joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

It is an experience that comes to a man once in a lifetime, and you will forgive me if I have related this experience before. When the Great War was over, I was on the other side of the sea. I was in Paris when Alsace-Lorraine was restored to France, and went from there to Mons a little after the Armistice. The armies were still standing in their positions. The railways in that part of Belgium were all destroyed. One morning early in November when the frost was on the ground, with some friends, I started out from Mons to Brussels. No breakfast was to be had anywhere, but we did not care about breakfast. I would have been willing to go hungry for a few days just to see what I expected to see.

We made our way to Brussels, where we tried without success to buy something to eat. We went into a little place finally, and tried to drink something that looked like ink—it was alleged to be coffee—which was too much for me. We went on to look for a place of vantage, for that day King Albert of Belgium was to return, after years of exile. We got into an office building, and up three or four stories above the level of the street, in a

little stone balcony at a corner where the king's procession was to turn. As we looked down, one of my friends said, "Do you see that General in uniform, trying to look over the heads of the people? That is Sir Arthur Currie." He was down there, and I up where I could see all that should take place, why, I do not know.

As far as the eye could see, there were countless thousands of people packed tightly together. They had all kinds of banners, pennants of all the lodges and fraternal societies, every kind of organization was out in full force—and they had almost every noise-making device that was ever invented, ready to acclaim the king when he came in. We watched for an hour or more, and at last we had indications that the procession was approaching. Presently, just below us, His Majesty, King Albert, rode into view on a white horse, his Queen beside him, his children behind him, the Generals of the Allied Armies following after that, contingents of all the armies that had made victory possible. As he came into view, instead of the bands striking up, silence fell upon the multitudes. Hundreds of thousands of people were silent with a silence almost as that of night when all have retired. There was perfect quiet. Beside me, was a French-speaking Belgian lady, and in French she said under her breath, with tears streaming down her face—as they were streaming down all our faces—just in a whisper, "*Magnifique*"—magnificent. The great multitude rejoiced with a joy too deep for words, with "a joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

Having received the end of their faith—I speak of it in the temporal sense for the moment—their national salvation, they rejoiced. The King had returned. So we have received the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls. We know that that is ever secure, and in anticipation of that great and glorious day when the white horse and his Rider shall come down the sky, we rejoice in spite of our tears, with "a joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

WHAT IS THE MILLENNIUM OF REVELATION XX?

(Continued from page 3)

advent shows plainly that it will be followed immediately by the great and terrible day of the Lord and then by the new heavens and the new earth.

Let it be specially noted also that Rev. XX makes no reference whatever to the Jews. It lends not the slightest support to the theory that the Jews are to be gathered back to Palestine and renewed as a nation, and are to have supremacy over the Gentiles. Every reader can quickly verify this statement for himself by simply reading the first ten verses of Rev. XX; and it is quite sufficient to discredit the pre-millennial teaching of our day. But that teaching is further and fully discredited by the added fact that, among all the prophecies of our Lord and of His apostles concerning His coming again, *not one word* is said of the revival of the Jewish nation or of any other of the expected happenings of pre-millennialism.

In a word, the current pre-millennial doctrine was *not derived from Rev. XX*, or from any other part of the Bible. What then is its source? Regard for the truth compels us to say that it is an unholy compound of first-century rabbinism (that is, the doctrine taught by the Jewish rabbis of Christ's day) and of the fabled "golden age" of the pagans.

I. The Happenings of the Millennium of Rev. XX.

A preliminary question arises: Are we to take the term "thousand years" as an exact measure of time, or as simply denoting a long period of indeterminate length? This writer favours the latter view, mainly because it is in keeping with the character of this day of God's longsuffering toward mankind (II Pet. 3:9, 15) that it should be of unmeasured length. Moreover, it is significant that the exact expression "a thou-

sand years," found in Rev. XX, occurs nowhere else but in II Pet. 3:8.

It should also be noted that the several visions of Revelation are not consecutive, but concurrent; and we are therefore warranted in placing the beginning of the millennium near the beginning of the Christian era.

Specially should it be observed that the millennial happenings of Rev. XX take place in the spiritual realm and that the actors therein (including the souls of verse 4) are all *spirit beings*; whereas in the millennium of current teaching both the scene itself and all the actors are earthly.

The most conspicuous personage in the scripture passage is the Devil, who is here identified by the same four-fold designation given in Chapter 12:9 where it is said of him that he "*deceiveth the whole world*." This is of much significance in connection with the statement of Rev. XX that his power to *deceive the nations* would be abridged during the 1,000 years.

Next in prominence is an Angel, who has the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand wherewith he binds the adversary, setting a seal upon him, so that he should deceive the nations no more until the 1,000 years are ended, when he must be loosed for a little season. The "key," the "chain" and the "seal" are, of course, symbols of corresponding spiritual things; for Satan could not be bound with a material chain.

Lastly the passage speaks of "the souls" of those who had been slain for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus and of those who had not worshipped the beast or accepted his mark. Those "souls" lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. It is not said or implied that they reigned *on earth*. On the contrary, the context forbids the idea; for it makes no reference to conditions on earth and gives no information in regard thereto.

Thus it is seen that the solitary passage of Scripture which mentions the millennium has contributed to the millennium of current belief *nothing but its name*. Concerning the elaborate and highly coloured picture which our dispensationalists have put before our astonished eyes, the truth is that not one of its features, or even of its minor details, was derived from Rev. XX. That picture may be admirable and even fascinating as a work of art, but it cannot be accepted as revelation.

II. Scriptures Topically Related to Rev. XX.

In the interpretation of a passage of scripture we should first learn all that can be learned by careful study of the passage itself, and then seek further light thereon from related scriptures; that is, scriptures which deal with *the same topics* as the passage we are studying. Light may be had from other scriptures upon each of the prominent topics of Rev. XX, namely: (1) The Binding of Satan; (2) The Souls of the Martyrs; (3) The Deception of the Nations (Gentiles).

1. The Binding of Satan

The binding of Satan was referred to by our Lord in a prophetic parable recorded by Matthew and Luke. The occasion was this: The Pharisees had attributed the Lord's miracle of casting out an evil spirit to the power of Satan. Answering their thoughts Christ said, "If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand?" (Matt. 12:26); and further He said, "Or else, how can one enter into the strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house" (vs. 29). It is evident from verse 26 that "the strong man" (the definite article is used) is Satan. Luke's account reads thus: "When the strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when the stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils" (Luke 11:21-23). The word "blind" in Matt. 12:29 is the same that is used in Rev. 20:2.

These passages show that the binding of Satan was not to be such as would nullify his power completely, but was partial in its effect; and this agrees with the millennial passage, which states that the binding of Satan was merely such as to deprive him of power to deceive the nations. The parable also shows that the purpose of binding the great adversary was to *effect the salvation of some of those whom Satan was keeping in his kingdom by deceptive means*. From this we may understand that, when Christ deprived Satan of his

power of deception over the nations, He took from him the weapons (*panoply*) wherein he trusted and thus made it possible to divide his spoils—those “spoils” being human souls. Moreover, we have here the evident fulfillment of Isa. 53:12, in which, following the wondrous foretelling of the atoning sufferings of Christ, we read: “And He shall divide the spoil with *the strong*” (one).

This verse from Isaiah's great prophecy clearly indicates that it was by His sufferings, death and resurrection (for Isa. 53:12 implies His resurrection, else He could not divide the spoils with the strong one) that Christ was to *bind* the great deceiver; and this is confirmed by other scriptures, such as Heb. 2:14, 15, where the declared purpose for which the Son of God “took part of flesh and blood” is “that through death He might destroy (annul) him that had the power of death, that is THE DEVIL, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Here it is revealed that Satan is a world-ruler, who exercises “the power of death,” and that his sway extends over all mankind. The purpose for which God the Son was made man was that, by His own fear of death, He might set free some of those who, because of the fear of death, were in lifelong bondage.

Thus it is clearly to be seen from even a brief examination of these scriptures that there has been a *binding of Satan* which answers to that of Rev. XX and has lasted fully a thousand years.

2. And Judgment was Given unto Them

“The souls of them that were slain for the Word of God and for the testimony which they held” had been seen by John in a previous vision. They were then “under the altar” (Rev. 6:9). There they cried for *judgment*, saying “How long dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood?” They were bidden to wait yet for a little season until others should be slain as they were. In Rev. 20:4 we read that to *these and to those others* “judgment was given; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

Christ is reigning *now*, but “at His coming” He will “deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father” (I Cor. 15:23, 24). Therefore the beginning of the 1,000 years must be placed after our Lord's ascension, the end thereof being evidently previous to His second coming. And those judgment-thrones must be located *where Christ now is*—“in the heavenlies” (Eph. 1:3, 20; 6:12).

Judgment is not confined to the great and terrible day of the Lord. It culminates then in the judgment of all the living and the dead; but it is always in progress; sometimes involving only individuals as Ananias and Sapphira; sometimes cities, as Sodom; sometimes nations, as Egypt, Babylon, and Israel. Judgment proceeds in the realm of spirits also; for we read that the saints shall judge angels (I Cor. 6:2, 3). And again we read that “the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God” (I Pet. 4:17). See also Enoch's prophecy, quoted by Jude (vss. 14, 15).

3. The Deception of the Nations (Gentiles)

This sub-topic is closely related to that of the binding of Satan; but it should be remembered that at the time of Christ's birth all the Gentiles, including even the most cultured nations, were sunk in the darkness of idolatry, being blinded by the god of this world (II Cor. 4:4), and in fact were worshipping Satan under the representations of various idols. Thus that ancient serpent was filling out the description of himself as the one who “deceiveth the whole world.” But a change was about to come. The infant Jesus was acclaimed by Simeon as “A light to lighten the *Gentiles*”; and from near the beginning of the gospel era even until now Satan's deceptive powers have been so far curtailed that the bearers of the gospel-message have been able to penetrate the darkest realms of his vast domain, delivering his bond-slaves and spreading everywhere the healing light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. During all those centuries God has been visiting “the *Gentiles* to take out from among them a people for his name” (Acts 15:14); thus dividing the spoils with the strong one and leading captivity captive. This could not have been had Satan not been “bound.”

It is appropriate here to recall our Lord's parting command to His followers for their age-long and world-wide commission to evangelize “all nations”; for that command carries with it the implication that Satan's power to deceive the nations would be nullified.

At the end of the 1,000 years Satan was to be loosed “for a little season” and go forth to deceive the nations again. Conditions in Russia and elsewhere suggest that that “little season” may already have begun.

“The first resurrection” (vss. 5, 6) is closely connected with the millennium. But that is in itself a large subject; and inasmuch as it is to be separately treated and by another writer in the series whereof this paper is a part, it has not been referred to herein. Suffice it here to state that the present writer understands that “the first resurrection” is that of the martyrs, just referred to (See Phil. 3:11).

Summing up briefly the results of our study, we find:

1. That the millennium of Rev. XX is a period whereof the happenings take place *in the realm of the unseen things*, its only earthly effect being that Satan is restrained during that period from deceiving the Gentiles as he had done during Old Testament times;
2. That it is a period during which “the martyrs of Jesus” (Rev. 17:6) are specially comforted and honored;
3. That it began some time after our Lord's ascension.

WHY I HAVE ABANDONED THE “ANY-MOMENT COMING” THEORY.

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In our early years we were taught the hope of the Lord's coming, and on our bookshelves many of our father's books on this subject are to be found, all teaching that the tribulation precedes the coming of the Lord for His church.

After some years we abandoned this view, for what we thought was further light on the subject, and now for some seventeen years we have held and taught the “any-moment coming” theory. During the last ten years we have spoken on A.T.P.M. platforms in such towns as Harrogate, Blackburn, Bournemouth, Southbourne, Southsea, etc., and have made many good friends amongst those who hold the “any-moment” view. We would hasten to add that we hold such friends in high esteem, and make no charge against them of any lack of saintliness, indeed it has been our good fortune to find and esteem many choice souls both amongst those who hold the “any-moment” view and in the ranks of those who consider such a view to be error, and it is our desire still to count such people amongst our friends.

In the last two or three years, during a period of more intense Bible study, we have experienced many doubts as to whether the new view we had adopted was, after all, as clearly established as we had imagined. Our attachment to any second advent movement was but slight; we were concerned to know and to teach the TRUTH, and although a modernist Principal of a Baptist College once wrote of us that our mind was “hermetically sealed” against new truth, we were quite ready to restudy the subject with as open a mind as possible, seeking to give Holy Writ frank and honest consideration without binding and limiting ourselves to any particular view. We are anxious that, having found liberty in Jesus Christ, we should not fall into bondage to any man or Movement.

It is easy to understand how many of our brethren who have held and taught the “any-moment coming” theory, find it difficult, fearlessly and frankly, to re-examine the whole subject with an open mind—for ourselves we must here state that such a course has brought its own reward.

We will endeavour to set forth clearly for our readers, some of the inconsistencies in the case usually set forth by “any-moment coming” teachers, though they by no means agree with each other on every point. They sometimes excuse themselves for this lack of agreement by saying that at least they all agree on one thing and that is that the church will be taken out of the world before the great tribulation. But they forget that this is the VERDICT, and that its value is no greater than the value of the evidence they produce in the attempt to establish it. Some of this evidence we shall now examine, and because we could no longer reconcile it with either revelation or reason (and the editor of the *Advent Witness* writes: “There must be room for a little common sense even in interpreting the inspired word”) we have had to abandon the “any-moment coming” theory.

The Argument from Sentiment

The sentimental argument often used, that God would never let His blood-bought children go through intense persecution, and therefore He must take them out of the world before such persecution as indicated in the great tribulation overtakes them, has never made any appeal to our mind, and we have never used it. The argument is illogical in view of the fact of the awful sufferings God has allowed His people to go through in the past; it has no support from logic, history or revelation, but is purely an argument from sentiment. If the flesh is asked, "Would you like to escape suffering?" no doubt the answer would be "Yes". But in the thought of the hymn writer we might well ask:

"Must I be carried to the skies
On flow'ry beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize
And sailed thro' bloody seas."

The Last Trumpet (Succeeded by Seven!)

"Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. xv. 52). This is a passage about which we found it very difficult to accept any of the explanations offered by our "any-moment" friends. It is a passage they take great pains to explain, but it does not need any explanation if we are prepared to accept what Paul has written. Elaborate explanations about Roman army customs are only needed when the plain meaning of the phrase written by Paul is rejected. Paul wrote "at the LAST trump." Our sense of fairness and logic would not finally allow us to set this passage aside as not meaning what is so plainly written. The LAST trump with SEVEN TO FOLLOW proved to be too preposterous an idea to be retained. Nor were we at all persuaded to its retention when we read that, as the book of Revelation (where the seven trumpets are revealed) was not written till nearly thirty years after Paul died, so "he would hardly use words that had no meaning for himself or his contemporaries. If he had the book of Revelation before him Paul could have alluded to it as describing the trumpet, but as the book was not in existence he did not and could not have referred to it." This is from the pen of one of the present-day vigorous exponents of the "any-moment" theory. We presume the writer has read 1 Peter i. 10-12, where we learn of the prophets to whom revelation was given, that was, (as Peter wrote) "not unto themselves, but unto us." According to the argument referred to above, they "would hardly use words that had no meaning" for themselves or their contemporaries. But this is precisely WHAT THEY DID, and scripture says so. No one is so foolish as to imagine that Paul could refer to a document that did not then exist, but who amongst the "any-moment" teachers will dare deny that God could reveal truth to Paul concerning the LAST trump before He revealed truth concerning trumpets 1 to 6 to St. John? Further, to declare that the LAST trump is the LAST trump is in no way to rob Paul's words in 1 Cor. xv. 52 of meaning for himself or for his contemporaries, even though they had no revelation concerning the other trumpets. The use of the word "LAST" definitely implies that some must have preceded, but this implication in no way robs Paul or his readers of the truth he is unfolding by the Holy Spirit. Is it not plain, to those who are willing to see, that the Holy Spirit in inspiring Paul to use such a phrase as "at the last trump," thereby prepares his readers for the further unfolding and filling in of events that were revealed to John concerning the seven trumpets? If words have any meaning, this phrase is a divine revelation that trumpets precede the trump that will be the signal for corruption to put on incorruption and mortality to put on immortality. We are assured that our honoured brethren in the Lord who hold the views we have felt we must abandon, recognize and accept the inspired word of God as we ourselves do, but we should be lacking in true Christian love if we failed to point out to them that, to cut out the word "last" from this passage is a very serious matter, for it is a deliberate rejection of an inspired word; and had it been written by John that the reign of antichrist will follow the 7th trumpet, none would have been more dogmatic than many of our "any-moment" friends, that Paul's "last trump" and the 7th trump are identical. Paul writes that resurrection and rapture occur at the LAST trump; those that

reject the obvious truth that the first six trumpets of Revelation are those which precede this LAST trump, have yet to explain what the trumpets are which do precede the LAST, for if there were none to precede it, the Holy Spirit would not have indicated that there are, by using the qualifying word "last"; this explanation, as far as we know, has not yet been given.

The Overtaking Day that does not Overtake!

It is clear evidence of the falsity of an exposition of scripture when its professed interpreters have to alter the text. The passage 1 Thess. v. 1-6 apparently causes considerable difficulty to some. We have found two parts of it misquoted by a prominent teacher. 1 Thess. v. 1, 2 has been quoted thus:—"But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you *for yourselves*, know perfectly that the Day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." A comparison of this with the Word of God will show that a deliberate alteration has been made, and by the alteration, the sense of the passage has been completely altered. True, it is but the alteration of the punctuation, but such alteration changes the meaning of the passage. The writer has stated in reply to our query that, his quotation is the authorised version "word for word"; but such a reply does nothing to alter the fact that the passage as given is NOT TO BE FOUND in the Authorised Version. The A.V. depends upon its punctuation for its sense, this punctuation has been deliberately altered to suit the writer's theory. The alteration makes Paul say that there is no need for him to write to his readers, about the times and seasons for their own benefit. Whereas, what Paul wrote was that, he had no need to write to the Thessalonians about the times and the seasons as they already had PERFECT UNDERSTANDING about them. He merely reminds them of what they had already learnt of these times and seasons, and warned them to be both watchful and sober.

It is evident that 1 Thess. v. 1, 2, as it stands in the A.V. does not suit the "any-moment coming" theory, or no attempt would be made to alter it. If the Church is to be taken out of the world years before the coming of the day of the Lord, what an excellent opportunity this passage presented to Paul to say so in clear and unmistakable terms. Shall we imagine what he might have written:—"But of the times and the seasons brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. You will have been removed from the earth years before the day of the Lord . . . sudden destruction will come on those who are left . . . but that day will not overtake you."

This is what Paul is made to teach, but it is JUST THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT HE DOES TEACH. The knowledge of the times and seasons that has been revealed to God's children will prevent them from being overtaken by the day of the Lord as by a thief. They will be prepared—that is if they do not reject the revelation for theories of their own—and will be watching and sober, equipped in faith, love and hope.

Further evidence of the difficulties this passage causes to certain advent teachers is shown by the misquotation of verse 4 by the same writer. This is how it has been quoted:—"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you." This is what the "any-moment" theory demands, but it IS NOT WHAT PAUL WROTE. The last three words of the verse have been left out in order to alter the sense. Paul actually wrote:—"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you *as a thief*." What reliance can we place on professed teachers of the Word of God when they are to be found guilty of deliberately altering the inspired word? None. It is the blind leading the blind. What Paul was conveying to his readers in this chapter was that in view of their perfect knowledge of the times and seasons they would not be overtaken unawares by the day of the Lord, it would not come like the unexpected coming of a thief in the night, they would be prepared, for their minds would have been enlightened by the same lamp of revelation. Only by misquoting Paul can he be made to say, "But, ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you."

An Inaudible Shout!

Another inconsistency is seen by the interpretation of 1 Thess. iv. 16. Here we are told "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": this is taught as indicating a secret coming that shall be seen and known only by believers. Note

the SHOUT, VOICE and TRUMP; if these indicate a SECRET coming, we shall be glad to know what language would indicate a PUBLIC coming. It is argued that the SHOUT, etc., are not inaudible, as the believers hear them, but not the world of mankind in general. But this is as pure a supposition as the modernist theory that, John invented the discourse between Jesus and Nicodemus. We do not propose blindly to accept either the latter or the former; we have rejected the modernist supposition because it lacked scriptural proof, on precisely the same grounds we reject the argument of the "any-moment" teacher.

Turning to another point in this chapter, who, unless they had some special theory to support, on reading 1 Thess. iv. 15 to 1 Thess. v. 23, would understand "the day of the Lord" (v. 2) to be the occasion of an event entirely different from "the coming of the Lord" (iv. 15); "the Lord Himself shall descend" (iv. 16) and "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 23)? Nor is it possible, here, to hide behind fanciful statements of the significance of the title "the Son of man"—for the title "Lord" is used; the simple and obvious truth is that in chapter, iv. the emphasis is on the RESULTS of the Lord's coming, and that of 1 Thess. v. 2 is concerned with the DAY of the Lord's coming; while in 1 Thess. v. 9 we return to the RESULTS of the Lord's coming.

The Parousia that is not the Parousia!

One writer states that "there is a period of at least seven years between the Parousia and the Manifestation or Epiphany," but this conclusion is arrived at only after four passages in the gospels, where the word "parousia" is used of Christ's coming, have been dismissed; we have had to discard such a method of handling the Word of God. According to this writer the Parousia "may happen at any moment," and yet this very word "parousia" is that used by our Lord to indicate His coming, and according to His infallible teaching, the Parousia cannot take place until "after the tribulation" (Matt. xxiv. 29). That the coming of Christ and the parousia of the Son of man are identical terms is obvious from a frank study of Matt. xxiv. 5, 23, 24 and 30, such is our Lord's teaching. Christ taught that His Parousia is after the tribulation, but we are asked to believe that it is some seven years before; in other words we are asked to believe that the Parousia is not the Parousia.

We cannot continue to hold a theory that has for one of its chief props the teaching that the title "Son of man" is used of our Lord in His relationships to Israel and not in His relationships to the church. If the teaching in the synoptic gospels concerning the second coming is to be set aside because the title there used for our Lord is "Son of man," then the gospel of John must also be set aside on the same grounds as not applying to the Church, for the title "Son of man" occurs no less than twelve times in this gospel. Why should the coming of the Son of man be any more Jewish than the lifting up of the Son of man, or than the glorification of the Son of man? If this title is entirely Jewish and without application to the church when used in connection with His coming, who can logically deny that it must be equally Jewish and without application to the church when associated with His flesh (John vi. 53) or His lifting up (John viii. 28)? If we are to search for a Jewish title, we cannot have a more distinctive one than that of "Christ"—the equivalent to "Messiah," and used thirty-nine times in the synoptic gospels. But second advent passages in the Epistles where this title "Christ" is used are all hailed as applying to the church, in spite of the fact that those with the reputed "Jewish" title "Son of man" are set aside.

The Present Church that is Absent!

As already indicated, we are assured that the Church will be removed from the earth at least seven years before the Manifestation or Epiphany. We have not yet found the passage of scripture where this is stated, and it is evident that Paul was quite ignorant of this when he wrote to Timothy, for 1 Tim. vi. 13, 14 reads "I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing" (epiphany) "of our Lord Jesus Christ." Surely Paul would never have instructed believers to flee the love of money and continue to fight the good fight of faith, until the epiphany if he had expected all such believers to have been removed from earth seven years before. According to

Paul the Church is present on earth witnessing and fighting up to the time of the epiphany, but "any-moment" teaching says the Church is absent. Whom shall we believe?

The Triumph of Idolaters!

Another false statement that must be emphatically denied as contradicting the plain word of God, is that "the great tribulation is to be a judgment of God for idolatry". If the great tribulation is the wrath of God then this is also the wrath of Satan (Rev. xii. 9-12) for the martyrs of Rev. xii. 11 are the result of Satan's onslaught. But we are asked to believe that this tribulation is on idolaters, and so (according to this) we have the amazing scene in Rev. xii. 11 of Satan persecuting those who are his own idolatrous worshippers, and these same idolaters triumphing by the blood of the Lamb! In Rev. vii. 14 we are shown a company which came out of great tribulation and which are before the throne serving God. To continue to apply this amazing system of biblical exegesis we shall have to believe that they are idolaters upon whom the righteous judgment of God has fallen! According to this the great tribulation is proof of the TRIUMPH OF IDOLATRY.

The First Resurrection that is the Second!

1 Cor. xv. 20-28 gives us an outline of events from the resurrection of Christ, ver. 23, to the manifested supremacy of God. What is Paul's programme? It shows the order in which all that are in Christ shall be made alive.

1. Christ the firstfruits.
2. They that are Christ's at His coming.
3. Then cometh the end.

(This "end" is shown in verses 24-28 to come after Christ's earthly rule, and when we turn to Rev. xx. 6-15 we see the details of this rule filled in, also the events connected with the "end.") Apart from the resurrection of the Lord Himself, Paul gives us two resurrections, "they that are Christ's at His coming," and "then cometh the end." This is exactly the number and order that John gives us, "they that are Christ's at His coming," called by John "the first resurrection" (Rev. xx. 5), and "then cometh the end," referred to by John in the same verse and also in verses 11-15, "the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." You can no longer hold the view that the "FIRST resurrection," mentioned by John is actually preceded, at least by seven years, by a resurrection of all the members of the true Church. To hold this view we have to strain our credulity to breaking point, and believe:

1. That in Paul's great summing up of Christ's work as revealed in resurrection he completely left out the resurrection called by John "the FIRST resurrection."
 2. That John's FIRST resurrection is in reality the SECOND.
- The argument that the FIRST resurrection is in stages, that the resurrection of 1 Thess. iv. 16 is the first stage and that of Rev. xx. 6 is the second stage cannot continue to have much weight in a mind that is truly seeking to know what divine revelation really teaches on the subject; for the very good reason that such a statement cannot be found in Holy Writ. No scripture can be found that states that the first resurrection of believers is in stages; let all honest Bible students face this fact.

Revelation that was not Revelation!

To maintain the "any-moment" theory it is taught by some that no prophecy in the first three gospels, no statement therein recorded, refers to the coming of the Lord for His Church, but it is allowed that the gospel of John, written several years after the other three gospels, contain such prophecy (John xiv. 1-3). Then it is stated that Paul was the first to give forth the truth of the coming for the Church. Here is a sample of such teaching. One has written in reference to Paul's teaching, that it included that of "the resurrection and rapture of the saints which were a mystery not previously disclosed": and the same teacher writes of "I will come again" (John xiv. 3). "If there was no other passage in the Bible which spoke of the Lord's Second Coming, this one would be sufficient to establish in our hearts the blessed hope. It is the clear promise of the Lord Himself, and must be taken literally." If this is true, then John must have received his knowledge of the Lord's coming for His church AFTER Paul wrote—for we are told it was "NOT PREVIOUSLY DISCLOSED". But John in chapters xiii. 31 to xvii.

26 gives us a record of our Lord's teaching given to the ELEVEN disciples; it was given to them before Paul was even converted, and long before John recorded it in writing; in this teaching He revealed His coming, and in words so plain that the dullest of the disciples could not fail to understand, for our "any-moment" teacher has written, "If there was no other passage in the Bible which spoke of the Lord's Second Coming, this one would be sufficient to establish in our hearts the blessed hope."

The eleven disciples then, some years before Paul wrote, according to the testimony of one of them, received from the Lord Himself the revelation of the blessed hope. A fact which completely shows the falsity of the claim that the resurrection and rapture of the saints were a mystery not disclosed before Paul taught them.

Non-Intervention that Intervenes!

An argument often vigorously pressed and repeated is that with regard to the resurrection of Christ the firstfruits and that of those who "are Christ's at His coming," "there is absolutely nothing between these two events, except waiting till the Lord has finished calling out a people unto His name." But we are also told if we expect antichrist's reign to take place before the coming of the Lord for His Church, we have abandoned the blessed hope; if this be true (and it is easily seen to be false) we have every justification for a like accusation against the "any-moment" teachers who wait, they tell us, for the Lord to finish "calling out a people unto His name." It is certain that Paul could not have expected the any-moment coming of his Lord when he wrote to the Thessalonians, for according to Acts xxiii. 11 he had to bear personal witness at Rome, and he had not been to Rome when he wrote that epistle. Nor could Peter expect the "any-moment" coming after our Lord's words in John xxi. 18, 19. But if Paul is expecting his visit to Rome and Peter is expecting old age, therefore, according to the principle laid down by "any-moment" teachers, BOTH MUST HAVE ABANDONED THE BLESSED HOPE. On the other hand, if Paul and Peter, while expecting certain events to intervene, still held strongly to the blessed hope—so too may those, who learn from scripture of yet other prophesied events which must precede the coming of the Lord.

No Divine Wrath for the Church

Do not let us be deterred from this search for truth in the Word of God, by the oft-repeated statement that our Lord delivers us from the wrath to come, and therefore the church will not pass through the great tribulation. The belief that the church will pass through the tribulation DOES NOT INCLUDE THE IDEA THAT THE CHURCH WILL EVER SUFFER THE WRATH OF GOD. The "any-moment" teacher is not alone in his confidence that he is to be delivered from the wrath of God. Noah and Lot were both on earth when God's wrath fell on the ungodly, but both were preserved together with others. But the great tribulation is not the wrath of God, it is the wrath of Satan and men against the godly, Abraham's spiritual seed will experience persecution, but not the wrath of God; this latter is reserved for Christ rejectors. The God who could preserve Israel in Egypt from the plagues that brought suffering and death on their persecutors, who preserved Noah and his family at the time of the flood, who saved Lot out of Sodom, can save His own blood-bought children from any future judgments that will be sent upon the ungodly. Let us beware of limiting the illimitable.

Such are a few of the inconsistencies that we have abandoned with manifest relief, and which have helped to reveal to us the unscriptural teaching of the "any-moment coming" theory.

We would conclude this little article with an earnest appeal for a frank reconsideration of the subject of those who, probably, so far, have been content to read and accept all that their favourite authors have written on the subject.

Let us beware of dividing the word with the knife of Jehoiakim, under the guise of "rightly dividing the word of truth." The Word of God does not need ingenious explanations but receptive hearts. Involved theological dissertations are often farthest from the truth. Let us be simple in our understanding, frank in our approach and prayerful in our study.

Thus shall we be guided, according to the divine promise "into all truth."

AN INTERESTING LETTER FROM JERUSALEM

Jerusalem, 8th August, 1938.

Dr. T. T. Shields,
Pastor of the Baptist Church,
130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2,
Canada.

Dear brother in Christ,

My greetings in the Lord Jesus Christ I send to you and to all the dear Saints of God in Toronto.

I herewith share with you the much grief and great loss which the destruction by fire of your beautiful Church Building has caused you. But since the merciful Father is aware of it He is sure to make all things work together for good to them that love Him.

The restoration of such a great building is not an easy task, and I see that it is a very heavy burden to you to do it, but be of good cheer brother, and remember the comforting "Jehovah Jireh".

As a practical help, I am enclosing herewith a crossed cheque No. F 215643 of Can. \$13.75 drawn on Barclays Bank (Canada) Montreal to be used in the following manner:—

\$10.00 for the reconstruction of the Church.
2.75 for the GOSPEL WITNESS (one year) and "Other Little Ships" to be sent to Mr. Shukri Khouri, Talbieh Qtr., Jerusalem, Palestine.

.50 for "The Most Famous Trial of History".	} To be sent to me.
.10 for the "Address on Separate Schools".	
.05 for "The Roman Catholic Horseleach".	
.10 for "The Papacy in the Light of Scripture".	
.05 for "The Baptist Message".	
.05 for "Is so-called Close Communion Scriptural".	
.10 for "The Anti-Christian Cult of Russellism".	
.05 for the "Oxford Group Movement Analysed".	

I pray the Gracious God to grant you all the help needed for the accomplishment of this tedious yet blessed work that lies before you, and to endue you with power and wisdom from above, to valiantly wield the sword of the Word in defence of the Holy Bible and to skillfully handle the trowel for the edification of the Church for many more years to come, For His Name's Sake Amen.

Yours in the Beloved

I. M. BASTOLI.

A Palestinian Christian Arab saved by the
Grace of God and a subscriber in
THE GOSPEL WITNESS

I. M. Bastoli
c/o Municipal Sanitary Department,
Jerusalem, Palestine.

Bible School Lesson Outline

OLIVE L. CLARK, Ph.D. (Tor.)

Vol. 2 Third Quarter Lesson 36 September 4th, 1938

THE GOSPEL PREACHED IN LYSTRA

Lesson Text: Acts 14.

Golden Text: "Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked."—Acts 14:10.

I. Power and Persecution in Iconium—verses 1-5.

The first missionary journey of the Apostle Paul, in which he was accompanied by Barnabas, was marked with signal success. They had been sent forth by the Holy Spirit, and as they preached the Word in the power of that same Spirit, many believed. Fruitful service can be accomplished only as we are empowered by the Spirit.

Unbelieving Jews attempted to discount the testimony in Iconium, as in Antioch of Pisidia. They would not welcome the truth themselves, nor would they allow others to receive it (Matt. 23:13). The opposition of Satan to God takes various forms at various times, and he uses various agencies, but he is ever at work, seeking to nullify the truth. He snatches the good seed away, chokes it, or tramples upon it (Matt. 13:4, 5, 7). By stirring up ridicule, strife, envy or

hâtré, by inspiring lying tongues and wicked hearts, he would frustrate the message of grace.

In spite of such hindrances the missionaries persevered in their preaching. They could speak with courage "in the Lord" (Acts 4:29). Opposition is sometimes an indication of closed opportunity (Acts 13:51), but at other times it is to be taken as a challenge to further effort. The Spirit of God will make us sensitive to the Lord's leading so that we may rightly interpret providential circumstances. Their faith was confirmed by special manifestations of the favour of God.

The Gospel is rightly called "the word of His Grace". The grace of God is the origin, content, instrument, accompaniment and end of our salvation (Acts 15:11; 20:24; Rom. 5:20; 1 Cor. 15:10; Eph. 1:6).

The hostile Jews in the Greek democratic city of Iconium did not work through influential citizens as at Antioch, but they incited a riot in which even the magistrates were involved.

II. Tribute and Torment in Lystra—verses 6-20.

The district of Lycaonia in Asia Minor was a bare and dreary region, and the inhabitants of its small towns were uncultured and superstitious. The Gospel suits the need of every individual of every race and station, for all men are sinners (Rom. 3:23), and God has provided a way of salvation for all (Isa. 35:8; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 John 2:2).

The miracle of the healing of the crippled man at Lystra resembled the cure of the lame man at the gate of the temple (Acts 3:4-8). The Gospel of the grace of God can cure moral cripples, enabling them to stand upright, to leap for joy, and to walk in the paths of righteousness (Isa. 40:31; Psa. 23:3).

The demonstration of supernatural power was interpreted by the Lycaonians in the light of their heathen background. There was a superstition current in that district, that at one time Jupiter, the chief of the gods, and his companion Mercury, the messenger of the gods, swift of foot and eloquent of speech, had come to earth in the form of men, and had been unrecognized save by a rustic couple. When the natives saw the miracle performed by the apostles, they concluded that Barnabas, possibly the more imposing in appearance (2 Cor. 10:1, 10), must be Jupiter, and that Paul the preacher must be Mercury. The people formed a procession, and made preparations to conduct a heathen sacrifice in honor of the visitors.

Quickly and earnestly disclaiming divinity for themselves,

the missionaries exhorted the people to turn from the reverence of dead idols to the worship of the living God (1 Thess. 1:9). In past ages God had not intervened in the affairs of nations, visiting them in wrath for their sins (Acts 17:30; Rom. 3:25; Eph. 3:3-6). And yet, they were without excuse, since God had revealed Himself to them in nature and in their hearts (Rom. 1:19, 20).

How weak and fickle the natural human heart! The hands that offered garlands one moment were filled with stones the next (Acts 28:4-6. The cry "Hosanna" was soon succeeded by the shout "Crucify Him" (Mark 11:10; 15:13). The apostles were first considered as gods, then as criminals. The Lycaonians were easily persuaded to believe that the miracle had been wrought, not by Divine power but by Satanic magic. (Matt. 12:24).

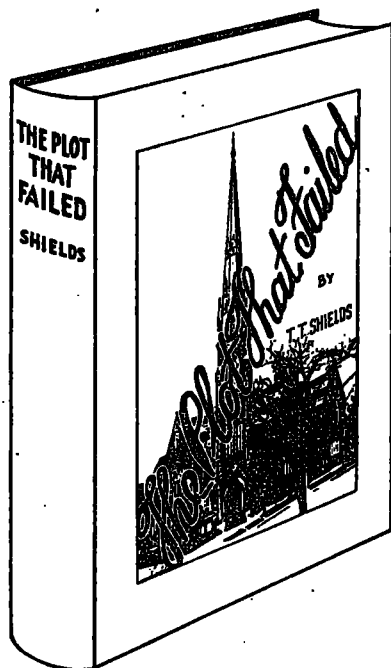
The stoning seems to have taken place in the city, and the unconscious Paul dragged outside the gates. This may be the experience of death referred to in 2 Cor. 12:2-4; Paul may have really died on this occasion, and been raised again.

III. Grace and Gratitude in Antioch—verses 21-28.

On the return journey from Derbe to Antioch the apostles visited each of the places where they had formerly preached the Gospel. At all times Paul showed tender solicitude for the young Christians (2 Cor. 11:28; 1 Thess. 2:7, 8, 19). He encouraged them to remain steadfast in the faith (Acts 11:23), reminding them that they must expect to be persecuted. The road to the Celestial City is beset with difficulties for the pilgrim (Matt. 11:12; 2 Tim. 2:3; 1 Pet. 4:12).

To strengthen the faith of the saved is not to be accounted an inferior work to that of giving the Gospel to the unsaved. We are to "make disciples of all nations", and also to teach them "to observe all things" (Matt. 28:18-20). Building up the body of Christ includes the task of contributing to the spiritual health and vigour of the existing members, as well as that of adding new members (Eph. 4:11-15).

What a joy for the Church to review the mercies of God (Duet. 8:2; Psa. 89:1; Luke 9:10; 10:17). The Christians at Antioch in Syria who had formerly gathered to pray to God now assembled to praise Him (Acts 13:1-3). The work at that time commenced was now fulfilled, and the apostles, who had been called unto God and committed to the grace of God (Acts 20:32), reported all that God had accomplished as He worked along with them (Mark 16:20; 1 Cor. 3:9).



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