

THE WORD OF TRUTH

Published Quarterly

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"—Jno. 8:32.

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Number 3

"Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:18)

SET FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL

**EDITOR'S WIFE, SISTER ADANNA L. BLAKELY,
GOES TO BE WITH THE LORD
ON JANUARY 1, 1979 — AGE, 43 YEARS.**

This issue is respectfully dedicated to her memory — a memory filled with beauty, encouragement in the Lord, and exemplary patterns of conduct.



In This Issue:

Special Tribute To Sister Adanna; And There Was No More Sea; The Resurrection Of The Dead; Do You Want To Be Taken Or Left; The Removal Of The Wicked; The Dead In Christ Shall Rise First; The Premillennial Wedge; His Coming

THE WORD OF TRUTH

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EDITOR'S WIFE CALLED HOME TO BE WITH THE LORD

On January 1, 1979, at 1:40 a.m., Sister Adanna Blakely, beloved and faithful wife of the editor, made her exit from the body to be "present with the Lord." Having obtained a "good report" before God and men, she moved up higher, being "gathered unto her people". She had the same testimony as Enoch of old, in that she "walked with God" and "pleased Him." She has left a large void here upon earth by her homegoing, but being now among those "spirits of just men made perfect", she has doubtless embarked upon a higher, nobler, more lofty ministry which we mortals are incapable of fully grasping.

Throughout her earthly pilgrimage Sister Adanna was noted for her diligence and zeal. She was extraordinary in whatever she put her hand to do. She was an example in being a wife, a mother, a homemaker, a cook, a seamstress, a gardener, a teacher, a singer, and a leader. Her appearance was always modest, as well as beautiful. From the crown of her head to the soles of her feet, her outward appearance consistently was in harmony with her high calling in Christ Jesus. She was always feminine, always chaste, always modest, and, above all, always godly. Her spirituality was not by fits and starts, but was a glowing testimony to consistency. She excelled in hospitality, her home always being open to fellow pilgrims passing through the area, or ministering to the brethren here.

Sister Adanna possessed a contented spirit, she never did demand a lot, and therefore the Lord blessed her with an abundance which most grasping spirits never obtain. She learned that we receive when we give; that the Lord always gives back to us in the proportion that we give to others. She did not have a greedy spirit, but a thankful one: the blessings of the Lord did not escape her attention, but opened a well of thanksgiving within her. She was pleasant and enjoyable to be around—she thought of others, not of herself, and you sensed that gracious spirit when you were blessed to be with her. She did not have a morose or melancholy spirit, but a joyful and vibrating one.

But above all of these extraordinary attributes, my beloved wife was a spiritual lady. She discerned and deeply loved the things of God. She fed constantly and regularly upon the Word of the Living God. When well advanced followers of our Lord would speak of "the things of the spirit of God", they did not leave Sister Adanna floundering in confusion. She was not one of those "silly women" of whom the Scriptures speak. It was the delight of her heart to hear the truths of Scripture, and she herself was able to communicate the truth to others.

Throughout close to twenty-three years of marriage, Sister Adanna was noted for her faithfulness to the assembly of the saints. She never missed unless she or one of her smaller children were sick—and that was a very rare happening in our household. She raised six children, and they were **always** in the assembly of the saints, from a few days old until she left this vale of tears. On one occasion, by way of illustration, I held a revival meeting every night for fifteen consecutive weeks in Western Illinois. Sister Adanna was carrying our oldest daughter at the time, in the last third of her pregnancy. The time was also during the close of the winter months—and yet she did not miss one single meeting, being there every night to encourage my own spirits, and to stand for the Lord and His Truth. This was completely in harmony with the manner of life for which she was noted, and which she so consistently lived.

During fellowship meals with the brethren, my wife was always pre-eminent in the matter of service. Her cooking was delightful, and she was always found in the kitchen afterward cleaning up and speaking with those that helped in this ministry. She had a serving spirit, never complaining about inconvenience, longevity, or hardship—truly a leader in this area.

People throughout the United States, as well as in several foreign countries, lament her absence from us. While we do certainly rejoice that she is in Abraham's bosom, it is difficult to let her go. Letters and cards of honor have come from New York to Florida, and California to Pennsylvania, as well as Idaho to New Mexico. All of this indicates that she was a woman greatly loved—and that because she was a truly lovely woman.

Sister Adanna carried a burden for the lost, and for the Church of the Living God. She desired with great desire to see people saved, and to see the church holy and righteous in its manner of life. She fervently longed for repentance among the godless, and for spirituality among those that have named the Name of the Lord. She also put her hand willingly to the Gospel plough to accomplish these things—she was not an "armchair" believer, but one that was always found in the midst of the battle, contending earnestly for the faith. Her hands, her mouth, and her heart were coordinated—a rare phenomenon indeed in our day. They all worked harmoniously for the glory of the God she so dearly loved.

The thought is precious to me that my own wife was the first person that I ever influenced for the Lord Jesus. Over the years she has had

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"AND THERE WAS NO MORE SEA"

By

Sister Adanna L. Blakely

(wife of the editor)

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; AND THERE WAS NO MORE SEA"—Rev. 21:1

Several years ago, while reading this text, I noticed the phrase "and there was no more sea." It so intrigued me that I asked the Lord to open it up to my understanding. It was just a few months ago that I received an answer to my request. Knowing that the Word of the Lord is very broad, I do not say that this exhausts the meaning of the passage, but I am convinced that what I have been given to see is in the text. I must also confess that nothing I have ever heard or read on this passage has ministered to me as this did. So powerfully has it spoken to my heart that I know it is from the Lord.

The "sea" speaks of our trials—and **this sea of trials will be taken away at the last**, and we will no longer be encumbered with trials and tests. There is a longing in the hearts of believers for this very thing. The phrases that we use confirm this. How often have you heard words like, "the billows roll", "the sea of life", or "the waves o'erflow us". Why are these trials likened to the raging of the water? Water in a sea is deep, forboding, dark. Further, the waves of the sea can be huge and engulfing. Are not our trials like this at times? How often have you been depressed, and things seemed dark—pressing in upon you. Often this darkness and depression seems like it will overwhelm us. It appears that we are drowning; sinking under the weight of the trials that are sent your way.

There is hope, if you can see it. "Thy (God's) way is in the sea, and Thy (God's) path in the great waters, and Thy (God's) footsteps are not known" (Psa. 77:19). Praise the Lord! **God is with us in that sea!** He has not forsaken us, and He has not tempted us above that which we are able to bear, but with the temptation will also make a way of escape that we may be able to bear it. **This escape is His way and path that is in the waters;** "Thus saith the Lord, **which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters**" (Isa. 43:16).

Let us look at some examples which show that God's path is in the sea or the water. "But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry land through the midst of the sea" (Ex. 14:16). The children of Israel thought that it would have been better to die in the land of Egypt than to be faced with the Red Sea in front of them and the Egyptians behind them. How incorrect they were. They assessed the case completely wrong, not knowing that God's path is in the sea, not in the wilderness! And how about you? Have you thought it better to die in the Egypt of this world rather than to face the trials of the Red Sea? Look and see the salvation of the Lord today, for His way and His path is still in the sea.

There was Joshua and the Israelites facing the borders of the promised land. As they approached

that border, they found the Jordan River standing between them and the land—and it was the time of the year when the river was swollen. It seemed hopeless to attempt to navigate those treacherous waters. But listen to what our Lord said to Joshua; "And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap" (Josh. 3:13). **They could not possess the land of Canaan until they went through the River Jordan**, and we cannot possess our Canaan without the Jordan experiences of life. But praise the Lord, when our feet "rest in the waters"—when we can enter them peacefully and in faith, they shall part before us!

There was also the time on the Sea of Galilee when the disciples were in the ship—in the **midst** of the sea. A fierce storm swept down upon them and they were tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary to them; "And in the fourth watch of the night **JESUS WENT UNTO THEM, WALKING ON THE SEA**. And when the disciples saw Him walking **ON THE SEA**, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; **IT IS I**; be not afraid. And Peter answered Him and said, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water. And He said, **COME**. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he **WALKED ON THE WATER**, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And **IMMEDIATELY** Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the ship, **THE WIND CEASED**" (Matt. 14:25-32). See, Peter walked on that sea for a short time, but his faith was little. He looked at the boisterous wind, not the Lord, and began to sink. How often in our trials we take our eyes off the Lord and let Satan roar at us as the wind, and we too begin to sink! Take the Lord's hand, for He is in that sea with you. Let Him lift you out of the water, and get back into the ship with Him!

Jonah's trial in the sea was a very unusual one. He was cast into the sea, and though it ceased from its raging (Jon. 1:15b), Jonah's fears did not cease—in fact, when the sea was calmed, Jonah's trial began! The sea was deep and dark and fearful to Jonah; but God did not allow him to drown, even though he probably thought he was going to expire. God prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. **That was God's path in the sea for Jonah—the fish!** Sometimes the path is rough, and you may even have a flood compass you, and the billows and the waves may pass over you, the sea weeds wrapping themselves about your very head. But when you remember the Lord as Jonah did, and recognize the fact that salvation is of the Lord, you will be vomited, as it were, out upon the dry ground!

Our trials are for purpose of learning and growing. We often call them valley experiences. The valley is where the flowers and the lush green

grass and grain grow, and where the showers come. The valley is needed for growth in our life. The mountain tops are barren—we cannot be there all of the time!

God is with us in these seas, He does not merely make a path for us; "When thou passest through the waters, I WILL BE WITH THEE; and through the rivers, they shall NOT overflow thee . . ." (Isa. 43:2a). Again, in Psalm 66:12b, we read; ". . . we went through fire and through water: but Thou broughtest us out into a **wealthy** place." Fire and water, the two elements God uses to purify us here. But He brings us out into a **WEALTHY PLACE**. There is **always** a blessing in every trial, or at the end, if we only have eyes to behold it. God does have a purpose for all things that He does; "I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it" (Isa. 46:11b). God does know what is best for us! We would become too satisfied and contented with this earthly dwelling place without trials. We are, remember, just pilgrims and strangers here (1 Pet. 2:11). His thoughts and His ways are higher than ours; "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8-9).

In Revelation 15:2, there is another sea mentioned. John said he saw, as it were, a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and his mark, and over the number of his name stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God." These are the victorious ones—the ones that have come through their trials. Their trials are **under** them now—they have been elevated **above** them! How often (if not always) during a trial Satan tries to do us in—to deliver, as it were, the final blow! But, praise God, we are going to stand on **THIS SEA** victorious! Those two purifying elements (water and fire) will be under us—gone forever! This sea was as glass, John said. All those things that came upon us here—trials, afflictions, tribulations, and persecutions—which we did not understand, will be made known there! That sea will not be dark and forboding—we will be able to see into it with spiritual clarity. Praise God!

So take heart, brethren, God has not allowed something peculiar to happen to you that others have not experienced already! All of God's saints came through victoriously John said—and you will too! Remember, God's **WAY** is in the sea, and His **PATH** in the great waters!

Editor's Wife Called Home To Be With The Lord

(From page 2)

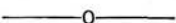
as much influence over me for holiness as any one person—and how thankful I am to the Lord for that. She was never ashamed of the Lord, and labored to point souls to Jesus Christ. Her six children (four daughters and two sons) are all trophies of her labors. They all came into the knowledge of the Lord through her influence and labors. She tirelessly taught and raised them in

such a way as to make them conscious of the Lord and His Grace. As the years come and go, our entire household will continue to reap the benefits of her labors—and the precious gift of her presence which was so graciously granted to us for over two decades.

Why have I spoken at such length concerning my departed companion? Simply because of her uniqueness. She stood head and shoulders above many of her peers—and such a life must needs be lifted up as an example for those that remain. There are not, quite frankly, many young women in the Church of our Lord that have arisen to her measure—and yet we seek to encourage many to follow her example, yea, to be strengthened with grace to do precisely that. This is the day of "women's liberation", the "ERA", and emphasis upon "rights". We place our fingers in our ears when we hear the vain prattlings that come from such as embrace these pseudo-philosophies. We have had in Sister Adanna Blakely an example that has spoken more loudly, and accomplished more true goodness than all of the women's movements this world has ever seen. We need to have a movement of the women back into the home; into activity among the righteous; into holiness and sobriety; into modesty and shamefacedness. If it be countered that such as this is not comely, the example of my wife shall prove such a postulation to be thoroughly false. Without hesitation, we declare that her truly lovely spirit, her beautiful appearance, her zest for godliness, her unselfish spirit, and her abounding hospitality were all owing to her faith. She was great because she was godly. We summon our sisters in Christ, as well as my own children, to emulate her example.

Is it easy to lose your wife—easy to see her spirit lifted from her while you hold her hand in prayer? No—it is not easy! In fact it is difficult, and accompanied with a grief that only those that have experienced it know. To awake in the early morning hours and find her gone, only lingering in your memory is a bitter herb of life; to come home and find her chair empty; to sit down to a table with the family and not behold her happy countenance is anything but joyful. But such hard experiences have brought me into a realm of grace and strength which I have never known before. Grace extends beyond mortal capacity; it reaches into the very bottom of the pit, and lights up the darkest valley. Our God can cause sorrow to come short of despair, He can make perplexity dissipate its strength before it dissipates mine. The grace of God has proven to be vastly superior to my own weakness—in fact, my weakness has been the bridge over which I have passed to a new realm where hope reigns more supreme than ever before, and dependency upon my God is greatly cherished. We have forged the raging rivers of stress, climbed the rocky mountains of trial, and made our way through the dark valley of mystery by faith—and in it all, we have found no fault with God. Sorrow has been added to sorrow as our weakness erupted oftentimes without seeming provocation, but let the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings, and the calves are in the stall again, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land.

Faith has proved that understanding is, indeed, inferior, and confidence has displaced feelings. Sorrow eventually does give way to hope, and weeping to joy. Without shame, I now confess that I do not know what the Lord has done, or why He has done it—nor do I comprehend all of the Sovereign and holy reasons that lay behind this act of separation which has broken my heart—but by faith I know that I shall know “hereafter.” I also perceive that there is no real need for me to comprehend these things. I have walked with the Lord enough to know that He is kind and gracious, and that His mercy endureth forever. He has not acted out of harmony with His nature in taking my wife—in fact, I know that His love for her was greater than mine. If I did have to give her up, I am so thankful that I could yield her up to Him, and not to some other man, or to a life of captivity to Satan. Thanks be unto God for giving her to me for such a long period! I have no regrets for our lives together, and am anxious for that great ingathering of the wheat, when together we shall be merged into that grand triumphant host which shall come “through much tribulation” to the glorious Kingdom of God.



EULOGY TO SISTER ADANNA DELIVERED BY EDITOR AT HER FUNERAL SERVICE

On November 3, 1935—on the Lord’s Day—a baby girl named Adanna LaDean Matias was born to Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Matias in East Chicago, Indiana. Unknown to those in the world at that time, this was a little seed of wheat planted in our Heavenly Father’s world by the Master Sower, the Lord Jesus Christ. In infancy, the child looked no different than any other child—but time would tell that there was a difference indeed.

Having lived a normal life, full of a variety of experiences that characterize this fleeting life, she was born into the Kingdom of God during the year of 1953. At the very outset of her new life, she was noted for fervency and zeal—always seeking to please her God and Father. She was a noted student of the Scriptures, and was not ashamed to bear the yoke that often accompanies discipleship to the Lord Jesus Christ.

On March 17, 1956, she was joined in holy matrimony to Given O. Blakely, who now stands before you. Their marriage possessed the trials that all marriages have—but the blessing of God was upon it. She mothered six children, and guided them in the counsels of the Lord. Many an earnest follower of Christ saw in her a shining example of a virtuous woman, and what a good mother should be. Nightly she would sit with her children and teach them of eternal matters, striving to transfix upon their conscience the importance of worshipping and serving the God that she loved.

Through the years that followed, she remained active in the service of the King—teaching Sunday School classes, instructing special gatherings of Christian ladies, and testifying of the Lord’s grace in beautiful song.

Her home was always the place where visiting evangelists and ministers resided—she was noted for taking young and old into her home and feed-

ing and ministering to them as a representative of Jesus Christ. Many within the confines of this very room have been recipients of her kind and beneficent spirit. She had, and executed well, the ministry of service—doing it joyfully and heartily.

But, alas, to prove that this life is not the only life, and that sin had so blasted the temporal order that even the good and righteous are called upon to suffer, Sister Adanna was diagnosed early in 1978, as having Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, otherwise known as ALS or the Lou Gherig’s Disease. The time of the diagnosis was our 22nd wedding anniversary—March 17, 1978.

The news jolted us, and the Tempter sought to drive us from the God we had come to love and serve by Grace. But the faith of the Lord Jesus proved vastly superior as it reached through the thick clouds that surrounded our hearts and laid hold of the promises of God. Sister Adanna herself overcame the inevitable feelings of depression and sorrow that accompany such knowledge.

I now give to you in her own words the testimony that she left behind. It is written in the back of her Bible: “I SAW MY AFFLICTION WAS NOT A TRAGEDY, BUT A GIFT GOD WAS USING TO HELP ME TO CONFORM TO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST—SOMETHING THAT WOULD MEAN MY ULTIMATE SATISFACTION, HAPPINESS, EVEN JOY.”

This observation was prompted by several promises also noted on that page of her Bible; “. . . now, what is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee; or what is thy request further? and it shall be done”—Esth. 9:12; “In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began”—Tit. 1:2; “I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full, and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need”—Phil. 4:12; “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise”—Heb. 10:35-36.

She clave unto these promises with a strong faith—a faith which was a bright and shining light to all that saw her.

On the last day of the year, December 31, 1978, Sister Adanna seemed to sense that the time of her calling had come. We joined thoughts at her bedside in our home at a little after 2:00 a.m. in the morning. I spoke with her of heaven, of the promises of glory that awaited the faithful—and soon she slipped into a coma—about 3:15 a.m.

Methinks that in her spirit she began to engage the forces of darkness, as well as him that had the power of death, that is the Devil. The last enemy, which is death, confronted her boldly, and for 22 hours and 25 minutes grappled unsuccessfully with her.

Finally, at 1:40 a.m., New Year’s morning, the angels of God hovered around her—unseen to mortal eye, and gently lifted her out of this tabernacle of clay, wafting her to Abraham’s bosom

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THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

“. . . the resurrection of the dead”—I Cor. 15:42

Man's life upon earth is neither permanent nor primary! "In the body" is a term denoting a **temporary** state, as well as a **secondary** state (II Cor. 5:6). It is during this time that we are (1. subject to the "devices" of Satan, (2. brought into intimate contact with "principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places, and the rulers of the darkness of this world" (Eph. 6:12), (3. called upon to "abstain from fleshly lusts of the flesh that war against the soul" (I Pet. 2:11), (4. are in a sense "absent from the Lord" (II Cor. 5:6), (5. brought to a state where we willingly confess that we are "strangers and pilgrims" in the earth (I Pet. 2:11, Heb. 11:13), (6. and endure the seemingly interminable conflict between our old and new natures (Rom. 7). These conditions, together with others, would be most intolerable were it not for the "hope and the resurrection" (Acts 23:6). Saints of old were given a veiled but vital sense of this hope, as is expressed in such statements as; "Yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:26); "I shall go to him (deceased son), but he cannot come to me" (II Sam. 12:23), etc. The teaching concerning the resurrection was clear enough in the Scriptures so that some **creedal** concepts were formulated around the basic postulate of the resurrection. Thus it is written of the Pharisees that they believed "there shall be a resurrection of the dead" (Acts 23:8; 24:15). However, the truth was somewhat obscure to the people, requiring further light and illumination. Our Lord Jesus Christ was the One through Whom the revelation came! It is written that "life and immortality" were "**brought to light** through the Gospel" (II Tim. 1:10), lifting the matter of the "world to come" (and "the quick and the dead") from obscurity to the light of day!

Now, that there shall, indeed, be a resurrection of the dead is not generally disputed in "Christian" communities. However, there is a wide divergence of opinions relative to the nature, time, and division of the resurrection. A significant number of those that stand beneath the banner of Christ declare, and teach quite forcibly, that there shall be two separate and distinct resurrections of the dead; one resurrection of the righteous, and one resurrection of the wicked. It is also asserted that these distinct resurrections are separated by one thousand years—a millennium. This concept is developed and built upon the foundation of a single text of Scripture: ". . . and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection" (Rev. 20:4-5). It is toward this heresy that we particularly desire to direct our attention. It is to be admitted that it is both widespread in presentation and popular in acceptance. This particular doctrine stands, as it were, as an idol to many. They are

hesitant to let it go, even though it has neither blessed nor strengthened them, succored nor encouraged them! Even though we may appear to be mere iconoclasts, we fully intend to exert effort to tear this idol down because we see it to be a blatant contradiction of "the truth as it is in Christ Jesus," a menace to spiritual sound mindedness, and a wresting of truths which are essential to understanding, comfort, edification, and stability! We consider it to be a classic example of sophistry, perversion, ignorance, sectarianism, and carnality. This doctrine produces infinitely more questions than it ever answers, fabricates a false sense of security, disarms believers for the conflict and dishonors those that have shed their blood for the Lord Jesus and His Word.

Some Preliminary Observations

First, this resurrection is preceded by a restriction of Satan's desuasive activities (verses 1-3). Deception is said to not be the portion of the "nations" during this time, as they are liberated to believe the truth. Secondly, Satan is loosed for a "little season" after this particular resurrection and thousand year reign—loosed because he "**must** be loosed" (verse 3b). Third, what John beheld were "souls", not bodies, thus indicating that he was describing a spiritual resurrection, not a bodily one. Fourth, those that were raised were not the entire body of the redeemed; in fact, they were a small percentage of them. Observe that these were they that had borne "the witness of Jesus"; i.e., they had been witnesses of His power and redemption. This would eliminate saints from Adam to John the Baptist, generally speaking. Also, these were a select group of those that had tasted of the redemption in Christ Jesus; they had been "**beheaded** for the witness of Jesus". That further reduces the number of constituents mentioned here. It is to be noted that these were they that had "not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands". This places them after the time of apostasy, or the "falling away" to which Paul alluded in II Thessalonians 2:3. The "beast" is depicted as earthly government in the book of Revelation, and the "image of the beast" is the same principle disguised as the "church", elsewhere called "babylon" and the "great whore" (Rev. 17:5; 18:10, 21; 17:1, 15, 16; 19:2). In short, the "souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God" spoke of those that lived immediately under the great falling away, when those that pretended to be of God, and even named the Name of Christ actually slew and murdered the children of God because they clave unto their way. The passage indicates that while, in the judgment of the world, these martyrs were not worthy of life; and while it appears as though their ministry was in vain, and that their words did not meet with success, yet God shall honor their words by causing them to come to the position of dominancy. The truth shall yet prevail, and "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14). **The lives of those martyrs of old were not lived in vain; their words did not merely go into the air! Their testimony shall be**

revived, given impetus, and received by those that possess "the love of the truth". Those whose words live like that shall never taste of the second death, neither shall they that receive with gladness that "everlasting gospel", spurned and rejected by the wicked world!

Fifthly, this resurrection is termed "the FIRST resurrection", indicating that it is not chronologically first, but first by gender. The words "first" and "second" are often used in Scripture to denote different orders, divers kinds, or separate genders. For instance, Adam is called the "first man" (I Cor. 15:45), and the Lord Jesus is called "the second man" (I Cor. 15:47). Obviously this does not speak of chronology, but of kind. Adam was the first of the natural order, Jesus began an entirely new order of creation—a combination of the Divine and the created, the heavenly and the earthly, the eternal and the temporal; thus is He termed the "second (order of) man". The Old Testament, or the covenant given to Moses on "tables of stone" (Deut. 10:1; 9:9-11; Ex. 34:28; Deut. 9:9) was termed "the first", while the New Testament ratified by the blood of Christ is referred to as "the second" (Heb. 10:9). It is certainly not that there were only two covenants made by God; or that no covenants were made between the "first" and the "second". However, there were only two manner of covenants; one established upon the activity of man, and one upon the activity of God (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8; Heb. 10). Without being overly burdensome on this point, the "first resurrection" speaks of a different order of resurrection than is normally mentioned in the Scripture. The general usage of the word "resurrection" refers to the raising of the bodies from the grave; however, because John was establishing the truth of a different kind of resurrection here, he used the term "first" not to denote chronology but to separate its distinct KIND of resurrection. The same means of conveyance was employed in describing death. The "second death" is "second" by reason of its different gender, and it is distinguished from the general definition of "death" (the separation of the spirit from the body) by the word "second". In short, if we are born twice, we will die only once; but if we are born only once, we will die twice. Having briefly dealt with this particular heretical dogma concerning "the resurrection", permit me to proceed.

The Resurrection Is Always Mentioned In The Singular

We never do read of a "second" resurrection in Scripture, nor do we confront the word "resurrections". The very concept of the resurrection is carefully preserved in the singular by the Holy Spirit. With meticulous consistency this principle is seen in Scripture. Our Lord Jesus spoke of "THE resurrection" (Matt. 22:30, 31; Luke 14:14; 20:36). The Apostles spoke of "THE resurrection" (Acts 4:2; 17:18; 24:15, 21; I Cor. 15:21, 42; Phil. 3:11; II Tim. 2:18). Further, the Scriptures speak of "THE DEAD" being "raised" (I Cor. 15:35), and declare that the "earth shall cast out the dead" (Isa. 26:19), certainly language that is very general in nature.

There are, of course, verses of Scripture which may appear to indicate two resurrections separated by time. It might be well to mention them here: "... thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:14); "Neither can they die any more: for they are equal into the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Luke 20:36); "... and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation" (Jno. 5:29). The term "resurrection of the just" is employed for comfort, not for chronological specificity. It simply means that the justified shall, indeed, be raised from the dead in order to vindication and reward. It is another way of saying, "when the just ones are raised from the dead they shall receive their reward". The wicked are not even in contemplation here. Secondly, those that are the "children of the resurrection" are those that have truly been ushered into a state of profitable existence and ministry by the resurrection; they have, so to speak, been "born", having received their new bodies or houses (II Cor. 5:1ff). "Children of the resurrection" are those whose earthly lives were but a preparation for the resurrection; who resided, as it were, in the womb of the earth until it brought them forth into glory. Thirdly, our Lord's reference to those that shall come forth unto the "resurrection of life" or the "resurrection of damnation" speaks not of two different resurrections but of two different classes of people participating in the resurrection. Our Lord specifically indicated this in the previous verses; "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which ALL THAT ARE IN THE GRAVES shall hear His voice, and they shall come forth . . ." (Jno. 5:28). The passage is so clear that one wonders how it can even be misconstrued—and yet it is. The meaning is that our Lord shall empty the graves ("ALL THAT ARE IN THE GRAVES") of both wicked and righteous, good and evil, holy and profane, and that, at that time, either life or damnation shall be the portion of every individual!

Suffice it to say, at this point, that the word "resurrections" is never used in reference to the graves yielding up their dead, nor is the term "second resurrection" employed in Scripture. Again, this word, to say nothing of the concept itself, is consistently used in the singular!

The Resurrection Of The Dead Defeats Death

A partial resurrection leaves some in the graves, thereby permitting a partial reign of death. Such a phenomenon is offensive to those that have come to understand the coming day of victory. It is written; "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (I Cor. 15:54). In this particular segment of the Scriptures, the Apostle is considering the blessedness of the life to come, when the saints shall, indeed, be "delivered from the bondage of corruption", along with the "whole creation" (Rom. 8:21). To underscore the fact that

this is the grand climax of the ages, the Holy Spirit witnesses that at the very time that the saints are raised from the dead, death shall have been "swallowed up in victory", the grave shall have lost its power completely and totally, having no more authority to retain a single mortal within its confines! The time during which this takes place is concisely termed the time when "the DEAD (not merely the saints) shall be raised" (I Cor. 15:52), and lest there be some sophist that is presumptuous enough to think that he is here speaking of the spiritually dead, or the wicked, the Apostle specifically identifies the saints with this resurrection ("we"—verse 47-52; "We . . . shall also bear the image of the heavenly . . . we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed . . . we shall be changed").

Now, if the two-resurrection hypothesis is correct (i.e., that the "dead in Christ" shall first be raised, and then, after a one thousand year span of time, the wicked shall be raised), then death shall not have been defeated at the resurrection of the righteous. It shall still have retained a considerable number of Adam's race in the bowels of the earth and sea. Does that sound like **victory** over the grave? Like death being **swallowed up in victory**? **The grave shall not be defeated in degrees, but in one grand flush of life!** This shall transpire at "the last trump" when there is "a shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God" (I Cor. 15:51; I Thess. 4:16)—certainly a graphic picture of a climactic and victorious moment; i.e., a "twinkling of an eye" (I Cor. 15:52). **One** bodily resurrection, **one** triumph, **one** victory, **one** grand defeat—involving two basic constituents: the wicked and the good, the righteous and the evil, the saved and the lost, the wheat and the tares! As is the custom with mortals, men have confused the issue by saying there are two resurrections, each with one division of men. However, there is **one** resurrection with two divisions of men, which, again, appears almost juvenile in its simplicity. It is a constant marvel to many of us that so simple a matter as "the resurrection of the dead" (Heb. 6:2)—one of the "first principles"—could be so confounded by religious teachers. It is no wonder that the more profound declarations of the Scripture are so little known when a vast segment of theologians (so-called) have not even been able to contend with the "footmen" of revelation (Jer. 12:5).

"The Dead In Christ Shall Rise First"

A passage (of no small concern to many people) in First Thessalonians states that "**the dead in Christ shall rise first**" (I Thess. 4:16). It is affirmed, upon the basis of this Scripture, that believers shall be raised before unbelievers; that the saved shall be resurrected before the lost. It is also asserted that a one thousand year period stands between these two distinct resurrections. However, the passage indicates something quite of another sort. Firstly, the unbelievers or the "lost" are not even under consideration here. The Thessalonian brethren were concerned for those saints that had "fallen asleep in Jesus" (I Cor. 5:18). In regards to them, the Apostle wrote; "But I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concern-

ing them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope" (I Thess. 4:13). Those that were asleep were certainly not the "lost", or the "tares of the field". Such a postulation borders on the verge of spiritual insanity. It is poignantly stated, in direct relation with "them which are asleep" that "them also WHICH SLEEP IN JESUS will GOD bring with Him" (verse 14). It is the Living God that has charge of "them", and they shall be brought "by God" together with Christ. In short, those that have fallen asleep have not missed the "great and notable day of the Lord!" In fact, they shall be raised "first"—i.e., before the living are "changed". Thus it is written; ". . . we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (or precede) them which are fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise FIRST: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord . . ." (I Thess. 4:15-17). And, does it not meet with sound reason that the "dead in Christ" shall be raised first; they fought the fight first, they finished the course first, they kept the faith first, they ran the race first. In regards to those that were martyred for Jesus, their cause has remained unvindicated the longest, their blood unavenged, and their enemies unrequited. One individual commenting on the Divine order of transformation said; "Those that are dead in Christ have further to come"! If those that are "alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord" are to be "caught up together" with those that have fallen asleep, then it stands to reason that "**the dead in Christ shall rise first**". To make more out of that passage than is clearly taught by the Lord appears to me to be an indication of a factious and sectarian spirit, as well as a bad and faulty heart!

Conclusion

The resurrection of the dead is not merely a surety, it is also a comfort; "**Wherefore comfort one another with these words**", wrote the Apostle to those that were concerned about these things (I Thess. 4:17). It is also something which is aptly termed "a **better** resurrection" (Heb. 11:35). It is better than that of Lazarus, Jairus' daughter, and the son of the widow of Nain! It is better than that of the young man that touched the bones of the prophet Elisha (II Kgs. 13:32), or the young lad that was raised by Elisha for the Shunammite widow (II Kgs. 4:35). It is a "better resurrection" than that from which Abraham received Isaac "in the figure" (Heb. 11:19). It is even "better" than the resurrection of "many bodies of the saints" which took place when our Lord and Savior died (Matt. 27:52-53). **It is "better" because it is final, complete, and thorough.** Death shall be overthrown, Satan's last stronghold upon the race of men broken, and the grave robbed of its victory. The bondage of corruption shall fall as the green withes that once bound Samson of old. Sin shall be finished; unrighteous-

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DO YOU WANT TO BE TAKEN OR LEFT?

Eschatology—the study of last things—is, as one might suspect, a very confused area for theologians. It seems that it is difficult enough for mortals to analyze present things, without thrusting themselves into an analysis of things to come. For this reason alone, we ought to be very cautious in our acceptance of dogmas concerning the latter days. God has very graciously given us some degree of revelation concerning the future, but it is given in such a way that only the spiritual and inquiring mind may glean any significant degree of truth. It would appear to this writer as though the Lord purposely veiled His revelation of coming things so as to “confound the wise” and “bring to nothing the wisdom of the world” (I Cor. 1:19, 27). These days there is much activity in theological circles concerning prophecy—prophetic conferences, studies, etc. Men use the pulpits of the land to perpetrate dogmas that have been handed down to them of their fathers—dogmas that may appropriately be called “vain tradition” (I Pet. 1:18). Among these varied and diverse dogmas is that of the “rapture”, which is purported to be the removal of the saints from “the great tribulation”—or, more accurately, the removal of the saints from the earth BEFORE the inception of the great tribulation. So widespread is this teaching that those who do not embrace it are viewed as spiritual freaks, being thrust out of the presence of those sophists that value mortal tradition more than Divine revelation. But we would have it known without shame, and without any reservation or apology whatsoever that we are not only among those that do not accept this dogma, but that we are firmly set against it and determined to repudiate it in every way we can—whether it be public, private, or through the written page.

The doctrine of which we speak is called theologically Pre-millennialism. It is presently associated with “fundamental” churches—whatever the term “fundamental” is designed to connote. In short, it teaches that believers will be taken away—removed from the earth—prior to the consummation of all things; specifically, before a great period of tribulation which, say they, shall be brought upon the wicked for their failure to accept the Lord’s Christ. In particular, this statement concerning some being taken and some being left is cited for the general comfort of those that are anticipating this secret and massive “rapture”, or catching away: “Then two shall be in the field: the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill: one shall be taken and the other left” (Matt. 24:40-41).

The Evil Are The Ones To Be Taken

One point of reference made by the Holy Spirit is completely overlooked by the promulgators of this doctrine; namely, that it is the **ungodly** that are said to be taken, **not** the godly. Our Lord Jesus specifically states that this taking shall be “as it was in the days of Noah”; “in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took THEM all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matt.

24:38-39). Was it Noah that was taken or the **ungodly**? Was not Noah LEFT and the wicked taken? Ought not the most simple in the Kingdom be able to discern this with clarity? What does this truth do for the “rapture” theory? It destroys it, and shows it to be the foolish prattling of unlearned and ignorant men!

Further, throughout all the Scriptures we are repeatedly taught that it is the wicked, the unrighteous, the profane, and the unspiritual that are taken away. To give but a few references: the Lord takes away **iniquity** (II Sam. 24:10), **dross** (Prov. 25:4), the **wicked** (Prov. 25:5), the **judges of the earth** (Isa. 40:24), the **detestable things** (Ezek. 11:18), **stony hearts** (Ezek. 36:26), **disobedient rebels** (Hos. 1:6), **reproach** (Gen. 30:23), **burdens** (Isa. 10:27), **wicked kings** (Hos. 13:11), etc. Now, this may seem irrelevant to the unlearned—but it is not! All through the Scriptures we are taught that the wicked are the intruders; that the tares are the invaders of the field; that “all things” belong to believers; that the meek shall inherit the earth; that the wicked, and all things associated with the wicked, are to be removed! **We are over and again explicitly taught to associate the very concept of removal with that which is undesirable.** Now, with these things in our hearts and minds, suddenly upon the horizon of theology arises this doctrine that states the righteous shall be removed, not the wicked; a doctrine that teaches us that while we **openly** confessed the Lord before men, and owned Him **publicly**, He shall remove us **secretly**; that the wicked will be left, not the righteous!

But these things do not at all comport with revelation. The Egyptians were taken away at the Red Sea, and Israel was LEFT! Sodom and Gomorrah were taken away, and Lot was LEFT! The ancient world was taken away, and Noah was LEFT! The accusers of Daniel were taken away, and Daniel was LEFT! The tares were taken away, and the wheat was LEFT! The bad fish were cast away, and the good fish were LEFT! The old nature passes away, and the new one is LEFT! The Old Testament passed away, and the New Testament is LEFT! The first heaven and the first earth shall pass away, and the new ones shall be LEFT! Over and over, we are taught that **the old is supplanted by the new, not the new by the old**; that the old is taken, not the new. Without going into more examples this ought to suffice to assist those that are confused in searching out the real truth on this issue; namely **the wicked are to be taken, and the righteous left**: “Let both grow together until the harvest: and AT THE TIME OF THE HARVEST I will say to the reapers, GATHER YE TOGETHER FIRST THE TARES, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn” (Matt. 13:30).

Language Associated With Rapture Theory Not In The Scriptures

To further highlight the humanism of this dogma, it ought to be pointed out that the great pivotal terms that are used to express this heresy are not even found in the Scriptures. For instance, the following words and phrases, in their preciseness, owe their origin to men, not to God: “rap-

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THE REMOVAL OF THE WICKED

"The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity."

—Matt. 13:41

The parable of the wheat and the tares offers to us considerable food for thought; it also provides us with a perspective of things that is very rare in our day. By brief summary, the Lord declared that the Kingdom of heaven was "likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field" (Matt. 13:24). Leaving the field in the charge of his servants, there came a time when they fell asleep, and while they "slept", the personal enemy of the sower of the seed came and dispersed inferior seed called "tares" among "the wheat, and went his way" (Matt. 13:42). For a season, this act of enmity went unnoticed; but when the blades began to show themselves and finally issue fruit, the tares were observed by the servants. Stunned by the presence of these contemptible plants, the servants correctly ran to the "householder" asking whether or not, in fact, he had sown only good seed: and if that were the case, how could these tares possibly have shown themselves (Matt. 13:27). The householder quickly stated what they should have surmised, but had missed: "An enemy hath done this" (verse 28). The servants, intent upon pleasing the householder, and, perhaps, in an effort to establish restitution for their period of deep sleep, said: "Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up"? (verse 28b). The sower quickly forbade such an hasty act declaring that in so doing there was a distinct possibility that they would also root up some of the wheat (verse 29). The solution was simple: "Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together FIRST the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn" (verse 30). At this point, the Lord Jesus began stating another parable, letting this particular one sift into the curiosity of His disciples.

After a period of time had elapsed, and the Lord had sent the multitude away, His disciples "came to Him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field" (verse 36). It has often been termed the parable of the "wheat and the tares", but it is of interest here to note that the disciples called it the "parable of the tares". I gather that this was because the tares were the particular theme of the parable; they were the subject of note and marvel, not the wheat. The planting, growth, presence, and fruit of the wheat was easy enough to understand—but the tares—their inception, their growth, and their uprooting—this provided more food for thought than the disciples were capable of absorbing—and, I fear—more than we are capable of absorbing without the gracious interpretation of the Lord. He quickly identified the various elements of the parable. The sower was Himself, the field was the world, the good seed were the children of the kingdom, the tares were the children of the wicked one, the enemy was the Devil, the harvest was the end of the world, and the reapers were the angels

(verses 37-39). The tares, the Lord asserted, would be gathered together "at the end of the world" when the angels would "gather out of the Kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity". Also, it was then that "the righteous" would "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father", i.e., within the "barn", having been gathered into that eternal granary.

Some elementary observations may be made at this point. Firstly, the field is not the church, or the visible church—it is the world; the grand theatre of redemption. It is there that the wicked and the just grow together—not within the church visible or invisible! Secondly, the Kingdom of heaven is likened to this situation, not the visible church, or the invisible church, or any other congregation of mortals. **It is the "Kingdom of heaven"; the express manipulations and evidences of the reign of the Lord God of heaven and earth that we are speaking of here!** Thirdly, observe that the wheat and tares grow together until the end of the world—note that "TOGETHER" until the "end of the world". There is absolutely no ambiguity on this point. Fourthly, the tares are gathered **before** the wheat, the wicked **before** the righteous—"at the end of the world".

Some preliminary conclusions may also be drawn at this juncture. First, that the righteous were the ones for whom the world was fitted; just as the field was for the wheat. Secondly, that the tares are the intruders, the foreign element, not the wheat; i.e., the wicked are the trespassers, not the righteous. Thirdly, that the offensive intruders in the Kingdom will be gathered out **BEFORE** those that shall "inherit the earth". Fourthly, that Satan's children are interspersed with God's children **in the world**, and shall continue to be until the end of the world. Fifthly, that until the end of the world, we shall have a mixture of righteous and wicked in the world—**no time segment being present where the two shall not be "growing" together.** Separation time is at the "end of the world"—that is what the Master said; that is what we believe. Sixthly, this parable is an express and concise contradiction of the great body of accepted theology, concerning the coming of the Lord and the end of the world, which pervades the church-world. Almost universally it is accepted that the saints shall be taken first, and then the wicked—but Jesus here taught that the wicked would be taken first, and then the righteous. **The righteous shall not shine in all of their glory until the wicked have been plucked up out of THEIR world;** the wicked, then, are actually inhibiting the glory of the righteous by their presence, even though they are serving a purpose in God's plan for the ages.

The fact that the wicked will be dealt with first is often taught in the Scripture; this is not an assertion confined to the particular parable under consideration. It is also declared in the parable of the great net. Our Lord declared again that "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind" (Matt. 13:47). Commenting on that parable, the Lord said: "So shall it be at **the end of the world:** the angels shall come forth, **AND SEVER THE WICKED FROM AMONG THE JUST**" (verse 49).

Note that language; it is precise and particular; "THEY SHALL SEVER THE WICKED FROM AMONG THE JUST"—"FROM AMONG THE JUST"! Does it sound strange to your ears? Is it not true that this does not comport with much of the theology to which we are daily subjected? And yet, having "received the love of the truth", we joyfully accept these affirmations of Divine purpose without fear of contradiction. Tares first, bad fish first! In other words, the wicked removed first—then the righteous! The wicked dealt with first, then the righteous! This is the obvious notation in these parables.

Of especial note is the fact (in the parable of the tares) that the field was "HIS field"; i.e., the world is the Lord's. As the Psalmist put it; "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof" (Psa. 24:1). The seed is **His**, the enemy is **His**, the reapers are **His**, the barn is **His**! It is not true, therefore, that "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made?" (Jno. 1:3).

Let us not forget that during the time of the flood it was **the wicked that were taken away**, not the righteous; "For as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be . . . and knew not until the flood came and **TOOK THEM ALL AWAY**; so shall the coming of the Son of man be" ((Matt. 24:37-39), Noah was lifted up above the cursing by means of the water, yet remained upon the earth, and after it had been washed of the wicked (baptized, if you please), he became a resident there again. The wicked were taken away; removed from the earth, because they had defiled it. Jesus said that His coming will be like that—a time when the wicked will be removed; praise the Lord! It is then that the "arms of the wicked shall be broken", and the "seed of the wicked cut off", when the "transgressors shall be destroyed together" (Psa. 37:17, 28, 38). Then the "wicked shall cease from troubling" (Job 3:17) when the angels of the Lord shall have plucked them out of the world forever. Hallelujah! It is the "plant that my heavenly Father hath not planted" that shall "be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13), not the righteous seed. Rather, "the meek shall inherit the earth", and "delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (Matt. 5:5; Psa. 37:11).

In the case of the chaff and the wheat, which goes first—chaff or wheat! Who would think of gathering first the wheat and **then** disposing of the chaff; **it is the chaff that is first removed, and then the wheat is gathered**: As it is written; "Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but the chaff He will burn with fire unquenchable." (Matt. 3:12). The principle everywhere pervades in the Lord's workings that you must "**FIRST BIND THE STRONG MAN**" before his house may be spoiled (Matt. 12:29; Mark 3:27). While "the earth is" truly "the Lord's, and the fulness of it", it is ruled in a subordinate degree by "the prince of this world", which is Satan (John 14:30; 16:11). It is, therefore, inconceivable that the Lord would first remove the righteous from Satan's **temporary** domain and field of activity, without dealing with "the children of the wicked one".

It is logical for God to deal with the wicked first, even though the test of truth is not limited

to its logical arrangement in the eyes of men. The wicked have been placed in the Lord's world by the Lord's enemy. They have encumbered the Lord's field, and are trespassers in every sense of the world. Their presence has produced handicaps for the righteous. Because they were the last on the earth in respect to placement, they shall be the first for removal, thereby fulfilling the word "the last shall be first, and the first shall be last" (Mk. 10:31). Too, the wicked are going to lose the earth, the righteous are going to gain it, and, having "abused the world" the wicked shall be plucked up from it violently, quickly, and first-ly! We leave these things now for our readers' consideration and weighing. I am sure you will find them to be innovative, strengthening, and edifying.

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ness shall be finally put away; temporality, suffering, mourning, persecution, and sorrow shall flee away from the saints of the Most High God, never again to be experienced in any form!

It is no wonder that Satan has diligently labored to garble this doctrine, to confuse the hearts of men concerning it, and to make it a point of controversy rather than an element of comfort. Who knows what joy, what comfort, what consolation, has been forfeited and obscured by the wresting of the precious truth of the "resurrection of the dead"! How many hearts have sat in consternation at the varied and heterogenous doctrines of the resurrection rather than letting the hope of the resurrection become a balm in Gilead for their weary hearts! The Lord rebuke the false and despicable prophets that have created two mass bodily resurrections! The resurrection in its Scriptural simplicity and pureness brings "hope" (Acts 23:6), "comfort" (I Thess. 4:16, 17), and "power" (Phil. 3:10-11). Let no man, dear readers, wrest that from your hearts! **There shall be a resurrection of the dead!** There shall be! It will be unto life for some, and unto damnation for others. It will be a time of begetting into liberty all glorious for some, and eternal bondage and fetters for others! Corruption, mortality, weakness, naturalness, and dishonor shall dissipate and fade away for the godly at this time! They shall come up out of the graves characterized by and observed for their "incorruption; not their corruption; for "power" instead of weakness; for "immortality" instead of mortality! They shall be completely spiritual, with no vestige of "nature" (i.e. Adamic nature) left in them! Thoroughly, completely, and finally "sanctified body, soul, and spirit" (I Thess. 5:23). Such a hope as this ought not to be obscured! It ought not to become the custodianship of unfaithful stewards, and those that are unlearned and ignorant in the ways of God. There is too unsure concerning its reality or nature.

It is affirmed that God "raised up" Jesus (Acts 2:24; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30; 17:31; Rom. 10:9; Gal. 1:1; Eph. 1:20), and that He shall also "**raise up us by His own power**" (I Cor. 6:14; II Cor. 4:14). Then you will reap! Then you will rejoice with "exceeding joy", then you will "know as you are known", then you will "enter into rest" in the fullest sense of the word!

"THE DEAD IN CHRIST SHALL RISE FIRST"

"... and the dead in Christ shall rise first"

—I Thess. 4:16

The coming of the Lord is truly the blessed hope of the church; "Looking for that **blessed hope** and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ"—(Titus 2:13). Note that a rapture is **not** the blessed hope—it is the "**appearing**" of our Savior! The removal of the saints from this world is **not** the blessed hope—it is the "**APPEARING**" of the great God and Savior, Jesus Christ! It is that "**appearing**" "without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28) that has enamored the hearts of believers through the ages! Those whose hearts have really been "circumcised" of the "body of the sins of the flesh"—those that have experienced in truth the "circumcision of Christ" (Col. 2:11) have always yearned for the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ—and for that reason have been subjected to a variety of erroneous and heterogeneous doctrines concerning Christ's coming. False prophets have filled the world with teachings that they thought would have an appeal to professed believers; teachings that bore heavily upon things close to their hearts. Thus it was the subject of the coming of the Lord.

The church at Thessalonica had been troubled by blind guides on this subject, and it had caused them no small difficulty of heart and conscience. The Thessalonians, as difficult as it may be to comprehend, were possessed of an inordinate excitement under the persuasion of the immediate coming of Christ. As a result, some of the brethren at Thessalonica had actually neglected their earthly duties, even ceasing from work and toil; having deteriorated into indolent activity: "For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they **work**, and eat **their own bread**. . . . And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed" (II Thess. 3:11-14). Thus did Paul exhort them, ". . . study to be **quiet**, and to **do your own business**, and to work with your **own hands**, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly **toward them that are without**, and that ye may have lack of nothing" (I Thess. 4: 11-12).

It would appear that some of the believers at Thessalonica had passed away, and that their brethren were distressed and alarmed about it, thinking that they would not participate in the witness of the descending Christ. Thus Paul wrote; "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope" (I Thess. 4:13). Ignorance is a terrible affliction; it brings distress to the soul, to the mind, to the heart, to the spirit, and often even to the body. As if it were not enough to be ignorant concerning those that had fallen asleep in Jesus, the Thessalonian brethren had sorrowed as though their ignorance were knowledge, and had assumed that what they did not know was something that they did know. They sorrowed as those that had no hope, assuming that their misapprehension concerning Christ's coming was really an appre-

hension instead of a misapprehension. They grieved over the departed saints as though they were wise, although they were really ignorant! Their ignorance, however, becomes an occasion for timely instruction—for the opening of the understanding to the reality of the resurrection and the coming of the Lord. Paul brings them back to the basic tenet of Christ's resurrection; "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him" (I Thess. 4:14). You see, believers have been "joined to the Lord" (I Cor. 6:17) in reality; this is not merely a theological point, but rather reflects precise fact! Believers have been identified with the Lord Jesus Christ! That is the basic postulate of the declaration of salvation: ". . . we be dead **WITH CHRIST**. . ." (Rom. 6:8); "I am crucified **with Christ**. . ." (Gal. 2:20); ". . . quickened together **WITH CHRIST**" (Eph. 2:5); "If ye be risen **WITH CHRIST**" (Col. 3:1); "Your life is hid **WITH CHRIST** in God" (Col. 3:3). We have been made "**partakers of Christ**" (Heb. 3:14). We are "**one body IN CHRIST**" (Rom. 12:5), "**established IN CHRIST**" (II Cor. 1:21), and "**caused to triumph IN CHRIST**" (II Cor. 2:14). We have been "**baptized INTO CHRIST**" (Gal. 3:27), have been "**blessed with all spiritual blessings IN CHRIST**" (Eph. 1:3), and are "**partakers of His promise IN CHRIST**" (Eph. 3:6). There are few things marked with any greater clarity than this: we have been Divinely associated and brought into fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. It is by God that we have been "called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (I Cor. 1:9), and have been "translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His Dear Son" (Col. 1:13).

It is in view of these great proclamations that the Apostle addresses himself to the matter of the coming of the Lord in his epistle to the Thessalonians. **Because believers have died does not mean that they have ceased to be, or that they will not participate in the glories of the appearance of our Lord's coming.** They are yet among the living, for "God is the God of the living" (Matt. 22:23). In fact, they are called "the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. 12:23). **The fellowship of the "saved" with their Lord Jesus continues after their tabernacles are laid in the grave.** There is nothing about the appearance of the Lord that they shall miss—"every eye shall see Him" (Rev. 1:7). The living will not have an advantage over those that have already finished their race, having fought the good fight of faith! Rather, declares the Holy Spirit, "the dead in Christ shall rise first" (I Thess. 4:16b). "**FIRST**"—**not** in relation to the rest of the dead; forever wash from your mind that preposterous bit of contrived theology! They shall rise "**FIRST**" **in relation to the living believers!** That is the point that the Apostle is making here! We that are alive shall not "prevent (meaning precede) them which are asleep" (I Thess. 4:15); i.e., the living shall not rise to meet the Lord **prior** to the resurrection of the righteous. It is only **AFTER** the "dead in Christ" have been raised that the ones that remain will be caught up to meet Him in the air. As it is written; "**THEN** (after the dead in Christ have been raised) we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together **WITH THEM** in the clouds, to meet the

"The Spirit of Antichrist"

"... that spirit of antichrist" — I Jno. 4:3

There is a spirit in the world which is so diabolical, so perverse, that it can properly be identified only as "antichrist." This "spirit" is opposed to the Lord Jesus Christ, and is determined to disseminate among the sons of men doctrines, works, and influences that will cause them to deny Christ Jesus the Lord. We read of this spirit several times in the Scriptures, and each time it is mentioned, caution is admonished, lest we be taken in by him. "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist should come, **even now there are many antichrists**; whereby ye know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but **they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us**" (I Jno. 2:18-19). From this message we learn that; (1. The coming of antichrist was **foretold**. (2. That reference is not made to one person, but to **many persons**—"antichrists." (3. That the presence of these imposters indicates that the earth is presently in its **last and closing** period of time. (4. That these antichrists were formerly **associated with the apostles**. (5. That they left the Apostles in order that their factious spirit might be made manifest. (6. That they were not really of the same order and spirit of the Apostles.

"Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? **He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son**" (I Jno. 2:22). From this declaration we learn that this spirit brings doubt concerning the relationship of Jesus to God the Father; that he seeks to obscure that glorious fellowship of The Father and The Son which is the very foundation of our redemption, sanctification, and justification. If this relationship is not true; if there is not a glorified man in the presence of God that has already passed through the vale of tears, according to God's decree, then we have no Mediator with the Father, no Intercessor, no contact with our Father which is in heaven. In fact, we are not sons at all, for our sonship is strictly conditioned upon the Sonship of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. **If He is not the Son, then it is impossible that we should be.**

"And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that **spirit of antichrist**, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already it is in the world" (I Jno. 4:3). Here we learn that antichrist is primarily a spirit, not mere flesh and blood—a spirit, under the guidance of Lucifer himself, that seeks to obscure the **humanity** of Jesus Christ. Not only, then, is there an attack upon His Divinity, but also upon His humanity, for our salvation rests upon both of these pillars—Christ's Divinity (Son of God), and His humanity (Son of man). We also learn that this evil spirit already had come in the days of John the Beloved, and that he was exercising his influence abroad in the world. **He seeks to cloud the fact that Jesus Christ did come "in the flesh," that He was "made of a woman, made under the law"** (Gal. 4:4).

This means that truths concerning His earthly experiences will be clouded by this wicked spirit. Such truths as, "He **suffered**, being tempted", "He was **tempted in all points** like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 2:18; 4:15). Because this truth is so integral to the perfection and patience and comfort of the saints (namely that their Lord and Savior is "able to be touched with the **feelings** of their infirmities" (Heb. 4:15), it is clear that great and subtle energy will be devoted to its obscurement.

"And this is love, that we walk after His commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. **This is a deceiver and an antichrist**" (II Jno. 7). **Here we learn that the primary objective of obscuring Christ's manhood is the thrusting of the saints into disobedient lives.** And verily this is true, that if I do not know that Jesus Christ—"the MAN Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 2:5)—is "able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:18), it is inevitable that I will be overcome by sin which dwells in my members!! **My situation, along with all true believers, demands a sympathetic Mediator and Intercessor**—one that has "suffered being tempted", and who, when He was upon earth, prayed "with strong crying and tears" (Heb. 5:7). I cannot "walk after His commandments" if He is not altogether such an One as this! I cannot live and reside within God's will and good pleasure, doing His will from the heart and overcoming he that is in the world unless Christ truly did "come in the flesh"!

Who Is Antichrist?

First of all, he is primarily a spirit—a spirit whose function it is to mitigate the testimony of Jesus—to modify the proclamation of the Gospel so that men are caused to despair and live in hopelessness. **False doctrine has its origin among Satan's unseen hosts—his generals and other principalities and powers!** These "powers" exercise influence over the spirits of men, bringing them into captivity to error and falsehood. This is why antichrist, though one, is manifested in the many. One spirit, but many antichrists—i.e., many men that move under the influence of this one evil spirit. While it is quite possible that this spirit may at some time be made known in one specific individual, the Apostle warned the saints of the multiplicity of antichrists, declaring that there were "many" that had gone out into the world.

It is probable that "the spirit of antichrist" is the same spirit spoken of by Paul in II Thess. 2:3-4; "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that **man of sin** be revealed, the **son of perdition**; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God". Here we observe several important facts. (1. that this individual is associated with a falling away from the faith—a departure from the True and Living God. (2. He is the "son of perdition", or the child of hell, working in a specific league with the

“prince of the power of the air.” (3. He stands in opposition to the Lord of lords and King of kings. (4. He exalts himself, bringing himself, cunningly, into the limelight, thus distracting men from the “Light of the World.” (5. He holds himself forth as pre-eminent and primary, nothing being above him. (6. He exalts himself above everything that is worshipped, demanding worship and adoration for himself above all else. (7. He is identified externally, or in some way, with the house of God. There is where he takes residence, appearing as though he is really a godly individual. (8. He assumes to himself the honor that is due only to God.

Now this personage is elsewhere referred to as “the mystery of iniquity” (II Thess. 2:7), indicating that he is not APPARENTLY the enemy of Christ. His subterfuge is brilliant, even to the subversion of multitudes. Men are still offered a God, a Lord, a temple, and the opportunity to worship. We believe that while all such worship and adoration may have the outward appearance of being true, it is really directed toward this evil spirit; this one from hell that sets within the very temple of God. That is the secret to his identification: **he appears to be godly, but is not. He appears to be truth, but is not; he appears to be identified with God and the temple of God, but is not!** That is the “mystery” of his presence. Wherever reproach is cast upon Christ in a subtle and delusive fashion, there the “spirit of antichrist” is at work. Wherever men are ignorant of the “MAN Christ Jesus” there the “spirit of antichrist” exercises his phenomenal influence. He is “antichrist”—against Christ—though he professes to be for Him. He is opposed to Christ, though he represents himself as being in league with Him. He exalts himself above Christ, though he deceives men into believing that he is holding Christ forth.

This “spirit of antichrist” works in people that have formerly been identified with the “faith” (Jude 3). Even as those early defectors from the camp of the apostles were called “antichrists”, even so many today may properly bear that appellation. Their programs, their influence, the entire scope of their work accrues glory and honor for themselves, and themselves alone. Their teaching, their presence, their influence, obscures the reality of Christ, hides His ministry, and blots out the knowledge of Him. Such men, under the influence of “the spirit of antichrist”, may build churches—fundamental churches—“sound” Bible colleges, etc.; but we must not be deceived by such things, for that is called “sitting in the temple of God, showing himself to be God”. He will not show himself as a “communist”, but as a “Christian”; not as a heathen, but as a believer; not as a devil, but as a saint. He may not be found out by cold intellectual analysis, for he is a master of that himself! He is found out by the company that he keeps (his followers left the Apostles). He is found out by the picture that he paints of the Lord Jesus Christ and His entrance into this world “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Rom. 8:3). He is discovered by his own uncontrollable desire for glory and attention. His own name follows him, not the Name of the Lord!

Let all believers cease to be naive concerning Satanic snares and learn that “cunning craftiness” is always applied by him for the purpose of subverting the saints!

Eulogy to Sister Adanna

(From page 5)

where she is gloriously comforted at this very hour.

Her life proves the faithfulness of God, and shines as a bright beacon for those of us that have been left to trod the remainder of this road to glory.

And so, while we have parted here, and the tears have copiously fallen, and our hearts have experienced a most grievous severance, we shall lift up our heads and hearts with thanksgiving for the gift of her presence over such an extended period. If there is hope for a tree, then there is hope for those that “die in the Lord.” Yea, rather, blessed are they that die in the Lord. Farewell, yokefellow — we shall soon meet where parting is no more, where tears are forever wiped away, and where the last enemy shall be swallowed up of life. You have truly left this world better than it was when you came, and have cast across our pathway a light that shall assist us in our own trek to glory.

Editor's Note: You will find a reprint of Sister Adanna's article “And There Was No More Sea” on page 3.

“The Dead in Christ Shall Rise First”

(From page 12)

Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (I Thess. 4:17).

Many have doubtless been taught that the resurrection referred to in these verses is the “first resurrection” of Revelation 20:1-4, but there is not one particle of Scripture that confirms this. This is the wild speculation of spiritless theology. What is meant in the Thessalonian text is far too plain to garble it with theological assumptions. The Thessalonians needed to understand that Christ's coming was associated with ALL of His children, not just with the ones that are alive at the time. They needed to be apprized of the fact that the living would **not** have an advantage over the dead, but they would TOGETHER meet the Lord in the air. Further, my heart greatly delights in the sequence of events that is outlined by Paul. It makes good sense that the dead in Christ should be raised **first!** They finished the race **first**; they fought the fight **first**; they were steadfast unto the end **first**, and they have waited under the altar for the Lord's consummation of all things: why shouldn't they be awarded the singular honor of experiencing the first bodily activity? **They shall be raised, the living shall be changed.** All of this will happen in “a moment, in a twinkling of an eye” (I Cor. 15:52). There will be no large time gaps, but there will be a momentary sequence of justice served, where those that have finished and waited will be honored.

Let us comfort one another with these words, knowing that our faithful brethren that have gone on before us—**that have outstripped us in the race**—have yet another honor coming to them: they shall be raised first—**before the living are transformed.** Holy is the Lord!

THE PREMILLENNIAL WEDGE

The subject of our Lord's return is exceeding precious to the saints "in Christ Jesus." It is called "that blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13), and is to be "looked" for with great anticipation (Heb. 9:28). So vital is this theme that it pervades all of the Apostolic teaching; held forth, as it were, for the comfort of believers as well as their encouragement in the face of vexatious trials. There are few, if indeed any, subjects upon which our Lord's return does not bear. Our "adoption", for instance, will be complete at that time (Rom. 8:23). "Redemption" is identified with that glorious return (Eph. 1:14), as well as "salvation" (Heb. 9:28), "grace" (I Pet. 1:13), "reward" (Rev. 22:12), "deliverance" (II Cor. 1:10), the passing of the present heavens and earth (Rev. 20:11), and the revelation of that unshakeable kingdom which we have "received" (Heb. 12:25-28).

The light of this truth casts its illuminating rays upon the whole scope of the Kingdom, and upon the doctrine of it in particular. It is the great circumference within which lie "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (II Pet. 1:3). Beyond that point of time the veil is thicker, the darkness more dense; for "it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (I Jno. 3:2). Our obedience is to be considered as of primary importance until that day, when we shall be ushered into the fuller and uninhibited life (Luke 19:13; Phil. 1:9, 10). The work of the Lord within us is performed "until the day of Christ" (Phil. 1:6). We are preserved by the Father until the Lord comes (I Thess. 5:23). The Lord's Supper is to be observed until He come (I Cor. 11:26). We are to withhold our judgment of hearts until the Lord appears (I Cor. 4:5), fighting the fight of faith in anticipation of that day (I Tim. 6:12-14), and being sincere and without offence until then (Phil. 1:10). It is then that God shall "judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained" (Acts 17:30-31).

When, therefore, the scope of this doctrine is seen, the importance of maintaining its apostolic purity will at once be clear to our hearts. Too, Mosaic types and shadows are brought into focus, and must be considered integral to the proper spiritual understanding of the return of "the man Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 5:6) the "second time" (Heb. 9:28). The word of the Lord on this point is to be taken as a whole; **all of the Scriptures stand together as a composite whole.** They speak a common message, for "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10). Jesus Christ is the "substance" to which all of the shadows of the Law and the prophets pointed (Col. 2:16-17). For instance, the ministry of the high priest in the Holy of holies brings to us a most profitable view of the intercession of our Savior. It is dealt with to our edification in the ninth chapter of Hebrews. There it is made clear to our hearts that intercession takes place ONLY within the confines of the "most holy place." **Once the high priest left that locality the intercession was over!** Now, our Lord Jesus "ever liveth to make intercession for

the saints" (Heb. 7:25). As long as He is before the presence of the Father believers are assured that they do have adequate representation before the "Father of spirits." When the Lord leaves our Father's presence, as was the case of the high priests of old, the intercession is over, and redemption is complete—the "eternal purpose" being wrought in accordance with the will of God. **Any doctrine of Christ's second appearing that violates this type or shadow is false, and destroys the spiritual continuity of the Scriptures.** This brief diversion is given only as a thought germ for fellow-believers to develop in the quiet and solitude of their own meditations. There is no question in my mind but that you shall find, in such a perusal of this thought in your hearts, that a direct confrontation with the dogma called "premillennialism" will take place.

It is axiomatic that an improper understanding of this apostolic doctrine will affect vast areas of our apprehension. Things as a whole will be seen improperly, and sound perspective of the Kingdom of God will be forfeited. It is quite correct that truth is always inter-related. **No single facet of it may be so isolated as to nullify or minimize another facet.** When once it is perceived in the spirit that the Word of God was not written in order to the substantiation of dogma, an entirely new approach will be made to it. Then one will come for purposes of edification and building up, rather than for sectarian fortification. These general observations must be taken into consideration in our contemplation of the Second coming of our Lord Jesus. It is not our purpose to here unveil an intricate system of inter-related theology that is knit together by human understanding and carnal analysis. It is rather to unveil the absolute devastation that such a system brings to bear upon the precious truth of Christ's return.

It is clear to my spirit that the singularly most devastating and deceptive doctrine presently embraced by Christendom is PREMILLENNIALISM. In a word, this heresy teaches that Christ Jesus shall return BEFORE earth's history is finished; BEFORE "the knowledge of the Lord covers the earth as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14). The postulate of this dogma is that the next return of our Lord will be BEFORE the cessation of all things; BEFORE the wicked are raised; BEFORE the fulfillment of all things "spoken by the mouth of His Holy prophets since the world began." See—at once the tenacious hold of this teaching evidences itself in the repugnance that these very words of suggestion bring to some of our ensnared readers. But, we shall spend no longer elucidating WHAT premillennialism is, but content ourselves with the proclamation of the truth of certain aspects of our Lord's coming, together with the penalties for not embracing the truth.

Acts 3:20-21

"And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven (singular) must receive (translated also "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."

The declaration of this text is made clear by faith to our spirits. Further, even the grammatical construction of the sentence, together with an ordinary philological perusal will at once demonstrate its strictly non-apologetic proclamation. **Peter is here declaring the truth without regard to sectarian establishment or denominational dogma.** The Spirit is not inspiring him to fortify tradition, but rather to set before the people the glorious reality of the presence of Christ and the refreshment of Divine and Eternal Life (I Jno. 1:1). Enraptured in his spirit with the truth he is proclaiming, Peter makes mention of our Lord's heavenly reception, even stating the actual duration of His present stay there. He affirms that Sovereign obligation was laid upon "the heaven" to not merely receive Christ Jesus the Lord, but to "receive Him UNTIL", thus "limiting a certain day" (Heb. 4:7). That point of limit devastates the premillennial postulation, throwing it into the spiritual trash heap with all false doctrines! Mark it well that the heaven "MUST" receive Christ "UNTIL the times of restitution of ALL things spoken by the mouth of ALL His holy prophets since the world began." Not "some" of the prophets, but "ALL of HIS holy prophets." Not all of the prophets until Christ came in the "likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3), or the prophets since Pentecost—but "ALL His holy prophets SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN." He does not speak of the fulfillment of some of the things His holy prophets declared, but "ALL THINGS" spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets. He does not proclaim that Jesus must be received in the heaven until some of the prophecies have been fulfilled, or until some of them begin to be fulfilled. Nay! He cries "UNTIL THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS SPOKEN BY THE MOUTH OF HIS HOLY PROPHETS SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN." "Restitution" speaks of restoration or recovering—in a word, fulfilling every jot and tittle of them. The illusion given here is vivid and edifying. It pictures the prophet's words as having been lost in the minds of the people—as having been clouded because of seeming inactivity in relation to their fulfillment. But God shall call them back to the consciences of men—none of His words shall "fall to the ground." In Sovereign precision their proclamation shall be executed, that God might be glorified—and they shall, according to our text, be executed BEFORE the Lord comes!

Now, Peter declares, as with heaven's "keys" (Matt. 16:19), that Jesus MUST be received in the heaven until ALL of these prophecies are fulfilled—restored—restituted! **As long as one single word spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets since the world began remains unfulfilled, the HEAVEN must continue to retain her Ruler!** "Well", says one sophist, "there are prophecies about the world being destroyed, about a new heaven and a new earth (II Pet. 3:12, 13), to say nothing of the Deliverer coming out of Zion to turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Rom. 11:26). Can it be that these must be fulfilled BEFORE the heavens relinquish their Lord? What of the resurrection, tribulation, etc.?" To the which we reply by faith; "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of the restitution of ALL THINGS spoken by the mouth of

His holy prophets SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN!" Know, O simpleton, that you must cease and desist from cramming your church dogma into the texts of Scripture. There is simply no room for the likes of it! We will not stand for it! If you have questions to ask, why do you not ask "How shall the Scriptures be fulfilled in view of my church dogma. Is there any text of Scripture that must be obviated, minimized, or swept under the theological rug of expediency because I have embraced this doctrine or that?" What inspired man ever said clearly and concisely that these things would transpire AFTER the Lord had come. Is there any clear declaration of such a dogma in all the Scripture? Away, now, with your inferences—we are not interested in them! **Your** reasoning pervades such inferences, and we will "none of it." Why do you self-elected proclaimers of the church not acknowledge the truth? Why do you propound your church tradition in lieu of the Apostle's doctrine, and "wrest the Scriptures to your own destruction" (II Pet. 3:16). Is this text too hard for you? Why do you not take Jehudi's pen-knife and cut it out of your Bibles (Jer. 36:23), for as long as it remains there it shall be a certain hindrance to the propagation of premillennialism, as cherished as it may be among the traditionalists and sectarians. Would not your Bibles be the better without Acts 3:20-21? Would they be not much easier to preach from, knowing that you would not have to confront this text? Ah, dear reader, it is far better to clear the stubble away from your heart, break up the fallow ground, seek the Lord (Jer. 4:3; Hosea 10:12), and "believe God." It will verily be imputed unto you for righteousness (Rom. 4:22, 23).

But, we will not devote ourselves to this text any longer, although we do have sufficient truth right here to tear away every prestige of the premillennial theory. I have said that premillennialism is a WEDGE that inserts itself into the understanding of the believer and perverts his comprehension of the Kingdom. I intend to erect this proposition upon five pillars of truth, each one of which is sufficiently strong enough to hold it up. These pillars are primary postulates of Scripture which are obscured partially, or even completely, by the reception of premillennialism into the heart and mind. For want of space, I shall only devote myself briefly to each pillar, spending sufficient time to cement it in your understanding. These are the pillars of which I shall speak. (1. The Absolute Defeat of Satan by Christ. (2. The Power Of The Gospel of Christ. (3. Tribulation. (4. Christ's Kingship. (5. The Nature of The Kingdom.

1. The Absolute Defeat of Satan By Christ

The heresy of which I have been speaking affirms that Jesus will return to earth to rule His enemies. These enemies are pictured as presently effectually fulfilling their evil purposes and thwarting, after a manner of speaking, the success of the truth. The world wars and the subsequent rise in immorality and wickedness in general, are cited as unequivocal proof that Satan's activity is efficient enough to demand a more effectual defeat than has already been delivered to him. The effect of this perversion of truth is that men live

in oblivion of the real Gospel, hopelessly ensnared by powerlessness before God, and blind to precious truths of the Word. If some appear to have great confidence and joy in the Lord, it is all too often only because they ignore the issues of life, never really confronting things as they are. Satan is pictured as a mighty and powerful foe who operates under little or no Divine restraint. Little wonder that under such a system the true "assurance of faith" (Col. 2:2; Heb. 6:11; 10:22) is almost altogether lacking. By way of brief diversion, a word concerning this matter of "assurance" is in order. Many "fundamentalists" glibly talk about "assurance", and "knowing" that they "are going to heaven", but their lives evince the vanity of their imaginations. It is a self-conceived assurance that they possess, and largely the mere mimicing of a creedal position of their church. The "assurance of faith" is something else; and it is called "full." **True assurance proceeds forth from intimate concourse with God, from the possession of "the mind of Christ" (I Cor. 2:16), and "knowing what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17).** Spiritual ignorance is rampant in the very circles that profess to have assurance. God is virtually unknown, His will is hidden from their understanding, and His counsels are not perceived. The very existence of such disheartening phenomenon belies the profession of assurance. If the great "eternal purpose" (Eph. 1:11; 3:11) is spoken of to these very people, the inevitable look of consternation spreads over their glib faces. What can we say to these things, but that they—like ourselves in times of darkness—are "deceiving and being deceived" (Titus 3:3). Further, ignorance of the full defeat of Satan contributes vastly to this unpleasant situation.

But what saith the Scripture; ". . . His cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it (the cross)", Col. 2:15. The cross of Christ appears to flesh to be a place of defeat, and not of favorable victory; and this is true when properly seen. It was here that Christ was victorious and Satan defeated, with all of his wretched hosts. Our Lord utterly overthrew them—praise His Name! They were "spoiled"—their possessions taken from them, their power wrested from them. Satan's head was "bruised", and before angelic hosts it was demonstrably realized that none can effectually resist "the Lord's Christ." "Angels and authorities and powers" are now "made subject to Him" in a spiritually evidential way (I Pet. 3:22). "The prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2) has been "cast down" and is "fallen from heaven" (Rev. 12:10; Luke 10:18). The prison doors have been opened (Luke 61:1), and "captivity" has been "led captive" (Eph. 4:8), and the "strong man" has surely been "bound" in order that his "house" might be effectually "spoiled" (Matt. 12:29; Mk. 3:27). **Satan can be no more defeated than he is right now!**

Now let it be clear to all believers that although Satan is the ruler of "this present evil world" (Gal. 1:4), **his will is subservient to the will of God**, as is illustrated in the book of Job (Job 1 and 2). But even in a more appreciable way to we mortals, he is in subjection to a glorified man,

"the man Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 2:5). **Not one jot or one tittle of our adversary's (I Pet. 5:8-9) will may be performed in ignorance of Christ's rule, for He has overthrown Satan completely, and the "Old Serpent" (Rev. 12:9) is His servant, unwilling though it may be!** At this point we begin to expose the fleshly stench of premillennialism, for this is the truth it cannot fully embrace without relinquishing its very foundation. It is to be understood that the real opponents of the Kingdom are not flesh and blood, but "principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12). Men are but their puppets, executing their will under their subservient power. Thus are men brought into captivity to Satan who takes them captive "at his will" (II Tim. 2:26), working in the "children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2-3). **If, however, the postulation of the premillennial heresy is true, then Christ's enemies are not to be defeated until He comes.** But such a view evinces juvenility that is not at all befitting of a child of the Lord. If the world is ruled by spiritual wickedness under the direction of the "Prince of the power of the air" (which has already been defeated and is in subjection to Christ), it is preposterous to suppose that any further overthrow or defeat is needed or is to be expected! Because the contemporary church is not able to enlarge its borders to its own satisfaction, and because the world at large repudiates the proclamation of the Gospel, by no means indicates that Christ is not ruling, or that Satan has not been overthrown. The Lord permitted the Egyptians to come after the Israelites when they left Egypt, almost overtaking them at the Red Sea. When the enemies of the Lord came out to arrest Elijah, their entire army camped about that city, and all looked hopeless. But this was only what **seemed** to be. God drowned Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, and the armies of heavenly hosts were camped about Elisha's dwelling. Everything was in full control, precisely ordered, and wrought in order to the Lord's glory. The Kingdom is still the Lord's (Psa. 22:28; Matt. 6:13), and He is the "Governor among the nations" (Psa. 22:28). Satan has been utterly defeated, and everything in this very world is still "Of Him (God) and through Him and to Him" (Rom. 11:36). **The world, if this is so, is not in a state of chaos or disorder, but only appears to be. The fact that the King's way of doing things does not concur with human conception does not change the reality of the case.** Satan IS defeated, God IS over all, Christ IS ruling. Although the premillennial view of eschatology seeks to obscure this with its proclamations of Christ coming to rule and reign upon earth, we cleave to the truth, finding it to be most liberating to our spirits.

2. The Power Of The Gospel

Another area which the wicked wedge of premillennialism touches is that of the Gospel of Christ. Because the Gospel is exceeding precious to us, we boldly oppose this dogma, loathing any and all things that would obscure its truth to our hearts. **The Gospel is the glorious message that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself not imputing their trespasses unto them" (II Cor. 5:19).** This was transacted in the death,

burial, and resurrection of our Lord (I Cor. 15:1-3). Concerning this "glorious Gospel" (I Tim. 1:11), premillennialism asserts that it shall not finally subjugate the world; that it shall eventually, on this earth, be replaced by a new and hitherto unrevealed Gospel. That means that the glorious news of redemption from sin will some day become obsolete upon this earth—before the "end of all things." "Because", it is reasoned, "the world is presently drifting further and further from the Gospel, we know that only the return of our Lord can ever turn the tide of things." Admittedly, this argument carries great weight to the fleshly mind; but to the mind that has been illuminated by the Holy Spirit, it is in direct conflict with the "truth as it is in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 4:20ff). It is further loathsome and obnoxious, because it attempts to reduce the purpose of God to a matter quite palpable and understandable to the unregenerate mind. Is not the Gospel expressly called "The EVERLASTING Gospel" (Rev. 14:6)? and does it not concern "Christ" (Rom. 1:16)? Who would dare cast a reflection upon this most holy Gospel in defence of a humanly devised scheme of theology! **If "life and immortality have been brought to light through the Gospel" (II Tim. 1:10), I hardly see how it can ever be reduced to obsolescence.**

Again, to the Word; "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the **power of God** unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). Note, He does not say "A" power, but "THE power"; not merely "the power", but "the power OF GOD." **To deny the thorough effectuality of the Gospel is to deny, therefore, the power of God, a sin of which the Spirit witnesseth (II Tim. 3:5).** To clear our hearts and minds on this matter it is necessary that our understanding of the scope of "salvation" be enlarged. "Salvation" extends from the beginning to the consummation of our full union and convergence with God. Its end will be revealed when our Lord shall come (I Pet. 1:13), and it is "ready to be revealed" (I Pet. 1:5). **The Gospel is God's power in order to the full implementation of that salvation, and as soon as the salvation is completed, the implementation of that salvation ends!**

During the present time the seeming lack of success of the Gospel is due to a "famine of the hearing of the word of God" that is abroad in the land (Amos 8:11). But, in eternal purpose, the Gospel remains thoroughly effectual in awakening those that have been "ordained unto eternal life" (Acts 13:48), who have been "appointed" to "obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thess. 5:9). If the number of such does not meet with our good pleasure, suffice it to say that our powerlessness is not to be imputed to our heavenly Father. In His due time He shall effectually empower the Gospel, and the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord (Hab. 2:14).

If that is too difficult for you to receive, you do not need a new theology, you need a new god! The Gospel is still, and shall ever be, God's power unto salvation. If it be countered that the Jew shall have another Gospel, it seems clear to us that the Lord has said that the Gospel of Christ

is God's power unto salvation to "the Jew first" (Rom. 1:16). Further, we who have truly tasted of the Lord that He is good, cannot conceive of any other Gospel than that of Christ—the "Gospel of Christ." If there will ever be another Gospel, we want nothing to do with it, for we are "complete in Him" (Col. 2:10), and stand with the saints of old who called a curse upon any man or angel that delivered any other Gospel than that which was preached by those who spoke in the power of the Holy Ghost "sent down from heaven" (Gal. 1:8, 9; I Pet. 1:12). Once again, the repudiation of this truth by the premillennial theory demonstrates and evidences its Satanic origin.

3. Tribulation

One of the tenets of the false notion under consideration is that a great tribulation will FOLLOW the return of our Lord for the saints; that such a tribulation shall be upon the earth AFTER the church has been cunningly and secretly snatched from it. This tribulation is purported to be seven years in duration, and one of such intense physical oppression and discomfort as has never been experienced before. Great fear and quaking is instilled in the hearts of these deluded brethren concerning the possibilities of being "LEFT" to endure, or go through, the "great tribulation." The result is that men receive a basically perverted view of tribulation in general, and a false hope concerning the future. Men that seem to be more wise than the Apostles take various texts from Daniel, Revelation, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; together with segments from Thessalonians and Corinthians, and cunningly weave them together into a theological tapestry that contributes to the crystallization of this view. To those who are ignorant of God's "eternal purpose" in Christ Jesus, and of His Sovereign will, according to which He works all things (Eph. 1:11); whose knowledge of the Scriptures is quite deficient, being more traditional than faithful—I say, to such as these, this theory seems quite plausible and is embraced eagerly, as well as ignorantly.

First, consider that Christ's coming will end everything, and "His reward is with Him, to give unto every man according as his deeds shall be" (Rev. 22:12). **That is an elementary portion of knowledge, and yet it is directly contradictory to the supposition that a tribulation period shall follow the Lord's coming, followed by more Christians, more preaching of another Gospel, more conquests of Christ, more overthrowing of the evil one, etc.** The possibility of any interim of tribulation FOLLOWING our Lord's return is, therefore, inconceivable, and the doctrine is ruled as carnal and false on that basis alone. But, beyond that, once the very principle of tribulation is understood, the erroneousness of this heresy is exposed. The principle is this; **Glory shall be experienced to the precise degree that tribulation has been experienced.** Our Lord is in the primary example of this. Further, the truth is everywhere taught in Scripture (II Cor. 1:7; II Cor. 4:16-18; II Thess. 1:4-5; II Tim. 2:12; I Pet. 4:13-14, etc.).

"Tribulation" speaks of the conflict of the spirit-world which is often manifested in fleshly animosities. The struggle of the spirit from earth

to heaven involves passing through the domain of "the Prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2). Such a move is met by firm resistance which eventuates in tribulation within and without. **Those who experience the greater struggle by faith have traveled the greater distance, and hence have the great glory.** If this be so—and it is—the greater the tribulation in the earth, the greater shall be the degree of our reign in glory. Indeed, the momentary sufferings of this life work for us a far more and exceeding eternal weight of glory (II Cor. 4:17-18). It is evident, without any further explanation that this flies in the face of premillennialism. But let the saints "try the spirits, whether they be of God; for many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I Jno. 4:1). It is enough to say that this exceeding precious truth of tribulation and sufferings has been stolen from many a heart commensurate with its embracement of the flesh-theory of the return of Christ before the consummation of all things spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

4. Christ's Kingship

"Our Lord's return", declare our opponents at this point, "marks the beginning of His Davidical rule. Then He shall sit on David's throne and rule in power. That this theological gibberish has a "show of wisdom", we cannot deny; but its "show" is "in the flesh", and not "in the spirit." The Apostles proclaimed that Christ **ascended** to rule, not that He is returning to rule; "And He ascended **on high**, leading captivity captive, and gave gifts to men" (Eph. 4:8ff); "Who is gone into heaven, **angels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him**" (I Pet. 3:22). Jesus is presently reigning in power, possessing "all authority in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18). Power over "all flesh" has been given unto Him (Jno. 17:2), and He is giving eternal life to as many as have been given unto Him.

It must be understood at this point that the purpose for Christ's rule is not merely the subjugation of His enemies—although "He must rule until "He hath put them all down; and the "last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Cor. 15:24-25). That is, however, but one facet of the rule; **the actual purpose is to "give eternal life to as many" as the Father has given unto Him** (Jno. 17:2-3); **that is the express reason for Him receiving power or authority over all flesh!** It is to this end that the overthrow of His enemies was directed. Jesus was sent as a Savior, and that is His primary work; salvation (Jno. 12:47; Luke 9:56; I Tim. 1:15; Matt. 18:11; Lk. 19:10; Matt. 1:21, etc.) **God's enemies posed no problem for Him before, and they do not now. They certainly have not been effectual in their resistance and insurrection against the God of all!** Understand, O reader, that your salvation demands a ruling Omnipotent Sovereign—none else could bring it to you. **Were Jesus not now on David's throne none would be saved, no gifts would have been distributed to the church** (Eph. 4:11ff), **and the enemy would still be the possessor of the "spoils."**

Concerning our Lord's occupation of the throne of David, we have the express testimony of Peter, who possessed the "keys of the Kingdom" (Matt. 16:19); "Therefore, being a prophet (David) and

knowing that God had sworn with an oath unto him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before **SPAKE OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST**, that His soul was not left in hell (hades), neither His flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear . . . therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made this same Jesus, who ye have crucified, both **LORD and Christ**" (Acts 2:29-36). The argument, or rather declaration, of the Apostle here is simply this; **the shedding forth of the Holy Spirit upon "all flesh", both handmaids and servants, was evidence that Jesus Christ had begun His heavenly rule; sitting upon the Throne of David as "LORD."** From that high exalted Throne He dispensed the Holy Spirit right through the adversaries—through the territory of the "Old Serpent", and bestowed it upon those who all their lifetime were held by Satan as captives through fear of death. Apart from Christ's resurrection, there was never such a mighty display of heavenly power as this! To minimize that by saying that the subjugation of earthly enemies of flesh and blood shall be a greater victory than the subjugation of rebellious hearts evinces a gross perversion of truth, as well as manifesting that those who embrace such heresy still "sit in great darkness." May the Lord give them to see the light.

The setting of God's King upon His holy hill is attributed by inspired men to the resurrection and subsequent ascension. Originally, the seating was spoken of by David; "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion" (Psa. 2:1-7). The early church, filled with the Holy Spirit following an encounter with the religious bigots of their day, lifted up their voices to the Lord, using this very passage, declaring that the raised and glorified Christ was He against whom the rulers of the world had been gathered, and whom God had set upon His holy hill (Acts 4:25-28).

The sundry references to our Lord in the Scripture often set Him forth as unquestionable King and Monarch of all: "He is **LORD OF ALL**" (Acts 10:36); "Christ . . . **WHO IS OVER ALL**" (Rom. 9:5); ". . . when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, **FAR ABOVE ALL PRINCIPALITY, AND POWER, AND MIGHT, AND DOMINION, AND EVERY NAME THAT IS NAMED, NOT ONLY IN THIS WORLD, BUT ALSO IN THAT WHICH IS TO COME**" (Eph. 1:20-21); "God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name **WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME**" (Phil. 2:9); "Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and **THE PRINCE OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH**" (Rev. 1:5), etc. If it be so that Jesus Christ can have all power in heaven and earth, be Lord of all, exalted above all, and have a Name above all: if He can possess the rule of the kings of the earth, and be above every principality, power, might, dominion, and every name that is named—if He can be all of that and yet not be up-

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on the throne, then perhaps the premillennialists are right. We then have a Ruler who doesn't rule; a King who doesn't reign; a Lord to whom enemies are not subject. If such be the case, then at what point does our adversary cease to have the control over us. Can He thwart the salvation which we possess in Christ Jesus. If Jesus is not now upon the Throne of David ruling, then who can be saved? Or are our benighted friends saying that it does not take "all power in heaven and earth" to bring a soul from darkness to light, from the power of Satan into Christ's marvelous light; from death to life! But, enough of such prating; it is so evident to the heart that has been enraptured with truth that Christ is King, that we need say no more. There is no high kingship and low kingship—He is either King or not; on David's Throne or not. We affirm that He is both, and are set firmly against anything and everything that says He is not! Nor is there any adversary, whether spiritual or flesh and blood, that can stand against such a declaration!

5. The Nature Of The Kingdom

Not only does the premillennial theory drive a wedge into our understanding concerning the four matters that we have already mentioned, however, but it also robs the soul of that precious truth of the nature of the kingdom. Those that embrace such a dogma look for a physical kingdom, for an earthly reign, for an external display of carnal power. Ah, such are indeed deceived; and so badly that they have escaped the liberating vision of the Kingdom of God. **Without that precious ointment of the knowledge of Christ's present reign, circumstances may become bludgeons whereby the soul is weakened hopelessly.** But there is no need to be in such a case; the Kingdom is accessible to those who live by faith, for they have been "translated" into it (Col. 1:13). It is a spiritual Kingdom; one that finds its participants exercising authority over principalities, over powers, over the rulers of the darkness of this world, and over spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph. 6:12). Our Lord Himself declared that His Kingdom was not of this world (Jno. 18:36); i.e., not of this world order. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds (II Cor. 10:3ff). Those who seek for an earthly physical kingdom seek, then, in vain, for even as Jesus Christ Himself is not of this world (Jno. 8:23), neither is His Kingdom of this world.

Let our readers see to it that they shun the profane babbling of the premillennial hypothesis lest it corrupt them and rob them of the precious jewels of truth. If other of our readers find these things confusing to their spirit, simply let them believe the Word of God without attaching to it all sorts of wily interpretations. If the Word says Jesus is King, believe it! If it says that David spoke of the resurrection of Christ when He spoke of one being seated upon his throne, believe it! If it says that we have been translated into the Kingdom of God's dear Son believe it! If it declares that the Lord Jesus Christ has been given

(Please turn to page 27)

The subject of Christ's coming is of intrinsic interest to true believers and worshippers; not because of its appeal to the intellect or curiosity, but rather, because of its SIGNIFICANCE to the saved. The coming of the Lord is truly the "blessed hope" of the church, and so do we view it (Titus 2:11-13). Our hearts are truly comforted by meditation and communication on this noble theme of faith, for then shall we "ever be with the Lord"—glad contemplation. **Because of the utility of this doctrine in comforting, encouraging, and stimulating the saints to pureness of spirit (I John 3:1-3), Satan has coloured it with heresies and surmising in order that its true value might not be derived by the needy people of God—of which we all are a number.** We rejoice in Christ Jesus, however, that we may be delivered from such "strong delusion", and be brought to truly benefit **within** by the truth" as it is in Christ Jesus" concerning His coming. Praise the Lord! It is our heart's desire to pass on to Christ's brethren those things which have assisted us, according to providential grace, in rising above such wicked deception as pervades the world of our day.

Not the least of the many points of confusion which touches on the Lord's return is the subject of (what is commonly called among fundamentalists) "the great tribulation". A whole host of doctrine has arisen on this subject which merits exposure because of its defiling effect upon the hearts and minds of God's people. It verily doth eat as the words of Philitus and Hymanaeus—"as a canker"—eroding and corrupting the souls of those who give ear to it. **To begin with, the term "THE great tribulation" is not a Scriptural one, and hence cannot connote a Scriptural concept.** The Holy Spirit uses the terms "great tribulation" (the article "the" is not present) (Matt. 24:21); "the tribulation of those days" (Matt. 24:29); "that tribulation" (Mk. 13:24). The same period is called "affliction" in Mark 13:19, and is pictured as a type of distress which had not been experienced before, nor ever after, upon the earth. Matthew 24:21 makes the same point, declaring: "such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Now, there is a primary, or first meaning to this prophecy, and a more general or secondary meaning. We shall concern ourselves with the first or primary one at this point. We stand with the men and people of God in these matters, not wishing to be divers from those saints of old that have spoken under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. At this point we are swift to point out that a great source of confusion on this, as well as other major doctrines of Scripture, is the Scofield reference Bible. In our persuasion, the church should be the better without this bit of literature, even though we understand that it is well revered among many of our fellows—but that is only because they have no understanding of their own, and thus must borrow from another.

The fact that people revert to men to gather in their doctrines is an evident token of their own spiritual bankruptcy. The Word of the Lord declares that ". . . a good man shall be satisfied from himself" (Prov. 14:14), i.e., that out of his own

person there flows "rivers of living water" (John 7:37-38) so that he does not require that "any man teach him, but as the same Anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, so shall ye abide in Him" (I John 2:27). **God has placed life within us, not merely external to us, and thus we may derive everlasting benefits from within, though we be deprived of much outward helps and instructions.** The truth and verity of the Kingdom, together with a real sensitivity to it, is brought by a communion with the Lord. The instruction that is given us by holy men is raw material which is to be refined within our spirits by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. Men can but sow and water; the increase is always of God. Now, it is our contention, and if pressed to the case, we are well able to defend it, that much of the teachings of Mr. Scofield on the subject of the Lord's coming, the great tribulation, and other eschatological studies, cannot be refined to the benefit of the saints, because it is "contrary to sound doctrine." To his own master Mr. Scofield stands or falls, together with us all—but we are not bound to accept him, any more than you be bound to accept us. We pray your indulgence on this matter, for many of the doctrines which have arisen from, and been fortified by his teachings have caused great spreads of carnal theology among the churches. **The common view that the great tribulation is a period of great and stupendous calamity that shall befall the earth AFTER the saints have been gathered out of the world by the Lord, is wholly unsupported by Scripture.** It will do no good to fit together some scattered and remote texts and form a doctrine of "private interpretation"—the apostles did not teach such a doctrine, and thus we totally repudiate it, for we continue in "the apostles doctrine"; and if they did not teach this, neither do we—praise the Lord! We are persuaded that it is our duty as stewards of the mystery of God in Christ to sound the warning concerning false doctrines, as Paul did in his day, concerning that grievous error of Hymeneus and Philetus (I Tim. 1:20; II Tim 2:17). The doctrines that have arisen concerning, what is commonly termed "the great tribulation" are destructive to faith, and prevail upon men to become carnal in their thoughts and in their expectations. The fruitage of this doctrine of things abundantly evidences its corruption—and thus will we spend no more time in calling your attention to them, but shall set ourselves to declare the "truth as it is in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 4:20-21).

Matthew, chapter 24, is a chapter of great depth. It is twofold in its application, dealing both with the destruction of Jerusalem, which was to follow some forty years later, and with the end of time when the Lord Jesus shall come in "power and great glory." **It appears from the text that Jesus purposely mingled the prophecies in order to prevail upon His disciples to live in a constant expectation of His coming, and in a ready fear of the anger of the Lord against their nation.** We shall in this portion deal with Matthew 24, verses 21 through 31. It is here that Jesus mentions "great tribulation." Observe the references the Son of man made to this period specified. (1. It

is a distinctive period—"such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, **nor never shall be**" (verse 21). (2. It is a dangerous period—"except those days should be shortened, **no flesh should be saved**" (verse 22a). (3. It is a determined period—"but for the elect's sake, those days shall be **shortened**," (verse 22b). (4. There shall be a period of delusion—"for there shall be **false Christs and false prophets**" (verse 24a). (5. It is a period of exceptional delusion—"and shall show **GREAT signs and wonders**: insomuch that, **IF IT WERE POSSIBLE**, they shall deceive the very elect" (verse 24b). (6. It is described as a period of deceptiveness concerning the presence of the Lord, declaring that His coming is secret—"they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert . . . behold, He is in the **secret chambers**" (verse 26). **This is delusion, as Jesus declares in verse 27, stating that His coming is not secret, but open, even as the lightning that "shineth even unto the west: so shall the coming of the Son of man be."** There is **nothing secret about the coming of the Lord—it is public, open, even as the lightning of heaven; let none deceive you on this point.** (7. Immediately following the tribulation of those days, there shall be great disturbances in the heavens—" . . . and the powers of the heavens shall be **shaken**" (verse 29). This is, to my understanding, speaking of the shaking of the spiritual powers that rule the world—the hosts of wickedness, that are mentioned in Ephesians 6:12; I Peter 3:21, etc. (8. It is then (**after** the mentioned tribulation) that the Son of man shall appear with great "power and glory", sending forth His holy angels to gather up His people from the four winds, "from one end of heaven to the other" (verse 31), or, as Mark puts it, "from the uttermost part of earth to the uttermost part of heaven" (Mark 13:27).

The immediate application of this prophetic utterance concerning a tribulation, doubtless refers to the great destruction of the city of Jerusalem in 70 AD by Titus of the Romans. As Josephus records, there was never a devastation like that before that day, and after reading accounts of it, it is difficult to conceive that there has been such an one since that time. There were 1,000,000 Jews slaughtered in that great destruction, as well as approximately 97,000 carried away captive. There was dire famine within, as well as sore destruction by the Romans—so much so that the parents began to eat and consume their own children. There were numerous dissensions, violence, and continual bloodshed and murder, and great pestilence. As Chrysostom puts it: "Whence came there thus upon them wrath from God intolerable, and more sore than all that had befallen aforetime, not in Judea only, but in any part of the world? Is it not quite clear that it was for the deed of the cross, and for this rejection? Mark, I pray thee, the exceeding greatness of the ills, when not only compared with the time that is past, they appear more grievous, but also with all the time to come. For not in all the world, neither in all time that is past, and that is to come, shall anyone be able to say that such ills have been. And very naturally; for neither had any man perpetrated, not of these that ever have been, nor those to come, a deed so wicked and horrible" (Hom., in loc.). Because the Jewish people com-

mitted the most dastardly crime ever wrought upon the earth in crucifying "the Lord of glory", and justly suffered the greatest of all tribulations in the flesh, surpassing all that passed before, or shall come thereafter. The affliction that was spoken of here by our Lord, however, was not only in the body, but included the great anguish of mind which accompanied a forsaken and persecuted people. When the people of Israel cried out in Pilate's hall of judgement, "His blood be on us and on our children" (Matt. 27:25), never did any other people invoke such an awful curse upon themselves, and upon no other nation did such a judgment fall. We read in Josephus' account of Jews being crucified until there was no more wood for making crosses; of thousands of people slaying one another in the fierce faction-fights within the city; and of so many of them being sold as slaves in the market, until their lives were finally counted valueless. Then came the fearful carnage of the Romans, which blood-curdling story exactly bears out the words of our Savior, uttered some forty years before it was fulfilled and these terrible events occurred. **Jesus gave no hope for the situation, but told them to pray fervently that their flight would not be on the Sabbath, or in the winter, because it would then be accompanied by many difficulties.** The women were to pray that they would not be heavy with child, but more free in their bodies to make swift flight, and get away from the terrible judgment of the Lord God Almighty, as He was incensed beyond imagination by the rejection of His Son by His own chosen people. **Truly, a trumpet sound to the slothful and indolent in their spirits today, who would reject and turn aside the Lord Jesus Christ, trodding under foot the blood of the covenant, and doing despite unto the Spirit of grace (Heb. 10:27-31).**

There is a second application of this truth—one that is taught throughout the Scriptures, and which merits our earnest attention. The tribulation spoken of posed a threat, in this sense, to the entire scope of the earth; "and except those days should be shortened, no flesh should be saved" (Mk. 13:20). **It is only the Lord's consideration of "the elect" that brings a shortening of these days:** and thus are we brought to glory in election (Rom. 11:5-7). The word "flesh", in this sense, has a different meaning than is ordinarily conceived. There are several different usages of the word in the sacred oracles. It is used to denote the adamic or natural part of man which is condemned, and repudiated by God (Rom. 8:3, 8, 9; Gal. 2:17, 24; Eph. 2:3; Rom. 7:25). Again, it is used to describe the external or outward part of our being; the body (Gen. 17:11, 24; Lev. 15:7; II Kgs. 4:34). Again, it is used in describing the nature of animal sacrifices under the law (Judges 6:20; I Sam. 2:15). But, another meaning is that which refers to race of men themselves; the word "flesh" is repeatedly used in reference to men in general (Isa. 40:5; 49:26; Ezek. 21:5; Isa. 66:16, 23; Jer. 25:31; 45:5; Ezek. 20:48; Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17; Zech. 2:13; Ik. 3:6; Psa. 65:2; 145:21; Gal. 2:16). In my understanding, Jesus uses the term in this sense here (in Matthew 24 and Mark 13). He used it in the same way in John 17:2, when He prayed; "Thou

(the Father) hast given Him power over ALL FLESH, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him." While it may well be alarming to many religionists of this day, it is probable that the tribulation mentioned in our texts is, in this secondary application, a tribulation of the soul, in which doctrinal delusion becomes the chief force of the Devil. There has never been, until our present day, a world-wide and divers fabrication of Gospel truth. While the early Roman church with all of its vanity and lies deceived the whole world, its chief weapon was that of fear and physical hostility—not mere doctrinal delusion. There was nothing suave about that early harlot—she was a beast in every sense of the word, and thousands, yea millions, of faithful saints were martyred at her hand, and their blood yet cries forth from the ground. With her doctrine of works in the stead of grace, and of merit in the stead of mercy, she yet threatened people's lives if they conformed not unto her villainess. For those that were acquainted with the Scriptures, her ways were evident. **But the tribulation of which we speak is far more subtle than this, and uses for its groundwork great doctrines of Biblical statement, perverted and wrested to mean what they contain not.** This affliction of soul is so fierce and strong, that were it not abated by Sovereign grace, no one could be saved, the Gospel of truth being so perverted as to render it totally obscured.

The distinctiveness of spiritual delusion is mentioned by the apostles frequently, as they warned the early church of the coming of fierce deception and apostasy. There is mentioned "strong delusion" (II Thess. 2:9-12), and a falling away from the truth (II Thess. 2:3); also a departure from the faith (I Tim. 4:1). This gives us a picture of the great power of delusion, that it even compels some to relinquish truth and faith! While I am not certain that these prophetic statements should be limited to the specific time of which I now speak, it is clear that they speak of a tribulation of spirit far stronger than many have imagined. It is, to my understanding, this sort of tribulation that is prophesied in general by our Lord.

Now, it is my conviction that we are truly living in just such a tribulation. **The Gospel has been so utterly perverted that it is scarcely possible to hear it anywhere declared in all of its pureness.** Spiritual assaults are being made upon the faith from all avenues, and few are able to withstand the evil day. Institutionalism, sectarianism, and traditionalism are mingled together and sprinkled with a few remote Gospel truths—so much so, that the Scriptures and the "everlasting Gospel" even possess a strange ring in most all religious assemblies. Religion has become big business, with gigantic temples, educational units, sophisticated clergymen called "doctors", efficiently trained personnel that are basically ignorant of even the fundamental doctrines given us by the apostles, and men wise in the ways of the world. Preachers have a continual stream of vain tradition flowing from their mouths, and religious gatherings are more for spectacle and recruitment than for worship and edification. The whole picture is appalling.

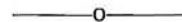
ing to the spiritual mind, and brings great grief of soul. Further, those who do not subscribe to such a conception of things are not permitted to gospelize in those circles. It is verily a fulfillment of the word in Revelation; “. . . no man may buy or sell, save he that has the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name” (Rev. 13:16-17). **That text speaks of spiritual trafficking, and of the limitation placed upon it by spurious religion. Qualifications for leaders, as well as followers, are laid down, ranging from Bible college or seminary training, to subscription to traditional creeds and dogmas of men.** Men are held aloof from God and His Word, and given interpretations for truth and tradition for precept. Those who wish to minister in such circles must receive the mark of identification which is acceptable to all false religionists. It is not a visible or tangible mark, but rather a **concept of things.** There may be general differences in doctrine, but there is a basic unity among all—a common unseen and unknown devilish purpose to destroy the faith. **The center of all these religions is the church or institution, and not Christ Himself.** Men work for the institution, contribute to her, and adore her. The pre-eminent activity is that of building up the organization, which is nothing more than demon-worship and doctrines of devils (II Tim. 4:1-4). The Roman church started this apostasy around the third or fourth century, and has since mothered many smaller and more insignificant “harlots” (Rev. 18). The institution in all such systems takes the place of Christ who Himself possesses “all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2). The members of these institutions, or religious businesses, acknowledge to all true worshippers (John 4:24-25) that they know very little about such things as spiritual worship, “communion of the Holy Ghost” (II Cor. 13:14), walking “unto all pleasing” (Col. 1:10), or “knowing what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:17). Their knowledge of the Scripture is small; they possess little or no knowledge of God (thus confessing their lack of participation in the new birth (Heb. 8:11); they are strangers to true grace, and have little appetite for the real things of the Kingdom of God. Yet, they are well accepted in their organization, and considered as very spiritual people. Such are victims of great tribulation!

The continual spew of religious garbage on the literature market, the virtual flood of false and traditional emphases—these beat as a mighty storm and flood upon the child of God, causing grief, and many times, virtual despair. Few are able to bear up under the viciousness of the onslaught. Delusion binds the minds of these people to such an extent that they many times suppose themselves to be in the grace of God, when actually they are laboring under a system of law. They are estranged from God in their affection, and yet suppose the Lord to be tolerant of their contemptible state. May the Lord raise up laborers and send them into these white fields to bear the “glad tidings of the Gospel of peace”, and may there be a swift fall of all popular religion as we see it, and a resurrection of the old Jerusalem Gospel and its true fruits.

We address those of you that are caught in

such systems and institutions. The word to you from the Lord is “Come out from her my people, and touch not the unclean thing” (II Cor. 6:16-17). Is it not trying upon your soul? Can you not feel the greatness of the tribulation? Is it not exceedingly greater than physical death? It wears and tears with heartless relentlessness upon your hearts, making you weak and spiritually vacillating unless you leave it. Why do you stay there sucking upon the asps hole? What can you gain but damnation to your soul? You cannot hope to reform the situation—it has already been cursed with a great curse, which shall not be reversed. “Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (II Tim. 2:19); both moral and religious iniquity.

We anticipate, praise the Lord, the fall of religious systems void of life, under the powerful spread of the Gospel in **God's due time.** You who languish because of such oppression, be of good cheer! Our King shall yet bring an end to this tribulation. Until He does, have no fellowship with it, and “keep the faith”, pressing “toward the mark.” “In patience possess ye your souls.” God hears the desire of your very heart, and is interested in your preservation in the truth faith once delivered to the saints. Cleave unto Him with purpose of heart, laying up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal. Finally, when there is a conflict between your faith and fellowship with the Lord, and the traditions and emphases of your “church”, abandon the allegiance to the institution, letting God be true, and every man a liar (Rom. 3:4). Do not permit any man to dampen your spirits unnecessarily. It is better to withdraw and be clean, than to fellowship and be filthy. Be a goad in the side of the false prophets of the land. Insist that they speak as oracles of God (I Pet. 4:11), and upbraid them when they do not—praying all the while that the will of the Lord be done. We commit you unto the Lord, and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified by faith in Christ. Amen.



Wives are to obey their husbands as “it is fit in the Lord” (Col. 3:18) whether they are ideal or not. Husbands are to love their wives and care for them whether they are obedient in all of their relationships or not. Children are to honor their parents and love them, whether they be “up-to-date” or not. Wives are to “guide the house, be keepers at home, love their children, and love their husbands”; husbands are to provide “for their own, and especially those of their own houses”, be not bitter against their wives, and provoke not their children to wrath. While these may appear more earthly relationships, they are not! **These are matters between God and man!** His will for the family! Whosoever refuses to bow the knee to Him as LORD in these relationships

(Please turn to page 27)

"HIS COMING"

"And now, little children, abide in Him; that when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming"—I John 2:28

The people of God stand in constant need of encouragement and comfort. The mission ordained of God, and urged upon His prophets is "Comfort ye, comfort ye, comfort ye My people" (Isaiah 40:1). From time to time, the child of God finds great weights of soul pressing upon him; sometimes so greatly that he "cast down", though "not destroyed" (II Cor. 4:9). The enemy does "come in like a flood"; but, praise God, the "Spirit of the Lord then lifts up a standard" by which the enemy is put to flight and the hearts of the redeemed are lifted up and the countenance made glad (Isaiah 59:19). Despondency is a common lot to these people of the "way" (John 14:6; Acts 19:9). Often do they say with David; "I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Thine eyes . . ." (Psa. 31:22); "Will the Lord cast off forever? and will He be favorable no more?" (Psa. 77:7). It is true that "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick" (Prov. 13:12). The world about us constitutes a constant tug and pull at our spirit, continually besieging us with things that are seen, and calling our attention away from our Beloved. The "flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh", is the pronouncement of the Lord (Gal. 5:17), and we are admonished to "abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul" (I Pet. 2:11). We have been called to a citizenship that is "in heaven" (Phil. 3:20), and are constituted "strangers and pilgrims in the earth" (I Pet. 2:11; Heb. 11:13). Our "hope" is laid up for us in heaven, and shall remain there until we are fitted in immortality to possess it. How we do "groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to-wit, the redemption of the body" (Rom. 8:23).

The subject of John's epistle is meant to spur the child of God toward the end; that "Blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:11-13). He writes to them that they "sin not" (I John 2:1-2), and that they might know that "they have eternal life" (I John 5:13). He rejoices their hearts with the prospect of "being like Him", when we shall see Him at His appearing (I John 3:1), and further instructs them that the possession of this hope is sufficient incentive to compel one to purify himself even as He (Jesus) is pure" (I John 3:3). The intent of the Beloved John, like that of the Apostle Paul, was to "present" his students "perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:28). He gives them admonitions conducive to such a presentation; "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (I John 2:5-17); "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits to see if they are of God; for many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:11); "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (I John 5:21).

In our text, John makes a similar appeal; "Little children, abide in Him". If any ponder the time during which this course is to be followed; John precludes it with "AND NOW . . ." (I John 2:28), John refers to them as "little children", not

because they are of a tender young age, or because they have just come to know the Lord, but because of their endearment to his heart. How he loved them—as a mother loves her little child. He is beseeching them as one who desires their perfection, and eternal glory. Oh, that we had knowledge of more ministers today with this burning desire; that their followers might be perfect in Christ Jesus, and not ashamed at His coming. I fear that the majority of ministers could never refer to their respective congregations as "little children". They have not the capacity for spiritual love that John had. They rather are inclined to "make merchandise" of the sheep than to feed them, succour them, and prepare them for glory. The Lord shall requite such evil shepherds according to His word (Ezek. 24), and crown with an unfading wreath of glory those that have faithfully tended the flock, and cared for the sheep (I Peter 5:1-5). John does not here speak as an "hireling" (John 10:12-13), but as a good undershepherd that has "entered" in "by the Door" of the sheep-fold (John 10:1-2). He bids his hearers to "abide" in Christ!

A more sound admonition could not be given to the sheep. **This is the only proper preparation for the coming of the Lord; a constant abiding in Him.** The Lord Himself admonished us; "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine; no more can ye except ye abide in Me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me, ye can do nothing" (John 15:4-5). To "abide" signifies a strong faith, whereby you continue to "Look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith" (Heb. 12:1-2). It is to continue to "Put off the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts" (Eph. 4:22), and to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:14). This is that act whereby we continue to "cast off the sin and weight which doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race set before us" (Heb. 12:1). It is permitting Christ's mind to be in us (Phil. 2:5; I Cor. 2:16), and thus "abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul" (I Pet. 2:11). This is "walking in the light as He is in the light" (I John 1:7), "walking as He walked" (I John 2:6), and possessing confidence, as well as actual participation, that "as He is, so are we in this world" (I John 4:17). This is no idle admonition, or a throwing of words into the air. **Here is the crucial part of the new born babe's life; he is to abide in Christ!** He is not to begin in the Spirit, and attempt to find perfection in the flesh (Gal. 3:3). Jesus is a Savior from past sin and from the power and dominion of sin (Romans 6). **As we abide in Him, the enemy shall have no power over us, but we shall be "more than conquerors through Him that loved us"** (Rom. 8:37). **Activity is not to be the objective of the child of God—ABIDING IS!** As we abide in Christ, activity is lifted from the realm of the vain (Eccl. 1) to the classification of "much fruit" unto God; so spoke our Lord in John 15!

Now, John gives a reason for abiding in Christ—that we may not be ashamed at His coming. It

is the purpose of life in Christ to prepare us for the coming of the Lord, at which time we shall be ushered into that eternal "rest" that yet remaineth to the people of God (Heb. 4:9). This is why the coming of our Lord is called that "blessed hope and glorious appearing" (Titus 2:13). It is at that time that our hope shall be seen, and we shall be gloriously transformed into the likeness of our blessed Lord (I John 3:1-2); blessed contemplation!

Oh, how runs my mind in channels deep
when on Christ's coming set
I see the clouds enfolding Him
my hope unto Him knit
With all the holy angels come
to gather out the grain
To purge His floor of all the chaff
the wheat He will retain
What lure hath earth with all its vice
when here my mind doth rest
This blessed contemplation now
compels me give my best!

It is understood that every true child of God (and there is no other kind) is yearning for that day of the Lord, hastening unto it (II Pet. 3:12). This is the day that marks the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is "our life" (Col. 3:3-4), and then shall we also appear with Him. The real crown of rejoicing to the servant of God is to have those who have given heed to his message "in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at His coming" (I Thess. 2:19). It is then that He shall appear "without sin unto salvation" unto them that "look for Him" (Heb. 9:28). Glorious day!

Our faith, tried by the unsearchable wisdom of God, shall then be found "unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 1:7). Glad fruition, when that solid Rock upon which has been built the sacrificial life, shall appear, "bringing grace" in manifold measure at His "revelation" (I Pet. 1:13).

John urges the sort of diligence and perseverance in Christ that will remove shame at His appearing. **Brethren, that shall be no time to be ashamed!** Then is when our confidence shall truly be made manifest! Those who glibly speak of their confidence, while refusing obstinately to abide in Christ, shall have their despicable hypocrisy unveiled at that day! The word "shame" or "ashamed" is not a light word; i.e., it is not a word signifying a mere red face, or slight embarrassment. This is a strong word that reminds us of Adam's reaction to the presence of God after that he and his deceived wife had partaken of the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:8-11). This type of shame causes the offender to shrink back, to draw back, to seek to hide amidst the filth and contamination of the world. The wretched fig aprons of self-righteousness shall be revealed as totally inadequate at the coming of our Lord — God hasten the day! This realm of earth cannot now hide your rebellious nature and filthy morality from God — much less in that great day of the Lord, when the "heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat" (II Pet. 3:12). The literal translation of I John 2:28 might read; "that we may not shrink in shame from Him at His coming." To contem-

plate, therefore, the enormity of Christ's glory at His coming, and its total incompatibility with the slothful life, is designed to awaken us from sin to do righteousness and sin not. When our blessed Lord appears, all who have been slothful and have neglected to recline in His bosom and abide in Him, shall shrink back from Him in shame and horror, running to hide amid the rocks and the hills, crying for the mountains to fall upon them. God has already declared that His soul will have no pleasure in him that draws back; they "draw back to perdition (damnation)" — (Heb. 10:38-39).

A heart that recoils either now or then at the thought of the appearance of the Lord evidences a state of enmity against the God of heaven. Regardless of the multiplicity of religious duties which have been undertaken, if there has not been a faithful abiding in Jesus, then there shall be shame and consequent damnation at His appearing!

Their shame is an "evident token of perdition" (Phil. 1:28). I remember some seven or eight years ago that I was in the state of Ohio for a time. While there a friend of mine was engaged in an evangelistic meeting in one of the local churches. The speaker of the evening was proclaiming the second coming of the Lord, and was determined to impress upon the people the reality of Christ's appearing. Behind some curtains on the stage he had placed a trumpet player, who, at a given signal, would begin to play loudly, so illustrating the "last trump" which shall usher in the Lord's appearing. At the prescribed time, the man blew the trumpet, and several (yea, almost all) within the congregation were filled with fear. After the meeting, there was much hilarity and jesting over the occasion between my acquaintance, the evangelist, and several of the congregation. Jokingly, they sloughed off the despicable display of faithlessness by remarking; "Brother, we thought the end was here." I have often thought of that occasion, and of the truth that it displayed. It unveiled a hypocritical church, and an abominable congregation, whose hearts were at enmity with God, and who were set at variance with the Lord's Christ; yet none were wise enough to see it. Brethren, the coming of the Lord is precious to the saved; to all others it is a fearful thing because it shall unveil wretched hearts and carnal desires. If you cannot say with John, "Amen, even so come quickly Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20), then it is time to "examine yourself to see if ye be in the faith; prove your own self; know ye not that Christ is in you except ye be reprobate (rejected of God) — (II Cor. 13:5). **This is not a subject that is meant to frighten the church, but rather to comfort it with the prospect that her warfare will soon be accomplished** (Isa. 40:2), and that God will "bruise Satan under our feet shortly" (Rom. 16:20).

It speaks to us of the deliverance from the "bondage of corruption" and from the "earthly house of this tabernacle"; of being delivered from the "body of this death" (Rom. 8:21-23; II Cor. 5:1; Rom. 7:24-25). All of this body's lusts, proclivities and inclinations toward the earth will be finally put away. Ought not I to rejoice over

that? Aye, and rejoice I will! The possession of this body makes me a "wretched man", and how I long for deliverance from it (Rom. 7:24). The coming of the Lord speaks comfort to my heart in this regard. We are told of the Lord's coming in such words as build us up in the faith, and increase our expectation of glory: "For our conversation (manner of living) is in heaven; from whence we also look for the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body . . ." (Phil. 3:20-21); and again; ". . . but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (I John 3:2). Sweet expectation! The body shall not be able to endure the glory of the Lord at His appearing; we shall be "changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (I Cor. 15:51-52).

It is tragic that such a precious teaching as the coming of our Lord has been so corrupted by the dogmatism and self-revealed teachings and pratings of men. Many have been deluded into viewing the Lord's appearance as a mere fleshly and earthly event which shall feed their lust for tangibles. It is not uncommon to hear of two future comings of the Lord, or at least a "first and a second phase" of His future coming. Traditional concepts have been so embraced by weak minds toward God, that the Scriptures have been jammed and pushed into narrow moulds fit for the propagating of denominational dogma. Very little of the current teaching on Christ's coming can actually be substantiated by sound Scriptural observation. It is not, however, my intention here to deal with their altogether rudimentary teachings, but rather to establish a single thought to the comfort of God's people; that the Lord is coming. I seek for you to observe the way that the Apostles speak of this grand event without the spectacles of tradition upon your soul. This event is called in various places "**the coming**" or "**His coming**", and is held forth as a single event bringing joy to the elect, and sorrow and shame to the reprobate. Hear the Word of the Lord; "I thank my God always on your behalf . . . so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for **THE COMING** of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 1:7); "For as in Adam all die, even so, in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the first fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at **HIS COMING**" (I Cor. 15:22-23); "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at **HIS COMING**" (I Thess. 2:19); "And the Lord make you to increase and abound . . . to the end He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at **THE COMING** of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints" (I Thess. 3:13); "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless unto **THE COMING** of our Lord Jesus Christ", (I Thess. 5:23); "Now we beseech you brethren, by **THE COMING** of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him" (II Thess. 2:1); "And then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of **HIS COMING**" (II

Thess. 2:8); "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto **THE COMING** of the Lord" (James 5:7); "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and **COMING** of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 1:16).

This coming is described elsewhere as "**THE DAY OF THE LORD**" (II Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3; 16:15; I Thess. 5:1-2). Until that great "day", the Lord has been "received up into heaven", angels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him (I Pet. 3:22), and shall remain there, "until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of **ALL** His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21). The current emphasis on our Lord's coming that teaches things shall continue upon earth, with flesh and blood, buying and selling, marrying and giving in marriage, is not of God! The Word of the Lord testifies that the heavens and the earth will not be able to abide His presence, but that they shall "flee away" from before His face, and there shall be found no place for them (Rev. 20:11). The Lord has been glorified, and invested with "eternal glory". He once stripped Himself of that glory, and humbled Himself, and became obedient unto the death (Phil. 2:5-9), coming in the "likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3), being "made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4), **But this shall not happen again!** He appeared to the world in that humiliated state **ONCE** — that is all! Narrow students of the Scriptures today, who are "straitened by their own affections" (II Cor. 6:12) have not been convinced of the magnitude of Christ's glory — and I do not suppose for a moment that I possess the wisdom of words or the eloquence to perform such an arduous task. Christ's coming is spoken of as being in glory — **that same glory that He possesses now**; "The Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father . . ." (Matt. 16:27); ". . . they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:30); Who-soever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, **WHEN** He shall come in **HIS GLORY**, and **IN HIS FATHER'S**, and of the holy angels" (Luke 9:26); "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 21:27).

This glory is so transcendent to this natural order that the mundane sphere cannot abide its presence. **Were Jesus to appear glorified before us now, the whole natural order would instantaneously collapse. Our Savior is too magnificent, too exalted to again fit into THIS order of things.** If the children of Israel could not bear to look at the face of Moses, who but saw a limited view of the "hinder parts" of God's glory (Exodus 34:33-35), what shall be said of the effects of the appearing of our Lord in "**ALL**" the glory of His Father" (Matt. 16:27; Mk. 8:38; Matt. 24:30; Mk. 13:26; Lk. 21:27).

It is at His coming that Jesus will "bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart" (I Cor. 4:5). What a glorious prospect for the child of God. His heart is saturated with the love of God (Rom. 5:5), and He is satisfied with nothing but His Lord. He knows that without Him he can do nothing, and

with Him he can do all things. Yet, he is not known of the world; "the world knoweth us not" (I John 3:1). They cannot "judge" (interpret) our hearts (I Cor. 2:14-16), and so impugn our motives, and adjudge us to be hypocrites, making mere pretense. How we yearn for our hearts to be made known, that they are pure, and made free from sin and the desire to sin, by the blood of the Lamb. Hearts "purified by faith", and consciences "purged from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. 9:14). Now, "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling" (Heb. 3:1), I bid you to be "patient unto the coming of the Lord". **He shall righteously unveil the devotedness of your heart, the longing of your soul to be in the presence of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple. It is not necessary that you convince the world of the sincerity of your heart. It is enough to the Lord that you actually do "love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth" (Eph. 6:24).** Let Him be the one that unveils your heart to those who harrass you! Look toward His coming, at which time the counsels shall certainly be made manifest. This is, of course, also meant to convict those whose hearts are filled with wretched rebellion against the Lord, whose affections are set on things of this earth, and whose devotion is mingled with idolatrousness.

It shall not be long, brethren, as faith sees it; "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. 10:37). Until that time, I bid you to "abide in Him, that ye be not shamed at His coming," but rather that you shall have "boldness in the day of judgment" (I John 4:17). Now, "May the Lord direct your hearts into . . . the patient waiting for Christ" (II Thess. 3:5) is my prayer for you!

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is as liable to condemnation as the murderer or the drunkard, for they are both immoral and disobedient, as well as unspiritual!

We cannot divorce grace from conduct of life! It is by grace that our lives are **CHANGED**, and our conduct altered. Grace is effectual and conforms us to Jesus Christ, so that our actions, words, thoughts, and deeds, become a declaration and representation of the purity of our hearts. If my external life has not been changed, I do greatly error in assuming that I have had a change of heart; for it is out of the heart that the issues of life flow forth (Prov. 4:23).

The Premillennial Wedge

(From page 20)

an exalted position, and that everything and everyone in heaven and earth are subject to Him, believe it! If in this process you find, as we have that the dogma of which we have freely spoken, is at variance with "the faith", let it fall into the theological trash heap. That is where it belongs!

Do You Want To Be Taken Or Left?

(From page 9)

ture", "THE great tribulation", "THE antichrist", "the second phase of His coming", "the third coming". While the Word of God mentions "great tribulation", it does not mention "THE great tribulation", while it mentions "the spirit of antichrist", it does not mention "THE antichrist". This would not seem to be of any especial consequence, except for the fact that these words are very basic to the establishment of the heresy to which we refer.

Simply Believing Is The Answer

Joyfully we acknowledge that we desire to be "left", not "taken" in the Scriptural sense of these words. **When the first heavens and the first earth have passed away, we want to be left; after the tares have been gathered, we want to be left; after the world has passed away, and the lust thereof, we want to be left!** The Scriptures speak of those that do the will of God as "ABIDING", not leaving (I Jno. 2:15-17). While the entire natural order, together with everything that has been bound to it (including the wicked) passes away, those that have taken residence in that unmovable kingdom shall **remain**; forever to be with the Lord. We find this a most joyous contemplation! But what of you? Do you desire to be taken or left?

PUNGENT POINTS

By Bro. Richard Ebler

The following is a collection of especially rich truths that were shared at a recent Men's Meeting. Our brethren gather once a month in various homes in order to fellowship in the things of God. Some of the thoughts are mine and some are not. It is sometimes difficult to keep track of who said what, especially when the spirits of the brethren are soaring high and truths are flowing rapidly from brother to brother. It is difficult enough to simply keep up taking notes on what has been said. Since it was all freely offered for the general edification of all the sheep, I present them here as best as I can remember them:

1. We can glorify God in many humble ways that do not make the headlines, but that are greatly applauded by angels without number. We are always being watched by the heavenly hosts who marvel to see sinful men overthrow sin and believe God in spite of all outward appearances and hindrances. Angels desire to look into the things that concern our redemption (I Peter 1:12). God is making known by the church unto the angels his manifold wisdom (Eph. 3:10).

2. We must not constantly agitate for new ministries to the point that we defile the consciences of the brethren. God is the one who does the calling and the sending. We must not usurp God's position. We must not overload others by binding on them our personal desires. Much damage can be done this way. Rather let us seek to instill the life of the gospel into the hearts of men and trust God to lead them into doing their earthly duties heartily as unto the Lord (which glorifies God)

as well as leading them into higher spheres of service.

3. David gave rewards to those who tarried by the stuff as well as to those who fought on the front lines of battle.

4. When we acknowledge the truths of the Bible it glorifies God, especially the truths concerning our sinfulness and God's grace.

5. When we draw near to God we see how vile we are by nature. The holy men of the Bible felt their uncleanness and unworthiness in the presence of God.

6. God set Himself a hard task in determining to bring many sons to glory in spite of the wicked environment of this condemned world, the power of Satan, the corruption of our flesh, the rarity of truth, and many other hindrances. Yet He will be glorified all the more by overcoming all these obstacles and bringing us to glory, fulfilling the work of faith with power.

7. Fallen angels stand in contrast to the saints. The angels were once pure and now they are vile. The saints were once vile and yet are redeemed out of the muck and mire unto a glory like unto that of the Son of God in heaven.

8. Perhaps the saints of each generation will judge their generation. At any rate God is preparing us to judge the world.

9. God's purpose today seems to be mostly that of displaying His grace toward men in saving them from the power and guilt of sin . . . more so than the mere working of outward miracles. The former is a greater work although it is seemingly less flashy and glamorous.

10. We live unto God on the basis of Christ's merits and death in our behalf. We do not live on the basis of our own achievements. We must not revert to law for a standing with God.

11. A constant diet of exhortation is not the same as feeding the sheep, although exhortation certainly has its proper place. Paul usually fed the saints and then corrected them in the same epistle with balanced measures of each. A constant diet of exhortation will have a numbing effect.

12. We glorify God by coming to Christ.

CHRIST'S SORROW

By Bro. Richard Ebler

"Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger" (Lam. 1:12).

The prophet Jeremiah is lamenting over the severe chastisement of Jerusalem after the city was destroyed in the Babylonian Captivity. This

is the actual, immediate, historical sense of the text.

We can, however, apply the words to the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. We will express Bible truths in Bible words. Surely the sufferings of our Lord for our sins was greater than that of Jeremiah or any other notable account of suffering which has been recorded in sacred pages.

Job's sorrow was one of the most famous examples of suffering ever recorded. He suffered loss of wealth, loss of health, loss of children, and **apparent** loss of God's favor. But what sorrow is like unto Christ's sorrow? Instead of loss of health he lost his very life in the most painful manner. Job's wealth, which was lost, did not compare to the riches of heaven which Jesus Christ laid aside in order to come to earth and die for us. Job had some natural children to lose, but Jesus was deprived of having any natural offspring at all. Job was **apparently** forsaken for a season, but Christ was really and actually cut off from the presence of the Father while He hung on the cross and cried out in that dark hour, "My God, my God! Why hast thou **forsaken** me?" Our sins had caused the Father to hide His face from the lonely figure on Golgotha's hill! What sorrow is like unto His sorrow!

The sorrow of Hannah was a deep and sore sorrow indeed. She wept bitterly in the distress of deprived lawful human instinct: the desire of a woman to bear children. This was an apparent token of God's disfavor upon her. Her womanly nature cried out to God as unto a faithful Creator. She was heard. Jesus, like Hannah, also suffered the deprivation of lawful human instinct. In the Garden of Gethsemane He had deeply desired to live and to avoid the painful ordeal of bearing the filth of our sin and being cut off from the Father. This desire to live is a very strong instinct. Going strictly by the law we can say that He had a **right** to live for He had never sinned. He, like Hannah, cried out to God for the cup to pass; however, **He** had to be cut off from God in order that **we** might be joined to God!

What sorrow is like unto His sorrow? None! His is unique! And it was all for us! Surely such a price will not be in vain!

BROKEN THINGS

By Bro. Richard Ebler

God uses broken things. For example take Gideon's pitchers which were broken in order that light might come forth. Many a heart has been broken so that light could shine forth from it in more clarity and power than ever before. "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart . . ." (Psa. 34:18). Indeed all who fall upon the stone **shall** be broken (Matt. 21:44). However the greatest broken thing that God ever used was the broken body of Christ. His body was broken in order that His blood might be spilled and our redemption made secure! Christ accomplished more in His death than He did in His life on earth. God uses broken things.