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"THE BOOKS WERE OPENED: . . . AND THE DEAD WERE JUDGED OUT OF THOSE THINGS WHICH WERE WRITTEN IN THE BOOKS." REV. 20: 12.

Events Clustering About the Millennium

The Unfolding of God's Plan in the "Day of the Lord"

By T. E. Bowen

SOME of the most thrilling events of all ages occur in connection with that period of time referred to in Rev. 20: 1-6, and generally spoken of as "the millennium," though that term itself does not occur in the Bible. The Scriptures do, however, undoubtedly teach the fact of "the millennium;" and, further, that this one-thousand-year period is soon to dawn. But the Word of God also makes it plain that before the millennium begins, there are some very important events to take place, events which involve the destiny of every living person.

It should be borne in mind that in the revelation of his Son to this world, the Creator is dealing with the problem of sin. This controversy, which originated in heaven, even before the world was, has come down to earth, involving the destiny of every human soul. Here the Son of God became also the Son of man, and here he lived as a man. Here his cross was uplifted. Here, too, Satan, the originator of sin, does his work, and here he is to be punished, with all his confederates—both angels and men.

A Time Appointed for Every Purpose

"To everything there is a season," wrote Solomon, "and a time to every purpose under the heaven." Eccl. 3: 1. There is a "day of salvation," a time when sinners may turn to the Lord and be saved. That day has an end. The Lord has appointed a day,—a time,—spoken of in the Word as the "day of the Lord," in which he will deal in a very definite manner with transgressors,—those who have spurned his love, refused his mercy, rejected his Son.

Every Scripture Will Be Literally Fulfilled

"The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." 2 Peter 3: 10. One might gather from reading this text alone that all these wonderful events take place in a twenty-four-hour day, or at one time, whereas from first to last they embrace a thousand years. The coming "as a thief" takes place when Jesus receives his kingdom in heaven, an event just before us. Luke 19: 11-27; Mark 13: 32-37. The heavens "pass away with a great noise" at his second appearing (Rev. 6: 14-17), while the elements melt with "fervent heat" a thousand years later (Rev. 20: 7, 8).

Let us study briefly the events occurring in this day-of-the-Lord period.

Jesus Receives His Kingdom in Heaven

The time spoken of as the "day of the Lord" begins with the close of Christ's priestly work in the heavenly sanctuary, at which time he receives from his Father his kingdom—the earth. This scene is thus

described by the prophet Daniel: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds [angels] of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him." Dan. 7: 13, 14. This takes place in heaven, not on earth.

Every Person's Destiny Sealed for Weal or Woe

Coincident with, or just prior to, the event of Jesus' receiving his kingdom in heaven, the destiny of every soul on earth is determined. This event in very fact brings the end of the world, in the sense of fixing human destiny, although taking place a little time prior to the visible, personal appearing of the Son of man to reap the harvest of the earth. See Rev. 14: 14-16.

This event, the Son's reception of the kingdom in heaven, marks the beginning of the day-of-the-Lord period, when the Almighty shall arise "to shake terribly the earth" (Isa. 2: 19), and to "destroy the sinners thereof out of it" (Isa. 13: 9). And this comes suddenly. We understand that Jesus refers to this very important event when he says: "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is." Mark 13: 32, 33.

At the close of Christ's work as priest in heaven, this decree recorded in Rev. 22: 11, 12, goes forth: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly." This ushers in the day of the Lord. Joel 3: 9-13; Zeph. 1: 14-18.

God's Vials of Wrath Poured Out

Following this decree the vials of God's wrath are poured out upon the earth by seven angels whose work is described in Revelation 16. The language is literal, not symbolic, and tells us in plain words what the wrath of God is. Read the whole chapter. There are seven plagues, each distinct from the others,—a plague of sores; the sea turned to blood; fountains turned to blood; the sun scorching men as with fire; a great false church punished, its world light going out in awful darkness; Armageddon comes on; great hailstones devastating portions, at least, of the earth. The prophet Daniel describes this as "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time." Dan. 12: 1.

These scenes are just before us. And there is but one way of escape—by now making Jesus our personal Friend and mighty Deliverer, while mercy lingers. This must be done, too, before the beginning of the millennium, before this day of trouble "such as never was" begins.

Armageddon Comes On

Near the close of this period of God's wrath upon a disobedient world—while the plagues are doing their work—Armageddon comes on. The kings of the East, and also of the West, marshal their armies upon the ancient battle fields of Palestine. What is to be the apparent occasion for this assembling, politically or otherwise, we are not told; but several of the prophets speak of this assembling of the nations. Space permits of only one or two texts: "I will also gather the nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there." Joel 3: 2. "For by fire and by sword will the Lord plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many." Isa. 66: 16.

Jesus Comes to Reap the Harvest of the Earth; the "First Resurrection"

While mighty nations are engaged in mortal combat on the field of Armageddon, earth's rightful King appears in power and great glory, accompanied by the angelic host, to reap the harvest of the earth. Rev. 19: 11-21. That scene no pen can portray, no tongue describe. Every face is turned upward; some gather paleness, some the blackness of despair. The event so long looked forward to, about which every prophet in the Sacred Scroll has written, is at hand. The King of kings and Lord of lords is about to claim his own.

When Jesus comes, he calls forth the millions of sleeping saints, shut up in Satan's prison house,—the grave,—and with his living saints, saved out of every nation, they are "caught up together" "to meet the Lord in the air," evermore to be with him. 1 Thess. 4: 14-17. Gloriously delivered is every one whose name is found "written in the book." Dan. 12: 1. But how different at this time the lot of the wicked! "The slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground." Jer. 25: 33.

The Millennium Begins

Here the millennium—the one thousand years—begins. And here is the binding of Satan. Confined to earth, bound here by a chain of circumstances, with no saint to annoy, no soul to tempt, no living man or

should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a little time." Rev. 20: 1-3, A. R. V.

Jeremiah thus describes the condition of the earth at this time: "I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by his fierce anger." Jer. 4: 23-26.

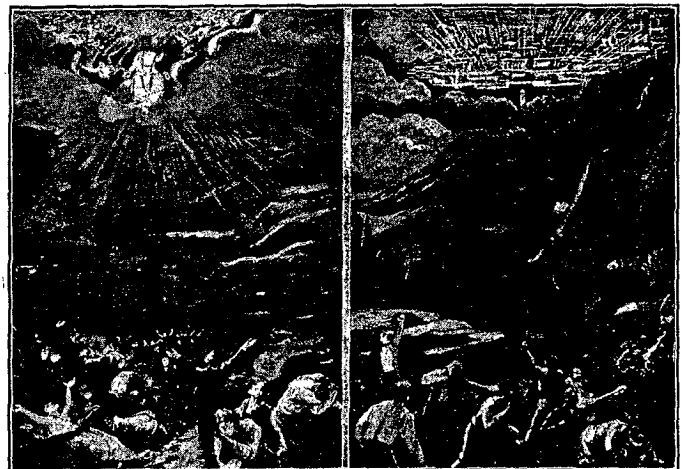
The revelator tells us what causes all this desolation: "The seventh angel poured out his vial into the air [the last one of the seven last plagues previously referred to, which is poured out just prior to Christ's personal appearing]; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. . . . And the cities of the nations fell." Rev. 16: 17-19.

It is the mighty voice of God (Heb. 12: 26, 27) that shakes the earth from center to circumference, making the proud cities ruinous heaps. No more forever are they to be inhabited or rebuilt. "For thou hast made of a city an heap; of a defended city a ruin; a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built." Isa. 25: 2.

Satan Loosed for a Little Season

For one thousand dreary years Satan views with dismay the results of his wicked devisings against God, compelled as he is to live among these ruins. At the close of the thousand years Jesus descends to earth, followed by the New Jerusalem; the glorious capital city of his kingdom; peopled by the nations of the saved. Rev. 21: 2, 3. His feet touch the same mountain from which he ascended to his Father. "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east," says the prophet, "and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley." Zech. 14: 4.

The capital of Christ's glorious kingdom, a great city approximately three hundred



CHRIST'S SECOND COMING

DESCENT OF THE HOLY CITY

woman upon earth to lead into sin, he who rose up in heaven itself before the world was, saying, "I will be like the Most High," is left with his angels to contemplate for ten long centuries the result of his wicked plottings against God.

The beloved disciple John describes the binding of Satan in the following impressive symbolic language: "I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss, and shut it, and sealed it over him, that he

and seventy-five miles on each side, descends and rests upon this "great valley," consecrated by the feet of King Jesus.

The Second Resurrection

The Son of God now calls to life again the untold millions upon millions who have gone down to their graves sinning against God. Rev. 20: 7. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order." 1 Cor. 15: 22, 23. These sleeping millions hear the voice of the Son of God, and live. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

The Millennium

A Bible Study

A Time of Judgment

1. WHAT text definitely brings the millennium to view?
 "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Rev. 20:4.

2. Whom does Paul say the saints are to judge?

"Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? . . . Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" 1 Cor. 6:1-3.

NOTE.—From the Scriptures it is plain that the saints of all ages are to be engaged with Christ in a work of "judgment" during the millennium, or one thousand years.

3. What prophecy had Paul upon which to base his statement?

"I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High." Dan. 7:21, 22.

The Two Resurrections

4. How many resurrections are there to be?
 "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of

The Destruction of the Wicked

8. What becomes of the living wicked when Christ comes?

"As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; . . . the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Luke 17:26-30.

9. What does the apostle say concerning this?

"When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, . . . and they shall not escape." 1 Thess. 5:3.

NOTE.—When Christ comes, the righteous will be delivered and taken to heaven, and all the living wicked will be suddenly destroyed, as they were at the time of the flood. For further proof see 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 6:14-17; 19:11-21; Jer. 25:30-33. There will be no general resurrection of the wicked until the end of the one thousand years. This will leave the earth desolate and without human inhabitant during this period.

great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled." Rev. 20:1-3.

NOTE.—The word here translated "bottomless pit" is translated in Gen. 1:1 "deep."—"darkness was upon the face of the deep." A more literal translation would be "abyss." It is a term applied to the earth in its desolate, waste, chaotic, dark, uninhabited condition. In this condition it will remain during the one thousand years. This will be the dreary prison house of Satan during this period. Here, in the midst of the moldering bones of the wicked dead slain at Christ's second coming, the broken-down cities, and the wreck and ruin of all the pomp and power of this world, Satan will have opportunity to reflect upon the results of his rebellion against God. But the prophecy of Isaiah says, "After many days shall they be visited."

The Resurrection of the Wicked

13. The righteous dead are raised at Christ's second coming. When will the rest of the dead, the wicked, be raised?

"The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Rev. 20:5.

NOTE.—From this we see that the beginning and the close of the millennium, or one thousand years, are marked by the two resurrections. The word millennium is from two Latin words, *mille*, meaning a thousand, and *annus*, year—a thousand years. It covers the time during which Satan is to be bound and wicked men and angels are to be judged. This period is bounded by distinct events. Its beginning is marked by the close of probation, the pouring out of the seven last plagues, the second coming of Christ, and the resurrection of the righteous dead. It closes with the resurrection of the wicked, and their final destruction in the lake of fire.

The Loosing of Satan

14. What change is made in Satan's condition at the close of the one thousand years?
 "After that he must be loosed a little season." Verse 3.

NOTE.—At the close of the one thousand years, Christ, accompanied by the saints, comes to the earth again, to execute judgment upon the wicked, and to prepare the earth, by a re-creation, for the eternal abode of the righteous. At this time, in answer to the summons of Christ, the wicked dead of all ages awake to life. This is the second resurrection, the resurrection unto damnation. The wicked come forth with the same rebellious spirit which possessed them in this life. Then Satan is loosed from his long period of captivity and inactivity.

15. As soon as the wicked are raised, what does Satan at once proceed to do?

"When the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." Verses 7, 8.

The Destruction of the Wicked

16. Against whom do the wicked go to make war, and what is the outcome?

"They went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." Verse 9.

NOTE.—This is the last act in the great controversy between Christ and Satan. The whole human race meet here for the first and last time. The eternal separation of the righteous from the wicked here takes place. At this time the judgment of God is executed upon the wicked in the lake of fire. This is the second death. This ends the great rebellion against God and his government. Now is heard the voice of God as he sits upon his throne, speaking to the saints, and saying, "Behold, I make all things new;" and out of the burning ruins of the old earth there spring forth, before the admiring gaze of the millions of the redeemed, "a new heaven and a new earth," in which they shall find an everlasting inheritance and dwelling place. The millennium is a great sabbath of rest, both for the earth and for God's people. For six thousand years the earth and its inhabitants have been groaning under the curse of sin. The millennium, the seventh thousand, will be a sabbath of rest and release; for, says the prophet concerning the land, "as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath." 2 Chron. 36:21. There remaineth therefore a rest ["keeping of a sabbath," margin] to the people of God." Heb. 4:9. This precedes the new-earth state.

The Restoration of the Earth

17. After this destruction of the earth and of all sin and sinners upon it, for what may the saints then look?

"Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Peter 3:13.

18. How does the prophet Isaiah describe this restoration?

"For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." Isa. 65:17.

and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5:28, 29. The hour comes for the righteous to hear that voice at the beginning of the millennium; at its close the hour comes for the rest of Adam's children to hear that same voice calling them forth to condemnation.

Some time must elapse—we know not how long—between this second resurrection and the final destruction of the impotent; for we read of Satan that "he must be loosed a little season." Rev. 20:3. As he is bound by a chain of circumstances at the beginning of the millennium, so at the end of this thousand-year period he is loosed by the descent of the city, the return of the saints, and the resurrection of the wicked. And again he goes forth to deceive and destroy. This is only for "a little season," but long enough for Satan "to deceive the nations," and to gather them together to battle, and they go "up on the breadth of the earth," and compass "the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city." Rev. 20:7-9.

Mighty giants before the flood, powerful Babylonian warriors, Medes, Persians, Greeks, Romans, as well as the best-equipped armies of today, with their knowledge of modern engines of warfare, are marshaled into one vast army. Legion upon legion, they march to what appears to them to be an easy victory over this golden city, which has come down to adorn the earth. Its untold wealth of gold and silver, its gates of pearl, they covet. And they determine to possess it. Rev. 21:10-27.

Sin's Climax Reached

But as Satan moves that mighty host against the Son of God, lo, that terrific storm of fire from heaven, so vividly foretold in the Scriptures, bursts upon him and upon his army, with withering, blighting fury. This flame shall not be quenched. It will fully accomplish God's purpose. In this sea of fire all workers of iniquity, together with fallen Lucifer, "son of the morning," and all his angels, perish in sight of the home of the saved, which all, including Lucifer himself, might have enjoyed had they been obedient and faithful in their appointed, "reasonable service" to God and his only begotten Son. But, instead, the offers of mercy were spurned, the exceeding great reward despised, and now all have received the "wages of sin," eternal death; and this in sight of the beloved city. "This is the second death," even "the lake of [hell] fire." Rev. 20:14.

Iniquity Not to Rise Up the Second Time

The death in the lake of fire is final. The earth, as well as the universe of God, is rid of every rebel against the law of the kingdom. Sin is rooted out of the universe of God. Mal. 4:1-3.

The psalmist wrote of this hour: "Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it." Ps. 37:34. Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Matt. 5:5. But they do not inherit it in its present sin-cursed condition. The apostle Peter, after speaking of the destruction of the earth by fire, when all the evil "works that are therein shall be burned up," adds, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Peter 3:13. This "kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven," of which Daniel wrote, is soon to "be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." Only the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land.

Come to the Saviour Now

These are not fables, but facts. Eternal issues are at stake. How shall we relate ourselves to them? Jesus graciously waits to receive all who come to him. The glories of his coming kingdom we may all share. His heart yearns for every soul. Why not turn to him now, giving him loyal, loving service? "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. "He that hath the Son hath life." "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved."

"Yet there is room; the Lamb's bright hall of song With its fair glory beckons thee along.

"Yet there is room; still open stands the gate, The gate of love; it is not yet too late."

When the King Shall Claim His Own

In the glad time of the harvest, In the grand millennial year, When the King shall take his scepter, And to judge the world appear, Earth and sea shall yield their treasure, All shall stand before the throne; Just awards will then be given. When the King shall claim his own.

— L. D. Santos.



"ALL THE CITIES THEREOF WERE BROKEN DOWN"

The Desolation of the Earth

10. What description does the prophet Jeremiah give of the earth during this time?
 "I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by his fierce anger." Jer. 4:23-26.

NOTE.—At the coming of Christ the earth is reduced to a chaotic state—to a mass of ruins. The heavens depart as a scroll when it is rolled together, mountains are moved out of their places, and the earth is left a dark, dreary, desolate waste. See Isa. 24:1-3; Rev. 6:14-17.

11. How does Isaiah speak of the wicked at this time?

"It shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited." Isa. 24:21, 22.

The Binding of Satan

12. How long is Satan imprisoned on this earth?

"I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a

life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5:28, 29.

5. What class only have part in this resurrection?

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power." Rev. 20:6.

6. What will Christ do with the saints when he comes?

"I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:3.

NOTE.—In other words, Christ will take them to heaven, there to live and reign with him during the one thousand years.

7. Where did John, in vision, see the saints?
 "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." Rev. 7:9.

NOTE.—This scripture shows plainly that the righteous are all taken to heaven immediately after the first resurrection. This accords with the words of Christ in John 14:1-3, where he says, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Peter desired to accompany Christ to those mansions; but Jesus answered, "Thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards." John 13:36. This makes it clear that when Christ returns to earth to receive his people, he takes them to the Father's house in heaven.

19. What is the apostle John's testimony concerning the new earth?
 "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.

20. What reward awaits the righteous?
 "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and ever-

lasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isa. 35:10.

21. What prophecy will then be fulfilled?
 "And thou, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem."
 Micah 4:8.

shall all the tribes of the earth mourn." Matt. 24:30. It is difficult to see what need there can be of such mourning if the various moral and religious agencies shall have accomplished their purpose. The same great truth is found almost everywhere in the book of Revelation. Rev. 1:7; 6:15-17; 11:15-18. The last passage is particularly noteworthy, for the time referred to is when "the kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ." But it proceeds to say, "The nations were wroth." Here again the anger is incredible, and also the reference to those who "destroy the earth," if there has been a gradual improvement in the state of mankind. . . .

Two chief objections to this view remain to be considered. It is sometimes said that to favor the literal fulfillment of these prophecies is to materialize them and to involve us in insuperable difficulties. But it is submitted that even though difficult, the literal fulfillment is the most natural. The prophecies relating to Christ's first coming were all literally fulfilled, and no one is at all perplexed by the thought of a divine incarnation or a literal crucifixion. . . .

Since, therefore, we have already experienced the literal fulfillment of the prophecies referring to Christ's humiliation, there is no reason why we should not believe in a similar literal fulfillment of the prophecies relating to his glory. . . .

It is sometimes said that two parables, the mustard seed and the leaven, indicate a gradual conversion of the world. It may be pointed out that these parables must somehow or other be harmonized with the teaching of the others uttered at the same time.

The Hope of the Church

BY REV. JOHN MCNICOL, B. A., B. D.
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THE attitude of the New Testament church is represented by the apostle John in the closing words of the Apocalypse. Visions of heavenly glory and millennial peace have passed before him. He has seen the new heaven and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, and the holy city, New Jerusalem, whose light was like a stone most precious. But, at the end of it all, the longing of the aged apostle is not for these things to come. Greater than all these glories, dearer than all these dear things, is the Master himself, and the prayer that rises from his heart as he closes his wondrous book is simply, "Come, Lord Jesus."

The hope of the church, then, is the personal return of her Lord. As Dr. David Brown stated in his book on the second advent, sixty years ago, "The Redeemer's second appearing is the very polestar of the church." Let us see how this hope lies upon the pages of the New Testament revelation, and how it influenced the life of the New Testament church.

Christ Taught His Disciples to Expect His Return

This was the last of the stage through which his teaching about himself advanced. In the early part of his ministry he seems to have kept his personality in the background; he forbade those whom he healed to tell about him. Then there came a time when he asked the disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" and led them to think of his divine origin. After that he began to instruct them about his approaching death and resurrection, his departure which he was about to "accomplish at Jerusalem." Luke 9:31. In the last days of his ministry his return to the world largely occupied his own thoughts, and he kept it prominently before the mind of his disciples. During his last journey to Jerusalem he foretold his own history in the parable of the nobleman who went into a far country to receive a kingdom, promising to return, and leaving with his servants the command, "Occupy till I come." Luke 19:12, 13.

One evening during the last week he sat on the Mount of Olives, looking down, no doubt, upon the massive buildings of the temple, the total destruction of which he had just foretold. The disciples gathered about him with the request, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall he the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Matt. 24:3. It is evident from the form of this question that his coming was no new thought to them. It was occupying their minds already. They knew that he was coming again, and they wished to know how to recognize the approach of that event.

In answer to the question, the Lord unfolded a panorama of intervening history, emphasizing the need of watchfulness because the time of his coming would be uncertain: "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. . . . Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." He enforced this teaching with two striking illustrations of the twofold kind of preparation needed on the part of the disciples,—the inward preparation of spiritual life set forth in the parable of the virgins, and the outward preparation of diligent service in that of the talents. Then he closed his discourse with a graphic picture of the changed conditions in which he would appear when he came the second time as the Son of man, sitting upon the throne of his glory.

"I Will Come Again"

Through the sad and dark hours of the very last night, his thoughts were occupied with his return. In the upper room, when the faithful little band were grouped about him in sorrow for the parting which all vaguely felt was near, he began his farewell words to them with this comforting assurance: "Let not your heart be troubled. . . . I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go, . . . I will come again." John 14:1-3. A few hours afterward he was in the midst of the shameful scenes of his trial. Mark his answer to the high priest, when he calmly acknowledged the claim to be the Christ, the Son of God. "Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Matt. 26:64. He did not look like the Messiah at that moment as he stood there with bound hands before his accusers. His appearance seemed to belie his words. But the time would come when they would see that his claim was true. This was what was in his thoughts. Through

The Lord's Coming Premillennial

By Rev. W. H. Griffith Thomas, D. D.

THE evident interest concentrated just now on the coming of Christ is most welcome. It is true that the study of eschatology in the hands of modern criticism is marked by many misconceptions and errors, but the ultimate result, it is hoped and believed, will be increased attention to the New Testament teaching on the coming of our Lord.

Now, while it must be admitted that there are differences of opinions on the subject between Christian men, it may fairly be said that only one of these is really fundamental. This, however, is certainly vital, because if one view is right the other must be wrong. The reference is, of course, to the question whether Christ will come before or after the millennium, by which term is usually understood a period of peace and almost total freedom from evil. It is obvious that both these views cannot be right; for if he comes before or after this period (be it a thousand years in duration or not), the whole perspective of teaching is necessarily affected. As it is the opinion of the writer that the New Testament teaches plainly the coming of Christ as premillennial, the present paper is addressed to the proof of this contention.

All evangelical Christians believe that Christ is coming again, and that this coming is personal. While spiritually he has never left his people, he has still to make a personal appearance from heaven. Acts 1:11; 1 Thess. 4:16; Heb. 9:28; John 14:3. This coming has been the hope and cheer of the church for centuries, and the supreme object of anticipation and effort. . . .

Those who believe that Christ will come first, that is, before the time of righteousness, are called premillennialists. . . .

On the other hand, many Christians believe that the whole world is to be brought into allegiance to Christ gradually during this dispensation, and that as the world becomes more thoroughly Christianized there will be peace, improved social condition, a diffused knowledge, elevated standards, and many other beneficial changes. All this is to be the result of the spread of Christ's kingdom. His rule will be a spiritual one in individual hearts and communities. And when the happy time, usually called the millennium, has run its course, Christ will return to judge the living and the dead and to bring earth's story to a conclusion. Those who hold this view are called postmillennialists. . . .

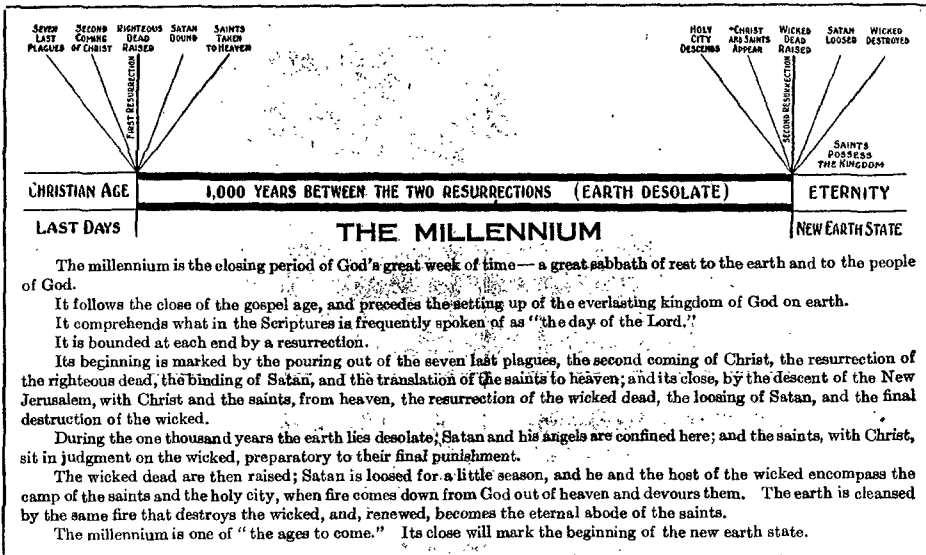
That the former view seems more in harmony with Scripture is urged from the following considerations:—

If the millennium is to be reached by the gradual regeneration of the world, it is clear that the coming of Christ must be in a very remote future; and this being so, it is difficult if not impossible to see how Christians can "watch" and "wait" for an event which it is certain cannot occur for at least a thousand years. The various passages which press home the duty of watching and waiting seem to be impossible of any such interpretation. Mark 13:35-37; Luke 12:35, 36; 1 Thess. 1:10; Phil. 3:20. The question has often been asked whether such statements as these would have any point for us if the divine plan were that Christ is not to come again until after the millennium.

The Scriptures do not appear to teach that the world is to become increasingly better during this dispensation. On the contrary, good and evil are said to exist and grow side by side till the end. Without pressing the metaphors of the parable of the sower, wherein there are three failures to one success, the teaching of the parable of the tares and of the dragnet seems to indicate that there will be no universal victory of Christianity before Christ's return. If good and evil are both to "grow together until the harvest," it will be impossible for the gospel to meet with universal acceptance in the present dispensation. Judging from what we know of nearly nineteen centuries of church history, and especially keeping in view the present condition of the world, it is impossible to contemplate a process in which all evil is gradually overcome until at last the earth is covered with righteousness as the waters cover the sea. . . .

Moreover, Scripture represents the close of this dispensation as a time of special activity of evil. Evil is predicted as everywhere increasing. Christ spoke of iniquity abounding (Matt. 24:3, 6, 12, 21), and with this agree the words of the apostle Paul about perilous times in the last days (2 Tim. 3:1-5). Indeed, he goes further and describes what he calls "the mystery of iniquity," which is to reach its climax in the "man of sin," who is to be destroyed by Christ at his coming. 2 Thess. 2:1-10. Even the professed church is spoken of in terms that imply departure from God, such expressions being found as "the love of many shall wax cold," "having a form of godliness," and "because thou art lukewarm." All these indicate not a state of improvement but of growing degeneracy, and a climax of evil at the end. . . .

According to the postmillennial view, the rule of Christ through the period of his kingdom remains indirect, a spiritual rule in individual hearts, which will not interfere with



The millennium is the closing period of God's great week of time—a great sabbath of rest to the earth and to the people of God.

It follows the close of the gospel age, and precedes the setting up of the everlasting kingdom of God on earth. It comprehends what in the Scriptures is frequently spoken of as "the day of the Lord." It is bounded at each end by a resurrection.

Its beginning is marked by the pouring out of the seven last plagues, the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the righteous dead, the binding of Satan, and the translation of the saints to heaven; and its close, by the descent of the New Jerusalem, with Christ and the saints, from heaven, the resurrection of the wicked dead, the loosing of Satan, and the final destruction of the wicked.

During the one thousand years the earth lies desolate; Satan and his angels are confined here; and the saints, with Christ, sit in judgment on the wicked, preparatory to their final punishment.

The wicked dead are then raised; Satan is loosed for a little season, and he and the host of the wicked encompass the camp of the saints and the holy city, when fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them. The earth is cleansed by the same fire that destroys the wicked, and, renewed, becomes the eternal abode of the saints.

The millennium is one of "the ages to come." Its close will mark the beginning of the new earth state.

human government exercised by ordinary men. But it is submitted that the teaching of Scripture concerning the kingdom of Christ is that of a direct and definite rule, manifested in the person of Christ, and destroying and displacing human governments. This seems to be the clear teaching of passages in the Psalms and the prophets. Ps. 2:6-8; 22:27, 28; 72:7-11; Isa. 9:6; Jer. 23:5, 6; Dan. 2:44; 7:13, 14. To the same effect is the teaching of the New Testament. The parable of the nobleman who went into a far country to receive a kingdom and to return, suggests a kingdom that shall be established on his return. Luke 19:11-27. There are also other references to the setting up of Christ's kingdom. Luke 1:31-33; 22:29, 30. The apostle Peter had the same general truth in his mind when he associated the restoration of all things mentioned in the Old Testament with the coming of Christ from heaven. Acts 3:19-21. All this argues for a definite personal coming which will result in the establishment of his kingdom. . . .

One of the clearest Scriptural proofs of this position is that according to the New Testament the establishment of Christ's kingdom follows, not precedes, his second coming. Our Lord's teaching of the future speaks of his appearance "immediately after" a tribulation, thereby suggesting that no universal peace will be the immediate precursor of his coming. Matt. 24:21-24, 29-31. Indeed, Scripture describes the condition of the earth at the coming of Christ as one of terrible wickedness, not of millennial blessedness. Luke 17:26-32. There does not seem any room here for a period of holy peace prior to the coming of Christ. The passage from the first Gospel just mentioned is sufficient to settle the truth of the doctrine that Christ's coming must be premillennial. It is, therefore, impossible to believe in any universal sway of righteousness on this side of the coming of Christ, and in agreement with this the New Testament associates that coming with the establishment of Christ's kingdom. Matt. 25:31; Luke 19:15; 2 Tim. 4:1. . . .

Christ's own testimony is not less definite and distinctive. "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then

The teaching of the parables of the sower, the tares, and the dragnet is beyond question. They foretell good and evil as existing and growing side by side. It is hardly likely, then, that the mustard seed and the leaven teach anything inconsistent with Christ's own interpretation of the first two parables. . . .

For these reasons it is submitted that the premillennial view is most in harmony with Scripture, proving that the expectation of the gradual conversion of the world till the millennium is reached, is really opposed to Scripture.—*The Bible Magazine*, May, 1916.

Joy to the World

Joy to the world, the Lord will come!
 Let earth receive her King;
 Let every heart prepare him room,
 And heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Lord will reign!
 Let men their songs employ;
 While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains,
 Repeat the sounding joy.

—Isaac Watts.

DR. DAVID BROWN once said that "premillennialism is no barren speculation; . . . when suffered to work its unimpeded way, it stops not till it has pervaded with its own genius the entire system of one's theology and the whole tone of his spiritual character." This is true. Belief in premillennialism affects with vital and transforming influence every part of our faith and practice. Not only is it in harmony with the truest view of God as revealed in Scripture, but it honors the Word of God, it exalts the person of Christ, it glorifies the redemptive work of our Saviour, provides the most powerful incentive to holiness, and is the constant inspiration of Christian missions. It is well known that most of the leading evangelists and missionaries of the last half century have been whole-hearted believers in the premillennial coming of Christ.—*The Bible Magazine*, May, 1916.

all the shame of those awful hours, the vision of his return in glory to the world that was rejecting him now, shone like a beacon upon his soul; and he "for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame."

This Same Jesus

At his ascension the same truth was brought again to the minds of the disciples. As they stood gazing in wonder toward the place where the Lord had disappeared from their view, two angels were sent to remind them of his return. "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Acts 1:11. It was this thought that sent the disciples back to Jerusalem with the joy which Luke describes in the closing verses of his Gospel.

It is very clear, therefore, that when Jesus departed from this world after his first coming, he left his disciples radiant with the joyful assurance of his coming again.

The Apostles Taught Their Converts to Wait for the Coming of the Lord

All the New Testament churches have the expectant attitude. No matter in what part of the world or in what stage of development they are found, they have this characteristic in common. The converting of the Thessalonians is described as turning "to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven." 1 Thess. 1:9, 10. The Corinthians "come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 1:7. To the Galatians Paul writes, "We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith" (Gal. 5:5); and to the Philippians, "Our conversation [eternally] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." Phil. 3:20. In the epistle to the Hebrews, the same attitude is disclosed, for there we read: "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. 9:28. It is evident that the early Christians not only looked back to a Saviour who had died for them, but forward to a Saviour who was to come.

There were two poles in their conversion. Their faith was anchored in the past in the facts of the death and resurrection of the Lord, and also in the future in the assured hope of his return. It is manifest, therefore, that the second coming of the Saviour occupied a most important place in the gospel which the apostles preached, and which these Christians received.

The Whole Life and Work of the New Testament Church Has the Coming of the Lord in View

All the lines of her activity and experience lead to this event. The sanctification of the disciple is a preparation for the coming of the Lord.

Paul writes to the Thessalonians, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. 5:23.

John puts the same thing in his own tender way: "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." 1 John 2:28.

Christian service gets its encouragement in the same inspiring issue. Paul exhorts Timothy to fidelity, charging him to "keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Tim. 6:14. And Peter writes to his fellow elders: "Feed the flock of God which is among you." "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

The patience of the early Christians in suffering and trial is bounded by the same event. "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. . . . Establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." James 5:7, 8. "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." Phil. 4:5. Their life of fellowship and brotherly love reaches its holy consummation at the Lord's return. "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." 1 Thess. 3:12, 13.

Their acts of worship, as, for example, their observance of the Lord's Supper, have the same end in view. "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." 1 Cor. 11:26.

Thus, whatever aspect of the church's life and work we consider, we find it to be a stream which moves on toward one glorious future. The appearing of the Lord Jesus himself fills the whole horizon.

The Joy of the Lord

Think of what this crowning act of redemption will mean for the Redeemer himself, when, attended with heavenly glory, he prepares to descend to the very world that witnessed his suffering, sorrow, and shame. What will it mean to him when the multitudes of the redeemed gather about him, and at last he sees of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied?

Is it not reasonable that there should be such a manifestation of the Redeemer to the world? Is it reasonable that the despised Man of Nazareth should be the only view the world would have of him who is to be the heir of all things? Is it likely that God would allow his Son's retirement from the world in apparent defeat without any subsequent vindication? If the prophetic vision of the suffering Servant had an actual personal fulfillment, surely the prophetic vision of the conquering King will also have a personal fulfillment. As the world was astonished at him when he came the first time, because "his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men," so it will be astonished when he comes the second time, and the prophet's vision breaks upon its view: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments

of the Reformation, wrote, "I ardently hope that, amidst these internal dissensions on the earth, Jesus Christ will hasten the day of his coming."

The acute and learned Calvin saw that this was the church's true hope. "We must hunger after Christ," he said, "till the dawning of that great day when our Lord will fully manifest the glory of his kingdom. The whole family of the faithful will keep in view that day."

The intrepid soul of John Knox was nerved by this hope. In a letter to his friends in England he wrote: "Has not the Lord Jesus, in despite of Satan's malice, carried up our flesh into heaven? And shall he not return? We know that he shall return, and that with expedition."

John Wesley believed this same truth, as is shown by his comment on the closing verses of Revelation: "The spirit of adoption in the bride in the heart of every true believer says, with earnest desire and expectation, 'Come and accomplish all the words of this prophecy.'"

It formed the burden of Milton's sublime application: "Come forth out of thy royal chambers, O Prince of all the kings of the earth! put on the visible robes of thy imperial majesty; take up that unlimited scepter which the Almighty Father hath bequeathed thee. For now the voice of thy bride calls thee, and all creatures sigh to be renewed."

It was the ardent longing of the seraphic Rutherford: "O, that Christ would remove the covering, draw aside the curtains of time, and come down! O, that the shadows and the night were gone!"

It was the prayer of Richard Baxter in the "Saints' Everlasting Rest": "Hasten, O my Saviour, the time of thy return! Send forth

tive standard as our own—commerce, so debased with greed of gold; science, preaching its doctrine of "dust thou art," and Christian dogmatics, often darkening hope with its eschatology of death! The face of present-day religion is to such degree prosed downward that, if some Joseph appears, with his visions of the sun, moon, and stars, men exclaim: "Behold, this dreamer cometh." But they that say such things plainly declare that they do not "seek a country."

There is a tradition that Michelangelo, by his prolonged and unremitting toil upon the frescoed domes which he wrought, acquired such a habitual upturn of the countenance that, as he walked the streets, strangers would observe his bearing, and set him down as some visionary or eccentric. It was well if we who profess to be Christians of the apostolic school had our conversation so truly in heaven, and our faces so steadily set thitherward, that sometimes the "man with the muckrake" should be led to wonder at us, and to look up with questioning surprise from his delving for earthly gold and glory.

Massillon declares that, "in the days of primitive Christianity, it would have been deemed a kind of apostasy not to sigh for the return of the Lord." Then, certainly, it ought not now to be counted an eccentricity to "love his appearing," and to take up with new intensity of longing the prayer which he has taught us: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

Amid all the disheartenment induced by the abounding iniquity of our times; amid the loss of faith and the waxing cold of love within the church; and amid the outbreaking of lawlessness without, causing men's hearts to fail them for fear, and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth,—this is our Lord's inspiring exhortation: "Look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

Eager Expectation

We remember sailing over a beautiful lake in Switzerland, journeying to the village that lay at its opposite end. Again and again, as the encircling hills shut in about us, the further shore seemed close at hand, and our destination nearly reached. But, rounding a projecting point, the aspect would change, the mountains would part once more, and another broad expanse of water would lie stretched out before us. Thus, by a singular peculiarity of the landscape, the journey's end seemed always imminent, and yet constantly receding. It was striking to observe how this feature of the journey affected the voyagers. Not a passenger was found at the ship's stern gazing backward. Every one was on the lookout. All eyes were bent forward in eager expectation, till at last the destined harbor was reached.

Now all the commands and promises of Christ put us on the outlook, and every great juncture of fulfilling history sets us watching to discern whether the daydawn is not approaching, whether the eternal hills are not closing in to bring the end of the age.

The impulse which inspires us to watch, to expect, to be ready to disembark, however vain it may seem to men, has both the authority of God's Word and the admonitions of all the history of the church for its support.

And, more than this, while none can know the day or the hour of the advent, we carry with us a chart of the church's history to tell us approximately where in our stormy and perilous voyage we are. Its weird, mysterious pages contain the whole map and delineation of the church's career from the ascension to the return of the Lord; but it was left for time to break the seals of this book and to discover its meaning. This it has been doing; and as, corresponding to this chart, headland after headland of the prophetic history has been desiered, these have been recognized by the students who have been searching diligently what and what manner of time the Spirit did signify in penning this prophecy.

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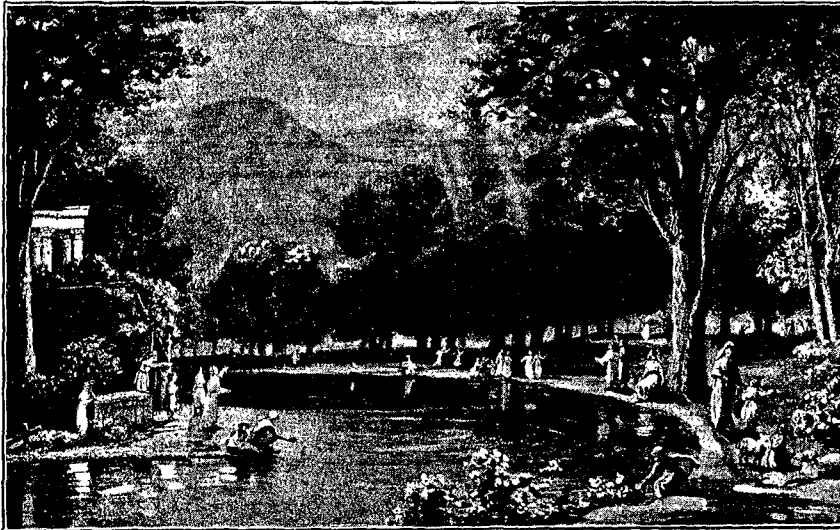
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THE ETERNAL HOME

from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength?" Isa. 63:1.

The Marriage of the Lamb

And what will this event mean for the redeemed? There will be, of course, the happy reunion of all the saints when the dead are raised and the living are changed; for, when the Lord descends from heaven with a shout, "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." But glorious as these things are, they are only preliminary steps to a higher and holier bliss. The climax of redemption will be the manifested union of the church with her Lord in the marriage of the Lamb. For then the Bridegroom shall come to claim his bride, and take her to share his glory and his throne. Then the church that Christ loved and purchased shall be presented to him a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Then the astonished world, beholding her transformation, shall cry, "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?" Think of what it will mean when, after sharing his humiliation in the midst of a scoffing and unbelieving world, the redeemed church is exalted to his side, and, as the consort of the King of kings and Lord of lords, stands "all rapture through and through in God's most holy sight." Nothing less than this is the destiny that awaits the church of Jesus Christ.

The Blessed Hope

It provides the most inspiring motive for Christian life and service. It is a supremely practical hope. The repeated instructions of the Lord and his apostles to be ready for his return indicate the force this doctrine had as a motive in the lives of the early Christians. The great leaders who have left this impress on the history of the church did not discard this doctrine, but made it a real hope in their own lives.

Martin Luther, in the midst of the throes

of thine angels and let that dreadful, joyful trumpet sound. Thy desolate bride saith, Come. The whole creation saith, Come. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

And if we follow in the steps of these men, we will return to the simple, unmetaphorical New Testament type of experience, and, with faces uplifted toward the veil, within which the Lord of glory waits, and with hearts all aglow with a personal love for him, we will carry on through all our life and service the same apostolic prayer—"The Fundamentals," Vol. VI, pages 115-127.

Behold He Cometh*

A. J. GORDON, D. D.

THE second coming of Christ is the crowning event of redemption; and the belief of it constitutes the crowning article of an evangelical creed. For we hold that the excellence of faith is according to the proportion of the Lord's redemptive work which that faith embraces. Some accept merely the earthly life of Christ, knowing him only after the flesh; and the religion of such is rarely more than a cold, external morality. Others receive his vicarious death and resurrection, but seem not to have strength as yet to follow him into the heavens; such may be able to rejoice in their justification without knowing much of walking in the glorious life of Christ. Blessed are they who, believing all that has gone before,—life, death, and resurrection,—can joyfully add this confession also: "We have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens;" and thrice blessed they who can join to this confession still another: "From whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

Looking Upward

Never did a Christian age so greatly need to have its attitude readjusted to the primi-

* Paragraphs selected from the beautiful little book "Behold He Cometh," by A. J. Gordon, D. D., published by Fleming H. Revell Company, New York and Chicago.