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THE SECOND APPEARING

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AND

PERSONAL REIGN OF THE LORD  
JESUS CHRIST ;

A DISCOURSE ON

“ THY KINGDOM COME.”—MATT. vi. 10.

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“ Ye have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed.”—2 Pet. i. 10.

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It is the opinion of many that the dispensation under which we live is the final one, that the purpose of God respecting this earth will be fully accomplished at its close : they believe that the conversion of the world will be effected by the preaching of the gospel, that all nations will be brought under its blessed influence ; and that, before the close of the dispensation, the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and the will of God be done on earth as it is in heaven.

That the kingdoms of this world *shall* become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and the will of God be done on earth as it is in heaven, is fully admitted ; but that the preaching of the gospel in the present dispensation will effect this, there does not appear to be the slightest ground for believing, taking God's word as our guide.

The purpose of God in the present dispensation, may be seen from the following passages of Scripture :—

Acts xv. 14.—“ Simeon hath declared how God at the first

did visit the Gentiles to take *out of* them a people for his name."

Matthew xxiv. 14.—“ This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world *for a witness* unto all the nations; and then shall the end come.”

From the first of these passages, it may be seen that while the tabernacle of David is in ruins, *i. e.* while Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles, God is *taking out from the Gentiles* a people for his name. Here then is the character of this dispensation: it is elective, a dispensation of *taking out*, not one of universality; and those thus taken out are only a kind of *first fruits* of God's creatures (see James i 18). But *after this* the Lord says, “ I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David;” then will “ the *residue* of men seek after God,” “ the residue” observe, “ the firsts fruits” having been already gathered.

The latter passage (Matt. xxiv. 14) shews that the conversion of the world is not to be effected by the preaching of the gospel in this dispensation, that it is preached for *a witness*, or for a testimony against\* all nations, and then shall the end come; *i. e.* the end of the age (*αιῶνος*, verse 3). These points will be treated of more fully in the sequel.

But there is another dispensation spoken of in Scripture, called “ the dispensation of the fulness of times,” which is to succeed the present, when He who “ worketh all things after the counsel of his own will ” shall “ gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth ” (Eph i. 10). And this is the blessed period, for the coming of which we pray, when we offer up the petition which I have selected for my text, “ Thy kingdom come !”

In endeavouring to set before you what I conceive to be the scriptural character of this kingdom, I propose —

1st, To shew that Scripture teaches us to expect a period of universal blessedness in the latter day.

2ndly, That Jesus will come, not at the close, but at the commencement of this period of blessedness.

3rdly, That his ransomed church shall reign with him during this period.

And lastly, consider the vast importance of the subject of the Lord's coming, shewing it to be the hope of the Church.

\* The words which are rendered here “ for a witness unto,” are rendered in Matt. x. 18. “ for a testimony against.”

and productive of most blessed and practical effects to the children of God.

The two subjects which form the great theme of prophetic testimony (as must appear evident to any attentive reader of Scripture), are the sufferings and the reign of Jesus. Indeed we are informed of this by the Holy Ghost, in 1 Peter i. 10, 11 : "Of which salvation the Prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ, which was in them did signify, when it testified before-hand the *sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.*" They prophesied of a suffering and reigning Messiah—of a Saviour born in Bethlehem to be stricken for the transgression of his people, and coming in the clouds of heaven, to "reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously."

The Jews, by reason of the veil which was upon their minds, could not see the coming of the Messiah to suffer, but looked for the full accomplishment, at his first advent, of those prophecies which spake of his glorious reign ; consequently when he came in great humiliation, the lowly Jesus of Nazareth, he was, in their eyes, as "a root out of a dry ground, without form or comeliness ; there was no beauty in him that they should desire him ;" and when he spake of being lifted up on the cross, their reply was, "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever . . . Who is this Son of Man ?"

Many in the present day have fallen into the opposite error. They see the suffering, but do not see the reign ; and would attempt to spiritualise and explain away those prophecies which speak of the reign of Jesus at his second advent, and tell us they must be understood in a figurative sense, because they say it is not at all reasonable that our blessed Lord should leave the Father's right hand to reign on this earth. Surely such interpreters of Scripture, had they lived before the days of our Lord's first advent, would, upon the same hypothesis, have united with the Jews in understanding those prophecies also in a figurative sense, which spake of the coming of the Lord of glory to die an ignominious death between two malefactors : for it appears far more reasonable that the Lord should come to be king over all the earth, than that he should come to be crucified as a malefactor.

Agreeably then to my first proposition, I shall proceed to

shew, from Scripture, that a period of glory and blessedness is to be expected in the latter day. The passages which I would adduce in proof of this, are the following :

Isaiah xi. 1—12, “ And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him . . . . And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; *for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.* And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”

Isaiah xxiv. 23, “ Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.”

Isaiah lxxv. 17—25, “ Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem and joy in my people; and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another

inhabit ; they shall not plant, and another eat ; for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands . . . . The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock : and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain saith the Lord."

Jer. xxiii. 5—8. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely ; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt ; but, The Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them ; and they shall dwell in their own land."

Ezekiel xliii. 2, 7. "And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east ; and his voice was like a noise of many waters : and the earth shined with his glory . . . . And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile."

Micah iv. 3—7. "And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off : and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks : nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more . . . . And the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth even for ever."

Rev. xi. 15. "And the seventh angel sounded : and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

Rev. xx. 1—4. "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a 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 : and after that he must be loosed a little season."

These passages, with many others too numerous to notice, certainly predict a period of blessedness in the latter day, commonly called the Millennium; when the Jews being restored to their own land and converted, shall enjoy all the earthly and spiritual blessings promised to them in Scripture, under the peaceful government and sway of the Prince of peace, whose throne shall then be erected in Mount Zion, and his kingdom extend to the utmost bounds of the earth (Psalm ii. 8); when wars and commotions shall for ever cease, and the whole earth be blessed in Israel's restoration: for "living waters shall go out from Jerusalem," and flow perpetually; "in summer and in winter shall it be" (Zec. xiv. 8); the Jews shall be "sent out to declare the Lord's glory among the heathen that have not heard his fame, neither have seen his glory" (Isaiah lxvi. 19); and "ten men shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you" (Zec. viii. 23), and "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit" (Isaiah xxvii. 6). The curse too shall be removed from the earth, for, "instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree," and the ferocity shall be removed from the animal creation; for "the Lord in that day will make a covenant for them (*i. e.* Israel) with the beasts of the field and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground; and will break the bow and the sword, and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely" (Hosea ii. 18). And every knee shall bow to Jesus, and every tongue confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Then will his kingdom come, and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

If we compare this glorious dispensation with the present, how very striking the contrast! I ask simply, is the whole earth in the present day filled with the glory of the Lord? Have the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ? Is Satan, the deceiver, shut up and sealed in the bottomless pit? No; but the whole world lieth in the wicked one (1 John v. 19); the course of this world is ruled by the Prince of the power of the air, the Spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience (Eph. ii. 2). Satan is the prince of this world (John xiv. 30), the god of this world (2 Cor. iv. 4); the way is broad that leadeth to destruction, the way narrow that leadeth to life; the enemies of the Cross many and mighty;

the cause of Jesus trampled under foot, and his worthy name blasphemed; the faithful followers of the Lamb despised and persecuted, even as foretold by the Apostle in 2 Tim. iii. 12—  
 “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”  
 A time this surely when every one who loves the Saviour, and has his glory at heart, should go mourning; but alas! how many do we see in the present day taking upon them the name of Christ, yet glorying in that which should have been their shame, standing identified with a world, the friendship of which is enmity with God; walking more as children of this world, than as those who are dead and risen with Christ, and made to sit with him in heavenly places; and thus bringing disgrace and reproach upon that worthy name by which they are called. Such then being the state of things in the present dispensation, it surely becomes every believer to pray earnestly that it would please God shortly to accomplish the number of his elect, and to hasten his kingdom.

Having then shewn from scripture that a period of universal blessedness is to be expected in the latter day, I shall now proceed to shew, agreeably to the second proposition, that the Lord Jesus shall come, not at the close, but at the commencement of this period of blessedness.

It must appear evident to any person who reads the New Testament with an impartial and unprejudiced mind, that *no* period of universal blessedness is to be expected *previous* to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Turn, in the first place, to the 24th of Matthew, and observe the character of the days preceding the coming of the Son of man—read the 37th, 38th, and 39th verses. “But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe 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.” Here we are told that the days before the flood are analogous to the days preceding the coming of the Son of man; and what was the character of the days before the flood? Was it a period of universal blessedness? Quite the contrary. “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. vi. 5). Neither then are we to expect a period of blessedness, or Millennium, before the coming of the Son of man: but, on the contrary, man’s wickedness will be “great in

the earth ;" and instead of that happy period when they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks, *no more* to learn war, "there shall be upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity ; the sea and the waves roaring ; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth : for the powers of heaven shall be shaken" (Luke xxi. 25, 26).

Next turn to 2 Thess. ii. Here again we learn that no Millennium is to be expected before the coming of the Lord. The Thessalonians had fallen into error respecting the time of the appearing of the Saviour. They supposed that the day of the Lord was instant (*ἐνέσθηκεν*), and the Apostle writes to correct their mistaken idea ; he tells them that the day of the Lord (or of Christ's second appearing) shall not come, except there come —what ? a period of blessedness first ? not at all,—but a falling away first ; that the man of sin must first be revealed, must continue a certain period, and then be destroyed by *the brightness of the Saviour's coming* ; that is, his personal coming evidently, as spoken of in the 1st verse. Now we certainly gather from this chapter, that the Apostle Paul looked for no Millennium previous to the Lord's second coming ; for had he done so, here would have been the place to mention it. Doubtless he would have said to the Thessalonians, That day shall not come except there come a thousand years of blessedness first ; but it is evident no such idea was entertained either by the Apostle or those to whom he wrote. He does tell them of the working of "the mystery of iniquity," which was to continue until fully developed in the setting up of the wicked one. Now from the manner of the destruction of this wicked one, we conclude that he must be the individual spoken of in Isaiah xi. 4. Observe, the Apostle says, "then shall *that wicked (one)* be revealed whom the Lord shall consume with the *breath (πνεῦμα)* of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." Isaiah says, "He (the Messiah) shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the *breath of his lips* shall he slay *the wicked (one)* ;" and then follows the Millennium, in the remainder of the chapter. Does not this prove clearly, the personal coming of the Lord at the commencement of the Millennium ?

The same truth may be deduced from the parable of the tares and the wheat. Universal blessing we know is not to be expected so long as the tares remain in the field ; unless indeed the tares be turned into wheat ; which the parable shews is not to

be expected. The tares remain until the harvest, the harvest is the end of the age,\* or coming of the Son of Man, therefore universal blessing must be subsequent to his coming; and so we find, the angels gather *out of his kingdom* all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; he comes, not to destroy the earth, but to cleanse and purify it. (See Matt. xiii. 24—30.)

The next passage which I would adduce in proof of this, is the 2nd chapter of the book of Daniel, where we read of the destruction of Nebuchadnezzar's image by the falling of a stone cut out of the mountain without hands; after which, this stone becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth. We are then told that this image was emblematic of four monarchies which were successively to arise, and are generally understood to be the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman; and the destruction of the image by the falling of the stone, emblematic of the destruction of these kingdoms, by the setting up of the kingdom of the God of heaven.

The stone undoubtedly is the Lord Jesus Christ, as appears by a reference to Matthew xxi. 44; where the Saviour (evidently in allusion to this falling of the stone) says, "Whosoever shall fall *on* this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever *it* shall fall, it will grind him to powder." Mark the distinction here between persons falling on the stone, and the stone falling on them; it is first lying on the ground, and, while remaining in that state was the cause of stumbling to many; by this we understand the humiliation of Jesus, which we know was a stone of stumbling to the Jews, who were broken in consequence—not destroyed. But observe, this stone is afterwards elevated as is clearly implied in the phrase, "on whomsoever it shall fall." Now the elevation of the stone is the exaltation of Jesus, and the falling of the stone can be none other than the second coming of Jesus in utterly destroying judgment on his enemies; and it is after the stone falls, that it becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth, or the kingdom of the God of heaven is set up, which breaks in pieces and consumes all these kingdoms, and shall stand for ever. See also Daniel vii. 13, 14, where the prophet has a vision of the Son of man coming *in*

\* It may appear to one who is not acquainted with the Greek, that the word rendered "world" in the 38th verse, "the field is the world," is the same as that in the 39th, "the harvest is the end of the world;" but in the Greek the words are quite different; the one in the 38th being *Kosmos*, that in the 39th *Aion*: the former having reference to place, the latter to time, and may more literally be rendered "age."

*the clouds of heaven*, which, if you compare with Matt. xxiv. 30, you will find to be the second coming: and what is the object of his coming? Not merely to pass sentence on the human race, but to receive "*dominion, and glory, and a kingdom*, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed;" and this kingdom is only *nigh at hand* when the signs indicative of the Saviour's coming are observable (see Luke xxi. 31).

Again, from the passages of Scripture which I have brought forward to prove the period of blessedness, it may be seen that the Jews are restored and converted at its commencement; if we can shew, then, that the conversion of Israel is effected by the personal coming of the Lord, we have another striking proof of his coming at the commencement of the Millennium. If we turn to the 14th chap. of Zech. verse 1—11, we find that after the Jews return to their own land in the latter day, all nations are gathered against Jerusalem to battle. "Then (we read) shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations. . . . *And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives. . . . And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee. . . . And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one. . . . And there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.*" Surely the coming of the Lord with all his saints can be none other than the second appearing (see 1 Thess. iii. 13). And one object of this coming is to destroy the nations which come against Jerusalem; and when these nations are destroyed, he will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon him whom they pierced; and what is the effect produced when they thus behold the Saviour whom they pierced? All the tribes of the land mourn (Zech. xii. 9—14), it is the day of Israel's repentance and conversion. Now, in 24th chap. of Matt. verse 30, we are told, this mourning of the tribes of the land shall take place when the Saviour appears in his glory. "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the land mourn (*πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς*), and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Compare Rev. i. 7, "Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also

which pierced him, and all the tribes of the land (*ῥᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς*) shall mourn because of him."

Let us, in the next place, examine for a moment the declaration of our Lord in Matt. xxiii. 38, 39, when he stood for the last time in the temple. A short time previous to this (xxi. 9) he had presented himself to the Jews as the predicted king of Israel, the disciples shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest;" and the little children in the temple cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" but the chief priests, scribes, and pharisees were offended, saying, "Hearest thou what these say? Master, rebuke thy disciples." "I tell you (said the Saviour) that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." Having then been rejected by his own, we find him, in the verses before us, predicting his departure from among them, and the utter desolation of their house as the consequence of that departure, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate; for I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth;" but at the same time tells them of his coming again when they shall take up the language of the Psalmist in Psalm cxviii. 26 (which they then refused to do), and say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord,"—when they shall acknowledge their offence and seek his face. See Hosea v. 15—"I will go and return to my place *till they acknowledge their offence* and seek my face; in their affliction they will seek me early." Precisely the same declaration as that in the passage before us, but in different words.

Another proof of the Lord's personal coming to establish his kingdom, is contained in Luke xix. 11—15, where we are told, that just before our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, as he drew nigh to the city, the disciples thought that the *kingdom of God* should immediately appear (the restoration of the kingdom of Israel doubtless, which they had then been expecting, see Acts i. 6, and Luke xxiv. 21); and in order to correct their mistaken ideas as to the time of the appearing of the kingdom, our Lord added and spake a parable, showing them that the kingdom was not, as they supposed, *immediately* to appear; that he should first go to his Father to receive the kingdom, and having received it, would return again to take possession of it. "A certain nobleman (said he) went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return; . . . and it came to pass that when he was returned, having

received the kingdom." In Daniel vii. 13, 14, we see the nobleman in the far country receiving the kingdom, that is, the Son of man brought before the Ancient of days to receive dominion, and glory, and a kingdom; and having received it, he comes in the clouds of heaven to take possession of it.

Conceiving then that the various passages which have just been adduced clearly prove the coming of the Lord at the commencement of the Millenium, I shall now pass on to the next point to be considered, viz. that his ransomed church shall reign with him during this blessed period.

We learn from 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52, that at the coming of the Lord, those who sleep in Jesus shall be raised, and the bodies of those saints then living shall be changed; and from 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17, that both shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and then shall they appear with him in glory, as the following passages show.

Col. iii. 4. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall *ye also* appear with him in glory."

1 Thess. iii. 13. "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*."

Jude 14, 15. "And Enoch also the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh *with ten thousand of his saints* to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

Rev. xvii. 14. "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of lords and King of kings; and they that are *with him* are called and chosen and faithful."

Rev. xix. 11—15. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called the Word of God. And *the armies which were in heaven followed him* upon white horses, clothed in fine linen white and clean (the fine linen is the righteousness of saints, verse 8). And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

The last passage quoted sets forth the Lord Jesus as a mighty man of war, coming to take vengeance on his enemies, to rule the nations with a rod of iron, and to tread the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And the saints are represented in verse 14 as being associated with him in this judgment, (according to the promise in Rev. ii. 26, 27; "And he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father"): and after the execution of this judgment, they shall sit with him upon his throne, (according to the promise in Rev. iii. 21, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne"), and shall reign with him a thousand years (Rev. xx. 6).

I would here remark (though perhaps it may be considered a digression) that it is never stated in Scripture that Jesus shall reign *over* the Church. The Church is the bride—the Lamb's wife—his destined partner and companion in glory; and shall be presented to him without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, at the day of his second appearing, when he shall share with her his glory, his crown. The Church is the body of Christ—bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh; it was of Christ and the Church the Apostle spake, when he said, "they twain shall be one flesh," which he calls "the great mystery"\* (Eph. v. 32). "even the mystery hidden from ages and generations, but now made manifest to the saints" (Col. i. 26). It is remarkable we never read in the Old Testament of the Church being "fellow-heirs and of the same body." No! this mystery was reserved to the present dispensation for full disclosure, I say full disclosure, because it was dimly set forth "at sundry times" in types and shadows from the beginning. As an instance of this we may bring forward Adam, who, we are told, was a "*figure of him that was to come*" (Rom. v. 14). If we behold him as Lord of the creation set over the work of God's hands, with all things put in subjection under his feet, do we not also see Eve at his right hand, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, his partner and companion in all this glory? (Gen. i. 27, 28). Now here we have typically brought before us, Christ, the second Adam—Lord of "the

\* The Apostle used the definite article here, τὸ μυστήριον, though the translators have rendered it "a great mystery."

world to come,"—"crowned with glory and honour," with all things put in subjection under his feet,\* and his bride, the Church his *joint and fellow-heir*, set upon the throne with him (Rev. iii. 21), perfectly conformed to his image (Phil. iii. 21), shining as the brightness of the firmament—as the sun in the kingdom of the Father (Matt. xiii. 43). And I would press this subject the more, as it is too much lost sight of by many of the Lord's people in the present day, who bring forward such passages as "he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever," and tell us the house of Jacob means the Church. If this be true, the Church are the *subjects* of the kingdom, not joint heirs with the King. Observe, it is not said, the house of Jacob shall reign with him, as it is of the Church (2 Tim. ii. 12; Rev. xx. 6), but he shall reign *over* the house of Jacob, that is, over the *Jewish nation*, then restored and converted, as we have already seen.

Whatever be the measure of the happiness of the departed spirit of the Saint previous to the resurrection, we know from Scripture that neither kingdom nor crown will be given until Jesus appear in glory. When the Apostle Peter exhorts the elders to feed the flock of God which was among them, and puts them in remembrance of their reward, he says, "and *when the Chief Shepherd shall appear*, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Peter v. 4). Again: What was it that enabled the Apostle Paul to rejoice in the prospect of martyrdom, when the hour of his departure drew nigh?—Knowing that there was laid up for him a *crown* of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge would give him *at that day* (2 Tim. iv. 8). At what day? Not the day of his death, but the day of Christ's appearing and kingdom (see remainder of the verse compared with verse 1).

In Eph. i. 14., the Church's inheritance is called a purchased possession, but *not yet redeemed*; that is, not yet recovered out of the hands of the usurper—still in the possession of the enemy. What then is the Church's inheritance? I answer,—the world,† of which Satan is now the prince, who is to be cast out, and shut up in the bottomless pit when Jesus comes; then will the decree go forth, "Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose

\* Psalm viii. 6, compared with Heb. ii. 5—9.

† Rom. iv. 13.

right it is; and I will give it to him" (Ezekiel xxi. 26, 27). Then will the ransomed Church take up the song of triumph in Rev. v. 9, 10, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall *reign on (or over) the earth.*"

Observe further, that it is *only* those who sleep in Jesus that are raised at his coming; the wicked rise not until the close of the Millennium. In Scripture the resurrection of the just is spoken of as distinct from, and prior to, that of the wicked: thus in Luke xiv. 14, "Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the *just.*" In Luke xx. 35, the resurrection is shown to be a privilege which some shall be accounted worthy to obtain; that is, the children of God. "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that age (*αἰώνος*) and the resurrection from the dead . . . are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." And the Apostle Paul views it in the same light in Phil. iii. 11: "If *by any means* I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." In 1 Cor. xv. 23, 24, we have the order of the resurrection laid down, viz. "Christ the first fruits, afterwards *they that are Christ's* at his coming, then (or next in order) cometh the end." Observe, the Apostle does not say, all men shall be raised at Christ's coming, but "they that are Christ's," and next in order "the end," when the rest shall be raised. As we read in Rev. xx. 5, "the rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished" (or until the end); but "blessed and holy is he that hath part in the *first* resurrection, on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." The last passage I would allude to in proof of this, is 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17, where it is stated that when the Lord descends from heaven, "the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain," &c. Here we have the resurrection of the just exclusively, without any reference whatever to that of the wicked.

Before I pass on to the next point to be considered, I would just allude to a passage in John v. 28, 29, which at first sight seems to favour the idea of all being raised simultaneously, but will be found, on examination, not to militate against, but rather favour the doctrine of the first resurrection. In verse 25, we find it stated, the hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear

shall live." And then we read, "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." Now the word "hour" here does not surely mean a period of sixty minutes, for the hour spoken of in verse 25, which then commenced, is not yet ended. "The hour is coming," said our Lord, "and *now is*, when the dead shall hear," &c., evidently referring to the quickening of those who were spiritually dead. Now as this hour of quickening has been going on for the last eighteen hundred years, and is not yet ended, why may not the hour spoken of in the 28th verse be a period of a thousand years? But observe, at the close of the 29th verse *two* resurrections are mentioned, a resurrection *to life* of those that have done good, and resurrection *to judgment* of those that have done evil, the one already shewn to be at the commencement, the other at the close of the thousand years.

We have now, in the last place, to consider the vast importance of the subject of the Lord's coming, shewing it to be the hope of the Church, and productive of most blessed and practical effects to the children of God.

That it is the hope of the Church, appears evident from the following passages of Scripture:

Luke xii. 35, 36. "Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that *wait for their Lord.*"

1 Cor. i. 7. "So that ye come behind in no gift, *waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

Phil. iii. 20, 21. "For our conversation is in heaven; *from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*"

1 Thes. i. 9, 10. "How ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God; and *to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.*"

Titus ii. 12, 13. "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; *looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*"

Hebrews x. 36, 37. "For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God ye might receive the pro-

mise. *For yet a little while and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry."*

James v. 7, 8. "Be patient, therefore, brethren, *unto the coming of the Lord*. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts, *for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*"

1 Peter i. 13. "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought *unto you, at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*"

1 John iii. 2, 3. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and 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. And every man that hath *this hope* in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

I could multiply passages to the same effect, for Scripture abounds with them, but those already advanced appear to me clearly to set forth the second appearing of the Lord Jesus as the one great and blessed hope of the Church: let us now for a moment consider its practical tendency.

A short time previous to our Lord's crucifixion, we find him taking his disciples apart, and instructing them concerning his departure from among them. He tells them that he is about to go to his Father's house to prepare mansions for them; but that after *a little while* he will *come again* and receive them unto himself; at the same time leaving them in ignorance as to the *precise period* of that coming, that they may be as men "that wait for their Lord." And this ought to be the true position of the Church in the present dispensation: waiting for the Son from heaven, as not knowing what hour its Lord may come. Read attentively the passages last quoted, and you will at once perceive that this was the position in which the Church stood in the days of the Apostles; and so long as the second appearing was kept in view as the one great object of hope, the Church retained this position; it stood as a witness for Christ in the midst of an evil world, with its loins girded about, its lights burning, like unto one who waits for his Lord, thus declaring plainly that here it had no continuing city, that this was not its rest, because it was polluted; but discerning with the eye of faith the things within the veil as its portion, even those things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man to conceive, revealed unto it by that Spirit which searcheth all things, even the deep things of

God, it minded not the things of earth, but those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. At the time of the departure of Jesus, the Church was set at "the end of all things" (see 1 Peter iv. 7 ; 1 Cor. x. 11), the Spirit continually testifying of the speedy return of its Lord: thus—"the coming of the Lord draweth nigh;" "the Lord is at hand;" "the judge standeth before the door;" "yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry;" "the night is far spent, the day is at hand," and so forth. To illustrate more fully this standing of the Church, we may bring forward the standing of the children of Israel during the night of the passover; to which our Lord evidently alludes in his exhortation to the Church in Luke xii. 35, 36. They stood within the blood-stricken doors of their houses, in the full consciousness of security through the blood, feasting upon the flesh of the lamb, with unleavened bread, and bitter herbs, having their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hand, thus declaring plainly that they had done with Egypt, that Egypt was not their rest, that they had another country in view, and that they stood in readiness for the summons to depart thither, not having a single tie to bind them to Egypt. Here then we have in type the Church's standing in the present dispensation; redeemed from the world (the spiritual Egypt) by the shedding and sprinkling of the blood of the true paschal lamb (1 Cor. v. 7, 8), and, in the full consciousness of acceptance, keeping the feast—enjoying the blessedness of communion with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ; cleansed from the leaven of malice and wickedness, eating the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, with the bitter herbs, *i. e.* having fellowship with Jesus in suffering; and standing (as I have already shewn) at the end of all things, in readiness for the summons to depart to meet the Lord.

But soon, very soon indeed, after the departure of Jesus, did the Church lose sight of this blessed hope. Soon did the servant begin to grow weary with watching and waiting, and to say in his heart, My Lord *delayeth* his coming (Matt. xxiv. 48). And what was the result? He lost his waiting position, and did eat and drink with the drunken; enjoyed himself during the absence of his master. Even so with the Church; hope deferred made it weary of watching and waiting; and it began to say, "My Lord *delayeth*." Observe, it is not, "My Lord *will never come*," but, "he *delayeth*;" it is yet a long time, though the Spirit said, "Yet a little while;" and then came in

the leaven of the Sadducees, of which the Saviour warned his disciples to beware (Matt. xvi. 6), that is to say, present enjoyment in the world, having lost sight of the resurrection hope. And we know, from the parable of the virgins (Matt. xxv.), that *that* which alone can awaken the children of God, and bring them again into their proper waiting position, is the cry, "Behold the bridegroom cometh!" the preaching of the coming of the Lord in the Church. We have, in this parable, first, the Church's calling; the virgins went forth to meet the bridegroom. Secondly, the Church's departure from its true position; they all slumbered and slept; and the cause of this departure; the tarrying of the bridegroom. Observe, they *all* slumbered; *wise* as well as foolish, and continued to do so during the long period of the tarrying of the bridegroom. Thirdly, the virgins are awakened by a cry, and brought again into their proper position; and when the bridegroom comes he finds the wise virgins not slumbering, but going forth to meet him. It is remarkable it was not until the bridegroom was about to appear that the cry was raised. We may expect then, that just before the coming of the Lord, the whole Church shall be awakened from its spiritual slumber by the cry of the Lord's coming; and when we see the children of God thus awakened, and brought into a waiting position for Jesus, we may conclude that the coming of the Lord cannot be far distant. Observe also, another of the effects of the cry: a separation takes place between the wise and foolish virgins; the foolish discover their want of oil, and go to buy; they find they have not grace to go on with the wise, and the wise go forth *alone*; and when the bridegroom comes, he finds the wise separated from the foolish, and prepared for his reception.

I ask then, dear friends, is not this a subject of vast importance to the children of God? May the Lord by his Spirit give all his dear children to know more fully and blessedly "what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints;" that having *this hope* in them, they may purify themselves even as he is pure; and looking for such things, may "be diligent, that they may be found of him in peace, without spot or blemish." And may it be our blessed portion in this day of abounding evil and apostasy, to be found among those few that have not defiled their garments; who shall walk with Jesus in white; to stand aloof from all that is of the world, and not of the Father; all that which is highly esteemed among men, "the lust of the flesh,

the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." Not setting our hearts upon that which, at the day of the Lord will be found to be wood, hay, stubble; but upon that which is "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." So shall we have confidence at that day, and not be ashamed before him at his coming: and when multitudes shall enter into the dens and caves of the earth "for fear of the Lord and for the glory of his Majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth," we shall lift up our heads with joy, and say, "Lo! this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation." May "the Lord direct our hearts into the love of God, and into the *patient waiting for Christ.*" Amen.

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