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The Second Advent
Of our Lord
Not secret but in manifested glory.

BY
BENJAMIN WILLS NEWTON.

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The Second Advent of our Lord not secret but in manifested glory.

WILL the Second Advent of our Lord and Saviour for which we wait, be secret, or in manifested glory? Will it terminate the age of human evil, or will evil still reign and triumph after it? Until recently there has been in the true Church of God a happy unanimity in answering these questions. In the midst of all the disagreements which have so grievously marred, and to a great extent, nullified the testimonies of Christ's people, they have not until recently, on this point, differed. They have all with one voice affirmed that when our High Priest returns "without sin, unto salvation," He will return in manifested glory. "Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen." "He shall come in His own glory and in His Father's, and of the holy angels." Until recently none have doubted that these and like texts describe the approaching Advent of our Lord—that Advent for which all His people are commanded to watch. It is, no doubt, possible that we may all have been deceived. We are not like

the Apostles, inspired and infallible. Apart from the Apostles, the concurrent assent of all the saints in earth has no authoritative value. We have no test of Truth except the Scripture. Nevertheless, a doctrine so truly new as the *secret* coming of the Lord, and the *secret* removal of His saints, must by its very novelty, awake suspicion, and should therefore be jealously tested by the Scriptures of Truth. With respect to this, and all other doctrines proposed to our acceptance, we appeal "to the law and to the testimony." Every thing that agreeth not therewith is not of light, but of darkness.

Let us refer, then, first, to the Epistles. The fourth chapter of the first of Thessalonians reveals the instrumentality by which the saints who sleep are to be raised, and the living saints changed. "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: afterward (*επειτα*) we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Can we, after reading these words, affirm that the coming of the Lord will be secret? Do such expressions as "shout," "voice of the archangel," and "trump of God," imply secrecy? What expressions could be chosen to denote universality of manifestation if these do not? Nor is the sphere of this manifestation to be *above* the heavens. *There*, indeed, it might be hidden from mortal

view. But heavenly places (*τα επουρανια*) are not to be the scene of this manifestation. It is not said that the Lord will descend from that place of glory which He now occupieth, "high above all heavens," and that He will descend into lower heavens and there receive His saints above the skies. On the contrary, it is said that He shall descend from heaven into "the air," and "the air is not above but *below the firmament*."* The air is the atmosphere that surrounds the earth in close contiguity thereunto, and is a part of this sub-lunary creation—contrasted, therefore, with the firmament and all that is above the firmament. It is "in the air" that the saints are to meet their Lord. Nor will they meet Him *merely*. The word translated "meet," means to meet† and *to come with the person whom we meet*. We are to meet Him in that day of His glory in order that we may accompany Him to the place to which He is going. It will be the day of visitation to Israel and to the earth. He will proceed from the air to the earth: and His feet shall stand on it. "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of

* Thus the fowl are called in Genesis "the fowl of the air," and it is said that they "fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven."—Gen. i. 20.

† *Eis apantēsin*. See its use in Acts xxviii. 15, where the brethren went to meet Paul at Appii Forum as he was proceeding towards Rome, accompanied him thence to Rome. "This expression occurs twice in the New Testament, and each time implies meeting one who was *approaching*—not merely meeting with a person."—ALFORD.

Olives," Zech. xiv. He will stand there as the Refiner indeed and Purifier of Israel, but also as their Deliverer. He will come as the Destroyer of His and their enemies who will at that moment be found under Antichrist, gathered in the valley of Jehoshaphat, there to be trodden in the winepress of wrath. His saints shall be with Him when He thus stands on Olivet, for it is written, "the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." Thus, in the same day (for "it shall be *one* day known unto the Lord") He will come, *for* His saints (for they are caught up to meet Him in the air) and He will come *with* His saints, for from the air they accompany Him to Olivet. Their glory (for they will all be glorified like their Lord) will add to the brightness of the day of His glory: they will meet with Him His enemies (Rev. xvii.) whom *sudden* destruction shall overwhelm—the appointed work of judgment will be wrought, and the stricken but not destroyed earth will be taken under the care and government of Christ, with whom His saints will be associated. They will meet Him in the air; thence for a brief moment they will accompany Him to earth while there He doth "His work, His strange work; and brings to pass His act, His strange act"—His act of judgment: but as soon as that is accomplished, they will ascend with Him into heaven—their home and His home, thence as "the saints of the high places" and "the host of the heavens" (names given to them in Daniel) to reign with Christ over all things.

This branch of the subject, however, we will for the present, leave. For a moment I turn aside to advert to an argument which although often refuted is still extensively used, and perplexes the minds of many. It is asserted that the Scripture marks as two distinct events, the coming (*παρουσία*—*parousia*) of the Lord, and His Epiphany or manifestation. The Scripture, it is said, recognises believers as remaining on the earth until “the coming” (*παρουσία*) of the Lord, and we are commanded to wait for “His coming;” but for His Epiphany (say they) we are not to wait, because we are to be removed at His coming, which is long to precede His Epiphany.* Such is the statement. It is a very intelligible statement. But is it true?

Its truth may easily be tested. If it were true, we should be unable to point out one single passage of Scripture that recognises believers as remaining on the earth until either “the Epiphany,” or “the manifestation,” or “the revelation” of the Lord: three distinct expressions, all used in the Scripture, and all equally implying *publicity*. If we are to be removed from the earth *before* the Epiphany of Christ, it is evident that the Scripture can *no where* either state or imply that we are to remain in the earth

* I say “long,” because, according to this system, the rise of Antichrist and all the events of his reign are to be subsequent to the Coming of the Lord, and to intervene between His Coming and His Epiphany.

until the Epiphany. If we can point out *one* passage that speaks of believers being in the earth until the Epiphany, the whole argument is disproved, and the system connected with it falls.

Let us turn then to the first Epistle of Timothy. There we find these words: "keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the Epiphany (*ἐπιφάνειας*) of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in His times He shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. (1 Tim. vi. 14.) This passage does of itself determine the question. It proves that we are to remain in the earth until the Epiphany, for it is very obvious that we should not be charged to observe the commandment given in this Epistle "UNTIL the Epiphany" if we were to be removed *before* the Epiphany.

Again, in 1 Thess. i. 6, the Apostle expressly speaks of the period at which God will grant "rest" or "relief" (*ἀνεσθι*) from suffering, to His tried and persecuted saints. Does he say that it is to be granted previously to the time when the Lord is revealed in glory? No. He says expressly that it is to be granted "WHEN the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance." Nothing can be more precise and determinate than the words of this passage. Shall we after reading it still venture to affirm that the saints will be removed into their rest *before* the revelation of the Lord in glory?

Nor is there throughout the Scripture one passage that does not harmonize with these texts. The Scriptures both of the Old and New Testaments, with one voice, bid us expect the coming of our Lord in manifested glory. Sometimes it is called "the coming,"—sometimes "the revelation,"—sometimes "the Epiphany" or "appearing," sometimes "the manifestation" of the Lord. The terms vary, but they all, either because of the context, or in virtue of their own signification, designate an Advent in visible glory. The first place in the New Testament in which the word "coming" is found as applied to the Second Advent of our Lord, is Matthew xxiv. There the disciples asked, "What shall be the sign of thy *coming* and of the end of the age?"—and there the Lord after telling them that a period of brief but unequalled tribulation in the land of Israel is to be the immediate precursor and sign of His "coming," goes on to say that His "coming" will not be secret but as the lightning. "Wherefore if they shall say unto you, behold, he is in the desert; go not forth; behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shining even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Will any one after reading this passage venture to affirm that the word "coming" is appropriated in the Scripture to a *secret* Advent of the Lord, and that His Advent *precedes* the time of the

unequalled tribulation? If we are commanded to wait for His coming, we are at the same time told that that coming is to be as "the lightning shining from the east unto the west." Can any words be more determinately expressive of diffused manifestation. They are in strict accordance with the words already quoted from the Thessalonians. "He shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God."*

In 1 Cor. i. 7, we find the Corinthians described

* Not only is "the coming (*ἡ παρουσία*) of the Lord" said to be as the lightning—visible to all, but in the following passage it is expressly connected with the visitation of the ungodly world. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the COMING (*ἡ παρουσία*) of the Son of man be." For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking . . . and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the COMING (*ἡ παρουσία*) of the Son of man be. In the commencement of the next chapter this COMING is connected with the separation of the wise and foolish virgins, that is, the end of Christendom. How then can it be said that "the coming" of the Lord affects the saints only?

They who have affirmed so strongly that the saints are to wait for the "coming" of Christ—not for the Epiphany, seem to have forgotten that the word "coming" is that which the Lord has chosen to denote His appearing throughout the xxiv. of Matthew—that very chapter which they are so anxious to take away from us, as if it were not addressed to us, but to Jews. If arguments such as these command acceptance, we shall have to say at last, that we are not to wait for any coming of the Lord which the Scripture mentions, but for some other coming which the Scripture does not mention.

as "waiting for the revelation (*αποκαλυψιν*) of the Lord Jesus Christ." "Revelation" is a word that emphatically indicates *manifestation*. It implies the drawing aside or removal of every thing that veils or hides, and therefore it is always opposed to concealment or secrecy, as in the following passage: "there is nothing *covered* that shall not be *revealed*." Were the Corinthians blamed by the Apostle because they waited for the revelation of the Lord? Were they told that they should wait, not for His revelation but for His coming, as if they were distinct events? No. They were praised because they waited for His "revelation." It was spoken of as an evidence of the grace that had been given them.

In 1 John iii. 2, we read, "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." The word "appear" is sufficiently indicative of *manifestation*. "When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall *appear* in his glory." A stronger word, however, than "appear" is used in the passage. The literal meaning of the word translated "appear," is "*to be manifested*." "It is not yet manifested what we shall be; but we know that when He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Can any words more simply declare that the time when we are to be changed into the likeness of our Lord and to see Him as He is, is the time of His mani-

festation, and not a period antecedent thereunto? In another passage (2 Tim. iv. 8), we find the saints described as those who love their Lord's "Epiphany," because that Epiphany brings them their long hoped for rest, and joy, and glory. To wait for His "coming," therefore, is the same thing as waiting for His glorious Epiphany.

I have already referred to 1 Thess. iv. : "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God," as words that in the fullest sense indicate *manifestation*. But what is the immediate result of this manifestation? In the first place, all who have fallen asleep in Christ, from Abel downwards, arise in glory. Millions of saints, even "a multitude whom no man can number of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues," shall suddenly rise from their graves glorified according to the glory of their Lord, and so be presented to the trembling and astonished eyes of men. "The dead in Christ shall rise first." The living saints too, shall in the twinkling of an eye be changed. And *afterwards* (for "afterwards" [επειτα] is the word used, indicating a certain interval however brief)—afterwards the changed and the raised saints together, shall be caught up in the clouds (the angels having been sent to gather them, Matthew xiii. and xxiv. 31) to meet and to come with their Lord. Can there be this display of the Lord's glory, and of the angels' glory, and of the saints' glory, and yet

the earth be ignorant that the hour of its visitation has come? When at the midnight hour the light which Gideon's host had hidden, was suddenly set free from its earthen prison, was its brightness concealed? Did it not flash terror into the hearts of all the hosts of Midian? So shall it be also when, in the saints, mortality shall be swallowed up of life: when the light that has been so long time hidden in them as earthen vessels (for Christ is in them the hope of glory) shall suddenly shine forth in its brightness and confront those mighty ones of the earth who shall have been gathered to "the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Moreover, the saints are not to be removed until "the end of the age." This is sufficiently proved by the parting words of our Lord: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age." The Lord could not have said that He would be with His servants "*until* the end of the age," if they were to be removed from the earth *before* "the end of the age." And He has Himself defined "the end of the age" to be the period when He will send forth His angels to separate those who nominally profess His name, from those who are in truth His people. "*The harvest is the end of the age*, and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be at the end of this age. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom (Christendom) all things that offend, and them

which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”*

It is very evident from this passage, that when the saints (the wheat) are removed from the earth, all who nominally profess the name of Christ (the *tares*) are at the same moment removed also, so that Christendom—all Christendom, suddenly ceases to exist at the very moment when the saints

* I have already observed (see “Occasional Papers,” No. I., p. 52) that in this passage the Lord is not speaking of *Heathendom*, for the Heathen, seeing that they do not *profess* His name, do not belong to this harvest-field. They are neither “wheat” nor “tares.” Nor is He speaking of the Jews, for they too reject the profession of His name. Nor is He speaking of the Ten Kingdoms of the Roman World, for they (whatever they may afore have been) will at that time be gathered in infidel blasphemy around Antichrist; openly rejecting the name both of Jehovah and of Christ. The “wheat” and “tare”-field is the emblem only of Christendom (Christ’s kingdom). When the Lord descends with His holy angels into the air, the first dealing of His hand will be with *it*. Before He deals either with the Jews or with the Heathen, or with the Antichristian nations, He will gather *out of His kingdom* (to which neither Jews, nor Heathen, nor the Antichristian nations will belong, or profess to belong) all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and cast them into a furnace of fire. Thus Christendom will end.

It should be observed that “the wheat,” *i.e.*, true believers, are not said to be gathered out of Christ’s kingdom, neither is His kingdom said to be destroyed or removed from the earth. On the contrary, His saints (the wheat) being changed and glorified, are removed into the heavenly branch of His kingdom; and converted Israel and others will be brought into its earthly branch.

are taken from the earth. Could this take place secretly? Could the world be unconscious of, or unaffected by, such an event as the disappearance of the whole of Christendom? Even if there were to be no display of the glory of Christ, or of the angels, or of the saints, yet how marvellous and astounding a sight, to behold all Christendom suddenly vanish. Will it not be so when the wheat and *tares* are reaped?

If then we were to adopt the doctrines of this strange theory, we should be obliged to say that Antichrist, whose history constitutes the leading feature in the last days of this present age, is not revealed until after the age has terminated. For if (as is asserted) the saints are to be removed from earth before Antichrist is revealed, and if (as we know from Scripture) they will not be taken till the end of the age (Matt. xiii.) when "wheat and tares" are both removed and Christendom ceases to exist, it is obvious that if we adopt the supposition referred to, we must say that Antichrist is to be revealed after Christendom has ceased to exist, and after the age of evil in which he is to act is ended. Will any one, on reflection, affirm this?"*

* Some have endeavoured to avoid the force of this argument by suggesting that the words, "end of age," may mean an indefinitely lengthened period. But no period can be more definitely marked: "THE HARVEST is the end of the age; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this age. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall

It is very evident that if Antichrist is not to be revealed until after the wheat and tares have been removed, he never will be revealed at all: for the greater part of the Ten Kingdoms of the Roman World which will form the very basis and strength of his power, are at present a part of "the wheat and tare" field. At present they form a part of Christendom, and so will continue until they are *by him* seduced from their professed allegiance to Christ. Antichrist is he who will detach the Roman World (την οικουμενην) from Christendom. If therefore Antichrist is not to arise until after "the wheat and tares" have been removed, the Ten Kingdoms will not have been detached from Christendom at the time when Christendom ends, and therefore will pass away with it. In that case it would be impossible for Antichrist to take the headship of the Roman World, because the greater part thereof as well as the whole of the rest of Christendom would have ceased to exist before he appears. It is, therefore, impossible that the apostasy of the Ten Kingdoms of the Roman World under Antichrist, should be *subsequent* to the resurrection of the saints. The Scripture again and again reiterates that the resurrection of the saints takes place, not before his rise, but at the time of his destruction. The

gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Is Antichrist to arise after this?

Scripture too uniformly connects the resurrection and glory of the Church of the first-born ones, with the hour when the veil shall be taken from the heart of Israel, and they shall "know the Lord:" and that will not be until Antichrist, and all in which unregenerate man has hitherto gloried, shall have sunk, never to rise again. See Dan. xii. 1.

Very important light is often afforded by the quotations made by the Apostles from the Old Testament Scriptures. Thus in 1 Cor. xv. after speaking of our final change when "in the twinkling of an eye this corruptible shall put on incorruption," the Apostle adds, "THEN shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." These words are a quotation from Isaiah xxv.—a chapter altogether devoted to the description of the joy and triumph of forgiven Israel in the day when they shall 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." In the midst of the enumeration of the honours and blessings of Israel in that day, these words, "death is swallowed up in victory," suddenly occur. They insert, so to speak, the words of the Apostle in the Corinthians into the midst of the twenty-fifth of Isaiah. They connect the hour of our resurrection with the day of Israel's forgiveness. They teach us that the day of the glorification of the heavenly branch of

the Israel of God, so far from being the time when the earthly Israel is delivered over to Antichrist and abomination, is on the contrary, the hour of Zion's triumph, the hour when God will receive the spared of Israel into recognised and everlasting forgiveness. The day of the receiving back of Israel and of their restoration to their "olive tree," is always spoken of in the Scripture as a day especially honoured of the Lord. The resurrection of "the Church of the first-born" will be part of the honour of that day. "If the casting away of them (Israel) be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but *life from the dead*." (*ζωή εκ νεκρῶν*.) The Church of the first-born will rise as "the first-fruits," showing the character of that heavenly glory to which all the believing House of Israel shall finally be conformed. We can easily understand, therefore, why the time when in us mortality is to be swallowed up of life, should be referred to as it is in the twenty-fifth of Isaiah.

In Isaiah xxvi. also, where Israel are addressed with reference to the day of their forgiveness, we again find the resurrection of the saints referred to. "Thy dead" (the dead saints of Israel) "shall live: my dead body, they shall arise: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead." If the chapter in which these words occur be examined, it will be seen in what close relation the resurrection of Christ's mystical body ("my dead body," as He is pleased

to call His sleeping saints) stands to the day of Israel's joy.

In Dan. xii. also, the resurrection of the saints is thus plainly referred to. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." But when is this to be? Is it at the time when Antichrist is about to arise, and Israel to be delivered over to him and to abomination? No. It is the time when the career of Antichrist (see Dan. xi.) shall be finished—when he shall have come to his end, and none shall help him. **THEN** it is that Michael will stand up to deliver Israel: **THEN** it is the sleeping saints will awake to life, and shine as the brightness of the firmament for ever. The Scripture everywhere delights to bring into closest connexion these two events—the glorification of the heavenly branch and the forgiveness of the earthly branch of the one Israel of God. The notion that Zion is to become the sphere of Antichrist's glory, and Jerusalem the sphere of his abominations *after* the resurrection of the saints, is a thought contradicted by every part of Scripture.

It would indeed be a strange result of the sounding of "the *last* Trump"—that Trumpet which is to indicate the *establishment in the earth in connexion with Israel* of that new covenant of

grace under which Israel and the nations are to be manifestly blessed—it would be a strange thing if that Trumpet which is to announce to Israel and the earth, that the day of man has ended, and the day of the Lord come, should be followed by the triumph of human evil under Antichrist, and by the giving over of Israel and the leading nations of the earth to wickedness and blasphemy! Yet this must be so, if Antichrist is to be revealed after the saints are glorified at the sounding of the “last Trump.”* But it is not so. The day on which that Trumpet sounds shall be the day on which “there shall come out of Zion the deliverer, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” Never after the day on which the saints rise, will Zion be made the home—much less the throne of evil. It will be recognised and rejoiced in as the mountain of the Lord where He will make to all peoples a feast of fat things, and destroy the veil that at present rests upon the nations, and manifest Zion in all those connexions of glory to which Psalm lxviii. 15 : Heb. xii. 22 : and Rev. xiv. 1, refer. Such will be the condition

* Called the “last Trump” with reference to that which sounded at Sinai when Israel were formally brought under the first covenant. “There were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud upon the Mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.” The last Trump will sound when Israel shall be formally brought under the second covenant. It will be the *last* Trump; because the second covenant is everlasting. It will be superseded by no other.

of glory that awaits Zion as soon as the Trumpet sounds and calls "the Church of the first-born ones" into their heavenly glory. The first resurrection, and the forgiveness of Israel, and the making on Zion "for all nations a feast of fat things," are consecutive and connected links in the one golden chain of blessing.

We are taught in the Acts, that the Lord Jesus is to remain in heaven "until the times of restitution of all that God hath promised by the mouth of all his holy prophets." How could this be true if the coming of the Lord Jesus from heaven is to be followed, not by "the times of restitution," but by the glory of Antichrist? There is little likeness between the day of Antichrist, and "the times of restitution."

Again, in Psalm cx., we read; "Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I shall have set thy foes a footstool for thy feet." How could this be true if when the Lord descends from heaven into the air, instead of finding His foes set as a footstool before Him, He were to find Israel and the nations about to enter on their last career of evil under Antichrist? The triumph of evil is not the same thing as its destruction.

Again, we read in the Revelation that among the saints who rise in the first resurrection, are especially mentioned those who have "not worshipped the Beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark." How could this be true if the first resurrection were to take place before Anti-

christ, and his image, and name were known? There cannot be two first resurrections.

Questions such as these might be almost indefinitely multiplied; but I forbear. All such difficulties vanish the moment we receive the truth again and again declared in Scripture, that the day of Israel's forgiveness is that on which the saints of all past dispensations will rise in glory—"a first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb." The day on which the cankered Gentile olive branch (that which we now call Christendom) is broken out of the Olive tree, because it has not continued in God's goodness—that self-same day shall see Israel grafted back into their own Olive tree. The day on which all Christ's true saints shall be translated from the earthly into the heavenly branch of the kingdom of God, shall see Israel brought into the earthly branch of that Kingdom. Whilst the earth remains, the Olive tree shall never lack branches, nor the Kingdom of heaven, subjects.

If we watch the signs of the times, we cannot suppose that the reign of Antichristian infidelity is very distant. Latitudinarianism is fast destroying the barriers which revelation has reared against the licentiousness of human thought; and when those barriers have been destroyed, that which the Scripture terms "lawlessness" (*anomia*) must be the result: and lawlessness is to be headed up in the Lawless one (*ὁ ἀνομος*). To him the whole Roman World, Eastern and Western, will give its glory. That part of the earth, therefore, which

hitherto has been and which will be, till "the end of the age, the home and the centre of civilization—the spring and the pivot of the world's energies, will become utterly APOSTATE. It will utterly reject God as revealed in Christ: God as the Jehovah of Israel: and God as the Creator. The patience of God will wait until Antichrist and the nations who are with him (see Psalm lxxxiii.) shall say of Israel, "Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance:" He will wait until that nation which He has chosen to show forth His praise in the earth, shall be in the very jaws of the devouring lion, but then He will wait no longer. The time of recompense for the controversies of Zion will have come. The throne of the Ancient of days will be set in heaven. He will sit in solemn inquisition on the nations who have given themselves to Antichrist and to Apostasy. Sentence will be passed upon them. The Son of man will be brought before the Ancient of days and invested with that administrative power over the nations which, till then, has been delegated to man. Voices shall be heard in heaven, saying, "The sovereignty of the world hath become the sovereignty of our Lord and of his Christ." Christ formally assumes (Dan. vii.) the government of Israel and of the earth, and so the Day of Christ begins. It begins not in earth but in heaven: for it is in heaven, not on earth, that the Son of man is brought before the Ancient of days, and there,

unseen by mortal eyes, assumes His millennial power.

But He assumes it in order that He may cut short the reign of evil. He assumes it in order that He may inflict the sentence that had been pronounced in heaven upon the blasphemies of Antichrist and the Apostate nations. Instantly, therefore, the tokens that immediately precede His appearance in glory will be seen. "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon earth distress of nations in perplexity at the roar of the sea and of the surge,* men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." These signs may be regarded as concomitant with the time when the Son of man is invested in heaven with His millennial power. It is evident that they are the immediate precursors of the appearance of the Lord in glory, for as soon as "they begin to come to pass," we are commanded to look up and lift up our heads, because our redemption draweth nigh. The Lord, accompanied by the holy angels, will descend from heaven into the air. Thence He shall send forth His angels; (Matt. xiii. & xxiv.) "tares and wheat" will be alike removed from the earth, and thus Christendom will end. All who profess His name, whether falsely or truly, will be taken from the earth: the latter changed and

* *Και επι της γης συνοχη εθνων εν απορια ηχους θαλασσης και σαλου.* See TREGILLES' Ancient Greek Text.

glorified, and caught up to meet Him in the air; thence to accompany Him to the earth. His feet will stand on Olivet: He will tread in the wine-press of wrath His apostate adversaries: Israel shall be purged and forgiven, and the reign of Christ manifestly commence on earth. On the same day, therefore, He will come *for* and *with* His saints, who will then accompany Him to His heavenly home where the order of the heavenly branch of His kingdom and all connected with the heavenly city will be established, while scattered Israel is being re-gathered, partly by the instrumentality of the spared heathen nations, to their earthly city, preparatory to their receiving there the order and glory appointed for them as the regulating centre of the earth's government.

Such in brief outline is the order of events clearly revealed in Scripture. If we watch, that is, observe the appointed signs (and there is no other way of watching in the sense in which watch is used in Scripture), we shall not indeed know either the day or the hour of the Lord's appearing, but we shall know when it is near, even at the doors. Nothing can be more plain than the promise of our blessed Lord as to this. "So likewise ye when ye shall see all these things come to pass, know ye that it is near, even at the doors. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."*

* Revelation xix. 11, has sometimes been quoted in proof that the saints will be in heaven, glorified, *previously* to the manifes-

tation of the Lord in glory. But it must be remembered that throughout of the Revelation we have continually presented to us in heaven, visions which have for the sphere of their fulfilment, not heaven but earth; the great object of the Revelation being to teach us to contemplate in heavenly aspects, things that are to have earth, not heaven as the sphere of their manifestation. Thus, when "the woman clothed with the sun," &c. (see Rev. xii.), was seen by John crying and travailing in birth, &c., the scene of *the vision* was heaven, but the *place of fulfilment* is to be earth. *There* her sorrow and travail is to be. So, also, the *ten-horned Dragon* was seen in heaven, but the place of his action, through the ten kingdoms, represented by his *ten horns*, will be earth. The like may be said of "the horses" seen in the sixth chapter. The place of the vision was heaven: the place of the fulfilment, earth.

The object of the vision in Rev. xix. 11, is not to teach us respecting a condition that attaches to Christ or to His saints *before* He quits heaven to execute judgment; for in that case He could not have been seen "*clothed with a vesture dipped in blood.*" This is a description incapable of being applied to the Lord until He has begun "to tread the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God:" and that will not be until He has descended to earth. (Compare Is. lxiii. and Rev. xix.) The object of the vision is not to teach us respecting a condition that attaches to the Lord whilst in heaven, but to teach us what will be the character of His acting at the time of His return to earth. Then, indeed, He can be described as "clothed with a vesture dipped in blood," for He will be revealed taking vengeance: His saints will follow Him when He is thus engaged in treading the wine-press, for they will meet Him *in the air*, and fall into the train of His glory there.

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