
**THE
APPROACHING
END**

AS GOD HAS FORETOLD IT

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RAPIDITY marks the day. Great changes are developing with uncontrollable speed. A momentous crisis is at hand. But we are not left in the dark; we have God's revealed mind about it.

History can relate what *has* been; speculation guess what *may* be; God alone can reveal what *shall* be; and this He has done. What is more, He has challenged the contradiction of coming generations by recording it in SCRIPTURE. Mark the majesty of His words: "I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isa. 46: 9, 10). Let unbelief cavil as it may, faith's response is bold and unwavering.

“Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” (Num. 23: 19).

Prophetic testimony is the record of the final triumph of *God's* will over the devil's use of *man's*. “To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen” (Rom. 16: 27). It is JESUS who is the substance of every past foreshadowing, the glory of every future purpose. “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev. 19: 10).

A powerful search-light at a ship's mast-head may bring much to view that lies in her course, but only *up to the horizon*. Beyond that it can discover nothing. God has seen the whole of this world's course to its finish; and by means of the *lamp* He has furnished, we too may see to the end, and how that end will be reached. To the shining of this 'search-light' there is no horizon-limit. Of it the apostle Peter writes, “Whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until

the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (2 Pet. 1: 19).

To discover the pole-star the mariner needs no scarch-light, but for the exposure of dangers in his course he needs one every hour of the night. So with the Christian. Nothing should come between his heart and the "Day Star" [or, Morning Star (J.N.D. Version)], and to see its shining he needs no prophetic lamp. But in this "dark place" destructive perils abound, and as the night continues they will increase. And if God has foreseen these dangers and provided a light to expose them, His Spirit may well say, "*Ye do well that ye take heed.*" Many have *not* taken heed to it, and are ignorantly holding to a course in which shipwreck is inevitable. Like "just Lot," their righteous soul may be "vexed ... from day to day" (2 Pet. 2: 7, 8) by what they see and hear. But, alas, not seeing the foretold end, nor the present deadly effect of their example upon their children and others, they remain in *association* with

known evil. Oh, that they would hearken to the appeal of Love divine! "*Come out of her, my people:*" "*Come out from among them, and be ye separate;*" "*Follow me;*" "*Depart from iniquity;*" "*Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart*" (Rev. 18: 4; 2 Cor. 6: 17; John 21: 19; 2 Tim. 2: 19, 22).

SECRETS OF THE FUTURE MADE KNOWN

"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant" (Ps. 25: 14).

Now that Jesus is glorified and the Holy Ghost come, secrets have been revealed respecting the following:

1. *The end of Jewish dispersion.*
2. *The end of Gentile government.*
3. *The end of the Church on earth.*

In unfolding His secrets God makes His own choice of servants.

We shall have to look at four: *Joseph* the patriarch, *Daniel* the prophet, *John* the

apostle of the Word made flesh, and *Paul* the apostle of the glorified Christ.

But in addition to these there is Another, a perfect Servant, of whom God could say, centuries before He appeared, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth" (Isa. 42: 1; Matt. 12: 18). Unmistakable features of this Servant can be traced in each of the others. For example:

All were specially loved. JOSEPH was loved more than all his father's children. DANIEL was told by Gabriel, "Thou art greatly beloved." JOHN was "the disciple whom Jesus loved." PAUL could say of the Son of God, "Who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gen. 37: 3; Dan. 9: 23; John 21: 7; Gal. 2: 20).

All were specially hated. (See Gen. 37: 4; Dan. 6: 4; Rev. 1: 9; 1 Cor. 4: 9-13.)

All were marked by separation. In heart and ways they were entirely apart from the defilement around. Joseph was apart from the evil of his brothers, and fled from

adulterous wickedness. Daniel refused to defile himself with the king's meat. John warns solemnly against the world. Paul was crucified to it, and it to him (Gen. 39: 9; Dan. 1: 8; 1 John 2: 15–17; 5: 19; Gal. 6: 14).

All suffered expulsion. Joseph was a prisoner in Egypt, Daniel a captive in Babylon, John in banishment at Patmos, Paul a prisoner in Rome.

But now think of the Perfect Servant! Who so truly beloved? Who so bitterly hated? Who so absolutely separate? Who so wickedly banished? Precious Redeemer!

Not only does God make His own choice of servants, He has His own choice of methods also. Let us pause to admire them.

Each of the first two servants came into God's secrets through *dreams*—a heathen king's dream and his own. The last two received theirs by *direct revelation*. But all four go to illustrate and confirm the truth that it was outside the sphere of *man's will*. "Prophecy came not in old time by the will

of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1: 21). In 1 Corinthians 2: 9, 10, what God makes known by *revelation* is put in direct contrast to that which the "eye" and "ear" and "heart" of man can reach by *investigation*. So with a dream.

A *dream* is an impression made on man's mind when *not under the control of his will*. No one can decide beforehand what he *will* dream, or what he will not; nor can he *at will* repeat a dream. This was proved to Nebuchadnezzar.

What does this teach us? If God can hold man's will in abeyance in making a purpose known, He can as easily do the same in carrying that purpose out.

JEWISH DISPERSION, AND ITS PREDICTED END

What a remarkable people! How unlike any other! Wandering everywhere, permanently settling nowhere, their identity rarely lost anywhere! Who can deny that Scripture has

spoken this concerning them: “They shall be wanderers” (Hos. 9: 17), but “not ... reckoned among the nations” (Num. 23: 9)? If they have been kept out of their own land, and more bitterly persecuted than any other nation on the face of earth, it is only another fulfilment of what they were told would be the result of their disobedience more than 1400 years before Christ, and while still on their way to the Promised Land. “I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate and your cities waste.” But they were *also* told that the day would come when they would be brought to own their iniquity. “Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob ... and I will remember the land.” “The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them” (Lev. 26: 33, 42, 43). Who can deny that the land *has* been left desolate without them? Who can deny that thousands of Jews (though still in unbelief as to their Messiah)

are now returning, and nearly all engaged in agriculture? clear indication that the land's rest from cultivation is well-nigh over, and God's promise, "*I will remember the land,*" not forgotten.

But to this day as a nation they are without a king or prince to reign over them; without civil government to legislate for them; without army or navy to defend them. Yet they still exist as one distinct nationality. Religiously they are without an image or false god, and without a priest to offer sacrifice to the true God. Yet they abide; and "shall abide" until *God's* end is reached. What shall that end be? The righteous remnant shall be brought to welcome their rightful King whom once they "pierced," though just before His second advent the mass who claim to be the nation will be deceived by the "false prophet," "*the man of sin,*" the "*antichrist,*" and for a short space will receive him.

Nearly 780 years before Christ—that is, more than 2600 years ago—the prophet Hosea

thus wrote: "The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim." (Where is the caviller today that can deny its fulfilment?) Then the prophet adds, "Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days" (Hos. 3: 4, 5).

But beside many foretellings, God has recorded most striking *foreshadowings* of the end of Israel's dispersion. In Joseph's two dreams we have a lovely type of Him to whom every knee in heaven and earth shall bow. The "sheaves" (things on earth), and "the sun, and the moon and the eleven stars" (things in heaven) all do obeisance to him. To be rejected by his brethren and sold as a slave did not look much like the fulfilment of such dreams. But the interpretation of Pharaoh's dream is made the means of giving effect to Joseph's own dreams. Joseph is

made lord of "all the land of Egypt;" and before him they cry, "Bow the knee." He is appointed chief administrator of Egypt's plenty for all the nations round about!

What a beautiful foreshadowing of the fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham—"In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." But *before* this time—"before the years of famine came"—Joseph was given Asenath as his Gentile bride. Another kind of picture is here—a foreshadowing of the Church's union with Christ which *precedes* Israel's discovery of His exaltation (Gen. 41: 45; Jer. 30: 7.) How perfect is Scripture, and blind the eye that cannot see it.

GENTILE GOVERNMENT AND ITS END

There is a vast difference between law-making and governing. *Law* expresses a ruler's will; *government* demands observance.

Without government, wickedness would be allowed a free hand and the world be

made unbearable. Before the Flood there was no government, and the earth was filled with violence, grieving God at His heart (Gen. 6: 5–13).

After the Flood God instituted government; violence must now be restrained, and human life respected. “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed” (Gen. 9: 6). Inquisition for blood was placed in *man’s* hand, and God supported him in it; hence, probably, the expression so widely known, ‘Murder will out’ (see Acts 28: 4).

THE NECESSITY FOR GOVERNMENT points to its use—the restraint of lawlessness and the support of well-doing. “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well” (1 Pet. 2: 13, 14).

In order to rightly appreciate God’s *present use* of government, we must bear in mind

that it is only a *temporary* provision until the sceptre is given to “the Prince of Peace.” “Of his kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1: 33). In the meantime, God has two objects of interest on the earth—ISRAEL and the CHURCH. Take a simple illustration. A farmer has seed in his granary. Though making no *present* use of it, he will, on no consideration, part with it. He intends to sow it in a certain field, and only waits for the harvesting of *another* crop, one of very peculiar interest, growing in the same field. He has a stake in both, and both will he preserve. But it is the *growing* crop that engages his special attention for the time being.

So with the concerns of the Great Husbandman. The natural seed of Abraham must wait until the Church is gathered home. The apostle of the Gentiles could say, “The Lord ... will preserve me unto his *heavenly* kingdom” (2 Tim. 4: 18). But a remnant of the Jewish nation will be preserved for the *earthly* kingdom.

Notwithstanding all the enemy has done to spoil it, the presence of the Church on earth is a precious reality to Christ. God's eternal purposes are connected with it. When the due season comes, it will be taken to heaven suddenly, and the field cleared by judgment of every noxious weed. This done, He will cause the preserved of Jacob to "take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit" (Rom. 9: 29; Isa. 27: 6).

On account of these two objects of interest, and until His designs for both are accomplished, God will have the world kept in a measure of order: though, if He sees it necessary, He may, "as the eagle stirreth up her nest," permit persecutions, or national conflicts, or commercial upheavals, to prevent their *settling down*, for they are neither yet in their destined position. Israel's place is *Canaan*; the Church's home is heaven; and God is behind the scenes acting for both. He could use Claudius Cæsar to disturb the

Jewish “nest” at Rome, in order to find suitable lodgings for a heavenly stranger at Corinth (see Acts 18: 1, 2).

GOD’S IDEAL IN GOVERNMENT is to have all power placed in the hands of ONE MAN—the one only HEAD (Eph. 1: 10; Ps. 2: 6–8).

He gave Nebuchadnezzar absolute control. But instead of using it for God’s glory and man’s blessing, he used it for his own glory and man’s destruction. In a little while absolute dominion shall be given to another Man—CHRIST. Then the whole earth will be filled with God’s glory; God’s will shall “be done in earth as it is in heaven;” and “men shall be blessed in *him*” (Ps. 72: 17, 19). With this before us, let us consider the significance of the IMAGE IN NEBUCHADNUZZAR’S DREAM.

In New Testament language it is thus expressed, “*The powers that be are ordained of God*” (Rom. 13: 1).

An image does not set *itself* up. It stands just where it is placed—a silent witness of the power and will of another. The thing

formed cannot dispute with the will that formed it (Rom. 9: 20).

In this image we get a glance at the whole scope of Gentile government as God fore-saw it to its end. Four great kingdoms or monarchies comprise the whole. These four imperial powers are represented in this image by the four chief materials that form it (Dan. 2: 38—43). The head is of *fine gold*, the breast and arms of *silver*, the belly and thighs of *brass*, the legs of *iron*, with a combination of “potters’ clay” at the lowest extremity—“the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay” (v. 42).

The whole is a graphic picture of the steady *decline* of imperial power. Nebuchadnezzar’s power was *absolute*. Fine gold represents it (Dan. 2: 38; 5: 18, 19). “Thou art *this head* of gold.” Succeeding powers are said to be more and more “*inferior*,” down to the toes. For example, the second in order, the Medo-Persian, is represented by silver; that is, “*inferior to thee*”—the

Babylonian (v. 39). It is important to take note of this, for we can only gauge the *present* whereabouts of Gentile government in the light of THE REAL SECRET OF ITS DECLINE.

It is said of Nebuchadnezzar, king of *Babylon*, "Whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive" (chap. 5: 19). But Darius the *Medo-Persian* could maintain no such supreme authority. He tried his utmost to deliver Daniel from death in the lion's den, but failed. What was the secret? It was *the intrusion of other wills*. A few princes and presidents had put their heads together to make a law that would serve their *own ends*, and then got the king to sign it. That principle has been gradually developing ever since; until today it is not a *few wills* backed up by royal assent, but *millions* of wills—wills strong and weak (iron and clay), wills combining and making their voice heard by representation, to make laws that suit *themselves*, and to which the king is expected to put his seal! When subjects *rule*

and kings are expected to *submit*, we are approaching the very antipodes of God's ideal, and, according to the image, *the end of Gentile government*.

But pause here a moment to notice one thing. The figure of "potters' clay" is associated in Scripture with *the supremacy of God's will over man's*. "Hath not the potter power over the clay? Who hath resisted *his will*?" GOD will have the last word, let men do what they may. He who set up Gentile government will, in His own time, set it aside for ever. It is when the utmost extremity of the "image" is reached that the "STONE cut out without hands" (that is, not of *man's* framing) will smite "the feet ... of iron and clay," and completely destroy the whole image, and the atoms will be carried away as the chaff is driven from the summer threshing-floor.

This will end Gentile government. "The times of the Gentiles," as the Lord speaks of it, will be over. But it will not be the end of Gentile *blessing*. In the day of Messiah's

reign something brighter and better than was ever known on earth is in the mind of the blessed God for the Gentile nations brought to bow to His beneficent sway. (See Isa. 66: 19, and Ps. 96: 10–13.) Happy day! Then will the “King of kings” make manifest to all created intelligences, that *God’s perfect will* and *man’s truest happiness* are bound up together.

THE STONE THAT SMITES THE IMAGE will fill the whole earth. Does the reader ask, What is the significance of this “STONE”? Four inspired witnesses agree in their testimony: *David*, in the Psalms (Ps. 118: 22), *Isaiah* (Isa. 8: 14, 15), the Apostles *Peter* (Acts 4: 11, 12) and *Paul* (Rom. 9: 33), all declare that the “STONE” is CHRIST. And this is confirmed by the Lord Himself (Luke 20: 17, 18). Speaking of His rejection and its solemn consequences, He says, “On whomsoever it [the Stone] shall fall, it will grind him to powder.” If, therefore, to have part with both the “image” and the descending

“Stone” will be an utter impossibility *then*, why try it *now*? To spend your best on that which is certain to be demolished is not true wisdom, and can only diminish your interest in the Kingdom which God has “set up” and “which shall never be destroyed” (Dan. 2: 44)—“a kingdom which cannot be moved” (Heb. 12: 28). How much better to take the blessed Saviour’s advice, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6: 33). One great help toward this is to see the import of DANIEL’S DREAM (Dan. 7).

In this dream the same four powers are brought before us, but this time under the figure of *four beasts*. We read, “These great beasts ... are four kings.” “The fourth beast shall be the fourth *kingdom*.” It is clear, therefore, that a “*beast*” is God’s symbol of *earthly government*; but the figure is not intended as any personal slight upon the king himself, for God says, “Honour the

king” (1 Pet. 2: 17). The first three powers are definitely named: *Babylonian*, *Medo-Persian*, and *Grecian*. The fourth and last—the *Roman Empire*—is named in the New Testament (Luke 2: 1). This power is by far the most important to us, not only because it is in existence today, but because it held sway during the lifetime of the Lord and His apostles, when God’s Kingdom *in the hearts* of men began to be set up (compare Dan. 2: 44, Luke 17: 21, John 3: 5). So that the way the Lord and His apostles acted towards Gentile government is definite light for the Church *now*, and will be to the end.

It was set up shortly before Christ’s *first* appearing, and will be ended by His *second*. As to territory under Roman sway, speaking generally, it included all the countries touched by the Mediterranean, together with their dependencies, of which Great Britain was one. This great Empire has since been divided into many kingdoms, but it will again be united under *one political head*, spoken

of in Revelation 13 as a beast rising out of the "sea," graphic figure of a state of things that can be neither *satisfied* nor *pacified* (Eccles. 1: 7; Isa. 57: 21). This crafty political upstart will endeavour both to satisfy and to pacify; and in those given over to the "strong delusion" will for a season succeed. He will be the devil's masterpiece of deceit and iniquity, and be endued with power from beneath. The "DRAGON" will give him his "power, and throne, and authority," and the mass will gladly hail his advent as *the very man they have been looking for!*

THE BEASTS. In the "image," as already noticed, the prominent idea seems to be the sovereignty of *God's will* in earthly government. In the "beasts," it is more the ravaging of *man's will*. The symbol is a simple one. With the exception of the fourth, they are all beasts of prey; *unclean*, but with *conquering* power.

Now, a beast naturally follows the bent of its own will, without any reference to God,

or even to man save for its own protection. But, all unknown to itself, you can make *use* of a beast's will for the accomplishment of yours. Take an illustration. A sheep-dog, being of a wolfish nature, takes delight in pursuing sheep. The shepherd knows how to make good use of this ravening beast; and what it imagines it is doing for its own pleasure is really for the welfare of the flock. But the shepherd keeps a keen eye; and should the dog be inclined to bite or harass, he instantly and energetically *overrules*.

The Lord Himself provides us with a key for the understanding of this figure of a "beast." The unjust judge in the parable "neither feared God, nor regarded man;" and a judge is clearly the representative of *governing power*. As a matter of justice, this judge disregarded the widow's appeal. It was only when her trouble gave *him* trouble that he interfered for her. As to *motive*, he served himself; in *result*, he served her. So with God's symbol.

Men in power may think they have hit upon some splendid stroke of policy, by which their own ends and their party's will be served. But they forget that, long before *their* scheme was thought of, *God* had secret designs of His own to further. By a hidden link with theirs, He can give effect to His own. The cat is no doubt gratified by the free access the farmer gives her to his granary. Devouring vermin suits her admirably, but allowing her to pursue her tastes serves the farmer's interests equally well. If governing powers will not by choice carry out God's will *consciously*, they shall, by the very force of their own wills, carry it out *unconsciously*.

If rulers are God-fearing men, all the better, but while things are in disorder, God does not *confine* Himself to good men for earthly government, though many blindly think He does. "The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to *whomsoever* he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men" (Dan. 4: 17). Mark, *not the*

best, but the "*basest*." Take a familiar example. One of the greatest boons in British history came to the nation through one of the basest of her kings. When, for his own ends, Henry VIII defied papal authority, the very Book which most condemned his wickedness was opened to millions of his subjects. By the will of God, however dark the monarch's motive, this was the bright result, an open Bible and full liberty to read it. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it *whithersoever* He will" (Prov. 21: 1). Even if there be a *combination* of powers, it is all the same. If ten kings at last combine to give their power to the beast and destroy the harlot, it will be because *God* puts it into their hearts to *fulfil His will* (Rev. 17: 16, 17). It was so at the beginning. "Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together." What for? Was it not for their own wicked ends? Yes. But in God's account it was "to

do *whatsoever* thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done” (Acts 4: 27, 28).

‘The very spear that pierced Thy side
Drew forth the blood to save.’

Weigh well those three words, “*whomsoever* he will,” “*whithersoever* he will,” “*whatsoever*” He predetermines.

‘Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign will.’

GOD HIMSELF OUR RESOURCE. In the midst of every form of modern upheaval, God would have the believer’s heart kept in perfect repose. GOD is for us. We are dependent on HIM, not on political or even international changes. “Consider the ravens,” “Consider the lilies”! How independent they are of acts of parliament, or the party in power to pass them. GOD cares for them. Yet how much better off is the saint who can say, “The LORD

is my Shepherd,” and, turning to Him with confidence, say, “My times are in THY hand!” Soon “the *government* shall be upon his shoulder.” Till then He will carry *us* upon *both* His shoulders. Great shakings and overturnings are to be expected—“I will overturn, overturn, overturn, ... until he come whose right it is” (Ezek. 21: 27; Heb. 12: 26–28). But the hand that has power to *shake*, has power to *keep*, and that hand holds us.

The Christian’s place at the beginning is the Christian’s place today; and that is, to submit to *man’s ruling* and to count on *God’s overruling*. This was Christ’s own place. What did He say to the politicians of His day? “Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s”—to earthly rulers, *submission*; to God the great Overruler, our *trust* (Matt. 22: 21). Who submitted as Jesus did? Who so trustfully committed Himself to God? But when did He interfere with this world’s government? NEVER. *When did God*

entrust the Church with governing power?
NEVER! To assume it is the spirit of Babylon (Rev. 17: 18). But for our good, providentially, He can use nation to restrain nation, party to curb party, candidate to defeat candidate, and quietly whisper to our trembling hearts, “*All things are for your sakes:*” “FAINT NOT:” “FEAR NOT” (2 Cor. 4: 15, 16; Luke 12: 32).

THE END OF THE CHURCH’S HISTORY HERE

Two facts have great prominence in the New Testament: the Church *as God has formed it*, and the Church *as man has corrupted it*. Each will have an end of its own.

THE CHURCH AS GOD HAS FORMED IT had its beginning at Pentecost; but the full truth of what was then effected was not brought to light till later. In connection with the Church, God had a choice secret, hidden from all previous generations since the world began. Marvellous to say, the first to get any direct intimation of this *chief of secrets* was the

“*chief of sinners*” at his conversion. This secret is called “the great mystery,” and involves spiritual union between Christ in glory and those possessing His Spirit on earth. The Lord’s appeal to Saul of Tarsus showed that He regarded His saints as *part of Himself*. “Why persecutest thou ME?” This was the *first intimation* of the secret, but its *full revelation* was set forth later in Paul’s epistles (Rom. 16: 25, 26: Eph. 3: 3–12: 5: 23–33; Col. 1: 26, 27).

But it may rightly be asked, What about the necessary moral suitability of those to be united to a Person so holy, so glorious, so exalted as the One seated in the highest heavens?

To set our hearts at rest on this point another revelation was necessary, and the man who leaned upon “his bosom” was the one chosen to record it—the apostle John.

Those spoken of by John, before the cross and the coming of the Spirit, as “*Jesus and his disciples*,” are spoken of by Paul as

“*Christ and the church.*” Only that Gentiles had been included in this mystical union when Paul wrote this epistle (see Eph. 3: 3–6).

SUITABILITY FOR UNION. One thing we must bear in mind. Suitability for union does not, in the least degree, consist in what we are by *natural* birth. Cultivated or uncultivated, the natural man has no place whatever in this union. The bride (Rev. 21: 16) is figuratively seen as a city “four square.” But *nothing* of *nature’s* growth is four-square. A *workman* is supposed for that. In this case, however, no *human* workman either, for the city is as high as it is long. It is *God’s* workmanship, not of *old* material, but a *new creation* “*in Christ Jesus*” (Eph. 2: 10). It is only that which is of Christ formed in us by the Spirit that can be united.

But it may be asked, What about that which is still within us, born of the flesh? Blessed be God, this has not been overlooked. In *Christ’s death* it has already had its condemnation. It is Christ risen and

glorified who is the Head of the body, and those risen with Him are the members. This was manifestly in God's mind from the beginning. Adam's "deep sleep" preceded Eve's union with him. Compare John 12: 24.

Now then for the divine *declaration of suitability*, as John has recorded it for the comfort of "whosoever believeth in *him*." They have—

A spiritual origin. "Ye are of GOD, little children"—"born ... of God" (1 John 4: 4; John 1: 12, 13).

Spiritual affinity. Drawn by the Father, and attracted by the Son's uplifting, Christ becomes absolutely indispensable. This is the real mark of every true believer. In the sense of doing without Him, and His precious death, they *cannot* turn away from Him. "Lord, to whom shall we go?" in the mouth of Peter is the conviction of all (John 6: 44, 67, 68; 12: 32).

A new relationship. It was after He had risen from the dead and had met

condemnation on the cross that Jesus said to Mary, “Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God” (John 20: 17).

The same Spirit of life. The Victor out of death’s domain imparts His risen life. “He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.”

Freedom from stain. Pronounced “clean” —“clean every whit” (John 15: 3; 13: 10). Cleansed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, “from all sin” (1 John 1: 7).

Freedom from charge. “Your sins are forgiven you for his name’s sake” (1 John 2: 12). “Shall not come into condemnation” (John 5: 24).

Fitness assured. “Ye have an unction from the Holy One;” “The anointing which you have received” (1 John 2: 20, 27). God’s Spirit dwells in us and with us. We have “boldness in the day of judgment.” “As he

is, so are we in this world” (1 John 4: 17). And “when he shall appear, we shall be like him” (1 John 3: 2).

Mutual affections. Loved by the Father, loved by the Son. Loved *perfectly*, loved “unto *the end*”—*eternally*. “We love him, because he first loved us;” “Ye have loved me” (John 13: 1; 14: 21, 23; 16: 27; 17: 26; 1 John 4: 19).

The Son's choice. “Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John 15: 18, 19).

What perfect suitability! and the Head Himself has revealed it by His Spirit.

But suitability *in itself* is not union. It is left for Paul to bring this out. “By one Spirit are we all baptized into *one body*” (1 Cor. 12: 13). “He is the head of the body, the church” (Col. 1: 18). “We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones” (Eph. 5: 30). Note, here, the twofold action of the same Spirit. He *seals* countless multitudes

of individuals in view of the redemption of *their bodies*; but by the Spirit's baptism of believers "we all" become members of *Christ's body*, which is *one*. (Compare Rom. 8: 23; 1 Cor. 12: 13.) Every so-called 'sectarian body,' therefore, is a public denial of God's intent in the Spirit's baptism. "GOD hath set the members *every one of them* in the body, as it hath pleased him." And Christ will present the Church to Himself all-glorious, as "*one pearl of great price*," "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing"— "holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5: 27). This will be the *display* of our fitness in glory.

But for presentation in that place we must be absent from this. As with the risen Heir, so with the joint-heirs.

Jesus said, "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more" (John 14: 19). From the world's vision He disappeared; and the Church, as GOD has formed it, will have a sudden disappearance also. "The Lord

himself shall descend from heaven.” The dead in Christ shall be raised; then those alive on the earth shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and all caught up together to meet the Lord in the air! (See 1 Cor. 15: 51, 52; 1 Thess. 4: 16, 17.)

Pause, reader, and ask yourself one question, ‘Where will that separating hour find ME?’ Shall I be sharing the joyful celebrations above, or the appalling desolations below? The door of repentance will then be closed for all who have disobeyed the Gospel; but not closed for heathen Gentile nations who have *not* heard His fame. They will have an opportunity of hearing the joyful tidings of Israel’s coming King (Isa. 66: 19).

THE CHURCH, AS MAN HAS CORRUPTED IT, will surely have an end—an awful end! At present, the “spiritual” and the “corrupted” exist in the world together, with nothing in common but the *Name*.

Take an illustration. We have all seen boys forming a big ball of snow by rolling it along

some country lane, and often noticed a certain quantity of dirt picked up with it. Now snow is snow, and mud is mud; but a ball of snow, though it has lost its true character for snowy whiteness, we still call a 'snowball.' And no matter how closely the two things may seem connected, we do not in the last degree change our thoughts of either. Should the sun break out in power, particles of snow would be drawn away in vapour. They might disappear one day and be seen descending as spotless as ever the next. But if *all* the snow in that large ball should be attracted by the sun and disappear, what would be left? A heap of mud, only fit to be swept away. And this will be the actual end of corrupted Christian profession.

Three things are spoken of in Scripture as preceding the Lord's appearing to reign—a *falling away*, a *catching away*, and a *sweeping away*.

When we think of the Church at the beginning, and its spiritual plight today, it is

not hard to trace what Scripture foretold—namely, a great “falling away” (2 Thess. 2: 3; 2 Tim. 4: 3, 4). Professors in general are becoming *infidel* in their doctrines (“They shall turn away their ears from the truth”), *political* in their hopes (“supposing that gain is godliness”), and *pleasure-loving* in their practice (“lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God”) (1 Tim. 6: 5; 2 Tim. 3: 4). Sad indeed, but undeniable!

THE DEVIL’S REVIVAL is spreading everywhere—the revival of his first great lie.

“*Ye shall not surely die.*” (NO JUDGMENT FOR SIN, therefore NO ATONEMENT needed. Help to *reform* your *neighbour*, and leave the rest.)

“*Ye shall be as gods.*” (A bit of divinity in every man! Reduce the Bible to your own way of thinking; and no loss if you drop it altogether!)

Bad as this is, things will get still worse in the professing Church. “Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse” (2 Tim. 3: 13). And this *before* the truly converted

are “caught up” to meet Him. But the *worst* cannot come until His own have disappeared. The Spirit’s presence now restrains. When He departs, evil will quickly ripen for the sickle of judgment. (2 Thess. 2: 7; Rev. 14: 15, 19.)

Iniquity will take three forms:

1. *Corrupted Christianity*, in its sum total, will bear the name of “BABYLON THE GREAT—THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS,” figure of systematized *religious* wickedness. She is seen sitting upon the beast; that is, she takes the place of giving it direction. She apparently continues her political influence until the heads of government have gained their own ends by her means, then they will stand her religious sham no longer. They will *hate* her, and *strip* her, and *burn* her (Rev. 17: 16). This will be the *end* of what professing Christianity affianced to the power of the world is fast going on to. Where is there a contest for political ascendancy, and the

spirit of Babylon is not well to the front? What does the heated struggle mean? Is it not to decide who shall have the next chance of doing now what the "*harlot*," sitting on the "*beast*," will do in the end; that is, trying to influence the government for her own ends?

2. *Governing power will be completely under Satanic influence.* THE BEAST is described as "full of the names of blasphemy."

3. *The Jewish Antichrist*, also spoken of as "another beast," the "*wicked king*," the "*false prophet*," will appear in the Holy Land. He will sit in the temple and claim that he is GOD! (Dan. 11: 36, 37; 2 Thess. 2: 3-12.) He will be in close alliance with the *political* "beast," and be his equal in diabolical power. Both will be cut off together when the Lord appears in heavenly glory (Rev. 19: 11-20).

THE DAY APPROACHING. Years ago, an acquaintance of the writer's had a dog, which evidently knew, after a long absence of his

master, when his return was approaching. Again and again he would run to the garden gate, look down the road, and return with a whine of disappointment; or he would jump on a chair and, looking out of the window, rehearse his welcome in a bark. And this was kept up until his master's arrival.

But how did he *know* that his master's return was drawing nigh? He saw certain preparations going on: cleaning of rooms, airing of beds, etc., and had learnt on previous occasions what this meant.

So with those who love the Lord's appearing; who rejoice to think of the day when all the earth shall gladly bow to His sceptre, and "everything that hath breath" shall praise His name. They are plainly told in Scripture what will precede, and lead up to, "that day." Hence the more such characteristics become apparent, the more clearly can they "see the day approaching."

Preparations in the house referred to were entirely for the comfort and good pleasure

of the expected master, but in connection with the day of the Lord there are evidences of its approach to which our illustration as it stands would hardly apply—activities of *another* order, prompted by other motives: not the desire for, or joyful expectation of, His coming, but through an evil, self-gratifying wish that He would *delay* His coming.

But suppose, during this said master's long absence, that the management of his estate had been allowed to lapse into gross disorder through the unfaithfulness of the majority of his servants, and only a few standing loyal to his wishes. Suppose, further, he had written to say that, when things had reached the last extremity of confusion, he would return, *deal with the rebellious*, and take the management into his own hands; but that before making his appearance *publicly, before all*, he would, on landing, summon his loyal servants to meet him at the port, go into *their* matters first, and then return with them to the estate. This would

better set forth what will actually occur in connection with the Lord's coming *for us* and our subsequent appearing *with Him*.

WHY HIS COMING IS NOT A COMFORT. Many there are who seem to be disturbed, rather than comforted, by thoughts of the Lord's return. What accounts for this? Three things. A defective apprehension of what He accomplished at His *first* coming; confused ideas of His second coming; and friendship with the world that rejected Him.

1. Numbers who believe that Christ died for their *sins*, are perplexed about *indwelling sin*. Thinking they have to judge of their acceptance before God by what they see in themselves, they regard sin's presence as a serious defect in their *fitness*. But if this were so, no saint on earth would have fitness. To *deny* we have sin in us is to deceive ourselves (1 John 1: 8). To deny the necessity for its condemnation is to belittle God's righteousness. But *in Christ's death*, indwelling sin has already had its deserved judgment.

GOD "*hath made him to be sin for us*" (2 Cor. 5: 21) and in Him "condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8: 3). Our acceptance does not consist in what we can make *ourselves*. God says what *He* has made us in Christ; and faith agrees with Him. GOD "*hath made us accepted in the beloved*" (Eph. 1: 6). We can only admire what we find *in Christ*, and take sides with God in condemning the evil we find *in ourselves*. But it is only in the light of *God's* condemnation of sin that we can really read our *deliverance*; and only in what God finds in Christ we can rightly see our *acceptance*. "Ye are complete in HIM" (Col. 2: 10). In our "changed" or resurrection bodies we shall have no indwelling sin. We shall have bodies like His; and there is no sin in Him! Sin's *absence* will mark us then; its *presence*, with its *condemnation*, now.

2. Some confound His coming to take His saints *to* heaven (John 14: 3) with His appearing with His saints *from* heaven, to judge the world and reign in righteousness.

The very mention of saints coming *out* of heaven seems to amaze many. Yet how plainly it is spoken of in Scripture (Jude 14, 15; Col. 3: 4; 1 John 3: 2; 1 Pet. 5: 4). The *Saviour's work* and merit are our only title for going in; but that which will materially affect our position in coming out is *our work*. We should bear both in mind. If I speak of only expecting a place just inside heaven, I cannot be thinking of *His* merits or how far inside they took Him. I must rather be taking some account of my *own*. If by way of excusing myself for some unscriptural course, I say, 'Oh, it will not be asked what I belong to,' I am forgetting what *He will do before* He brings us out again (2 Cor. 5: 10). At His judgment-seat *our whole course, as believers, will be thoroughly gone into*; and this in view of being manifested with Him in the eyes of the world. Each one will occupy his own position in the kingdom; and this will be awarded by "the righteous judge" for faithful service during His absence. (See

Luke 19: 11–13; 1 Cor. 3: 8–15; 4: 5; 2 Tim. 4: 7, 8; Rev. 19: 8–10.)

FOR FITNESS TO GO IN, **NO** ACT OF SERVICE WILL COUNT. FOR REWARD, IN COMING OUT, **EVERY** ACT OF TRUE SERVICE WILL COUNT.

3. If His *love* has reached my heart, how could friendship with the world that hated and murdered Him be a fitting response to it? How could His coming be a comfort to one who is in close alliance with a world doing its best to get on merrily without Him?

If *you* have tasted His love, dear reader, *be true to it*. If you have not, *be true to yourself*, and come to Him. It is for your *soul* that the god of this world is bidding; and temporal gain his best price for it!

GEO. CUTTING

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