

F. H. ...

Bible Outlines

ON THE

Second Coming

By C. C. C.



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2. Is the World Getting Better or Worse?
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THE SEVEN DISPENSATIONS

THAT the Bible distinctly teaches that there are seven dispensations, each of which it also clearly describes, is to many even devout students of the Word an unknown truth. And the failure to apprehend these different epochs, and God's purpose in each, is undoubtedly the cause of much of the confusion of ideas concerning the teachings of the Bible which is everywhere apparent. Many Christians of superior intelligence make painful acknowledgment of their inability to understand and harmonize Scripture truth. We are convinced that these sad conditions are due to the omission of the simple premises here presented.

1. Notice first how marked is the difference between Adam's environment in Eden and his relationship to God, and any subsequent period in man's history. There was innocence in Eden, but it was the innocence of ignorance; for when testing came, Adam and Eve failed and were driven forth from their Paradise home. While doubtless quite brief in its duration, yet the residence of our first parents in Eden marks a distinct dispensation, and shows God dealing with man in a different manner than He has since done. The end of that dispensation reveals man a failure, and the execution of judgment upon him.

2. From the expulsion from Eden to the Flood is the second age. It covered a period of 1,656 years. By the fall man became possessed of the knowledge of good and evil, which gave his conscience a basis for right moral judgment. But notwithstanding this advantage, miserable failure marked his conduct. The age was one of outbreking wickedness. "All flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth," and the "wickedness of man was great on the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." The flood came. Man's second chance like the first became to him a curse, and ended in judgment.

3. After the deluge man was placed in authority upon the earth. Gen. 9:2. The new age brought him even greater privileges and opportunities than he possessed in the preceding one. How he prostituted these, and the judgment which came upon him in consequence are graphically narrated in Gen. 11:1-9. Flushed with pride and glorying in the arm of flesh, men completely ruled God out of their plans and thoughts, saying, "Let *us* build *us* a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven; and let *us* make *us* a name." But in quick judgment God confounded their speech and scattered them, and the close of another age—which had lasted 427 years—showed man an abject failure.

4. The next dispensation continued 430 years. It began with the call of Abraham from among the descendants of the scattered Babel builders. God's gracious promises to him and his posterity make this age distinctive, and

mark another advance in man's opportunities. But faithlessness and disobedience run like a serpent's trail through the history of this period. There was a gradual and steady decline in the character of the people from the high examples of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, until the ignorant and degraded race is found in slavery in Egypt.

5. Led forth by Moses, God's people enter a new dispensation—that of **Law**. It was promulgated on Sinai and designed for their guidance and blessing in Canaan. But the entire 1,500 years of that age show repeated and almost constant violations of God's will. Idolatry abounded until the captivity, and after the return, sins just as heinous in God's sight, until their iniquity culminated in the crucifixion of Christ. The judgment of the nation in the destruction of Jerusalem closed the age. Man again a failure.

6. The present dispensation is that of **Grace**. It began at Pentecost and will end——? In it God's goodness is manifested in the free offer of salvation to all who repent of sin and believe on His son. But man is again a failure. The great majority even in Christian lands rejecting Christ (as He prophesied, Luke 17:25), and many who profess His name being wholly untrue to the simple requirements of the gospel.

That this age will end in judgment as all before it have ended, is clearly stated by Christ Himself. Luke 17:26-30. But before wrath is executed on a guilty world, the Lord will call His sleeping saints and living ones, to meet Him in the air. I Thess. 4:15-18. Then follows the

great tribulation. Matt. 24:21-22. Dan. 12:1. Zeph. 1:15-18. After which will be the glorious revelation of Jesus Christ coming with power, to overcome anti-Christ, judge the living nations and set up his millennial reign, Satan having been bound.

Matt. 24:29-30. Rev. 19:11-21.

7. For a thousand years will Christ reign with His saints, who will have glorified bodies like His own. I John 3:2. Phil. 3:20, 21.

"Behold a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment." Isa. 32:1.

"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" I Cor. 6:2. Isa. 2:2-4. Isa. 11.

At the end of the 1,000 years Satan will be loosed for a little season, and gaining human adherents, will make final battle against the Lord and His saints, only to be overcome and to be cast into the lake of fire. Then will be set up the Great White Throne, the wicked dead judged and cast into the lake of fire, after which will appear "the new heaven and the new earth" ushering in the ages to come. Rev. 20.

SUMMARY.

1. Paradisaical Dispensation,		Innocence.
2. Antediluvian	" 1656 years,	Conscience.
3. Noachian	" 427 "	Authority.
4. Patriarchal	" 430 "	Promise.
5. Jewish	" 1500 "	Law.
6. Christian	" ——— "	Grace.
7. Millennial	" 1000 "	Peace.
Eternity, "Ages to Come."	"Christ all and in all."	

CONCLUSION.

To give a few instances of how frequently the Word of God is misapplied because of a lack of acquaintance with the truth pertaining to each dispensation: Notice the matter of **worship**. The magnificent temple at Jerusalem and its gorgeous ritual services are often reverted to by a Christian church in defense of its practices. But if these things were designed for this age, why did not the apostles seek to introduce them after Pentecost? A little reflection will surely show them to be entirely inconsistent with this Holy Ghost, missionary age of the church, when her most important work is to preach the gospel in all the world, in the spirit of self-denial.

So with the question of **war**. If it was right for Israel to go to war, why not the Church? There is abundant proof of the right and duty of the Jews under the law to fight their enemies. But where can such a thought be found in the New Testament? Did any of the apostles or early disciples wield a sword of steel after Peter's assault on Malchus?

And as to **wealth**. Notwithstanding the plain voice of the Spirit to the contrary, I Tim. 6:9, and the Saviour's words, Mark 10:2, the wealth of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is considered a sufficient warrant for Christians seeking to be rich.

IS THE WORLD GETTING BETTER OR WORSE?

WHAT an apple of discord, this question! The optimists on the one side in large majority contending for the growing excellence of humanity and engaged in mixing colors for a rainbow effect; the pessimists on the contrary just as sure of degeneracy and decay.

With the former company is to be found the greater number of the pulpits of the land and by a large majority the secular and religious journals, together with statesmanship, patriotism, culture, art, science, etc., all calling attention to the manifold evidences of a gradual improvement in temporal conditions. And that there seems to be good ground for such arguments who can deny? We hurriedly scan the evidence. In the field of invention and discovery: rapid transit, electric lights, cathode rays, radium, floating ocean palaces, Pullman cars, automobiles, wireless telegraphy, air transit and perfected machinery, of whose products the middle classes and even the poor get the benefit, so that people in moderate circumstances can have conveniences in their homes, which a king could not have purchased one hundred years ago.

Benevolent and reform organizations are in this age almost numberless. They range all the way from Temperance and Prohibition Clubs, and Anti-Lottery Associations, down to "Don't Worry" and "Keep Sweet" Societies. Hospitals for all classes of sufferers have never been so

numerous. Orphanages are everywhere, and free schools abound. In strong evidence is the blessed work of the Deaconesses. The Salvation Army's drum beat is heard the world around. Christian young people are banded together by the millions. Millions of dollars are given yearly for foreign missions. Church members of all kinds number over 35,000,000. The Methodists are building four churches a day. The peace movement is gaining adherents. The average term of human life is being steadily prolonged. Many other indications which there is not space to name will doubtless occur to the reader. No wonder those who look only on this side of the question see only brightness.

But there is another side!

Has the pessimist no reason for his forebodings? Alas, the brighter the light, the darker the shadow. And this electric light age is no exception, for there **are** shadows, and of blackness intense.

In contrast with the hopeful summary we have just considered, we find facts that are equally true, and alarming is their significance.

Note that with all the widespread efforts of the temperance reform in all its phases, there was spent in our country in 1911 for intoxicants, \$2,000,000,000, and for tobacco \$1,200,000,000, while the expenditure for flour aggregated only \$435,000,000. and for church work only \$165,000,000.

There were in 1904, 104,806 criminals in the jails and penitentiaries of the land, and the criminal expense to the country is not less than \$100,000,000 annually.

While the population is steadily increasing, crime is advancing in a much larger ratio.

The New York Times in a recent issue contained a startling headline:

“HOMICIDE RECORD FOR 1911 APPALLING.

It swells the average of the decade until rate per 100,000 in our cities reaches 7. 2”

And the Homiletic Review in a recent editorial says:—

‘The curse of government in North America is the inadequate morality of the people.’

This was said at the Christian Convention Congress in New York last April by one entitled to high respect, the Hon. J. A. MacDonald, of Toronto. It is a grave charge. It calls for serious thought, especially in the churches that should be moral leaders of the people. If so, the facts will testify. **An alarming fact is that in “heathen” Japan there is one homicide to every 53,000 of the population; among us, one to every 9,500—five and one-half times as many.”**

Insane asylums are overcrowded, and insanity steadily increasing.

There are now in New York State 32,657 insane persons in hospitals. This is about 1 in every 200 of the adult population. In 1890 the number of insane in hospitals and almshouses in this State was 16,006; in 1910 it was 32,657, **an increase of 104%**. The population of the State has increased in the same time 52%. For the country at large the insane in asylums increased from 75,000 in 1890 to 150,000 in 1904.

The margin between marriages and divorces is becoming less and less, until in some communities like San Francisco, the ratio of divorce to marriage, is as one to five. In the State of Indiana, according to the latest report, it is one to ten, "a devil's tithe," while in the country as a whole about one in every eight marriages ends in divorce or separation.

One-fourth of the total population are estimated to be users of alcoholic beverages, and on this basis the average per capita is \$69.32, or 19 cents a day. This expenditure has been on the increase for more than twenty years. Since 1880, it has increased 93 per cent., or from 10.09 gallons per capita to 19.48 gallons.

Nov. 27th, 1912 The New York Times stated:

"LIQUOR MADE IN 1911 BREAKS ALL RECORDS.

Internal Revenue Report Shows 249,279,346 Gallons Ripening in Warehouses.

Washington, Nov. 26th.—The annual report of Royal E. Cabell, Commissioner of Internal Revenue, given out here today, shows that all records were broken in the past fiscal year in the production of alcoholic liquor. The years' production of distilled spirits amounted to 175,402,395 gallons, nearly 7,000,000 gallons more than in the previous banner year, 1907. The production of beer, ale, etc., amounted to 63,216,851 barrels more than in the previous record year, 1910. The amount of liquor held in bonded warehouses for ripening now reaches the enormous total of 249,279,346 gallons."

What a horrible and lengthening catalogue of suicides is spread before us in the papers day by day! In 1909 there were 8,442.

Liquor drinking, cigarette smoking and the frequenting of gambling houses on the part of women in our large cities is becoming common. Socialism and anarchy are having a phenomenal and unchecked growth, and strikes and mob violence are more and more frequent.

Lynchings with fiendish accompaniments are all too frequent. Lawlessness is everywhere apparent. Corruption in politics bold and widespread. Disrespect to parents a growing evil. Luxury and extravagance in fabulous degree. Worldliness in church life heart-sickening, while church membership and attendance are almost at a standstill. And these things are only an outline of the true condition.

Who now is competent to place the sums of these contending facts over against each other and to strike the balance?

But can it be that moral conditions are really worse than they have ever been; that the glittering twentieth century is more deeply sunken in vice than the first or second when pagan Rome reveled in her saturnalia of crime and corruption? Perhaps no one would insist on that conclusion, directly—but **relatively**, when the opportunities of each age are taken into consideration—**then**, no Bible, no churches, no preached word in any general sense; **now**, all these and more—how stands the account?

“But the final issue is not in the outward appearance of the world’s condition. If society could be freed from crime, injustice, dishonesty etc., and the highest moral standards established everywhere, this would not show the world to be

growing better in the sense that it is becoming more acceptable to God.

'Satan is transformed into an angel of light'.

"And if able, would bring about such a moral state. In the beginning Satan did not suggest that man become immoral, but to act independently and apart from God. This is what the 'Liberal' is suggesting today.

"Morality cannot save. There is no life apart from Christ. A man must be born again, but sin in the human heart refuses God's way, and desires to put reason in the place of God's Word, and morality in the place of the life Christ gives. **The condemnation resting upon men comes from their failure to accept Christ. John 3:18.**

"The vital question is this: 'Is the proportionate percentage of persons becoming sons of God, by faith in Christ, greater than the increase in population?'

"If so, the world is getting better, but if not, it is getting worse. The strong drift of the present age is to deny man's need of regeneration, the authority of the Bible, and the Deity of Christ." (Van Osdel.)

How aptly may the Saviour's arraignment of Capernaum be applied to this age, and how forceful is the denunciation. Matt. 11:23. "And thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day."

But with which of the two contending parties does the careful student of the Divine Word stand? Is he optimist or pessimist? In one sense—that of mere human estimate—neither; in another sense—that of the Divine judgment—both. He is a pessimist when contemplating only man and his most brilliant achievements. For remembering the disastrous end of every preceding age, he sees man at his best a failure. But a glorious optimist is he when he reflects upon God's infinite purposes as revealed in the Scriptures. He accepts both series of facts and finds the key for the apparent contradiction in the Word of God. For instance in it he sees the **recognition of human progress.** Dan. 12:4. "For many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased." But also a **prophecy of coming doom.** Dan. 12:1. "And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time."

Human activity is noted in the Bible. Luke 17:27. "They did eat, they drank, they married wives, and were given in marriage." But also **sudden destruction.** "And the flood came and took them all away."

Again, Luke 17:28, "They did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded, but," verse 29, "The same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all." And these the Saviour gives as pictures of the last days. Verse 30, "Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

The **presence of the good** in the end of the

age is recognized in the Word. Dan. 12:10. "Many shall be purified and made white."

But also the **presence of the wicked**. "But the wicked shall do wickedly."

Appropriate here are the Saviour's words, Matt. 13:30, "Let both (wheat and tares) grow together until the harvest." Verse 30, "The harvest is the end of the age."

"Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The morning cometh"—How many inspiring missionary and other sermons telling of the conversion of the world by the preaching of the Gospel, and of the final triumph of the good by means of existing agencies, have been preached from this text by prominent and eloquent divines! But reference to the passage in Isa. 21:11-12 will show that the text as usually given is not complete, "the morning cometh," yes, "**And also the night.**" Does it require a D. D. to give the exegesis? Surely not. Ever since Adam's sin the age has been one of darkness to the godly. By faith the believer has ever looked for the day. Rom. 13:12. It is coming! "The morning cometh." To the believer the end of this age means the coming of his Lord. To the waiting church He is the Morning Star; to the Jew the Sun of Righteousness. But to the ungodly! ah, to him it will be a night of judgment and disaster. Jude 14,15. "The morning cometh and also the night."

SIGNS OF CHRIST'S COMING

Matthew 16:3: "Can ye not discern the signs of the times?"

IN every age there has been set before true believers some blessed hope. First it was the coming of the Son of God as Saviour which fired their eager expectations. Then the promise of the Holy Ghost's descent. And now, in this age, another glorious prospect; not the conversion of the world by the preaching of the Gospel, the advance of civilization, and the beneficent influence of the many social and political reforms over which men have become enthusiastic—but the coming of the Son of God as Judge and King! It is this "glorious appearing" which now becomes the "blessed hope" of His waiting people. And when it is natural for wife or bride to be indifferent as to the return of husband or betrothed, then will it be natural for the Church, which He calls His bride, to assume carelessness, and to speak flippantly concerning the glorious coming of her Lord.

As signs preceded and accompanied the Saviour's birth, and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, so do signs presage the **second** coming of the Son. But, alas, as the Pharisees failed to observe in their day the signs then plainly given, and as the enthusiasts at Pentecost were charged with being filled with wine, so do many today not only fail to observe the indications of the Lord's approach, but treat with open ridicule, with quiet pity, or with sharp criticism those whose greatest crime is to believe the simple statements of the Word of God.

Some objector will say, "But Jesus Himself did not know the day nor hour." Nor do we profess to know the exact time. But it must be remembered that while lack of information on this point was a part of the Saviour's humiliation He knows now, for He said after His resurrection, "all power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth."

Again, it is objected, "It is not for you to know the times, or the seasons." True, the apostles and believers who were to come after them were to be kept in ignorance as to the time of His coming, that while laboring for Him, they might always be on the *qui vive* for His appearance—and the same applies to us. In Luke 21: 29-31, and elsewhere we are bidden to give attention to this very thing; while in Revelation, the very book which treats most on this subject, a blessing is pronounced upon those who read and hear. Rev. 1:3.

If Simeon was promised that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ, may not the Spirit give intimation of His second coming to the faithful watcher as it draws near?

If Daniel knew by books, Dan. 9:2, the time of the end of the captivity of his people; and if Noah was told the exact time the flood would come—is it not possible that some of the Lord's "own" may receive intimations of His near approach? In Dan. 12:10, we read, in connection with a reference to the "time of the end," that the wise "shall understand." Prophecy is God's time-lock. It will open on time, we may be sure. They do well who give heed to it. "But the im-

patient question will be raised, 'What practical value has this doctrine? True, it has been dear to martyrs and confessors in times of suffering and trial. But in these days, when the heavens are ablaze with evangelical light, and all nations are illumined with its brightness, it seems an impertinence for you to trim the wicks and re-light the lamps of prophecy.' So I thought, as one cloudless day, I was journeying toward the hills which form the western boundary of our State, and a porter came to light the lamps. 'What is the need of lamps,' I said, 'on such a cloudless day?' The next moment we plunged into the Hoosac Tunnel. It was clear now why the lamps had been lighted. And does not Scripture say something about 'a more sure word of prophecy, unto which we do well to give heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn?' II Peter 1:19" (A. J. Gordon).

True He is coming as a *thief*. I Thess. 5:4. "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that day should overtake *you* as a thief."

Reader, never antagonize nor ridicule this doctrine, for such action will at once bring you into the bad company which Peter describes in his second epistle. II Peter 3:3, 4.

I. The Sign from Nature.

In Matt. 24:7 we read, "There shall be earthquakes in divers places." To be sure, there have always been earthquakes, but now the seismograph shows that there is not a second of time when the earth's crust somewhere is not trembl-

ing with a shock of greater or less severity. And are cyclones, floods, tidal waves, storms, blizzards, and other disturbances of nature less or more frequent than formerly? Surely not less numerous and violent than in the past. At any rate, it is easier to believe that as the age draws to a close these things will increase, than that the present time—so filled with them—can possibly be the millennium, a view which some hold.

II. The Political Sign.

Dan. 12:1. Matt. 24:7. "Nations shall rise against nation." That this prophecy of our Lord could not have referred to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem is proven by the historical fact that then nation was not arrayed against nation, for imperial Rome was proud mistress of the world, and with the exception of casual revolts and insurrections, she held dominion with an iron grasp.

Notice too, that Daniel's "time of trouble" is connected with the time of resurrection, which all agree comes only at the end of the age.

The war in Turkey is causing the gravest apprehensions, and never have the preparations for conflict been as great as now. The peace of Europe costs a billion dollars a year. Is the Russian bear lying down with the lamb? Is the British lion eating straw like the ox? Are they not, rather armed to the teeth, and glaring at each other? Is not "the coming European war" a journalistic phrase? There may have been periods of greater warfare, but no time in all the past showing such stupendous preparations for war! Many con-

flagrations have there been, but never so much combustible material heaped together like a huge mountain, only awaiting the spark that will cause an explosion that will shake the earth.

We see, too, **internal** disorders in every land. Incurable discontent and a widespread restlessness. The riots and tumults in the past have been put down by the strong hand of the law, but still is seen the curling smoke which tells of a pent-up volcano beneath. That hissing sound may seem only a little escaping steam, but it tells of a boiling cauldron of disorder. And all the reforms that men have ever planned are no more effective to produce peace than court-plaster would prove to cure a cancer.

Do some speak of peace and arbitration? The Word replies. I Thess. 5:3. The Saviour also plainly says, Matt. 24:21, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."

III. The Financial Sign.

James 5:1-6. This description refers plainly to the last days. What is the present dominant affection? What else than the "love of money"? Oh, how wild men are for its possession, and how freely do they acknowledge its power! In England, we hear of the "sovereign," and well named is that disc of gold. In France is found the "Napoleon," and how like him does gold imperiously rule. In our own land it is the "almighty dollar" of which men freely speak. Almighty! The power that drives the trade in

rum and every other cursed product. Potent to shuffle the gambler's cards, to buy woman's honor, to debauch legislation. to cause robbery, prostitution, murder. For the love of money the rich grind the poor, and the poor hate the rich. Great wealth there is in the world today and many rich, but extreme wealth on one hand means extreme poverty on the other. The greater the luxury and display and extravagance in national and social life, the greater the starvation and despair among the poor. The history of Rome, of France, of other nations, proves it. "Be patient, brethren."

IV. The Sign of Human Progress.

Dan. 12:4. "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Does this refer to modern-time rapid transit, and the development in art, science, mechanical skill, diffusion of knowledge? Many think so. If true, how apt the reference. For never have been such wonders wrought, nor have existed such numberless testimonials to man's ability, as these days witness.

But if the sense of this passage is (as many scholars claim) that of the eye running to and fro or scrutinizing the pages of prophecy, and thus increasing knowledge concerning its teachings, then no less true is the fulfillment. For when have men searched the pages of the Book as now? And when has a knowledge of its prophecies been so widely diffused, and so many been led to look for the end of the age, as at the present time?

V. The Moral Sign.

Dan. 12:10. "But the wicked shall do wickedly." II Tim. 3:13. "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse." Are moral conditions any better now than in the past, especially when the greater advantages and privileges of these days are considered? Who can read the daily record of murders, suicides, seductions, divorces, desertions, drunkenness, robberies, swindles, frauds, lynchings, licensed prostitution, the desecration of the Lord's Day, and many other strange and shocking deeds of evil, without realizing that some of our cities are successful rivals of Sodom; that the human heart is still "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," and that the ruling genius of the affairs of this world is the same old devil who has held sway since the fall, though now sometimes attired like a gentleman?

VI. The Religious Sign.

Or that shown by a study of the state of the Church. There will be some confusion here unless we discriminate. A little attention shows two antagonistic conditions. On the one hand, intense devotion, holy living, great activity; examples of purity and self-sacrifice, that remind us of the record in the Book of Acts. Noble offerings for missions, and consecration of life that is glorious. And here and there a gathering of believers that reminds us of the early days, when the simple Gospel was lived and preached and faith wrought wonders. There have never been so many godly people in the world, as there are

now, and there is, thank God, in the midst of a wicked world a Church of Philadelphia. Rev. 3:7-10.

Matt. 24:14 is being fulfilled.

But, on the other hand, worldliness, pride, self-sufficiency, just like the description found in Rev. 3:14-18. Distinguished ministers and theological professors denying Christ's deity, the resurrection of the body, the eternal loss of the wicked, etc., etc., or at least, not at all sure about these things. Large salaries are drawn, but not many sinners converted, as under Wesley, Whitefield, Edwards, Finney, and others like them. Beautiful diction, charming eloquence, and unquestioned scholarship in the pulpit, but no **power**. While in the churches, for sociability's sake or to make money, there are entertainments held, which—if there were tears in heaven—would make angels weep.

And when there is added to all this unfaithfulness of professed followers of Christ the rising tide of heresies, Unitarianism, Universalism, Spiritualism, Theosophy, Christian Science, Millennial Dawnism, the multiplied forms of "New Thought," etc.,—what a sombre picture is set before us! II Tim. 4:3, 4.

VII. The Gentile Sign.

Luke 21:24 tells us of the "times of the Gentiles," a distinct period, with a definite end. Rom. 11:25 tells of the "fullness of the Gentiles," plainly referring to an elect number to be gathered out of the world in this dispensation of grace, after which the blindness of Israel will be

removed, and the Jewish race reinstated in God's favor. Plainly harmonizing with which is that comprehensive statement in Acts 15:14, "God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name." From these Scriptures we learn that this parenthetical Gospel age is an elective age. That in it the world is not to be converted but that the elect are to be gathered out of the world. Gal. 1:4. Now in Matt. 24:14 we read, "And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world as a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." As there is hardly a nation on earth in which this Gospel is not preached, may we not conclude that we are verging toward the time of the end of the age, and of His coming?

But, says one, "Shall not the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea?" Isa. 11:9. Yes, but only after His coming as Judge, for just preceding the above passage we read in Isa. 11:4, "He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked." But, again, "Will not the nations 'beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks?' " Isa. 2:4. Again, yes, but not until (verse 4) "He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people." See also verse 2, where we are told that the "mountain of the Lord's house shall (first) be established in the top of the mountain," and in verse 3, "for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." But, says another, "This being the dispensation of the Holy Ghost, is it

not his work to save the world?" Can we find this stated anywhere in the Word? In John 16:8 we are plainly told of the Holy Spirit's work as to the world. Not conversion, but **conviction**. "He shall reprove (convince) the world of sin."

VIII. The Jewish Sign.

Acts 15:16 and Luke 21:24 tell of the restoration of Jerusalem and the temple. And Rom. 11:24, 25 tells of the reinstatement of Israel to God's favor. Jere. 31:10-12 gives a prophecy of their gathering again, as distinctly as it tells of their scattering. If we believe one statement, we must take the other also. Of Israel's homecoming it is said, "they shall not sorrow any more at all."

And that which prophecy so plainly states, facts today corroborate. Witness the thousands of Jews already in the Holy Land, and add to that the rapid development of that unique project—the Zionistic movement. Surely some of the most unlikely prophecies are being fulfilled before our very eyes, as we thus see the Jewish race preparing for the final possession of its wrested inheritance. "But the land is desolate," says the skeptic. True, but hear how God replies, Ezek. 36:34, "And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden."

But many Jews are saying, "We have no thought of returning, and look upon the whole

idea as a dream. We are at home in this land, where we purpose remaining." Again God answers, Ezek. 20:32-34, "And that which cometh into your mind shall not be all, that ye say, eW will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone. As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you. And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered." When God speaks the word they must return.

A few Jews are being saved now—"the remnant according to the election of grace"—to help complete the body of Christ. It may be, as suggested by the converted Rabbi, Joseph Rabinowich, "to fill up the wounded side of Jesus, rent by Jewish malice as He hung upon the tree." But the great mass will return to Jerusalem in unbelief, there to suffer under anti-Christ, and to endure the tribulation called in the Word "the time of Jacob's trouble," until He comes whose right it is, and who, after centuries of rejection, they will at last hail as their Deliverer, crying joyfully, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

THE TRANSLATION OF THE SAINTS

HOW singular that many who profess to believe the Bible implicitly, and who would at once assent to the statement that Enoch and Elijah were caught up to heaven

without dying, ridicule and contradict, or at best treat with indifference the idea that at some time in the future the living saints, together with those whose bodies are sleeping in the dust, will suddenly be drawn as by some invisible magnet upward through the air to meet the Lord. "Unpractical!" says a materialistic world and a careless church.

But let us believe the Word of God.

I. **There is to be such an occurrence.**

I Cor. 15:51,52. "Behold I show you a mystery; we shall not all **sleep**, but we shall all be **changed**. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the **dead shall be raised** incorruptible, and **we shall be changed**."

I Thess. 4:15-18. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are **alive** and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent (precede) them which are **asleep**. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the **dead** in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are **alive** and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

II Thess. 2:1. "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the **coming** of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our **gathering** together unto Him."

The coming of the Lord was the landmark from which the apostle made all measurements. It was the polar star by which he steered his course

I Thess. 5:10. "Who (Christ) died for us, that, whether we **wake** or **sleep**, we should live together with Him."

John 11:25, 26. "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were **dead**, yet shall he live: And whosoever **liveth** and believeth in me shall never die."

Here we have an evident reference to the dead at His coming, and also to the living ones.

II. When will the translation occur?

1. Manifestly at the end of this age or dispensation, the two events being so closely interwoven in Scripture statements that no argument to sustain this view is required.

2. But will it be before the Tribulation? So the Word seems clearly to teach.

Note in Rev. 3:14, that the last state of the professing church on earth, Laodicea, is not one of tribulation, but of declension, lukewarmness, and ease. (See Tim. 3:1-9.)

As the Tribulation is to be the time of anti-Christ's rule, there would be no necessity of admonishing the church to watch for the appearing of the Lord, as the very presence of anti-Christ would be the sign of the Lord's early coming.

After the meeting in the air (I Thess. 4:17), an **interval** must occur previous to the Lord's coming to the earth, in which the judgment-seat, etc., takes place simultaneously with the development of the Tribulation on earth.

In Rev. 4:5 the whole church represented by the elders is seen glorified (I Cor. 15:23), crowned, and reigning with Christ, **before** the seals which herald the Tribulation on earth are loosed by the Lamb.

The inquiry of the elders (Rev. 7:13, 14) regarding the Tribulation saints clearly defines the church (to which he belongs) as a distinct and previously raised company.

The expectation given to the sufferers in the Tribulation (Matt. 24:23-31) is His **lightning appearing** (verse 27) as Son of man to gather His elect (verse 31), to sit on His throne (Matt. 25:31) and to judge His enemies (verse 31), is quite distinct from the hope of the church of the **personal** call (I Thess. 4:16), **reception** (John 14:3), and **reward** (Rev. 22:12), with which the Lord greets His own in the air.

The Tribulation is defined as **Jacob's trouble** (Jere. 30:7), thereby with other Scripture marking it a distinctly national and Jewish calamity; see Dan. 12:1; (note **nation** and **thy people**;) also Matt. 14:15-22, where it is connected with the centre of Judaism—Jerusalem. In contrast, believers are to expect tribulation, not as a distinct or exceptional experience, but as part of their calling (II Thess. 1:6; John 16:33; Rev. 1:9) and in the meanwhile to ardently await (Phil. 3:20 Rotherham) their Lord from heaven.

Rev. 3:10. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the **hour** of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

In addition to the above testimony we find by a study of Revelation that the Church is safe in glory before a single act of judgment is executed upon a wicked world.

III. Who will participate in the translation?

1. "The dead in Christ." I Thess. 4:16. Will these include Old Testament saints? So it seems. See Job 19:25-27; Dan. 12:13; Psa. 1:5.

2. Living saints. That is, all the members of Christ's body, else His body would not be complete. In other words, **all true church members**. for the church is the Bride of Christ, and He will not come for her until she is complete and ready. Are you a member of **the** church? It is described in Rev. 19:7 and Rev. 3:8.

But what about believers who seem not to be looking for a personal coming of the Lord? Ah, He can soon get them to look up. It is remarkable how this blessed hope is being accepted by humble souls everywhere.

IV. What the translation means to the true believer.

1. Release from toil. See the beautiful analogy in Mark 6:47-51.

2. Blessing. Jesus is now our Intercessor, and as the High Priest, under the Old Covenant, entered within the veil on the day of atonement to make intercession for the people, and then came forth to bless the waiting multitude, so has our great High Priest passed up from Olivet, through the veil of blue into the Father's presence, where He is now our Mediator, and whence He will come again to bestow eternal peace and

blessing. Heb. 9:24, 28. "For Christ is not entered into the holy place made with hands, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. And unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

3. Glorious union with Christ in holy marriage. For then will be the wedding of the King's Son and of His Bride, the Church. It will be the grand consummation of the ages.

Did the morning stars sing together and the sons of God rejoice at the creation? Did the angels bring a glad message at the Saviour's birth? Did heaven rejoice at Pentecost when 3,000 souls were born again? More stupendous will be the demonstration, and higher and more entrancing the song; and more brilliant the glory and display when angel heralds will announce the nuptials of the Son of God and His chaste Bride, whom He loved and for whom He gave Himself, and who kept herself spotless amid temptation. For then heaven's wardrobes will be emptied; and heaven's bells set ringing, and heaven's banqueting tables spread. Rev. 19:6, 7, 8. "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints."

THE TRIBULATION

THE world and the nominal church do not care to hear of a tribulation period and apply the name "Jeremiah" to him who predicts it, forgetting that while Jeremiah was the weeping prophet of woe, his prophecies were all fulfilled. The lot of Micaiah, I Kings 22:8, is likely to be that of any who dare speak God's truth to a proud and sinning race. But in Ezekiel 13:10-15 we have a foreshadowing of the doom of those who deceive the people with their false cry of "peace, peace."

I. **There is to be a period of tribulation.**

Daniel 12:1. "And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time."

Matt. 24:21. "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."

I Thess. 5:3. "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; (as witness, the Czar's address to the powers on disarmament and the Peace Movement) then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."

Isaiah 26:21. "For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

II. Description of this terrible time.

Isaiah, 24th chapter. Read also a description of the judgments under the seals, the trumpets and the vials in the Book of Revelation.

III. In it Anti-Christ will reign, supported by the false prophet.

I John 2:18. "Anti-Christ shall come." II Thess. 2:3, 8, 9.

1. He will be received by the Jews. John 5:43. Isaiah 28:15.

2. His pride and power. II Thess. 2:4, 9, 10. Rev. 13:4, 5, 13, 16, 17, 18.

IV. It will end by the Revelation of Christ.

1. When anti-Christ will be overcome. II Thess. 2:8. Dan. 7:9-11. Rev. 19:15, 21.

2. And the living nations judged. Matt. 25:31, 32. Jude 14, 15. Dan. 2:34, 35, 44. Psalm 2:9.

V. The saints are to escape all this.

(See the Translation, page 28.)

THE MILLENNIUM

THESE 1,000 years are the golden age for which the world has ever longed. Rom. 8:19. "For the earnest expectation of the creature (creation) waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." Ps. 72. Isa. 35. Joel 2:24-26.

Features of that Blessed Age.

1. Idolatry and all forms of false worship will have ceased. Heb. 8:11; Phil. 2:10, 11; Hab. 2:14.
2. War will be at an end. Isa. 2:4; Ps. 46:9; Zech. 9:10.
3. Justice will be impartially administered. Isa. 11:3, 4; Ps. 72:2.
4. The earth will be blessed with fertility. Isa. 41:18, 20; Isa. 35:6; Amos 9:13.
5. The instincts of wild beasts will be changed. Isa. 11:6-9; Isa. 65:25; Hosea 2:18; Ez. 34:25.
6. Human life will be prolonged. Isa. 65:20.
7. The resurrected and translated saints will participate in the rulership of the earth with Christ. I Cor. 6:2; Dan. 7:22; Matt. 19:28.
8. At the end of the millennium.
 - a. Satan will be loosed. Rev. 20:7.
 - b. He will be destroyed. Rev. 20:10.
 - c. The wicked will then be resurrected and judged. Rev. 20:11-15.
 - d. The earth will be renewed. II Peter 3:12; Rev. 21:1.
 - e. The New Jerusalem will come down. Rev. 21:2.
 - f. The ages to come will be ushered in. Eph. 2:7.

DEFINITIONS

1. The word "world" in the Scriptures means variously "age, or dispensation" (aion); the "physical creation" (cosmos); and "society or mankind." It is of great importance to notice the sense of the word wherever used.

2. "Let," 2 Thess. 2:7, means "hinder,"

3. "Prevent," 1 Thess. 4:15, means "precede."

4. "Generation," Matt. 24:34, means "seed, race, age." See Ps. 14:5; 22:30; 112:2; 1 Peter 2:9.

5. "Go to," Gen. 11:3, 4, 7, means "Come."

6. "Beasts," Rev. 4:6 means "living ones."

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