

Earth's Last Hour

By CARLYLE B. HAYNES

AN ANALYSIS

of the Evidences Now Manifesting Themselves
Everywhere, of the Nearness of the Long-
Foretold Return of Jesus, and the
Establishment of an Enduring
World Government.

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FORWARD

It is the last hour, the sunset hour. You catch the picture at once. The light is fading. The shadows are closing in. Familiar things are fading from view.

The world is like that. Human history has passed through great cycles. Each of these has had its last hour. And each last hour has brought closer the conclusion of all cycles and all hours. The passing day, the changing seasons, the gathering storm clouds, are images of the course of time.

Earth's sunset hour has come. Slowly the light wanes. Stealthily the shadows creep from their ambush. Gradually the colours die out of earth and sky. The sounds of life cease one by one. And in this hour of all hours, a sense of solemnity comes over the soul.

— Is this the end? What does the future hold? The shades of darkness deepen. Men grope for the way. Storm clouds rise and humanity seeks shelter and security.

In the great guidebook of Him who made the earth is the answer to men's questionings. And May the reader find in that answer, here presented, light, and hope, and shelter.

MOST STUPENDOUS EVENT IN HUMAN HISTORY

EVERY PERSON who believes in God, every person who accepts Jesus Christ, every person who would be counted as a Christian, every person who holds the bible to be God's Word, must believe in the second coming of Christ in the very near future. This is one of the outstanding teachings of the Bible, which is the foundation of Christianity.

No doctrine of Scripture is more pronounced or more clearly stated than this. In the New Testament alone there are more than three hundred positive statements regarding the second coming of Christ. Every writer insists upon it. So it is not a matter of interpretation. What we are dealing with here is a matter of incontrovertible fact.

Jesus Christ is coming again. He is coming in our time. His coming will change the face of the world. His coming will solve all the vexing problems of humankind. His coming will usher in an eternal kingdom of peace. His coming will mark the inauguration of a new kingdom and the desolation of this present world. His coming will mark the end of evil, sin, and suffering, and the bringing in of righteousness, peace, and everlasting joy.

To some His coming will be "as a thief in the night," and they will mourn when they view His appearing. To others His coming will be the culmination of every hope, the realization of every desire. Now, before He comes, is the time to prepare our hearts for His coming. For whether the world approves or not, whether men desire Him or not, Jesus Christ will come.

Study with me a little while, and see how absolutely assured this event is.

The positive certainty of the second coming of Jesus Christ to this earth rests upon the most substantial and absolute authority the world has ever known. That authority is the infallible word of Jesus Christ Himself. If Jesus said He is coming again the second time, that alone settles for ever the whole question of the certainty of His return. And Jesus has said just that.

Just before His death, He said to His disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, *I will come again*, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:2, 3. Here, in the words of the greatest authority on earth, is a clear cut, unequivocal promise and pledge, the meaning of which there is no possibility of mistaking. Jesus Christ Himself said, "I will come again."

In the twenty-eighth verse of John 14, He repeats it, "I go away, and come again unto you." To the unbelieving Pharisees and scribes, just before His betrayal, He declared: "Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Matthew 23:39. Replying to the questions of His disciples as to what would be the sign of His second coming and of the end of the world (Matthew 24:3), Jesus said: "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; . . . and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matthew 24:30.

On another occasion He said to His disciples, "The Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels." Matthew 16:27. On the occasion of His trial, when adjured by the high priest, Jesus replied: "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Matthew 26:64.

In the last chapter of the Bible this same Jesus repeats three times to His servant John this great truth of His second coming: "Behold, I come quickly;" "And, behold, I come quickly;" "Surely I come quickly." Revelation 22:7, 12, 20. Certainly every person who accepts Jesus Christ as his guide and teacher must, by this uniform testimony of his Master, have created in his heart a conviction regarding the certainty of the second coming of Christ. These statements admit of no doubt. Jesus is coming again.

Not only did Jesus Christ make these plain, positive statements, giving assurance of His second coming, but during His public ministry He uttered many parables in which He forcefully presented this same great truth. He spoke the parable of the ten virgins. Matthew 25: 1-13. In this he admonished His people: "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh;" and appealed to every disciple to be ready for that great day. He spoke the parable of the talents. Matthew 25:14-30. In this He represented Himself as the "man travelling into a far

country.” Before going away, He delivered into the stewardship of His servants certain talents — talents of money, influence, speech, physical and mental strength. “After a long time” — and that time is nearly past — He will come again and reckon with them all in a final judgment. They will be required to render an account of their stewardship, as a result of which they will receive reward or punishment according to their works.

He spoke the parable of the tares. Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43. Here, plainly, we are taught that a separation between the righteous and the wicked will take place at “the end of the world” and the establishment of His coming kingdom. He related the parable of the net. Matthew 13:47-50. The teaching here is that the final judgment is connected with His second coming. He spoke the parable of the forgiven servant. Matthew 18:23-35. This reaches its culmination at the time of the judgment and the return of our Lord. He spoke the parable of the labourers in the vineyard. Matthew 20:1-16. Here, too, the lesson is regarding the future accounting with reference to the work of the Lord’s servants when “the burden and heat of the day” is finished, the labour assigned is completed, and the time of reward comes. He spoke also the parable of the marriage of the king’s son. Matthew 22:2-14. Here the invitation of the gospel is sent out and not answered. It is sent out again, and made light of. It is sent out with great urgency, and good and bad are gathered in; and the wedding is supplied with guests. Wedding garments, representing Christ’s own righteousness, are furnished the guests, and only those wearing these are admitted to the marriage supper, those not having them being cast “into outer darkness.”

So in parable after parable Jesus Christ set before the world in His public teaching the truth of the coming of His kingdom, the final judgment of the world, and the ultimate rendering of rewards and punishments.

Plainly, then, the immutable Word of God teaches the second coming of Jesus Christ. This great event will yet take place. Nothing can prevent its occurrence. Unbelief will not hinder it; opposition will not prevent it; fear will not keep it from coming. It is predicted in the infallible Word of God.

May we know if it is near? In chapters to follow we will search the prophecies of the Scripture on this point.

SUDDEN CHANGES IMPENDING

SUDDEN and unexpected changes in human affairs are about to take place. They will affect every person on the earth. God is about to take a hand in the affairs of men. He has done this on former occasions. But never on the scale now about to be seen. His final dealings with men are now at hand.

Men look for great changes to take place slowly. Civilization advances with laggard steps over the earth. Human enlightenment and advancement are slow processes. Even the church has been deceived into thinking the kingdom of God will establish world rulership through politics, and by slow steps.

Not so, however, will the next great intervention of God in human affairs be. Decades will not pass into centuries and centuries run on into millenniums before we witness the solemn scenes of the breakup of civilization and the end of the world.

Jesus is coming. Not merely sometime, but soon. He is coming quickly. He is at the door. His feet are on the threshold. His hand is on the latch. Men may, in their thoughts, put far off the day of His return. They may persist in saying it will not occur in their lifetime. But before long, and suddenly, a change will come over the spirit of their dream. They will hear the voice of the Son of God as it rolls through the earth, speaking life to the blessed dead, but bringing terror and despair to those who are living in their sins.

“Not slowly, slowly, like twilight;
Nor like the cold, creeping tide,

Or barque, from its distant offing,
Moving on o'er the waters wide;
But instant! like sudden lightning
In the depths of a tranquil sky,
From east to west, in a moment
The havoc descends from on high.

“the day of the Lord, it cometh
When the virgins are all asleep,
And the drunken world is lying
In a slumber yet more deep:
Like the sudden lurch of a vessel
By night, on a sunken rock;
All the earth in a moment reeleth,
And goeth down with a shock.”

— *Bonar.*

The suddenness of the end is not out of harmony with the acts of nature or of nature's God. These are often sudden, silent, unexpected. The lightning stabs through the blackness with startling suddenness. The thunderbolt crashes without warning from the cloud. While we saw the gathering cloud, still the fiery gleam and the reverberating roar came with a sense of intense shock.

The shock of the earthquake usually comes without forewarning. Before men know it, there is a sickening trembling beneath their feet, and perhaps a great crevasse opening before them.

As it is with nature, so it is with her Sovereign, a God of both love and justice. Sodom and Gomorrah knew not till the storm of fire suddenly fell and swept them away for ever. The hosts of Pharaoh saw no danger in pressing after the Israelites into the bed of the Red Sea, until suddenly those standing walls of water gave way, the cold waves closed on them, and they sank like lead in the mighty deep.

The angel of death on the passover night did his awful work silently and unperceived of men. Suddenly the wail of death went up over the whole nation. Whereas the process was stealthy, the result was sudden, and was known in every hut, in every home, in every palace of the land.

The angel that smote the scores of thousands of the mailed warriors of Sennacherib was doubtless not seen by a single guard in the vast army. But 185,000 soldiers never woke again. The morning sun revealed the silent slaughter of the night.

There are times when Death springs from his lair and cuts down his victims in an instant. Awful and sudden calamities are become common. Our eyes are unable to discern the invisible sword of the vengeful messenger as it quickly descends to smite and cleave and crush to the ground. But we see the effects.

Ananias and Sapphira little dreamed how swiftly death would smite them as they lied to the Holy Spirit.

Herod was on his throne, and the crowd bent low to pat him divine honours, when “immediately the angel of the Lord smote him.” The stroke was like sudden lightning.

Some years ago an actor on a stage had just spoken his lines, consisting of the words, “There is another and a better world,” when he gasped for breath, closed his eyes, and the curtain of death fell on his acting for ever.

“Life is short,” said a friend to his companion on parting from him on the railway platform. The train started, he made one misstep, and the next minute was a mangled corpse.

A minister stepped into his pulpit on New Year's Day, opened his services, apparently in good health, read the solemn text, “This year thou shalt die,” said a few words, stopped, staggered, and dropped to the floor, dead. His work was done.

So in the midst of life we are in death. All about us human life is being snapped out as an electric light is snapped off. Before men are aware, the sands of life are run, and there is no remedy or recovery. “For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the

birds that are caught in a snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.” Ecclesiasties 9:12.

At His first appearing on earth, our Lord came “suddenly to His temple.” All Israel were looking for Him. All Israel were seeking Him. But with Him in their midst, they knew Him not. For thirty years He was among them, unknown, unperceived. All the preparations for His revealing were unrecognized.

Then suddenly He walked forth among men, claiming Sonship with the omnipotent God. Just as suddenly He came to His royal city, His temple, and His kingdom. Just as suddenly, when His followers were entranced with visions of kingly power and earthly grandeur, He quickly disappeared from the abodes of the living, and went down among the silent dead.

But when the powers of darkness imagined they had conquered, fondly supposing they had locked their royal Victim securely in the tomb for ever, suddenly He burst the barriers of death, threw aside the bondage of the grave, and came forth from His prison house. All heaven was astir with gladness and joy. But it was the effulgent glory of heavenly angels, and not the pomp or trappings of earthly royalty, which was manifested on that morning when the mighty Conqueror, guarded by cherubim and panoplied by God, broke down for us the bar of death, and went up to the right hand of the Majesty on high. All was unexpected — sudden.

So it will be when He comes again. Many seek Him now as did Israel. But they look for His advent to occur in a way not warranted by the Bible. He will come before most men are aware even of the nearness of His coming. Even now the celestial world may, for aught we know, be astir with magnificent preparation.

Swift as the unseen arrow from the well-strung bow, the flaming chariots of Jehovah will bear Him down the sky. The white war horses will come forth in battle array. The widespreading heavens will open, and down the parted skies the King will travel in the greatness of His strength. Down this pathway of the glory-gilded skies the Lord of lords will come, His face shining as the sun in its strength, His eyes like a flame of fire, His form clothed with the glory and majesty of the heavenly power, His voice as the sound of many waters, the keys of death and the grave hanging at His side, His head crowned with a halo before which the sun pales, His flowing robes more beautiful than the rainbow. Attended by a splendid retinue of shining seraphim, the brilliant bands of angels filling the glory-flashing skies from end to end, the immortal Conqueror, the eternal King, will come to take to Himself His own.

How magnificent beyond all description will be this advancing pageantry of the skies! How sublime beyond all mortal comprehension will be the Lord Jesus when He “shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels!”

His angelic escort will have the speed of lightning. The watchers will discern the tokens of His approach, but the careless, indifferent world will not know, the wicked will not understand.

“Desolation shall come upon thee suddenly.” “The spoiler shall suddenly come upon us.”

Stealthily as the midnight thief, sudden as a clap of thunder from the clear sky, the Lion of Judah will rend the heavens and burst upon the vision of an unprepared world. “As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on a wall, and a serpent bit him,” so cometh the day of the Lord upon an unbelieving, gay, heedless world. Amos 5:19.

Who can describe the terror of that day for those who are unprepared? What wailing, what remorse! Everything will then be over, the prayer, the song, the sermon, the last ray of hope, the last chance of Paradise. There is only the Judge, the great white throne, the sentence, “Depart,” the everlasting separation, the fiery lake, the second death, the blackness of darkness for ever. And there is no remedy.

A shout, and the trump of God will sound out over all the turmoil of earth. 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17. Afar out on the tossing ocean men will hear, appalled, the clangour of the trump of doom. Deep down in earth’s cavernous mines, where the toiler bends over his work by the dim light of his little lamp, will suddenly blaze the light of that flaming river which rolls earthward before the chariot of the Son of God.

Out on gory fields of strife, where great armies meet to rage in tumult and to die, a sound will be heard that will still the inferno of the cannon’s roar, and a summons will go forth more powerful

than the voice of kings or dictators. Over all the land and sea it will be heard. All who dwell on the earth will hear it.

The loud peals of the Archangel's trump will roll out over the abodes of the living, and through the resting-places of the dead. Men will look heavenward, and see the coming King. His eyes will search them as a piercing ray, eyes that run swiftly to and fro over the gazing and affrighted race, eyes that are keen to separate the precious from the vile.

Virtue and holiness will fear not, but rejoice greatly. But the sinful and unpardoned will tremble and quail before the Lord in that great day of God.

For now the slain Lamb will be King. the despised one of Galilee is clothed with omnipotent power. He holds in His hands the destiny of the whole world. "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." Revelation 1:7.

In view of that solemn day, swiftly approaching, and all its fearful unfoldings, what is the pomp of the world, the equipage of royalty, the dazzling wealth of the millionaire, the hall of mirth and gaiety, the honour that cometh from men, or the wreath of fame? Wrath is coming, wrath against sin. And with this to be settled, what avails liberty, pleasure, enjoyment, ambition, all the satisfactions of life, all the powers of man, all the attractions of woman? Wrath is coming, the wrath of God Himself against sin.

The fashion of this world will pass away. The earth is soon to reel like a drunken man, as it staggers to its fiery crucible. The heavens will soon roll together as a scroll. The whole human family is soon to come to the terrible crisis of the ages. Families, friends, lovers, are soon to part, strangely, sadly, eternally, and never more to meet.

Before long the kingdom of God, the hymns of the blessed, the city of Gold, the green new earth, the flowers that shall never know winter, and the sinless, endless clam of God!

"Behold, I come quickly." "As a snare shall it come on all." "Behold, I come as a thief." "If the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come." "Of that day and hour knoweth no man." "Ye know not when the time is." "In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." "Ye know not when the master of the house cometh." "Take heed to yourselves." "Watch . . . and pray always."

These are some of the warning words sent on before Him in His message to the world. Let them serve to keep us alert, and awake and watchful, clothing ourselves in His might, girding ourselves with His holiness and divine power, erecting our banners in the fear of Him who conquered sin and Satan, death and the grave, putting on the whole armour of God, and preparing for the marriage supper of the Lamb.

"Lest coming *suddenly* He find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say to all, WATCH."

IS THE ADVENT NEAR?

THE return of Jesus Christ to this world is soon to take place. All about us are overwhelming evidences of its certainty.

Two things combine to create the conviction of the nearness of the return of our Lord. We have already mentioned the repeated assurances of the Holy Scriptures that Jesus is to return. And there are also prophetic utterances in the Bible, which tell of the occurrence in the earth of long-foretold signs of the times.

The prophecies of the Bible regarding the last days are full and complete. The signs predicted by Christ and His apostles as harbingers of His return are clear and abundant. Let us look at them briefly.

The books of Daniel and the Revelation are filled with striking prophecies covering the centuries from the time of Daniel and John to the present. A study of these prophecies is calculated to bring the strongest conviction regarding the nearness of the end of time.

In the second chapter of the Book of Daniel is a prophecy given to King Nebuchadnezzar in the form of a dream of a great metallic image. This dream was interpreted by Daniel. The head of the

image seen in the king's dream was of gold, its breast and arms of silver, its thighs of brass, its legs of iron, and its feet and toes part of iron and part of clay.

The interpretation of this prophecy makes clear the fact that the head of gold represented the first universal empire, Babylon; the breast and arms of silver, Medo-Persia; the thighs of brass, Greece; the legs of iron, Rome; the feet and toes part of iron and part of clay, the modern nations of Europe today.

In the dream the image was struck on its feet by a great stone. This stone was a symbol of the kingdom of God, which is to be established at the time when the present nations of Europe are flourishing.

Nearly all that was foretold in this outline of the world's history has been wonderfully fulfilled. The very next stage in the fulfillment of this prophecy is the establishment of the kingdom of God.

In the seventh chapter of Daniel is another prophecy of the great empires of the world, between Daniel's time and the end of human history. Here Babylon is shown under the symbol of a lion; Medo-Persia, a bear; Greece, a leopard with four heads; pagan Rome, as a monstrous ten-horned beast; and papal Rome, the opponent of the people and truth and church of God, as the shrewd, powerful, cunning little horn, which would persecute, slay, and destroy the people of God, and seek to change the law of God. Here, too, the prophecy closes with the triumph of God, the establishment of God's kingdom over all the earth, and the victory of the saints.

In the eighth chapter of the Book of Daniel is another great line of prophecy, beginning this time with Medo-Persia, which is set forth under the symbol of a ram having two horns. It is succeeded by a goat, representing Greece; then follows Rome in both its pagan and papal phases represented by a little horn which became exceeding great. The final triumph of Christ and His truth is clearly and graphically set forth in this prophecy, which continues through chapters nine, ten, eleven, and twelve.

In the Book of Revelation is contained prophecy after prophecy covering the Christian era. In chapters two and three is the prophecy of the seven churches, which covers the history of the true church of Christ during the centuries of the Christian era, beginning with the church as established by the apostles and reaching to the church of today, the whole time between Christ's first and second advents being divided into seven periods.

In chapters five, six, seven, and eight is the prophecy of the seven seals, in which the religious history of the world from the first advent of Christ is foretold. Beginning with the time of the apostles, when the church was pure in faith and life, and "went forth conquering, and to conquer," the student is carried through its apostasy, the establishment of the Papacy, the Reformation, the rise of the remnant church, and its final triumph.

In chapters eight, nine, and eleven is the prophecy of the seven trumpets, covering the chief political and warlike events of the Christian era. Here is presented in symbolic language the breaking up of Western Rome, and the fall of the Roman empire. After sweeping over the events of nineteen centuries, the prophecy contains the ominous words: "The nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth." Revelation 11:18. (See also Psalms 2:8, 9; Daniel 2:44, 45.

In the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapters is another prophecy covering the time of the Christian era. It begins with the Christian church under the symbol of a woman, and then sets forth the persecution of Christ and His people by pagan Rome under the symbol of a great red dragon, by papal Rome under the symbol of a ten-horned beast; and ends by dealing with the rise, progress, and destiny of the United States under the symbol of the two-horned, lamblike beast, as well as the rise, progress, and glorious triumph of the final message of the gospel of Christ, the great threefold message of Revelation 14.

Chapters fifteen and sixteen contain the prophecy of the seven last plagues, which will bring an end to the works of man on this planet.

Chapters seventeen and eighteen contain additional prophecies of the closing events of human history, and the final fall of spiritual Babylon.

The closing chapters of the book reveal the events of the millennium, the descent of the Holy City, the fiery cleansing of the earth, the destruction of sin and sinners, the glorified new earth, and the eternal reign of Christ with His people.

The circumstantial particularity of these numerous predictions, and their progressive fulfillment through a series of centuries, culminating in the days in which we live, constitute impressive and convincing proof of the nearness of the advent of our Lord.

When Christ was on earth nineteen hundred years ago, He not only declared that He would come again, but explained how His people might know the time when His coming would be near at hand. He foretold the conditions which would prevail just before His second coming. He gave signs, which, when they should appear, were to be understood as harbingers of the coming of the end of all things. He told His people to watch. He gave convincing evidence of the nearness of His coming. Indeed, all through the Word of God there is set forth in the predictions of the prophets and apostles the condition of the world and its various activities at the time of the ending of earthly affairs.

The present condition of the world betokens that the end is near. The fulfillment of the inspired prophecies gives reason to expect very soon the coming of our long absent Lord.

In the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, Jesus directed attention to the signs of His second coming. He pointed to the darkening of the sun. Verse 29. It was fulfilled in the remarkable Dark Day of May 19, 1780.

He foretold, as a sign of His coming, the falling of the stars from heaven (verse 29), which was fulfilled in the great meteoric shower of November 13, 1833.

In Daniel 12:4, Daniel declared that the time of the end would be a time marked by unparalleled running to and fro and an unusual increase of knowledge.

This is certainly that time. There never has been such a time as during recent years for development of human thought and knowledge. This is evidenced by the marvels of the present age which are all about us. By these we know the predicted increase of knowledge has come, and by the unparalleled changes which have taken place, we know that the divine prediction has been fulfilled, and that we are in "the time of the end."

Among the predictions which Christ made, recorded in Matthew 24, are statements relating to the warlike conditions of the world and the world-wide preparations for more war, together with the distress of nations which naturally follows. Verses 6, 7.

Today, in fulfillment of this sign, we have before our eyes a picture of impressive significance. Peace conference after peace conference has been held, but wars have not stopped. Millions of men are bearing arms. Hundreds of millions of pounds are being spent to maintain greater armies and armaments; other millions in testing and experimenting with new inventions and devices and equipment for wholesale killing; still other millions for scientific development of agencies for killing whole populations; and the world is just as much an armed camp as ever. There is the same malice, hatred, and enmity in human hearts; there are the same intrigues and scheming and overreaching in diplomatic circles; and men are just as ready to fly at each other's throats as at any former time. wars and rumours of wars disturb the earth everywhere.

Another sign given by the Lord is contained in Matthew 24:12, where he said, "Iniquity shall abound." We are living today amid this abounding iniquity. The world is corrupt, licentious, warlike, filled with strife, commotion, and violence. We are living in an age of moral corruption. Licentiousness is appallingly prevalent. Crime is increasing at a terrifying rate. this spirit of restlessness, lawlessness, anarchy, is not limited to any one place, but is spreading throughout the earth.

Then there are signs in the religious world that have been fulfilled in their time. the religious developments in the last days are strikingly outlined in 2 Timothy 3:1-5. In fulfillment of this prediction, we find in the religious world today just what was foretold — self-love, covetousness, the spirit of self-praise, pride, blasphemy, disobedience to parents, ingratitude, unholiness, absence of natural affection, implacability, false accusation, profligacy, fierceness and brutality, hatred, treachery, recklessness, haughtiness, love of pleasure, formalism, and hypocrisy. a tide of vanity and pride has swept into our churches, fulfilling these ancient predictions.

Another sign plainly set forth in James 5:1-6, is the deepening of bitter relations existing between capital and labour. This prediction states that there will be an unparalleled heaping together

of the wealth of the world, and a resulting discontent among the labouring classes which will bring bitter economic labour warfare.

Another sign outlined by our Lord in Matthew 24:7 is that “there shall be . . . pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.” these, in fulfillment of this prediction, are happening about us all the time.

Reading these prophecies and predictions in God’s holy Word, and witnessing their fulfillment all about us, we have no doubt that soon, before long, and suddenly will come the fulfillment of the following passage, “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.”

THE BLAZING SPLENDOUR OF THE SON OF GOD

SOME day, and soon, we shall witness unusual sights in this old world of ours. The things predicted in the Sacred Scriptures regarding the closing events of human history will soon be fulfilled. The words which God has spoken are not futile. They will come to pass. “Heaven and earth shall pass away,” said Jesus, “but My words shall not pass away.”

God has declared there is a time coming, when the heavens shall depart as a scroll when it is rolled together. Every mountain and island will be moved out of its place. The foundations of the earth will give way. The earth will reel to and fro like a drunkard. Skyscrapers will collapse, and the cities of the nations will topple and fall. The most devastating earthquake ever known will wreak destruction over all the earth.

And then, culminating all, the skies will disclose their glorious Maker. Some day we who often watch the sky will see a cloud such as we have never seen before. We have seen inky black clouds, and clouds of snowy whiteness; clouds brightly tinted and many silver lined; clouds made brilliantly gorgeous by the afterglow of the setting sun. But we have yet to see a cloud made magnificently glorious by the blazing splendour of the Son of God. We have seen the morning clouds as they have enwrapped the distant mountain peaks and daintily capped the hilltops. We have yet to see the cloud which shall enfold the awful form of the Mighty One. We have seen clouds driven as chariots to carry rain to the dry and thirsty fields. A cloud will one day be seen that will be the chariot of heaven’s King of glory when He comes to refresh His saints.

This is no fanciful dream, no cunningly devised fable. It is the solemn truth of the Word of God. Nothing is more certain of fulfillment than the predictions of God’s own immutable Word.

Jesus is coming. He is coming suddenly and unexpectedly. “In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.” Matthew 24:44. When the wicked world is dreaming of pleasure; when the people are all unready; when the false cry of “Peace” is sounding over the earth, He will come. As the blinding glare of lightning suddenly stabs across the heavens, so Jesus will come. Matthew 24:27.

God poured out His Spirit on the day of pentecost in a most wonderful way; but that was not, as some mistakenly suppose, the return of our Lord. From that first outpouring until now the Spirit of God has been with true believers; but this is not the second coming of Christ. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus has been with His church for these nineteen centuries, to aid, to comfort, and to bless, in fulfillment of His gracious promise, “Lo, I am with you alway;” but this is not His oft-predicted return. He has sent many messages of admonition and counsel in His blessed Word, the Holy Scriptures, but this is not the second advent of the Lord Jesus. His people have passed away in death through these centuries, and in a spiritual sense Christ has stood by their side in comfort, consolation, and courage; but this is in no sense the fulfillment of the prophecies regarding His second coming to this earth.

The same Jesus who was crucified; the same Jesus who was literally raised from the dead; the same Jesus who said, “Handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have;” the same Jesus who, in the clear sight of His assembled disciples, was taken bodily up into heaven and received into a cloud — this same Jesus is to return to earth in the sight of all its inhabitants, and in the same bodily form in which He went away.

When He departed, two angels tarried and said to His disciples, while they stood on Mount Olivet watching His vanishing figure, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Acts 1:11. And Paul, with equal force and positiveness, declares, "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout." 1 Thessalonians 4:16. Not a spirit, but the Lord Himself. Not death, but the Lord Himself. Not the Bible, but the Lord Himself. Not a dispensation of Providence, but the Lord Himself.

The whole heavens will soon flash with the awful splendour of His divine presence. "He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's and of the holy angel's" Luke 9:26. He "shall be revealed from heaven, . . . in flaming fire." 2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8. When he came before, He was a weak babe in Bethlehem's manger; when He comes again, He will be the all-conquering King. Before, He was "despised and rejected of men;" now His lightnings will lighten the world, and all the earth will see and tremble. Before, He was a sacrifice, and died on Calvary; now He comes as a Judge, sitting upon a "great white throne" His enemies crowned Him with thorns; now there will be on His head "many crowns," and in their hearts affections His people "bring forth the royal diadem and crown Him Lord of all." Before, He came in humility and weakness; now He comes in radiant glory exceeding the brightness of the sun, and with all power in heaven and earth at His command.

It is this thrilling, glorious, world-shaking event, which lies just in the future. How everything else in the world sinks into insignificance in comparison with the hope set before the people of God!

THE MENACING FERMENT OF SOCIAL DISCONTENT

TH**ERE** are three world-wide developments which have come to be the most conspicuous characteristics of our time. I direct attention to these as convincing evidences, as prophetic signs, as foretold certainties, of Christ's second coming.

I have reference to the world-wide social discontent and unrest; world-wide insecurity of and peril to all human institutions, governments, and arrangements; and world-wide departure from and abandonment of the old standards of morality, faith, and righteousness. These things shout from the housetops and the watchtowers that Christ's second coming is near at hand, even at the doors. We will study them in order, one by one.

First let us consider social discontent and unrest. The world is being rocked today by social discontent and unrest. While this is not a new thing in history, it is nevertheless more widespread and pronounced today than ever before. It constitutes the outstanding characteristic of this age. It is running through civilized society like an infection, heating the elemental passions of men to the point of inflammatory turmoil and outbreak. It erupts everywhere in periods of marked violence. It seizes upon people who formerly were immune to it.

It is manifesting itself in every sphere of human activity. It has found voices to speak for it in journalism and literature, as well as from the platform and the pulpit. It is troubling all the parties in all states. It is forcing itself on the attention of the most indifferent and heedless. It has become a seething ferment in the mental blood of the world, until men can think and speak of little else. The noise of the agitation and clamour regarding the relationship of wealth and poverty, of rich and poor, of capital and labour, has become a deafening din in the ears of humanity.

More widely over the earth than ever before in history, has this ferment of discontent spread. It is filled with greater menace than ever before. It has clothed itself with a new power in the extension of the franchise. The discontented have votes. And they are using them. Discontent with the present economic and governmental order has gone beyond a mere tumult in the streets. It is more than a cry in the market-place. It is organized. It is armed with power. That power is swift and decisive. It can be quickly stirred to action. And it acts with such tremendous force that even the leaders of the masses fear to oppose demands which they know to be impossible and unreasonable.

The centuries-old murmur of the masses against hard and oppressive conditions of life has now swelled into the crescendo of a harsh, sinister, menacing roar of determined millions of men who propose to take these conditions into their own hands, and ruthlessly smash all opposition. A titanic

struggle for mastery is on. All the raw elemental forces of human nature are about to be unleashed in the smashup of the world.

This widespread social discontent will find no solution save in the return of Jesus Christ. Its very existence in the world is an evidence of the nearness of His coming, for all this turmoil and upheaval in connection with the present economic order has been definitely foreseen and positively predicted as a harbinger of Christ's second coming.

Under inspiration the Apostle James was given a revelation of the tumultuous conditions in the last days. He wrote of our troublous times thus: "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you." James 5:1-6.

Here Inspiration describes "the last days" as a period when there would be an unparalleled heaping together of wealth and treasure. "the last days" were to be marked by such an amassing of wealth on the part of a few as had never before been seen in the history of the race. This heaping up of wealth in "the last days" was to result from an unfair and unjust dealing with "the laborers who have reaped down your fields." In other words, those who had produced the wealth of the world were defrauded of their just share of the results of their industry. This is covered in the expression, "Ye have condemned and killed the just."

The prophetic picture accurately describes the present condition of the world. Human history has never before witnessed such vast accumulations of wealth as are known today. Never before has there been such a mad rush to make money quickly. We have passed rapidly through the age of millionaires to that of multimillionaires. This is an age of colossal fortunes. There is an unprecedented hoarding of treasures. There are unparalleled accumulations and combinations of capital. there appears to be no end to human greed.

On the other hand, there has been a corresponding increase in poverty. This was altogether to be expected. The wealth of the world cannot be gathered into a few hands without there resulting want, suffering, and misery among millions. As a consequence, Labouring men, in order to obtain rights which are not voluntarily granted them, and to secure an adequate return for their labour, have been organizing to protect themselves, and strikes, boycotts, and lockouts have resulted.

Labour is organized. Capital is organized. They are locked today in a titanic struggle for the supremacy. What all this means, is pointed out in the words of the inspired Scripture in the same chapter where the prophecy is given. Counselling the faithful people of God who are caught up in this turmoil and upheaval of elemental passions, James writes: "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." Verse 8.

Thus a current development meets in full the specifications of the ancient prophecy. this is the time foretold. These are the developments foreseen. this is the situation the ancient prophet saw in vision. This seething cauldron of world-wide social discontent means just one thing. It means that "the second coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

PERILOUS TIMES ARE COME

IN our survey of world conditions as signs of the return of our Lord, we come next to consider the world-wide insecurity and uncertainty in all human affairs.

The deep foundations of the world are being convulsed. Volcanic forces are seething and surging beneath our feet. Perilous times have come in all human affairs.

Serious as these times are, however, men of clear-eyed vision, of wide information, are able to see in them only portents of still more perilous times to come. The present unrest and confusion are only the mutterings of the coming tempest, the tremblings of the coming earthquake, the eddies of

the approaching whirlwind, the gratings of the avalanche of ruin overhanging our world. Everywhere and in every social stratum, thinking men are afraid.

Thousands of millions of the world's wealth were consumed and lost in the World War. Hundreds of millions more have been blotted out in the depression that has followed. Tens of millions of men have been thrown out of work. Unemployment has become one of the serious problems of the world. It is the source of acute distress. It is looked upon by the statesmen of the world with apprehension. The relief projects which governments have created, provide only a temporary relief.

Want and suffering stalk among the poor, sowing seeds of revolt and lawlessness. High prices bring additional perplexity and distress. The poor are confronted with the gigantic problem of how to provide enough food to maintain life. Millions are trying to maintain health and strength on an impoverished diet. One by one, they are compelled to relinquish the more nourishing foods, and multitudes are underfed.

The situation is made still more acute by increased taxation and the decreasing value of money. There is a load of taxation on the population of the world today, such as has never before been known. And for money with which to pay these taxes and at the same time sustain life, we have an inflated currency, the value of which is correspondingly diminished.

Looking ahead, there seems little prospect that prices will be materially lowered, or that currency values will ever be fully restored. All the known economic forces and values of the world have been thrown out of order, and it seems unlikely that they will ever recover.

As the result of the distress and the economic upheaval, a political ferment has broken out in and among the nations. There is a clash of parties, groups, classes, races, and creeds. Everywhere there is social discontent. Now parties are forming, and existing party machinery is being reconstructed in order to change the present order of things.

Governments are insecure today — all governments. Nothing is stable and sure. Nothing is substantial. Thrones and empires have crashed into the dust. Crowned heads have fallen. Governmental structures are tottering. Socialism, anarchism, Communism are the vogue as never before. They strain their eyes to catch the first rays of the "red dawn."

Revolt is in the very air. It penetrates everywhere. Young and old are carried away with a freedom which is only licence. This manifests itself in dress, in speech, in conduct, and in all phases of human behaviour. Men feel that desire is the highest law; that there is no divine tribunal to which the human will must bow.

All the restraints imposed by law, religion, custom, or even ordinary decency are being cast aside as outworn, and free rein is given to every impulse and passion.

In the state, in the church, in the home, in society everywhere, the spirit of independence is manifesting itself, corrupting all the finer things of life and calling for the storm of God's wrath to be visited upon a impenitent world.

This distress of nations, distress of individuals, distress of society, resulting in perplexity and fear, constitutes one of the surest signs of the times. Jesus foretold it when He said: "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh". Luke 21:25-28

The day in which we live is the time to which this prophecy points. The distress of nations seen today surpasses that of all other times of which we have heard, or seen, or read, or known. Everywhere in the world, among all nations, and among all classes of men, there is distress. Distress, tension, and hatred in the relation of nations to one another are increasing. In accordance with the words of Jesus, these things all about us testify to the positive truth that we are about to "see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

JUNKING THE MORALITY OF OUR FATHERS

THERE is another outstanding world development which constitutes a positive sign of the nearness of the return of our Lord. It is the world-wide departure from ancient and established standards of morality and righteousness. This is certainly one of the striking characteristics of the age in which we live.

There is a departure, everywhere manifested today, from the old standards of morality, faith, and righteousness, and the casting aside of all the restraints that have held the lower passions of men in check.

With many today, religion is mere philosophic speculation. With others it is the performance of relative duties. With others it consists in admiration of the bible as a book of literary excellence. With others it consists in bustle and external zeal in good works. But in reality, in nearly all it lacks life — that profound, intense, glowing life which so marked it in earlier times. Therefore, it lacks simplicity, freshness, reality. It is hollow and shallow.

In Jesus Christ there is a redemptive energy, a divine, eternal power. In Him men become new creatures. A new light illuminates their souls, new joys take possession of their hearts. New hopes allure them into the paths of righteousness and peace. The world becomes empty, void, and vain to him in whom Christ truly lives; it loses its hold on the heart. This divine energy which elevates, regenerates, and transforms men is today ignored and cast aside by the easy religionists of this age.

Professed Christians of today are perfectly at home in the externals of religion. They rejoice in pompous worship and ecclesiastical ceremonies. Amid the splendour of Gothic piles and symbolic crosses, altars, and images, true reformation of heart and life is ignored. The tide of vanity and pride rolls on, untouched by the faith it professes.

The inner life of the heart, the work of the Holy spirit, the renewing of the mind, the beginning of eternal life in the soul, the new birth, the receiving of the Word of God — how much of such matters does the average churchgoer know? The whole religious life has become for many a round of forms. It places no restraint on unholy passions and ambitions and desires. All inward grace may be lacking, but if the name is on the church roll, that fact is supposed to cover a multitude of sins. External forms are honoured, but the hidden virtues of the soul — those divine energies whereby God transforms sinners into saints — are ignored.

Faith in Christ may wane, the life may be defective, inner spiritual vitality may be lacking; but if the forms are right, if the professions are regular, if the social standing is good, men are accepted as Christians — and this is all that is thought important.

This very condition, so signally prevalent today, has been fully outlined in the Word of God, and definitely pointed out as an evidence of the nearness of the return of Jesus Christ to this earth. Indeed, the Spirit of God gave special emphasis to this development. Paul wrote: “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the *latter times*, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.” 1 Timothy 4:1.

Again Paul wrote: “The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” 2 Timothy 4:3, 4.

Paul wrote again of his departure from the faith, of the substitution of mere formalities for a vital spiritual life, as follows: “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

What a catalogue of evil is here set forth! And all these evils are to manifest themselves among church members, professed Christians; for the apostle refers to those “having a form of godliness” — those whose outward profession is all right, but who deny “the power thereof.” They go to church, but they do not obey God.

In this time so marked by hypocrisy and formalism and by departure from the faith, God has a word of counsel for His loyal, truehearted, faithful, and sincere people. To them the injunction comes, "From such turn away." To this warning, let us give heed. While we note the increasing apostasy in the churches, while we mark the perils of our times and learn from them that we are "in the last days," let us keep ourselves pure. Let our feet be planted on the Word of God. Let our hearts hear only the voice of the Great Shepherd. Follow Him alone.

Turn *away* from the formal and godless, the faithless and unbelieving, and turn to the oracle of God, to the Holy Scriptures, to Jesus our great Intercessor and Redeemer. Turn to where, perchance, only a few are met together in the name of Christ, but to whom the Lord says, "There am I in the midst."

It matters not how few these may be, if the great Immanuel honours them with His presence. It matters not if they meet in lowly places, yea, even in the dens and caves of the earth, if only the Lord is among them, for with Him is light and life and joy and abiding peace.

Dark as is the picture painted, forbidding and disheartening as is the fact of widespread apostasy from true religion, remember that it is one of the signs that our Lord is coming soon to take to Himself His redeemed and waiting people, and to usher in that eternal kingdom of peace, justice, and righteousness that will endure for ever.

THE OLD EARTH'S PLAIN

The earth is old, and time her face hath graven,
Her watchers sit with drooping head beside her gates;
She lifteth up her hands in suppliance to heaven,
Looks out upon the unanswering stars — and waits.

"I am weary," she saith, "of Time's slow, dull revolving,
Weary of creation's travailing in pain.
Into the centuries deep gulfs my tears dissolving
Have mingled with the ashes of my slain.

"I am weary of the wrongs that cry for righting,
Weary of delusions manifold,
Weary of sin's remorseless blighting,
Weary of the curse of blood-bought gold.

"I wait for Life, to rouse my millions sleeping,
And set the silent, dust-bound captives free,
To crush the power of Death's relentless reaping,
And plant the seed of immortality.

"I wait for peace, world-wide and everlasting,
Not bought with strife of arms, but love's sure dower;
Not calm dead, inactive, soul-blasting,
But peace with progress, liberty, and power."

So waits the earth while worketh the old leaven,
Works out the clash of creeds, the strife of states;
Lifting her hands in suppliance to heaven,
She looks upon the unanswering stars — and waits.
— *Selected (arranged)*

A WORLD OUT OF CONTROL

THE governmental machinery carefully constructed to control human affairs has broken down. All that man has been able laboriously to build up through the centuries in the way of checks and balances is disintegrating. National and international structures designed to produce peace and amity, have proved powerless. Nothing that men have been able to invent, no form of human government, no arrangement of human genius, no scheme of human devising, nothing within reach of human wisdom and ability, has been able to prevent the dreaded breaking up of human society as at present constituted.

Civilization is doomed, and that within this generation.

This is not the half-baked, partially considered conclusion of wild alarmists. It is the carefully considered verdict of serious-minded, thinking men, many of whom hold exalted positions among the statesman of many nations in the Old World and the New.

Clear-eyed but with a perplexed sense of awe and dread in their hearts, they look out upon a world shaken to its foundations by the death agony. They do not hesitate to declare that there is no way of world recovery short of a miracle — and they are frank to say they expect no miracle.

They base their conclusions on the fact that something far more devastating than an earthquake has jarred the world out of its course, and is breaking to pieces. The world has got beyond control. Physically, socially, mentally, morally, commercially, financially, the world is moving in hopeless disorder. And the spirit of disturbance is, in its influence, as wide as the world itself.

Like some gigantic piece of intricate machinery which has been dislocated by tremendous shocks, the world is beginning to crash in hard confusion. It grinds and grates upon our ears in its terrible course. and it is catching up and bearing within its mighty, crushing whirl the torn and bleeding forms of those who have vainly tried to reduce it to order, symmetry, and harmony. Civilization is feeding on its own flesh.

Disarmament conferences, regardless of the sincere desire of humanity for a reduction in armaments, have resulted only in enlarged preparations for war and increased tenseness. Peace conferences have been powerless to reduce friction and hatred between nations. Reparation and war-debt conferences only serve to make an already hopeless situation more desperate.

The League of Nations has demonstrated its impotency on occasion after occasion, and threatens to break down altogether in the face of a possible, nay, probable, outbreak of trouble between the great nations of Europe and Asia. Reconciliation of the immutable viewpoints of the great nations is looked upon as hopeless. These nations are more hopelessly divided today than at any former time.

Moratoriums on international debts have only served to emphasize the futility of any hope that the nations involved can ever satisfy each other. The various international meetings to solve world problems have come to nothing. And men have come to despair of ever discovering that any method can be applied to compose the national, international, racial, religious, economic, and financial disputes which are hurrying the world to destruction.

Is it any wonder, then, that far-seeing, serious-minded men of intelligence have come to dread what a day may bring forth? Under the shifting sands of the continents, other civilizations lie buried, proving that no civilization is self-perpetuating.

Men who were wont to scoff at the idea of “the end of the world” are soberly and despairingly now forecasting that it will bring about its own destruction by its complex artificiality. And on this distracted, nerve-racked, panic-stricken, confused, disordered, and despairing world, we cannot look without being reminded of those strikingly descriptive words of our Lord, spoken nineteen centuries ago, in pointing to this very time:—

“Upon the earth, nations in despair, as when in terror of the roaring and raging sea; men expiring from fear, and apprehension of what is coming upon the world.” Luke 21:25, 26, Fenton’s translation.

No man of reason can doubt that we have reached the time pointed forward to in these words of our Lord. These present times, these present perplexities, these present alarms, these

present apprehensions, are the times and the events pointed to by the great Teacher and Prophet. And now that we have reached these times, what then? What are we to learn from them? What are they to mean to us? Is there any word of certainty regarding the future? Yes, dear friend, there is. The Master who pointed to these times, also explained their meaning. He said:—

“when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.” Luke 21:28.

This, then, is no time to be cast down. It is no time for despair. It is no time for pessimism. The truest optimists in the world today are those who see in these dark and troubled days the harbingers of a coming world of peace and justice.

What the Master meant by the words, “Your redemption draweth nigh,” He makes clear in verse 27:—

“Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.”

These things, then, this present troubled, restless, condition of the world; this failure of human governments; this impossible situation which has arisen; these irreconcilable aims and motives; this powerlessness of man to order aright his own affairs; this imminent crash of civilization, mean just one thing.

They mean, with absolute certainty, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is coming the second time to this earth. He will come, accompanied by all His holy angels. As earth’s inhabitants look up, they will see Him coming in all His glory, clothed with the majesty of heaven, on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, “King of kings, and Lord of lords.” He will return to gather His people. He will bring an end to injustice and oppression. He will bind death. He will rifle the grave. He will deliver creation.

“Surely I come quickly,” is His gracious word of promise. With hearts broken through our sympathy with the burdens and sorrows of men, with unutterable longing to hasten the common deliverance of all, our response is, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

A WORLD MAD AND DRUNKEN

EXAMPLES of the swift and sudden destruction of human liberties on a vast scale are placed before us almost daily in our newspapers. It is altogether amazing how speedily the achievements and advancements made in human progress over a period of decades and centuries can be made to disappear as though by the waving of a magician’s wand. We are living in a time of rapid changes, when laborious and careful building through long years of struggle and at costly expenditure of blood and life, is ruthlessly destroyed overnight.

Nation after nation has discarded representative government, and reverted to absolute dictatorship. A national crisis develops — confusion and turmoil follow — a spectacular leader appears almost by magic and gains followers by millions by impossible promises — they place him in power — they consolidate his position — they support him in cancelling and removing all obstacles against the use of dictatorial power — they make loyalty to him a fetish — they make disloyalty to him treason — and they shout with satisfaction when he proceeds to put down all opposition, and destroy all the safeguards of constitution and well-ordered civilized society as he gathers to himself the power of absolute despotism.

It is an almost unbelievable picture. After centuries of heartbreaking struggle and sacrifice, civilization was emerging in the twentieth century into a condition of stability. The liberties men had fought for during long years of hardship were being consolidated everywhere. Liberty of speech, of the press, of opinion, of assembly, of conscience, and freedom of religion, were coming to be everywhere recognized and established.

And now, almost overnight, we see these things tumbling like a house of cards, all the gains of centuries being lost. It is almost as if some superhuman despot, angered to the point of fury by the enlightenment and progress human beings had made, had issued the order to bring it all to nothing, and lesser human despots leap to carry out his orders.

And these destructive movements develop with a swiftness that take's one's breath. Never before in human history have such world-shaking events taken place so rapidly. The stupendous changes now occurring before our eyes have never been equalled in either their speed or their vast importance.

More and more the sense of balance has been lost. Everything moves with desperate haste. Stupendous projects, involving not millions of pounds, but hundreds of millions, are rushed through with little thought or plan. Turmoil reigns everywhere. The world is drunk or mad, or both.

Nothing so fitly describes the days we live in as the words of an old, old prophecy, dealing with this very time. Looking forward to the nations of today and declaring that God would send among them the cup of war and of His wrath, an ancient prophet wrote, "they shall drink, and reel to and fro, and be mad." Jeremiah 25:16, R.V.

Drunk and mad. Yes, that is an accurate description. Nothing else will explain the situation. Commotions rock the world. Turmoil reigns everywhere. Black clouds of evil presage hang on all earth's political horizons.

Mutual hatred embitters the relations of nations. Self-destructive infatuation pervades the councils of the mighty. Feverish restlessness permeates the whole world. Men's fairest schemes result in failure. There certainly is distress of nations with perplexity. Men's hearts are failing them for fear and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth. The nations are heaving in a restless fury, like the roaring of the sea in a great storm. The machinery of civilization has suffered a shattering shock, and is dislocated. It cannot be reduced to order. The world is drunk — and mad.

This is recognized by entirely sane, serious-minded, thinking men. Stanley Baldwin, when Prime Minister of Great Britain, speaking to the National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches, said: "Having been in international politics for most of the time since the war, I will not write myself down a pessimist, but I will say that at times I feel that I am *living in a madhouse*."

The closing events of this world's history are upon us. They are moving with great speed. The wrath of God, like a pall of blackness, overhangs the impenitent world. It is the death warrant of a godless and impious race.

The great tempest of the wrath of God will break soon and suddenly upon a surprised and unready world. The final doom of a rebellious race is near at hand. The resistless might of an offended God against a race that has broken His law and would have none of His grace, will before long smite mankind from this planet. His Word declares that "evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great tempest shall be raised up from the uttermost parts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth." Jeremiah 25:32, 33, R.V.

There is no other prospect than this for a sin-cursed and obstinate race which persists in sin. It cannot hope for life. Its impending and rapidly hurrying destiny is death.

"Behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many." Isaiah 66:15, 16.

"The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, He shall fill the places with the dead bodies; He shall wound the heads over many countires." Psalms 110:5, 6.

All this will be preliminary and preparatory to making the world over, bringing in a new order of things, establishing lasting and world-wide peace, and fulfilling the ancient promises and prophecies of God regarding a new earth.

So the turmoil of old earth, as it passes through its death agonies, does not affright us. We see in these things the precursors of important changes, the harbingers of God's own eternal kingdom of peace.

Jesus Christ is coming the second time to this earth. This time He will take over the dominion and rule of this planet. Then our fondest hopes and desires will be met in the fulfillment of the ancient prophecy:—

"there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Daniel 7:14.

HIS COMING

I heard the evening bells,
With soft, low, silvery chime.
Was it the echo of His steps along
The corridors of time?

O watchman of the night,
Reveal the tidings now;
Falls there not from the distant east
Light on a mountain's brow?

Must swift destruction be
Precursor of the Lord?
It is the marked sign all may read,
Within His written Word!

His judgments sweep the earth,
By famine, flame, and flood,
His chariot wheels, where'er they roll,
Have left the track of blood!

To those who watch for Him
With straining, earnest eyes,
There comes an undertone of joy
To clear these clouded skies.

We've watched and waited long,
Dear Lord; when wilt Thou come
To lift us from this vale of gloom,
And take Thine exiles home?

— *Mrs. E. J. Alexander.*

THE PROBLEM OF WORLD RECOVERY

TH**ERE** will be no permanent recovery in economic, social, or governmental affairs in this world until Christ's return. His second coming provides the only prospect men have of permanent social and economic security and justice.

Every effort which men and governments have made to bring about recovery from depression, has been disappointing. The world is still drifting in uncertainty and fear. All the well-intentioned plans of the world's ablest statesmen have been inadequate to restore confidence or security. New plans are being invented and proposed at a feverish rate as the old ones prove failures and are discarded.

During the last six or seven years the whole world has found itself wandering and lost in a bog of depression. All nations have been affected. Every human arrangement has felt the shock of dislocation. It is scarcely an exaggeration to declare that every home and family on earth has been

influenced by this strange, mysterious overthrow of all the conditions and arrangements with which we had become familiar and upon which we had come to rely.

All the institutions and achievements which men have laboriously built up over a long period of years in civilized human society to safeguard and stabilize their present and assure their future have proved too weak and feeble to accomplish their purpose.

Banks have closed their doors. Trust companies have proved untrustworthy. Real-estate values have diminished and disappeared. Commerce and industry have been terribly impaired and injured. governments have been overturned. The savings of millions have been irretrievably lost. Confidence in all the works of men has been terribly jolted. Everywhere in the world the evils of the depression have spread. High prices, lowered income, widespread unemployment, strikes, lockouts, mounting taxes, devaluation of money, lost homes, lost farms, lost investments, unsaleable property and produce, surplus of manufactured goods, with all their attendant hardships and suffering, have been outstanding features of these recent years.

Coupled with all this and naturally growing out of all this, have been broken confidence, downright suspicion, growing hatred and jealousy and animosity among peoples and nations.

In all nations the leaders of the people have endeavoured in various ways to find means to stem and check the depression, and bring about recovery. Governmental effort looking to recovery are attempts to straighten out wrongs correct social and economic ills, and bring things back to normalcy once more. The great word is "recovery." Their sponsors usually promise everything. Such promises are usually impossible of fulfillment.

Not because they are wrongly intentioned do they fail of accomplishment. The best and wisest of our leaders bring them forth. They have nothing in mind save to help. They are not schemers and intriguers. Their purposes are good. They desire good for their fellow-men. And they do the best they can. Their best is not good enough. The best that any other group can produce will not be good enough.

There is something about this whole situation which our leaders do not take into account, which they leave out of their reckoning. It is this: There is that as the root of social and economic confusion, of human wretchedness and misery, which no scheme or arrangement of man, no political philosophy or administration, can ever remove or change. And that thing which is the root cause of all human ills, and which man cannot reach or deal with, is bound, sooner or later, to bring every human scheme of recovery to defeat.

It is not in man to recover. The thing that is wrong with this world, the thing which produces all human maladjustments, all depression, all wretchedness and misery, all injustice, all unfairness and oppression, is not merely bad politics; it is sinful human nature. It is not merely wrong governmental arrangements; it is wrong lives. Sin is the root cause of all that is wrong in the world. And sin cannot be reached or destroyed by any political, economic, social, or governmental arrangements which can be effected.

Change human environment as you will, change human conditions of life, change social and economic arrangement and structure, change the government, change the whole political philosophy of government, and when all that is done, you have not changed fallen human nature one iota. And it is human nature that is wrong. It is human nature that is productive of all other wrongs. The tree is bad. The fruit is bound to be bad.

Mankind, through the ages, has tried every form of political philosophy in constructing governments, from outright despotism through every gradation to forth-right Communism. All have failed. And all that the ingenuity of the human mind can invent is bound to fail. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Jeremiah 10:23. It is not in man to bring about recovery.

Man has demonstrated that he can ruin a world. That is settled. But he cannot reconstruct a world. He cannot repair the ruin he has made. He cannot bring about recovery. It took man only a moment to ruin the world. He has had six thousand years for his many schemes of reconstruction. None of them have succeeded.

He has tried everything. And not one thing has worked to bring about permanent recovery. The world is more wicked and lawless now than it has ever been. Peace does not reign among the nations. Misrule has not departed. Righteousness is not ruling the world. Injustice, oppression, and unfairness have not been eliminated. The heart remains deceitful above all things, and desperately

wicked. Oppression, cruelty, selfishness, debauchery, lust, sedition, strife, hatred, and murder are not eradicated, subdued, or mitigated. They are more rife than ever. They rage on. They grow worse. And man has found no cure for them.

So all man's attempts at recovery, at restoration, have resulted only in greater evils. His attempts at progress have been abortive. Indeed, progress in evil, in alienation from God, is the feature of greatest prominence in his history.

But this progress in evil has a limit. God has set bounds which He will not allow it to pass. He will make the wrath of men to praise Him, and the remainder thereof He will restrain. A certain amount and a certain duration He will permit, but no more. Neither the amount nor the duration is indefinite. They are nearing their boundaries.

When a man has exhausted his feeble attempts to repair the damage sin has wrought, when every recovery scheme of man has proved futile, then God will take things into His own capable hands. He will bring about recovery which will be complete, effective, comprehensive, and successful. Where man has failed, God will succeed. He will repair the ravages of sin, restore the conditions of paradise itself, banish wrong and injustice and oppression, and plant equity and righteousness and peace in the earth forever.

The good is about to displace the evil. The blessing is about to take the place of the curse. The second Adam is at hand. With Him will come the kingdom and the glory. He will come with the clouds of heaven. By the destruction of the wicked, He will overthrow oppression, and bring an end to crime. He will deliver from this present evil world all who put their trust in Him, and are obedient to His commandments. He will rifle the grave, and take His people to heaven. He will establish everlasting righteousness. And on His righteous, peaceful throne He will reign for ever and ever.

There is no other remedy for a ruined world than this. There is no other prospect of genuine recovery than this. This is the one great hope of the whole creation. It is the only hope of a sorely burdened world, which under Him will at last know the blessedness of righteous rule.

THE DIVINE PLAN FOR RECOVERY

THE second coming of Jesus Christ provides the only hope of a permanent solution for all the ills of humanity. Political systems, no matter how perfect in theory and conception, are inadequate and powerless to bring real and permanent recovery to the world.

Sin is at the root of all the trouble and injustice and wrong in the world. And nothing that men can do will remove sin. Men cannot be made good by law. No change in political philosophy makes a change in the human heart. Human nature is just the same, operates the same, responds to the same incentives, moves from the same motives, and is ruled by the same iniquity and sin, no matter what political banner it marches under.

But, thank God, the situation is not altogether hopeless. God has set His hand, has pledged Himself, to recover what has been lost. His plan has as its foundation the gift of Jesus Christ, His only Son, who came into this world to meet sin, to grapple with it, to take all the penalty upon Himself for every human being, to exhaust all its venom and malice upon Himself, to go down into death to meet its dread punishment, and to conquer it. And soon He will come in clouds of glory, to take it all away, destroy it for ever, banish it from the universe. Yes, sin is destined to be destroyed.

Only then will full recovery be realized throughout the whole world. But even now we may individually realize some of its benefits in pardon for the guilt of sin, and in deliverance from its bondage and dominion. Even now our lives may be yielded to and governed by the eternal law of righteousness set forth in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Salvation, starting with the sacrifice of our Lord on Calvary, proposes and promises and involves and assures many wonderful things. Summing them all up we have this — full and complete recovery of all that was lost by the introduction of sin into this world, entire restoration of Edenic conditions, the complete overthrow and destruction of everything that is wrong or bad, and the eternal establishment and maintenance of everything that is right and good. This certainly requires a change of authority. Such a change is contemplated and assured in the near future. It is foretold for our very

time in the ancient prophecies of the Bible. Concerning the nations of today, God inspired Daniel to write:—

“And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever” .Daniel 2:44

The “God of heaven” will take over into His own management the mishandled affairs of this world. He will “set up a kingdom.” He will put into operation righteousness, equity, and justice. And all that He does will “stand for ever.”

There will then be only one rule, one authority. All other rule and dominion will be put down. There will be world-wide authority, a universal administration. The apostle Paul declares:—

“Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power”. 1 Corinthians 15:24

“All rule,” “all authority,” and “all power,” other than that of God, is to be “put down.” That is one of the first steps in clearing the way for the establishment of the new and eternal administration. There is to be no divided authority, no limitation of rule. No man-appointed vicegerent will rule in Christ’s stead. No religious laws or union of church and state will usher in the coming kingdom. No vicar will represent our blessed Lord. He will come in the clouds of glory, with all His holy angels, and God the Father and Christ the Son will for ever be supreme.

And then, and not until then, will righteousness prevail over all.

“Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained;” Acts 17:31

It is when God’s “judgments are in the earth” that “the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” Isaiah 26:9. It is of the time when He establishes His kingdom, that He declares, “Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet.” Isaiah 28:17.

“And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever”. Isaiah 32:17.

Injustice and oppression will then be eliminated for ever.

“He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor”. Psalms 72:4

The Lord, from His dwelling-place in heaven, has observed the failure of man to rule justly and well. He has seen the oppression and unfairness and cruelty and injustice of human administrations. It has move His heart. And He declares:—

“For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD”; Psalms 12:5.

David has described that glorious time, and said of it:

The LORD is King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land. LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear: To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress”. Psalms 10:16-18

One of the first steps in God’s plan is recovery from death. “Thy dead men shall live,” Isaiah cried. Isaiah 26:19. “Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,” Daniel wrote. Daniel 12:12. “The dead in Christ shall rise first,” Paul declared. 1 Thessalonians 4:16. “The hour is coming,” said Jesus Himself, “when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God.” Yes, “The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” John 5:25, 28, 29.

At that time, those who have been deprived of justice will receive a just recompense. “Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.” Luke 14:14

There will then be such a redistribution of wealth and of all good things that all people of God will not only be kings, but will actually be lifted to share the life of heavenly beings, and death itself will be abolished for evermore.

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in My throne.” Revelation 3:21

“And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” Revelation 5:10.

“Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.” Luke 20:36

Never to die anymore! Think for a moment of a world in which there is no death. Let the glory of it move your minds. That is recovery indeed. These bodies of ours, now subject to infirmity, disease, decay, and death, are to be changed so that they will never die, never grow old, never become sick, never become infirm.

“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.” 1 Corinthians 15:53, 54.

These weak, feeble, diseased bodies are going to be fashioned anew, and made like unto His own glorious body.

“We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” Philippians 3:20, 21.

These are some of the things we confidently expect as a result of the return of our Lord. But they are not all. Others will be discussed in another chapter.

THE MILLENNIUM AND THE GLORY THAT SHALL FOLLOW

ALL of earth’s horizons are dark with menacing storm clouds. It seems the very earth beneath our feet is trembling in terror of an impending shock of titanic force.

The hour of crisis is upon us, a crisis unprecedented in human history. The world’s economic structure is collapsing. The world’s governmental structure has proved impotent. Civilization, as we know it, seems staggering on the edge of a precipice, and the edge is crumbling.

There are bewildering paradoxes everywhere. There is an oversupply of food, yet starvation stalks the streets. There is overproduction of all commodities, yet destitution is the lot of millions. There is more gold and silver and money than ever before, but distress is found everywhere because there are no buyers. There is much work to be done, and the world of civilization is to be saved, but there are more unemployed than ever before.

All the wisdom and ingenuity of men are futile in finding a solution. Problems grow increasingly and alarmingly worse. Men’s hearts everywhere are failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth. Throughout the entire race of men the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint.

It does not require any special enlightenment to discover that human affairs are rapidly moving to a final collapse. The serious literature of the day, the thoughtful pronouncements of world leaders, teem with statements showing that universal catastrophe is upon us. Thoughtful men are talking about the “doom of our civilization,” “destruction of life on a colossal scale,” “world-wide uprising and revolt,” “bloody revolutions,” “the complete and irremediable collapse of the world economic system,” and “utter and irretrievable ruin.” Certainly this time is described with marvellous exactitude by the prophetic word of our Lord — “distress of nations, with perplexity.”

Shall believers in Christ share with the people of the world in this fear? No, our attitude is to be that commanded by our Lord, “When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.” Luke 21:28.

Followers of the Lord are bidden to rejoice, not at the distress of the world, but because in these developments that distress, they may discern the approach of a new age of glory, long promised, and now about to be realized.

The popular fancies regarding the millennium as a period of peace and prosperity on earth, have no basis whatever in bible teaching. They are merely the fancies of men. They are not from the Word of God.

The millennium is not, as many suppose, a thousand years of glory and peace on earth. It is not an age of progress. It is not an age of recovery. It does not result from the conversion of the whole world. Not will the world be converted during that period.

On the contrary, the Bible millennium will be an age of darkness and gloom on this earth. It will be a period when death reigns over all the earth. The day of salvation will then have ended, and the day of the Lord will have begun. And of this day of the Lord, or the millennium, the Inspired Record says:—

“Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the LORD is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. [20] Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?” Amos 5:18-20

“Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.” Joel 2:1, 2.

The Bible nowhere teaches that the whole world will be converted. In the parable of the wheat and tares, recorded in Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43, it is made very plain that both the righteous and the wicked are to “grow together” until the “harvest,” which is explained to be the “end of the world.” At the end of the world, instead of the wicked all being converted, they are to be cast into a furnace of fire, where there will be “wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

The order of events opening and closing the millennium is plainly set forth in the teaching of the Bible. The millennium will begin with the second coming of Christ. At that time there will be four classes of people — the righteous dead, the righteous living, the wicked dead, and the wicked living.

At the coming of Christ all the righteous dead will be raised from their graves, and with the righteous living, who are to be translated, will be taken to heaven. 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17.

Though these two classes will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, they will not remain in the air, as some teach, but will go with the Lord to heaven. John 14:2, 3.

In heaven all the righteous will remain during the thousand years, or millennium. Said the prophet: “They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” Revelation 20:4.

It is plain from this that the righteous will not be on earth, but in heaven, during the thousand years that comprise the millennium.

The wicked dead will not be raised at the second coming of Christ. They will be left unmolested in their graves. Their sleep will not be broken at that time, for the Inspired Record says: “The rest of the dead [the wicked] lived not again until the thousand years were finished.” Revelation 20:5.

There will be two resurrections — a resurrection of the righteous at the second coming of Christ, and a resurrection of the wicked one thousand years later, at the close of the millennium. Thus the millennium will open with a resurrection and close with a resurrection.

The living wicked will be destroyed at the second coming of Christ. They will remain dead until the second resurrection, at the close of the millennium. It is to the wicked living at the coming of Christ that the apostle refers in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10: “You who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.”

From this plain teaching of the Bible we clearly see what becomes of the four classes on the earth at the second coming of Christ. The righteous dead will be raised, the righteous living will be translated, and these two classes together will be taken to heaven to live and reign with Christ for a thousand years. the wicked dead will be left in their tombs; the wicked living will all be destroyed at His coming, and together these two classes will remain in the prison house of death until the close of the millennium.

Clearly, then, during the millennium the world will be in a completely ruined, wrecked, and depopulated condition. It is Armageddon that will begin this slaughter. The fears that men express today in our press are well grounded. Armageddon is not only self-destruction of a race in rebellion against God, but it is the forerunner of the final overthrow that shall befall all the wicked forces of the earth, a ruin from which there will be no recovery, no return.

During the time of the millennium there will not be a human being left alive. The earth will be completely depopulated. It is to be a great cemetery, its dead scattered over its surface, unlamented, ungathered, unburied. Jeremiah 25:32, 33.

Seven Last Plagues	
Second Coming of Christ	
Righteous Dead Raised	Saints Possess
Satan Bound	the Kingdom
Saints Taken To Heaven	ETERNITY
First Resurrection	NEW EARTH STATE

----- **1,000 YEARS BETWEEN THE TWO RESURRECTIONS (EARTH DESOLATE)** -----

CHRISTIAN AGE	Holy City Descends
LAST DAYS	Christ and Saints Appear
	Wicked Dead Raised
	Satan Loosed
	Wicked Destroyed
	Second Resurrection

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

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

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

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

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

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

The prophetic description of earth is found in Jeremiah 4:23-26 and Isaiah 24:1, 3.

The utter depopulation and ruin of the earth — such is the terrible destiny that overhangs this world. Not since the waters of the Flood overwhelmed the human race has such a terrible and widespread destruction been known to man.

The fulfillment of these divine predictions is hurrying on apace. the wrath of God, like a pall of blackness, overhangs the impenitent world. It is the death warrant of a godless and impious race.

"For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many. Isaiah 66:15, 16.

This great tempest of the wrath of God will break suddenly upon a surprised world. Like a furious tornado the storm of the wrath of an offended God will burst upon those who have despised His mercy.

The great and mighty, the nobles and princes, are called upon to howl and mourn over their impending ruin. Jeremiah 25: 34, 35.

It is the final doom of the rebellious race, which will be destroyed from the face of the earth. Psalms 21: 8-10.

From the description which the prophets have given of the earth during the millennium, we discover that there will be a waste and desolate wilderness. The righteous will be in heaven. The wicked will all be dead. The cities of earth will be broken down at the presence of the Lord. All the works of men will be destroyed. Darkness will cover the earth. The bodies of the dead will be from one end of the earth to the other end.

It is the earth in this condition that is called "the bottomless pit" into which Satan will be cast bound. Revelation 20:1-3. Here in this desolate earth, with its cities broken down and its whole expanse become a great ruin, without any of the human race left, Satan will be compelled to stay for a thousand years.

The age of glory on this earth will not be during the millennium. It will follow the millennium. This desolate earth is to be made new. We read the glorious truth of the conditions then to prevail in Revelation 21:1-4. Nothing we have seen or heard or thought here can compare with the splendours of this coming kingdom of Christ.

During the thousand years of the millennium the earth had been desolate. The cities were broken down at the second coming of Christ. their ruins have been the scenes of Satan's captivity.

The people of God will be in heaven during the millennium. At its close they will come back to the earth with the New Jerusalem, for it is written, "I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Revelation 21:2. The millions of wicked will then be raised to life again. the word of Scripture is: "The rest of the dead [the wicked] lived not again until the thousand years were finished. . . . And when the thousands years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." Revelation 20:5-9.

With his armies Satan makes a desperate and futile attempt to overthrow the city of God. The fire of God will not only consume Satan and all the wicked, but will melt the earth, purifying it of every evil thing. 2 Peter 3:10; Malachi 4:1-3. And from the ashes of this old earth, God will create a new earth. The face of nature will be renewed. Verdure will spring forth over all the ruined earth, now to be glorified. Even those places which have been desert and waste and dreary will be purified. And this is to be the dwelling-place of God's people for ever. Their occupancy here is described in Isaiah 65:21, 22.

The infirmities and decay of man will be at an end. the eyes of the blind are to be opened. The ears of the deaf are to be unstopped. Lame men are to leap as the hart, and the dumb are to sing. Isaiah 35: 5, 6.

There will be no more feebleness of the physical powers. The dreaded on-creeping of old age will not impair the faculties. There will be abounding health, thrilling vigour, unimpaired strength, more abundant life, as the millenniums roll on and on, and there will be an abiding confidence that it will always be so.

The capital of this glorified new earth is to be the New Jerusalem. What a city it is! Nothing that earth has known can be compared with it. Turn and read the description in Revelation 21:9-27 — a description which there is no reason to understand in any but a literal way.

And these glorious privileges and pleasures will continue, and increase, and become more enjoyable as the ages roll. They will never be removed, and immortality will enable men to participate in them through the ages.

"For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. Isaiah 66:22, 23.

Not only the new earth, but also God's people, will remain. And their chief joy will be in worship. Sabbath after Sabbath they will come from their homes to worship before the Lord, uniting in praise and profound gratitude for His goodness and mercy in bringing them into the peace and safety and gladness of this glorious land.

"Blessed," indeed, "are they that do His commandments," washing their robes in His righteous, precious, and saving blood, "that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Revelation 22:14.

THE RESTORATION COMPLETE

THRRILLING and inspiring as are the developments already discussed, which will follow the second coming of Christ, there are others of like nature which we now present.

The earth itself will be completely renewed, renovated, cleansed of sin, made over into an entirely new earth. This is assured under God's benign rule. His promise is, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth." Isaiah 65:17.

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

"I saw a new heaven and a new earth." Revelation 21:1.

And "the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." Psalms 37:11.

In this new earth, where righteousness and peace abide, there will be pleasant, homelike joys and occupations.

"They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. . . Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." Isaiah 65:21, 22.

Peace and security, quietness and assurance for ever, will be characteristics of the coming kingdom.

"My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places." Isaiah 32:18.

Every person "shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid." Jeremiah 30:10.

"And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid." Ezekiel 34:28

"But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it." Micah 4:4

There will be no more crime, no violence, no accidents, no wasting, no destruction.

"Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise." Isaiah 60:18

There will be no sickness there. Disease of every kind will be conquered and abolished for ever.

"The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick." Isaiah 33:24.

And death, sorrow, pain, and crying will be for ever in the past, unknown in God's kingdom.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Revelation 21:4

Now to sum it all up, let us look at the whole of this divine programme. Let us examine all that God plans, and proposes, and promises when His government is established.

Nothing that man has done or can do bears any comparison with it. Nothing we have seen or heard or thought can equal it. All the proposals and promises of men pale and grow dim alongside it. What God will bring about exceeds even our most extended imaginings. The things He has prepared have not entered into the heart of man.

The earth will be made new. Not one country, one continent, one hemisphere, but the whole earth. All the misery, wretchedness, sin, violence, terror, injustice, and oppression will be gone for ever.

Social and political conditions will be made new. A redistribution of wealth will be made, until every man is a king. There will be social justice and equity in all human relationships, with absolute security, peace, quietness, and permanent safety and assurance. The inhabitants will be all righteous. Sin and the curse will be gone for ever. The former things are passed away.

Our bodies will be made new. The bodies we have now are subject to illness, pain, decay, death, and disintegration. They are easily injured, disorganized, destroyed. Disease feeds on them, dims their eyes, dulls their ears, disarranges all their functions.

Not so with the new body, the resurrection body. No disease will ever sap its strength. No death will ever disintegrate its particles. The passage of time will leave no mark upon it. The creeping on of age will never bow it down. It is incorruptible. The forces of eternal youth are in it. The energies of the eternal God are imparted to it. It will never feel pain. It will never grow old and feeble. It will never die. It is eternal, immortal, incorruptible.

And we cannot even imagine the powers of the new life.

Our bodies will then transcend the limitations that handicap them now. No weakness, no deformity, no limitation of space or of movement will hamper them. As is the resurrection body of Jesus so will our bodies be.

For He "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." Philippians 3:21.

And "we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." 1 John 3:2.

All our faculties will be raised to the highest power. There will be no more feebleness of the physical powers, no more dreaded on-creeping of old age, impairing our faculties. Abounding health, thrilling vigour, unimpaired strength, more abundant life will be ours as the millenniums roll on and on.

Eyes that were blind here will be opened, ears that were deaf here, unstopped. Tongues that were dumb here will be unloosed, limbs that have been crippled here, made whole. Truly, the people of God "shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isaiah 35:10.

There will be no need for life insurance; there will be no death. There will be no need for old-age insurance; there will be no old age. "For as the days of a tree are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." Isaiah 65:22. There will be no need of health insurance, for there will be no sickness; no need of accident insurance, for there will be no accidents. There will be no need of theft and fire insurance; there will be no robbery, no fires. We will not need unemployment insurance. The service of God will employ all for ever. None will need security insurance. Safety and quietness will prevail always. There will be no need of storm and lightning insurance, for wasting and violence and destruction will have given place to security and peace and assurance.

No more depression will there be, no more alarms, no more uneasiness or fear, no failures, no poverty, no injustice, no oppression, no unfairness, nothing to molest, nothing to make afraid, no more tears, sorrows, or crying, no more pain, no more death. Sin and the curse will be gone for ever. The former things will have passed away.

No freezing cold will mar that land. There will be no burning heat, no gloomy clouds, no darkness of night, no wasting sickness, no cruel pain, no graveyards, no parting with loved ones, no temptations, no sin.

There will be the waving of palms of victory, and praise, and rest, and glory, and quietness, and confidence, and assurance, and safety evermore, world without end. Fulfilled then will be the ancient oath of God: "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." Numbers 14:21.

It will not be difficult then to exclaim: "the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." Psalms 16:6.

To God, who is now preparing all this for His people, we will sing: "In Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Psalms 16:11.

As our hearts thrill at the contemplation of this coming kingdom, and as we meditate on the infinite goodness of God in making such a future possible, let us remind you that all these glorious prospects are for the followers of God, the saints of Christ. They cannot be claimed, nor the future life reasonably be expected, by those who have not, and who will not, surrender themselves to, and accept the salvation of, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Even now every person is preparing for a harvest of glory or a harvest of shame. Even now everyone is deciding whether he will be in the new earth we have been studying about. Our individual future is in the making now. "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Galatians 6:8

There is no cheating the harvest, dear friend. What are you hoping of that resurrection day? Eternal life and eternal death are placed before you. If your mortal body is quickened to life in the resurrection when Jesus comes, it will be because your living spirit has been quickened now by the Spirit of the Lord.

May you know the "power of His resurrection" now in being given life, and may the Lord Jesus Christ quicken you who are dead in trespasses and sins, that you may live His life here in the conquest of sin, as well as hereafter, following the conquest of death.

To everyone comes the gracious invitation: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17.

The citizens of the new earth are being recruited now. their fitness for life in God's kingdom is being determined now. The eternal destiny of all is being decided now.

Christ has come to seek and to save the lost. He has sought you. He has found you. May God help you to let Him save you. He offers you eternal life. He offers you an eternal home. He offers you all that I have so feebly and inadequately set before you.

He has died for your sins. He will pardon them if you will accept that death.

He has taken your guilt and your punishment, if you will now receive Him as you Substitute.

He has cancelled the sentence of the law against you. He will lift that sentence from your soul if you will now accept His sacrifice. He has purchased eternal life for you. He will confer it upon you if you will now surrender yourself to Him.

He has prepared an eternal home for you in the new earth. He will convey to you the title deed, and give you an abundant entrance into it, if you will now follow Him in obedience.

The time of the eternal kingdom is nearly here. It will not be long delayed. "Surely I come quickly," said Jesus. Will you not now reply with glad and eager heart, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Revelation 22:20.

ALMOST HOME

We are sailing into harbour,
Sailing o'er a troubled sea;
Storms and tempests sweep around us,
Shoals and rocks are on the lee.
With our chart and log and compass,
Held by faith's dead reckoning,
Homeward bound we're swiftly sailing
To the city of the King.

We are sailing into harbour,
Brothers, hear the Lord declare,
There will be no griefs nor sorrows,
No more trials, no more care,
No more pain and no more crying—
Listen, for the Saviour saith,
No more sickness, no more suffering,
No more parting, no more death.

We are sailing into harbour,
And from out the golden gate
We can hear the angel's vespers
As the storms of life abate.
Golden glories from the city
Slant athwart the heavenly dome,
And each balmy sunset zephyr
Whispers, "One day nearer home."
—*R. Kelso Carter.*
