

Last Day Delusions

By Allen Walker

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Introduction

I FIRST heard of Allen Walker while interning in Wenatchee, Washington, soon after being graduated from college. An elderly evangelist in possession of some unusually effective reasoning on the law question credited to him with its origin. I wrote Walker and secured a copy of a privately printed book titled *Law and the Sabbath*.

So comprehensive were its analogies, so clear its presentation of the law-gospel relationship, that when I attended the Seminary in 1953, I brought it to the attention of friends, urging that it be printed. In the meantime the author had submitted the manuscript to the Southern Publishing Association, and they, seeing its value, published it in 1954 under the title *The Law and the Sabbath*. Gratefully received by ministers and laymen alike, it has been called the “finest book on the subject in print.”

An indefatigable worker in the South until his death in 1955, Walker never passed by an opportunity to witness for God. From his contacts with ministers of many denominations came a unique grasp of numerous doctrines. Among his papers after his death were found keen and incisive discussions of such subjects as “eternal security,” “futurism,” “the conversion of the Jews,” “the rapture,” “the second chance doctrine,” and the views of the Jehovah’s Witnesses on the “deity of Christ,” and His “second coming.”

These are being published for the first time as chapters of this book. Because they were not prepared to stand as successive chapters, some editing has been necessary. In some instances quotations have been brought up to date. Chapters five and six have been revised to provide a brief background to the questions being discussed. Repetitious material – present to some degree because the papers were not prepared to stand together – has been deleted. In a few instances additional verses have been added to provide a more complete coverage of the topic. However, in the main, the thinking and organisation of the author have been carefully preserved.

During my evangelistic and pastoral work I was called on many times to face the issues discussed in this book. I am not aware of anything in print which handles the questions with grater clarity or with more emphasis on Scripture. Last-day delusions are stripped of their camouflage by a man who wielded the sword of the Spirit with discrimination and power.

R.R. HEGSTAD.

Once Saved, Always Saved?

ONE OF the greatest deceptions of these closing days is the widespread teaching that once a man has passed from a standing of “condemnation” to a standing of “justification,” he can never again come under condemnation before God to the extent of being lost. It is claimed that no matter how completely he may afterward abandon himself to drunkenness, thievery, adultery, profanity, or any other sin – even if he should die while practicing one or all of these sins – there is not the remotest possibility that he will be lost. He may lose his fellowship, but he cannot lose his salvation.

According to this teaching, being born again does not necessarily lead to discontinuance of sin. The instant a man believes in Christ and by faith accepts Him as Saviour, he receives eternal life. This being the case, no amount of subsequent sinning can deprive him of this life. If a man dies in his sins, he is not damned; instead he is believed to go to be with Jesus!

A leading champion of this theory has written: “God wants a clean people. And they can be if they will humble themselves and confess their sins. To refuse to do so is to invite the judgment of God in weakness and sickness, and persistent unrepentance may result in the Lord *taking them home*, and then they will face the judgment seat of Christ.” But on this very point Jesus said, “Ye . . . shall die in your sins: whiter I go, ye cannot come.” John 8:21.

This writer goes on: “Can the believer continue in sin and go unjudged?” He does not ask, “Can the believer continue in sin without being lost?” Indeed he teaches that a man can continue in sin until his last breath and still be saved. The Lord will visit weakness and sickness upon a man to make him “clean,” but if he persists in wickedness, then the Lord will take him “home.” There he will face the “judgment seat of Christ,” not, however, for the purpose of receiving condemnation. There and then the final cleansing takes place before he is assigned a place in the kingdom. This is supposed to be the significance of facing the “judgment seat of Christ.”

The difference between this belief and the Catholic doctrine of purgatory is not great. In purgatory sinners are retained for a time to be cleansed from their sins before they are admitted to heaven. In this belief they are cleansed at the judgment seat of Christ before being assigned a place in the kingdom. According to Catholic theology, the sinner must have all defilement removed before he can come into Christ’s presence – thus purgatory gives hope to those who die in their sins. In this belief the sinner comes before Christ with his defilement. The Apostle John, writing of the New Jerusalem, wherein Christ sits at the judgement seat, said, “There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth.” Revelation 21:27. Just what explanation is made of this verse and other similar verses is not known.

I once heard a preacher deliver a radio sermon on the prodigal son in which he emphasised that the prodigal “never ceased to be his father’s son.” Meeting him after the broadcast and knowing him to be a believer in the once-saved, always-saved doctrine, I said, “This son wasted his living with harlots. Suppose he had died while living that way?” His unhesitating reply was, “He would have gone straight to heaven.” Holding the doctrine he did, he could not consistently answer otherwise.

The problem is, how can this view be made consistent with Scripture? John said, “There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth.” And Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” And what of the claim that the prodigal son “never ceased to

be his father's son," even while wasting his living "with harlots" –as the elder brother charged? Jesus gives the answer in the parable of the prodigal son, when He quotes the father as saying, "This is my son . . . was lost, and is found." He was his father's son; but he was a *lost* son. The same can be said of all who have turned back from Christ into the practice of sin. They are *lost* sons. If they die in that state, they certainly will not be taken home for cleansing; the only cleansing for sin that has ever been provided is the blood of Jesus Christ. Had the prodigal continued in his sinning, he would have continued lost. Says the Scripture, "Whoremongers . . . shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." And Paul said plainly that adulterers shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10.) This would have ruled the prodigal son out, had he died in his sins.

The once-saved, always-saved believers class such as "carnal Christians." If there were such (but there are not) the lake of fire would still be their lot, for Paul declares, "To be carnally minded is death." Romans 8:6. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." Verse 13. Because Seventh-day Adventists believe that what a man does in this life has a great deal to do with his destiny, they are charged with not believing in salvation by "pure grace." But according to the Scriptures, a grace which gives license to sin is not grace; it is presumption. Jude speaks of some who "pervert the grace of our God into licentiousness." Jude 4, Revised Standard Version. Moffatt's Translation speaks of those who "pervert the grace of our God into immorality."

Despite these warnings, a believer in "pure grace" boldly says: "When a child of God deliberately sins against the light he has received, he can be sure [of being lost? Far from it!] that there is coming a time of real judgment, not unto condemnation, but either a chastening (as we shall see later) or a shameful appearing before the Judgment Seat of Christ at his coming." Why should a drunkard or an adulterer care to repent if he is made to believe that at the judgment seat of Christ he can be absolutely sure of eternal salvation despite his continued sinning? The author is not talking of a sin that is committed because of a sudden temptation or because of unwatchfulness. He is claiming that if a man who deliberately practices sin is not stopped by chastisement, he still need have no fear of condemnation. If that is not encouraging the "carnally minded" to live securely in their carnal ways, what is it doing? It was on this point that Paul most earnestly warned, "Be not deceived."

According to the same author, if God is His foreknowledge sees that a Christian is piling up sin against sin, He tries to correct him by chastisement. Failing in this, He "takes him home," that is, to heaven. In other words, if a man sins moderately, he will get to heaven someday; but if he sins profligately, he will get there more quickly! If this is not putting a premium on sin, what is it doing? The man who commits the most sin, the man who refuses to stop sinning, will get to heaven ahead of his conscientious, righteous brethren. It makes no difference what these sins are. They may be "murders, drunkenness, revellings"; but the more he abandons himself to such iniquities, the sooner he will be "taken home to be with the Lord." Contrast this with Paul's theology: "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Galatians 5:21.

What explanation is made of Paul's assertion? One radio preacher said, "The kingdom of God here has no reference to the future kingdom of Christ." In other words, sinners will inherit the future kingdom, but not this one. What is this one? He asserted that the kingdom of Galatians 5:21 is identical with that spoken of in Romans 14:17, which reads, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy

Ghost.” That is, the sinner will not enter into this higher plane of spiritual life while practicing immoralities. That a man does not enter into a higher plane of spiritual life while practicing immoralities is self-evidently and Scripturally true; that, failing to reach this plane, he nevertheless qualifies for the future kingdom is hardly worthy of comment.

But what of the cleansing at the judgment seat of Christ, which sinners are asserted to undergo? What is its purpose, and when does it occur? According to the theory, “This will occur at the return of the Lord when He calls the church to Himself at the rapture . . . Those who appear there are already saved forever, but it will be a judgment of their works and a rewarding of the saints. This reckoning has nothing to do with their salvation, which is forever settled when they believe, but it deals with rewards or loss of rewards and their place and position in the kingdom of Christ.” Thus a man who lives and dies in sin may be affected as far as his position in the kingdom is concerned, but his right to share in the kingdom is not compromised one whit! This is what it means to be saved by “pure grace”!

When the statement that this cleansing occurs “at the return of the Lord” is coupled with another belief of the proponents of this theory, an interesting situation develops; for they claim that “carnal Christians” –thieves, adulterers, liars, murderers- have been going to heaven by the thousands and tens of thousands ever since the days of Christ. If “carnal Christians” have been going to heave for thousands of years and if their cleansing is not to take place until the future coming of Christ, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that heaven is liberally populated with men and women such as one can find in any penitentiary –with one exception: They are there in “spirit form.”

The foregoing is in no sense a misrepresentation of this teaching. An evangelist schooled in the theory recently held revival meetings in one of the South’s largest cities. Under the influence of his preaching a notorious gambler and drunkard was converted. Not long after this, the man was killed in a fight after having slipped back into his previous mode of living. Told about this a year later when he returned to the city, the evangelist explained, “The Lord killed him and took him to heaven so that eh would not keep on disgracing the church.” In other words, he could disgrace the church, but he could not disgrace heaven! When he believed in Jesus, he received eternal life; and this, no amount of sinning could annul. It is believed that at the judgment seat of Christ this man and all others who once believed and later died in their sins will have all their abominable works burned up, but they will be saved. And, carrying this to its logical conclusion, some are now finding room in this cleansing for the devil himself!

The phrase “judgement seat of Christ” is used twice in the New Testament. Though it is frequently quoted by apologists for the once-saved, always-saved theory, the context is skipped over –as well it might be, for it in no way supports the conclusions drawn. The context teaches that all have an accountability to God which cannot be escaped. To use the words of Ecclesiastes 3:17, “I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work.” Peter says, “The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God.” 1 Peter 4:17. And Paul says that “the house of God” is “the church.” (1 Timothy 3:15.) In Hebrews 10:30 he adds, “The Lord shall judge his people.” The doctrine of these verses is the same as those in which the phrase “judgment seat of Christ” is used. Notice Romans 14:10, 11: “But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set a naught thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.” As if to illustrate that “all” means “all,” he continues: “For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess

to God.” It is a bit difficult to see how “every knee” and “every tongue” can be limited to mean only “the church” –the church including, of course, those who believed and who later died in their sins.

The next mention of the judgment seat of Christ is found in 2 Corinthians 5:10, 11 and says nothing about judgment taking place after the “rapture,” or dealing only with the church. This reference reads, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.” This shows again that this judgment will include everyone, and that those who have done evil will face God’s wrath. Impelled by their sense of guilt, the wicked kneel and confess the immutable righteousness and justice of God. Confronted with eternal loss, they are filled with fear and consternation. The righteous –those who have lied righteously through the power of the indwelling Christ- are presented “faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.” (Jude 24.)

Speaking of the man who has been once justified, the author says, “God will not impute sin to him to the damnation of his soul.” In this connection it is well to remember the question of Peter: “What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” 1 Peter 4:17, 18. Notice that the verse asks, “What shall be the end of them that *obey* not the gospel of God?” It does not ask, “What shall the end of them that *accept* not the gospel?” Some who accept the gospel do not continue to obey Christ. Is it the implication of these verses that God will not impute sin to them to the damnation of their souls? Hardly. To contend that such is the teaching of these verses is to substitute the “broad . . . way that leadeth to destruction” for the “narrow way which leadeth unto life.” Certainly these verse hold out no promise for the sinner who deliberately chooses to practice known sin. As John says, “He that committeth sin is of the devil.” 1 John 3:8

Some may argue that a clear distinction exists between those who “obey not the gospel of God,” and those who are of the “house of God,” whom Peter mentions in the first part of 1 Peter 3:17. That is, those who “obey not” cannot be classified among those who have once accepted Christ, because they are not included in the “house of God.” The intent of this reasoning, of course, is to say that a man who has once been born into the family of God cannot be separated from that household. That a distinction exists between those who are of the house of God and those who do not obey Him is not denied. That a man once a member of the household cannot later leave the household is.

Consider for a moment the gambler and drunkard, previously mentioned, who was converted during some revival meetings and who later was killed in a fight. The evangelist’s explanation was that the “Lord killed him and took him to heaven so that he would not keep on disgracing the church.” In other words, nothing he did denied him his place in the household of God. Thus he cannot be classified with those “who obey not the gospel.” Call the classification in which he falls what you wish, the Apostle John pretty well settles his status before God: “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.” 1 John 3:10. If this gambler and drunkard was not doing the righteousness of God, if he was not loving his brother –he was killed in a fight, hardly a brotherly action- he does not come, as far as John is concerned, within the ranks of the children of God or His household. That he was once converted and a member of the household is not debated. That he continued a

member is. As John says, “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.” 1 John 1:6.

Other interesting verses to analyse in this context re found in 1 Corinthians 11. “For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself. . . . For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep [die].” Verses 29, 30.

Here we have no question about one fact: These under discussion are believers. They are celebrating the Lord’s Supper. (See verses 27, 28.) Now, how does the once-saved, always-saved believer explain these verses? A prominent spokesman declares them to contain an example of those who are hurried to heave by the “chastisement” method for deliberately practicing sin. After quoting, “For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself,” he says, “It must be pointed out that the word ‘damnation’ in this verse should be ‘judgment’ and not ‘damnation.’ The word is *krineis* in the original, and means ‘judgment.’ These folk are believers who will never be damned, for they are already saved.”

According to *Young’s Analytical Concordance*, the word here translated “damnation” is not *krineis* but *krima*. It can be properly translated “judgment” or “condemnation.” It is the same word Jesus used in condemning the Pharisees in Matthew 23:14, when He said: “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore, ye shall receive the greater damnation {*krima*}.” Did Jesus mean that these hypocrites –whom He condemns with some of the most scathing words found in Scripture - were simply to be judged “to determine their place and position in the kingdom of Christ”? Certainly if the “damnation” of 1 Corinthians 11:29, 30 means simply a judgment for the purpose of determining place and position in the kingdom, it is consistent reasoning to assume that that is what it means here. Shall scholarship and truth be crucified on a cross of error to bolster up the claim that wilful transgressors will be hurried to heaven to prevent them from continuing to “pile up sin against sin”?

We cannot leave the usage and meaning of *krima* without citing one more text, found in 1 Timothy 5:12: “Having damnation {*krima*} because they have cast off their first faith.” This makes it plain that believers can “cast off their first faith” and go into damnation at the end. Indeed in the same chapter Paul says, “But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” Verse 8. If the worst thing that can happen to believers who deny the faith is a trip to the judgment seat of Christ, there to be assigned their positions in the kingdom, surely we need shed no tears for the infidel. If God is equitable and rewards are based on merit, his place in the kingdom will undoubtedly be superior to that of the believer who provides not for his own, described as “worse than an infidel”!

Another text which is troublesome to those who teach the doctrine of “security in sin” is 1 Corinthians 9:27: “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” One preacher explains: “This word ‘castaway’ has no reference to loss of salvation, as some believe.”

I confess, it has always seemed to me that being a castaway in the end does not hold out much hope. The word in the Greek is *adokimos* and is translated “reprobates” in 2 Corinthians 13:5. That verse reads, “Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” This verse tells us that Christ is not in a reprobate –

adokimos- castaway. Paul further informs us that when Christ is not in us, the hope of glory is gone. (Colossians 1:27.) No wonder Paul was watchful lest he be a castaway, or reprobate! The dictionary says the word *reprobate* means “abandoned to depravity of doom.” Evidently Paul understood it to mean such; he held out no hope that reprobates would be saved. Consider Titus 1:16: “They {reprobates} profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate {*adokimos*}.” This makes it evident that a reprobate does not really know God; he can only “profess” to do so. Once when the Jews claimed to have Abraham as their father, Jesus said to them, “If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham.” “Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me.” (And, according to His own definition, loving Him involves keeping His commandments, See John 14:15, 21). “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.” John 8:39, 41, 42, 44. Our works tell whether we are of God or of the devil. A profession to be Christ’s, unaccompanied with Christ’s works, is nothing more than empty words. How can it be taught that “reprobates” –abominable, disobedient reprobates- are not going to face the loss of salvation? Once some men asked Jesus, “Lord, are there few that be saved?” It is likely that if they had heard some modern preaching, they would have asked instead, “Lord, are there any going to be lost?”

To support the “security in sin” argument advanced in the preceding quotations, the author uses this analogy: “Once a person is born, he cannot be unborn.” How threadbare this argument is! It is not a question of whether he can be “unborn.” The question is, Can he get sickly and die? Every person who dies has been born, but dying does not mean being “unborn.” The doctor cautions the parents regarding how the child should be cared for to keep it from dying, not how to keep it from being unborn. Suppose the doctor said, “Now that the child has been born, you need not worry’ it can never be unborn.” That is the teaching of the doctrine we are examining. But in truth, unless a child is fed, it will soon die. Likewise Jesus said of the spiritual child, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.” John 6:53. Anything without life has become dead – if it once lived. What did Jesus mean by eating His flesh and drinking his blood? He explains in verse 63: “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” It is the duty of every minister to instruct the new born babes of the gospel that the continuity of their spiritual life depends upon feeding on “every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4.) This is what Jesus meant when He said, “Except ye eat . . . ye have no life in you.” This is as true of the spiritual life as it is of the physical.

Closely allied to this matter of feeding on the Word of God is this question: “Can a follower of Christ who discovers new light and truth in the Scriptures disregard it without compromising his salvation?” Those who believe in the once-saved, always-saved doctrine consistently assert that rejection of Scriptural truth has nothing to do with being saved or lost. Their teaching forces them to that conclusion. But Jesus said, “Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.” John 12:35. Then in 1 John 1:6 we read, “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.”

To illustrate the problem: Let us suppose that a person who has been converted and sprinkled studies the Scriptures and becomes convinced that immersion is the only biblical mode of water baptism. He comes to a minister holding the eternal security views, and says, “I was sprinkled, but now I see the light: I see that I have not been baptised according to the teaching of Christ in the New Testament. Will I be lost if I reject this light?” What will the

minister say? What *can* he say, holding the views he does? “When a man puts his trust in Christ, the Bible doctrine is that he is justified then, and in the future God will not impute sin to him, nor charge up sin against him to the damnation of his soul.”

Says the Scripture, “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.” To “walk in darkness” is to “do not the truth,” and this makes us guilty of a lie. This shows how unscriptural it is to teach that if a man has once been born again, no matter how many sins he chooses to commit, no matter how much truth and light he rejects, he cannot be lost. In Acts 13:46 we read, “It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you . . . {ye} judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life.” This is why Jesus admonished, “Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.”

All the conclusions of this teaching are based on a false premise: The very minute a person believes in Jesus and by faith becomes justified before God, he is then and there unconditionally given eternal life – a life which no amount of sinning, no amount of rejecting of light and truth can annul. If a premise is false, then every conclusion which stems from that premise is false also. Since the once-saved, always-saved doctrine rests squarely on this foundation, if it can be proved to be unsound, the structure must of necessity topple. But if the premise is true, then the practice of sin – drunkenness, idolatry, profanity, adultery, lying, thieving, the rejection of light and truth – cannot cancel the eternal life with which the onetime believer has been invested. He cannot even pluck himself out of the hand of Christ. This is asserted to be truth regardless of how fully he yields himself to the devil.

Paul’s feelings on this point are interesting and pertinent. “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?” Romans 6:16. When a man decides to obey Christ no longer and yields himself to obey the devil, he no longer belongs to Christ; according to Romans 6:16 he belongs to the devil.

Let us investigate the texts upon which this false premise is based – the premise that the moment a person believes, eternal life is imparted to him. One of these verses is John 10:27, 28: “My sheep hear {hearken to} my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” John 10:27, 28. Every word of this is true. But let us not overlook who are His sheep. That is the important point. Jesus says they are the ones who “hear” His “voice” they are the ones who “follow” Him. Suppose the time comes when they refuse to hearken to His voice. Suppose the time comes when they no longer “follow” Him. Suppose the time comes when they begin to live in unconfessed sin. Or they begin practicing deliberate sins. Are they hearing His voice? Are they following Him? According to Jesus, they cease to be His sheep. They have plucked themselves out of the hands of the Shepherd and have forfeited the eternal life promised to His sheep. Jesus says, concerning His sheep, “I give unto them eternal life.” The question is, When? He adds, “In the world to come eternal life.” (Mark 10:30.) This will be given only to those who continue to hear His voice, to those who continue to follow Him. Such “shall never perish.” This is what Jesus said, and it is in perfect agreement with what Paul says in Hebrews 3:14: “For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.”

Let us consider some other verses. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into

condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” John 5:24. Of such Psalm 37:33 says, “The Lord will not . . . condemn him when he is judged.” We must not overlook the conditions of these promises. They are for him “that heareth my word” and “believeth on Him that sent me.” Suppose the time comes when a man ceases to do this. Can it be said of him who yields himself to obey the devil and deliberately begins again to practice vice and immorality that he believes in Jesus? Jesus described such a man as one of those who “believe, and in time of temptation fall away,” (Luke 8:13.) Obviously, falling away here indicates a condition of no longer believing. A man who falls away no longer hears Christ’s word. Thus he no longer qualifies as one who “hath everlasting life.” Only the man who remains faithful to the end can in truth be said to have everlasting life. In John 6:40 Jesus said, “And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.” It does not say that he who has believed has everlasting life, but rather he that “believeth.” This cannot be said of those “which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.” Such no longer believe.

The truth of all this is simply explained in 1 John 2:25: “This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.” Or as it is stated in 1 John 5:11, 12, “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.” This makes the next statement true: “He that hath the Son hath life” because “this life is in His Son.” In no other way can it be said that a man now has everlasting life. The next statement is just as true: “He that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” So long as he “believeth” and “heareth” His word, he “hath the Son.” But those “which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away,” no longer have the Son of God nor eternal life, which is in His Son. The same truth is stated in Romans 6:23: “The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” These Scriptures prove the error of the premise on which is based the teaching that once a man has believed; no amount of deliberate and rebellious sinning can cause him to be lost.

Wrote the Apostle Paul: “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 5:1; 8:1. Notice that this exemption from condemnation applies to those “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” If the time comes when men cease to “walk . . . after the Spirit” and return to walking “after the flesh,” what happens? We find the answer in Romans 8:13: “For if ye live after flesh, ye shall die.” The so-called “carnal {fleshy} Christians” go back under condemnation, and if that decision is final, they die. Peter says such “are cursed children” who “have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray.” 2 Peter 2:14, 15. Then Peter tells us what awaits such in the end. He says that to them “the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.” Verse 17. Thus he is in harmony with Paul.

We should not lightly pass over such solemn words given us by the Holy Spirit. He is speaking of those who “have forsaken the right way.” There is only one right way, and that is the Jesus way. He said, “I am the way.” Some who were once in that right way have forsaken it and gone astray. By so doing they have become “cursed children,” and that which awaits them in the end is “the mist of darkness . . . forever.” This means more than the loss of “fellowship” – it means the loss of “salvation.” While they were walking in the right way, they were walking after the Spirit and were on grounds of justification before God. But when they turned from this right way and began walking after flesh, they forfeited their justified position and again were under condemnation. If they had not forsaken the right way, they would have been saved.

While standing on justified grounds before God, they were “positionally” in Christ Jesus. The words “in Christ Jesus,” “in Him,” and “in Christ” are frequently used in the New Testament in speaking of those who have been born again. “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature>” 2 Corinthians 5:17.

The Scriptures plainly teach that the “in Christ” relationship is severed when a man chooses to return to the practice of sin. In John 15 Jesus said to His disciples, “I am the vine, ye are the branches.” “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away.” Verse 5, 2. When an unproductive branch – disciple – is taken away, what happens to him? Answer – “He is cast for as a branch, and is withered.” What is his final destiny? Answer: He is “burned.” Verse 6. This is not talking about the bad fruit which believers in eternal security contend is burned up before the judgment seat of Christ. This is speaking of the “cast forth” branches – disciples – which aforesaid were in Christ. They are burned. Speaking of the same class in Hebrews 6:8, Paul says that their “end is to be burned.” There was a time when these branches were directly attached to the vine, which is Christ. They were “in Christ Jesus.” But later on they were cut off from the vine. Then the “in me” relationship ceased to exist. As a result they “withered,” and in the end were “burned.” They withered when fellowship was lost; they burned when salvation was lost. Does it necessarily follow that a branch must burn? No, for “God is able to graff them in again” provided “they abide not still in unbelief.” (Romans 11:23.) Knowing the unrepentant hardness of the human heart, Jesus encourages those who are in Christ Jesus to abide in Him lest they be cast forth and, unrepentant to the end, be burned. The word “abide” can only mean, “active, progressive faith.”

Right here is the appropriate time to give consideration to 1 Corinthians 3:11-15. “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus. Now if any man build on this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire. . . . If any man’s work abide which he hath build thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”

In vain do we seek in these verses for the proof that after a man is once accepted by God, he can begin living a life of immorality, and deliberately and stubbornly choose to practice all kinds of iniquity and yet be saved!

We are plainly told in Galatians 5:21 that “they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” What Paul is getting at in this Corinthian letter is explained in Jude 22, 23: “And of some have compassion, making a difference. And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.” There are some who because of environment and heredity have never had opportunity to rise to the heights of others. In some ages men of honest heart have died not knowing the fuller light of succeeding ages. Says the Scripture, “The times of this ignorance God winked at.” Acts 17:30. God, the all-wise Judge, will make a “difference,” considering where and when a man was born. (Psalm 87:6.) We may be sure that “the Judge of all the earth {will} do right.” We may be certain also that these “some” will not be those who deliberately and stubbornly choose to pile up sins while boasting of security because at some revival they “believed in Jesus” and were “eternally saved.”

In the church at Corinth there were some unfaithful members. The fact that Paul’s epistle was addressed to “the church of God which is at Corinth” does not mean that every member of that church was accepted by God. Paul made this plain when he said, “But now I have

written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard.” Such a person might be called a brother and be counted in the membership, but that would not make him accepted with God. Paul advised, “Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.” 1 Corinthians 5:13. Someone in the church was guilty of “such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife.” 1 Corinthians 5:1. The “security of sin” school holds that because this man was one of the members of the church of God at Corinth, the practice of fornication could not annul his salvation. To prove this, they quote verse 5; “To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” Let us note that Paul did not say “will be saved” but “may be saved.” We find similar language in Luke 20:13: “Then said the Lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it *may* be they will reverence him.” Notice, “It may be.” But did they? No, they did not. They said, “Come, let us kill him.” And they did. Verse 14.

Whether “that wicked person” who was practicing “such fornication” turned from his wickedness, we are not told. After having been put out of the church, he may have considered his ways and repented of his sins, to be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Certainly, to have kept him in the church would only have been encouragement to him to continue in his wickedness. At any rate, there is no teaching here that the sinner will be saved in his sins. God saves sinners *from* their sins, not *in* them. In this same letter Paul admonished Christians not to be deceived and believe that fornicators shall inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10. Let us not take the stand that in chapter 5 Paul taught that they would inherit the kingdom, and then in chapter 6 contradicted himself by teaching that they would not.

This whole question, as taught in the Holy Scriptures from Genesis through Revelation, is summed up in Ezekiel 18:27, 28: “When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.” But on the other hand, “When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.” Verse 24. With this setting forth of the justice of God, no man should find fault.

The study of the Bible truth on this subject can be brought to a close by the tender words of encouragement of the Holy Spirit found in Jude 24, 25: “Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

The Second Coming and the Secret Rapture

WHEN General MacArthur was called from the Philippines during World War II, he looked toward the shore of Bataan, where American boys were dying, and promised grimly, "I will return." It was a happy day for the general and those who survived to see his coming when he returned. But suppose that one of his staff had turned to him as he strode ashore and had said, "Well General, you kept your promise, didn't you?" and he had replied, "No, not yet – this is only the first phase of my second coming, I am going away and take some of my Philippine friends with me. I will be gone just seven years. Then I will return with them and then, and not until then, will it be true that I have kept my promise to come again. You must understand that when I promised to return, I had in mind one event in two parts with seven years in between." Such a conversation would have sounded exceedingly strange. So strange, in fact, that the reader may well be wondering what we are getting at by this introduction. This will become plain as we imagine a similar conversation concerning the fulfillment of the words of Jesus spoken to His disciples just before leaving the earth some 2,000 years ago: "I will come again." John 14:3. We know that He meant He had been here once, and that He was going to come "the second time." (Hebrews 9:28.)

Suppose again that as he comes in the clouds of heaven, one of the resurrected disciples meets Him in the air and says, "Lord, You did come again just as You promised, didn't you?" Then suppose Jesus replies, "No, not yet – this is only the first phase of my second coming. I am taking you and the others to heaven with Me. We are going to stay up there seven years. Then I am going to return to the earth again and bring all of you with Me, and then it will be true that I did come again." How could Jesus come two times seven years apart and yet call these two comings the "second" coming?

What is the purpose of such a strange introduction? It is to introduce a strange doctrine which teaches just what this strange introduction says! It is this doctrine, called the "secret rapture," that we shall examine in this chapter.

First let us ask, Just how could Jesus come two times, seven years apart, and call these two comings the "second" coming? It would seem that the last would be the third coming. The only reply that the secret rapture teachers have to make to this is: "When He comes for His own, He comes in the air; but when He comes seven years later, He comes down to the earth." By this language they mean that His coming "in the air" to receive the resurrected and living saints is not the event He had reference to when He said, "I will come again {the second time}." But this claim is not according to Bible facts. Jesus said, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:3. The fact that He receives them unto Himself when he comes "in the air" (at the *beginning* of the supposed seven years) is Bible proof that this is the coming he had in mind when He said, "I will come again," and this will be mathematically "the second time." Hebrews 9:28.

Stranger still is the connection of the rapturist teachers that Christ's coming will be a secret event. The Apostle Paul described that coming in the following language: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17.

According to the wording of this description of the Lord's return there will be three sounds: the sound of the "voice," the sound of the "shout," and the sound of the "trump." In addition to these three sounds there will be the noise of graves being torn open; the voices of the resurrected shouting, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory" (1 Corinthians 15:55); the joyous cries of the living who are caught up to meet the Lord in the air; and the great wail of the wicked, addressed to the rocks and mountains, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb" (Revelation 6:16).

Jesus used the word "secret" just once in reference to His second coming: "Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not." Matthew 24:26. Certainly there is no comfort in these verses for one teaching a secret coming. After this warning Jesus set forth the truth about His coming in forceful language: "For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Nothing is more visible than flashes of lightning on a dark night, and nothing could be less secret.

Of particular interest in this connection is the rapturist belief that millions who are left behind when Christ comes the second time will be given another opportunity for salvation. According to this belief, multitudes will awaken some morning to find the world minus thousands of its inhabitants. They will run around in consternation and confusion, wondering just what has happened. Then, for seven years, they will have the opportunity of preparing themselves for His "second coming" (actually the third). This idea is based on Matthew 24:40, 41: "Then shall two be in the field, the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left."

This verse is correct, as are all the verses of Scripture. One shall be taken and the other left. The one whose sins are forgiven will be taken up to meet the Lord in the air. The one who is living in sin will be left, having been destroyed by the brightness of His coming. (2 Thessalonians 2:8.) The whole trouble comes from reading a little word into the verse: "One shall be taken, and the other left" –*alive*. This verse is actually coupled with one which speaks of the destruction of the world in the time of the Flood. All who were left outside the ark when the Flood came were destroyed: "The flood came, and destroyed them all." Luke 17:27. After describing the Flood, Jesus said, "So shall also the coming of the Son of man be." This verse, Matthew 24:39, is intended primarily to point up the unexpectedness of Christ's coming to those who are not looking for Him, but it also presents a true parallel between those destroyed outside the ark and those who will be destroyed at Christ's coming. This is confirmed by numerous verses: Revelation 6:14-17; Matthew 7:26, 27; etc. As Jesus said, "The flood came, and destroyed them all." "Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Luke 17:27, 30. Did the wicked of Noah's day swim around in a "great tribulation" of surging waters and "thousands, hundreds of thousands" get "saved"? "The flood came, and destroyed them *all*" Then, according to Jesus' words, there will not be thousands of "unsaved" people running around in consternation and confusion the day after Jesus comes, wondering "just what has happened." That "the day when the Son of man is revealed" does not mean seven years after His second advent will be proved.

Further, it seems not to have occurred to the second change teachers that Jesus is coming with a crown on His head (Revelation 14:14) as "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORD" (Revelation 19:16). This means that His priestly mediation has been terminated; He is no longer the "mediator between God and men." Since there is no other name given among men whereby we might be saved (Acts 4:12), man is left without a mediator, and without a

mediator there can be no forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 7:25). As the Apostle John expressed it: “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly.” Revelation 22:11, 12. This decree goes forth just before Christ’s second advent.

Teachers of error are given to coining words or statements which are not taught in the Scriptures and then repeating them over and over to make the impression on minds that they are Biblical. Again and again they will speak of the “rapture,” until multitudes think the word is from Scripture, when in reality there is no such word as “rapture” anywhere in the Bible. Then listeners hear repeated over and over again, “The Lord is coming *for* His saints and then seven years later *with* His saints.” This is repeated until the idea gets fixed as truth in the minds of people. The words “with all his saints” are found just one time in the New Testament, and even the “rapturists” will not deny that this has no reference to what they call the “secret” coming because they admit Paul addressed these words to the church. We read, “to the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ *with all his saints*.” 1 Thessalonians 3:13. So here they have the Lord coming with all His saints at the beginning of what they call “the seventieth week” (to be discussed chapter 6) instead of at the end of the seventieth week. What do they do with this text? The answer is, Nothing. They just leave it alone because it plainly disproves their theory.

“With all His saints” is explained in Matthew 16:27 as meaning “with all His angels.” Note the similarity of the statements: “With all His saints,” “and all the holy angels with Him.” The one text which they quote with much emphasis to prove the Lord is coming “seven years later with His saints” is Jude 14: “Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints.” They claim these are the saints which the Lord “raptured out of the earth seven years previously in a secret coming.” But no proof is offered to support such a claim. It can be plainly proved that “ten thousands of His saints” is just another way of saying “and all the holy angels with Him.” Speaking of when the Lord came down on Sinai, Moses wrote: “He came with ten thousands of saints.” Deuteronomy 33:2. That these were angels is confirmed by Psalm 68:17: “The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.”

The suggestive statements “*for* His saints and then *with* His saints” and “*for* His church and then *with* His church” are just as lacking in Scriptural foundation as the word “purgatory.”

Other coined words are the “rapture” and the “revelation.” The “rapture” – the secret catching away of the church – is spoken of as being at the beginning of “Daniel’s seventieth week,” and “the revelation” at the end of “Daniel’s seventieth week.” These words are nothing more than semantic playthings used for the purpose of suggestive effect upon the minds of millions who are ignorant of the Scriptures. We find the word *revelation* used just once in the New Testament with reference to the second advent of the Lord, and even the rapturists do not deny that it there is connected with what they call “the first phase of His second coming.” Says Peter, “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 1:13. This coming is called the “revelation.” How completely this destroys the teaching that the “revelation” is to be at the “end of Daniel’s seventieth week,” and that that coming is to be called the “revelation”! Peter is here speaking of the one and only second coming of our Lord Jesus, and he calls this coming the “revelation.”

Now to a further consideration of this appearing and its identification with His second advent rather than with another coming seven years after. When Jesus went away, He did not suddenly and secretly vanish out of the disciples' sight. Luke says that as He was ascending, "He lifted up his hands, and blessed them." Had there been thousands standing there, they would have witnessed with their eyes what the disciples saw. Said the angels to them, "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. Jesus went away visibly. He was seen as He was going away. He will return "in like manner." If His coming were intended to be secret and invisible, certainly He would not descend with shouting, the blasting of a trumpet, and His voice sounding up in the clouds. Paul makes it plain that it will not be a soundless trumpet. He declares, "The trumpet shall sound." 1 Corinthians 15:52. That is the purpose of a trumpet.

Again, Paul says He shall "appear the second time." (Hebrews 9:28.) If His coming were to be secret and invisible, it should be said that He will *not* appear. When it is dark and cloudy, the sun does not appear as it is coming up. So we read: "When neither sun nor stars in many days appeared." Acts 27:30. Now note the following: "The Lord appeared unto Abraham" Genesis 12:7. "There appeared unto them Moses and Elias." Matthew 17:3. "He appeared first to Mary Magdalene." Mark 16:9. In all these cases the one who appeared was seen. When Jesus comes the second time, He "shall . . . appear." Hebrews 9:28. In Colossians 3:4 we read that He "shall appear." Peter says, "When the chief Shepherd shall appear." 1 Peter 5:4. "He shall appear." 1 John 2:28. "He shall appear." 1 John 3:2. To be accepted in the "secret rapture" group, one cannot believe and teach a visible "appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Timothy 6:14.) But why should we disbelieve all these scriptures in order to cling to the error of a secret and invisible "rapture," which is not once mentioned in the Bible?

Let us look at 1 Thessalonians 4:16 again. Paul declares, "The Lord himself shall descent from heaven with a *shout*, with the *voice* of the archangel, and with the *trump* of God." Notice He says, "With the *voice* of the archangel." The word *voice* here is from the Greek word *phone*, from which we get the word "telephone." Who ever heard of an inaudible "phone" being put in a person's home or place of business? No one would hear it when it rings. We may be sure the *phone* of the archangel will be heard by both good and bad when it "rings" up there in the clouds, so loudly as to wake up the dead. Let us examine some other places where the word *phone* is used and see how far from the truth it is to teach that it will be noiseless. Isaiah described John the Baptist as "the voice {*phone*} of one crying in the wilderness." (Matthew 3:3.) Did all within hearing distance hear this voice of John? Jesus "cried with a loud voice {*phone*}, Lazarus, come forth." Did those standing about the grave hear that *phone*? "Paul cried with a loud voice {*phone*}." Acts 16:28. A voice is not inaudible. A phone is not inaudible. Neither will the "voice of the archangel," which sounds at the Lord's return, be inaudible. A rapturist radio preacher, trying to explain away the sound of the "voice," said, "There are some of you hearing my voice right now on this radio, but your neighbour next door is not hearing it." But if the neighbour had been close enough, he would have heard it too, for it was not a silent voice that was coming over the radio.

When Jesus comes, Paul says He will be announced by "the trump of God." Of what use would a silent trump be? A trumpet is blown for the purpose of giving out a sound. Note the following proofs: In 2 Chronicles 5:12 we read of the "priests sounding with trumpets." Were they silent and inaudible? Exodus 20:18 speaks of "the noise of the trumpet"; Hebrews 12:19 of "the sound of a trumpet." The contention that the "trump of God" will be soundless

is contrary to the words of Scripture and to common sense. How completely Paul's description of the Lord's return refutes the secret rapture theory so widely taught and believed today!

The real second coming of the Lord is going to be so vastly different from that which the secret rapturists are looking for that it will be to them an overwhelming surprise. It will come upon them in its unexpected nature "as a thief in the night," a complete surprise. Certainly it is wise to look for "that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:13.) The secret rapturists are not looking for a glorious appearing. They are not expecting a glorious appearing. They are expecting something secret and invisible. So sure are they that it will be something secret that one of their periodicals advertised cards for sale to be read by those who "do not go up in the rapture," explaining to them what has happened. Here is the wording of the card:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This household is looking for the imminent return of the Lord.

When it occurs – as it surely will – that in a day, in a night, or in an hour, it is discovered that millions of people are missing and this house is found empty, then know that there has taken place that of which the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17. It will mean that Christ has called out of this world all the saved, of which were we of this household. Don't search for us. We will be back in seven years, when Christ comes with all his saints to destroy Antichrist, who will come with lying wonders. Don't be deceived by Antichrist, and don't let Antichrist put his mark on your forehead or in your hand. Read carefully these passages of Scripture and pray and understand: Read Revelation 13 and the chapters following. Also Daniel's prophecy.

Please notice that the card says this will be the event described in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17. Let us read these verse again to see if we could possibly have been mistaken in concluding that they introduce no secret event: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a *shout*, with the *voice* of the archangel, and with the *trump* of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." As if to add emphasis to this, the psalmist declared, speaking of Christ's second coming, "Our God shall come, and shall *not keep silence*." Psalm 50:3.

The description of this event as given on this card contrasts greatly with the description by the Apostle Paul. So greatly, in fact, that it is difficult to understand how any human mind could believe that the two descriptions are of the same event. That which is written on the card contradicts everything Paul said. Jesus declared, "Take heed that no man deceive you." To whom would He apply the name "deceiver" in this case – to the writer of this card or to the Apostle Paul? And what of the other Bible writers? And what of Jesus Himself? Notice how the following verses contradict the words of the card: John said, "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him." Revelation 1:7. Jesus said, "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matthew 24:27. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the one end of heaven to the other." Verses 30, 31.

Jesus gave these descriptions in answer to the question, “What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” Verse 3. The reader may inquire, “What do the secret rapture believers do to explain away these words?” They tell their folk that the disciples were not asking about the coming that Jesus spoke of when He said, “I will come again, and receive you unto myself.” They claim that the disciples were asking Jesus what would be the sign of the second half of His coming, seven years after the “rapture.” They teach that all of Matthew 24 applies to the seven years following the first half of His second coming. They further claim that when Jesus said, “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come,” He meant the end of the seven years. It would seem that a period of time so definitely marked off would not heed any sign showing when it is about to close.

This false teaching about the manner of the Lord’s return is preparing millions to be looking for something which is not going to happen in the manner in which they have been taught. Thus the second coming of the Lord will come upon them “unawares” as “a thief in the night.” As a warning against such a deception, Jesus said, “Behold, I have told you before.” Matthew 24:25.

The Millennium and the Second-Chance Theory

THE ANGEL, speaking to Mary about the birth of Jesus said: “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.” Luke 1:32, 33. The “futurists” say that kingdom is going to be set up here on the earth; that multitudes are going to be converted over the earth through the ministry of the Jews, who are going to be instantly “born again” at Christ’s coming; that for 1,000 years Jesus is going to be king “on David’s throne”; and that this work of converting the wicked of earth will go on during the entire 1,000 years.

There are two Scriptural reasons why this is not the truth. In the first place, Jesus has ceased to be a priest and mediator between God and guilty man when He comes as King. In the second place, Jesus never spoke more emphatically than when He said, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” He also said that the unconverted “cannot see the kingdom of God.” These strong statements of Jesus completely overthrow the futurists’ kingdom-of-God idea that millions of wicked, who have never been born again, will enter it.

Before David died, the Lord sent Nathan the prophet to him with some wonderful promises concerning the future of his throne and kingdom. “And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.” 2 Samuel 7:12. Then follows the repeating of this promise: “I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.” “And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.” Verses 15, 16. Some of the strongest language in all the Bible is found in Psalm 89 with reference to the certainty of these promises concerning the future of David’s throne and kingdom. “My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.” “My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon.” As we shall see, this promise will be fulfilled through Jesus, “which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.” (Romans 1:3.)

After the death of David there were good kings and bad kings succeeding him on the throne, until it was overthrown by the Babylonians. Just before this overthrow the following interesting prophecy was made through Ezekiel the prophet: “Thou profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high, I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him.” Ezekiel 21:25-27. It was the “king of Babylon” who removed “the diadem” and took “off the crown.” (Daniel 1:1-3.) The prophecy declares, “It shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him.”

That the One “whose right it is” is the Lord Jesus is easy to prove. In Isaiah 9:6, 7 we read: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his

shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”

This language is too plain to be misunderstood. The Child that was born, the Son that was given, is the Lord Jesus. The time is coming when He will be the “Prince of Peace.” He will sit “upon the throne of David” and rule with “judgment” and “justice.” Then we have the assurance that “the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.” This definitely identifies the King.

Again, we read the words of the angel to Mary: “The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: . . . and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” Luke 1:32, 33.

It now becomes necessary that we trace the steps leading up to Christ’s occupation of the restored “throne of David” and his rulership over that kingdom which shall have “no end.”

While Jesus was on earth, his followers had a misunderstanding of “the times and the seasons” when these prophecies would be fulfilled and the kingdom restored. Their misunderstanding on this point had become such an article of faith that they almost abandoned hope when Jesus died. More than once when Jesus had approached Jerusalem, “the city of the great King,” they had been sure He was about to overthrow Roman rule and re-establish “the throne of David” over the earth. At His triumphal entry “they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord.” Mark 11:9, 10. They were sure Jesus was on the way to proclaim himself King, and that the Old Testament prophecies concerning the restoration of David’s throne and kingdom were about to be fulfilled.

On another occasion “he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem and because they taught that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said therefore, a certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.” Luke 19:11, 12. Jesus said this to correct their misunderstanding as to the time of the setting up of the kingdom. But still they did not understand.

In the course of the conversation during the Emmaus walk the two disciples said, in tones of disappointment and despair, “We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.” Luke 24:21. They did not have their minds on spiritual redemption when they uttered these words. After they were assured of His resurrection, they still did not understand, but “asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” Acts 1:6. Soon came the day when the Nobleman took His journey “into a far country,” and they had His answer: “While they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they stood looking steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? 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 1:9-11. There went the Nobleman, and there is the promise of His return.

The prophetic scriptures that have reference to the certainty of the restoration of David’s throne and kingdom convinced 3,000 on the day of Pentecost that Jesus was the promised

Messiah, and that His resurrection was the only explanation of the empty tomb. Here is the way it was presented: “For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh shall rest in hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” His flesh was not to see corruption, as we are about to see, because he was raised the third day.

Next Peter proved that David was not speaking of himself: “Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and that his sepulchre with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither did his flesh see corruption.” Then he explains why: “This Jesus hath God raised up.” When they heard this, some 3,000 of them were convinced that David was prophetically speaking of the death and resurrection of the Messiah.

The “oath” to which Peter referred is found in Psalm 132:11 “The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.” If his flesh had seen corruption and had not been raised, then the oath to David would not have been kept. It was all so plain that there was no way to get around it, and they rejoiced in their discovery that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. All this proves that Jesus will be a literal king on a literal throne in the literal new earth. It was the “fruit of his {David’s} loins, according to the flesh,” which was raised up “to sit on his throne.” This disproves the contention of the Jehovah’s Witnesses, who contend that this body was never reinvested with life, and that it probably “dissolved into gases.” If anything like that happened, then the oath to David, “of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne,” has failed.

Luke tells us that when Jesus “was parted from them,” He was “carried up into heaven.” (Luke 24:51.) Today He is our high priest. He is not a king in the literal sense that He will be when He takes the throne of His father David. Paul says, “We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.” Hebrews 8:1. But the time will come when he no longer will share the throne of His Father; He will sit on His own throne, as we read in Revelation 3:21: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” Here Jesus speaks of “my throne” and of the throne of “my Father.” What Jesus speaks of as “my throne” is plainly in the future.

In the first chapter of Revelation John saw Jesus clothed as a priest: “And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.” Verses 12, 13. These garments were similar to those worn by the Levitical priests. But when John saw Jesus coming in the clouds, He did not have on the garments of a priest, but the garments of a king. “And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on His head a golden crown.” Revelation 14:14. This shows that His office as Priest has ended; His office as King has begun. There is no priestly mediation of His blood for the forgiveness of sins when he comes crowned as King. How impossible that at this time and following “thousands, hundreds of thousands,” will find pardon for sins, as Jehovah’s Witnesses and futurists teach.

Just what will happen to the righteous and the wicked, both living and dead, when the King comes in the clouds of heaven should be carefully studied by “rightly dividing the word of truth.” Returning to Revelation 14:14, we read that Jesus will return, “having on his head a golden crown and in His hand a sharp sickle.” A sickle is an instrument for reaping a harvest. So the next verse says, “And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap: for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And He that sat upon the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.”

Jesus said that “the harvest is the end of the world.” Matthew 13:39. At that time He will “gather the wheat into His garner, but burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” Matthew 3:12. There is nothing here that teaches that the chaff will be “born again,” turned into wheat after the Harvester comes. In Revelation 14:16 John says, “The earth was reaped.” That brings the end. There is no seed sowing after the harvest. He goes on, “And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to Him that had the sharp sickle, saying. Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.” Yes, fully ripe in wickedness and sin. “and the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the wine of the earth {the wicked}, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.” Verses 17-19. That makes two classes “reaped” when Jesus comes as king: the righteous, represented by the wheat in Matthew 3:12, and the wicked, represented by the chaff. This then is the harvest. It is the “end of the world.” There will be no seed sowing after the harvest. Instead of having a second chance, millions of the lost will be lamenting, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.” Jeremiah 8:20.

We have another picture of the Lord’s return in Matthew 25:31, 32, which teaches the same thing. “When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory.” It does not say “upon His throne of the judgment of the nations,” as the rapturists contend. There is nothing here about judgment. The word is not even used. It is the day of separation between those who are ready and those who are not. “And before Him shall be gathered all nations. And He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth His sheep from the goats.” Those who are ready will meet the Lord in the clouds, and those who are not will be slain “with the brightness of His coming.” That will be a great separation day. Jesus said, “The one shall be taken, and the other left.” The one who is ready will be taken to meet the Lord in the air; and the other will be left behind, slain upon the earth. How plain the Lord makes this when He says, “Then shall the king say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Verse 34. These sheep will be going up to meet the Lord in the air. Unto them Jesus will say, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” Verse 40. The futurists declare (without offering one text for proof) that when Jesus said “my brethren,” He meant the millions of ungodly, unbelieving Jews. Jesus contradicted this when He said, “My brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.” Luke 8:21. Instead of the Jews hearing the Word of God and doing it, they are among the most rebellious people on earth against the Word of God. Paul said to them, “It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you. But seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” Acts 13:46. But the futurists teach that those who put “the word of God away from them” are “Jesus’ brethren”! Nothing could be farther from the truth. In the verses so far examined, the evidences are all against the second chance teaching that

hundreds of thousands of Jews who refused to hear Moses and the prophets are going to be forgiven after the Lord's return.

When the King returns, here is what is going to happen to the "sheep": "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout {not with silence}, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17. How anyone can imagine that such language is describing a "secret rapture" is hard to understand. Where do these go after meeting the Lord in the clouds? Just before Jesus died, He said to His disciples, "Thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards." John 13:36. They are taken with Jesus, he told His disciples this would be at His coming. "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also," Jesus went to heaven. When He comes again and receives them unto Himself, he is going to take them where He went. The futurists claim (they do not even substantiate the claim with Biblical evidence) that they are going to "live and reign with him" up there "for seven years"; but Revelation 20:6 plainly declares that they "shall reign with Him a thousand years." Man says "seven years," but the Bible says "a thousand years."

We have discovered the disposition of two classes when Jesus comes: The "dead in Christ shall rise first," and the living in Christ "shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." They will then go with Christ to heaven and live and "reign with Him a thousand years." Note carefully – this is important – the verse does not say that Christ is coming to earth to live and reign *with them* 1,000 years, but they are to be *with Him* 1,000 years. However, after the 1,000 years, when the earth has been made new, "God Himself shall be with them." Revelation 21:3. Notice that during the 1,000 years they are "with him," and after the 1,000 years He is "with them." It is then that "we shall reign on the earth." Revelation 5:10. The New Jerusalem will be here. In that city will be the restored "throne of David." Then Jesus will be King over all the earth.

The wicked dead will not be raised at the beginning of this 1,000 years for a second chance, as Jehovah's Witnesses teach, for, after dead in Christ rise first, "the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Revelation 20:5.

There is one more class to be disposed of when Jesus returns. We have reference to the millions of living who do not meet the Lord in the air. The Scriptures classify them as the "goats," the "chaff," the "five foolish virgins," those who loved not the truth, "that they might be saved," "them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" – teeming millions of them, both Jews and Gentiles. These were not watching and praying always, but their hearts were "overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness." That day came upon them "unawares," and did overtake them "as a thief in the night." What is going to happen to these when Jesus comes? Here we come to the parting of the ways between what the Scriptures teach and what the futurists and Jehovah's Witnesses claim. One of the futurist authorities says that the greatest revival the world has ever known will take place with this class as the Jews start preaching to them. In Zechariah 13:1 it says, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness." Arguing on the time and application of this "fountain" (Christ's blood) he goes on to say, "The prophet is speaking of a time yet to come." The fact that there will be no high priest to mediate this blood shows how far from the truth is this futurist view. Of these untranslated millions who are not ready when Jesus comes, a futurist

radio preacher says, “The unsaved will not even be aware that anything has happened.” Then he contends that they will go into a “great tribulation” and be saved “by the millions.”

We have already found, in a preceding chapter, that even as the wicked were destroyed by the Flood, “so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” Matthew 24:37, 39. Let us examine another illustration Jesus used: “Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.” He added, “Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.” The wicked of Sodom did not scream around in a “great tribulation” of fire, or did “thousands” of them get converted. In fact, the Lord couldn’t find even ten righteous in the entire city; that’s why it was destroyed. See Genesis 18, 19.

Let us get three verses in mind: “The flood came, and destroyed them all.” Luke 17:27. “It rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.” Verse 29. Then the application Jesus made as to the fate of the wicked at His second coming. “Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.” Verse 30. According to these verses, after Jesus comes there will be no wicked left here on earth to be converted. The prophet says, “The slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried.” Jeremiah 25:33.

The prophet Isaiah, speaking of what will happen to the wicked when Jesus comes, says, “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.” Isaiah 24:21, 22. Notice the words, “and after many days shall they be visited.” The “rest of the dead” (the wicked) shall live again after 1,000 years. Slain by the brightness of His coming, they will be resurrected to the second death. See Revelation 20.

Summing up the events which will occur at the Lord’s return, we find: The dead in Christ shall rise first. They, together with the living saints, will meet the Lord in the air. They will go with Him to heaven and there live and “reign with Him a thousand years.” The wicked living will be destroyed by the brightness of His coming. This will leave the earth empty, with “no man” here for 1,000 years. In Jeremiah 4:23-27 we find it described thus: “I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form and voice; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord and by His fierce anger. For thus hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end.” Notice the words, “yet will I not make a full end.” When the thousand years are over and the city of New Jerusalem comes down from God out of heaven upon the earth, and after the earth has been purified and renovated with fire, then the “Lord God shall give unto Him {Jesus} the throne of His father David: . . . and of His kingdom there shall be no end.” Luke 1:32, 33.

The Setting up of Christ's Kingdom

THE discussion of the previous chapter prepared us for an understanding of the words of Revelation 20 and 21. Revelation 20:1-4 reads, "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold upon the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

It will be interesting and profitable to examine the teaching of these verses. In the first place, the language is figurative, as is the case with all the prophecies of Revelation. For example, the devil could not be bound with a chain of steel links. In the days of Jesus a man possessed with a demon plucked the chains asunder. (Mark 5:4.) It is with a great chain of circumstances that Satan is bound. At the second coming the righteous living and dead are taken to heaven; the wicked living are slain by the brightness of Christ's appearance, and they, along with the wicked who died previously, live not again until the thousand years are fulfilled. With no one to tempt, Satan is securely "bound."

Another act worthy of attention is evident in an analysis of verse 6: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." The thousand years cannot begin until after the first resurrection because those who shall live and reign "with Him a thousand years" have "part in the first resurrection." Now, comparing verse 6 with verse 4, we find that some of those who live and reign with Christ "a thousand years" are those who "had not worshipped the beast {Antichrist}," and who had refused to receive "his mark." How completely this demolishes the futuristic school of prophetic interpretation is evident, for they claim that the emergence of the Antichrist and the imposition of his mark are to be looked for *after* the first resurrection and what they call the rapture. As a radio preacher recently expressed this belief, "I don't expect to be here when the beast is enforcing his mark upon the people. I expect to go up in the rapture and be in heaven during the great tribulation time." But these verses declare that some of those who come up in the "first resurrection," and who "live and reign with Christ a thousand years," have already refused to worship the Antichrist or receive his mark! Thus the Antichrist must have already been on the stage of action carrying on his oppressive work before the "first resurrection," and thus the beginning of the "thousand years." These Bible facts should lead every honest student of Scripture to question severely the origin and effect of futuristic interpretation. That futurism was an invention of the Jesuits to turn the accusing finger of Bible prophecy away from the Papacy will be proved in the next chapter.

We are now ready to read further in Revelation 20. After speaking of those who "were beheaded for the witness of Jesus"; those which had not "worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands" (all of whom came up in "the first resurrection" and "lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years") – John says, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Verse 5. The fact that the verse says, "The *rest* of the dead lived not again until the thousand

years were finished,” proves that some of the dead – namely, the righteous dead, mentioned in verse 4 – came up in the first resurrection, which begins the “thousand years.” This also makes it evident that the persecutions of verse 4, in which many saints were slain, preceded the beginning of the “thousand years.” Nowhere in the Bible do we find that there will be a great tribulation three and one-half years after the Lord appears from heaven. By then the dead in Christ have already risen. The time of trouble (Daniel 12:1) must take place before the return of the Lord.

In verse 7 we read, “And when the thousand 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.” If our previous conclusion is correct – that Satan’s binding is occasioned by the slaying of those whom he has tempted – we should find this loosing of Satan accompanied by a resurrection of the “rest of the dead” – the wicked dead. Verse 5 confirms our deduction: “But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.” So the “loosing” of Satan and the resurrection of the wicked occur at the same time – that is, when the “thousand years” are finished. It is the resurrection of the wicked that looses Satan. It gives him subjects to deceive. It populates the earth again. It likewise proves that it was the depopulation of the earth that made it impossible for him to “deceive the nations.” There were no nations here during the “thousand years”; there were no people here alive. But as soon as the resurrection of the wicked takes place, he goes out to deceive the nations, the “number of whom is as the sand of the sea” The devil deceives them by making them believe they can capture the Holy City. “And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.” Verse 9.

This verse does not tell us where the Holy City comes from to be here on the earth at the end of the “thousand years.” This information we gather from Revelation 21:2: “and I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” It is this city, whose “builder and maker is God,” that is attacked by the wicked. But “fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.” This brings the end of the “thousand years.”

“He that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new.” Revelation 21:5. In the glorious age introduced by this verse, the “Prince of Peace,” “the seed of David according to the flesh,” will sit on the “throne of David” restored in the New Jerusalem. Then will the meek “inherit the earth.” (Matthew 5:5.) Then Jeremiah 23:5 will be a reality: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.” This will be the true return of Israel to the land of Palestine and Jerusalem. When Jesus said to the Jews, “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” He forever forsook the “Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.” From that day until Jesus comes, the eyes and expectations of His people are to be focused on “Jerusalem which is above,” and which is “the mother of us all.” How tragic that the futurists have their eyes, their hopes, their hearts all set on the old Jerusalem: the sin-ridden, blood-soaked, Christ-rejecting Jerusalem. Rather than looking toward old Palestine, the true people of God join Abraham in looking “for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” All the beautiful kingdom promises of the Old Testament will have their fulfilment when the earth is made anew and “shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.” Then will be realised the promise to Mary: “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his

father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”

How fitting all the names and titles! Jerusalem means “habitation of peace.” It will be the capital of the kingdom of peace, and on the throne will be the Prince of Peace. To those who enter there, the promise is made, “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and their 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. There will be ended the long history of sin and suffering. The character of God stands vindicated in righteousness, and “every creature” unites in exclaiming, “Just and true are thy ways.” It is for the guarantee of this justice that the saints live and “reign with him” in heaven 1,000 years. For during this time, before the millions of wicked are raised, all who are saved will have the privilege of co-operating in the judgment of the lost. Says John, “I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” Concerning this judgment, Paul inquires, “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world” in things that “pertain to this life?” 1 Corinthians 6:1-3. Is he speaking of this future judgment?

Let us read the answer in 1 Corinthians 4:5: “Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart.” We are definitely instructed not to judge the people now. We do not know “the hidden things of darkness” nor “the counsels of the heart.” But when the Lord comes and the time for the “saints” to “judge the world,” all things will be made manifest in the records of every life with which we are concerned. Daniel said, “The time came when judgment was given to the saints.” Daniel 7:22. Then we shall understand why some are absent. God is going to make this known to us before they are raised to the second death. This work of judging is one of the reasons why those who come up in the first resurrection live and “reign with him {Christ} a thousand years.”

All this will be carried to completion according to God’ scheduled plan of the ages. The claim is made that it was God’s purpose to establish this kingdom at the first coming, but because the Jews said, “We will not have this man to reign over us,” the setting up of the kingdom was postponed. This reasoning will not stand up. Prophecies written hundreds of years before the time of Christ – for instance Daniel 2 and 7 – make it evident that Christ’s kingdom of glory was not expected to be established at the time of the first advent.

Consider the prophecy of the second chapter of Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon I the seventh century before Christ, saw in a dream a “great image” composed of different kinds of metals. The image’s head was of gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, and his feet part of iron and part of clay. See verses 31-33. Daniel interpreted the dream, likening the various metals to different kingdoms which would yet arise. He specifically declared that the head of gold represented Babylon. (Verses 38, 39.) History shows that Babylon was followed by Medo-Persia (the breast and arms of silver), Grecia (the brass), and Rome (the legs of iron). It was in the days of Rome that Christ was crucified. A Roman judge sentenced Him; Roman soldiers took Him to Calvary and guarded His tomb. According to Daniel’s prophecy, the fourth kingdom was to be “divided.” (Verse 41.) This did not occur until 400 years after Christ’s death. Thus when Daniel describes the setting up of God’s kingdom as occurring sometime after the break-up of the Roman Empire, it becomes evident that God did not anticipate that the kingdom would be established in the days of Christ.

Further, to teach that God was compelled by the unbelief of the Jews, contrary to His original purpose, to postpone the setting up of this kingdom and to introduce “the church age” until he can bring the Jews around to where He wants them, is without Scriptural warrant. This would mean that if God had not been compelled to postpone the kingdom, Pentecost would never have happened. But the “wave sheaf” offering, for nearly 2,000 years the foretelling of Pentecost, proves that what the futurists call the “church age” was definitely in the plan of God. It was not an afterthought to take care of an emergency.

To prove that God had to change His plan to accommodate the unbelief of the Jews, they quote and misinterpret Acts 15:14-17: “Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.” The very next verse proves this was not an afterthought: “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.” So from the “beginning of the world” the New Testament church and its mission were in the plan of God.

Concerning these verses here are the futurists’ claims: That the conversion of the world is not God’s purpose now. This is to be done after the return of Jesus. That during this age He is just taking out a people for His name. It doesn’t seem to occur to them that God has been taking out a people for His name ever since the days of Abel. To claim that, when this “church age” is over, God is going to re-establish the throne and kingdom of David in order to convert the whole world is the old Russellism second-chance teaching the garb of futurism. Kingdoms have never been God’s evangelising agencies.

Peter did not make the statements above quoted to prove some future world-evangelism project. He quoted them in support of the work among the Gentiles which was going on, and because the Jewish Christians questioned that God was back of it. Peter said, “Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.” Was this a prophecy of some future evangelisation to be done? Let us see that it was not. Paul and Barnabas had just been “declaring the conversion of the Gentiles.” (Acts 15:3.) “Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.” Verse 12. Peter had been sent to the Gentile house of Cornelius, and he reported “how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.” Then to prove that this work among the Gentiles and their salvation was in the divine plan and had been prophetically foretold, Peter said, “And to this {the conversion of the Gentiles which had been going on} agree the words of the prophets.” Then the words of the prophets were quoted in support of this gospel work among the Gentiles, which had already been going on. He never quoted the prophets to prove some future conversion of the world. That was not what they were discussing. They were discussing something that had already been going on and that was in God’s plan: the conversion of the Gentiles. This council had been called to discuss what God expected of these converted Gentiles.

The words of the prophets which Peter cites as being in favour of the Gentiles’ conversion are found in Amos 9:11. In them Amos turns from the dark picture of his people’s sinfulness and consequent chastisement, which he has dealt with in the preceding verses, to the glorious promises of future restoration. These promises were fulfilled in part to those who returned from Babylon exile. Had Israel and Judah lived up to their possibilities, the promises would

have been realised fully; but when they failed, the Lord gave the Gentiles the opportunity Israel lost. This opportunity was pressed by Peter, who pointed to the conversions among the Gentiles as a fulfilment of the prophecy of Amos and in agreement with the plan of the Lord. The fallen tabernacle is a tragic figure representing the sad spiritual state of Israel before its captivity. When literal Israel failed, the building of the tabernacle – that is, the raising again of a standard to Jehovah – devolved upon the Gentiles – spiritual Israel. See Matthew 23:37, 38; Acts 13:44-48.

This conversion of the Gentiles was a part of the work in setting up “the tabernacle of David that is fallen.” When the disciples questioned Christ concerning the setting up of His kingdom, He said, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power {to get people ready to live in the kingdom}, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” – which meant the Gentiles. So after the seventy weeks of probationary favour ran out, they began preaching to the Gentiles in “the uttermost part of the earth.” This getting people ready to live in the kingdom was the first and most important part of the work of restoring “the tabernacle of David that is fallen.” But according to the testimony of these men – Paul, Barnabas, and Peter – that part of the restoring work was already in progress at the time of the Jerusalem council. It was not be held back until after the second coming of the Lord.

It is safe to say that one of the greatest delusions of this age is the revival of the Russellism teaching that the kingdom of Christ is to be set up here on the earth and last for 1,000 years, during which millions will be converted. The only difference between Russellism and futurism on this point is that the former gets up all the dead of the past ages and gets them in on this second chance. Russellism claims that since God is no respecter of persons, it would be unjust to convert the living Jews and Gentiles by “physical sight,” which opportunity was not given to the millions who have died in unbelief. But both these schools do greatly “err, not knowing the scriptures.” Concerning those who have died in their sins, Jesus said, “Where I am, thither ye cannot come.” Concerning those who are living in their sins at the time of the second advent, Paul said Christ would come “in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Thessalonians 1:8.

When in answer to the question “What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” Jesus said, “Take heed that no man deceive you,” He must have had direct reference to this “salvation by the millions” teaching. Instead of teaching this, the believer in the true second-coming message will be saying with a loud voice, “Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh,” and “What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.”

Futurism and the Emergence of Antichrist

THE study of Revelation 20 proved that the emergence of the Antichrist could not possibly be dated after what futurists call the “rapture.” Thus the origin and effect of futurism need to be scrutinised carefully, for should multitudes be looking to the future for Antichrist – as they are – when he is already here, the disastrous consequences can be readily imagined.

The history of prophetic interpretation shows that the great reformers who gave birth to the Protestant Reformation believed papal Rome to be the Antichrist. “Wycliffle was wont to call the Pope Antichrist.” “That the Pope was Antichrist was indeed the general doctrine of the first Reformers everywhere.” H. Grattan Guinness in his *Romanism and the Reformation* says, “Luther never felt strong and free to war against the papal apostasy till he recognised the Pope as Antichrist.” - pp 153, 154.

In contrast to the great Protestant reformers stand the advocates of futurism, Says one, quoted in a monthly futurist publication: “Though most of the Reformers believed Rome was Antichrist, I think today the general opinion among prophetic students is that this was a false interpretation.” Another writer in the same issue of this magazine said: “We have never been willing to accept the idea that the Roman Catholic church (or the Pope) is the Antichrist . . . The identification of Catholicism with the Antichrist arose during the heated days of the Reformation.” One writer goes so far as to say: “The Protestants have always been too ready to believe the worst of Rome. This is a sweeping statement, I realise, but the Scriptures tell us plainly that he {Antichrist} is yet to come.”

Ironical though it may be, the sentiments of the futurist writers can be traced back to the Jesuits, who sought to turn the accusing finger of Bible prophecy away from the Papacy by evolving the school of prophetic interpretation called futurism. As one foremost theologian says: “So great a hold did the conviction that the Papacy was the Antichrist gain upon the minds of men, that Rome at last saw she must bestir herself, and try, by putting forth other systems of interpretation, to counteract the identification of the Papacy with the Antichrist.

“Accordingly, toward the close of the century of the Reformation, two of the most learned doctors set themselves to the task, each endeavouring by different means to accomplish the same end, namely, that of diverting men’s minds from perceiving the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Antichrist in the papal system. The Jesuit Alcasar devoted himself to bring into prominence the preterist method of interpretation . . . and thus endeavoured to show that the prophecies of Antichrist were fulfilled before the popes ever ruled in Rome, and therefore could not apply to the Papacy.

“on the other hand, the Jesuit Ribera tried to set aside the application of these prophecies to the papal power by bringing out the futurist system, which asserts that these prophecies refer properly, not to the career of the Papacy, but to some future supernatural individual, who is yet to appear, and continue in power for three and a half years. Thus, as Alford says, the Jesuit Ribera, about A.D. 1580, may be regarded as the founder of the futurist system of modern times.”

He continues, “It is a matter for deep regret that those who hold and advocate the futurist system at the present day, Protestants as they are for the most part, are really playing into the

hands of Rome, and helping to screen the Papacy from detection as the Antichrist.” – Rev. Joseph Tanner, *Daniel and the Revelation*, pp 16.17.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that a careful study of 2 Thessalonians 2 furnishes convincing proof that the reformers were correct and that the Jesuit Ribera and the futurists are wrong. Paul starts this chapter by making very plain the object of his discussion: “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day {of our gathering together unto Him} shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin {Antichrist} be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” Verses 1-4.

The words of Paul are so plain that it is difficult to comment on them. How can they be made plainer? The day of Christ’s coming will not come “*except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed.*” Show these words to any child who has learned to read; show them to anyone not prejudiced by “private” interpretations, and he will say, “These verses say that the man of sin {Antichrist} is going to be revealed before Jesus comes.”

Paul is not referring to some superman suddenly to appear 2,000 years after he writes. The mystery of iniquity “doth already work.” While Paul lived, he combated the emerging spirit of the Antichrist. By the sixth century A.D. Antichrist had matured. The crowning act in the great drama of deception, however, awaits the return of the Lord: “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the rightness of his coming.” Verse 8.

How do the futurists explain these verses, so contrary to the teaching? First, they say that Paul started out by saying that he was going to discuss the “coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and . . . our gathering together unto him,” but that he did no such thing; that after saying this he immediately began to discuss another event, which, they claim, will not come until after “our gathering together unto him.” The day of “our gathering together unto him” they call the “rapture”; they invent another coming seven years later, and then claim that it is between these two comings that “Antichrist will come on the stage of action.” Thus, in order to invent a time for him to come after “our gathering together unto him,” they accuse Paul of declaring that he is going to discuss one thing and then, instead of doing so, of discussing another. In other words, he immediately gets clear off the subject of his introduction. It should be noticed, however, that Paul – logical, straight-thinking Paul – plainly says that “first” – before “our gathering together” unto Christ – this man of sin shall be revealed.

Notice the continuity of thought, which shows he did not start out discussing one event and immediately begin discussing another: “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day {of “our gathering together unto him,” which he said he was going to discuss} shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.”

What greater stretch of the imagination can be conceived than to claim that Paul did not continue to discuss what he said he was going to discuss? Then again, how very plain he makes it that a “falling away” and the revelation of “that man of sin,” who causes the falling

away, must come *before* “our gathering together unto him” and not *after*, as the Jesuits and the futurists hold.

As we examine into why it was necessary for Paul to write the Thessalonian church that the day of “our gathering together unto him” was not “at hand,” it will be all the more plain that he was not writing about “one event in two parts,” but rather of the one and only second coming of Christ.

Someone had “fallen asleep” in the church at Thessalonica. Paul wrote them to “comfort one another with these words.” (1 Thessalonians 4:18.) In verse 16 and 17 we find the words he refers to: “For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout [not in secret], with the voice [not in silence] of the archangel, and with the trump [“the trumpet shall sound,” 1 Corinthians 15:52] of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then *we which are alive* and remain shall be caught up *together* with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

Because Paul wrote that “we which are alive” shall be “caught up,” they gathered that he, as well as they, would live to see the Lord come, and that the day of “our gathering together unto him” was at hand. To correct this misunderstanding, Paul writes in the second letter, “Let no man deceive you by any means” into thinking that “the day of Christ is at hand.” (Verses 2, 3.) Then he goes on to explain what must happen first. “For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed.”

Recognising that this “Wicked” system must be born, grow to maturity, run its course of many centuries, and at the end be destroyed by “the brightness of his coming” – having prophetic insight into all this – Paul knew that the “day of Christ,” which would bring about “our gathering together unto him,” could not be at hand in his day.

In this discovery of why he wrote them as he did in the second letter, we find confirmation of our previous assertion: The only day or event Paul was speaking of was the day of “our gathering together unto him.” He did not begin talking about something else, as the futurists contend.

After stating that the man of sin must first come and bring about the falling away, he goes on to describe none other than the pope of Rome, “who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” No power but the Papal See can fulfil the specifications, neither is there a point of identification here that has not been fulfilled by the claims of Rome.

Let us take up these points of identification one by one. First notice that the Antichrist is an opposer. (Verse 4.) When anyone rejects truth, he becomes an opposer. Paul says that when the Jews rejected his preaching, “they opposed themselves.” Acts 18:6. No system has ever rejected more truth than the Papacy.

Second, he “exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.” Please notice the word “above.” He exalts himself above God. In the Mass the priests do just that. They claim the power to create the Son of God. God never created His Son. He was with the Father from the beginning. (John 1:1-3.) In a Roman Catholic book, *Dignities and Duties of the Priest*, it is claimed the “the priest may, in a certain manner, be called the creator of his Creator, since by saying the words of consecration, he creates, as it were, Jesus in the sacrament, by giving Him a sacramental existence.” -p. 32. Again: “O happy function of the

priest! He that created me (if I may say so) gave me power to create him; and he that created me without me is himself created by me.” – *Ibid* p. 33. The claim that the pope and the priests can take bread and create the Son of God is one of the strongest dogmas of the papal system. By this act they presume to exalt themselves above God.

Verse 4 continues the identification: “He as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” The Scriptures teach that men are to come before the Father in the name of the Son for the forgiveness of sins. But Catholics are taught to come before the priests, who are said to possess the power to forgive sins. By making this claim, they are acting as God. Following are some of their claims on this point: “Were the Redeemer to descend into a church, and sit in a confessional to administer the sacraments of penance, and a priest to sin in another confessional, Jesus would say over each penitent, “Ego te absolve,” the priests would likewise say over each of his penitents, “Ego te absolve,” and the penitents of each would be equally absolved.” – *Ibid*, p 28. Thus do they claim the same power and authority to forgive sins as does Jesus.

Again they say, “To pardon a single sin requires all the omnipotence of God. . . . Hence, when they heard that Jesus Christ pardoned the sins of the paralytic, the Jews justly said, ‘Who can forgive sins but God alone?’ But what only God can do by his omnipotence, the priest can also do by saying “Ego te absolve. . . .’ Indeed, it is not too much to say that in view of the sublimity of their offices the priests are so many gods.” –*Ibid*, pp. 34-36.

In these claims is a direct fulfilment of the predictions which Paul made about that “man of sin.” It is not hard to understand just why the reformers contended that the Antichrist is the Papacy.

That the man of sin was emerging in Paul’s day is made evident from his assertion: “For the mystery of iniquity doth already work.” That it will continue until Christ comes again is likewise evident: “And then {when the power which has restrained the Antichrist is removed} shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming”—the same coming Paul started talking about in the first verse, the day of “our gathering together unto him.”

Killen, in *The Ancient Church*, page 418, says, “One hundred years after the death of the apostle John, spiritual darkness was fast settling down upon the Christian community, and the Fathers, who flourished toward the commencement of the third century, frequently employ language for which they would have been sternly rebuked, had they lived in the days of the apostles and evangelists.” This cannot be disputed: A system such as Paul described did come on the stage of action in the early centuries, a system whose false teachings rapidly embraced the whole world and gained adherents by the hundreds of millions. The apostasy Paul foretold was something much larger and more influential than could be brought about over the earth by one “superman” in a three-and-one-half-year period as was taught by the Jesuit Ribera and as is taught by his successors today. The Papacy for nearly 1,500 years has been one of the strongest and most powerful institutions in the world. The predictions and descriptions of Paul with reference to this “mystery of iniquity” have been too accurately fulfilled in the rise and history of the Roman Catholic Church to give any grounds for denying that it is what Paul had in mind.

An examination of the meaning of the title “mystery of iniquity” will serve to substantiate the conclusions which have been set forth.

Paul speaks of two “mysteries”: “the mystery of godliness” (1 Timothy 3:16) and “the mystery of iniquity” (2 Thessalonians 2:7). By finding out what “the mystery of godliness” is, we will have the key to the meaning of “the mystery of iniquity.” Going back to 1 Timothy 3:16 we read, “And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was *manifest in the flesh.*” Then the “mystery of iniquity” would be Satan “manifest in the flesh.”

When Paul said that “God as manifest in the flesh,” he meant in the person of His Son, Jesus. John says: “The Word was God” and “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. John 1:1, 14. Jesus, in the flesh, was such an accurate and true manifestation and revelation of God that He could say, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” John 14:9. This is what Paul meant when he said that the “mystery of godliness” is “God manifest in the flesh” through the Person of His Son.

Now, in order to become “God manifest in the flesh,” the Son took some steps – not of self-exaltation, but of self-abnegation. Paul puts it this way: “Let the spirit of Christ Jesus be yours also. Though from the beginning he had the divine nature, yet he did not look upon equality with God as something to be clung to, but impoverished himself by taking the nature of a servant and coming like other men. Then he appeared among us as a man and still further humbled himself by submitting even to death – yes, death on a cross.” Philippians 2:5-8, Twentieth Century new Testament.

It was the disposition of Jesus voluntarily to step down from His position of equality with God. He came down past the nature of angels to the nature of servant. He came down to death, even the “death of the cross,” and then on down until He rested in Joseph’s new tomb. It would have been impossible to come down any lower. It pleased Him to give up His heavenly place of equality with God and the honour of being like the Most High to become one with us in the form of a servant. Then He still further humbled himself by gladly submitting to the most shameful of deaths, “even the death of the cross.” When we remember that He did this for us, how can we keep from loving Him and being wholeheartedly consecrated to Him! This “mind . . . which was in Christ Jesus” was just the opposite of pride and self-exaltation. Jesus was “the mystery of godliness” – “God . . . manifest in the flesh.”

The “mystery of iniquity,” then, would be Satan manifest in the flesh of a person who would seek to exalt himself just as did Satan when he said, “I will be like the most High.” Isaiah 14:14. That spirit is the disposition of the Antichrist, who “opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” 2 Thessalonians 2:4. Christ was the “mystery of godliness”; Antichrist is the “mystery of iniquity.”

In a number of ways, as we have already proved, the Papacy presumes to “be like the most High.” But to be like the most High is not the limit of this self-exaltation. Speaking of the Mass, *Our Sunday Visitor* (December 1, 1946) said: “He {the priest} can hardly wait to each dawn when he will once again hold the Lord between his fingers {in the form of the wafer}.” Another issue said, “Our priests pick up the Lord and move him here and there forward and backward.” Isn’t this exaltation above God? How can the futurists deny that this is the Antichrist? Why will they contend that the reformers were in error in so teaching?

As for bringing about a “falling away,” the Papacy has substituted an error for every truth of the Scriptures. Mary and a host of dead saints are substituted for the “one mediator”; the Mass for the Lord’s Supper; an earthly priest for the heavenly priest; sprinkling for baptism;

repeated offerings for the “one offering”; the pope for “another Comforter”; tradition for the Bible; Sunday for the seventh-day Sabbath; papal infallibility for the teaching of the Holy Spirit through the Word; the earthly Holy Father, the Pope, for a heavenly “holy Father” (John 17:11); the false theocracy for the separation of church and state; self-exaltation for humility; confession to the priest for confession to God; pardon from the priest for pardon from God; penance for repentance; and the Immaculate Conception (of Mary) for “partakers of flesh and blood.”

One futurist writer, in attempting to prove the pope is not the Antichrist, has said: “The Popes and the Roman Catholic church have never denied that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.” If this writer knew anything about the wording of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, he would never have made such a statement. This dogma declares, “We . . . define . . . the Blessed Virgin Mary . . . from the first moment of her conception . . . {was} preserved free from all stain of original sin.” That means that God did not permit Mary to inherit the nature of her ancestors. If she did not, then Jesus did not come “in the flesh.”

One objection which is often given to prove that the Papacy cannot be the Antichrist is based on Paul’s speaking of him as “the son of perdition.” Can such a term be applied to a system like the Roman Catholic Church? We have a precedent which is similar when we remember that the whole Israelitish system was called “son.” The Lord said, “Israel is my son,” and “Let my son go.” Exodus 4:22, 23.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:1-8 Antichrist’s system is given a number of titles, such as “that man of sin,” the “son of perdition,” the “mystery of iniquity,” and “that Wicked.” It is far more difficult to think of these titles as applying to some monster scheduled to appear in the future than it is to think of them as applying to the entire system of Romanism headed up by the succession of popes.

In addition to the evidences already given, much more could be added from the prophecies of Daniel and John supporting the teaching of the reformers that the Papacy is the Antichrist. Seventh-day Adventists stand firmly with them on the historic interpretation of prophecy. The futurist system of interpretation came in and cut short the work of the Reformation, which is prophetically scheduled to be resumed and finished in these closing days. (Revelation 14:6-14.)

So definite is the testimony of history, so clear its relationship to the prophecies of the Inspired Word, that the reformers – Luther, Calvin, Knox, and others – held firmly to the position that the little horn with the eyes of a man (Daniel 7:20), “that man of sin” (2 Thessalonians 2), “the leopard beast” (Revelation 13), and “the scarlet woman” (Revelation 17) all represented the Papal Church.

The acceptance and promulgation of futurism, the invention of a crafty Jesuit, has had the effect of throwing the cloak of protection and concealment over the real Antichrist. How tragic this is at a time when events of world history are moving toward a climax of deception! What would the reformers think if they could be awakened and shown what is taking place? The Seventh-day Adventist interpretation of prophecy is solidly in line with that of these reformers, whose work of reformation was cut short by the Jesuit invention of futurism.

The Seventieth Week of Daniel 9

CLOSELY allied with the secret rapture teaching – indeed, an integral part of its foundation – is the system of prophetic interpretation called “futurism.” Futurism – the belief that fulfilment of Bible prophecies is yet in the future – contrasts with the school of prophetic interpretation known as historical.

The development of futurism and the validity of the historic Protestant position that the Papacy is the Antichrist was treated in chapter five; in this chapter will consider the futurist interpretation of the prophecy of Daniel 9:23-27, for most of the deductions of the secret rapturists have their basis here and are built on the claim that the last week of the ‘seventy weeks,’ of which Daniel speaks, is yet in the future. During that seventieth week, which is supposed to begin at the “rapture,” Antichrist will come on the scene of action. It is believed that he will enter into some kind of covenant with the Jews and that in “the midst of the week” he will break this covenant. This is to be followed by the “great tribulation” and the conversion of millions of Jews by the sight of Jesus coming in the clouds with power and great glory at the end of the seventieth week. These Jews will then become missionaries to all the world and, to quote a foremost exponent of the theory, “a great revival will break out. Thousands, hundreds of thousands will be saved. Undoubtedly this will be the greatest time of salvation the world has ever known.”

This is nothing more or less than the old “second chance” Russellism theory clothed in new garb. It is Satan’ counterfeit second-coming message and is based on the arbitrary, unscriptural disconnecting of the seventieth week of Daniel’s prophecy from the sixty-nine preceding weeks. The seventieth week is then shoved ahead some 2,000 years.

According to the prophecy the Jewish people were to lose their position as the favoured nation of God at the termination of the seventieth week. Prove that this was done, that such a standing with God came to a finish when the seventy prophetic weeks – considered as a whole – terminated in A.D. 34, and the prophetic structure of futurism will fall to the ground. This we shall do.

Introducing the seventy-week period, the angel said to Daniel, “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression.” Notice the word “finish.” The margin of verse 26 says, “And they {the Jews} shall be no more his people.” The words, “to finish the transgression,” or similar words, are used elsewhere in the Scriptures and always mean the filling up of the cup of iniquity to the limit of God’s forbearance followed by divine judgment. To Abraham the Lord said, “The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.” In Daniel 8:23, speaking of Grecia, Daniel prophesied, “In the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king {Rome} . . . of fierce countenance . . . shall stand up.” This means that when Grecia reached the limits of God’s forbearance on account of its transgressors, it would be set aside and succeeded by Rome. So when the Jews in the murdering of the Son of God and the rejection of His resurrection did “finish the transgression,” this was followed by divine judgment, and they were succeeded by the Gentiles. As Paul expressed it, “It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” Acts 13:46. This complements the marginal reading of Daniel 9:26: “And they {the Jews} shall be no more his people.” When

the angel said to Daniel, “Seventy weeks are determined upon {allotted to} thy people . . . to finish the transgression,” he was informing Daniel of the event announced by Paul.

By His plain statements and parable Jesus repeatedly warned the Jews of their approaching rejection and doom. In Matthew 23:29-32 He said, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers {which went into Babylonian captivity}, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.” By pursuing such a course, they were about to “finish the transgression” preparatory to their judgment and rejection.

In one of His parable Jesus phrased the situation in a way that caused the chief priests and the elders of the people to pass judgment on themselves. “There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: and when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their season. Jesus saith unto them, . . . Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. . . . And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.” Matthew 21:33-45. Thus it was that Paul said, “Lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” In these verses we find fulfilment of the words of the prophecy: “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression.” Daniel 9:24. Or, as the marginal reading of verse 26 says. “They shall be no more his people.”

This period of seventy weeks, or 490 literal years, was to begin with the “going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem,” which was then in ruins. We find this commandment, or decree, in Ezra 7:21-27: “And I, even I Artaxerxes the king, do make a decree” – then, follows the wording of the decree for the restoration. The decree was issued in the fall of the year 457 B.C. Measuring from that date, 490 years takes us into A.D. 34. Let us see what happened at the expiration of these 490 years. The date A.D. 34 was just three and one-half years after the Lord was crucified, the last week of the seventy-week period specifically allotted to the Jewish nation. During the last three and one-half years of the seventieth week, the ministry of the disciples was confined exclusively to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel.” This was in obedience to the command of Christ given when He first sent out the disciples: “Go not in the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Matthew 10:5. The reason their preaching was to be confined to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel” was because the seventy weeks of probationary favour had not yet expired. But when those 490 years did end in the year A.D. 34, the disciples immediately began a ministry among the Gentiles: “They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria {a Gentile city}, and preached Christ unto them.”

Acts 8:4, 5. Why did the disciples at this time begin to preach among the Gentiles? It could be only because the seventy weeks expired at this time. Thus we have definite evidence that the seventieth week was not dissected from the preceding sixty-nine and pushed ahead some 2,000 years to begin “at the rapture.”

Of the events which preceded the cutting off of the Jewish nation, the stoning of Stephen and the persecution of the followers of Christ in Jerusalem ranked foremost. These, in effect, finished “the transgression.” In a last appeal to the Jews, Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, pleaded with his countrymen: “Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken.” Then, beginning with Abraham, he presented the prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah. Unable to deny his clear reasoning, the Jews prepared to seize him with violent hands. Said Stephen, “Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not yours fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have be now the betrayers and murderers: who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it. When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.” “Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him.” Acts 7:51-55, 57, 58. In Acts 8:1 we read, “At that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem.” These were the final steps which did “finish the transgression.” Then, after this, says the record, “They that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.” Indeed it was only a short time after Saul witnessed the stoning of Stephen that he was converted and became the “apostle to the Gentiles.” Later, describing how the Jews had filled their cup of iniquity, Paul addressed the Thessalonian church: “For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always: for the wrath of God is come upon them to the uttermost.” 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16. In all this – being “stiffnecked . . . in heart and ears,” in “always” resisting the Holy Ghost, in becoming the “betrayers” and “murderers” of Jesus, in stopping “their ears” to Stephen’s voice and murdering him – they did fill up their sins and were rejected as God’s people.

In the face of these Bible facts, how far from the truth to teach that the last of the probationary “seventy weeks” is still future! Also, what basis would there be for believing that seeing Jesus coming in the clouds would result in the conversion of the nation which once rejected Him? Did they not see Him then? Were not adequate evidences of His divinity given? Christ taught in a parable that even the witness of one risen from the dead would not suffice. (Luke 16:30.) “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” Verse 31. The writings of Moses and the prophets “testify” of Jesus (John 5:39); surely they shall not be set aside in favour of conversion through physical sight. To Timothy, Paul wrote of the Holy Scriptures “which are able to make thee wise unto salvation.” (2 Timothy 3:15.) These were the Old Testament Scriptures of which he spoke; they have been in the hands of the Jews the world over to this day. Were it not for their hardness of heart, their unbelief, they too could become “wise unto salvation” through their testimony of the true Messiah.

I once heard a futurist speaking to a large congregation about the future “conversion of the Jews.” In the course of his remarks he declared that when Jesus appears visibly in the clouds of heaven – “seven years after the rapture” – they would be convinced of their mistake and reach forth their hands and acknowledge Him as “their Messiah.” Thus he taught that all the Jews – whether unbelieving, worldly, or pleasure-loving – would accept Him whom their fathers rejected. But as has been pointed out before, when Jesus comes, it is as “King of kings” and not as priest. And when Jesus ceases His priestly work, there is no longer any “Mediator between God and men.” That being the case, there is no more forgiveness of sins. Then how could thousands, yea, hundreds of thousands, find forgiveness of sins after the Lord is seen coming in the clouds as “king of kings, and Lord of lords”? – and here we have reference to the one and only second coming.

When Jesus met the two disciples on the Emmaus road, He did not reveal Himself to them immediately; He wished their conviction of His resurrection to rest upon something more dependable than physical sight, for Satan can produce great wonders, even transforming himself into an angel of light. 2 Corinthians 11:14, 15. “Their eyes were holden that they should not know him”; then “beginning at Moses and all the prophets he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” Luke 24:16, 27. He did this that their faith might rest on the “sure word of prophecy” rather than upon physical evidences. In sight of this the futurists teach that after millions of unbelieving Jews have refused to accept the Scriptures concerning the fact that Jesus is the Son of God, the Lord is going to excuse them and convince them by physical sight. Jesus contradicted this idea when He said, “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.” Paul contradicted it when he said, “Seeing ye put it {the word of God} from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life.” This the Jews are doing even to this day, and all the second chance teaching in the world is not going to alter God’s plan, laid down when He said, “Search the scriptures; . . . they are they which testify of me.” John 5:39

In the dramatic parable of the barren fig tree, Christ taught that the Jewish nation is not going to be converted – by physical sight or otherwise – and go out as missionaries to all the world. “bearing fruit” after the Lord’s return. We read, “And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away.” Matthew 21:19. How withered and fruitless has been that fig tree through the ages to this day! According to the parable to Jesus, thus it shall be for all the future.

Futurists emphasise Jeremiah 30:3 as a prophecy of Israel’s restoration: “For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people, Israel and Judah, saith the Lord: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave their fathers, and they shall possess it.” Then they tell the people that “the Lord is today doing that very thing before our eyes.” But Ezra 1:1-3 says that these words of Jeremiah were fulfilled in the return from Babylonian captivity: “That the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, . . . and put it also in writing, saying, . . . Who is there among you of all his people? His God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel.” The pitiful thing is that many people do not even know there ever was a captivity and return of the Jews to Palestine.

That the prophecy of Jeremiah was fulfilled when the Jews were released from Babylonian captivity is historical fact; that it has a future application to God’s people is not denied. But Paul is positive in his assertion that “ye are all {Jew and Gentile} children of God by faith in

Christ Jesus.” “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Galatians 3:26, 28, 29.

He specifically states that God makes “no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.” Romans 10:12. The reason why God does not save Israel as a nation is that “they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children. . . . That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.” Romans 9:6-8

Again he emphasises that God is no respecter of the blood that flows through a man’s veins: “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart.” Romans 2:28, 29.

These verses serve only to emphasise again that the seventy weeks which concerned the nation of Israel are in the past; in A.D. 34, as the prophecy foretold, the Jewish nation was rejected.

Everything foretold to take place during the seventy weeks did take place. “Seven weeks threescore and two {sixty-nine} weeks” were to reach to the finishing of the “transgression”; in “the midst” of this last week Jesus was to “cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.” This He did by the “one offering” on the cross. Jesus died three and one-half years (“in the midst of the week”) after His anointing. During that last week Jesus did “confirm the covenant” of truth “with many” – “as many as received him” – through His own ministry for three and one-half years and through the ministry of the disciples for the other three and one-half years ending A.D.34. Jesus did “make reconciliation for iniquity” by His death on the cross; He did bring in “everlasting righteousness,” which is even the righteousness “which is through the faith of Christ,” unto all and upon all that believe. Jesus did “seal up the vision and prophecy” by accurately fulfilling the portions concerning His ministry. Jesus did make an “end of sins” when He offered Himself. And the “most holy place” (see Daniel 9:24, margin) of the sanctuary in heaven was anointed for the beginning of His priesthood work. The most important event foretold, and which was to occur “in the midst of the week,” was the causing of the “sacrifice and the oblation to cease” when He made “reconciliation for iniquity” by His death. The futurists teach that this had no reference to the Lord’s death, but that it is something that Antichrist will do three and one-half years after the “rapture.” A misinterpretation that confuses something that the devil supposedly is going to do in the future with Christ’s atoning death is tragic indeed.

Jehovah' Witnesses and the Testimony of Scripture

NO BOOK on last-day delusions would be complete without taking up several of the teachings of the Jehovah's Witnesses, sometimes known as Russellites after their founder, Charles Taze Russell. Ardent advocates of the "millennial dawn" doctrine and sharers in the "second chance" delusion, Jehovah's Witnesses also hold strange views concerning the triune Godhead (which they deny) and the deity of Christ (likewise denied). They believe that there is but one solitary being from all eternity, Jehovah God, the creator and preserver of the universe and of all things visible and invisible. The Word, or Logos is "a god," a mighty god, the "beginning of the creation" of Jehovah, and His active agent in the creation of all things. The Logos was made human as the man Jesus and suffered death to produce the ransom, or redemptive price, for obedient men.

They believe the Trinity doctrine to be of Satan. (*Let God Be True*, p. 81.) The Holy Spirit is "the invisible active force of Almighty God that moves his servants to do his will." – *Ibid.*, p 89. They claim that there is no such thing as a personal Holy Spirit.

It is not possible to cover all the errors of the Jehovah's Witnesses in this chapter, nor can more than a small amount of the vast body of Scriptural refutations available be presented. Only a few will be considered.

The Jehovah's Witnesses are not in harmony with the Scriptural truth that the Holy Spirit is a person. A way of helping them see this truth is opened up by Romans 8:34. Their own version of the Scriptures, the New World Translation, here reads, "Christ Jesus is the one who died, yes, rather the one who was raised up from the dead, who is on the right hand of God who also pleads for us."

/Could one who is not a person plead for us? Of course not! This will rarely be denied. Notice that the verse quoted says that Christ "also" pleads for us. This indicates that someone else is pleading on our behalf. Verse 26 identifies this other *person*, for it is admitted that only a person who can plead: "The spirit itself pleads for us." Thus we have two persons pleading, or making "intercession" (King James Version), for us.

Jehovah's Witnesses teach that "between his birth and resurrection Jesus was totally human." If this is true, then His death for our sins was only a human sacrifice. They contend that the one who sinned in the beginning was not divine, so the sacrifice to redeem Adam need be only of "corresponding value," a human sacrifice. What they forget is that the atoning sacrifice must be equal in value to all the lives forfeited by sin. One human life is equal in value to only one human life. That is stated in Genesis 9:6: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." This explains why the Holy Scriptures declare: "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him." Psalm 49:7. The sacrifice must be at least equal in value to every life which has been forfeited. Since it was by the Son of God that "all things {were} created" (Colossians 1:16), His divine nature is more than equal in value to all who have sinned.

The Jehovah's Witnesses' reply to this is: "Adam was human, and not divine. Then, federally, the death of a human being {Jesus} was the corresponding price to redeem {federally} all who died in Adam." This is an argument based on a misapplication. Jesus did

not die to prevent the death that came upon all men because of Adam's sin, the first death; He died to save man from the "second death." For, "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." Revelation 2:11. More than a human sacrifice was required to redeem man from the second death, and it is this second death that man is saved from by the atonement. Since man is not responsible for what Adam did, that life which was taken from him by death because of Adam's transgression will be given back to him. Says the Scripture, "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." Acts 24:15. What is returned is the life lost because of Adam's transgression. Justice would demand that this be done. No one will face judgement for what Adam did. Each will face the judgment for his personal sins. Everyone "shall give account of himself to God." This will include all men, for "all have sinned." This makes it necessary for the sacrifice of Christ to be at least equal in value to every life which has been personally forfeited by sin.

This brings us to an examination of 1 Corinthians 15:22: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." This verse cannot mean that all will be exempted from the second death, because the Scriptures plainly teach that millions will go into the second death. (Revelation 21:8.) It means all will be made alive from the death which came as a consequence of Adam's transgression. We are well aware that the following parenthetical reading is the way some teach this verse: "For as in Adam all die {spiritually}, even so in Christ shall all be made alive {spiritually}." That adds up to universalism. But the Scriptural parenthetical rendering is: "For as in Adam all died {physically}, even so in Christ shall all be made alive {physically}." But completely apart from what Adam did and the consequences, every man has personally sinned and is "guilty before God." (Romans 3:19.) And although Adam's sin federally caused all to die, it is not true that the Lord's death federally took care of the second death for all men. In fact, it was never intended that all men die the second death, so there would be no use in His death federally for all. It "is appointed unto men *once* to die {because of Adam's transgression}, but after this the judgment." Hebrews 9:27. This judgment determines whether that shall die the second death or not. The first death was by divine appointment because of Adam's transgression. But it is not appointed unto men twice to die. If men die the second death, it is by their own personal choice. God, in His mercy and long-suffering, gives men the opportunity to choose for themselves what shall be done with them in the end. If they choose eternal life, that is what they will get. By causing men to be deceived by false teachers and false teachings, the devil robs millions of eternal life.

If Jesus was not divine between His resurrection and ascension, then He encouraged and accepted the practice of idolatry. Over and over He accepted worship. But worship can properly be given only to God. Speaking of an angel, John said, "I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not." The angel added, "Worship God," which meant that such worship was to be rendered only to the Deity. If an angel, who is higher than man, was not to be worshipped, what about man, who is made "a little lower than the angels"? (Hebrews 2:7.) Such worship would be the basest of idolatry. When Peter saw Cornelius fall down at his feet to worship him, he protested with the words, "I am a man," which shows that one must be more than man to be worshipped without committing idolatry. If Jesus was not more than man, then it was a violation of the second commandment to worship Him.

Jesus did accept worship in the fullest sense of the word. Let us note the following: "There came a leper and worshipped him." Matthew 8:2. His disciples "worshipped him," saying, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God." (Matthew 14:33.) It was that position that entitled Him

to be worshipped. Had Jesus been human only, as was Peter, to worship Him would have been idolatry. (Matthew 14:35.) How completely this disproves the Jehovah's Witnesses' teaching that Jesus was only human!

If Jesus at His birth was no more than human, then He was wrongly named. It was foretold that His name would be "Emmanuel," which being interpreted is "God with us." And it was at His birth, not after His resurrection, that He was given this name. If He was not by nature both God and man, then they should have named Him "man with us," for that is all He would have been. So the New World Translation is correct when it reads, "With us is God." And there is no room here to use hundreds of words trying to prove that the word "God," as here used, means "a god," a little god.

In their attempts to get around this, the Jehovah's Witnesses quote Christ's words, "My Father is greater than I." Here Jesus was modestly speaking of rank, not of nature. For in another place He declared that "all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." The words "even as" mean in the "same degree." It was Scriptural to "honour" the Father with worship. If the Son were nothing more than human, it would be unscriptural to "honour" Him with worship.

Then there is to be considered Christ's claim to forgive sin. There is no mere man which "hath power on earth to forgive sins"; and the Jews rightly asked, "Who can forgive sins but God only?" To prove to them that that is exactly what He was, He said: "That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house." Mark 2:7, 10, 11. By that miracle He demonstrated that He was more than human; that He, as God, had "power on earth to forgive sins." The Jehovah's Witnesses, in denying His divinity and in refusing to honour Him even as the Father should be honoured, are, at the same time, denying His power to forgive sins. No mere man can forgive sins. Where is text that says he can?

Another claim of the Jehovah's Witnesses is that the "body" that was put to death and placed in Joseph's tomb was never reinvested with life. They say, "We do not know what became of that body. All we know is that it did not see 'corruption'; to prevent it from seeing corruption, it may have dissolved into gases or it may have been petrified and laid away as a grand memorial of God's love." Peter, in explaining why that body did not see corruption, said, "This Jesus hath God raised up" Acts 2:32.

When confronted with this Bible proof that Jesus' body was raised from the dead, the Jehovah's Witnesses say, "He gave His flesh for the life of the world; He would not do that and then take it back again." The weakness of this argument is shown by Jesus' statement, "I lay down my life for the sheep." John 10:15. Did He take that life back again? Let Jesus answer: "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. . . . I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." Verses 17, 18. It was the same life that was given that was taken back again, and the same is true of His flesh. As the atonement required, Christ "tasted death for very man." (Hebrews 2:9.)

In reply to this the Jehovah's Witnesses argue, "Paul said we would no more know Christ after the flesh." They leave off the first half of the same text, which says, "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh." That certainly does not mean that no man has a body of flesh.

Quickly abandoning that argument, they will say that Paul said, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Corinthians 15:5.) The truth is flesh and blood cannot

inherit anything. Jesus said, “The flesh is weak.” Paul explains what he had in mind: “This corruptible must put on incorruption” because “corruption {does not} inherit incorruption.” God is not going to invest this corruptible “flesh and blood” with “immortality.” (1 Corinthians 15:50-54.) In Philippians Paul speaks of Him “who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” This proves that, at the time Paul was writing this, Jesus had a body, and that the time is coming when our bodies will be like His body. It also proves Jesus is not an intangible, invisible essence.

Jesus was seen going away: He “lifted up his hands, and blessed them” (Luke 24:50) He went away with a material body. When confronted with this, Jehovah’s Witnesses say, “That body evaporated when it got high enough.” This is read in some publication other than the Bible.

They repeat, “The world seeth me {Christ} no more.” This assertion of Christ’s is supposed to prove that He is “an invisible, immaterial, spirit being.” Matthew quoted something else which Jesus said: “Ye shall not see me henceforth {He said to the unbelieving Jews}, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” Matthew 23:39. That He will be seen when he comes the second time is evident, and He is coming as the “same Jesus” who was seen going into heaven. (Acts 1:9-11.)

Continuing to seek an answer to the question, “What happened to Jesus’ body?” we examine the argument of Peter on the day of Pentecost. (It convinced 3,000 Jews that the only solution to the empty tomb was that “this Jesus hath God raised up.”) Standing before that immense multitude, Peter spoke of “Jesus of Nazareth . . . whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.” Why was it impossible for Jesus’ body to remain in the grave? First, death had no legal claim upon Him because He had not sinned. Second, God had sworn with an oath to David that He would raise up Christ before His body saw corruption. “For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is at my right hand, that I should not be moved: therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope. Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” That this was speaking of Christ and not David is evident from Acts 2:29. Peter said, “Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.” Certainly David was not raised. But Christ was, for God swore with an oath to David that “of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne.” Verse 30. Christ was raised “according to the flesh.” If Peter had said “according to the spirit,” Jehovah’s Witnesses would have no difficulty. But when Peter says “according to the flesh,” this does not fit into their “dissolved into gases” teaching. Let us continue with Peter’s explanation of the empty tomb:

“He {David} seeing this before {that ‘according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ’} spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. . . . This Jesus hath God raised up.” Verses 31, 32. If God had not raised Him up, His flesh would have seen corruption, and the oath to David would have been forfeited. These evidences were so logical and Scriptural as to what really became of that body of flesh that 3,000 Jews were convinced of Christ’s resurrection.

Let us examine the oath to David, found in Psalm 132:11. “The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.” This is the prophecy quoted by Peter in explaining why Christ’s body did not see corruption.

When Jesus was born, the angel said to Mary, ‘The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.’ The time is coming, when the earth has been made new and the New Jerusalem is here, that this oath to David and this promise to Mary will be fulfilled. It will be that resurrected body – that flesh which did not see corruption, that body which was the fruit of David’s body, raised up according to the flesh – that will sit on that throne of the kingdom of David.

To further oppose the idea that Christ had a physical body after His resurrection, Jehovah’s Witnesses seek to find evidences of Jesus “materialising and dematerialising.” Of Him “passing through shut doors” and “having a spirit body.” Let us examine the verses from which they seek to teach this.

1. He appeared unto Mary as a gardener. (John 20:15.) This is supposed to show that he assumed different bodies at will.

In reality the verse teaches nothing of the kind. It was “yet dark.” (verse 1.) Mary “saw Jesus standing” (Verse 14) and supposed “him to be the gardener” (verse 15). The verse does not say He “appeared as a gardener.” That He was a physical being is indicated by His directions to her, “Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father.” Verse 17.

2. He was able to materialise and dematerialise at will, passing through solid walls and shut doors. John 20:19, on which this belief is based, reads, “Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut . . . midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.” When Jesus arrived, “the doors were shut,” but there is no proof that He did not open them. Most likely He simply walked in, unseen, when the two disciples returned from Emmaus with the news that they had seen Him. (Luke 24.)

An interesting record, worthy of study in this context, is found in Acts 5. Verse 18 speaks of the apostles being put in prison. When the next day the council and “all the senate of the children of Israel” were called together, and officers sent to the prison to get the apostles, the officers sent to the prison to get the apostles, the officers were unable to locate them. They reported, “The prisoners standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.” Verse 23.

How did the apostles get out? If the same conclusion is drawn from this verse as is drawn from John 20:19 – and a consistency in interpretation is a virtue – the apostles must have dematerialised and walked through the prison gate or wall. In one case Jesus arrived in the midst of the disciples within a locked room without being seen; in the other the apostles left a locked room without being seen by the guard.

How did they get out? “The angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth.” Acts 5:19.

If this could be done without disturbing the guards, surely Christ could get into a room through the door without disturbing the disciples. He had the power to walk in unseen. Further evidence that He did not materialise and dematerialise, that He had a physical body, is contained in His words to the terrified disciples who, seeing Him in the room, “supposed that they had seen a spirit.” (Luke 24:37.) Said He, “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.” Verse

39. There He stood “in the midst of them” with a material body composed of “flesh and bones,” definitely not a “spirit” as the Jehovah’s Witnesses teach.

That this was the same body that was crucified is proved in John 20. Thomas said, “Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.” Verse 25. Jesus said to him, “Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.” Verses 27, 28.

The Jehovah’s Witnesses accuse Jesus of deception. They claim that this was not the body that He made the disciples think it was. He “assumed that body” in order to convince Thomas. If it was not the body that was pierced with a spear, if the hands were not those through which nails had been driven, then Jesus resorted to deception. Jesus was not that kind of person.

Let us illustrate the point this way: Suppose a father’s little boy is given an apple. The boy takes one bite out of it and lays it down, intending in a few minutes to return and eat the remainder of it. Suppose the father picks up the apple and eats it. A few minutes later the little boy comes in and begins crying because his apple is gone. The father hurriedly slips into the kitchen, selects an apple which looks like the other one, bites a hole in it, takes it to the little boy, and says, “Here is your apple. See where you took the bite out of it?” Does he knowingly practice a fraud on the little boy? Does he lie to the boy? The only answer is Yes. Yet this is the kind of deception which the Jehovah’s Witnesses claim Jesus used on Thomas!

3. Another evidence advanced to prove Christ materialised and dematerialised at will is found in the chronicle of the Emmaus walk, Luke 24:13-32. But the record does not say that on the Emmaus walk that afternoon Jesus “materialised into an unrecognisable body.” Verse 15 says, “Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.” Verse 16 tells why they did not recognise Him. “Their *eyes were holden* that they should not know him.” Jesus wished their confidence in His resurrection, when established, to rest on something more than physical evidence. “Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” Verse 27. Then, when they sat down at the table in Emmaus, “their eyes were *opened*, and they knew him.” Verse 31. “But,” agree the Jehovah’s Witnesses, “He vanished out of their sight.” So did Philip after he baptised the Ethiopian. (Acts 8:39.) But he had a material human body. Find a man who will argue that Philip was a spirit!

It pays to read the Scriptures carefully. Speaking of Christ, Paul did not say, “He was raised a quickening spirit.” What he did say was, “The last Adam was *made* a quickening spirit” – a life-giving spirit. Paul also said He was “made of a woman,” and “was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.” (Romans 1:3.) So, here again, we have the word “spirit” applied to a human body of flesh. He was not born a “spirit being,” neither was he raised a “spirit being,” for neither could be “according to the flesh.”

In addition to all the Bible evidences which have been given, we now examine John 2:19-22. “Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of *his body*.” Note that John says Jesus was speaking of “his body,” which would be raised “in three days.” This

proves that this body was not to be dissolved into gases! Let us read on: “When therefore he {the Lord} was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.” If, in the face of such striking evidence, a man will still contend that Christ’s body was not raised up, he must not believe “the word which Jesus had said.” There are some who put the word of God away from them, and judge themselves “unworthy of everlasting life.” (Acts 13:46.)

As interesting reading is found in the Emphatic Diaglott, in which the Jehovah’s Witnesses have such confidence that they have secured the copyright. Hebrews 10:20 reads, speaking of Christ: “Which Way he consecrated for us, through the veil, (that is, his *flesh*, recently killed and *yet is living*).” It would be interesting to hear how the Jehovah’s witnesses square this translation with their belief that the flesh is not resurrected.

4. The one text which is used above all others to prove the Lord’s body “evaporated” as He went up is 1 Peter 3:18: “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” This means simply that on the third day after his death he was “quickened” {made alive again} by the Holy Spirit. In another place the Apostle Paul stated the same thing: “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by the Spirit that dwelleth in you.” Romans 8:11. Notice the similarity of the two statements: “The Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead”; “being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” The Jehovah’s Witnesses make these verses mean, “Put to death in the flesh but raised a spirit being.” But Peter was not discussing the kind of body with which the Lord was raised. He was discussing *how* He was raised up, and in so doing said: “Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened {made alive} by the Spirit.” That this is the truth is proved by what follows. Speaking further of what the Spirit had done in the past, Peter says: “By which {Spirit} also he {Christ} went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, *when* once the longsuffering of God waited in *the days of Noah*, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved.”

Let us inquire, Was there any preaching to these “spirits in prison” – the ungodly people who were living while the ark was being prepared? We read the answer in 2 Peter 2:5: “And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.” This preaching by Noah was motivated by the same Holy Spirit that “raised up Jesus,” as we read in Genesis 6:3: “And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man.” So Christ, *by* the Holy Spirit, *through* the voice of Noah, did preach unto the “spirits in prison” – those ungodly men in the prison house of bondage and sin. And Christ was quickened the third day by that same Spirit. There is not one word here about Christ going and preaching to spirits during the three days between His death and resurrection. They, of whom he speaks, were disobedient “while the ark was a preparing,” and the preaching was to them during that same time. The Scriptures teach that “they that go down into the pit {grave} cannot hope for thy truth.” Isaiah 38:18. There is no amount of preaching that can benefit those who go down into the grave, who have died in their sins. When Peter says, “For this cause was the gospel preached to them that *are* dead” (1 Peter 4:6), we can be

sure that the preaching was *before* and not *after* they died. They “are dead” as Peter speaks; they were alive when they heard the gospel preached.

It may well be asked, Why do Jehovah’s Witnesses cling to the belief that Jesus’ body dissolved into gases in the face of so much plain evidence to the contrary? The answer is simple: To provide a basis for the secret and invisible coming of Christ, which they believe has already occurred. If Jesus has a real body, there can have been no such coming.

Their teaching, briefly, is this: When the Scriptures speak of His “coming,” it “does not mean that he is on the way, or has promised to come, but that he has already arrived and is present.” – *Let God Be True*, pp 187, 188. “The year 1914 marked the end of the Gentile times. That date marked the end of Satan’s uninterrupted rule, and therfoe the time when Christ the rightful ruler of the world received control.” – *Ibid.*, p. 191.

Three and one-half years later, in the spring of 1918, the judgment began. “The dead Christians sleeping in the graves were then raised with spirit bodies to join him at the temple.” – *Ibid*, p. 192.

Contrast this picture of a secret, already-in-the-past coming with the words of Paul: “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17.

As the modern rapturists do, so the Jehovah’s Witnesses teach that the “shout,” the “voice,” and the “trump” are alike inaudible. But Paul declares emphatically that “the trumpet shall sound.” 1 Corinthians 15:52.

Some of the details of Christ’s coming, as set forth in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17, have been treated in previous chapters. A portion of the verse which causes particular embarrassment to Jehovah’s Witnesses is that which says, “Then {when the righteous dead are resurrected} we which are alive and remain shall be *caught up together with them* in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.” The cause for embarrassment is evident when it is remembered that they teach that the resurrection of the righteous dead occurred in 1918. “The dead of Christians sleeping in the graves were then raised with spirit bodies to join him at the temple.” – *Ibid*, p 192. Just how it happens that the righteous living, to be caught up *together* with them, are still here is difficult to explain. Together means “at the same time,” and not even recourse to figurative interpretations can do much to mitigate the force of this language. Never does the word “together” mean at different times. In Ezra 2:64 we read of a “whole congregation together.” Scatter the congregation and there is no longer any sense in using the word “together.” In Isaiah 65:25 the prophet says, “The wolf and the lamb shall feed together.” Does this mean at different times? Does he mean years apart? Does he man the lamb and the wolf will not feed at the same time? In Acts 2:44 we read, “All that believed were together.” Does this mean that the believers were separated from each other?

Surely it is evident that if the righteous dead were raised in 1918, the righteous living in no sense of the word were caught up together with them. But that is exactly what God says occurs when Christ comes the second time. God says, “together”; the Jehovah’s Witnesses say “not together.” The entire invisible presence teaching is overthrown by

one word, and falls “together” with the other unscriptural teachings concerning last-day events.

Last-day delusions need deceive no one who will anchor his faith to the Word of God. “Take heed that no man deceive you,” Christ admonished the disciples. “And what I say unto you I say unto all, *Watch.*” Mark 13:37. Fitting words to close a volume on last-day delusions.