

1: 15.) Peter is clear as the light on the act that Jesus must remain in heaven until a period described as "the times of restitution," proving that all things will be out of order until he returns. At the same time the inspired speaker promises that return in so many words: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3: 19, 21.)

We may rest fully satisfied, that when Jesus takes to himself His great power and reigns, a speedy and wonderful change will pass over the nations of the world. Instead of weary centuries of misrule by the tyrant kings of the Gentiles, sin rampant, Satan at large, the nominal Church a melancholy exhibition of worldliness, and true saints waiting, praying, watching, struggling and wondering how long it will yet be ere the morning breaks, there will be a swift destruction of the enemies of righteousness, and a rapid diffusion and development of piety, rectitude, and truth. The glorious King will rule as never king did before. He will fill Zion, and the world through Zion, "with judgment and righteousness;" and "wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of his times." Good men will no longer talk about "the mysteries of Providence,"—mysteries indeed, if our blessed Lord is on His throne all this time!—but the majesty of righteous government over every form of wrong and rebellion will be sublimely manifest, to the admiration of every loyal subject of the glorious Sovereign, and the confusion of all who dare dispute His will.

The forms of speech in the parables are decisive proofs that Jesus is still waiting for His throne. "After a long time," the Lord of the servants to whom the talents have been intrusted cometh and reckoneth with them. The Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and commanded the porter to watch. A certain nobleman went into a far

country to receive for himself a KINGDOM and to return. And when he was returned, having received the kingdom—which obviously means that he returned as soon as he received it—then judgment, or the exercise of royal authority, began at once. Rewards for fidelity, punishment for negligence, and death for refusal to submit to his sceptre, were promptly bestowed. The idea of righteousness, of putting disordered things right by the exercise of absolute regal power, flashes irresistibly upon the mind here. This is a KING who will not be trifled with. He has waited long for His kingdom, carrying on a work of marvellous grace in the interval; but now that He has received the sceptre decreed for Him, "He will make a short work upon the earth," and put things speedily to rights in his house, which the worldly, careless, self-indulgent, and quarrelling servants have thrown into disgraceful confusion, making an ecclesiastical Babel of that which should be the scene of love, peace, and joy.

Finally, it is to be noticed also that Daniel says, that the God of heaven is to set up a kingdom in the days of the last kings of the fourth and last Gentile dynasty, a note of time which clearly proves that it is not yet set up. The Ruler of this magnificent kingdom is one like the Son of Man—the same, yet how unlike the Man of Sorrows!—who is to come with the "clouds of heaven," the very sign which He himself gives: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall 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." (Matt. 24: 30.) Daniel describes the kingdom which the Son of Man is to receive from the Ancient of Days, at the time in question, in a few words weighty with meaning: "And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." (Dan. 7: 14.) The splendor of this description of the dominion of the coming King is unrivalled; and its locality is not heaven, but earth; for, as if to

prevent all mistake here, we are assured that it is "UNDER the whole heaven."

One more proof of that which has been sufficiently proved already, if the reader accepts the testimony of Scripture in its fair and obvious meaning. We have already referred to the parable of the pounds. Why did our Lord deliver this parable? To correct the mistake

of the people who "thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." (Luke 19: 11.) The time of its appearance, however, cannot be far off now. All creation groans for it. And when it comes, may the reader and the writer be honored with admission to its glory!

Editorial.

THE REMOVAL OF THE SAINTS.

How many things have been taken for granted, without proof! How have things that are different been confounded, because of their similarity! What a blind deference has been paid to great names, to authority, to commentators, to text-books! To dissent from them, to think for yourself, to independently investigate,—how often have these things fastened a taint of supposed heresy, and that even in the Protestant Church! How often has confusion arisen from the asserted, but unproved, seeming tautology of parallel passages! In fine, how often, in the modern Church, HAS THE WORD of God been made of no effect through the tradition of the elders!

We thankfully accept the experience and the labors of our forefathers in exegetical studies, wherever such can be proved to be sound. But, if not—perena! "To the law, and to the testimony!" Harmonize the Scriptures. Use diligently the Bible. If their conclusions cannot stand this test, it is "because there is no light in them." If they "speak not according to this Word," their conclusions must be, very respectfully—perhaps regretfully—laid aside. We refuse to take statements *ex cathedra*. We prefer to regard the Holy Scriptures as a fresh volume, just put into our hands, as it were, for the first time. To us they are new, however ancient and venerable in themselves.

It seems incredible how men of otherwise sound judgment, and of undoubted piety, should be so warped as to refuse to apply to the Bible the rule they employ with every other writing,

viz., to accept words in their plain meaning. But such is the force of prejudice and of habit, and such is the reverence for traditional teaching, that an artificial, manufactured sense is looked for almost everywhere, and predictions or narratives are believed to be clothed in "figurative language," when the passage, according to the universally admitted laws of language, contains not a solitary figure. The angelic message to the Virgin: "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb," is not violently distorted to mean, "Thou shalt entertain an idea in thy mind;" but the equally plain declaration, "He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever," is asserted to mean, "He shall be supreme in the affections of Christians." The whole system is so utterly incredible that it is a marvel of marvels how sensible men could have been induced to give it confidence.

We have thought it well to let these remarks precede and pave the way for the consideration of that important topic which forms the subject of this and a subsequent paper, viz., the fate of true disciples at the close of this dispensation or age. It has been suggested, additionally, by the interesting letter in vol. iii, page 156. The reply to this letter is entirely satisfactory as regards the virgins; but it has (judiciously) left untouched the difference between the "servant" of Luke 12: 45, and the "evil servant" of Matt. 14: 48, both of whom say in their hearts, "My lord delayeth his coming," and both of whom are "cut off" from privileges; whilst the latter only is doomed to weeping and gnashing of teeth, because he, in addition, is a hypocrite:

42 and from want of a clear apprehension of this difference, as well as of the fact, that being "cut off" (margin) does not necessarily imply loss of *salvation*, arises the difficulty in the mind of the writer of the aforesaid letter.

In a previous paper (see *Prophetic Times*, vol. iii, pp. 129, 144) the question was considered, What are the New Testament eagles? But the subject has still wider bearings, as we purpose now to show, as far as God has given, and shall give, enabling grace.

It cannot be too often repeated that there are various stages in the Second Advent of our Lord, as was the case at his First Coming in the flesh. In a general view, the prophets speak of both of these as single events, although both consist of a number of particular and successive occurrences, just as we speak of the French Revolution, the American Revolution, the English Revolution, the great American Rebellion, as single events.

It was the want of a clear insight into the various seasons and stages that caused the disciples, and many of the Jewish people of old, to be so much at a loss respecting the apparent Messiahship of the Prophet of Galilee. "Is not this the Christ?" And yet, "Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." Both were right; but the conclusion the objectors drew was erroneous.

It was predicted to Daniel, that in the time of the end—*up to* which time the prophecy should be sealed—many should run to and fro, and knowledge should be increased. This prophecy is fulfilling before our eyes, in a double sense. Men have made surprising discoveries in science and the arts; and locomotion, and the transmission of intelligence, have become wonderfully rapid through the aid of steam and electricity. So, also, the true millenarian faith of the Primitive Church having, in the providence of God, been strikingly revived, earnest students have "run to and fro" over the sacred pages; and the Divine blessing on their indefatigable and prayerful investigations has, through the harmonizing of the various portions, added very greatly to our insight into the purposes of the Lord.

And of all the clear inferences drawn, none is so remarkable and important as the difference

between the "parousia" and the "epiphany;" or, in other words, the glorious visible manifestation of the Lord, and his previous silent, unheralded, unnoticed, and unknown coming as a thief.

This "coming as a thief," just as the iniquity of the earth has ripened, is imminent. It may occur at any moment.

Those who are "ready" will be translated, as Enoch was, and be thus "kept from the hour of trial that is to come upon the whole world;" and the reason which Jesus gives for it is, because they have kept the "injunction" He left "concerning the patient expecting" of Him, and the patient enduring of the suffering incidental to it, which suffering He, in the days of his flesh, experienced to the full. It was in *this* sense that John, after having understood the coming wonders of the Revelation, said: "I am your companion in the suffering connected with the present time of patient expectation of the coming of Jesus."

Men and brethren, are these things so? or is such an expectation indeed an idle dream? The Scriptures promise that some shall be preserved from "the hour of temptation;" that some shall "be counted worthy" to *escape* all these things, and "to stand before the Son of Man." **THEX OTHERS WILL NOT.** And in no other way than by *successive stages* in the Advent can the apparent contradictions between the announced, and public, and visible, appearing in glory, and the unannounced, silent, sudden, "coming as a thief" be reconciled.

It is often objected: "The coming of Jesus cannot be so near as some assert, because none of the predicted convulsions of nature have taken place—the sun has not yet been turned into darkness, nor the moon into blood, as is foretold they will be antecedent to it." This objection would hold were it not that the Scriptures, on the other hand, represent that sublime event as occurring in a manner totally unannounced and unexpected. It is undeniable that it is the repeatedly expressed will of God that every believer, from the earliest time, should be in so expectant an attitude as not to look for any expected *prophetic* event to occur between his lifetime and the coming of Jesus.

This is the exact *truth*. Let who will deny it, the grand fact remains, that the parousia, the sudden, silent coming of Jesus as a thief, is the *very first event in the predicted galaxy of wonders*.

Whatever events might occur before then in the history of the world and of modern kingdoms, neither the Great Tribulation, the Reign of Antichrist, the Judgments of the Seals, the Trumpets and the Vials, the Battle of the Great Day of God Almighty, the appearing of Jesus in flaming fire (2 Thess. 1:7, 8), the judgment of the living nations (Matt. 25), nor the glories of the Millennium, can take place until the resurrected, translated, and crowned saints that are made kings and priests shall have been removed into the presence of the Lamb; for *there* John, being in spirit, in the Lord's day, saw them *before* any of the wonders of Jesus revealed were enacted. The other companies *followed*: it was not until afterwards—until the first fruits had been removed—that he saw the *harvest* of the earth ripe, which having been gathered—"the reapers are the angels"\*—it followed that the *wine-press*, too, of God's *wrath* was trodden, when blood, for two hundred miles' distance, was four feet deep. (Rev. 14.)

Men and brethren, are these things so? If they are so, indeed, then can anything be more important than to be acquainted with the inferences that may fairly be drawn from a close collation and harmony of the predictions of the antecedent removal of the ready saints? Can anything be more intensely interesting than to ascertain, if possible, the time of this stupendous event? An event, the sublimity and absorbing importance of which throw into the shade the revolutions of earthly kingdoms, and diminish into reverse-telescopic minuteness the grandeur of temporal stations and riches!

The removal of the New Testament eagles is near. Although we do not yet *positively* know whether the *parousia* of the Lord, at which it occurs, will be at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning (Mark 13:35)—probably a translation of a

\* The *sickle* (Rev. 14) is not used for gathering grapes, but only for grain: "Gather the wheat into my garner."

portion of the Church will take place at each of these—yet we do know that all-important event is *near*, and are safe, and warranted by Scripture, in looking for it. The signs of the times, and especially the wonderfully altered condition of the Jewish people, give a clear general indication. Besides which, the foreshadowing year-day fulfilment of the Revelation, dim though it be, is nearly run out; and, above all, the predicted 6000 years have nearly expired, and *all* the other prophetic chronological periods, in their foreshadowing year-day fulfilment, are just running out. It makes no difference that, as yet, the *precise* day and hour cannot be pointed out. God has wisely permitted this until the Great Tribulation begins, or (for more attentive and prayerful minds) until Daniel's predicted covenant of one week shall have been made. (Dan. 9:27.) The facts remain the same. Nor does the "confirming" of this covenant necessarily precede—it probably does *not* precede—the translation of the eagles. We repeat it, *their* removal is the very first event in the coming galaxy of wonders.

And what if some, unwilling to go through the prayerful and laborious investigation that leads (as yet) to the full conviction of these facts, should be unable to perceive them? May not this very thing, in an unbelieving age, be permitted of God, as a test of their fidelity, especially if they occupy a ministerial position?\*

The removal of the New Testament eagles is close at hand. It is a time of universal expectation. All thinking minds in the whole

\* The author of an able work that has lately appeared, discussing the various theories put forth concerning the Second Advent (a work that has hardly even received a respectful notice in the theological works of the day)—R. C. Shimeull's "Great Question of the Day"—in his appeal to some of the leading *post-millennial* clergymen of the United States, well says:

"Is it not, we submit, a fearful thought if, perchance, the very errors which originate in the infirmities of the Lord's servants should be designed, in His all-wise providence, as a *test* of our fidelity in searching the Scriptures daily whether these things be so, and, in case of our *neglect* to do this, to 'blind the minds' of those who, on the above pretext, reject the truth?" (Pages 25 and 26.)

Church are asking what is about to transpire. We have reached the year 1866, the *annus mirabilis*, so long looked forward to as the termination of the Pope's temporal dominion, and pointed out as such by various commentators. And it is most remarkable that for several years past, by common consent, the "Week of Prayer," at the beginning of the year, has been very generally observed by the Church in all parts of the world. Not "two or three" have agreed on earth as touching the things they shall ask, but the great majority of the most earnest and pious believers. Will not God hear his own elect that thus cry to Him for a revival of genuine religion, and the universal prevalence of Christianity? He will. But He will answer "by terrible things in righteousness." Judgment, in both senses of the word, will begin at the house of God, as it always does, both by the translation of the ready saints, who even now cry day and night, "Come, Lord Jesus," and by the persecution of others by Antichrist. The post-millennarian brethren are expecting the conversion of the world; the pre-millennarian brethren are expecting the opening of the grand drama of the Revelation. But all are expecting something unusual. Not that these things must necessarily occur in the now present year, 1866, but that "the time is fulfilled," and that the winding up is just taking place. *The parousia may occur this very night*, or any night or day as it passes. We challenge the world to disprove it.

E. E. R.

### IS IT A STUMBLING-BLOCK?

SOME one writes us, that he receives, and reads with interest, our weekly issues, but that he has one difficulty which deters him from accepting the doctrine of the imminency of our Saviour's coming. "One thing," he writes, "is, and always has been, a stumbling-block in my mind; it is this: In reading the New Testament, we see evidently that the Apostles themselves most certainly believed and taught that Christ's second coming would occur during their lives or generation; and yet many centuries have passed away, and he has not come. How then can we be much impressed with the idea

of his coming in our day? Their words and their views, gathered, as we are obliged to gather them, from the New Testament, do not afford a solid, satisfactory basis for a convincing argument, mistaken as they evidently were themselves. Can you wonder then why some Christians hesitate to adopt your views, so far as decidedly to affect their own lives or teachings?"

We think our correspondent has found a difficulty where none exists. If the point he urges is of any force, it weighs as heavily against Christianity in general, and against the credibility of the sacred writers as inspired teachers, as against our particular doctrines. If he is a Christian, and holds the New Testament to be an inspired book, the same processes by which he reconciles his alleged difficulty with his faith in the Gospels and Epistles will also reconcile it with what our Serial is meant to teach. It is, therefore, an adequate meeting of the case, in the shape in which he has presented it, just to turn it over to the department of Christian evidences, in which all Christians, of all shades of belief, are as much concerned with it as ourselves. We may say, however, that he has not correctly represented the facts in his premises, nor argued logically in reaching his conclusions. A more accurate version of the matter deserves to be given, and in that may be found a satisfactory removal of the block at which he has been stumbling.

There is, indeed, a good deal of variety, and seeming conflict, in the declarations of the Scriptures as to the nearness or remoteness of the Saviour's second coming. That many of the early Christians expected it to come in their day is not to be doubted. Paul spoke of himself and his brethren as likely to be among "them that are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." (1 Thess. 4: 17.) He wrote to the Corinthians that his calculation was that they should "not all sleep" before the time would come in which "the last trump" would sound, and they "be changed." (1 Cor. 15: 51, 52.) And to the Hebrews he said: "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (Heb. 10: 37.) James, also, wrote "to the twelve tribes which

are scattered abroad, stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord *draweth nigh*." (5: 8.) Peter wrote to the saints in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia: "The end of all things is *at hand*: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." (1 Pet. 4: 7.) John wrote: "Little children, *it is the last time*; and as ye have heard that the Antichrist shall come, even now there are many Antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." (John 2: 18.)

And yet, there was no such settled confidence and certainty in the minds of these Apostles, or intended to be conveyed by these words, as though the event referred to might not be perchance yet long delayed. As Professor Butler has well observed: "The same St. Paul who addressed the Thessalonians in his first epistle as if they, yet alive, were to behold the coming of Christ, in his second warns them that his words were meant to justify no such certainty, inasmuch as that the day of Christ was to be preceded by a great and conspicuous apostasy. The same St. James who had spoken of the same coming as *drawing nigh*, introduces his assertion with exhortations of endurance, and illustrations drawn from the 'long patience' of the husbandman waiting for the fruit of the earth. The same St. Peter who in his first epistle contemplates the end of all things *at hand*, and bids Christians hope for the 'grace' to be brought at the revelation of Christ, in his second obviates objections to the tardy march of the expected Judge, not by denying the fact (as our correspondent's conclusion would require), but by reminding his reader that the Lord is not slack as some men count slackness, but long-suffering to usward, and that the cycles of His providence are framed upon a scale in which one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. And the same book of Revelation which promises the rapid return of Christ unfolds an antecedent series of events, probably to occupy long-revolving ages."

It is also to be noted in this connection, that the Scriptures themselves repeatedly declare that the first Christians were purposely held back from all certain and definite knowledge

respecting the times and seasons. Even Christ himself is represented as, at one time, uninformed as to that point. His own words, more than once recorded, are: "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only." (Mark 13: 32; Matt. 24: 36.) And so again, when His disciples questioned Him on the subject, His reply was: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power." (Acts 1: 17.) These passages, connected with others of like tenor, prohibit us from expecting any certain or definite information from the writers of the New Testament as to the exact time of the Advent. They inform us in advance that, so far as it was given them to know, the Saviour's coming might be in their day, or it might be deferred to a period in the remote future. Their words are, therefore, no more to be taken as asserting or fixing the Advent as certainly to take place in their day than as having reference to events which did happen in their day, which some have been disposed to accept as the coming of Christ, to which they were looking with so much anxiety and hope.

And then again, so far from arguing the non-inspiration of the Apostles, or the untrustworthiness of their words respecting Christ's coming, the indefinite imminency in which the New Testament leaves it ought to induce the contrary conclusions. It shows the presence, not the absence, of Divine wisdom in the whole matter, in so arranging the allusions to the time as to secure the same practical effects for every age without confining the promise to any. We can readily see how Providence would have defeated some of the very ends at which it aims if any other method had been adopted, or the manner of speaking of the time of the Advent had been anything different from what it is. It is the Divine will that the return of our Lord should be, in every generation, the subject of perpetual watchfulness, expectation, conjecture, fear, desire. To cherish anticipation, he has permitted gleams of light to cross the darkness; to baffle presumption, he has made them only *gleams*. He has harmonized with consummate skill every part of his revelation to produce this

tenements of clay, He is coming, first, to gather His slumbering and living saints to meet Him, and then come with them to renovate the earth. He comes for His saints before coming with them.

#### RICHARD BAXTER ON THE ADVENT.

Would it not rejoice your hearts if you were sure to live to see the coming of the Lord, and to see his glorious appearing and return? If you were not to die, but to be caught up thus to see the Lord, would you be averse to this? Would it not be the greatest joy that you could desire? For my own part, I must confess to you that death, as death, appeareth to me as an enemy, and my nature doth abhor and fear it. But the thoughts of the coming of the Lord are most sweet and joyful to me, so that if I were but sure I should live to see it, and that the

trumpet should sound, and the dead should rise, and the Lord appear, before the period of my age, it would be the joyfulest tidings to me in the world. O that I might see his kingdom come! It is the character of his saints to love his appearing, and to look for that blessed hope. "The Spirit and the Bride say come; even so come, Lord Jesus." Come quickly, is the voice of faith, and hope, and love. But I find not that his servants are thus characterized by their desire to die. It is, therefore, the presence of their Lord they desire; but it is death that they abhor, and therefore, though they can submit to death, it is the coming of Christ that they love and long for. If death be the last enemy to be destroyed at the resurrection, we may learn how earnestly believers should long and pray for the second coming of Christ, when this full conquest shall be made.—*Baxter's Works*, vol. 16, p. 555.

## Editorial.

### THE REMOVAL OF THE CHURCH.

#### THE FOURFOLD SUCCESSION.

(Continued from page 44.)

WE believe that the removal of the Church, in its entirety, will be gradual, and in successive companies. To set forth this great fact, is the main object of this paper.

The grand "harvest," as has been intimated above, takes place just before the glorious "epiphany," or visible descent of Jesus in majesty and glory. It is described in Matt. 24:30, 31. It occurs "immediately after" the Great Tribulation, when the sign of the Son of man shall have appeared in heaven. It is then that the Lord descends with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. The whole Church, in its extremity of agony, will then be crying, "Come, Lord Jesus," and be looking for His appearance with intense eagerness of expectation, as the only possible deliverance from the unparalleled fierceness and persecution of Antichrist and his confederate, Satan,—perhaps incarnate in him.

To this prayer the whole Church must come. This universal prayer, and the answer to it, are

the grand climacteric of the present dispensation. Happy are those who, through prayerful Berean scripture-searching, come to understand this. Happy, above all, is the first company! Those who do not wait for any demonstration to their outward senses. Those who are found not only reading, understanding and ready, but teaching. Matt. 24:46; Luke 12:43; and giving this, the meat then in season. They have the highest promise in the Bible.

But we are firmly persuaded that such is the immens eprejudice engendered by the prepossessions of modern "spiritualizing," teaching that the great bulk of the Church will not believe until the *miraculous* proofs have so multiplied that they will walk by *sight*; beholding and feeling the unparalleled prodigies of the last days, both Satanic and Divine. For "he" (Antichrist), "doeth great miracles." Rev. 13:13. "If it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Matt. 24:24. "Behold, I have told you before." On this awful passage, "He doth great wonders," the believing Church has ever kept its eye.

And this is the place to remark that, even

with our present light, we can, already, distinctly trace a fourfold removal, a fourfold succession, and a threefold translation, together with (probably) a threefold resurrection. 1. The eagles. 2. The wise virgins. 3. The Wilderness saints. 4. The great tribulation saints. These are the living believers at the Lord's Advent. They, together with the vast multitude of dead saints that shall be resurrected, constitute the body of the New Testament elect. At the first Advent there was a succession of distinct events. Both analogy and Scripture point to a similar succession at the second.

In a recent article, entitled "The Eagles," (see "Prophetic Times," Vol. III, pp. 129, 144), we spoke of the removal, by translation, of the Eagles and of the Wise Virgins, as occurring antecedently to that of the great body of believers; and such is the case; nevertheless, we must distinguish between them likewise. For, in the time of the Virgins, the whole Church,—all the Virgins,—go forth to meet the Bridegroom. That time is not now. For, as the Jews of old, at Corinth, Acts, 18:6, opposed themselves, and blasphemed, when Paul announced that the Messiah had been crucified, (as too, at Thessalonica, "This Jesus whom I preach, is Messiah,") in the same way now, the great body of the Church derides His personal reign on earth, and stigmatizes it as "carnal" and visionary; thus attempting sacrilegiously, albeit unwillingly, to rob the Divine Sufferer of the brightest jewels of his crown. Hence, too, the peculiar favor shown to those who, among believers, are pressed in spirit not only to hold and confess the singular faith, but also to expect Jesus, being ready: for God's rule is, "Them that honor me I will honor."

But what is the time of the Wise Virgins? Jesus answers, Matt. 25:1, "then." Thus he defines it, relatively, if not absolutely. And when is this "then?" It seems strange that it should, as far as we know, have hitherto been overlooked, that in the natural order of the narrative (and we must accept that order, unless convincing reasons are shown to the contrary), the Virgins go forth after the Eagles have been removed. It is when that servant, who is found giving the meat in due season, shall

have been made ruler over all the Lord's goods. And what is the meat in due season? The context shows that it is faithful teaching, in connection with the coming as a thief: "Whom the Lord when He cometh shall find so doing." These faithful teachers are found not only announcing His personal reign on earth, in general, but proclaiming His immediate Advent, and the manner of it, as a thief. And this singular faithfulness, at the risk of self and even, too often, the goodwill of their brethren (which, next to the Master's, they value most highly), is counted for righteousness unto them, as with Abraham and Phinehas of old, though in another sense; and especially because the matter in question is, as it were, the apple of the Redeemer's eye, viz., the reward that was set before him, for which, alone, he "despised the shame."

These saints,—the Eagles,—when the last and most fearful night of earth's sorrow begins to overshadow it, are taken away, "at even," because they needed no urging to pray, "Come Lord Jesus," and therefore had already the mind of the Spirit. See Rev. 22:17, 20. For it cannot be too often repeated that the coming of Jesus is the grand point, held up to view by the Holy Ghost at the close of the sacred Scriptures, as that on which everything depends, and that the prayerful expectation of it is the true posture of the Church.

The Eagle saints are identical with the saint of Rev. 5, and likewise [perhaps] with the 144,000 of Rev. 14; but we are inclined to think that the latter may be a narrower circle of the former. The Eagle saints undoubtedly as we said on a former occasion (though we did not then yet quite clearly comprehend the distinction between them and the Wise Virgins), comprise both changed living ones and resurrected believers. Their "lot," is the prize of the high calling, το ἀρβύριον. Phi 3:14. They comprise, in the general, both changed living and resurrected dead saints but in the narrower sense, they are the first changed living believers only. Paul will, unquestionably, be among them, seeing he exhorted all that were "complete" (τέλει—Phi 3:15), to be thus minded, viz., to seek for the prize. Knowing by the Holy Ghost that t

coming as a thief would not occur in his lifetime,—although he also knew that “we shall not all die,” and that Jesus had said, “He that is living, and believeth in Me, shall *never die*,”—his utmost ambition and effort were, not to attain a resurrection, in general, in which even the wicked, however unwillingly, naturally share, but to “that resurrection *from amongst* the dead ones;” (Greek): Phil. 3: 11; at which also he will receive the crown of righteousness, which, at present, is still reserved for him. 2d Tim. 4: 8.

This glorious company is identical with the symbolical Man-child of Rev. 12, “caught up to God and to His throne.” Rev. 12: 5. Doubtless, also, it constitutes *the Bride*. Speaking generally, the whole Church, perhaps, and even the New Jerusalem itself, as embodying all within it, may be called the wife of the Lamb: Rev. 21: 9; but that there is a Bride, in a stricter and narrower sense, is apparent from Ps. 45, and Canticle 6. In Psalm 45, we read of the king’s daughter, of the virgins her companions, and of the queen. In Canticles 6, we read of threescore queens, fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. In Canticles 6: 13, we not only find the Bride, the Shulamite (the feminine of Sheloms, the Prince of Peace), but also a most remarkable allusion to her twofold nature, embracing changed living ones and resurrected ones, in the *dual* word “Mahanaim;” which word occurs in the Hebrew in one other passage only, and is very significant.

We have no doubt that those who are not in the habit of closely comparing and harmonizing the word of God, will speak sneeringly, almost contemptuously, of this; sad experience fully prepares us for it; but, every word of God is pure, and *all* Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for instruction. He that is now already able to receive it, let him receive it; but this attainment is not, we admit, to be had without labor and devotedness. Nor will it do to hold this sublime truth in unrighteousness, nor even merely speculatively; entire consecration is presupposed: for those redeemed *away from* the earth, and *from amongst* men, follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it. Nevertheless,

whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing; and if, in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

But we cannot help asking again: how is it possible for those to attain to such a conviction who are not yet sufficiently in earnest, or who have not yet prayerfully investigated Scripture sufficiently to be able to distinguish first principles,—to be able to decide between premillennialism and postmillennialism, the great question of the day?

Men and brethren, we solemnly ask again, *are these things so?* If they are,—if even there is only much to be drawn from Scripture in their favor,—we would earnestly say to opposers, in the language of the prophet, in reference to this selfsame coming crisis, “Be ye not mockers, lest your hands be made *strong*.” Paul, verily, thought within himself that he ought to do many things contrary to Jesus of Nazareth. Festus told him he was *mad*. He replied that he spoke forth the words of truth and soberness. And on another occasion, too, the Jews gave him audience up to a certain point, and then cried: “Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live.” On Stephen, too, being full of the Holy Ghost, they gnashed with the teeth, so incredible did the truth seem. Might there not be a similar, to some seemingly reasonable, incredulity now?

Men and brethren, are these things so? If they are,—if the removal of the Eagles is the very first link in the chain of coming wonders, if no further previous intimations may be looked for,—if the Lord’s promise and his coming to His Church as a thief (Rev. 3: 3) may occur now, how much reason there is for the twelfth proposition in the doctrinal thesis put forth with the first number of the “Prophetic Times,” viz., “We believe that very important interests are connected with the *right understanding and diligent inculcation* of these truths, as indicated in Dan. 12: 9, 12; Matt. 24: 42, 51; Luke 21: 34, 36; 1 Thess. 5: 1, 9; 2 Tim. 4: 8; Heb. 9: 28; Rev. 16: 15; where it is taught that only those who are properly awake to these particular matters, and watchful, and waiting,

and looking for the Lord’s speedy return, and prepare accordingly, shall escape the dreadful tribulations which are to mark the last years of this dispensation, or secure the high and peculiar honors in reservation for the wise and faithful.”

“O thrice and four times blessed those, who, while sighing:

“When shall earth bloom again  
In Eden’s blessedness?”

can give a sober and *scriptural* reason for the hope that is in them, when they add:

“We wait for Jesus from the skies;  
Soon shall His glories greet our eyes.”

Let it never be forgotten that whatever may be the spiritual attainments of believers, in other respects, the Holy Scriptures make *this disposition*, this spiritual condition, this *expectation of Jesus*, the test of the spiritual condition of the whole man. Rev. 3. It may be denied. It may be explained away. But, taken out of the Bible, it cannot be. “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”

The second class consists of the Wise Virgins. The trumpet shall sound. But whether symbolically at the seventh year-day vial (which is part of the seventh trumpet), or literally in heaven; whether the removal of the ready, watching, *expecting*, supplicating Eagles, will or will not be visible to those believers who shall be left behind,—one thing is very evident, viz., that so astounding an event will wake up the whole Church. Then all the virgins (none of the ungodly can be virgins) will go out to meet *the bridegroom*. Every believer will not only become convinced of the truth of the premillennial advent, but will expect the coming of Jesus *for himself*, and that *shortly*. Prophecy will no longer be neglected, but be studied and be understood.

But, five of these virgins will not only nod, as the Wise Virgins also do, but be foolish. For it is much to be noted that a considerable interval of time,—probably several years, perhaps three and a half years,—will elapse before the Bridegroom, having fetched the Eagles, will

come for the wise virgins. During this period the iniquity of the earth will ripen so fast that Christians will be brought into a fearful extremity of distress and persecution; they will find themselves unprotected, and exposed, and buffeted, amid the howlings of a furious tempest, from which, unlike the Eagles, they, through unwatchfulness, were not “counted worthy” to escape. For the Bridegroom does not come *for them* until midnight; until Antichrist is actually about to be enthroned, and, sitting in the temple of God, issues the decree respecting his image-worship. And by this time, in the ordinary course of things, the edge will have been worn off from the unparalleled keenness both of disappointment and of expectation: the ordinary business of life will call for attention; and *the cares of this life* will be doubly pressing, in those awful days when unexpected complications, *perplexity*, distress and prodigies, will crowd upon each other. Hence they nod, whilst the Bridegroom tarrys. And yet, aroused by the midnight cry,—perhaps a direct announcement from heaven, heard only by believers,—the wise virgins are instantly ready. For, observe, they have now learnt, from the translation of the Eagles, to pray anxiously: “Come, Lord Jesus!” Observe, also, they are not the Bride; they can only go in *to* the wedding. But even this is unspeakable privilege.

Why this distinction between them and the eagles? We answer, it is just. They did not walk by naked faith; they did not rely exclusively on the word of the Lord; they did not believe until they had a miraculous demonstration in the rapture of the Eagles.

As for the *world*, when the first wonder at the sudden disappearance of so many known “enthusiasts” shall have subsided, the newspapers will make light of the whole matter; and by the time the wise virgins are taken, the rapid development of wickedness, through direct Satanic agency, will have become so enormous, that even an audible angelic proclamation will only afford them fresh food for merit and blasphemy.

At the coming of Jesus, the Church is, as its moral condition, divided into seven clas-

of believers, as we learn from the second and third chapters of the book which shows us Jesus revealed. The wise virgins are the Smyrnians. They do not escape the hour of temptation, although they are taken away before the Great Tribulation itself. No fault is found with their want of entire devotedness, as in the case of the five churches; yet it is said to them, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer." They did not, in time, "wait for the Son of God from heaven." They did not observe the Saviour's "special injunction to patiently expect and look for His appearing without warning, suddenly, as a thief."

The third class consists of the Wilderness Saints. They are entirely distinct from the others. We find the account of these saints in Revelation 12. They, too, in a miraculous manner, are preserved from the Great Tribulation; and, like the Wise Virgins, yet in an inferior degree, are also kept from the full effects of the hour of temptation. But not in the same manner as the Eagles and the Wise Virgins, or by a blessedness similar to theirs. They are not even, like the Wise Virgins, a part in the wedding. Unlike the other two classes, they have no share in the Enoch translation, comprising the first stages in the first resurrection; they had not even the faith and the preparation of the Wise Virgins, much less of the Eagles. They are not translated, at all, as the others are. There is also no simultaneous resurrection of sleeping saints, in their case; and they are not taken up to meet the Lord in the air, until the general harvest is reaped.

When Satan is cast out from his present abode in the aerial spaces into the earth, and confined within its narrow limits, iniquity rapidly culminates, and prodigies multiply, compelling the Church to return to its ancient faith, the longing expectation of the coming and personal reign of Messiah; in marked contrast to the present state of things, wherein the Wicked one catcheth away the word of the kingdom because it is not understood.

Those who are living just on the verge of the Great Tribulation, having more tangible evidences than the translated Wise Virgins had, will not equal them in blessedness; but if they even then believe, and long for the Saviour's

advent, they, too, in accordance with God's accustomed boundless mercy, shall be delivered and be hidden, until "the indignation be overpast." Too slow in heart to believe, even with the Wise Virgins, or else not sufficiently consecrated, help comes for them in another manner, even when there is no room for them in the pavilion-cloud. God will prepare an inaccessible place of refuge for them in "the Wilderness;" where, like Israel of old, they shall be miraculously nourished during the whole continuance of Antichrist's rule, viz., for three years and a half, or 1260 days.\*

Up to this time the people of the Lord who are left behind, though sharing to the full in the general and awful distress of the nations, and the perplexity caused by the confusion of nature arising out of the development of spiritualism into the open sorcery and Antichristianism of the last days,—the sea and the waves roaring, and the powers of heaven being shaken,—will have suffered no extremity of general persecution on account of their religion. But *now*, Antichrist being enthroned, and arrogating to himself Divine honours, and the worship of his image being made a political test, they will fall as winnows before the scythe of the mower.

\* Much has been written and conjectured respecting the precise locality of this place of refuge, and the manner of their gathering into it, whether miraculous or otherwise. There is but one place spoken of in the Bible under the name of the Wilderness. We incline to believe that the place of refuge will be the same Wilderness in which the children of Israel wandered. And this becomes almost certain when we reflect that it is a clear inference from Scripture that Mt. Sinai is the mustering-place of the armies of heaven, previously to the battle of the great day of God Almighty, as we have shown in a previous article in these pages. (See the article, "Armageddon," Prophetic Times, Vol. II, Nos. 3 and 11.) This also accounts for that battle taking place on the borders of Idumea, Is. 63, &c.: inasmuch as Antichrist, after capturing Jerusalem, against which the nations were gathered, advances into the Wilderness, in order, in all probability, to remove by force the only remaining open protest and obstacle against his universal sway, viz., the hidden Church, the known adherents of the Rival King.

And now, mark. Just before this awful culmination, there comes another test of faithfulness. To look for the coming of Jesus as a thief (as in the case of the Eagles and the Wise Virgins) will no longer be possible; for, guided by the sure word of prophecy, all the hopes of His people will *now* be directed to His open Epiphany. Those, therefore, who will then be living on earth, led by this plain and unerring chart, and no longer "spiritualizing away" the word of God, will perceive that the crisis has arrived; and that until the three and a half years of the predicted raging of Antichrist shall have expired, the Church must wait and suffer.

Now, in order to avail themselves of the place of refuge prepared in the Wilderness, they will be compelled to flee like Lot, at a moment's warning, leaving all their worldly affairs and **ALL THEIR PROPERTY behind, and escaping with their lives, only for a prey.** This will, then, be the test of entire readiness and watchfulness; though it will require far less faith than the Eagles showed, or even than the Wise Virgins exhibited. And even then, none but those Christians who have now, at length, full faith and entire devotedness, will avail themselves of the provided refuge in the manner then indispensably necessary, viz., by cutting loose instantly, and at every sacrifice, from all earthly ties.

And how natural that many, though then necessarily and fully convinced of the nature of Messiah's kingdom, and of the urgency of the crisis, will linger a day or two, with the purpose and in the hope of making some final arrangements. **REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE!** It is just here that Jesus puts in this most solemn admonition. And these, lacking even then, full and implicit faith, will be overtaken by the storm; and will not only not escape to the antitypical Zoar, but will perish in, though not with, the antitypical Sodom. Thus, our Lord's strange injunction will be explained: "Remember Lot's wife!" It applies to a particular crisis only, and the mystery of these words is solved.

And we may here remark that precisely the same is true of the parable of the Laborers in

the Vineyard. It has a specific application to a certain time in the closing scenes of this dispensation. And thus, "whosoever shall seek to save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it." And hence, the urgent injunction for *this special crisis*,—already dimly foreshadowed at the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. Then "he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away; and he that is in the field, let him, likewise, not turn back. Remember Lot's wife!"

But, finally, there is a fourth class of believers, including all the rest of the Church, and such as shall still, afterwards, be converted in the terrors of the time of the end; for "it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." These are they who are left behind to pass through the Great Tribulation; most of whom will be "beheaded" (guillotined) for refusing to worship the beast and his image, or to receive his mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads. Rev. 13.

But these, too, eventually, if any remain alive—and there will probably be a few, just converted before the Lord comes—will be translated to His presence, together with the Wilderness Saints, at or near the end of the three and a half years, or 1260 days of the reign of the Man of Sin; and with them, no doubt, the great body of them that sleep in Jesus. For, in Rev. 7, we read of a great multitude that no man could number, standing before the throne having come out of the tribulation of the Great One. But not until they are *ready*; not until they are *watching*; not until the terrors of the Great Tribulation shall have *compelled* them to be, with unutterable anxiety, expecting an supplicating in agony, "Come, Lord Jesus Come quickly!"

Two Scripture facts make it absolutely certain that not a single true member of the Church universal will be left on earth when Jesus comes: firstly, the saints *all* come with Jesus Zech. 14:5; Rev. 19:14; them that sleep Jesus will God bring with Him: 1 Thess. 4:1 and secondly, John expressly saw them, and vision, in heaven, *after* they had passed throu

the Great Tribulation. See Rev. 7:14; Rev. 5:2.

For all true children of God, speaking in general terms, there is a part allotted in the First Resurrection, as distinguished from the second, which concerns chiefly the multitudes of the ungodly dead. But, on the other hand, it is important to understand that there are several stages in the First Resurrection. For, unless we understand and believe, we cannot expect, nor make a corresponding preparation. The coming as a thief is the first stage, or Enoch translation. And this coming as a thief is subdivided into the successive removal of the Eagles and of the Wise Virgins.

In general, we unhesitatingly assert, as above, that we may gather from Scripture that there are three great successive translations and a fourfold succession of deliverances for the saints. There seem to be hints of minor subdivisions also; but of this we are unable to say anything confidently as yet. But if it were so, it would be exactly analagous to God's dealings with His people in times past, as we suppose.

We lay it down as an axiom that not only will there be, at the coming of Jesus, an exact reward according to works, for both the translated living, and the resurrected dead saints, as stated in Rev. 11:18; Rev. 22:12; 2 John 8; Is. 40:10; Is. 62:11; at which time the fire shall try every believer's work, and some shall lose everything but their own salvation: 1 Cor. 3:13, 15; not only are there five different crowns mentioned in Scripture: 1 Cor. 9:25; Rev. 2:10; 1 Thess. 2:19; 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Pet. 5:4; (also, for Philadelphians only: Rev. 3:11; the Redeemer has many: Rev. 19:12); not only are these things so, but we have, in the gospels, distinct statements of the Lord's dealings with various classes of His saints, at His coming. Some are with and of the Bride. Some go in to the wedding. And some, already, even at that early period, called the thief-coming, are not taken until the Lord "returns from the wedding, and knocks."

He that is able to receive it, let him receive it. We are not "indulging in wild fancies." We are not "fanatics." We are not "led away by a heated imagination." We are not tortur-

ing into literalness, what is figurative language. These are plain statements of Scripture. The *onus probandi* (obligation of proof) rests on those who deny it.

And, finally, with our whole soul we protest against the modern postmillennial heresy of the Protestant Church, which says: "My Lord delayeth His coming." The Lord may come as a thief, at any moment. This is the uniform testimony of the Bible. And any system of interpretation that puts any event between us and that coming, whether a millennium or a covenant, must, so far at least, be erroneous. With the utmost possible earnestness, we repeat that we are not to look first (as so many do, and are taught to do), for the dissolution of the Turkish Empire, the re-establishment of a Jewish state, in unbelief, or the making of a covenant with the unbelieving Jews by Antichrist, but only and exclusively, for the instant and sudden parousia of the Son of Man. Those great events are also imminent; but we are not to look for them; we are not to put anything between us and the Great Parousia, lest it surprise us unprepared. It is the very next event described in the prophetic page. There is nothing between us and it, as there delineated. Therefore, be ye ready.

The grand and closing drama of this dispensation or aion (*αιων*), is just about to open. And in it, the sudden, unheralded, instantaneous translation of the Eagles from earth to heaven, into the immediate presence of our glorious Bridegroom and first-born brother is the very first act. It behooves all Christians, therefore, and especially all students of prophecy, to weigh well the evidence before rejecting as "visionary," (as so many are inclined to do) both the fact and its imminence. None but those who are intelligently expecting, entirely consecrated, and loose to the world, in short, ready, will be taken with the Eagles. After that it will be said of the other believers, notwithstanding the Lord still greatly loves them: "So we see that they could not enter in (to this blessedness) because of unbelief." Heb. 3:19. Solemn thought! We most earnestly, most affectionately, most humbly ask our beloved brethren and sisters, who are one with us

in devotedness to the Crucified, how those can be ready, who are not only not expecting, but have not even yet settled in their own minds the first principles of this mighty subject.

Reader! Are you truly converted to God? Have you repented and trusted your soul entirely to Jesus? If not, you have neither part nor lot in this redemption and blood-purchased possession. Behold, we beseech you, now in the time of calm before the tempest, to come to Jesus, to take him for your Saviour. The invitation is personal, full, free, unconditional. All the blessings of the kingdom, purchased by Divine blood, are offered to you. Oh accept them, repent, believe, lest you perish!

Believer! are you truly consecrated to God? Have you lost your whole will in God? Thus did the Master, in His Father's. And the disciple that is complete is as his Master. And this, too, is the normal condition of all in heaven, and of all in the kingdom. If not thus consecrated, you are keeping back a part; you are not profiting as you ought, by the Spirit's training. Call it "perfect love," if you will; call it "sanctification," call it "entire consecration," call it "sealing," call it what you will; but do the thing.

Fellow-servant in the ministry. Are you, with Paul, pressing toward the mark for the prize (*το βραβειον*) of the high calling of God in Messiah Jesus? As many as are complete (*τελειοι*) are thus minded. Suffer us to ask, are you giving now the measure of meat in season? "Blessed is that servant, whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing." It is at His coming that that particular instruction will be in season. "He will make him ruler over all that He hath." This is the highest individual promise in the Bible.

Even so. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus, come QUICKLY!  
E. E. R.

### NAPoleonISM.

#### GIVING GLORY TO NAPoleon.

THE "Unità Cattolica," a Genoese journal, hitherto not very favorable to France and the Napoleon dynasty, has given publicity to an article of extravagant praise to the Emperor for his brave, charitable, and wonderful con-

descension in visiting the cholera patients in the hospitals of Paris, during the recent prevalence of that plague. It says: "Napoleon III made those visits in a manner to exclude all suspicion that he was prompted by political motives and not by charity. Therefore, GLORY BE TO HIM. In concert with the people of Paris, we cry out, 'VIVE L'EMPEREUR!'"

#### Jews APPEALING TO NAPoleon.

The Jews of Tunis have appealed to Napoleon III to interfere for their protection against the cruelties which they are made to endure under the administrations of that country. They attempted to form themselves into a society for self-protection, in correspondence with the Universal Israelitish Alliance, which has its seat in Paris; but the Bey peremptorily forbade it. Hence the appeal to Napoleon.

#### NAPoleon'S MEDICAL CONGRESS.

The Emperor of France has proposed a consultation of physicians to meet at Constantinople and discuss the probable origin and progress of cholera, and report the best means of averting this scourge. The Sultan has acquiesced and appointed one or two of his own best physicians, and so have several European Powers. Our Government has been invited to send representatives, and the matter is under consideration. The fact is, the French either have discovered, or say they have, proof that the great cause of the cholera is to be found in the annual pilgrimages made to Mecca; the filth of the 100,000 pilgrims, and the carcasses of the animals they kill being strewed on the way, and these, with the privations and poverty they suffer, and the intense heat they have to endure, breed pestilence. It was a march of British troops in India, suffering from great heat and privation, that is said, in 1817, to have produced the cholera which ravaged Europe in 1831, and visited this country in 1832. The Emperor of France proposes, it is said, if such should prove to be the cause of this epidemic to suggest such means by which the annual pilgrimages may be either abolished or humanized.

The Philadelphia "Ledger," from which