

XIII

TRIBULATION ARGUMENTS CONSIDERED

The Lord Jesus gives a warning of an unequalled tribulation which shall immediately precede His coming in glory: "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened....Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 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." (Matt. 24.21-30.) Some have said, "What a fearful prospect it is if the Church shall be in this tribulation! Can we suppose it possible that the Lord can permit any part of this suffering to fall on His redeemed and believing people? Is it not more fitting, more in accordance with His dealings in grace towards them, that they should be removed to be with Him before this trouble sets in?" And thus any theory is judged admissible which shall exclude the Church from sharing at all in this suffering, or from being on earth at the time. But we cannot draw conclusions in this transcendental manner. Thus Peter argued and spoke when his Master foretold "that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." It was nature, and not spirituality, that led him to think thus of the sufferings of his Lord, rather than of the promise of His resurrection: "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee." (Matt. 16.22.) Should not our Lord's rebuke to Peter check all such reasonings? especially, too, when He speaks of His followers taking up their cross, losing their lives, but having before them the promise that the "Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father?" We can never set our opinion of what is fitting in opposition to any direct statement of the Lord.

But is suffering and trial so strange a lot for the people of Christ? "These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16.33.) How continually did apostles teach "that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." (Acts 14.22.) "No man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation, even as it came to pass, and ye know." (1 Thess. 3.3,4.) If, then, certain tribulations are to be expected as the common experience of the faithful servants of Christ, why should it seem strange that they should be instructed respecting the great and final tribulation? Why should it be thought that they must previously be taken away?

"What are these that are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb: therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple." (Rev. 7.13-15.) These are "a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,"¹ whom John saw standing "before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed

1 It may illustrate some points of the Jewish system of interpretation, when I mention that I have heard it gravely maintained, that this great multitude were all *Jews*: not persons

with white robes, and palms in their hands."

Thus the gathered assembly of those whose robes have been washed and made white in the blood of atonement, are set forth as those who have passed through great tribulation: it is so spoken of as their characteristic, that it seems as if the last scene on earth, in which they had been regarded, was one marked by tribulation.

It is said that, if the unequalled tribulation is an affliction for Israel and a punishment for the Gentile, how can the Church be in it? In this inquiry, two fallacies are assumed: First, That this tribulation is part of the out-pouring of *judgment*; and second, That the Church, while in the world, is exempted from part of the suffering which falls on men or on nations. For believers there is no *penal* suffering, because Christ in life and in death endured for His people all that is penal: any disciplinary sorrow on Israel or on the nations before Christ comes, has, in part at least, a corrective character; it ought to lead to repentance; and from this the last tribulation, though of a very special kind, is not to be excepted.²

But in this last tribulation, Christ is very mindful of His people: "for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened"; and, besides this, they are *warned* of that time, in order that they may at once *flee away* from the scene of suffering. Those who believe that these warnings are intended for Christians, may, by obeying the word of the Lord, be locally removed from the *fierceness* of the trial; those who think such warnings are not for them, of course, cannot do this; they neglect the light which God has given them.³

Thus the Lord desires that His people should be enabled to endure; that in obedience to Him, they should watch the coming on of this tribulation, and that they should know that, however they may in part be sharers in it, His own coming is to follow at once.

of, or belonging to all nations, but Jews who had been scattered amongst all nations. The use of words seems vain if it be legitimate thus to pervert them. It is not too much to call this trifling with Holy Scripture. I have also heard it taught that this is not a heavenly, but an earthly scene: that they stand on earth before the throne of God. If so, how could even the Spirit of God himself (I desire to speak reverently) find words to describe what is heavenly?

In some more recent statements, these are said to be a peculiar class, who stand in contrast to the Church; we "are washed", but these (it is said) "wash their own robes." When advocates of a system support it by such perversions, it shows that they at least lack better arguments; and that they, and all who receive their teaching, value the "secret coming" system, more than they do the doctrines of grace; for they invalidate the latter to maintain the former.

2 Some who saw that the company of the redeemed in Rev. 7 are indeed the Church, and who yet would not admit that the Church can be in the special tribulation, rashly cut the knot by asserting that this company were not in the tribulation at all; "they came *out of* great tribulation" (14) meant, according to such teachers, that they came *away from* it, so as not to have been in it! This they said was the force of the preposition *εκ* here. If this were true, then Col. 1.18, where our Lord is called "the first-born (*εκ*) from the dead", would teach that He never died at all, instead of the direct contrary. If it be allowable thus to wrest words, can Almighty God himself give an unequivocal revelation of truth in human language?

3 See Appendix C.

XIV

THE DOUBLE: "TWO JEWISH REMNANTS"

So evident is it that believers in Christ are contemplated as those who shall use the warnings connected with the manifest appearing of our Lord, that many who clung tenaciously to the opinion of a secret advent and a secret rapture, and who styled everything of an opposite teaching in Scripture "Jewish", extended their theory by some remarkable additions. For a considerable time they were content to apply indefinitely to "the Jewish remnant" those parts of the New Testament which do not consist with the supposition that our Lord may come at any moment; but at length they saw that "the Jewish remnant" seemed to be, in some passages especially of the Old Testament, persons who do not own Jesus as the Christ until they see Him in glory; and that some other passages which they would not admit to be applicable to the Church, incontestably set forth persons who own the Lord Jesus before His coming in glory.

Hence arose a theory of two Jewish remnants: but neither of them part of "the Church", at least not the Church of this dispensation. It was said that after the secret rapture of the Church, a certain testimony would go forth to Israel; that by this many would be converted; some said to full faith in Christ, and others said to partial; and that this remnant would go through the unequalled tribulation, and would use the Scriptures which bear on it. It was said by those who held that this remnant would be true believers, that at the manifestation of Christ they would be taken up to a place of heavenly blessedness, whilst those of them who had been cut off by persecution would be raised from the dead: that this raised and changed body of persons should share in the full glory of "the Church" was afterwards denied by those who divided the saved into classes, making the Church, as such, to extend only from Pentecost (or as some said from the martyrdom of Stephen) until the secret rapture.

Such was "the remnant" to whom these teachers applied (with various modifications) the Scriptures which speak of the glory of Christ being seen by some of His at His public coming.

"The unbelieving remnant" were those who in the purpose of God were to be preserved for earthly blessing, being converted by the manifest appearing of Jesus.

Now, it is quite true that the Scripture does speak of two remnants in Israel: First, "The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob unto the mighty God." (Isa. 10.21.) This remnant that shall return is the spared of Israel who, after the judgments of the Lord, shall be the earthly people. Second, "At this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." (Rom. 11.5.) This remnant of Israel according to the election of grace, is that portion who, during this dispensation, believe in Christ; but in the Church they form no separate body; believing Jew and believing Gentile are one in Christ; and every Israelite led by the Holy Ghost to the blood of atonement now, is an integral part of the church of the first-born. Thus, believing Jews who pass through the tribulation, and wait for the Lord's appearing, are in no sense separated from those who have gone before them.

It has been asked, If the saints come with Christ, must they not have been taken away before? and may not the interval be a long one, perhaps a whole age?

The Scripture says that they are raised, and changed, and caught up to meet the Lord in the air, as He comes, and when He comes; and thus having met Him, they come with Him. If such a questioning as this were allowed to set aside plain testimonies, nothing in Scripture, however definite, would be certain.

It is in vain to imagine any "remnant according to the election of grace", except as part of the present Church.

CORROBORATIVE PASSAGES: "WHEAT AND TARES"

It is rarely found that the proofs of any leading truth of Scripture so depend one on another, that unless each proposition is demonstrated in its order, the whole fails: for habitually we find that the evidence of revealed verities is collateral; that is, there are many passages which prove a point if taken singly; and when looked at together they have a strong corroborative force.

In the parable of the wheat and the tares (Matt. 13.24-30, 36-43) Christ gives us some very simple instruction. The result of the sowing of the seed is that there is much wheat in the field: an enemy sows tares amongst them; and from that day until the harvest there is no point of time in which the field does not contain some of each. "Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn." (Verse 30). "As, therefore, the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world [age]. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (40-43.)

Thus the removal of the Church, as set forth in the secret rapture theory, is impossible: for, from the moment of the first preaching of the gospel, until the angels are sent forth to sever the wicked from among the just, both classes are found mingled in Christendom. Had the secret rapture been the teaching of Christ, He could not have spoken of *wheat* as well as tares growing together until the harvest. For if the Church had been previously taken away, there would have been in the field tares, and tares only.

This contradicts also the notion of a body of Jewish believers being formed after the rapture of the Church; for unless the field were left, for awhile at least, free from wheat, and unless a new sowing altogether took place, this could not be. There is no such break or interval allowed in Scripture up to the time of the harvest, when "the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."⁴

4 See Appendix D.

"PAROUSIA" AND "EPIPHANEIA"

The Apostle Paul, himself the Apostle of the Gentiles, when writing to Gentile Churches or to individuals, holds forth the hope of the Lord's coming as that which is public, open, and manifest. Thus he describes believers as "looking for that blessed hope, and the *appearing* of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." (Titus 2.13.) In writing to Timothy, he thus addresses the man of God: "I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the *appearing* of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Tim. 6.13,14.) In 2 Tim. 4.1, "the *appearing* and the kingdom" of our Lord are spoken of as truths of primary importance; and what they are to believer is shown by verse 8; for there the apostle says of our hope, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His *appearing*." This passage is enough to show that those who are looking to the coming of Christ in His manifest glory, have the true hope of his advent. Not a word or a hint is there on St Paul's part that this coming shall be a secret thing: it is a manifestation in glory. One of the events of that point of time is the destruction of "the man of sin, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the *brightness* (or manifestation) of His coming." (2 Thess. 2.8.) This is the same word as in the passages previously cited; in all these it belongs to our Lord's second coming; in its only other occurrence it relates to His first coming, when the apostle speaks of God's "purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the *appearing* of our Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Tim. 1.9.10.) It is from the word rendered "appearing" (επιφανεια) that we derive our English term *epiphany*, applied to our Lord manifestly set forth as the incarnate Son of God.

The same Apostle speaks of the coming of Christ, for which the Church waits, as a revelation; thus the Corinthians are described as "waiting for the *coming* (margin, *revelation*) of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 1.7.) The hope of the Thessalonians was "rest...when the Lord Jesus shall be *revealed* from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." (2 Thess. 1.7-11.) If then the coming which the Church expects can be secret, then equally may all these particulars be secret also: but if secrecy is here intended as to the hopes of the Church, what words could be used which should unequivocally express open publicity?

Even if it were true that the writings of other apostles were "Jewish", surely those of the Apostle of the Gentiles could not be so restricted: and thus the point that our hope is the manifest appearing of our Lord (and no supposed secret coming) when proved by the teaching of St Paul, ought to carry conviction even to those who introduce and teach such groundless distinctions.

It has indeed been said⁵ that our hope is the *coming* of the Lord signified by

5 So little had I heard of this argument on the words επιφανεια and παρουσία for many years

another term (*παρουσία*), which is, they say, more strictly *presence*; and in contrast to this, they say, is *His shining forth* (*επιφάνεια*), the word found in passages already cited, and rendered *appearing*; this, they say, is the Jewish hope. But, First, *παρουσία*, the word said to be connected with our hope, is habitually used for "coming" in ordinary expressions: thus, "the coming of Stephanas" (1 Cor. 16.17); "the coming of Titus" (2 Cor. 7.6, see, too, verse 7); "my coming to you again." (Phil. 1.26).

Second. this word, which is said to imply a hope for the Church of a secret coming, is that which is used in Matt. 24 (the very chapter which some would represent to be Jewish), in speaking of our Lord's public and glorious appearing. In verse 3, the disciples ask, "What shall be the sign of thy *coming*?" Our Lord, in His reply, says, "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." (27.) "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." (30.) This, then, is that coming which shall be as the lightning in open visibility. "As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the *coming* of the Son of man be." (37-39.) Is this a secret coming known only to the Church, and not affecting others?

Third. The word *επιφάνεια*, which, on the supposition now under consideration, has to do with the visible appearing of our Lord at some period subsequent to the rapture of the Church, is that which, in Tit. 2.13, 1 Tim. 6.14, 2 Tim. 4.8, is given as the hope of that very Church, whose existence on earth at the time is denied by such theories. This word is not used, except in 2 Thess. 2.8, in connection with others besides the Church.

When one event is spoken of in various aspects, different words may be rightly used; and thus *παρουσία* is the most general term for that one coming of our Lord, which is the object of the Church's hope. Those who have mystified the minds of the uninstructed by incorrect teaching as to the use of the words of Scripture, incur a solemn responsibility; they obtain an advantage as teachers, based wholly on rash assertions; the best that can be supposed of such is that they "understand neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." But they are responsible for misleading others by their assertions, for the sin of ignorance is still sin.⁶

(ever since 1839, when it seemed to be abandoned for other theories), that I should have scarcely thought it needful to notice it, had I not found that it was again revived. I well remember how some used to press it, and how unspiritual they thought the endeavour to show how these words are really used in the New Testament. It is one of the cases in which the attempt has been made to misrepresent the *facts* of Scripture, and in which the uninstructed and unwary have been misled.

6 See Appendix E.

XVII

WATCH!

But are not believers called on to watch? Is not the exhortation, "Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come?" Does not this injunction apply to us? and how can we thus watch if there are any previous events predicted? Does not this passage show that the momentary expectation that our Lord may come is that which we should rightly cherish? This exhortation is given us in Matt. 24.42, the very chapter which some say is "Jewish", and its reference is to that coming spoken of in the context, which is one of public manifestation, and one which is introduced by signs. But it has already been stated that the rejection of the force and bearing of Scriptures, because they are said to be "Jewish", is a groundless assumption; and thus, if any choose to quote a few words from such portions in defence of a supposed secret advent no objection is to be made on that ground; but the connection has to be shown between the words quoted and the true doctrine of the Lord's coming, with which He has himself associated them.

The coming spoken of is one as manifest as the lightning, as definite as the judgment of the flood. Its date is not revealed, so that it cannot be measured by years or centuries; but there are indications which will speak definitely to those who are truly watching. To this purpose the parable of the fig-tree was spoken, of which the application is, "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is nigh, even at the doors." (33.)⁷ It is to persons thus instructed that the charge is given to watch: they are not told to watch irrespective of signals, but to be ready to note them as they appear. "What, then (it is said), are we to wait for *signs*, and not for the Lord himself?" But what does such a question mean? *If the Lord has told us so to wait*, it is thus that we should watch. To despise the sign is to despise the Word of the Lord who has promised it; it is to refuse submission to His authority. If an absent master has told his servants to wait for his return, which shall be intimated by a letter that he will send, are they obeyers of his word if they say that they expect him before the arrival of his promised letter, or if, when the letter arrives, they neglect it, and say that it is not for them? Those who expect it not, although told, might well do this.

Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh *and knocketh*, they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth, and serve them....Be ye therefore ready also; for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not." (Luke 12.35-37,40.) Thus the hope of His coming does not exclude that His knock shall be first heard; nay, this signal is pre-supposed. Let it also be noted that the same passages which speak of our being called to watch, as not knowing the day or the hour, are those in which special prominence is given to the manifest advent of the Lord, so that these definitely exclude any thought of a supposed secret coming being that for which we are called to wait.

But, it is said, is not the supposition that events must precede the coming of the Lord that which is meant by the servant saying, "My lord delayeth his

⁷ "The budding of the fig-tree" is especially considered in my "remarks on the Prophetic Visions of the Book of Daniel" (pp.1-6. Fifth edition, 1864. To avoid mere repetition, I refer to what has there been said.

coming?" Is not the admission of such a thought sinful? In Matt. 24 and Luke 12 the servant is spoken of who says this; but his sin is not the knowledge that he has of intervening events, but the mode in which he acts, though having such supposed intelligence. "But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; *and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken*; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of; and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites." His sin is the *use* which he makes of his partial knowledge, instead of his employing it to lead him the more definitely to watch for the promised indication of his master's coming. He who looks for promised events as indications of the Lord's advent, will not rest for a moment in the events themselves: their value is, that they lead on the thoughts and affections to Him for whom the Church is called to watch and wait, and who has Himself promised these signs to His expecting people.⁸

To watch unscripturally is really not to watch at all; but to substitute something of emotion and sentiment for "the patient waiting for Christ."

⁸ See Appendix F.

XVIII

ARE SIGNS JEWISH?

"But are not signs Jewish? Are they not intended only for Israel? and, if so, would not attention to them distract us from our true hope?" A pointed question may convey a true or false thought in argumentation; it may remind of some true and fully admitted principle, or it may suggest the adoption of some fallacy as though it were a revealed truth.

Now, if signs were "Jewish", indicating the glorious appearing of the Messiah, since there is but one Christ, and His coming in glory is the promise to His Church, they would be of equal significance to us, for they would instruct us as much as they would Jews. But on what ground are "signs" said to be "Jewish"? Our Lord's words are: "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it but the sign of the prophet Jonas." (Matt. 16.4.) "Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation." (Mark 8.12.) To the generation of Israel, rejecting the resurrection of Jesus ("the sign of the prophet Jonas"), no sign shall be given. This unbelieving generation, from which Peter exhorted his hearers to save themselves (Acts 2.40), marked by the same moral characteristics, will not pass away until the things spoken of in Matt. 24 shall be accomplished in the manifestation of the glory of the Lord: and thus signs cannot be for them. "This generation" cannot mean the men then alive merely, for if so Israel would long ago have owned Jesus of Nazareth. "As the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven shineth unto the other part under heaven, so shall also the Son of Man be in His day; but first must He suffer many things, and be rejected of *this generation*." (Luke 17.24,25.) Unconverted Jews have said from this passage that, if Jesus had been a true prophet, the next generation of Israel would have believed on Him, for it was by that generation He was to be rejected. The argument is legitimate; the only fallacy is that of imagining that "generation" means the men then living. The future generation of Israel shall believe.

No sign shall be given to unconverted Israel "this generation" rejecting the Son of Man: and any portion of Israel converted is essentially a portion of the Church, even as the Pentecostal saints were all Jews.

But the Lord has promised *signs* ("there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars." (Luke 21.25), and these signs can only be for His believing people. They are closely connected with our watchfulness. We wait for the budding of the fig-tree. "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." (Verse 28.)

SECRET RAPTURE--SCRIPTURES CONTRADICTORY

Those who deny the Pentateuch to be a revelation given through Moses, have often pointed out the periods in the history of Israel in which the most plain commands of the law were set aside, either by neglect, or by direct and positive contravention. Thus when, in the days of the Judges, the people so often practised idolatry, how is it possible (it has been said) that they could have a law which so positively forbids all worship save that of the true God, and any religious honour to be paid to any image or picture? Is it not evident that the Mosaic law must have been a subsequent invention? If in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, the people had possessed the law, how could that king have ventured to set it aside in all essentials? May we not (they say) conclude that the law which forbids all image worship, which limits the priesthood to a particular family, which prohibits sacrifice except in the place that God chose, and which defines so precisely at what period in the year the stated feasts should be observed, was then unknown? and, if unknown, could it then exist?

Sceptical questionings of this kind have a certain weight; but they at once fall to the ground when confronted with even the smallest quantity of *fact*; and if they had really any conclusive force, we must know that in the same way it might be said that the Christian Church *cannot* in general have possessed the New Testament. And if it be said that in many lands even now the Scripture is withheld from the people, so that no counter-argument can be drawn from its being practically set aside, yet in this country there is no such restriction; and thus any manner in which it is ignored amongst us, illustrates the way in which the law was neglected often by Israel of old; or, as in the days of our Lord, made of no effect through the tradition which had virtually supplanted it.

Now, it is very remarkable that those who have the Scripture, and who read it with some measure of attention, can have adopted or received a system which contradicts some of the simplest statements of our Lord and His inspired apostles, thus we can feel no surprise that there was a similar setting aside of the early portion of revelation: and as we find that this system is defended, so we may well imagine that there were some who could defend the proceedings and practices of the days of Jeroboam, "who made Israel to sin."

Our Lord has promised that He will return in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and that then He will send forth His angels to gather His elect.

The secret advent doctrine teaches that He will come privately, and that then He will raise His sleeping saints and change the living, taking them up to Himself a good while before His manifestation.

The Scripture warns the saints of perilous times, and of evils in the latter day before the coming of Christ.

The secret advent theory maintains that no such events can be known as would interpose an interval between the present moment and the coming of the Lord.

The Scripture speaks only of Christ's second coming, until which He remains at the right hand of God the Father.

The *secret* advent is a notion entirely opposed to this; for it represents our Lord first coming in a private manner to take the Church to meet Him, and then at a future period (according to some, a long interval) coming in glory; and this some call His *third* coming.

The Scripture teaches the Church to wait for the manifestation of Christ.

The secret theory bids us to expect a coming before any such manifestation.

Our Lord says that the wheat and tares shall be together in the field until the harvest.

The doctrine of the secret rapture affirms that at some time considerably before the harvest, all the wheat shall have been removed, leaving only tares.

Our Lord bids us look for certain signs, and use them in our watching.

The advocates of the secret advent contradict this, saying that signs are not for us.

The Scripture tells us that the *first* resurrection of the saints will be when the Lord has come forth as the conqueror, and that those will share in this resurrection who have suffered under the final Antichrist.

The teachers of the secret doctrine say that the resurrection of the present Church will take place long *before the first* resurrection,⁹ and before the manifestation of the Antichrist.

Is it not surprising that men with their Bibles in their hands, can be led to adopt a theory of doctrine which not only adds to Scripture, but contradicts it at all points? This is just the simple and natural consequence of the acceptance of the one leading addition to Scripture, that there shall be a secret coming of the Lord, and a secret rapture of His Church.

When Christ distinctly states a truth, it might have been expected that at least those who profess to be His believing people would receive His words as conclusive; and thus it might have been thought that those only who avowedly reject His authority would deny the force of what He said. Now our Lord has expressly taught us that His coming shall not be secret: He has told us this, not only by saying that it will be manifest, but also by warning against any supposition of such a secret coming as suits some of the "Jewish" notions. After speaking of the unequalled tribulation, He says, "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert, go not forth;

9 In 1839, I heard it maintained with such approbation that objectors were hardly allowed a hearing, that if strictly correct language were used, the first resurrection of Rev. 20 would be called "*the SECOND-first resurrection*"; for it was said that "*the FIRST-first resurrection*" would have taken place privately a good while before. Is it not a sitting in judgment on Holy Scripture when endeavours are thus made to *correct* and to *improve* the words used by the Spirit of God? No one would do this unless he felt in his conscience the force of the words of inspiration, and struggled to set them aside.

behold, He is in the secret chambers, believe it not. 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." (Matt. 24.23-27.) No man with these words in his Bible, ought to accept the doctrine of any secret coming without feeling that he is casting off, in so doing, the authority of the Lord; for this is done, virtually, when the warning of Christ is treated as if He had taught the very reverse, and as if He had charged us to believe and expect what, in reality, He says shall never be, and against the supposition of which He warns us.

THE DAY OF THE LORD--CANTICLES AND APOCALYPSE

When a point has been established by full proof from Holy Scripture, it is often impossible, and in general needless, to meet each objection or difficulty which may be raised. It is often impossible, because all the modes in which different objectors will find difficulties may be unknown to those who rest on the simple warrants of the Word of God. It is commonly needless, because when we have to do with those who are subject to the authority of God in His Word, full Scripture proof of a point is enough; and also it is felt that the varying grounds taken by objectors, and their contradictions of Scripture, show that they are striving (even though at times unconsciously) against truths which cannot be overthrown.

Thus, if we have to establish the Deity of Christ, we bring forward the direct proofs, the distinct statements that He is God over all, blessed for ever, and that He is the Creator, Sustainer, and essentially the Lord of all. We do not think it needful to inquire into every cavil of every objector, and to discuss these one by one, before we regard the point as proved. We do not pretend to meet what may be called the difficulties of the case; indeed, we do wisely not to imagine that we can overcome the prejudice which is proof against the distinct words of inspired prophets and apostles. We have, as well as we are enabled, to state the revealed truth; and then its application can be made with efficacious power by the secret working of the Holy Ghost.

Although reference has been made to particular objections, to discuss them in detail has not been attempted. The reasons just stated will suffice for this: answers have been given to some of the ways in which the Scriptures cited have been set aside; but beyond this it is impossible to go without an extensive inquiry into the various modes in which advocates of the secret coming and secret rapture seek to make the theory plausible. It would be as much to the purpose to discuss all that has been written against the truth that "we are justified freely by the grace of God, for the sake of Christ's merits, through faith", before firmly and definitely setting forth the Gospel. All the grounds of objection to the hope of Christ's people being His glorious appearing, to which I refer, are such as *really* have been relied on. I do not discuss mere surmises; I notice a few points for the help (as I trust) of some; but I do not charge any one with holding anything which he rejects: different maintainers of the secret rapture have taken different grounds.

A supposed distinction has been made between the *coming* of Christ and the *day* of the Lord, as if the one could be a secret hope before the other which is manifest; but in 1 Cor. 1.8, "the *day* of our Lord" is the hope of the Church: so, too, in 2 Cor. 1.14, is "the *day* of the Lord Jesus"; in Phil. 1.6, 10 believers are directed on to "the *day* of Jesus Christ"; in 1 Thess. 5.2, Christians are spoken of as knowing that the day of the Lord cometh like a thief in the night, but (verses 4 and 5) it will not come like a thief on those who are children of light; but still it is the *day* that they expect. In 2 Thess. 2.1, 2, "the *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ", and "the *day* of the Lord" (true reading) are used as co-ordinate terms. And well may this be done; for at the *coming* of the Lord Jesus the *day* begins: the only contrast that could be drawn is, that the *coming* is one point of time, while the *day* is a continuous period: to those who are in the darkness of night, however,

it is the same thing to expect the dawn of the sun-light and the beginning of the day: and he who tried to distinguish these things as to time, would fail in finding intelligible language in which to express himself. In 2 Pet. 3.12, believers are spoken of as "looking for and hasting unto the *coming* of the *day* of God"; this is the same "*day* of the Lord" which verse 10 speaks of as the fulfilment of "the promise of His (Christ's) coming" (verse 4), about which the scoffer asks, as if it were a hope that had failed. The passages which speak of the day as our hope contradict all theory of secrecy. Could the Sun of Righteousness arise without the day beginning? Had a distinction been made the *dawn* would precede the sun-rising.

Some, indeed, ask, "Have you not overlooked how plainly the secret rapture of the Church is set forth in the Canticles?" But is it intended that we should interpret the New Testament by the Canticles? Should we not rather let the full light of the Christian Revelation shine on the ancient Scriptures? Of one thing we may be certain, that nothing in the Canticles *can* contradict our Lord's words, and His promise that His elect shall be gathered unto Him by His angels at His manifest coming with power and great glory. Whatever may be the import of passages in the Canticles which speak of secrecy ("the secret¹⁰ places of the stairs", etc.), or of the withdrawal of the bride from any particular scene ("Come with me from Lebanon", etc.), we ought to be so established in New Testament truth as not to imagine that these can set forth a secret rapture, unless such a rapture had been definitely taught in the Word--instead of its being contradicted.

To learn the distinct hope of the Lord's coming is a far simpler thing than it is to interpret the Canticles. Many may know definitely the promises of our Lord, who can but ponder as to that book, valuing it not according to their intelligence of its contents, but because they see Christ there.¹¹

Others ask whether it is not evident that the Church is seen in the Book of Revelation in heavenly glory, long before the visible coming of our Lord.¹² Now, our hopes may be known very clearly, even though we have but little ability to interpret the Apocalypse; nay, it is rather by apprehending our hopes that we shall begin to use that closing book of Scripture aright.

The teachers of the "secret" doctrine act in very contradictory ways with regard to the Apocalypse. Some of them say that it is not for *our* instruction, for it is given from Christ to show "His *servants* things which must shortly come to

10 I could hardly give the supposed detail how "the clefts of the rock" became "the secret places of the stairs", without going beyond that gravity and reverence for Holy Scripture that should be maintained.

11 That this book has a holy character is what few, I trust, who read these pages, will doubt: that it must set forth *Christ* is what reverential readers of Holy Scripture will of course admit. The theories of Ewald and others must be abhorrent to every Christian mind; and although Ginsburg seeks to give a new turn to such theories, yet it is vain to make the subject of the book of Canticles a shepherdess, who contemns and finally rejects the addresses of King Solomon. The grounds on which Ginsburg excludes Christ, and adopts, with less irreverence of *expression*, notions borrowed from Ewald, etc., are of the weakest kind. Even *unconverted Jews*, such as Aben Ezra, could teach him better. It would be marvellous that he should find followers, except that any notion which unsettles definite thoughts as to Holy Scripture, or which would *exclude Christ*, is sure to be admired by some. Dean Alford has well said that he who does not find Christ everywhere in Holy Scripture, will not be able to find Him anywhere. "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

12 See Appendix G.

pass";¹³ others say that the epistles to the seven churches are our portion ("the things which are"); but that when a door is opened in heaven (Chapter 4) the Church is caught up. Others maintain that the whole book is future; that the seven churches even are bodies which shall be formed (and which shall be thus taught), *after* the secret removal of the present Church. Now, without discussing these contradictory theories, let it be again noted that the coming of the Lord is set forth in the opening of the book: "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him"; and to *this* coming, the Apostle responds, "Even so, Amen." No supposition that the Church is found in resurrection glory prior to such a coming can be admitted as capable of reconciliation with this opening expectation. Nor can any symbol be rightly interpreted as setting forth the Church as actually in resurrection glory at a point of time previous to the *first* resurrection of Chapter 20, and that is after the last anti-Christian persecution, in which the faithful are beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus.¹⁴

It the manifest coming of our Lord in glory be not our hope, it would be indeed strange that the apostles should have so habitually taught such a coming, and have said so much about it in their epistles.

If the secret advent and secret removal of the Church be true, how can the advocates of their theory show that the secret event did not take place long ago? How do they know but that they themselves are living in the supposed interval between the secret coming of Christ and His coming in glory? And thus, How can they be sure that they are part of the Church at all? In fact, if the secret rapture theory were true, they might be devoid of all knowledge of what way of salvation (amongst the confused theories) is *now* available; for the preaching of the Gospel may have ended with the rapture and resurrection of the Church; and, if this is a private occurrence, it may be long past, without any one being aware of it.

13 See. p. 25.

14 Much has been made, in connection with the supposed secret rapture of the Church, of the description of the throne, etc., in Chapters 4 and 5, and of the living creatures and elders. Chapter 5.9,10, is a passage which has been thought to have an especial bearing on this subject. The true *reading* of the verses is, "And they sing a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and redeemedst us to God by thy blood out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation; (10) and thou madest them to our God a kingdom and priests, and they reign on the earth." That verse 10 should be read in the third person αυτους, and βασιλευουσιν (or, -ουσιν), instead of ημας and βασιλευσομεν, is not at all a matter of doubt; whether the verb should be in the future or the present is less certain. But in verse 9, ημας, "us", should certainly be read. There was an opinion, many years ago, that it rested on but slight authority. This arose through an error in a reprint of Griesbach's text; so that he was supposed to have excluded it. On this misprint interpretations were based. Now of all collated MSS. the *Codex Alexandrinus* alone omits ημας (and this is thought to have some support from the Ethiopic version); and one MS. has ημων instead. The consent of the ancient versions has much weight in a case of this kind. It is surprising that some later editors have omitted it only on the authority mentioned. Its absence appears to have some supposed bearing on the present question. A maintainer of the secret rapture, in publishing a text of the Revelation, gave a few readings professedly from the *Codex Sinaiticus*, in which he prints, by some strange hallucination, τω θ.ήνων as the reading of that MS. This was at first copied by Dean Alford in his Greek Testament, and in Mr C.E. Stuart's very useful little work, *Textual Criticism*; so that the error has become widely spread. But *Codex Sinaiticus* reads τω θεω ημας, exactly like the common text. I have seen the passage in the MS. itself, and any one can verify it in the two editions of Tischendorf. How the omission of ημας could be made to support the secret rapture doctrine I do not at all know.

"TIMES AND SEASONS"

"But do you not remember," it is said, "that God holds the times and seasons *in His own power*? Does not this shew that He may arrange events as He willeth? that He may re-dispose their order? And is not the definite formation of expectations, as if God must bring events to pass in one way and not in another, a *limiting of the Holy One of Israel*?" God has all things in His power; but when once He has spoken, He will fulfil; and thus, without irreverence, we may say that such events will occur, and such will not. When once God has promised, He is concluded by His own words: He cannot deny Himself. Thus we may, with all confidence, say, that if God has revealed that a portion of His Church shall be found in unbroken continuity on the earth up to the harvest, when the wicked shall be severed from the midst of them, then so it will be. If He has said that Antichrist's appearance and power shall precede the coming of Christ, then this must be the order of events. If He tells us that it is after, and not before, the time of special tribulation that Christ shall come, then we must not discredit God by the imagination that it may be previous. If the Lord Jesus has told us that His shall not be a secret coming, then we must take heed and not accept the teaching that bids us expect a secret advent. If He tells us to watch for His appointed signs, then we must not imagine that this can be inconsistent with the hope of seeing the Lord, or that it can have any evil effect morally; nay, we must be sure that such an expectation, held in the Spirit, is that which will produce the right effect of watchfulness and waiting in every one who rests on the word of Christ, because it is His.

However much God may do in grace and mercy beyond what He has promised, of this we may be sure, that whatever He has promised shall be fulfilled; and that every revealed circumstance in connection with the time or order shall have a perfect accomplishment. In unrevealed things, it behoves us to avoid speculation; but where the Scripture speaks, it is for us, whether we understand or not, to listen and to receive.

In any inquiry what God can do, or will do, there are two principles which must be borne in mind: *Firstly*, God is "the faithful God"; "God that cannot lie." This is part of His own essential character; and we know, too, that as to His revelation in Christ, "all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God by us." (2 Cor. 1.20). *Secondly*, besides this (or rather consequent on this), "the Scripture must be fulfilled." What can prove this more fully than our Lord's prayer and agony in the garden, and His betrayal? "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matt. 26.39.) "O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." (42.) "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? *But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?*" (53,54.) "But all this was done *that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.*" (56.)

If there are points which are not certainly or definitely stated in Scripture, some conclusion may, perhaps, be formed from analogy or probable

inference; but when the Scripture tells the events and their order, then what is called "free enquiry" has no place whatever. Those who sit in judgment on Scripture, and question or deny what it conclusively says, are not fitting persons to be listened to as teachers in the Church of Christ, whatever be their claims as to wisdom or holiness.

The question of the apostles to the Lord in Acts 1.6 is, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" To this He replies, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power." He then tells them what their service should be as *witnesses* for Him--in fact, referring them back to His own previous instruction in Matthew 24.6,14: "*The end is not yet.*" "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." They are thus reminded that the restoration of the kingdom to Israel could not be in the ordering of God until the events of that chapter were brought to pass; it was thus that He had put these times and seasons in His own power. We cannot measure these events by a century or by a thousand years, but we may know their order as revealed and recorded in Holy Scripture.

When the Apostle says, "I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery...*that blindness in part is happened to Israel, UNTIL the fulness of the Gentiles be come in*" (Rom. 11.25), the following words, "And so all Israel shall be saved", prove that the blindness shall be altogether taken away. But *when* shall this be? When the fulness of the Gentiles is gathered. How could the Scripture speak of a "blindness in part *until*" that time, if Israel's greatest blindness, in the depth of anti-Christian evil, is not till after the removal of the Church? But the order of these events has been revealed for our instruction. It is when He cometh with clouds, when every eye shall see Him, that Israel shall look on Him whom they pierced--when the spirit of grace and of supplications shall be poured upon them. Until that day the fulness of the Gentiles will not have come in. The resurrection of the Church and the removal of the blindness are at the same time.

SENTIMENT AND EMOTION: THE TRUTH OF GOD

There is sternness in the truth of God, which might almost seem like harsh severity, when it is regarded by those whose thoughts on the subject of revelation have been formed in a great measure from sentiment and emotion. An imaginative feeling may exist; and this may be so cherished that even the Scripture is only used for sentimental purposes; and thus the force of definite truth is by no means felt, because the mind has sunk into a kind of spiritual reverie: indeed, there is a disposition to avoid definite truth, from a contrast that has been formed between it and that which is supposed to be spiritual. Thus when the details of revealed promises and purposes are stated from the Word of God, there is a feeling that there is but little, if anything, in them that is really edifying, or that can afford nourishment for spiritual life. And thus dreamy indefinite thoughts of God's love are cherished, and such a view is taken of the person and work of Christ, and of His coming glory, as may stir up spiritual emotions, or what are supposed to be such. But it must never be forgotten that holiness is not the only thing taught us respecting the Holy Ghost: He is the Spirit of Truth as well as the Holy Spirit of God; and the two things should be combined, and not set in contrast. We are not to accredit any supposed holiness irrespective of truth; we are not to regard truth as rightly held unless it be connected with holiness: and as truth is found in the revelation given in Holy Scripture, this must be our standard by which we must judge whatever professes to be either holiness, such as God would approve, or truth, that His people should accept.

Emotional religion has always a tendency to make *feeling* the standard of what should be received as truth, and what rejected. A certain kind of high wrought feeling (approaching to mysticism, or amounting to it) is that which is allowed to rule the judgment as to whatever God has revealed; and sometimes these indefinite claims to spirituality are accepted by others, so that the doctrines of such teachers are supposed to be worthy of all acceptance, not because they are found in Holy Scripture, but because they are said to be true by such holy and devoted men. But if we would judge according to God, we must test all claims to holiness and devotedness by means of truth, and not merely do the reverse. Asceticism is not Christian holiness; the zeal of Francis Xavier is not Christian devotedness.

It is very manifest that the doctrine of a secret coming of Christ, and a secret removal of the Church to be with Him, is peculiarly suited to those who cherish the religion of sentiment.¹⁵ What more cheering (they say) than the thought that the Lord may take His people to Himself at any moment? What more animating than the belief that this may take place this very day? And when any one brings them to Scripture, and tries to point out the revealed hope of the Lord's coming, it seems as if there were nothing but coldness in the teaching, and as if the Lord were put far off from them. They ask sometimes if such chilling doctrines can be consistent with love to the Lord, and whether love to His person does not exclude the thought of a revealed interval, and of events that will take place first. It is thus that truth is judged by sentiment and emotion, instead of true emotions, which are according to God, being formed by truth in all its definite severity. Whatever makes the feelings sit in judgment on Scripture, and whatever

¹⁵ It is as impossible to discuss a question scripturally with those who are guided by emotion and sentiment, as it was for Greatheart, in the second part of *Pilgrim's Progress*, to arouse Heedless and Too-bold when sleeping on the Enchanted Ground.

thus leads to the avoidance of the force of that Scripture teaching which is not in accordance with such feelings, must, however, apparently sanctified and spiritual, be of nature, and not of God. Are we to seek to be guided by other hopes than those which animated the Apostolic Church? They knew that days of darkness would set in before Christ's coming; they were instructed respecting the many Antichrists and the final Antichrist, but so far from their hope of the coming of the Lord and of resurrection being thus set aside, they were able to look onward through the darkness to the brightness of the morning.

It may freely be owned that those who think it right to expect the Lord at any moment, and who sternly condemn others who maintain that His appointed signals shall take place first, have often in their hearts much real love to Him; and love towards His person is never to be regarded lightly. But let such remember the prayer of the Apostle, "That your love may bound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment" (Phil. 1.9): it is not only of importance that love should be rightly directed as to its object, but also that there should be in the soul real spiritual intelligence. If a wife has the promise of her husband's return from a distant country, and she has his written directions for the rule of the house during his absence, and part of these directions includes a statement how his return shall be expected, that a letter will first arrive to say by what ship he will come--there would be no want of love (and that, too, intelligent love) on her part, if she sought to be occupied day by day as he directed, and if she showed that she believed his word that the promised letter should come, and that then he would himself arrive by the appointed vessel. She would be waiting according to his word and will; and no one could reproach her for want of love to her lord from not being on the tip-toe of momentary expectation. But if the wife were to say that the part of her husband's directions respecting the promised letter related to the servants of the house, and not to her, and if she were to be constantly on the shore, expecting her husband's landing in a way that he had not promised, and if she refused to be brought to attend simply to what her husband had said--she would, while professing to do this out of love to him, show that she was a visionary, and not one whose love was guided by the simple intelligence of her husband's mind as distinctly expressed: feeling would have led away from true obedience.

There are, indeed, those who say that love can allow of nothing as between their souls and the coming of the Lord; they avoid any real scriptural inquiry on the subject; and when events prophesied by our Lord are pointed out, they say that their views are directed upward, that *there* they find their strength, in contrast to "men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." (Luke 21.26.) And thus they avoid the force of even our Lord's words, through a supposed spirituality. Men's hearts may be dismayed, but this will not apply to believers, who would see in that which caused dismay to others the bright prospect of deliverance to themselves, for the coming of the Lord would be at hand.

The dreamy ethereality, which assumes the name and the garb of spirituality, avoids the apprehension of *facts*; they appear to unrefined, and there is too little in them for the exercise of mere sentimental feeling. But is it not by facts, and facts too occurring on this earth, that God works? The incarnation of the Son of God, the reality of His meritorious obedience, of His vicarious sufferings, the atonement of the Cross--all, indeed, on which we depend for salvation, has to do with *facts* in all their literal truth, on which the forgiveness of sins, and the acceptance of our persons, depend. Why, then, avoid the contemplation of those facts which are yet before us, in all their definiteness of detail?

Sentimental religion often approaches very nearly to mere ideality: the ideal Christ takes in part the place of the Christ of revelation, and although it cannot be denied by any one professing to be a Christian that the literal blood of atonement was shed here on the literal Cross, yet so far from seeing that the redemption price was paid to the full when Christ said, "It is finished", and died, they speak of the real atonement having not been made until Jesus, risen from the dead, presented His own blood on the mercy seat above. Thus (with various modifications) they speak and write about salvation and justification in "the risen Jesus", not seeing that His work in connection with sin was completed for ever on the Cross.¹⁶

But real love is no mere ideality: it is an active thing. God's love was shown in providing the salvation wrought out by His blessed Son; and if we have true Christian love in our hearts it will be found an active principle also, both towards God and towards the brethren for His sake. Yet how often have we seen sentimental love fail altogether: it has been much set forth in word, but the moment that it has been tested, its merely emotional character has been proved. The false principle of mysticism as to the love of God is, that He loves His own image which His grace and Spirit work in us: this is much the same as saying that He loves us so far as He sees us worthy of His love, or as He sees some congruity in us. If the love of God be so regarded, the love to the brethren may well be of the same character: love not for the Father's sake, not for Christ's sake, but for the sake of some inwrought fitness in the object. Those who make sentimentally the secret rapture the centre of all their thoughts, have habitually shown how utterly their love fails towards any Christians who object to this theory. They often speak of them as if such were devoid of love to Christ, and they treat them as if that were the case. It might seem as if they had made that one point (in which they are led by feeling, not by Scripture) the very test of Christian profession. They ask, indeed, with earnestness of manner, how those who deny the secret advent can "love His appearing",¹⁷ and they refer to the passage (Heb. 9.28), "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation", as if it included only those who hold a peculiar expectation. To *these* it is that they extend their mystical love, which has so much taken the place of what is truly

16 Rom. 4.25 plainly teaches that our Lord "was delivered in consequence of our offences, and raised again *in consequence of our justification.*" The preposition in each case is the same, so that just as His death resulted from His bearing our sins, so did His resurrection result from the accomplishment of that propitiation whereby we receive pardon and peace. Some speak of our sins "being buried in the grave of Jesus"; but how could they get there? The Cross was the last place where He had to do with sin: the shedding of His blood, the laying down of His life, was the payment of the full redemption price. He himself bore our sins up to the tree; but on the completion of His sacrifice, all that had to do with sin was ended; and He was laid in the grave, not as *then* the sin-bearer, but as the Holy One who *had borne* the full penalty. Of this the resurrection was the full proof. If the weight of sin rested on Him when buried, how could it have been removed? It is true that our sin had laid Him in the grave, because He had died to put it away; but it was no longer on Him when He was there. On Rom. 4.25, see, *as to this point*, Bishop Horsley's sermon. *Nine Sermons on our Lord's Resurrection*, etc., p. 249. 1822.

17 If it were desirable to answer arguments in the same way as that in which they are put, it might be asked whether those who expect a secret coming of Christ are those "that love His *appearing*"? For this is of necessity a manifest thing. But at least let not the advocates of a secret coming speak of those who expect the appearing of Christ, as if they failed in that love to Him which should lead them to wait for Him. They love His *appearing*, and they do not substitute something else in the place of "that blessed hope."

Christian.

But "they that look for Him" does not mean a part of the Church, but the whole; not those who expect in a particular manner, but those who know that as He died, rose, ascended, so surely He will come again, as has been promised. It does not depend on the intelligence of believers, or the reverse. The *fact* has been embodied in the common expressions of Christian belief: "He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead: whose kingdom shall have no end" (*Nicene Creed*); "Thou sittest on the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father. We believe that thou shalt come to be our Judge" (*Te Deum*). Such, even in the darkest ages, has been the profession of the nominal Church; such has been ever the solemn acknowledgment of true believers. If they inquired but little about the circumstances of that coming, or the connected events, who would dare, even in thought, to exclude them from the number of those who love the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ? Who would say that they are not of "those that look for Him?"¹⁸

Such sentimental feeling, when allowed full outflowing in connection with the doctrine of the secret advent, works this, amongst other evils--the narrowing, both in practice and in principle, of that Christian love which should be directed towards all who are in Christ, and which should include all living believers, and all who from the beginning have obtained a good report through faith.

It is almost impossible to overstate the evil effects of sentimental and emotional opinions and practices when young unconverted persons are exposed to them. The stern facts by which conviction is brought to the conscience are all but idealised; the true character of sin, and God's wrath against it, is overlooked or obscured; and while the death and resurrection of Christ are indeed spoken of, the full character of His work and His definite fulfilment of God's holy law for us in His life, are lost in a dreamy notion which in part at least puts His resurrection in the place of His death, as that by which the full atonement is made. In this manner devotional feelings are often stirred up; but without the primary ground having been cleared; without the question of sin and its forgiveness through the blood of the cross having been settled; and without the acceptance of the righteousness wrought out in the living obedience of Christ when on earth, as that in which the sinner can stand before God. Apparent devotedness is thus at times excited: there is the endeavour, on emotional grounds, to do much for God, but without the preliminary truth having been grasped of what, in the gift of Christ, God has done for us. There is in all this the endeavour to show good fruit from the tree which is still in its natural corruption. This, too, is often fostered by the misuse of devotional books, as if they could be substituted for coming to Christ in heart and conscience; and by the injudicious tone of "good books", which touch the feelings only, even when they are not replete with error of doctrine and principle.

The religion of sentiment and emotion often leads to mere asceticism: a very different thing from the practical holiness in which the believer is called on to walk. Any unconverted sentimentalist may assume an ascetic garb as a substitute for the Gospel.

It has been remarkable to notice how the sentimental expectation of the Lord's coming has led away from the close and reverential study of Holy Scripture. Indeed, it has been painful to hear earnest and real desire definitely to study the

¹⁸ See Appendix H.

Word of God regarded and termed by some, as being "occupied with the *letter* of Scripture."¹⁹ But do those who say this know what they mean? They speak of principles, and of having their minds occupied with Christ; but how do we obtain true principles except from God's revelation in the Word? and how does the Spirit lead the mind to be occupied with Christ, except from the definite truth of Holy Scripture? In fact, those who thus speak, putting the *spirit* in contrast to the *letter*, appear not to know what they are discussing; and as to Scripture itself, by paying but little heed to what they call "the letter", they really disregard so far what the Spirit has there set forth. "But oh! (they say) this *head-knowledge*, this intellectual study of truth! how it leads our minds away from Christ!" It is true that there may be mental intelligence with but little spirituality; but it is equally true that if we obey God we shall never neglect the words of His Scripture.

Of course, with this tone of feeling, all *critical* study of Scripture is decried; it is deemed a waste of time. Even the study of the Word of God in the original Hebrew and Greek is spoken of as if it were a secular occupation. The English Bible is thought to be enough for teachers and taught alike; and thus they remain alike uninstructed. And if the original languages are looked at, exact scholarship is deemed superfluous. How different is this from the real study of God's Word; from using and valuing each portion, however minute, as being from Him, and as being that of which He can unfold to us the meaning by the teaching of His Spirit. How different from the practical application of the most definite rules of grammar, which lead to absolute persuasion that apostles and evangelists wrote nothing at random, but that even as to the most delicate shades of thought they used the right cases, moods, and tenses.²⁰ All diligent and careful inquiry, and laborious examination of authorities, so as to know what were the very words in which the inspired writers gave forth the Scripture, is regarded as merely intellectual and secular. But is this a healthy tone of thought? Should not those who believe in the Divine authority of Holy Scripture know that they ought not to neglect its critical study? And if it be truly inspired, ought they not to feel that it is of some importance to inquire what is its true text--what, as far as existing evidence can show, were the very words in which the Holy Ghost gave it forth?²¹

Most difficult is it to arouse Christians in general to a sense of the *full* importance of critical study of Scripture; and especially is this the case when dreamy apprehensions are cherished, and where vague idealism has taken the place of truth, and sentimental asceticism is the substitute for Christian holiness.

There may be an external knowledge of Scripture where there is no spiritual life or light; but that is no reason for cherishing what is supposed to be spiritual in contrast to the words of inspiration. Such a contrast cannot really exist. He who truly loves the Lord Jesus Christ, and is guided by His Spirit, will

19 See Appendix J.

20 "It is unwelcome news to the maintainer of some cherished exposition, to be told by an unsympathising critic that it is a baseless vision, a notion unsupported by the language of the text. And it is also worthy of remark, *how often the supporters of extravagancies in theology, have manifested an instinctive dread of exact learning.*"--Rev. T. S. GREEN, M.A., *On the Grammar of the New Testament Dialect*. Ed. 1, 1842. Introduction, p.v.

21 The opposition of visionary teachers and the receivers of their teaching, to all textual criticism founded on *evidence*--to all investigation, in fact, regarding what are the real words and sentences given forth under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost--appears to be only equalled by the temerity with which, in certain cases, they accept conclusions which they desire, rather on assertion than on evidence.

be the most subject to that which is written in the Word. *True* acquaintance with Scripture is the best check to mere sentimental emotion.²²

22 "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of their own selves, etc., etc....Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth....But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, etc....All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. 3). So taught the Apostle of the Gentiles, who was himself an able "minister of *the New Testament*" (2 Cor. 2.6), for the guidance of the Church in the "perilous times."

XXIII

"THE RESURRECTION OF THE JUST"

The doctrine of the Resurrection of the Just, even when held with but little apprehension of the events connected with that time, has always kept alive, as a *fact*, the reality of the coming of the Lord in power and great glory; for the expectation has not been some idealistic thought of Christ secretly taking His people to himself, but His visible appearing--the visible opening of the graves, when "the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Is the hope of resurrection a mere personal expectation? Few, I suppose, would say this; for it is that in which the family of faith have a common hope and a common interest. But of which should we think most, in connection with it, the glory of Christ, or of our own blessedness? Surely the former: and this puts secrecy out of the question.

Even, too, as to ourselves, publicity is an essential part of the hope of resurrection; for in the resurrection of Christ's people, they shall be fully declared to be His, in body as well as in Spirit; and until then their triumph cannot be a manifested thing. The resurrection of Christ was His own personal vindication, as the One in whom the Father was ever well pleased--it defined and marked Him out as the Son of God, the Lord of all glory. But He shall yet be *publicly* vindicated. Up to this time, His believing people die and lie in their graves apparently as do others; their bodies are "sown in corruption", "in weakness", "in dishonour"; it *seems* as to the bodies of the saints, that Satan has a triumph over them, and as if he could still dishonour Christ in His members. Whatever a secret resurrection might do for the blessedness of the saints themselves, it would not vindicate Christ in them; and He comes "to be *glorified* in His saints." Even if there could be a secret resurrection "in incorruption", yet a *secret* resurrection "*in glory*" (and it is *in glory* that the just shall be raised) would be a contradiction.

The death of a believer is great gain to him personally, for he departs to be with Christ, which is far better; but still it leaves him with an unconsummated hope; and in each case Christ has one more whose resurrection is needful for His own glory to be vindicated. We need feel no surprise at the prominence which the New Testament gives to resurrection; for although a part of the Church shall be alive and remain at the coming of the Lord, yet, as a fact, the great majority of Christians--the believers of long-succeeding age after age--have fallen asleep; and thus, as to the Church in general, it is not change, but resurrection which is the point of expectation. It may be said, that both these classes, the saints living when the Lord comes, and those in their graves, are needful for the manifestation of Christ as "the Resurrection and the Life." If all believers were to die, it would seem as if Christ had not so overcome death and Satan (who had the power of death) that He might lead His redeemed into glory without their passing through death. The change of the living saints when He comes shall show how in this He is "the Life." If all His people had lived on till His coming, it might have seemed as if theirs was but some protraction of existent natural life, and not the power of resurrection ministered to them. Christ died and lived, "that He might be Lord both of the dead and living." (Rom. 14.9.) As Lord of the dead, He receives into blessing in His own presence (how joyful who can tell?) the spirits of His departed people: He cares for their mouldering bodies, and He has pledged himself to raise them in "the last day." Then it shall be seen that He is "the Resurrection"; that

of all the Father gave Him He hath lost nothing; and that His glory shall be *manifested* in the triumph of His members as sharers actually in that promised hope of resurrection which He set before them.

I have already shown, from Scripture (§ 12, p. 26), that the resurrection of the just shall take place at the time when the Lord again puts forth His hand to bless His ancient people Israel; and also (§ 7, p. 18) that the *first* resurrection cannot be until the last form of anti-Christian evil shall be ended by the coming of Christ in glory.²³ The *order* of resurrection in 1 Cor. 15 teaches the same thing: "Every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; *afterward* they that are Christ's at His coming. Then [i.e. *afterwards*, at a subsequent period in order] cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father....For He must reign until He have put all enemies under His feet." (23-25.) "They that are Christ's at His coming" are all saints up to that time--those who share in the *first* resurrection. "The end", spoken of as subsequent, is the period of the resurrection of Millennial saints, and of all others (though the just are only specifically treated of in this chapter). Thus, there can be no resurrection of "those that are Christ's" until the coming at which He restores Israel, and raises His believing people "in glory." "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Thus does the hope of resurrection in glory at Christ's appearing lead to true Christian service.

23 Christ remains at the right hand of God the Father until the time when the Father puts all enemies to be His footstool: "Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, *until* I make thine enemies thy footstool." (Ps. 110.1.) Jehovah shall then send the rod of Christ's strength out of Zion: "Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." He does not leave His place at the right hand of glory above (Matt. 26.64) until the Father has prepared the enemies to be His footstool: *then* Christ comes forth to act on the commission thus received; and then He puts forth His authority in subjecting all enemies to himself, as set for that purpose by the Father. Then He reigns in bringing all into subjection. Those who hold that Christ will leave the right hand of God to receive His Church secretly, before the Father has prepared the foes to be His footstool (thus contradicting His words before the high priest), have sometimes tried to render the passage in Psalm 110, and the citations of it in the New Testament, as though they meant "until I do set, or am setting", as if it were what He is about to do. Some have even gone the length of asserting that critically the notion is not that of the *future perfect*. A passage from Gesenius, which was said to show this as to the Hebrew, was some years ago quoted and circulated in print; but for the sake of any puzzled by this, I mention, that the words quoted from Gesenius were not *his* sentiment, but an opinion, the incorrectness of which he was showing, as any Hebrew scholar might do! It is wonderful that any one can say that the Greek in the New Testament can mean anything except "until I *shall have* placed thine enemies." The words "until He have put" are a similar construction, and any one can see that this is not "until He is putting"; the whole force of the argument turns on the thing *having been* done.

THE HOPE

Hope is always proposed to us for a definite object, and that of a kind which the hope should from its nature produce. The hope of the coming of the Lord, and our gathering to Him in glory, is given to the Church militant that it may be thereby strengthened for service and endurance. When the land on which Caleb had trodden was promised him for an inheritance, it was a hope that rested on his soul through the forty years' wandering in the wilderness, and during the conquest of the land, until he received it in the apportionment from Joshua; he was then fourscore and five years old, still kept alive by the Lord, and still as strong to go in and out for war as in the day that he had been sent by Moses to spy out the land. He did not expect the accomplishment of the hope until the forty years of judicial sojourn in the wilderness were completed--until Jordan was crossed, and the land conquered. It was hope, though he knew of intervening years. When we are directed to look unto "Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith", it is as the One who had been Himself sustained by hope, "who for (or answerable to) the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. 12.2.) So, too, as to us; it is as we have the hope set before us, rightly apprehended and sustained in the power of the spirit of God, that we can serve and suffer.

Every time that believers meet around the Lord's table, to unite in the Lord's supper, as a part of the one Church, they declare, in obeying the Lord's command, that they unite in the Church's hope: "As oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death *till he Come*." The coming is that public coming which He taught: just as we look back at the one Cross, and the one work of atonement there wrought, so is the one hope professed, "that blessed hope: the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." The hope can be as little turned into something ideal, or of sentiment and emotion merely, as can the solemn reality of the Cross, and its one finished work. Any hope but that which God has given might make ashamed: "We rejoice (says the Apostle) in hope of the *glory of God*." (Rom. 5.2.) For hope resting on God's Word cannot "make ashamed." God's love to us is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given unto us: so that a hope directed by Holy Scripture is one which cannot fail. The Church is taught to pray, "Our Father, which art in heaven, *Thy kingdom come*"; and this directs our thoughts and hopes onward (as it is surely intended to do) to that day when the Son of Man shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend; and *then* (and not before) shall the righteous shine forth as the sun *in the kingdom of their Father*.²⁴

Manifested glory is an essential part of our hope. So far is the hope of a

²⁴ The advocates of the secret rapture well know that they are looking for what will (they suppose) be long prior to the *kingdom*; therefore do they put from them as their hope the Scriptures which speak of "the kingdom" and "the Gospel of the kingdom." But we are taught to pray, "Thy kingdom come"; and, lest this should be idealised, the next words are, "Thy will be done *in earth*, as it is in heaven." This is not the point to which those look who expect to be taken to the Lord, and that then there will be a period in which God's will shall be especially contravened on earth in all Satanic power and anti-Christian blasphemy. Therefore such act consistently in abstaining from the use of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer. But we may know assuredly, that any theory or principle which sets aside a distinct command of Christ is thereby proved to be erroneous. We can thus test what seem to be refined forms of doctrine.

secret or private removal of believers to the Lord from having that character, that it more resembles the expectation of being taken away by death: a secret translation would be different from death in its nature, but it would be equally contrary to the appearing of the Lord in glory. Death, it must be remembered, is nowhere set before us as our hope, for although the believer has hope in death, and a hope that triumphs over the power of death, the removal of our spirits to be with the Lord is greatly different from our hope. It is a mistake to suppose the coming of the Lord to mean death; for death is not our Lord, and death is ours as well as life; and in dying we go to Him instead of His coming to us. A very similar mistake is it to suppose a private taking of Christ's people to Him to be His coming in glory, for which we are called to wait.

An essential difference between the hope of the Lord's coming and death was long ago pointed out in this one particular: if we die, we leave the things here in their present course, and though our own life will be ended by death, yet the things in which we have taken an interest will not; and thus often, so far from the thought of death separating from worldly hopes, it has had the opposite effect of leading into arrangements for the continuance of those things in which pleasure was taken: they have been valued for the sake of *persons* left behind. The hope of a secret removal of the Church, without the hand of the Lord bringing all the present course of things to an end, may have, and has had, a similar effect. It has been thought that though the Church is removed, all secular things will remain, and that, as to them, arrangements might be made of the same kind as if removal by death were expected. Is *this* a hope that triumphs over present things and the snares of the world?²⁵

There are, indeed, some who say, "An expectation of times of extreme peril before the Lord's coming, times of great tribulation, during which Christ's people would have to wait on this earth, would be no *hope* to me--it would only lead to discouragement and dismay: I want that which would *animate* my soul; no *hope* that is not of such a character would produce in me an emotion of present joy, or give me sustained comfort." Such reasoners go on sometimes to say, that even though proof of revealed events to occur before the coming of Christ is logically correct, although no flaw or fallacy can be detected in the arguments, yet because the *result* is such as cannot be accepted, therefore there *must* be a defect somewhere.²⁶ Therefore in meeting such thoughts, it is well that it is on *testimony* that we rest as to this truth; not on a process of reasoning, but on the inspired declarations which bear on this point on every side.

But will the expectations produce no animating hope? Will there be no emotions according to God from the thought of seeing Christ in His glory, and being like Him at His coming? It is not on the intervening darkness that we have to rest, but on the brightness beyond; that is our hope, and it is made known to us that we may understand our place of service and patience while *waiting* for the

25 "My children are not yet converted (it has been actually said), therefore they have not the hope of the rapture of the Church; but as Christ may remove me as one of His people any day, I have to make proper provision for them and their position in this world."

26 Such persons often escape from the bearing of Scriptures on their consciences by calling them "Jewish." But let such be asked, Do you mean *unbelieving-Jewish*, or "Christian-Jewish?" If they say the latter, then must the persons to whom such Scriptures apply be part of the Church, as essentially so as the Ephesians were; if they say the former, then it may be asked them, How can unconverted Jews use any part of the New Testament at all? If an *expression* be adopted, and used without explanation or definition it may then afford a shelter for any ambiguity or fallacy.

coming of our Lord, by which all trial shall be for ever ended. However hopeless it may be to meet the arguments of idealistic visionaries, who assume a conclusion, and refuse to submit to opposing Scripture testimony, yet for others it is well distinctly to show that the hope of Christ's coming was given to be the sustainment and consolation in intervening trial. So far from its being a thing to cast down or depress, it is gracious in the Lord to have told us what to expect in the path of the Church up to the time of the appearing of Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Peter, in his first epistle, contemplates Christians as "begotten again unto a *lively hope* by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1.3), while waiting for the "inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, *ready to be revealed in the last time.*" (1.4,5.) Meanwhile, such may be "in heaviness, through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory *at the appearing [revelation] of Jesus Christ.*" (7.) The trial may be borne, the temptations may be endured, as knowing what the blessing shall be at the revelation of the Lord himself. And what is the practical exhortation to those thus set in the place of present trial: "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.*" (13.) This, then, is the point at which we are to look beyond all suffering, and this is the truth, as applied to our souls by the Spirit of God, which is to give us present sustainment. But, lest any should imagine that the Church should be exempt from special and peculiar times of suffering, as well as that which falls on men in general, he says, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that *when His glory shall be revealed*, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (4.12,13.) "Let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls unto Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." (19.) So also as to service. To those who feed the flock of God, taking oversight, the promise is, "*When the Chief Shepherd shall appear*, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." (5.4.)

The Apostle James teaches us not only the need of patience in waiting for the Lord's coming, but that that hope is our power in continuous patience: "Be patient, therefore, brethren unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." (5.7,8.)

The Apostle Peter, in his second epistle, while instructing the Church as to events which would take place, and how they were to be guided after his decease, gives the practical directions how they should be occupied with *the prophetic Word* until the Lord comes: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy" ("the prophetic word more abiding" than the voice in the holy mount had been), "whereunto ye do well that ye take heed (until the day dawn and the day-star arise)²⁷ in your

27 The reasons for regarding "until the day dawn and the day-star arise" as a parenthetic clause, and for connecting "in your hearts" with what has gone before ("take heed in your hearts,") are very strong; for what sense is there in *the day-star arising in your hearts?* If it meant any attainment *in us*, then it would indicate when we could do without the Scripture. The only tolerable objection that I have heard to the verse being thus read is, that προσεχω in this sense is an elliptical phrase for προσεχω τον νουν, and

hearts." (1.19.) Thus it is to the prophetic Scripture that we are directed; and he who feels the force of this injunction, and apprehends the authority of Scripture as given forth by the Holy Ghost, will feel that no diligence, no pains can be too great to be bestowed upon that which God has so given us, and about which He tells us that we "*do well* to take heed." Those whose hearts are subject to this commandment will not call the careful study of Scripture "mere head knowledge," "knowledge of the letter," or anything of the kind; they will seek to know *what* God has said, knowing that all Holy Scripture has been written for our learning, and for the reason that the Apostle gives immediately after: "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"; and so far from feeling that their hope is dimmed thereby, they will know that they are waiting for Christ according to His word and will. To such the prophetic word will be indeed a light; and though darkness be around, they will be guided by that lamp which the Holy Ghost has kindled, until the day dawn and the day-star arise, until the glorious appearing of Him who is "the bright and morning star." Substitute a secret coming for the appearing of Jesus, and the prophetic word is no guide at all; for what bearing can prophecy have on the walk of those who ought not (on that theory) to be informed of a single event that can occur previous to the imagined secret rapture? Not such, however, is the teaching of apostles and prophets.

In the second and third chapters of this epistle, the Apostle gives ample warning of evils that should be. When men ask, "Where is the promise of His coming?" those who are instructed in Scripture may point to those testimonies which show what is to be expected, and why, in mercy to those who shall be gathered in, that day has not yet come. "We, *according to His promise*, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (3.13.) We wait then "according to His promise." If the millennial blessing of Jerusalem and the people of Israel (Isa. 65.17,18) is an exemplification of the new heaven and earth thus promised, how much there is in which the prophetic word may cause us to rejoice as to the glories of the reign of Christ. If we *look for* the new heavens and new earth, this is to us an object of hope; but it is one which cannot be immediate; for not till Christ has put down all authority and power, not till all enemies are subjected to Him, and even till death, the last enemy, has been destroyed, can there be the new heaven and the new earth. Thus we hope for Christ's glorious coming, we hope for the millennial reign which then begins, and we hope onward for that which is thus postmillennial (Rev. 21.1-8), when "God shall be all in all." We see before us point after point of glory and blessedness revealed, "according to His promise." "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye be found of Him in peace without spot and blameless." (2 Pet. 3.14.) "Ye, therefore, beloved, *seeing ye know before* [the warnings given of intervening evil], beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." (17.)

that thus *εν ταϊς καρδιαϊς* is a most unsuitable addition. But, first, an elliptical phrase is often so used that the ellipsis could not be supplied without encumbering the sentence; and, second, "in your hearts" is a kind of adverbial expression equivalent to "inwardly." We may be told to direct our minds inwardly to Holy Scripture, because it needs that it be inwardly digested. "In your hearts" is similarly an adverbial expression in 1 Pet. 3.15, "Sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts" ("inwardly sanctify Him"); if, indeed, there is not there a parenthesis, "Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled (but sanctify the Lord Christ) in your hearts." 1 Pet. 3.21 is an instance of an expression remaining at the end of a parenthesis, connected in sense and construction with what has gone before: "save...by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" belong together; while "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience before God," is simply a parenthetical statement.

Most close is the connection between prophecy and promise: prophecy is to the believer often promise: thus in Heb. 12.26, "Now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." Where is this *promise* written? In Hag. 2.6 we find the *prophecy*, which to the child of faith is promise, because it has to do with that day when the "kingdom which cannot be moved" shall be ours, in contrast to all that can pass away. The same epistle had before taught, "Ye have need of *patience*, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the *promise*. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (10.36,37.) The appearing of the Lord is to manifest His triumph in the Gospel: "As it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin, until salvation." (9.27,28.)²⁸

The Epistles of Peter and James, and that to the Hebrews, are parts of Scripture which some term "Jewish"; but are they not markedly *Christian*? Does not the hope of Christ's appearing, as set forth in them, lead to Christian walk and acting? Ought not patience, service, and hope to characterise all Christians? But these are some of the graces here set forth as results of a true apprehension of the coming of Christ. So, too, is the diligent study of God's Word, and the upholding of its authority. There have been previously quoted many passages from the Epistles of St Paul to Gentile churches or to individuals: is not the consolation concerning the departed a precious part of our hope? Is it a light thing to be called always to abound in the work of the Lord? Is ability to glory in tribulations of small importance? And yet all these are connected with the hope of the appearing, the manifest revelation of Christ, and with nothing previous, and with nothing secret. Imagine a secret coming, and then how will any of these precepts and principles apply?

So far as there is found in the holders of the secret advent a power of Christian hope, love, service, joy, and endurance, so far does it spring, not from their theory, but from the measure of truth with which the soul is directed to Christ as the One who shall come. God sometimes works graciously on souls, in spite of very defective apprehensions of truth; but how much more could they act according to Him if their hopes were rightly directed.

The Apostle John teaches us: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall *appear*, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is; and every man that hath THIS HOPE in Him (*i.e.* resting on Christ--*ἐπ' αὐτῷ*) purifieth himself, even as He is pure." (1 John 3.2,3.)

This, then, is the practical power of the hope of Christ's manifestation: this it is that can enable believers to glorify Him who has cleansed them in His blood, and clothed them in His righteousness: this it is that sets before them that consummation in which Christ shall be glorified, in His people receiving the full results of His redemption. This Scripture answers any who ask, "What effect can the hope of Christ's *appearing* have? and why should such an expectation be cherished as a holy hope? *Then* it is that we shall be like Him. It is not a deduction, not a conclusion in which there may be some mistake; but the definite

²⁸ Men, as men, have before them death as the wages of sin, and after that the judgment: believers instead of having death thus as the penalty to fall on them, look back to the cross where Christ bore their sins; instead of looking on to judgment, they look to the coming of Christ for salvation in its fullest and most ample sense.

statement of the Holy Ghost in His own inspired Scripture. If we believe the promises of God as He has set them forth, we shall not transfer to a secret coming of Christ the many things and the practical results which the Scripture joins to His appearing in glory. It is better to act implicitly on what God says, even when we understand not His objects: still more should we do this when He tells us why He teaches us, when He seeks to make known to us His counsels, and intelligently to guide our souls by the promise of that *revelation* of Christ; *then* all who have been partakers of grace shall fully show the efficacy of His blood of atonement, and then shall they reign with Him in His manifested glory.

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly: Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Plymouth, March 17, 1864.