

Why will there be a Second Advent?

That the second coming of our Lord Jesus occupies a prominent and important position in the teaching of the apostles and prophets, as well as of Jesus himself, is a fact that can scarcely fail to have been noticed by every Bible student. Yet, from various causes, very many of those who profess to love Him, and whom we have reason to believe do, are not much interested in it. A few endeavor to figure it away by applying it to the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost; others to the destruction of Jerusalem, &c.; all apparently forgetting the fact, that in the last book of the Bible, written more than sixty years after Pentecost, and twenty-six years after Jerusalem's destruction, He that was dead and is alive speaks of the event as *yet future*, saying: "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me." And the inspired John replies: "Even so *come* Lord Jesus."

Quite a number endeavor to satisfy themselves with the thought that it is a spiritual coming – that when any are converted, that forms a part of the coming of Christ, and that so He continues coming until all the world is converted – then, say they, He will have fully come.

They evidently overlook the fact that the world will not be converted when He comes; that the Bible, our only guide on the subject, declares that, "In the last times perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." That "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived;" and that Jesus gave special warning to His little flock, saying: "Take heed to yourselves lest that day come upon you unawares, for as a snare shall it come upon all them" (not taking heed) "that dwell upon the face of the whole earth, and they shall not escape."

Again, we may rest assured that when Jesus said, "All the tribes of the earth shall mourn and wail because of Him when they see Him coming;" He did not refer to the conversion of sinners – Do the tribes mourn and wail because of the conversion of a sinner? – And if it refers, as almost all admit, to Christ's personal presence on the earth, it teaches that all on earth will not love His appearing, as they certainly would do if all were converted.

But, "If I go away, I will come again," cannot refer to a spiritual coming again, because, spiritually, He never went away, as He said, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world," [age.] Therefore, Jesus taught His second PERSONAL coming. The word

Millennium

Signifies one thousand, and is the term used by Christian people generally in speaking of a time future, when "the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth as the waters do the sea, and none need to say unto his neighbor, "Know thou the Lord?" "All shall know Him, &c." The time when there shall be no more curses; "when the wilderness shall blossom as the rose," and "streams break forth in the deserts," when "the tabernacle of God will be with men and He shall dwell with them," [R4 : page 2] when Satan shall be restrained and righteousness shall control. "Then nation shall not lift up sword against nation," "nor learn war any more," but "they shall beat their swords into plow shears, and their spears into pruning hooks."

These prophetic pictures and statements are expected to have fulfillment some time by nearly all Christians, and they call it the millennial age because it is said (**Rev. 20:2-6**) to be for a thousand years that Satan is bound and Christ reigns.

This far nearly all of the Church are agreed. They are millennialists, but there are post-millennialists and pre-millennialists;

post signifies after, pre, before; so the former believe Christ will come after the millennium and the latter that He comes before it.

As these are the only views which contain sufficient truth to make them worthy of our consideration, we shall devote more time to them. All who believe in the second personal coming of Christ, should be interested in knowing what the general teaching of the Bible is on the subject. It is necessary, however, that we come to the consideration with a child-like mind, desirous of knowing how God has arranged the matter, and anxious to have the teachings of His word, and ready to lay aside our ideas and, as God's children, take His plan. Thus, let us inquire

Why does Christ Come?

and examine briefly the arguments presented by both Post- and Pre-millennialists, comparing them with the Word – and Plan of God.

The first expect that through the efforts of the Church, the world will be converted, and thus the millennial age introduced, at the close of which the Lord will come, wind up earthly affairs, reward believers and condemn sinners. That to convert the world, bind Satan, make "the knowledge of the Lord to fill the whole earth," and "nations to learn war no more," are the work of the Church without JESUS, and in her present mortal condition. When she has accomplished this great and difficult task, Jesus comes to wind it up, &c.

They have much Scripture, which taken disconnectedly, seems to favor this view. But even this, we believe, when God's word and plan are looked at as a whole, will be found to favor the other view, viz., that Christ comes before the conversion of the world; that the Church is now being tried, and that the reward promised the overcomers is, that they shall share in that reign: "To him that overcometh will I give to sit with me in my throne." Rev. 3:21. "And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Rev. 20:4.

There are two texts in particular used by our post-millennial brethren, to which we would refer: "This Gospel must first be preached in all the world for a witness. Then shall the end come." They claim this to refer to the Gospel converting the world before the end of the Gospel age. We pre-millennial believers claim, that witnessing to the world does not mean converting the world, but as it reads, to witness or testify.

This witness has already been given. In 1861, the Bible Societies' reports showed that the Gospel had been published in every language of earth; not that all earth's myriads had received it. No; not one in a hundred of the twelve hundred millions have ever heard of the name of Jesus. Yet it has fulfilled the text – it has been a witness to every nation.

We understand that the object of the present witnessing is "To take out a people for His name" – the Church – who at Christ's coming are united to Him, and receive His name. Rev. 3:12.

The second text is, "Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool." The thought generally gathered from this Scripture is, that in heaven God has a throne on which He sits continually, and that when "Christ sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high," He sat down also upon the same throne. This is a misconception. The throne of God referred to is not an ivory or golden seat, but refers to His supreme authority and rulership, for "Heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool," and Paul says, "God hath highly exalted Him [Christ], and given Him a name above every name." He hath given Him authority above every other, next to the Father. If Christ sits upon a material throne until His enemies are made His footstool [all subdued], then, of course, He could not come until the millennium was fully inaugurated. But if it means the exalting to power, it would not interfere with His coming and subduing all things unto Himself.

To illustrate: King William is on the throne of Germany, we say, yet we do not refer to the royal bench, and as a matter of fact, he seldom occupies it. We mean that he rules Germany.

Right hand signifies the chief place, position of excellence or power, and the words of Jesus to Pilate agree with this thought: "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Mark 14:62. He will be on the right hand when coming, and remain at the right hand during the millennial age.

There are able arguments possible on both sides, yet both are not true. We propose, therefore, to take a glance at the general

Plan of Salvation,

to see which view is in harmony with it. In so doing, we shall find the relation and bearing of both the first and the second comings, and know where to locate.

First, then, Has God a plan? All must agree that He has, although almost all are inclined to think and talk of His dealings as though He were dealing by a rule of chance, and governed entirely by circumstance. No; He that would condemn a man for building a tower without first counting the cost, shall He build and people a universe without counting the cost? No, brethren; "Known unto the Lord are all His ways from the beginning." God has a plan, a purpose, and we know that "all His purposes shall be accomplished." But how shall we find that plan? It is revealed to us in His word. "Search the Scripture," as Paul says, "Compare Scripture with Scripture," for

"God is His own interpreter,

And He will make it plain."

We are too much inclined to ask What does my church say about any question, instead of What saith the Scriptures? Too much theology

studied, and the Bible not enough. With the thought, then, that "The Scriptures are able to make us wise," that "the testimonies of the Lord are sure making wise the simple," let us examine. **[R5 : page 2]**

We will not here discuss the question, Why evil was permitted. We take the fact which sickness, death, vice, &c., make so plainly and painfully evident, viz., Evil exists. Its existence is attributed in Scripture to the devil. Evil continues because Satan's power is continued. It will last throughout the present age, because "the devil is the prince [ruler] of this world" [age]. He will continue its ruler as long as he can, or until he is bound. He cannot be bound until a stronger than he takes the control out of his hands.

God, of course, can control him; and of Jesus it is written, "All power in heaven and in earth is given unto me."

But while Christ has all power, for wise purposes He has not made use of it, permitting evil to reign and measurably control the world, and permitting the devil to be "prince of this world," or epoch. But the time is coming when "He shall take to Himself His great power, and reign," exalting His Church, giving her "power over the nations," so that instead of, as now, being "subject to the powers that be," she shall "rule the nations." But when will He thus assume control? When the Gospel Church, "His body," Ecclesia, is complete. Evil now being permitted for "the trial of your faith," the perfecting of the saints. This time is synchronous with the sounding of the seventh trumpet. Rev. 11:15. Here the mystery [church] of God is finished, and "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and His anointed" [church]. Now, we inquire, is this transfer of authority

From Satan to Christ

caused by the conversion of the nations to Christ through preaching the Gospel? We answer, No. At this time the nations are not converted (vs. 18), "And the nations were angry; and thy wrath is

come." If converted, they would not be thus hostile, neither would God's wrath come upon them. On the contrary, God teaches in many Scriptures that a great time of trouble will come upon the nations. "Come, behold the desolations which the Lord hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth." This is the way God tells us He will make wars to cease. The next clause informs us that then He "will be exalted among the heathen and in all the earth." This chastisement of nations will be for their good, and is necessary to them as is the chastisement which God now inflicts upon His children, and it will have a good effect, for "When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." It is in this new dispensation that, with evil restrained – Satan bound – the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth, as the waters do the sea." The conversion of the world, instead of being due now while "the devil is the prince of this world," will, David says, be "When the kingdom is the Lord's and He is the Governor among the nations, [then] all the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and the kingdoms of the nations shall come and worship before Him."

During the infancy of the human family – say from Adam to Moses – God treated his creatures like very young children. So far as we know, they had very little knowledge of their Creator's power or character. They had scarcely any revelation, the exception being the few cases where God favored special persons, as Abraham, Lot, &c., communicating to them by angels, giving to Abraham and Eve peculiar promises, which they could only vaguely comprehend.

The next age was to the Jewish nation a schooling season, during which God taught them to respect His promises and laws. They were yet minors, under age, therefore not treated as children, but kept under the law, their schoolmaster. Gal. 4.

While the Word of God was being written and committed to the Jews for keeping, &c., the remainder of the world seems to have been left in the darkness of heathenism. They bowed down to wood and stone, destitute of truth as they are to-day.

In Scripture the period from Adam to the flood is called "the world [age] that was." From the flood to the second coming of the Lord, "the world [age] that now is," and "the present evil world," [age], and the next is called "the world to come."

"The present evil world" contains three

Separate Ages.

The Patriarchal, lasting from the flood to the death of Jacob; the Jewish age, lasting from the death of Jacob until the death of Christ, when He gave them up, wept over them, and said: "Your house is left unto you desolate;" the Gospel age, lasting from the resurrection of Christ, when He became "the first-born from the dead, and the beginning of the new creation," until the full company of "the Church of the First-born" is complete, and He comes. The time of the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the resurrection and reward of prophets, saints, &c. Rev. 11:16.

We know not how many ages may be in "the world to come;" but that there is more than one, we are sure, for Paul speaks of "the ages to come." Eph. 2:7. The first of these alone is dealt with in Scripture, the millennial age, during which we live and reign with Christ a thousand years. Rev. 20:4.

Having got an outline, let us look more particularly at God's doings and sayings, and, first, it will astonish you, doubtless, until you reflect, when I say, that according to His word, God has not exhausted His resources for the world's salvation; that, in short, He is not now

trying to save the world, nor has he been during past ages. What has He been doing? "Taking out a people – Church – for His name." Don't think this wonderful, as it is only putting in a striking form what all Calvinists believe, among whom are Baptists, Presbyterians and others, viz., That God is now electing, or choosing His Church out of the world. Yes, and all our brethren who believe in free grace must admit, that if "all His purposes shall be accomplished," and "God's word shall accomplish the thing whereto it was sent," if these Scriptures are true, God did not purpose the conversion of the world during the past six thousand years, else it would be accomplished. Neither did He send His word to convert the world up to the present time, else it did not prosper in the thing whereto He sent it. These two views have been a dividing point in the churches for centuries, viz.:

Election vs. Free Grace.

We believe the Scripture to teach both, but that it requires the observance of "Heaven's first law," order, to rightly divide the word of truth on this subject.

First we will glance at Election. During the age preceding the deluge, there is no Scriptural account of God giving mankind any law, and very little light of revelation. One promise shines out, "The Seed of the Woman to Bruise the Serpent," and even this required future revelation in order to be comprehended. God had, however, a few patriarchs or servants who had light above the masses, as lamp-posts in a dark way.

The Patriarchal age had increase of light. It is now revealed that this seed is not only to crush evil [serpent], but to "bless all the families of the earth," still God's Church is represented by one man, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, &c., &c. **[R5 : page 7]**

These patriarchs were elected – chosen. "God called Abraham, and said," &c. Abraham, and not his kin, was called. His parents were

idolators. He had "many sons and daughters," but only one is chosen. "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." Of Isaac's two sons, only one was chosen, "as it is written," says Paul, Rom. 9:7-13, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (loved less). God chose before they were born, "that the purpose of God according to election might stand." Now, remember, I do not say that God elected one to go to heaven and the other to hell. No; far from it. That is the common misconception of the Scriptural, and when properly understood, beautiful doctrine of Election.

At Jacob's death another advance step in God's plan is taken, and typical or fleshly Israel is formed. From this time one man no longer represents God in the world; but a nation, all the sons of Jacob and their posterity. And now we have an elect nation or church, and God gives all His special blessings to it. Other and larger nations – Egypt, Chaldea, &c. – are passed by, left without light and without knowledge, while these are given to Israel. "What advantage, then, hath a Jew?" Much, every way, chiefly because to them were committed the oracles (laws and testimonies) of God. This is Paul's statement. God speaking to them, says: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." This people alone was recognized, and thus continued until Christ came. Yes; and after it.

During Christ's ministry He preached to them, and would not suffer His disciples to do otherwise, saying as He sends them out, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not." Why so, Lord? "I am not sent save, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." All his time was devoted to them until death, and here was His first work for the world, and

God's Grandest Gift,

not for Israel only, but for all, for "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man." And now, also, in the Gospel age, a certain sort of election obtains. Some parts of the world are more

avored with the Gospel (which is free to all who hear) than others. Contrast yourself, with your privileges and knowledge, with the heathen man who never yet heard the call. When this called-out company, (called to be "sons of God," "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord,") is complete, then the [R6 : page 7] plan of God for the world's salvation is only beginning. Not until then will the seed "bruise the serpent's head," and "bless all the families of the earth." For the seed is not Christ, the head, alone, but the Church, which is His body, as Paul informs us, Gal. 3:29, "Which seed is Christ; and if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." The same company are to bruise the serpent. Rom. 16:20. The very God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.

The Gospel Age.

The Gospel age makes ready the chaste virgin (church) for the coming Bridegroom. When ready, the Bridegroom comes, and they that are ready are united. The second Adam and the second Eve become one, and are thus the beginning of the new creation, and then the glorious work of elevating mankind in general begins. The river of living water flows, and the work of the Church begins. In the next dispensation, new heavens and new earth. She is no longer the espoused Virgin, but the Bride. THEN "the Spirit and the Bride say come, and whosoever will let him come and drink of the water of life freely."

As Adam, the beginning of the fleshly race, was composed of man and the helpmeet taken from his side, as it is written, "Male and female created He them and He called their name ADAM," Gen. 5:12, so the "Second Adam," of whom Paul says the first "was a figure," or type, has a helpmeet taken from His side, and when she is fully formed and perfected, the Bridegroom comes and they go in to the marriage;

they become one, "the new creation of God" (read Eph. 5:25,30,32), making in "Himself of twain (Jews and Gentiles)

"One New Man."

(Eph. 2:15.) This new man we have found to be the seed "to crush the serpent's head." "The seed of Abraham," "in whom all the families of the earth shall be blest." That the Gospel age so far from closing the Church's mission, was only a school of affliction to enable her, as well as her head, to be touched with a feeling of earth's infirmities, that they might sympathize with mankind, and during the millennial age assist them, when "the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth," scattering the darkness of sin and ignorance, causing "wars to cease unto the ends of the earth." These are the "times of restitution," which Peter says are due when Christ comes. Acts 3:17-19. For this "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God." Rom. 8:22,19. These sons are not now manifest. There are in Christ's flock many "wolves in sheep's clothing." Among the wheat there are many tares; but when in "the harvest" ("the end of the age"), they are separated, then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father – be manifested – and then to the groaning creation (mankind) shall this "Sun of Righteousness arise, with healing in His wings."

But let us leave this bright and pleasant picture of the coming day, of which, with the poet, we could say:

"Haste thee along, ages of glory,

Haste the glad time when Christ appears,"

and turning, look at a dark picture. Have you ever asked yourself, while rejoicing in the glorious opportunities to be offered to mankind during the millennial age – What about those who have died before the plan of God has thus reached its fullness? There have lived on earth

since creation (six thousand years), about one hundred and forty-three billions of human beings. Of these the very broadest estimate that could be made with reason would be, that less than one billion were Saints of God – the Church – the Bride. What of the one hundred and forty-two billions who died out of Christ? What is their condition?

Atheism answers: They are eternally dead. There is no hereafter. They will never live again.

Calvinism answers: They were not elected to be saved. God foreordained and predestined them to be lost – to go to hell – and they are there now, writhing in agony, where they will ever remain without hope.

Arminianism answers: We believe that God excuses them on account of ignorance, and that if they did the best they knew how, they will be as sure of being a part of the "Church of the First-born" as is Paul himself.

To this last view the great majority of Christians of all denominations hold, from a feeling that any other view would be irreconcilable with justice, on God's part.

But, we inquire, what do the Scriptures teach on this last point? That ignorance is a ground of salvation? No; the only condition known in Scripture is FAITH. "By grace are ye saved, through FAITH." Justification by faith is the ground-rock of the whole system of Christianity. When, on the day of Pentecost, Peter was asked, "What must we do to be saved?" he answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized, and thou shalt be saved."

Again he says, Acts 4:12, "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved," than the name of Jesus.

Paul reasons that a man must hear the Gospel before he can believe: "How shall they believe on Him of whom they have not heard?" This – God's plan – that men shall be saved on account of faith, Paul says was to the Jews a stumbling block (because they expected salvation as a reward of keeping the law) and to the Greeks (the worldly wise) foolishness. But, nevertheless, it has "pleased God by the foolishness (in the eyes of men) of preaching to save

Them Which Believe."

I want to Scripturally close you in to the thought, that all who have not heard could not believe, and not believing, could not be a part of the Bride of Christ. But, you object, Paul, in the first two chapters of Romans, teaches "that these having not the law are a law unto themselves," and that this law which their conscience furnishes, is sufficient to justify them. No, I answer, you understand Paul differently from what he intended. Paul's argument everywhere is, that "all the world is guilty before God." "For if I had not known the law, I had not known sin. For by the law is the knowledge of sin." The law given to the Jew revealed his weakness, and was intended to show him that he was unable to justify himself before God. "For by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His (God's) sight." As the law thus condemned the Jews, so Paul says it is with the Gentiles also. Though ignorant of the law, they had light enough of conscience to condemn them. "That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God," Rom. 3:19, in order that eternal life may be seen to be "the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord," to every one that believeth.

Well, you answer, the Bible to the contrary, I believe and insist that God won't damn the world for ignorance. Now, let us see. Do you practice what you declare? Why do you assist in sending missionaries to the heathen, at a cost of thousands of valuable lives and millions of money? If they will all be saved – or even half of them – through

ignorance, you do them a positive injury in sending a preacher to tell them of Christ, for we know that only about one in a thousand believe when the missionary does go to them. If your idea be correct it were far better that no missionaries should ever be sent. Before, nearly all saved; now, because of knowledge, nearly all lost. In the same way we might reason, that if God had left all in ignorance, we would all have been saved. Then, instead of the Gospel being good news, it would be more properly named bad news.

No, my brethren; you do believe that "there is no other name given whereby we must be saved." Your actions speak the loudest, and speak rightly.

Now, suppose we look at these things just as God tells us of them, and leave the clearing of His character to Himself.

What Has Become of the 142 Billions?

First, we answer, that you may be sure they are not now in hell suffering; because not only do the scriptures teach that full and complete reward is not given to the Church until Christ comes, "when he shall reward every man," but the unjust are to receive their deserts then also. Whatever may be their present condition, it cannot be their full reward, for Peter says: "God knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished," and he will do so. But the thought of so many of our fellow creatures at any time being lost, without having had the knowledge which is necessary to salvation, seems terrible, indeed, to all who have a spark of love or pity. Then, too, there are a number of Scriptures which seem hard to harmonize with all this. Let us see in the light of his dealings how shall we understand the statement, "God is Love," or "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish."

Ah, Lord, it seems to poor, frail humanity that if you loved the world so much, you might have made provision, not only that believers might be saved, but also that all might hear.

Again we read: "This is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Lord, all our reason seems to say, not so. We cannot see how Jesus lighted more than a few of earth's billions. Yonder Hottentot gives no evidence of having been so enlightened, neither did the Sodomites and myriads of others. **[R7 : page 7]**

Once more we read: "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man." How, Lord, we ask? If he tasted death for the one hundred and forty-three billions, and from other causes it becomes efficacious only to one billion, is not his death comparatively a failure?

Again: "Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Surely it is to but a little flock to whom it has been glad tidings, and not to all people.

Another is: "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all." A ransom, then why should not all have some benefit from Christ's death?

Oh, how dark, how inconsistent do these statements appear when we remember that the Gospel Church is "a little flock." Oh, how we wish it would please God to open our eyes that we might understand the Scriptures, for we feel sure that did we but understand, it must all seem clear, it must all declare in thunder tone, "God is Love." Oh, that we had the key! Do you want it? – Are you sure you do? It is the last text we quoted, "Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Due time. Ah, now we see. God has a due time for everything. He could have testified it to this one hundred and forty-two billions in their life time. Then that would have been their due time; as it was not so, their due time must be future. We know that

now is our due time, because it is testified to us now. Christ was a ransom for you before you were born, but it was not due time for you to hear it until years after. So with the Hottentot; Christ was his ransom at the same time that he was yours; he has not heard it yet, and may not in this life; but in God's due time he will.

But does not death end probation? one enquires. There is no scripture which says so, we answer, and all the above and many more scriptures would be meaningless or worse,

If Death ends all

to the ignorant masses of the world. The only scripture ever quoted to prove this generally entertained view, is, "As [R8 : page 8] the tree falleth, so it lies." If this has any relation to man and his future, it indicates that in whatever condition of knowledge or ignorance he enters death, he remains the same until he is raised up again.

But can knowledge ever reach these billions in their graves while dead? No; God has provided for the resurrection of them all. For "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." As death came by the first Adam, so life comes by the second Adam. Everything that mankind lost in the first, is to be restored in the second. Hence, the age following Christ's second coming is spoken of as "the times of restitution."

Life is one of the things lost, and is to be one of the things restored. Mark me! I do not say eternal life is given them. No; Adam never had eternal life to lose; if he had it, he could not have died. He had natural life, lost natural life, and it is to be natural life that the second Adam restores. This is a certain sort of salvation that Christ accomplishes for all; but the eternal salvation, which believers receive, is entirely different. This enables us to use another text, which is little used except by Universalists, and although not Universalists, yet we claim the right to use all scripture. It reads: "We trust in the living God,

who is the Savior of all men, especially of them which believe." All men are saved or rescued from the loss entailed on them through Adam, by having all those lost things, including natural life, restored to them. He is also the "especial Savior of them which believe." For believers who now constitute the body of Christ are the happy recipients of "The gift of God, eternal life. While those of the world are raised natural bodies, those of the Church are raised spiritual bodies, "neither can they die any more, but are like the angels of God."

Now we see that "the testimony in due time" explains all of those troublous texts. In due time it shall be "glad tidings of great joy to all people." In due time that "True Light shall lighten every man that cometh into the world," and in no other way can these scriptures be used without wresting. We take them to mean just what they say. Paul carries out the line of argument with emphasis in Rom. 5:18,19. He reasons that as all men were condemned to death and suffered it because of Adam's transgression, so also Christ's righteousness justifies all to life again. All lost life, not of our own will or choice, in first Adam; all receive life at the hands of the second Adam, equally without their will or choice.

When thus brought to life, and the love of God testified to them, their probation,

Their First Chance,

begins, for we do not preach a second chance for any.

But Peter tells us, that "the restitution is spoken of by the mouth of all the holy prophets." They do all teach it. Ezekiel tells us of the valley of dry bones, "This is the whole house of Israel;" and God says to them, "I will bring you up out of your graves, and bring you into your own land." This agrees with St. Paul, Rom. 6:25,26. Blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles (the Gospel Church, the elect company "taken out of the Gentiles") be come in,

and so all Israel shall be saved," or brought back from their cast-off condition. For "God hath not cast off His people whom He foreknew." They were cut off from His favor while the bride of Christ was being selected, but will return to favor when that work is accomplished. – Vs. 28 to 33. The prophets are full of statements of how God will "plant them again, and they shall be no more plucked up." This does not refer to restorations from former captivities in Babylon, Syria, &c., for the Lord says, "In that day it shall no more be a proverb among you 'the fathers ate a sour grape and the children's teeth are set on edge;' but every man shall die for his own sin." This is not the case now. You do not die for your own sin, but for Adam's – "As in Adam all die." He ate the sour grape, and our forefathers continued to eat them, entailing further sickness and misery upon us. The day in which "every man shall die for his own sin," is this Millennial or Restitution day. But when restored to the same conditions as Adam, will they not be as liable to sin and fall again as he was? No; they will be liable, but not as liable; they have learned in their time the lesson which God designed to teach to all, viz., "The exceeding sinfulness of sin." They will be prepared to appreciate the good and shun the evil, and the Gospel Church then glorified will be, "the kings (rulers) and priests" (teachers) of that new age, for "Unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world (age) to come, whereof we speak," &c. Then through "the second Adam" and His helpmeet they may be begotten into their spiritual likeness.

But are we sure that God intends these blessings for any but the "people whom He foreknew" (the Jews)? Yes. He mentions other nations also by name, and speaks of their restitution. Let me give you an illustration that will be forcible:

The Sodomites.

Surely if we find their restitution mentioned you will be satisfied. But why should they not have an opportunity to obtain eternal life as

well as you or the Jew? They were not wicked in the proper sense, for they did not have law or much knowledge. True, they were not righteous, but neither were you when God gave you your opportunity. Christ's own words shall tell us that they are not as guilty in His sight as the Jews, who had more knowledge: "Woe unto thee Capernium, for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom it would have remained unto this day." Thus Christ's own words teach us that they had not had their full opportunity. "Remember," Christ says of the Sodomites, that "God rained down fire and destroyed them all." So, if their restoration is spoken of, it implies their resurrection.

Let us look at the prophecy, Ezek. 16:48 to the close. Read it carefully. God here speaks of Israel and compares her with her neighbor, Samaria, and also with the Sodomites, whom he says, "I took away as I saw good." Why did God see good to take away these people without giving them a chance of eternal life through the knowledge of "the only name?" Because it was not their due time. They will come to a knowledge of the truth when restored. He'll save them from death's bondage first, and then give them knowledge as it is written. "God will have all men to be saved, and to come to a knowledge of the truth." When brought to the knowledge, then, and not until then, are they on trial for eternal life. With this thought, and with no other, can we understand the dealings of the God of love with those Amalekites and other nations, whom he not only permitted, but commanded Israel to butcher. "Slay Amalek utterly – leave neither man, woman or child." "Spare not the little ones." How often my heart has ached, and yours, too, as we sought to reconcile this apparent wantonness on God's part with the teachings of the new dispensation, "God is love," "Love your enemies," &c. Now we can see that the entire Jewish age was a type of the higher, Gospel age; Israel's victories and conquests merely pictures of the Christian's battles with sin, etc. These Amalekites and Sodomites and others were used to

illustrate, or to be "examples" "for our admonition;" and these people might just as well die so, as of disease and plague, and it mattered little to them as they were merely learning to know evil, that when on trial, "in due time," they might learn good and be able to discriminate and choose life.

But let us read the prophecy further. After comparing Israel with Sodom and Samaria, and pronouncing her worse, vs. 53 says: "When I bring again the captivity [in death, all are captives and **[R8 : page 8]** Christ came to 'set at liberty the captives and to open the prison doors' of the grave,] of Sodom and Samaria, then will I bring thy captives in the midst of them." (These will be raised together.) In vs. 55 this is called "a return to

"Their Former Estate."

– restitution. But some one, who cannot imagine that God really could be so good or just, suggests God must be speaking ironically to the Jews, and saying He would just as soon bring back the Sodomites as them, but has no notion of either. Let us see. Read vss. 61-62. Nevertheless "I will remember my covenant with thee; I will establish it to thee." "Yes," says Paul, "this is God's covenant with them – they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and callings of God are without repentance." Rom. 11:27-29. The 63d verse concludes the argument, showing that the promised restitution is not based on the merits of the Jews, Samaritans or Sodomites. "That thou mayest remember and be confounded and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God." When God signs his name to a statement in this way I must believe it. "Saith the Lord God." And no wonder if they are confounded when "in the ages to come He shows forth the exceeding riches of His grace." (Eph. 2:7), and many of God's children will be confounded and amazed also when they see how "God so loved THE WORLD." They will be ready to exclaim with brother

Paul: "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

But some will inquire, how comes it that this has not been seen long ago? We answer, God gives light and knowledge to his people just as it is due. The world was left in almost entire ignorance of God's plan until the Gospel age, when Christ came, bringing life and immortality TO LIGHT through the Gospel. The Jews up to that time supposed that all the promises of God were to and for them alone, but in due time God showed favor to the Gentiles also. Christians generally have supposed that God's blessings are to the church, but we begin to see that God is better than all our fears, and though he has given us the "exceeding great and precious promises," He has made some to the world also.

"The path of the just is as a shining light that shineth more and more, until the perfect day," and the fact that it now shines so brightly, and that we are able to see more of the beauty and harmony of God's word, is strong presumptive evidence that we are in the dawn of that glorious millennial day, when "we shall know even as we are known."

But we promised to harmonize those doctrines of the Church generally supposed to be antipodes, viz., CALVINISM, or Election, and ARMINIANISM, or Free Grace. Perhaps you already see how they harmonize themselves by simply recognizing the order of the ages and applying each text to the place and time to which it belongs. Let me then point out to you

The Inconsistency of Either Calvinism or Arminianism

when separated from each other. In doing so I do not wish to reflect on those who hold these doctrines. I shall merely call your

attention to features which their warmest advocates must confess to be their weak points.

First – Calvinism says God is all-wise: He knew the end from the beginning, and, as "all his purposes shall be accomplished," He never could have intended to save any but a few – the true Church, the little flock. These He elected and predestined to be eternally saved; all others were equally predestined and elected to go to hell, for "known unto the Lord are all His works from the foundation of the world."

This has its good features. It shows, and properly, God's Omniscience. This would be our ideal of a GREAT God, were it not that three essential qualities of greatness, viz., MERCY, LOVE and JUSTICE, are lacking, for none of these qualities find place in bringing into the world one hundred and forty-two billions of creatures damned before they were born and mocked by protestations of love. No, no. "God is love;" "God is just;" "God is merciful."

Second – Arminianism says: Yes, "God is love," and in bringing humanity into the world He meant them no harm, only good. But Satan succeeded in tempting Adam; thus "sin entered into the world and death by sin," and ever since, God has been doing all He can to deliver man from his enemy, even to the giving of His Son, and though now, six thousand years after, the gospel has only reached a very small portion of those creatures, yet, we do hope and trust that within six thousand years more, through the energy and liberality of the Church, God will have so far remedied the evil introduced by Satan, that all may at least know of His love, and the knowledge of God be co-extensive with the knowledge of evil.

The commendable feature of this view is, that it accepts the statement that "God is love." But, while full of loving and benevolent designs for His creatures, He lacks ability and foreknowledge adequate to the accomplishment of those designs.

While God was busy arranging and devising for the good of His newly created children, Satan slipped in, and by one stroke upset all God's plans, and in one moment brought sin and evil among men to such an extent that even by exhausting all his power, God must spend twelve thousand years to even reinstate righteousness to such a degree that man will have an opportunity to choose Good as readily as Evil, and the one hundred and forty-two billions of the past six thousand years, and as many more of the next, are lost to all eternity, in spite of God's love for them, because Satan interfered with his plans as God had not foreseen. Thus Satan, in spite of God, gets one hundred into hell to one God gets to glory. This view must exalt men's ideas of Satan, and lower their estimation of Him who "Spake, and it was done; commanded, and it stood fast."

But how refreshing it is for us to turn from these fragments of truth, as separately considered, and

See How Harmonious

and beautiful they are when united. How, during the present and past ages God is electing or gathering, by the preaching of His word, the Gospel church. How He wisely permitted evil to come into the world, in order that He might develop His church, which, thus "being made perfect through suffering," might be prepared for her glorious work in the future; and how the mass of mankind, though not now on probation, are nevertheless getting a knowledge and experience by contact with sin which He foresaw they would be the better of; and, furthermore, how he took occasion, in connection with this, His plan, to show us His great love, by so arranging that the death of Christ was necessary to our recovery from sin, and then freely giving Him "to be a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world," and then in the next dispensation – "The new heavens and earth" (Rev. 21:1,9-10 and 22:17) – when "The Spirit and the Bride say come, and whosoever will may come and take of the

water of life freely." He will show us His "Free Grace" in fullest measure.

Is not this the teaching of God's word? Men never would have thought of such a glorious plan of salvation. Truly God has said: "My ways are not your ways, nor my thoughts your thoughts." Hereafter when we address Him "Our Father," may it call to our mind that His love and compassion are far greater than the pity of our earthly parents, and while we study His word more and more, and seek to "grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of God," let us ever remember that

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain.
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain."

Having seen how much of the great plan of God waits the coming of Christ for its accomplishment, and having, we trust, found why Christ comes, can we help loving His appearing? In our next we hope to examine with you what the Bible teaches of How Christ Comes.