

## **A HARMONIOUS VIEW.**

Among Christian people there are three leading views relative to Christ's coming. We briefly state them:

First, those called Second Adventists, look for Christ's coming, expecting that soon he will appear – a fleshly being – in the sky, when instantly the Church will be caught up into the air above the earth and there remain with him, while fire and brimstone are rained upon the earth, burning it to a cinder. During the time it is burning, and until it cools off (probably thousands of years), Christ and the Church will be waiting in the clouds.

These will then take possession of the earth, which will become as the garden of Eden again. There they expect to "build houses and inhabit them, plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them, and long enjoy the work of their hands." There they expect to reign with Christ as kings and priests – over whom none can tell (unless it be over one another), since all the rest of mankind must have long since perished in the burning earth.

Second, those terming themselves Pre-Millenarians, expect Christ to come unawares and gather the Church, and with them leave the world and go to heaven for a few years. During the absence of Christ and the Church, the world will be full of trouble, distress of nations, pouring out of the vials of wrath (more or less literal), etc. This trouble and distress will destroy or subdue unruly sinners, and then Christ Jesus and his church will return to earth and inhabit a new Jerusalem City which will (literally) descend from the sky.

Christ and his saints – all glorious fleshly beings – [called SPIRITUAL as a compliment to Paul (1 Cor. 15:44-50), though held to be really fleshly] will then reign over the few of the nations

**[R470 : page 5]** which have survived the trouble. This reign will last a thousand years. Then the dead, so unfortunate as not to live during the Millennial age, will be brought out of a "lake of fire" to earth, and arraigned for mock trial and condemnation before Christ Jesus and his Church. All will speedily be condemned and sent back to hell for never ending ages; then Christ and the Church will go to heaven and deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and the world will be set on fire and melted – possibly to become, at some future time, again a stage for combat between new races of men and devils; or possibly to continue to roll through space a blackened cinder, a lasting memorial of the lost cause of man's dominion, and of God's lack of wisdom in undertaking to establish an earthly government of which man should be king. (Psa. 8:6.)

Third, Post-Millenarians, by far the largest class, including nearly all so-called orthodox Christians, claim that the foregoing views are too gross and materialistic. They claim, and with good reason we think, that it would be very absurd to think of the glorious Christ and his Church (spiritual beings) either building houses and planting vineyards and enjoying the work of their hands, or reigning and living in a city in Palestine. They think this would be progress backward and not forward. During this age, say they, the church walks by faith and not by sight. To bring in a new age, in which it would walk by sight, would prove it to be a dispensation on a lower plane and not progression.

They claim that the Millennium, or 1000 years' reign of truth and righteousness, will be marked by no visible manifestation of Christ to men's natural eyes, but that the Church, in her present condition, will stem the tide of evil and cause righteousness to prevail, and that thus God's kingdom – church – (which they claim is now reigning) will conquer the world, and bring about the foretold blessedness and happiness to fill the earth. All this is to be

accomplished without Jesus' personal presence here, though they claim that the Church will have special spiritual help and power from him in the great work. When the point is reached where all evil and wrong is subjected to right, the plan ends (i.e., if so aimless a supposition can be called a plan at all), and then Jesus comes and the mock trial and condemnation of the ignorant and unfortunate billions, who lived before the Millennial light had fully blazed forth, are re-consigned to endless woe and the earth destroyed by fire, much as Pre-Millennialists believe.

We cannot find words to express our thankfulness to our Father that we have been led into a much more harmonious and reasonable understanding of his plan than any of these views present. These are the human reasonings on the Word of God before the true light was due. Many still tenaciously hold these ideas of the past, but those who walk in the path, which shines more and more, are led into a more reasonable and harmonious view. We rejoice to be of those free from fetters of human creeds – free to search and believe God's Word – free to be taught of God. Hence, as the Millennial morn is breaking, we are prepared to see light in God's light.

The truth seems to lie between – the last two views being the extremes – Second Adventism being, in our judgment, the grossest and farthest from truth, except on the one point of man's condition in death.

Now, let us state briefly a fourth view of this subject, as seen from ZION'S WATCH TOWER, the scriptural proofs of which have frequently been presented in our columns and hence are now omitted. We ask a careful comparison of it, not only with the three above, but with God's Word as a whole.

### **THE FOURTH VIEW.**

This view recognizes plan, system, purpose in all God's works, reading them in his statements and in his doings.

Jehovah formed the earth – not to burn it, but "to be inhabited." "He created it not in vain; he formed it to be inhabited" (Isa. 45:18). He created various orders of creatures adapted to the earthly home, of which man was the Chief – Lord – Ruler – King (1 Cor. 15:40; Psa. 8:6).

This is Jehovah's plan, and must ultimately be accomplished, but its accomplishment requires the work of seven thousand years.

Man, to be in any degree a likeness of God, must have a free will, and, in order to the proper use of his will, he must have knowledge. This, God could have given him without, but permitted him to gain by, experience. When he sinned by the exercise of his free will, God inflicted a righteous punishment and withdrew the life, and thus death reigned by sin, and man for 6000 years has been experiencing "the exceeding sinfulness of sin" and the bitterness of its fruit.

During all this time Jehovah's plan did not change. Man knew not of it, nor angels, for "angels desired to look into these things," but were not permitted (1 Pet. 1:12). Meanwhile God gave laws, and caused types and shadows of his plan to be enacted in a nation which he chose for this purpose (Israel). These shadows showed the leprous character of sin and pointed to the slain Lamb of God – as the means and agency for its removal – and in the type, too, was presented the blessings to follow its removal.

In due time Christ Jesus came and "gave himself a ransom (equivalent price) for all." Did he come too soon, since sin must reign the full 6000 years? No, our Father had another part of his [R470 : page 6] plan hidden in this plan for earth! It was to select "a peculiar people," "a little flock," "the Bride," who should be

lifted out of the human nature entirely and become new creatures – partakers of the Bridegroom's Divine nature. Thus the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world, was not too soon, but in "due time." All must be bought before any could be selected, and there was just sufficient time for the selection of the Bride before the due time should come for giving the human family a knowledge (experience) of good, and bringing in everlasting righteousness, and restoring to such as would have it – the lost dominion.

We are now in the early dawn of the Millennial day. It is the day of all man's week (7,000 years) the best; the only one in which right will rule and wrong be fully subjected, and man will be restored by natural processes to the perfection once lost by the disobedience of one man, but the right to which has been redeemed by the obedience of the man Christ Jesus (Rom. 5:18).

During this Millennial age Jesus and his Bride, spiritual beings – no longer men – will be personally present, directing and overruling the affairs of earth, but invisible to men, as angels have been in the past. As Satan and his angels (present – invisible – yet ruling among men) have used Rome as so willing an agent that it is scripturally called by his name – the devil and Satan – so this spiritual kingdom of God will operate through restored fleshly Israel, and find in it so willing an agency that it will be properly called also the kingdom of God, and will extend its borders righteously, as the Roman counterfeit has attempted to do unrighteously, until the kingdom shall fill the whole earth. Then shall be fulfilled the prayer of the Master, "Thy kingdom come: Thy will be done in earth as in heaven." And man restored shall plant and build and long enjoy the work of their hands, for "the earth abideth forever." God "made it not in vain; he made it to be inhabited."

When sin and Adamic death are wiped out, and all its traces removed, and the incorrigible destroyed in the second death, then man, being in the condition in which he was first created – an image of his Creator, and possessed of an experimental knowledge of both good and evil – will be in proper condition to receive and rightly use the first dominion. Then the dominion will be delivered up to God, even the Father, by the accountability of men being made thereafter directly to Jehovah, instead of to Jesus as during the Millennial age (John 5:22). During that age the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, his agent – man's purchaser – Redeemer.

Thus we get a glimpse of God's plan for bringing many sons to glory – some to the glory of the human nature and some to the Divine nature. But the glory of the terrestrial (earthly) is one thing and the glory of the celestial (heavenly) is another thing entirely (1 Cor. 15:40). Surely we can say that it is a plan worthy of our God – full of Wisdom, Love and Power. "Oh, the depths of the riches both of the knowledge and wisdom of God!"

We understand that now we are in the dawn of the glorious day – it is not yet sunrise – (the shining forth of the Church, Matt. 13:43), but the "Day Star" (Jesus) has arisen in our hearts – we know of his presence – and the sunshine will, ere long, dispel the darkness and storm with which this day opens. That this Millennial era commences with a time of trouble, and the pouring out of symbolic plagues and vials, we believe and teach; and we incline to the belief that the trouble and distress will be of a sort at first little appreciated by many. First, the nominal Churches – systems – having filled their mission are due to be destroyed. Secondly, earthly kingdoms, having served their purpose, are vessels of wrath fitted for destruction (Rom. 9:22); and mankind, long held in bonds

of ignorance, under oppression and superstition, is to be released and prepared for their experience with good during Messiah's reign.

As this Gospel age is the time for trial of those called to the heavenly nature – the Church – so the Millennial age is to be the time of judgment – trial of mankind – to determine who of them are worthy of human perfection and the dominion of earth. It will be the time of trial of earth's dead, as well as those living, when that age begins.

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