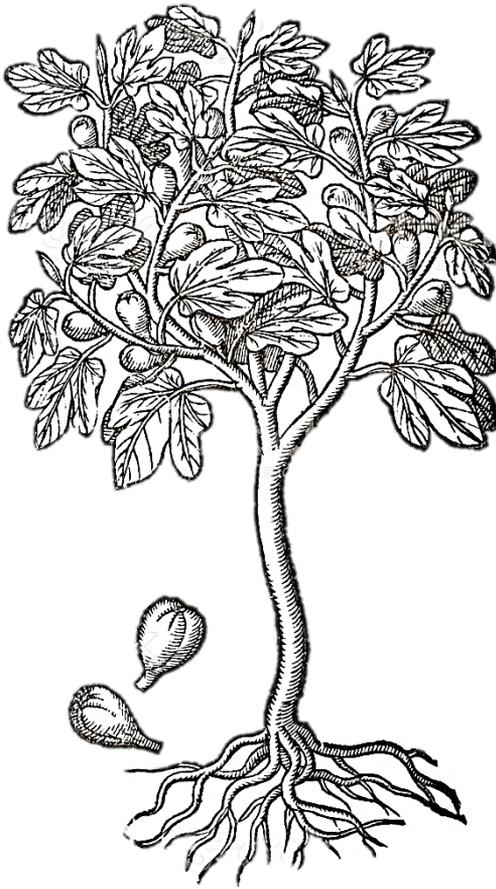


# Christ's Second Coming

"WHAT SHALL BE THE SIGN OF THY COMING AND OF THE END OF THE WORLD?" – DISCIPLES.



"WHEN YE SHALL SEE ALL THESE THINGS, KNOW THAT IT IS NEAR, EVEN AT THE DOORS." - JESUS.

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## JESUS NEXT APPEARS

The Son of Man will be seen "coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." But before his coming, a great work will be done for his people. Should he suddenly burst upon them now, they could not endure "the power and great glory" of the scene. This subject is well illustrated by the following words of the prophet: "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord, his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain; as the latter and former rain unto the earth." Hosea 6:3. The morning is a beautiful figure of the opening glory of the day of God. The day-star first appears, then the dawn of day. And as the light of day increases, our eyes are enabled to endure it, and view the sun shining in his strength. But, should the light of the sun burst upon the world suddenly at midnight, no human eye could endure it.

So will the people of God be prepared to meet their coming King. They must first break away from the love and cares of this world, and consecrate all to the Lord. Then will they, in due time, share the outpouring of the holy Spirit "as the rain, as the latter and the former rain upon the earth." The day-star will arise in their hearts. 2Pet.1:19. Those who have taken heed to the sure word of prophecy through the dark, watching night, will then raise their heads in triumph. They are filled with faith, and with the Holy Spirit. Glory is poured upon them till they can gaze on Christ and angels. The trumpet sounds. The angels are dispatched to the graves' mouths. The voice of the Son of God awakes the sleeping saints of all ages. They come forth in immortal perfection; and as they leave the earth, the living saints are changed. The "elect from one end of heaven to the other," each with an angel bright and strong to lead the way, are all caught up to meet the Lord, who waits in mid-heaven to receive the purchase of his blood. As language would fail to describe what follows, dear reader, we leave you here to contemplate it, praying that we may be prepared to participate in the meeting scene.

## PARABLE OF THE FIG-TREE

Verses 32,33. "Now learn a parable of the fig-tree; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh. So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it [He, margin,] is near, even at the doors." The parable of the fig-tree is probably the most forcible figure that could be used by our Lord to illustrate this subject. When the trees of the field

begin to put forth their leaves, and the tender grass springs up, and the ground is being covered with its green, velvet carpet, we know that summer is nigh. It is a certainty with us that summer is coming when we see these signs in nature. We know that summer is nigh. "So likewise," or, with the same certainty, we may know that Christ's coming is at the doors when the signs in the sun, moon, and stars, are fulfilled.

Here, dear reader, our Lord has stated the object of these signs, which is, that we may know when his coming is at the doors. But we are told that the church is not to know anything of the period of Christ's second advent. Then, we inquire, why did our Lord give signs of the event? Are they given to deceive us? to lead the honest Christian to look for Christ's coming when, in fact, nothing is to be known of the time of the event? Certainly not. The fact that Christ foretells signs of his coming, and then states the object of those signs, that the church may know when the event is near, even at the doors, is sufficient proof that it is the design of Heaven that the church should understand the period of the second advent.

### ALL THESE THINGS

Our Lord says (Luke 21:28), "And when these things BEGIN to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." The signs began to come to pass with the dark day of 1780. Then it could be said that redemption draweth nigh, and from that time the humble follower of Jesus might look up in expectation of witnessing his glorious appearing. But (verse 31) "when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand."

The signs in the sun, moon, and stars, are all that were given to base faith upon. All the other events mentioned in connection with these, have their fulfillment after the faith of God's people is perfected, and the doom of all sinners is fixed; therefore they cannot be embraced in the phrase "all these things." The three signs having come to pass, we may now learn the parable of the fig-tree, and know that Christ's coming is near, even at the doors. The phrase, "all these things," does not embrace the mourning of the tribes of the earth, and the sign of the Son of Man. Neither does it embrace the shaking of the powers of the heavens; for that does not take place until the seventh vial is poured out. But the faith of God's people is perfected, and the doom of all sinners is forever fixed, before the pouring out of the first vial. The parable of

the fig-tree was given to inspire faith in the minds of those who hear the reasons of Christ's soon coming. But to suppose that this parable is to be learned after it said, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still. . . and he that is holy let him be holy still;" after the thunder, lightning, great earthquake, and great hail, "each stone about the weight of a talent," is most absurd. No! The phrase, "all these things," in Verse 33, embraces the three great signs in the sun, moon, and stars, given to strengthen the faith of God's people, while merciful warnings are being given to the world. Here, then, since the falling stars of 1833, the parable of the fig-tree has force, and we may know that Christ's coming is near, even at the doors, with all the certainty that we know that summer is nigh when the trees put forth their tender buds and leaves.

### THIS GENERATION SHALL NOT PASS

Verses 34,35: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Many suppose that our Lord here speaks of the generation then living, who listened to his teachings. That such are in error on this point, the following facts clearly prove:

1. It is certainly true that what is embraced in the phrase, "all these things," was not fulfilled in that generation.
2. It could not be the generation living in the days of his flesh, for he said to them (Luke 11:29), "There shall no sign be given it but the sign of Jonas, the prophet.

It is evident that our Lord refers to the generation who were to see the signs fulfilled, and who were to be instructed by the parable of the fig-tree. In this prophetic discourse, he leads the minds of his disciples down over the events of the Christian age, mentions the signs in the sun, moon, and stars, which were to appear in the last generation, and then declares that this generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled.

In like manner, Paul carries his brethren forward to the resurrection, when he says, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." 1Cor.15:51, 52. Or, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." 1Thess.4:17. The things here mentioned by the apostle did not take place in his day. They have not yet taken place. Notwithstanding, he

speaks of them as though they would take place in his day, and he have a part in them.

Also, in like manner is the mind carried backward in Ps.95:10: "Forty years long was I grieved with this generation." The generation here spoken of provoked the Lord in the wilderness, long before David lived. He goes back and speaks of it as though it were present. In this manner our Lord goes forward, and speaks of the last generation as though it were present.

We do not believe that the phrase, "this generation," marks any definite number of years. Some suppose that our Lord designed to teach that some who were witnesses of the dark days in 1780 would live to witness the second coming of the Saviour. But it is our opinion that the Lord designed to teach that the people who should live at the time of the fulfillment of the last sign (the falling stars of 1833), and should hear the proclamation of the coming of Christ, based partly upon the fulfilled signs, should witness the scenes connected with his coming.

The proclamation of the coming and kingdom of Christ is given to the last generation. God did not send Noah to preach to the next to the last generation before the flood, but to the last. The very generation which was destroyed by the waters of the flood saw Noah build the ark, and heard his warning voice. So God has raised up men to give the solemn warning to the world at the right time to give force to the warning. And the very generation of men that live after the three great signs are fulfilled, and who hear and reject the warning message from Heaven, will drink the cup of the unmingled wrath of God. For such, the seven last plagues are reserved. And those of this very generation who receive the message, suffer disappointments, and endure the trials of the waiting position, will witness the coming of Christ, and exclaim, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us." Isa.25:9.

With what emphasis our Lord gave utterance to this sentiment. It is a rebuke upon our unbelief. As we read it, God help us to believe it: "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.' And as though this were not enough to lead us to unwavering faith, he adds these forcible words: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

## THE DAY AND HOUR

Verses 36,37: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of Heaven but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." The day and hour, and even the year, of the second advent, are purposely hidden. Some of the prophetic periods reach to the time of the end, while others extend still farther down, very near the end itself; yet none of them reach to the coming of the Son of Man. The prophecies clearly point to the period of the second advent, but do not give the definite time of that event. But many suppose that the text proves that nothing may be known of the period of the second advent. In this, they greatly err, as may be seen from the following reasons:

1. Because our Lord, after stating that the sun should be darkened, and that the moon should not give her light, and that the stars should fall from heaven, gives the following forcible parable, and makes the most distinct application of it to this subject. He says: "Now learn a parable of the fig-tree; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh. So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." Verses 32, 33. No figure should exceed the fact illustrated in a single particular. This being the case in the parable of the fig-tree, the point becomes an exceedingly strong one. No language can be more direct. No proof can be more complete. With all that certainty with which we know that summer is nigh when we see the buds and the leaves shoot forth from the trees in spring, may we know that Christ is at the doors. The most daring unbelief will hardly venture to deny those words of the Son of God, and assert that nothing can be known of the period of his second coming.

2. Because our Lord declares that as the days of Noah were, so should also the coming of the Son of Man be. Said God to Noah, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." Gen.6:3. The period of the flood was given to the patriarch. And under the direct providence of God, he prepared the ark and warned the people. So the fulfilling prophecies and the signs distinctly declare that the second coming of Christ is at the doors, and the solemn message has gone forth.

3. Those who claim that the text proves that nothing may be known of the period of the second advent, make it prove too much for their own unbelief. As

recorded by Mark, the declaration reads: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." If the text proves that men will know nothing of the period of the second advent, it also proves that angels will know nothing of it, and also that the Son will know nothing of it, till the event takes place! This position proves too much, therefore proves nothing to the point. Christ will know of the period of his second advent to this world. The holy angels who wait around the throne of Heaven to receive messages relative to the part they act in the salvation of men, will know of the time of this closing event of salvation. And so will the waiting, watching people of God understand. An old English version of the passage reads, "But that day and hour no man maketh known, neither the angels which are in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." This is the correct reading, according to several of the ablest critics of the age. The word know is used in the same sense here that it is by Paul, in 1Cor.2:2: "For I determined not to know [make known] anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Men will not make known the day and hour, angels will not make it known, neither will the Son; but the Father will make it known.

Says Campbell: "Macknight argues that the term know is here used as a causative, in the Hebrew sense of the conjugation hiphil, that is, to make known. . . . His [Christ's] answer is just equivalent to saying, The Father will make it known when it pleases him; but he has not authorized man, angel, or the Son, to make it known. Just in this sense, Paul uses the term know: 1Cor.2:2: 'I came to you making known the testimony of God; for I determine to make known nothing among you but a crucified Christ.' "

Albert Barnes, in his Notes on the Gospels, says: "Others have said that the verb rendered knoweth means sometimes to make known, or to reveal, and that the passage means, 'that day and hour none maketh known, neither the angels, nor the Son, but the Father.' It is true the word has sometimes that meaning, as 1Cor.2:2.

The Father will make known the time. He gave the period of the flood to Noah, which well represents the proclamation of the second advent, given in connection with the evidence of the termination of the periods of Daniel, during the great Advent movement of 1840-44.

And when the patriarch's work of warning and building was finished, God said to him, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark." "For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights." So when the waiting, watching, weeping, toiling time shall be finished, and the saints shall all be sealed, and shut in with God, then will the voice of the Father from Heaven make known the definite time. See Rev.16:17; Joel 3:16; Jer.25:30.

The present is emphatically the waiting, watching time. It is the especial period of the patience of the saints. In definite time we would find relief from the state of suspense to which our present position subjects us. The Lord appeals to us thus: "Watch, ye therefore; for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch." Mark.13:35-37.

One of the fatal consequences of not watching is distinctly stated in Rev.3:3: "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." The consequence of not watching will be ignorance of the time. What will be the consequence of watching? The inference is unavoidable, that it will be a knowledge of the time. In answer to the agonizing prayer of the Son of God, "Father, glorify thy name," there came a voice from Heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." The disciples understood these words from Heaven, while the people that stood by said it thundered. John 12:27-29. So will the waiting disciples of Christ understand the voice of God when he shall speak from on high? But the unbelieving world will not understand it. In comparing Noah's days and ours, the Lord continues:

#### NOAH'S TIME AND OURS

Verses 38,39: "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." A picture of the present condition of the mass of mankind is here drawn. How dark the features! The people of the last generation will be like those before the flood, while the ark was preparing. Noah preached, and warned them of the coming flood, and they mocked. He built the ark, and they scoffed and jeered. He was a preacher of righteousness. His works were calculated to give edge to, and set home to the

heart, what he preached. Every righteous sermon, and every blow struck in building the ark, condemned a careless, scoffing world. As the time drew nearer, the people were more careless, more hardened, more bold and impudent, and their condemnation surer. Noah and his family were alone. And could one family know more than all the world? The ark is a matter of ridicule, and Noah is regarded as a willful bigot.

But the Lord calls Noah into the ark. And by the hand of Providence the beasts are led into the ark; and the Lord shuts Noah in. This is regarded at first by the scoffing multitude as something wonderful; but it is soon explained away by the wiser ones, so as to calm their fears, and they breathe easier.

The day of expectation finally arrives. The sun rises as usual, and the heavens are clear. "Now where is old Noah's flood?" is heard from a thousand impious lips. The farmer is caring for his herds and lands, and the mechanic is pursuing his work of building. On this very day, some are being joined in marriage. With many, it is a day of unusual feasting and sports. And while all are looking to long years of future prosperity and happiness, suddenly the heavens gather blackness. Fear fills every heart. The windows of heaven open, and the rain in torrents descends. "The fountains of the great deep are broken up," and here and there come gushing up rivers of waters. The valleys are fast filling up, and thousands are swept away in death. Some flee to the highest points of land; but the water fast follows them up. Men bear their wives and children to the mountains, but are obliged to part with them there to drown, while they climb the highest trees. But soon they, too, are covered with water, so that there is not a resting-place for Noah's dove. All are still in death. Horrid death! made still more horrible by being in consequence of slighted mercy! But where is Noah? Ah! safe in the ark, borne upon the billows. Safe from the flood; for God "shut him in."

By most people, the evidences of the soon coming of Christ are considered insufficient to base faith upon. But mark: the testimony and acts of one man condemned the people destroyed by the flood. The evidences then were sufficient, otherwise the world would not have been condemned. But a hundred times more convincing evidences come pouring in upon us, that the day of the Lord is near, and hasteth greatly. We follow down the numerous prophetic chains of Daniel, and of the Revelation, and we find ourselves in every instance standing just before the day of wrath. We see the signs spoken

of by prophets, by Christ, and in the epistles, fulfilling, or fulfilled. And at the right time, and in the right manner, to fulfill certain prophecies, a solemn message arises in different parts of the world: "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand." Joel 2:1.

Wherever we look, we see prophecy fulfilling. While the knowledge of God and the spirit of holiness are departing, spiritual wickedness, like a flood, covers the land.

But these evidences are considered insufficient to rest faith upon. Well, what kind of evidence would the unbelieving have? "When the signs of the end," says the skeptic, "are fulfilled, they will be so plain that no one can doubt." But if the signs are of such a nature, and are fulfilled in such a manner, as to compel all to believe in the coming of Christ, how can it be as it was in the days of Noah? Men were not then compelled to believe. But eight believing souls were saved, while all the world besides sank in their unbelief beneath the waters of the flood. God has never revealed his truth to man in a manner to compel him to believe. Those who have wished to doubt his word, have found a wide field in which to doubt, and a broad road to perdition; while those who have wished to believe, have ever found everlasting rock upon which to rest their faith.

Just before the end, the world will be hardened in sin, and indifferent to the claims of God. Men will be careless about hearing warnings of danger, and blinded by cares, pleasures, and riches. An unbelieving and infidel race will be eating, drinking, marrying, building, planting, and sowing. It is right to eat and drink to sustain nature; but the sin is in excess and gluttony. The marriage covenant is holy; but God's glory is seldom thought of. Building, planting, and sowing, necessary for convenient shelter, food, and clothing, are right; but the world has gone wholly after these things, so that men have no time for disposition to think of God, Heaven, Christ's coming, and the Judgment. This world is their god, and all their energies of body and mind bow down to serve it. And the evil day is put far away.

The faithful watchman who sounds the alarm as he sees destruction coming, is held up before the people from the pulpits of our land, and by the religious press, as a "fanatic," a "teacher of dangerous heresies;" while in contrast is set forth a long period of peace and prosperity to the church. So the churches are quieted to sleep. The scoffer continues to scoff, and the mocker mocks on. But

their day is coming. Thus saith the prophet of God: "Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt. And they shall be afraid; pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them. . . . Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it." Isa.13:6-9.

Most dreadful day! And is it near? Yes; it hasteth! It hasteth greatly! What a description given by the prophet! Read it; and as you read, try to feel how dreadful will be that day: "The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy; for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land." Zeph.1:14-18.

Now we hear the "peace-and-safety" cry from the pulpit, and all the way along down to the grogshop. "Where is the promise of His coming?" is murmured from the impious lips of a thousand last-day scoffers. But the scene will speedily change. "For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them . . . and they shall not escape." The scoffing of the haughty scoffer will soon be turned to wailing and howling. "The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low." Isa.2:11,12. "And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground." Jer.25:33.

The last plagues, in which is filled up the wrath of God, now bottled up in Heaven, waiting for mercy to finish her last pleadings, will be poured out. Unmingled wrath of Jehovah! And not one drop of mercy? Not one! Jesus will

lay off his priestly attire, leave the mercy-seat, and put on the garments of vengeance, never more to offer his blood to wash the sinner from his sins. The angels will wipe the last tear shed over sinners, while the mandate resounds through all Heaven, Let them alone. The groaning, weeping, praying church on earth, who in the last message employs every power to sound everywhere the last note of warning, lest the blood of souls be found in her garments, is now hushed in solemn silence. The Holy Spirit has written within them these prophetic words of their soon-expected Lord: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Rev.22:11.

### THE FINAL SEPARATION

Verses 40,41: "Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; one shall be taken, and the other left. This language was designed to illustrate the final separation of the righteous and the wicked. Many husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, will then part, never to meet again.

### THOSE WHO WATCH, WILL KNOW THE TIME

Verses 42-44: "Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore, be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh."

The day and hour of Christ's second coming are not revealed in the Scriptures. Neither is the year in which this glorious event is to take place pointed out. No one of the prophetic periods reaches to the second coming of Christ. The sanctuary is to be cleansed at the end of the 2300 days, and Daniel is to stand in his lot at the end of the 1335 days. But that these events occur before the second appearing of Christ, is susceptible of the clearest proof. Both these prophetic periods terminated in 1844. But we cannot give a defense of our position in regard to these periods in this work.

The time from the end of the prophetic periods to the coming of Christ is emphatically the waiting, watching time. Those who watch, as our Lord commands, will know the time. No man will make it known; for it is not revealed to man in the Scriptures. Angels will not make it known, though they

may minister to and communicate with, the children of men. Neither will the Son. But the Father will make it known when he speaks again from Heaven. He once spake the ten commandments in the hearing of the people. His voice then shook the earth. When he speaks again, the heavens and earth will both shake. Says Paul: "Whose voice then shook the earth; but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." Heb.12:26. "The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake." Joel 3:16.

Probably there is no prophecy that better describes the present state of unbelief in the world in regard to the second advent, caused partly by fanatical time-movements, than the following: "Son of Man, what is that proverb that ye have in the land of Israel, saying, The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth? Tell them, therefore, Thus saith the Lord God: I will make this proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel; but say unto them, The days are at hand, and the effect of every vision. For there shall be no more any vain vision nor flattering divination within the house of Israel. For I am the Lord: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass; it shall be no more prolonged; for in your days, O rebellious house, will I say the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord God." Eze.12:22-25. The burden of this prophecy is time; therefore, the word here mentioned that the Lord will speak, will be the time.

Rev.3:3, is also to the point: "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." Those who do not watch, will not know the hour. Those who watch, will know the hour.

The present watching condition is clearly defined in 1Thess.5:1-4: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."

The present watching, waiting position requires much faith and patience. Says Paul, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God [in proclaiming the coming of Christ], ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." Heb.10:35-39.

Says James, "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 latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." Chap.5:7,8.

The present position and present duty of God's people are defined in Rev.14:12: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

#### THE FAITHFUL AND WISE SERVANT

Verses 45-47: "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods."

In this figure, Christ is represented as the lord of the household of faith (see Mark 13:35; Heb.3:6), leaving his house, and committing the work of caring for his church to his servants. A blessing is promised those servants who are faithfully discharging their duty when their Lord comes. They are to feed the flock of God, over whom the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers. Acts 20:28. They must preach the word. 2Tim.4:2. They should watch for souls as they that must give account. Heb.13:17. They will not only give meat to the household, but they will give it in due season. They will preach the present truth. Their last work, before the return of their Master, will be to proclaim his coming, and to teach the necessary preparation. They will sacrifice the society and blessings of home, and go everywhere, preaching the word, suffering fatigue of body and burden of spirit. But such will have great reward in the kingdom of God. "Who is that faithful and wise servant?" Where shall we find

him? Ans. He is faithfully and wisely attending to the interest of the household of faith.

1. He is faithful. As a faithful watchman, he will give timely warning when he sees the sword coming. His work just before the end is seen in the following scriptures: Joel 2:1: "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand." Isa.58:1: "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." 2Tim.4:1-5: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

2. He must be wise. "He that winneth souls is wise." He must be wise. He will expose error, then hold forth the truth in its harmony and beauty, and thus win men to the truth. When it becomes his duty to "reprove and rebuke," it will be at a proper time and place, and then with all "long-suffering and doctrine." He will study to show himself "approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2Tim.2:15.

#### THE EVIL SERVANT

Verses 48-51: "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: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." What the evil servant says and does, shows most clearly the position and work of the faithful and wise servant. Why the evil servant says, "My Lord delayeth his coming," is because the faithful servant is proclaiming the coming of his Lord. Why the evil servant smites the faithful servant, is because he teaches the speedy coming of his Lord. The faithful servant, true to his commission to preach the "gospel of the kingdom" to a

fallen church and a scoffing world, toils on, and the evil servant smites on. One is laying up treasure in Heaven, and is preparing to go home to his eternal reward; while the other is calling down upon his head the displeasure of the high and holy One, and is getting ready to receive the unmingled cup of the fury of the Lord. The faithful servant is turning some, at least, to righteousness, to shine forever as stars in his crown of glory, while the evil servant pursues his downward course and work of death, making the bitter cup of woe which awaits him, still more bitter. But the separating day is coming. The Lord will come, and cut asunder the evil servant, and appoint him his portion with the lost. In the general wailing and gnashing of teeth, with hypocrites he will receive the portion due him for his works.

Head the doom of the false shepherds, the ministers of the last generation, who come up to the day of the Lord with their garments all stained over with the blood of souls. They now cry, Peace and safety, and their flocks confide in them. They stand between us and the people, and turn away the arrow of truth. But their day is coming, dreadful beyond description. Thus saith the Lord: "Howl, ye shepherds, and cry; and wallow yourselves in the ashes, ye principal of the flock; for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersions are accomplished; and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel. And the shepherds shall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to escape. A voice of the cry of the shepherds, and an howling of the principal of the flock, shall be heard; for the Lord hath spoiled their pasture. And the peaceable habitations are cut down, because of the fierce anger of the Lord." Jer.25:34-37.

#### PARABLE OF TEN VIRGINS

Chap.25:1-4: "Then shall the kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps."

The twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew are one connected discourse. The parable of the ten virgins of chapter 25, is a further illustration of the great subject of the second advent, treated in the previous chapter, especially of the action of the wise and the evil servants, given in the closing part of it. "Then shall the kingdom of Heaven be likened [compared, Campbell's translation] unto ten virgins." At the very time when both these classes of

servants are manifested, may the kingdom of Heaven be compared to an eastern marriage. The parable, then, does not have a general application; but illustrates the kingdom of Heaven at a particular time. There can be no mistake on this point.

Some have desired to obtain a correct account of an eastern marriage, that they might better understand this parable. But let it be understood that our Saviour has here given the desired history, and testifies that the kingdom of Heaven shall be likened, or compared, unto it.

The kingdom of Heaven is not the future kingdom of glory. The parable can in no wise illustrate that kingdom. The term here, as in many other places in the New Testament, applies to the work of grace; or, more definitely expressed, it refers to the great second-advent movement, caused by the power of the word and Spirit of God upon the minds and hearts of men.

The ten virgins illustrate those who professed faith in the evidences of the soon coming of Christ, based upon fulfilled and fulfilling prophecy, and the signs of the times. Their lamps represent the word of God. Ps.119:105; 2Pet.1:19. The oil may illustrate abiding faith, produced by a thorough work of the word and Spirit of God upon the hearts and lives of men. The difference, then, between those illustrated by the foolish, and the wise virgins, is that one class rest in that faith which alone is the result of theory, while the other class have that abiding faith which results not only from theory, but also from the work of grace wrought by the word and Spirit of God. And in the great advent movement, these two classes have been clearly manifested.

Verses 5-7: "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps." The bridegroom in this parable represents Jesus Christ, and the tarrying of the bridegroom clearly shows a disappointment on the part of those looking for his second coming, and a consequent delay. The first point of expectation, as expressed in the title page of Wm. Miller's nineteen lectures, was "about the year 1843." This time passed, and believers, for as time, sank into a position which is well represented by the words, "They all slumbered and slept."

In the summer of 1844, it was seen that those evidences which had been relied upon as proof that the 2300 prophetic days of Dan.8, would end in the year

1843, proved that they would terminate in 1844. The entire body of believers had been united, agreeing with Wm. Miller that the 2300 days dated from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, B.C. 457. This point settled, the figures 1843 were readily found:

From 2300

Take 457

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1843 remains

But it was seen that it would require 457 full years before Christ, and 1843 full years after Christ, to make 2300 full years; so that if the 2300 years commenced with the first day of B.C. 457, they would reach to the first day of A.D. 1844. It was also seen that this prophetic period did not commence with the year 457, in the spring, but in the autumn of that year; consequently, 2300 full years would terminate in the autumn of 1844. In connection with this view of the subject, a most forcible application of the parable of the ten virgins, and other scriptures, was made, and a most solemn, searching cry went forth to Adventists everywhere, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." This appeal to professed believers went with astonishing rapidity and power, and all were aroused to search the Scriptures with greater care and deeper interest, fitly represented by the words, "Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps."

### CHARACTER OF THE WORK

As to the character of the work which resulted from giving what was called the midnight cry, it evidently was the special work of God. It was not, as many supposed the result of fanaticism.

1. Because it bore the marks of the especial providence of God. It was not characterized by those extremes ever manifested where human excitement, and not the word and Spirit of God, has the controlling influence. It was in harmony with those seasons of humiliation, rending of heart, confession and complete consecration of all, which are matters of history in the Old Testament, and are made matters of duty in the New.

2. Because it was subversive of all those forms of fanaticism which had made their appearance somewhat in connection with the second-advent cause. These were at once swallowed up by the solemn power of the midnight cry, as the rods of the magicians were by the rod of Aaron.

3. Because the work was marked with sobriety, humility, solemnity, reverence, self-examination, repentance, confessions, and tears, instead of lightness, exaltation, trifling, irreverent expressions, self-justification, pride in spiritual things, voluntary humility and will-worship, which generally characterize the conduct of fanatics.

4. Because the work bore the fruit of the Spirit of God, as set forth in the New Testament. It was evidently guided by wisdom from above. The apostle James declares this wisdom to be "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." Chap.3:17. Paul says that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Gal.5:22,23. These are the good fruits of the work and Spirit of God, and these did all appear in an eminent sense as the results of the midnight cry.

Of all the great religious movements since the days of the first apostles of our Lord, none stand out more pure and free from the imperfections of human nature and the wiles of Satan, than that of the autumn of 1844. In fact, after looking back upon it for more than twenty-six years as the greenest spot on all the way in which God has led his people, we do not see how it could have been better, at least so far as the direct providence and work of God is concerned. It was beyond the control of human hands, or human minds. Men and demons sought to hinder and to mar this work; but the power that attended it brushed away their influence as you would remove a spider's web, and there stood the work of God, free from the print of a man's hand.

The Advent Shield published in January, 1845, bears testimony to the character of that work, in words of truth and soberness. And let it be borne in mind of truth and soberness. And let it be borne in mind that the Shield was a standard work, of 440 pages, for all Adventists at that time, and that the following testimony from it was not published till about three months after the seventh-month movement, when Adventists had taken time to review the past, and settle, as was supposed, upon a firm, united position:

"It produced everywhere the most deep searching of heart and humiliation of soul before the God of high Heaven. It caused a weaning of affections from the things of this world, a healing of the controversies and animosities, a confession of wrongs, a breaking down before God, and penitent, broken-hearted supplications to him for pardon and acceptance. It caused self-abasement and prostration of soul, such as we never before witnessed."

Verses 8,9: "And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves." Those who had no part in the great advent movement can scarcely form any idea of that work. But those who took part in that work know that the burden of testimony to believers everywhere was that the preparation was an individual work. All were faithfully warned to look to God, and obtain an individual experience. The urgent requests for help from those in whom the work had been superficial, and the faithful responses of those who had the work at heart, are well illustrated by the above conversation between the foolish and wise virgins.

#### THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

Verse 10: "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut." There are two things which the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments illustrate by marriage: First, the union of God's people in all past ages, as well as at the present time, with their Lord; second, Christ's reception of the throne of David, which is the New Jerusalem. But union of believers with their Lord has existed since the days of Adam, and cannot be regarded as the marriage of the Lamb. It is supposed that Isaiah (54:5) speaks of the church when he says, "Thy Maker is thine husband;" but Paul, in Gal.4, applies this prophecy to the New Jerusalem. Says John, speaking of Christ, "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom." John 3:29. That Christ is here represented in his relation to his followers by a bridegroom, and his followers by a bride, is true; but that he and they are here called the bridegroom and bride, is not true. No one believes that the event called the marriage of the Lamb took place eighteen hundred years since.

Paul, in writing to the church, 2Cor.11:2, says, "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you a chaste virgin to Christ." But does this prove that the marriage of the Lamb took place in Corinth? or, did Paul only wish to

represent by marriage, the union which he had effected, through the gospel, between Christ and the church at Corinth? He also says, Eph.5:23, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church." But please turn and read from verse 22, and it will be seen that Paul's subject is the relation and duty of man and wife to each other. This is illustrated and enforced by the relation of Christ and the church. Those who suppose that Paul is here defining who the Lamb's wife is, are greatly mistaken. That is not his subject. He commences. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands." Verse 22. "Husbands, love your wives." Verse 25.

The marriage of the Lamb does not cover the entire period of probation, in which believers are united to their Lord, from Adam to the close of probation. It is one event, to take place at one point of time, and that is just prior to the resurrection of the just. Then what is the bride in the marriage of the Lamb? Said the angel to John, "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." Rev.21:9. Did the angel show John the church? "And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven from God." Verse 10.

The New Jerusalem is also represented as the mother. "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." Gal.4:26. Christ is represented (Isa.9:6) as the "everlasting Father" of his people; the New Jerusalem, the mother, and the subjects of the first resurrection, the children. And, beyond all doubt, the resurrection of the just is represented by birth. How appropriate, then, is the view that the marriage of the Lamb takes place in Heaven before the Lord comes, and before the children of the great family of Heaven are brought forth at the resurrection of the just.

Let those who are disposed to cling to the old view that the church is the bride, and that the marriage is after Christ comes, and the saints are caught up to Heaven, answer the following questions:

1. Who are illustrated by the man found at the marriage, Matt.22, not having on the wedding garment? Will any be caught up by mistake, to be bound hand and foot, and cast down to the earth again?
2. If the church is the bride, who are they that are called to the marriage as guests?

3. Jerusalem above is the mother of the children of promise; but if the church is the Lamb's wife, who are the children?

The marriage of the Lamb is Christ's reception of the throne of David, or his own throne, which is the New Jerusalem above. That city is finally to come down upon the new earth, to be the capital of the everlasting kingdom. The event illustrated by the coming of the bridegroom in the parable, is thus described by the prophet: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and the brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him." Dan.7:13,14. This language describes a grand transaction in Heaven between the Father and the Son. The Son, at his second advent to this world, does not approach the Father. So far from this, the apostle represents the Father as remaining in Heaven, and sending his Son. "And he [the Father] shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you." Acts 3:20.

The words of the Psalmist are to the point: "Ask of me [says the Father to the Son], and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Ps.2:8,9. Before the Son makes his second advent to this world, he receives from the Father "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom."

After the coronation of the King of kings, or the marriage of the Lamb, the opening heavens will reveal him coming in grandeur and in glory, leading on the armies of Heaven to the last great conflict with the beast, the false prophet, and the kings of the earth. See Rev.19. "His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns." "And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords." His mission then will be to "judge and make war." He will then destroy his enemies, and redeem his people. The marriage is over, and his people are still waiting his return. The true position of the waiting ones is thus described: "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." Luke 12:35,36.

In the parable, while the foolish virgins were gone to buy oil, the bridegroom came; those that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door

was shut. Our position is, that before the second advent, events take place on earth and in Heaven, connected with the experience and history of those who are called out to wait for the Lord, which may be, and will be, likened, or compared, to the several events of an eastern marriage named by our Lord. The bridegroom, in the parable, represents Christ. The coming of the bridegroom, and the marriage, in the parable, represent events that take place in Heaven in connection with the reception of the throne of the immortal kingdom by the rightful heir, Jesus Christ. The marriage of the Lamb takes place before the second advent, so that at Christ's second appearing he returns from the wedding. These facts will appear evident from a close examination of Ps.2:8,9; Dan.7:13,14; Matt.12:36.

The shutting of the door, in this parable, does not represent the closing of human probation, sometimes called the shutting of the door of mercy. That last decisive event is at the close of Christ's ministration in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, and is spoken of by our Lord thus: "When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are." Luke 13:25. That is when Jesus rises from his mediatorial work, lays off his priestly garments, and puts on his royal robes. Then will the King of kings proclaim in Heaven, to be repeated by the church on earth: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me." Rev.22:11,12. "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of Thy people, and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was." Dan.12:1.

But the shut door of the parable illustrates the closing of Christ's work in the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, at the end of the 2300 prophetic days of Dan.8:14, when the heavenly Bridegroom entered upon that last work of atonement which is to terminate with his union with the throne of the immortal kingdom.

At that time Christ closed one distinct ministration, or shut the door of the holy place, and opened another distinct ministration, or opened the door of the most holy place, as he, the great high priest, entered it to cleanse the sanctuary.

This open, and this shut, door, are thus spoken of in the address to the Philadelphia church: "These things saith He that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works. Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." Rev.3:7,8. The term, "key of David," in this text, has direct reference to Christ's reception of the throne of David, which is his rightful throne, the throne of the immortal kingdom. And the entire address to the Philadelphia (brotherly love) church applies to that glorious period in the history of Adventists, when, by the power of the midnight cry in the autumn of 1844, every heart beat in union, and every voice was raised in the joyful proclamation, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." Was the door of mercy then shut? No! The truth is so far from this that the Coming One declares to his dear, waiting people, "Behold, I have set before thee an open door."

This door our great High Priest opened when he entered upon the work of cleansing the heavenly sanctuary from the sins of all his people. Before the ark of the Ten Commandments and the mercy-seat, he stands, ready to offer his blood in behalf of all who will, by faith, enter with him.

Verses 11-13: "Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch, therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh." The wise virgins represent those who occupied a correct position in 1844, and those who still receive it and adhere to it. These were in a state of acceptance with Christ, and could be represented as going in with him to the marriage. And do not the foolish virgins, who came afterward represent those who in 1854 occupied an erroneous position in regard to the prophetic periods?

The light upon the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary had been given. The open door of the most holy place, revealing the ark of the Ten Commandments, had been set before all Adventists. But many closed their eyes, and rebelled against the law of God in that ark. The rejection of so clear light left them exposed to the terrible delusion of a false time movement in 1854. And the folly of these timeists is manifested in that they have departed from the true position on time, have rejected the open door, and are in rebellion against the law of God.