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The Second Advent and Parousia (Presence) of Christ.

(Convention Address.)

WHEN thinking of this matter of the Second Advent of our Lord it is well to hold in mind the fact that God's plan is one harmonious whole, which is being wrought out through Christ; and that the Second Advent stands related to the work of the First as effect to cause. That is, that the great work of Restitution at the Second Advent follows the work of Redemption accomplished at the First Advent as a logical sequence according to the Divine Plan. The Lord's return is therefore the dawn of hope for the world, the time for the bestowment of the favours secured by the redemption—the 19 centuries of the Gospel Age being an intervening space, during which the Bride of Christ is being selected, to be associated with her Lord in the great work which He comes to accomplish.

When rightly understood the object of our Lord's Second Advent is truly a glorious one. He comes to bring in the long promised times of restitution, when the whole world shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God.

The Scriptures tell us that when Christ comes the second time, Satan will be bound and all evil will be restrained.

"The ransomed of the Lord (i.e., all mankind) shall return (from the sleep of death) and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads."

At that time God will pour out His spirit upon all flesh, and shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain. The Scriptures clearly teach that when Christ comes the second time He comes to reign, and He must reign until He has put down all enemies—all opponents, all things in the way of the great restitution which He comes to accomplish—the last to be overthrown being death (1 Cor. 15:25-26) and that He will reign for a thousand years.

What a great change will be brought about when Christ comes to reign; everyone shall know about it; and see that it is indeed the Lord's Kingdom which has at last come. Instead of the wicked prospering as they do today, then shall the righteous flourish. Instead of war, and strife, and commotion, unrest and strikes, there shall be "abundance of peace." "He shall judge Thy people with righteousness, and Thy poor with judgment. He shall judge the poor of the people and save the children of the needy, and break in pieces the oppressor." (Psa. 72.)

We see then that the Second coming of our Lord is indeed a greater matter altogether than that of the First Advent. It is not confined to the one nation of Israel; it is not even to occupy a literal throne like the kings of the earth, but Christ shall be king over all the earth, "King of kings and Lord of lords," and much more powerful than if He were once more changed to the limitations of the human body. (Psa. 98.)

Seeing clearly the object of our Lord's Return, that it is to take up His great power and reign, it becomes a matter of intense interest to His people to know how or in what manner He is to be expected. Some Christian people think that when Christ comes the second time He will come again as a man. This conclusion is based upon a too literal interpretation of some scriptures. In 1 Thess. 4:16 we read, "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God." The voice and the trumpet mentioned here correspond with the same figures used in Rev. 11:15-19. "The seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying The Kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever . . . And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged." This expression agrees also with the statement of the prophet Daniel, ch. 12:1-2, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great Prince . . . and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation . . . and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake."

It seems clear that Daniel and John both refer to the same time of which the Apostle Paul speaks in 1 Thess. 4:16. It is the time of our Lord's appearing, and the preparation for the establishment of His Kingdom in the midst of a great time of trouble. The "shout," the "voice of the Archangel" and the "trump of God" are all symbols. We would not expect that the second coming of our Lord would be announced by a literal, audible sound on the air. It seems clear that Paul is here referring to what the Revelator terms "the seventh trumpet," the "last trump" in a series of symbolic trumpets. We note also the Apostle Paul's reference to the same trump in 1

Cor. 15:51-52. "Behold I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

The proof that these references are to the same trumpet is found in the record of the events connected with each.

Paul mentions the resurrection, and the establishment of the Lord's Kingdom, as connected with "the Trump of God," and the Revelator mentions the same with even greater minuteness. The sounding of the "seventh" or "last trump" is an indication of the presence of our Lord; the events due to take place at the sounding of the "last" or "seventh trump" are visible to the eye of faith. There can be no doubt that we are living in the day of His preparation the period which precedes the actual reign of Christ and His Church. On every hand there is evidence of the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy (ch. 12) in which he states that when Michael shall stand up there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation. The name Michael signifies "who as God" or one representing God, a fit name for Him who is "the express image of the Father's person."

The Scriptures show that it is the preparation for the setting up of Christ's Kingdom in the earth that causes the dissolution of the kingdoms of this world of which Satan is the ruler.

Another text which is sometimes taken to show that Christ will come in human form, is found in Acts 1:11. It reads—"This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come, in like manner, as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Some think the meaning of this passage is—As ye see the Lord ascend into heaven, so, in like manner you shall see Him come again. A little careful consideration of this text, however, reveals that it does not say that those who saw Him go will see Him come, nor that anyone else will see Him come. What is stated in this Scripture is that the manner of His coming will be like the manner of His going? And what was the manner of His going? Was it with great spectacular demonstration? Was it with trumpet sound and voices and a great shout rending the air? If so, we should expect His coming again to be "in like manner." On the other hand was it not quietly and secretly, quite unknown to the world, and known only to the little flock of His own footstep followers? His statement (John 14:19) "Yet a little while and the world seeth Me no more," has never yet been disproved; for none but the brethren saw even His manifestations after His resurrection, and no others witnessed His ascension. And in like manner as He went away (quietly, secretly, so far as the world was concerned, and unknown except to His followers), so, in this manner, He comes again. And as when He went away He lifted up His hands and blessed them, so, when He comes again, it is that their joy may be full, as He said "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself," "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." (John 14:3; 16:22.)

Describing His Second Advent our Lord also said, "Behold I come as a thief." How does a thief come? He comes stealthily, and at a time when people are unaware of his presence. But did not the Scripture say "Behold He cometh with clouds and every eye shall see Him"? The Greek word here translated "see" signifies "to discern." It will be with the eyes of their understanding that all men will "see" or discern the great change of dispensations taking place.

"And when He was questioned of the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said, The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation" (marginal reading, not with outward show. Luke 17:20).

These Scriptures show that the Lord will be present unseen, doing a work of which the world for a time will be entirely unaware. His arrival must therefore be in a quiet manner, unobserved, and unknown to the world, just "as a thief" would come, without noise or other demonstration to attract attention.

The Scriptures assure us that the Lord does not leave His people in ignorance concerning the fact of His presence. His direction to His disciples when about to leave them was, "Watch therefore for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." Again He said, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, . . . that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open unto Him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching; verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them."

Surely the Lord's consecrated people in these last days have realized the fulfilment of this promise. The light, the knowledge and understanding which God's people now have concerning the Plan of the Ages together with its times and seasons, surpasses anything which the church has had since the times of the Apostles. According to His promise the Lord has indeed come forth to serve His people, and what a blessing has come to us as we have feasted our minds upon the rich treasures of His grace as now revealed to us through His Word. The world of mankind around us cannot appreciate the light of truth which now shines out from the pages of God's Word. The natural man perceiveth not the things of the spirit; they are foolishness unto him, therefore we need not wonder that the worldly-minded are unable to see the signs which indicate the presence of our Lord.

Our Lord's presence will be manifested to the world by exhibitions of "power and great glory," not, however, merely to the natural sight, but to the eyes of their understanding, as they shall open to an appreciation of the great changes which will then be effected. His presence and righteous authority will be recognized in the punishments, and later in the blessings that will flow out to mankind when His reign begins.

In that Day, evil powers are to be overthrown, and righteousness, established by a gradual process, shall speedily work out a corresponding retribution to evil-doers, and blessings to them that do good—"Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, . . . but glory, honour and peace to every man that worketh good—in that day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds."

(Rom. 2:9, 10, 6, 5.)

And since there is so much that is wrong now the retribution will be very severe at first, making a “time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation.” Thus, in vengeance, and trouble, and wrath upon the nations, will the Lord reveal to the world, the fact of the change of dispensations. And thus, “when the judgments of the Lord are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” (Isa. 26:5-11.)

Our Lord will thus reveal Himself gradually. some will discern His presence sooner than others, but ultimately “every eye shall see (discern) Him.” (Rev. 1:7.)

But “He cometh with clouds,” and while the clouds of trouble are heavy and dark, when the mountains (kingdoms of this world) are trembling and falling, and the earth (organised society), is being shaken, disintegrated, melted, some will begin to realize that the great day of Jehovah has come; that the foretold day of trouble and wrath upon the nations is beginning; and that Jehovah’s Anointed is laying justice to the line and righteousness to the plummet. (Isa. 28:7.) And He must reign until He shall have put down all authorities and laws on earth, contrary to those which control in heaven.

While the Lord’s presence will be revealed to the world by means of the judgments of the fiery time of trouble; (see 2 Thes. 1:7-8) yet a different method is used to make known to His footstep followers the fact that that important event has taken place. Our Lord repeatedly urged upon His followers the necessity for earnest watchfulness respecting His Second Advent. His words are, “Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.”

And when His disciples inquired what would be the sign of His presence and the end of the Age, the Lord gave them certain signs or indications which would enable us to know of the fact of His presence after it had occurred.

In our Authorised Version the Greek word “Parousia” is incorrectly rendered “coming.” In the Emphatic Diaglott and in Prof. Young’s translation it is rendered “presence,” and in the marginal reading of the Revised Version “presence” is acknowledged to be the true definition of the word. This Greek word “parousia” invariably signifies personal presence, as having come, having arrived; and it should never be understood as signifying to be on the way, as the English word “coming” is generally used.

In the 24th chapter of Matthew’s Gospel we have what has been termed our Lord’s great prophecy, and when we remember that it was in answer to the question “What shall be the sign of Thy presence and of the end of the Age”? it assists us to identify the Divinely provided signs. Coming down to verse 27 in this 24th of Matthew, our Lord furnished us with a most beautiful illustration of the manner in which His presence will be revealed. His words are,

“As the bright-shining emerges from the east, and illuminates even unto the west, so will be the presence of the Son of Man.” That most translations of this verse are faulty in using the word lightning, where sunlight is meant, is evident; for lightning flashes do not come out of the east and shine unto the west. They just as frequently come from other quarters, and rarely, if ever, flash clear across the heavens. The Lord’s illustration, and the only one which will comport with His words, is the sun’s brightness, which does invariably emerge from the east and shine even unto the west. The Greek word “astrape,” here used is thus shown to be improperly translated in this text, and also in the account of the same words by Luke (ch. 17:24.) Another instance of the use of the word “astrape” by our Lord is found in Luke 11:36, where it applies to the brightness of a candle, and in the common version is rendered “bright- shining.” “As the bright-shining of a candle doth give thee light.” Incorrect ideas of the manner of our Lord’s coming and revealing, firmly fixed in the minds of the translators, led them into this error of translating “astrape” by the word “lightning.”

They supposed that He would be revealed suddenly, like a flash of lightning, and not gradually, like the dawning sunlight. But how beautiful is the figure of sunrise, as illustrating the gradual dawning of truth and blessing in the day of His presence. The Lord associates the overcomers with Himself in this figure, saying, “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father.” (Matt. 13:43.) And the Prophet, using the same figure, says,

The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His beams.” (Mal. 4:2.) The dawning is gradual, but finally the full, clear brightness shall thoroughly banish the darkness of evil, ignorance, superstition and sin.

In Matt. 24:30 our Lord refers again to the sign of His presence among His professing people. “Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven.” The sign or proof of His “parousia” will be given in heaven. Not in the heaven of the Father’s presence, and before the holy angels, but in the symbolic heaven, the ecclesiastical heaven. It is in this heaven the professedly spiritual class—that the sign or evidence of our Lord’s presence will first be apparent. Some will “see” the fulfilment of the prophetic declarations respecting this day of the second presence, in the marvellous unfolding of the Divine plan of the Ages, and will recognize it as one of the signs of His presence. (Luke 12:37.) The judgment of Babylon, Christendom, social and ecclesiastical, is another sign that the Judge has come, and is reckoning first of all with those to whom as stewards He committed His goods. (Matt. 25:19; Luke 19:15.) “Judgment must begin with the house of God.” It is to Laodicea the last or seventh period in the church’s history that the announcement is made “because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold or hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth.” (Rev. 3:14-16.)

The gathering together of God’s elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other, referred to in verse 31, is also a sign of our Lord’s presence. It is a sign in the heavens—amongst the professedly spiritual class. Have we not all observed that during the past 60 or 70 years particularly, there has been a work of separation going on amongst the Lord’s people? And have we not heard and responded to the call, “Come out of

her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins and receive not of her plagues.” (Rev. 18:1-5.)

The Harvest work in progress is probably one of the clearest proofs of our Lord's presence. The parable of the wheat and tares illustrates the special work which marks the closing period of the Gospel Age. We are all familiar with the parable which pictures the man who sowed good seed in his field, and how later his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat. When the servants of the householder noticed the growth of the tares they became alarmed and said to their lord, “Wilt thou that we go and gather them up? But the lord says nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and in the time of harvest I will say to the

reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.”

In explaining this parable our Lord said—“The harvest is the end of the age.” The tares or imitation Christians are to be gathered in bundles for the burning, while the wheat, which represents God's true people, the “little flock” of overcomers, is to be gathered into the barn of safety. Just as our Lord was present during the Harvest of the Jewish Age in the gathering of the wheat from the chaff of that nation, so also He is present during the Harvest period of the Gospel Age, gathering the “wheat from the tares.” His presence during this harvest as chief Reaper is shown in Rev. 14:14, 16.

Verse 32. The parable of the Fig-tree is another sign, this one on the earth. In Luke 13:6-9 we have a parable of the fig-tree which was fruitless, and the owner threatened to cut it down, but afterwards spared it in order to give it a further opportunity to bear fruit. It would seem to illustrate the unfruitful condition of the Jewish nation, and the Lord's long-suffering with that people. Also in Matt. 21:19 there is the incident of the unfruitful fig-tree which Jesus cursed and immediately it withered away. Both these references seem to point to the Jewish nation as represented by the fig-tree. So in Matt. 24:32. In this verse we believe our Lord is referring to the Jewish nation under the figure of the fig-tree. The fig-tree putting forth its leaves would, we believe, illustrate the revival of the Jewish national hopes. God had promised that He would restore them again to their own land and establish them there, and as the times of the gentile domination over Israel come to a close we see the indications of God's returning favour to His people.

The fact that we can see these indications is proof that we are living in the time of the Lord's presence. Our Lord's words in verse 34 indicate that the generation living at the time when these signs could be recognized would not pass till all these things be fulfilled (commence to have their fulfilment.) The presence of Christ indicates the very near approach of His Millennial Kingdom.

Verse 35. “Heaven and earth shall pass away” (see 2 Pet. 3:10.) The fiery time of trouble which marks the full end of the Gospel Age will destroy the present “heavens” (ruling power of which Satan is Prince) and the “earth” (the present order of things which is based on injustice;) “but My words shall not pass away.”

In verses 37-39 our Lord refers again to the disciples' question regarding His “parousia.” He says “As the days of Noah so shall also the 'parousia' (presence) of the son of man be.” The comparison we notice is not between the coming of Noah and the coming of our Lord, nor between the coming of the flood and the coming of our Lord. The coming of Noah is not referred to at all; neither is the coming of our Lord referred to; for as we have seen “parousia” does not mean coming, but “presence.” The contrast, then, is between the time of the presence of Noah among the people “before the flood,” and the time of the “presence” of Christ in the world, at His Second Advent, before the fire of trouble which marks the full end of the present dispensation.

And though the people were wicked in Noah's day before the flood, and will be wicked in the time of our Lord's presence, before the hot fire of trouble comes upon them, yet this is not the point of comparison or likeness to which our Lord refers; for wickedness has abounded in every age.

The point of comparison is clearly stated, and is readily seen if we read the passage carefully. The people, except the members of Noah's family, were ignorant of the coming flood, and unbelieving as to the testimony of Noah and his family, and hence they “knew not”; and this is the point of comparison. So shall also the “presence” of the Son of man be. None but those of the family of God will believe here; others will “know not,” until society, as at present organised, begins to melt with the fervant heat of the great time of trouble now impending.

This is illustrated by the words, “As in the days that were before the flood, they were eating, drinking and marrying until the day Noah entered into the ark, and knew not, “so shall also the parousia (the presence) of the Son of man be.” In the time of the presence of the Son of man, therefore, the world will go on with its eating, drinking, planting, building and marrying—not mentioned as sinful doings, but as indicative of their ignorance of His presence, and of the trouble that will prevail in the world. This, then, is our Lord's answer to the question of the disciples—What shall be the sign (or indication) of Thy presence and of the end of the Age? It is as though the Lord said: There will be no sign for the worldly masses; they will not know of My presence and the new dispensational changes. Only a few will know, and they will be taught of God before there is any sign which the worldly could discern.

The closing verses from verse 42 on, are full of meaning. In verse 37 our Lord had shown that the world would not know of the parousia of the Son of man; and now He cautions His professed disciples that, unless on their guard, they will be similarly in darkness relative to His presence. He says, “Watch, therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.” If one expected a thief to come at a definite time, they would stay awake so as not to be taken unawares; so the Lord urges upon us to be ever awake, always ready, and watching for the first evidence of His presence.

“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.” All the storehouse of precious truth shall be opened to such faithful servants, to supply and feed the household of faith.

But if the servant’s heart is not right, he will say, My Master tarries (He has not arrived) and may smite his fellow-servants (who are declaring that the Lord has arrived.) Such may eat and drink with the intemperate (become intoxicated with the spirit of the world), but the Master of that servant will come (will have arrived) in a day not expected, and in an hour in which that servant is not aware, and will cut him off and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites.

Thus we see that the period of the Lord’s presence among His people during the Harvest time of the Age is a time of separating His faithful people and gathering them together unto Himself in harmony with the Prophet’s statement.

“Gather My saints together unto Me those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.”

In the Lord’s sight it is evidently an important matter that His Church, His prospective Bride, should continue to maintain an attitude of watchfulness. If we fail to watch we will not discern His presence, and even after being made acquainted with the fact of His presence we must still keep on the alert. In this connection how appropriate are the Master’s words in Luke 21:34-36. “Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all those things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of Man.”

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News and Views.

THE war of religions—Christianity versus Communism—is now being fought in Europe, and it is one of the most important happenings in the world today.”

The above announcement introduces a report which appeared in the Melbourne press some few weeks ago from Alexander Clifford of the London “Daily Mail” who had gone to Rome in search of an answer to the question, “Kremlin or Vatican?” This report, quoted in part, continues as follows “Vatican City.—The bells of St. Peter’s shake down their golden notes into the heavy Roman sunshine. The pigeons wheel among the fountains. The pilgrims come and go in shabby victorias drawn by scrawny horses.

“Cardinals and monsignori glide by in sleek cars and at the doors in the wall of the Vatican stand guards in Renaissance uniforms. The sun-soaked wall itself was built to outlast eternity. But there is writing on it these days. ‘Viva II Communismo!’ says the writing. Hammers and sickles are scrawled around the words. How seriously does the Vatican take the threat of this new religion which is lapping its very walls? Does it realise its danger?

“Communism, whether you like it or not, is a spreading faith which claims to be valid for all mankind. Catholicism, whether you like it or not, is an internationally-organised Church with over 300,000,000 adherents. The two faiths are diametrically opposed. And now, in Poland, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, Communism has overlapped into Catholic territory.”

After questioning what Catholic tactics are going to be under these circumstances, and suggesting three possible lines which the Vatican can take in this extreme crisis, the press reporter concludes “The Pope—the Catholic commander-in-chief in this war of religions—has a reputation for intelligence rather than fighting strength. It may be that he is meeting Communism with some deeper, subtler scheme which has not yet shown itself. But as far as an outsider can judge in this camp, the Vatican is leaning most heavily on its spiritual strength as a defensive weapon and its faith that evil cannot in the end prevail. And judging by the inroads already made by Communism in Catholic countries, that is not enough.”

The above report is certainly of much interest to the Lord’s people who are observing the fulfilment of Bible prophecy in the last days of this “present evil world.” Much has happened to restrict and weaken the influence of Catholicism in Europe since 1914 (apart from the time of the Reformation onward), but this, including what is happening today, is in no way unfavourable to Christianity, strange as this may seem to some people. The explanation is found of course in the fact that the Papal system, existing since the sixth century, has never represented Christianity in the world. St. Paul very clearly predicted the setting up of this great antichristian system, which he styled “The Man of Sin,” and “The Mystery of Iniquity.” (2 Thes. 2:3-7.) Likewise, our Lord warned against the same when in Matthew 24:15 He quoted from Daniel respecting the “abomination of desolation.” Again, the all-seeing Lord in His messages to the churches in Revelation, comforted His true people as they remained faithful amidst “Satan’s seat,” and “the synagogue of Satan,” (Rev. 2:13; 3:9) , both references being to the wicked, persecuting system of the Papacy. It will be seen, therefore, that the conflict above mentioned in Europe is incorrectly styled Christianity versus Communism; rather should it be termed Churchianity versus Communism.

True Christianity has no more reason to fear today than when its Founder was put to death and His cause apparently defeated in the eyes of the worldly wise. All through the darkest days of the persecuting power of Rome the message of Christianity was doing its work, confirming the saints and supporting them in the faith, even unto death. And the same is also true today; the pure truths of Christianity continue to be the means whereby the Lord is “taking out a people for His name,” from the world, and from the religious systems of which the Papacy is termed the “Mother.”

But though Christianity is prospering in harmony with God’s will, in that one here and there is drawn to the Son by the Father (John 6:44) and developed in preparation for the heavenly Kingdom, what can be expected as a result of this conflict between the Papacy and Communism? The Scriptures make it very clear that we are approaching the time when the Catholic system will be destroyed from the face of the earth. In Daniel 7 a prophecy is given depicting the four world empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. There can be no doubt that Daniel 7:7-11 reveals the rise and fall of Papacy within the Roman Empire. Verse 11 reads, “I (Daniel) beheld then (in vision) because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake (pompous claims of the Papacy); I beheld, even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.” Note also Dan. 7:15-27; verses 23 to 26 are especially descriptive of the rise and consuming of Papacy.

If, then, the influences of Communism are to be used to promote the consuming of the great Catholic system, which has deceived all nations, surely it will mean the liberation, in preparation for Christ’s Kingdom on earth of 300,000,000 human beings who are at present captivated by the abominable doctrine of the Mass, bowing down in superstitious worship of the Virgin Mary and held by other gross errors in this “mystery of iniquity.”

While the above is not to be taken as indicating that Communism could solve the world’s troubles, yet any system which the Lord may use to break the power of the great antichrist, even though it produce anarchy in so doing, must be endured by mankind until Christ’s Kingdom takes over control and brings “the desire of all nations” for the benefit of all the obedient.

The position of Protestant Churches is also of interest in view of world conditions, and the following news item appeared in the Melbourne “Age” of 21st July last, under the heading “The Dullness of Christianity.”

“Christianity, respectable, tame and harmless in its modern form, lacked challenge, and as a result many young people were turning to Communism, a revolutionary cause to which they could give their lives. This assertion

was made last night by Rev. J. Arthur Lewis when speaking in Collins-street Baptist Church on ‘The Joy of Getting Into Trouble.’ Although their perspective is wrong, in my opinion, their spirit is to be admired,’ added Mr. Lewis. By common consent the trend of modern Christians was not to manifest any of the fanatical goodness associated with early Christianity. As a result the modern Christian was ‘just mediocre.’ Playing safe and keeping out of trouble was the main worry of most Christians.”

How well Mr. Lewis has described present-day church systems which the Lord has cast off from His favour, and not Christianity, can be seen by comparing his remarks with Christ’s message to Laodicea, the seventh and last church period, as given in Rev. 3:15-17—“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

What a terrible condition is thus revealed by the Lord, and the fact that many young people were turning from such systems to Communism is quite natural, inasmuch as they have never understood Christianity. The fault lays not with these young people, but with church leaders who claim to represent Christianity and yet continue to associate with the luke-warm, worldly systems of Christendom, whose teachings are contrary to the Word of God.

The most glaring errors held by most of the so-called Protestant Churches are also part of the teachings of Roman Catholicism and are as follows: The Immortality of the Soul, which, if correct, would cancel the necessity for Christ’s sacrifice; the Doctrine of the Trinity; Hell; Infant Baptism; Misconception of the Second Advent and Times of Restitution. Additional errors held by the Roman Catholic Church are the Mass, worship of the Virgin Mary, and Purgatory. It is not to be wondered that we find the Catholic Church system referred to as the “Mother of harlots” in the Scriptures (Rev. 17:5 etc.) and the so-called Protestant Churches aptly take the position of children and follow to a great extent in the steps of the “Mother.” Be it noted that the term “Mother of harlots” clearly denotes that the daughter systems have also entered into illegal union with the world, and thus have been rejected by the Lord.

Under the title of “Babylon” both mother and daughter systems are described in Revelation 18 from verse 2—“Babylon the great is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.” Then follows in verse 4 the Lord’s appeal to those of sincere heart condition within these systems—“Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues: For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.”

The plagues on Babylon may be brought about by Communism, or at least by a rising of the masses of mankind generally, but whatever the forces used, the Lord makes no mistake when He exhorts His people to free themselves from any assembly holding any of the errors of Babylon, that they may be “accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”

These true hearted Christians are likened to keen-eyed eagles. They appreciate the truths of God’s Word when they find them; unhindered by the errors of man-made creeds they delight to assemble together with other alert Christians to partake of the food which the Lord provides for all who worship Him in spirit and truth.—“Whosoever the body (food) is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.” (Luke 17:37.)

Brethren Finish the Earthly Way.

Two elderly brethren have finished the pilgrim way recently—Brother Fox of Sydney on 28th June last, and Brother Biggin of Digby, Victoria, on the 21st July.

Brother Fox first gained a knowledge of the truth, by the Lord’s providence, through the reading of a tract about 15 years ago, and he rejoiced greatly in the glad tidings ever since. Having been a Roman Catholic, he ceased not to praise the Lord for deliverance from such a bondage, and often remarked how he prayed for the Lord’s blessing upon

all God’s true servants and the printing presses which produced the literature containing the truth message. Of a most loveable disposition, a visit to the dear old Brother made one feel blessed indeed, as the spirit of the Lord overflowed to those about him. The visits from one and another, including two friends from a distance, were always appreciated, especially as failing eyesight and other bodily weaknesses kept Brother Fox confined to his room in recent years. He had reached the advanced age of 88 years and was looking forward to his heavenly Home. “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.”

Brother Biggin had rejoiced in the truth for many years, having first received the message of the kingdom through a tract placed in his goods by a Brother in the same district. For a number of years the home of Brother and Sister Biggin was the meeting place for the little Class at Digby, and quite a few visiting friends who passed through at different times will well remember the cheery, rejoicing manner and appreciation of the truth manifest by our dear Brother. He will be missed very much by elderly Sister Biggin with whom he has shared companionship in life for about 64 years, also by the members of his family and the brethren in Digby and Merino. Sincere sympathy is extended to Sister Biggin and family in their great loss; no doubt the message of the truth will give great comfort especially to our elderly Sister Biggin, who will sorrow not as those without hope. “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.”

Onward Go !

("Let US go ON."—Heb. 6:1.)

Pray on, pray on, dear pilgrims! God hears and answers prayer!
He'll lighten every burden, He'll drive away your care.
Pray on, pray on, ne'er ceasing, pray with thanksgiving, too,
There's much to own to goodness, God is so good and true.

Work on, work on, dear pilgrims! the need is truly great!
The fields are white to harvest ! work ere it be too late.
Be steadfast and unmoving, abounding day by day,
His grace is all sufficient, however rough the way.

Sing on, sing on, dear pilgrims! then sighing will depart !
The song which gladdens others, will cheer your weary heart.
Sing songs of joy and gladness, this world is full of woe,
Sing in the shade or sunshine, sing everywhere you go.

Wait on, wait on, dear pilgrims! the time is drawing near,
When labours will be ended, and Christ will re-appear;
Our eyes shall then behold Him, we'll see His blessed face,
And tell with hearts enraptured, the story of His grace.

Press on, press on, dear pilgrims! the upward way leads Home!
The wilderness or desert is only "Till He Come."
The past is all forgiven, the future fair and bright:
Soon, soon will be the "Welcome," and ended be the night.

Cheer up, cheer up, dear pilgrims! oft tried with griefs and pain!
We must, through tribulation, the Heavenly glory gain.
The suff'ring of this present, compared can never be
With glories that shall follow, through all eternity.

Edwin R. Miles.

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31st August—"A World Transition."
7th September—"The Coming World Dictator."

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10th August—"The Hope of Immortality."
17th August—"The Keys of Hell."
24th August—"God's Purpose for Man."
31st August—"The River of Life."
7th September—"The Kingdoms of This World."

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