

STUDY VI

OUR LORD'S RETURN--ITS OBJECT, THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS

Our Lord's Second Advent Personal and Pre-Millennial--Its Relationship to the First Advent--The Selection of the Church and the Conversion of the World--Election and Free Grace--Prisoners of Hope--Prophetic Testimony regarding Restitution--Our Lord's Return Manifestly the Hope of the Church and the World.

"AND He shall send Jesus Christ, which [who] before was preached unto you; whom the heaven must retain until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

Acts 3:20,21

That our Lord intended his disciples to understand that for some purpose, in some manner, and at some time, he would come again, is, we presume, admitted and believed by all familiar with the Scriptures. True, Jesus said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age" (**Matt. 28:20**), and by his spirit and by his Word he has been with the Church continually, guiding, directing, comforting and sustaining his saints, and cheering them in the midst of all their afflictions. But though the Church has been blessedly conscious of the Lord's knowledge of all her ways and of his constant care and love, yet she longs for his promised personal return; for, when he said, "If I go, I will come again" (**John 14:3**), he certainly referred to a *second personal coming*.

Some think he referred to the descent of the holy Spirit at Pentecost; others, to the destruction of Jerusalem, etc.; but these apparently overlook the fact that in the last book

of the Bible, written some sixty years after Pentecost, and twenty-six years after Jerusalem's destruction, he that was dead and is alive speaks of the event as yet future, saying: "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me." And the inspired John replies, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Rev. 22:12,20

Quite a number think that when sinners are converted that forms a part of the coming of Christ, and that so he will continue coming until all the world is converted. Then, say they, he will have fully come.

These evidently forget the testimony of the Scriptures on the subject, which declares the reverse of their expectation: that at the time of our Lord's second coming the world will be far from converted to God; that "In the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" (*2 Tim. 3:1-4*); that "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." (*Verse 13*) They forget the Master's special warning to his little flock: "Take heed to yourselves lest that day come upon *you* unawares, for as *a snare* shall it come on all them [not taking heed] that dwell on the face of the whole earth." (*Luke 21:34,35*) Again, we may rest assured that when it is said, "All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him," when they see him coming (*Rev. 1:7*), no reference is made to the conversion of sinners. Do all men wail because of the conversion of sinners? On the contrary, if this passage refers, as almost all admit, to Christ's presence on earth, it teaches that all on earth will not love his appearing, as they certainly would do if all were converted.

Some expect an actual coming and presence of the Lord, but *set the time* of the event a long way off, claiming that through the efforts of the Church in its present condition the world must be converted, and thus the Millennial age

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be introduced. They claim that when the world has been converted, and Satan bound, and the knowledge of the Lord caused to fill the whole earth, and when the nations learn war no more, then the work of the Church in her present condition will be ended; and that when she has accomplished this great and difficult task, the Lord will come to wind up earthly affairs, reward believers and condemn sinners.

Some scriptures, taken disconnectedly, seem to favor this view; but when God's Word and plan are viewed as a whole, these will all be found to favor the opposite view, viz.: that Christ comes before the conversion of the world, and reigns for the purpose of converting the world; that the Church is now being tried, and that the reward promised the overcomers is that after being glorified they shall share

with the Lord Jesus in that reign, which is God's appointed means of blessing the world and causing the knowledge of the Lord to come to every creature. Such are the Lord's special promises: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." (**Rev. 3:21**) "And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." **Rev. 20:4**

There are two texts chiefly relied upon by those who claim that the Lord will not come until after the Millennium, to which we would here call attention. One is, "This gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." (**Matt. 24:14**) They claim this as having reference to the conversion of the world before the end of the Gospel age. But *witnessing* to the world does not imply the conversion of the world. The text says nothing about how the testimony will be received. This witness has already been given. In 1861 the reports of the Bible Societies showed that the Gospel had been published in every language of earth, though not all of earth's millions had received it. No, not one half of

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the sixteen hundred millions living have ever heard the name of Jesus. Yet the condition of the text is fulfilled: the gospel has been preached in all the world for a *witness*--to every *nation*.

The Apostle (**Acts 15:14**) tells that the *main object* of the gospel in the present age is "to take out a people" for Christ's name--the overcoming Church, which, at his second advent, will be united to him and receive his name. The witnessing to the world during this age is a secondary object.

The other text is, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." (**Psa. 110:1**) The vague, indefinite idea regarding this text seems to be that Christ sits on a material throne somewhere in the heavens until the work of subduing all things is accomplished for him through the Church, and that then he comes to reign. This is a misconception. The throne of God referred to is not a material one, but refers to his supreme authority and rulership; and the Lord Jesus has been exalted to a share in that rulership. Paul declares, "God hath highly exalted him [Jesus] and given him a name above every name." He hath given him *authority* above every other, next to the Father. If Christ sits upon a material throne until his enemies are made his footstool [all subdued], then of course he cannot come until all things are subdued. But if "right hand" in

this text refers, not to a fixed locality and bench, but, as we claim, to power, authority, rulership, it follows that the text under consideration would in no wise conflict with the other scripture which teaches that he comes to "subdue all things unto himself" (*Phil. 3:21*), by virtue of the power vested in him. To illustrate: Emperor William is on the throne of Germany, we say, yet we do not refer to the royal bench, and as a matter of fact he seldom occupies it. When we say that he is on the throne, we mean that he rules Germany. Right hand signifies the chief place, position of excellence

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or favor, next to the chief ruler. Thus Prince Bismarck was exalted or seated at the right hand of power, by the German Emperor; and Joseph was at the right hand of Pharaoh in the kingdom of Egypt--not literally, but after the customary figure of speech. Jesus' words to Caiaphas agree with this thought: "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on *the right hand of power*, and coming in the clouds of heaven." (*Matt. 26:64*) He will be on the right hand when coming, and will remain on the right hand during the Millennial age, and forever.

A further examination of God's revealed plans will give a broader view of the object of both the first and second advents; and we should remember that both events stand related as parts of one plan. The specific work of the first advent was to *redeem* men; and that of the second is to *restore*, and bless, and liberate the redeemed. Having given his life a ransom for all, our Savior ascended to present that sacrifice to the Father, thus making reconciliation for man's iniquity. He tarries and permits "the prince of this world" to continue the rule of evil, until after the selection of "the Bride, the Lamb's wife," who, to be accounted *worthy* of such honor, must overcome the influences of the present evil world. Then the work of giving to the world of mankind the great blessings secured to them by his sacrifice will be due to commence, and he will come forth to bless all the families of the earth.

True, the restoring and blessing could have commenced at once, when the ransom price was paid by the Redeemer, and then the coming of Messiah would have been but one event, the reign and blessing beginning at once, as the apostles at first expected. (*Acts 1:6*) But God had provided "some better thing for us"--the Christian Church (*Heb. 11:40*); hence it is in our interest that the reign of Christ is separated from the sufferings of the Head by these nineteen

centuries.

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This period between the first and second advents, between the ransom for all and the blessing of all, is for the trial and selection of the Church, which is the body of Christ; otherwise there would have been only the one advent, and the work which will be done during the period of his second presence, in the Millennium, would have followed the resurrection of Jesus. Or, instead of saying that the work of the second advent would have followed at once the work of the first, let us say rather that had Jehovah not purposed the selection of the "little flock," "the body of Christ," the first advent would not have taken place when it did, but would have occurred at the time of the second advent, and there would have been but the one. For God has evidently designed the *permission* of evil for six thousand years, as well as that the cleansing and restitution of all shall be accomplished during the seventh thousand.

Thus seen, the coming of Jesus, as the sacrifice and ransom for sinners, was just long enough in advance of the blessing and restoring time to allow for the selection of his "little flock" of "joint-heirs." This will account to some for the apparent delay on God's part in giving the blessings promised, and provided for, in the ransom. The blessings will come in due time, as at first planned, though, for a glorious purpose, the price was provided longer beforehand than men would have expected.

The Apostle informs us that Jesus has been absent from earth--in the heaven--during all the intervening time from his ascension to the beginning of the times of restitution, or the Millennial age--"whom the heaven must retain *until* the times of restitution of all things," etc. (*Acts 3:21*) Since the Scriptures thus teach that the object of our Lord's second advent is the restitution of all things, and that at the time of his appearing the nations are so far from being converted as to be angry (*Rev. 11:18*) and in opposition, it must be admitted

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either that the Church will fail to accomplish her mission, and that the plan of God will be thus far frustrated, or else, as we claim and have shown, that the conversion of the world in the present age was not expected of the Church, but that her mission has been to preach the Gospel in all the world *for a witness*, and to prepare herself

under divine direction for her great future work. God has not yet by any means exhausted his power for the world's conversion. Nay, more: he has not yet *even attempted* the world's conversion.

This may seem a strange statement to some, but let such reflect that if God has attempted such a work he has signally failed; for, as we have seen, only a small fraction of earth's billions have ever intelligently heard of the *only name* whereby they must be saved. We have only forcibly stated the views and teachings of some of the leading sects--Baptists, Presbyterians and others--viz., that God is electing or selecting out of the world a "little flock," a Church. They believe that God will do no more than choose this Church, while we find the Scriptures teaching a further step in the divine plan--a RESTITUTION for the world, to be accomplished through the elect Church, when completed and glorified. The "little flock," the overcomers, of this Gospel age, are only the body of "The Seed" in or by whom all the families of the earth are to be blessed.

Those who claim that Jehovah has been trying for six thousand years to convert the world, and failing all the time, must find it difficult to reconcile such views with the Bible assurance that all God's purposes shall be accomplished, and that his Word shall not return unto him void, but shall prosper in *the thing whereto it was sent. (Isa. 55:11)* The fact that the world has not yet been converted, and that the knowledge of the Lord has not yet filled the earth, is a proof that it has not yet been *sent* on that mission.

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This brings us to the two lines of thought which have divided Christians for centuries, namely, Election and Free Grace. That both of these doctrines, notwithstanding their apparent oppositeness, have Scriptural support, no Bible student will deny. This fact should lead us at once to surmise that in some way both must be true; but in no way can they be reconciled except by observing heaven's law, *order*, and "rightly dividing the word of truth" on this subject. This order, as represented in the plan of the ages, if observed, will clearly show us that while an Election has been in progress during the present and past ages, what is by way of distinction designated Free Grace is God's gracious provision for the world in general during the Millennial age. If the distinctive features of the epochs and dispensations outlined in a preceding chapter be kept in mind, and all the passages relating to Election and Free

Grace be examined and located, it will be found that all those which treat of Election apply to the present and past ages, while those which teach Free Grace are fully applicable to the next age.

However, Election, as taught in the Bible, is not the arbitrary coercion, or fatalism, usually believed and taught by its advocates, but a selection according to fitness and adaptability to the end God has in view, during the period appointed for that purpose.

The doctrine of Free Grace, advocated by Arminians, is also a much grander display of God's abounding favor than its most earnest advocates have ever taught. God's grace or favor in Christ is ever free, in the sense of being unmerited; but since the fall of man into sin, to the present time, certain of God's favors have been restricted to special individuals, nations and classes, while in the next age all the world will be invited to share the favors then offered, on the conditions

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then made known to all, and whosoever will may come and drink at life's fountain freely. *Rev. 22:17*

Glancing backward, we notice the selection or election of Abraham and certain of his offspring as the channels through which the promised Seed, the blesser of all the families of the earth, should come. (*Gal. 3:29*) We note also the selection of Israel from among all nations, as the one in whom, typically, God illustrated how the great work for the world should be accomplished--their deliverance from Egypt, their Canaan, their covenants, their laws, their sacrifices for sins, for the blotting out of guilt and for the sprinkling of the people, and their priesthood for the accomplishment of all this, being a miniature and typical representation of the real priesthood and sacrifices for the purifying of the world of mankind. God, speaking to the people, said, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." (*Amos 3:2*) This people alone was recognized until Christ came; yes, and afterwards, for his ministry was confined to them, and he would not permit his disciples to go to others--saying, as he sent them out, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not." Why so, Lord? Because, he explains, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (*Matt. 10:5,6; 15:24*) All his time was devoted to them until his death, and there was done his first work for the world, the first display of his free and all-abounding grace, which in "due time" shall indeed be a blessing to all.

This, God's grandest gift, was not limited to nation or class. It was not for Israel only, but for all the world; for Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for *every man*.

Heb. 2:9

And now also, in the Gospel age, a certain sort of election obtains. Some parts of the world are more favored with the

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gospel (which is free to all who hear) than others. Glance at a map of the world and see how small is the portion enlightened or blessed in any appreciable degree by the gospel of Christ. Contrast yourself, with your privileges and knowledge, with the millions in heathen darkness today, who never heard the call, and who consequently were not called. When the called-out company (called to be sons of God, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord--who have made their calling and election sure) is complete, then the plan of God for the *world's* salvation will be only beginning.

Not until it is selected, developed, and exalted to power, will *the Seed* bruise the serpent's head. "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet *shortly*." (**Rom. 16:20**; **Gen. 3:15**) The Gospel age makes ready the chaste virgin, the faithful Church, for the coming Bridegroom. And in the end of the age, when she is made "ready" (**Rev. 19:7**), the Bridegroom comes, and they that are ready go in with him to the marriage--the second Adam and the second Eve become one, and then the glorious work of restitution begins. In the next dispensation, the new heaven and the new earth, the Church will be no longer the espoused virgin, but the Bride; and then shall "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come! And let him that heareth say, Come! And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." **Rev. 22:17**

The Gospel age, so far from closing the Church's mission, is only a necessary preparation for the great future work. For this promised and coming blessing, the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, waiting for the *manifestation* of the sons of God. (**Rom. 8:22,19**) And it is a blessed fact that free grace in fullest measure, not merely for the living but for those who have died as well, is

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provided in our Father's plan as the blessed opportunity of the coming age.

Some who can see something of the blessings due at the second advent, and who appreciate in some measure the fact that the Lord comes to bestow the grand blessing purchased by his death, fail to see this last proposition, viz.: that those in their graves have as much interest in that glorious reign of Messiah as those who at that time will be less completely under the bondage of corruption--death. But as surely as Jesus died for *all*, they all must have the blessings and opportunities which he purchased with his own precious blood. Hence we should expect blessings in the Millennial age upon all those in their graves as well as upon those not in them; and of this we will find abundant proof, as we look further into the Lord's testimony on the subject. It is because of God's plan for their release that those in the tomb are called "*prisoners of hope*."

It is estimated that about one hundred and forty-three billions of human beings have lived on the earth in the six thousand years since Adam's creation. Of these, the very broadest estimate that could be made with reason would be that less than one billion were saints of God. This broad estimate would leave the immense aggregate of one hundred and forty-two billions (142,000,000,000) who went down into death without faith and hope in the *only name* given under heaven or among men whereby we must be saved. Indeed, the vast majority of these never knew or heard of Jesus, and could not believe in him of whom they had not heard.

What, we ask, has become of this vast multitude, of which figures give a wholly inadequate idea? What is, and is to be, their condition? Did God make no provision for these, whose condition and circumstances he must have

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foreseen? Or did he, from the foundation of the world, make a wretched and merciless provision for their hopeless, eternal torment, as many of his children claim? Or has he yet in store for them, in the heights and depths and lengths and breadths of his plan, an opportunity for all to come to the knowledge of that *only name*, and, by becoming obedient to the conditions, to enjoy everlasting life?

To these questions, which every thinking Christian asks himself, and yearns to see answered truthfully, and in harmony with the character of Jehovah, comes a variety of answers:

Atheism answers, They are eternally dead: there is no hereafter: they will never live again.

Calvinism answers, They were not elected to be saved. God

foreordained and predestined them to be lost--to go to hell--and they are there now, writhing in agony, where they will ever remain, without hope.

Arminianism answers, We believe that God excuses many of them on account of ignorance. Those who did the best they knew how will be sure of being a part of the "Church of the First-born," even though they never heard of Jesus.

To this last view the majority of Christians of all denominations assent (notwithstanding the creeds of some to the contrary), from a feeling that any other view would be irreconcilable with justice on God's part. But do the Scriptures support this last view? Do they teach that ignorance is a ground of salvation? No; the only ground of salvation mentioned in the Scriptures is *faith* in Christ as our Redeemer and Lord. "By grace are ye saved, *through faith*." (**Eph. 2:8**) Justification by faith is the underlying principle of the whole system of Christianity. When asked, What must I do to be saved? the apostles answered, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. "There is *none other* name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved"

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(**Acts 4:12**); and "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." **Rom. 10:13**

But Paul reasons that a man must hear the gospel before he can believe, saying, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" **Rom. 10:14**

Some claim that Paul teaches that *ignorance* will save men, when he says that "The Gentiles, which have not the law, are a law unto themselves." (**Rom. 2:14**) They gather from this that the law which their conscience furnishes is sufficient to justify them. But such persons misunderstand Paul. His argument is that the whole world is guilty before God (**Rom. 3:19**); that the Gentiles, who had not the written law, were *condemned*, not justified, by the light of conscience, which, whether it excused them or accused them, proved that they were short of perfection and unworthy of life, even as the Jews who had the written law were *condemned* by it; "For by the law is the knowledge of sin." (**Rom. 3:20**) The law given to the Jew revealed his weakness, and was intended to show him that he was unable to justify himself before God; for "By the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in his [God's] sight." The written law *condemned the Jews*, and the Gentiles had light enough of conscience to *condemn them*; and thus every mouth

is stopped from claiming the right of life, and all the world stands guilty before God.

Remembering the statement of *James (2:10)*, that whosoever shall keep the whole law, except to offend in one point, is guilty, and cannot claim any blessing promised by the Law Covenant, we realize that indeed "there is none righteous; no, not one." (*Rom. 3:10*) And thus the Scriptures close every door of hope save one, showing that not one of the condemned is able to secure eternal life by meritorious works, and that it is equally useless to plead ignorance

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as a ground of salvation. Ignorance cannot entitle any one to the *reward* of faith and obedience.

Many Christians, unwilling to believe that so many millions of ignorant infants and heathen will be eternally lost (which they have been taught means to be sent to a place of eternal and hopeless torment), insist, notwithstanding these Bible statements, that God will not condemn the ignorant. We admire their liberality of heart and their appreciation of God's goodness, but urge them not to be too hasty about discarding or ignoring Bible statements. God has a blessing for all, in a better way than through ignorance.

But do these act in accordance with their stated belief? No: though they profess to believe that the ignorant will be saved on account of their ignorance, they continue to send missionaries to the heathen at the cost of thousands of valuable lives and millions of money. If they all, or even half of them, would be saved through ignorance, it is doing them a positive injury to send missionaries to teach them of Christ; for only about one in a thousand believes, when the missionaries do go to them. If this idea be correct, it would be much better to let them remain in ignorance; for then a much larger proportion would be saved. Continuing the same line of argument, might we not reason that if God had left *all men* in ignorance, *all* would have been saved? If so, the coming and death of Jesus were useless, the preaching and suffering of apostles and saints were vain, and the so-called gospel, instead of being good news, is very bad news. The sending of missionaries to the heathen by those who believe the Calvinistic or fatalistic view of election, that the eternal destiny of each individual was unalterably fixed before he had an existence, is even more absurd and unreasonable.

But the Bible, which is full of the missionary spirit, does not teach that there are several ways of salvation--one way

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by faith, another by works, and another by ignorance. Neither does it teach the God-dishonoring doctrine of fatalism.

While it shows every other door of hope closed against the race, it throws wide open the one, only door, and proclaims that whosoever will may enter into life; and it shows that all who do not now see or appreciate the blessed privilege of entering shall in due time be brought to a full knowledge and appreciation. The *only way*, by which any and all of the condemned race may come to God, is not by meritorious works, neither by ignorance, but by faith in the precious blood of Christ, which taketh away the sin of the world. (*1 Peter 1:19; John 1:29*) This is the Gospel, the good tidings of great joy, "which *shall be* unto ALL PEOPLE."

Suppose we now look at these things just as God tells us of them, and leave the clearing of his character to himself. Let us inquire, What has become of the one hundred and forty-two billions?

Whatever may have become of them, we may be sure they are not now in a condition of suffering; because, not only do the Scriptures teach that full and complete reward is not given to the Church until Christ comes, when he shall reward every man (*Matt. 16:27*), but that the unjust are to receive their punishment then also. Whatever may be their present condition, it cannot be their full reward; for Peter says, "The Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (*2 Peter 2:9*); and he will do so.

But the thought that so many of our fellow creatures should at any time be lost from lack of having had the knowledge which is necessary to salvation would be sad indeed to all who have a spark of love or pity. Then, too, there are numerous scriptures which it seems impossible to harmonize with all this. Let us see: In the light of the past and the present as the only opportunities, laying aside all hope

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through a restitution in the coming age, how shall we understand the statements, "God is love," and "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish"? (*1 John 4:8; John 3:16*) Would it not seem that if God loved the world so much he might have made provision, not only that believers might be saved, but also that all might hear in order to believe?

Again, when we read, "That was the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (*John 1:9*), our observation says, Not so; every man has not been enlightened; we cannot see that our Lord has lighted more than a few of earth's billions. Even in this comparatively enlightened day, millions of heathen give no evidence of such enlightenment; neither did the Sodomites, nor multitudes of others in past ages.

We read that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death "*for every man.*" (*Heb. 2:9*) But if he tasted death for the one hundred and forty-three billions, and from any cause that sacrifice becomes efficacious to only one billion, was not the redemption comparatively a failure? And in that case, is not the Apostle's statement too broad? When again we read, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to ALL PEOPLE" (*Luke 2:10*), and, looking about us, see that it is only to a "little flock" that it has been good tidings, and not to all people, we would be compelled to wonder whether the angels had not overstated the goodness and breadth of their message, and overrated the importance of the work to be accomplished by the Messiah whom they announced.

Another statement is, "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all." (*1 Tim. 2:5,6*) A ransom for all?

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Then why should not all involved have some benefit from Christ's death? Why should not *all* come to a knowledge of the truth, that they may believe?

Without the key, how dark, how inconsistent, these statements appear; but when we find the key to God's plan, these texts all declare with one voice, "God is love." This key is found in the latter part of the text last quoted--"Who gave himself a ransom for all, TO BE TESTIFIED IN DUE TIME." God has a due time for everything. He could have testified it to these in their past lifetime; but since he did not, it proves that their due time must be future. For those who will be of the Church, the bride of Christ, and share the kingdom honors, the present is the "due time" to hear; and whosoever now has an ear to hear, let him hear and heed, and he will be blessed accordingly. Though Jesus paid our ransom before we were born, it was not our "due time" to hear of it for long years afterward, and only the appreciation of it brought responsibility; and this, only to the extent of our ability and appreciation. The same principle applies

to all: in God's due time it will be testified to all, and all will then have opportunity to believe and to be blessed by it.

The prevailing opinion is that death ends all probation; but there is no scripture which so teaches; and all the above, and many more scriptures, would be meaningless, or worse, if death ends all hope for the ignorant masses of the world.

The one scripture quoted to prove this generally entertained view is, "Where the tree falleth, there it shall be."

(Eccl. 11:3) If this has any relation to man's future, it indicates that whatever his condition when he enters the

tomb, no change takes place until he is awakened out of it.

And this is the uniform teaching of all scriptures bearing on the subject, as will be shown in succeeding chapters. Since God does not propose to save men on account of ignorance,

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but "will have *all men* to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (**1 Tim. 2:4**); and since the masses of mankind have died in ignorance; and since "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave" (**Eccl. 9:10**); therefore God has prepared for the awakening of the dead, in order to knowledge, faith and salvation. Hence his plan is, that "as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive, but each one in his own order"--the Gospel Church, the Bride, the body of Christ, first; afterward, during the Millennial age, all who shall become his during that thousand years of his *presence* (mistranslated *coming*), the Lord's due time for all to know him, from the least to the greatest. **1 Cor. 15:22**

As death came by the first Adam, so life comes by Christ, the second Adam. Everything that mankind lost through being in the first Adam is to be restored to those who believe into the second Adam. When awakened, with the advantage of experience with evil, which Adam lacked, those who thankfully accept the redemption as God's gift may continue to live everlastingly on the original condition of obedience. Perfect obedience will be required, and perfect ability to obey will be given, under the righteous reign of the Prince of Peace. Here is the salvation offered to the world.

Let us now consider another text which is generally ignored except by Universalists; for, although we are not Universalists, we claim the right to use, and believe, and rejoice in, every testimony of God's Word. It reads, "We trust in the living God, who is the Savior of *all men*, specially of *those that believe*." (**1 Tim. 4:10**) God will save all men, but will not specially ("to the uttermost") save any except those

who come unto him through Christ. God's arbitrary salvation of all men is not such as will conflict with their freedom of will, or their liberty of choice, to give them life against their wills: "I have set before you, this day, life and death; *choose* life, that ye may live."

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Simeon contrasted these two salvations, saying, "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation,...*a light to lighten the nations, and the glory of thy people*, Israel[ites indeed]." This is in harmony with the declaration of the Apostle, that the fact that Jesus Christ, the Mediator, gave himself a ransom for all is to be *testified to all* IN DUE TIME. This is that which shall come to all men, regardless of faith or will on their part. This *good tidings* of a Savior shall be to *all* people (**Luke 2:10,11**), but the special salvation from sin and death will come only to *his* people (**Matt. 1:21**)--those who believe into him--for we read that the wrath of God continues to abide on the unbeliever.

John 3:36

We see, then, that the general salvation, which will come to every individual, consists of light from the true light, and an opportunity to choose life; and, as the great majority of the race is in the tomb, it will be necessary to bring them forth from the grave in order to testify to them the good tidings of a Savior; also that the special salvation which believers now enjoy in hope (**Rom. 8:24**), and the reality of which will, in the Millennial age, be revealed, also, to those who "believe in that day," is a *full* release from the thralldom of sin, and the corruption of death, into the glorious liberty of children of God. But attainment to all these blessings will depend upon hearty compliance with the laws of Christ's Kingdom--the rapidity of the attainment to perfection indicating the degree of love for the King and for his law of love. If any, enlightened by the Truth, and brought to a knowledge of the love of God, and restored (either actually or reckonedly) to human perfection, become "fearful," and "draw back" (**Heb. 10:38,39**), they, with the unbelievers (**Rev. 21:8**), will be destroyed from among the people. (**Acts 3:23**) This is the second death.

Thus we see that all these hitherto difficult texts are explained by the statement--"to be testified in due time." *In due time*, that true light shall lighten every man that has

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come into the world. *In due time*, it shall be "good tidings of

great joy to all people." And in no other way can these scriptures be used without wresting. Paul carries out this line of argument with emphasis in **Rom. 5:18,19**. He reasons that, as all men were condemned to death because of Adam's transgression, so also, Christ's righteousness, and obedience even unto death, have become a ground of justification; and that, as all lost life in the first Adam, so all, aside from personal demerit, may receive life by accepting the second Adam.

Peter tells us that this restitution is spoken of by the mouth of all the holy prophets. (**Acts 3:19-21**) They do all teach it. Ezekiel says of the valley of dry bones, "These bones are the whole house of Israel." And God says to Israel, "Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I ...shall put my spirit in you, and I shall place you in your own land; then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord." **Ezek. 37:11-14**

To this Paul's words agree (**Rom. 11:25,26**)--"Blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles [the elect company, the bride of Christ] be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved," or brought back from their cast-off condition; for "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew." (**Verse 2**) They were cast off from his favor while the bride of Christ was being selected, but will be reinstated when that work is accomplished. (**Verses 28-33**) The prophets are full of statements of how God will plant them again, and they shall be no more plucked up. "Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel,...I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land; and I will build them and not pull them down, and I will plant them and not pluck them up. And I will give

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them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, for they shall return unto me with their whole heart." (**Jer. 24:5-7; 31:28; Jer. 32:40-42; 33:6-16**) These cannot merely refer to restorations from former captivities in Babylon, Syria, etc., for they have since been plucked up.

Furthermore, the Lord says, "In those days, they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge, but every one [who dies] shall die for his own iniquity." (**Jer. 31:29,30**) This is not the case now. Each does not now die for his own sin, but for Adam's

sin--"In Adam all die." He ate the sour grape of sin, and our fathers continued to eat them, entailing further sickness and misery upon their children, thus hastening the penalty, death. The day in which "every man [who dies] shall die for his own sin," only, is the Millennial or Restitution day.

Though many of the prophecies and promises of future blessing seem to apply to Israel only, it must be remembered that they were a typical people, and hence the promises made to them, while sometimes having a special application to themselves, generally have also a wider application to the whole world of mankind which that nation typified. While Israel as a nation was typical of the whole world, its priesthood was typical of the elect "little flock," the head and body of Christ, the "Royal Priesthood"; and the sacrifices, cleansings and atonements made for Israel typified the "better sacrifices," fuller cleansings and real atonement "for the sins of the whole world," of which they are a part.

And not only so, but God mentions by name other nations and promises their restoration. As a forcible illustration we mention the Sodomites. Surely, if we shall find the restitution of the Sodomites clearly taught, we may feel satisfied of the truth of this glorious doctrine of Restitution for

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all mankind, spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets. And why should not the Sodomites have an opportunity to reach perfection and everlasting life as well as Israel, or as any of us? True, they were not righteous, but neither was Israel, nor were we who now hear the gospel. "There is none righteous; no, not one," aside from the imputed righteousness of Christ, who died for all. Our Lord's own words tell us that although God rained down fire from heaven and destroyed them all because of their wickedness, yet the Sodomites were not so great sinners in his sight as were the Jews, who had more knowledge. (*Gen. 19:24; Luke 17:29*) Unto the Jews of Capernaum he said, "If the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day." *Matt. 11:23*

Thus our Lord teaches that the Sodomites did not have a full opportunity; and he guarantees them such opportunity when he adds (*verse 24*), "But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for thee." The character of the Day of Judgment and its work will be shown in succeeding pages. Here we merely call attention to the fact that it will be a *tolerable*

time for Capernaum, and yet *more tolerable* for Sodom; because, though neither had yet had *full* knowledge, nor all the blessings designed to come through the "Seed," yet Capernaum had sinned against more light.

And if Capernaum and all Israel are to be remembered and blessed under the "New Covenant," sealed by the blood of Jesus, why should not the Sodomites also be blessed among "*all* the families of the earth"? They assuredly will be. And let it be remembered that since God "rained down fire from heaven and *destroyed them all*" many centuries before Jesus' day, when their restoration is spoken of, it implies their awakening, their coming from the tomb.

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Let us now examine the prophecy of *Ezekiel 16:48-63*. Read it carefully. God here speaks of Israel, and compares her with her neighbor, Samaria, and also with the Sodomites, of whom he says, "I took them away as I *saw good*." Neither Jesus nor the Prophet offers any explanation of the seeming inequality of God's dealings in destroying Sodom and permitting others more guilty than Sodom to go unpunished. That will all be made clear when, in "due time," his great designs are made manifest. The Prophet simply states that God "saw good" to do so, and Jesus adds that it will be more tolerable for them in the day of judgment than for others more guilty. But upon the supposition that death ends all probation, and that thereafter none may have opportunity to come to a knowledge of the truth and to obey it, we may well inquire, Why did God see good to take away these people without giving them a chance of salvation through the knowledge of the only name whereby they can be saved? The answer is, because it was not yet their *due time*. In "due time" they will be awakened from death and brought to a knowledge of the truth, and thus blessed together with all the families of the earth, by the promised "Seed." They will then be on trial for everlasting life.

With this thought, and with no other, can we understand the dealings of the God of love with those Amalekites and other nations whom he not only permitted but commanded Israel to destroy, saying, "Go, smite Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." (*1 Sam. 15:3*) This apparently reckless destruction of life seems irreconcilable with the character of love attributed to God, and with the teaching of Jesus, "Love your enemies," etc., until we come to recognize the systematic order

of God's plan, the "due time" for the accomplishment

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of every feature of it, and the fact that every member of the human race has a place in it.

We can now see that those Amalekites, Sodomites and others were set forth as examples of God's just indignation, and of his determination to destroy finally and utterly evildoers: examples which will be of service not only to others, but also to themselves, when their day of judgment or trial comes. Those people might just as well die in that way as from disease and plague. It mattered little to them, as they were merely learning to know evil, that when on trial, in due time, they might learn righteousness, and be able to discriminate and choose the good and have life.

But let us examine the prophecy further. After comparing Israel with Sodom and Samaria, and pronouncing Israel the most blameworthy (*Ezek. 16:48-54*), the Lord says, "When I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then will I bring again the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them." The captivity referred to can be no other than their captivity in death; for those mentioned were then dead. In death all are captives; and Christ comes to open the doors of the grave, and to set at liberty the captives. (*Isa. 61:1; Zech. 9:11*) In *verse 55* this is called a "return to their former estate"--a restitution.

Some, who are willing enough to accept of God's mercy through Christ in the forgiveness of their own trespasses and weaknesses under greater light and knowledge, cannot conceive of the same favor being applicable under the New Covenant to others; though they seem to admit the Apostle's statement that Jesus Christ, by the favor of God, tasted death for every man. Some of these suggest that the Lord must, in this prophecy, be speaking ironically to the Jews, implying that he would just as willingly bring back the Sodomites as them, but had no intention of restoring

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either. But let us see how the succeeding verses agree with this idea. The Lord says, "Nevertheless, I *will* remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I *will* establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. *Then, thou shalt remember* thy ways and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters....And I *will* establish my covenant with thee,

and thou shalt know that I am the Lord; that thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, SAITH THE LORD GOD."

When a promise is thus signed by the Great Jehovah, all who have set to their seal that God is true may rejoice in its certainty with confidence; especially those who realize that these New Covenant blessings have been confirmed of God in Christ, whose precious blood is to seal the covenant.

To this Paul adds his testimony, saying, "And so all Israel [living and dead] shall be saved [recovered from blindness], as it is written, 'There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins.'...

They are beloved for the fathers' sakes; because the gracious gifts and callings of God are not things to be repented of." **Rom. 11:26-29**

We need not wonder that Jews, Sodomites, Samaritans, and all mankind, will be ashamed and confounded when in his own "due time" God shows forth the riches of his favor. Yea, many of those who are now God's children will be confounded and amazed when they see how *God so loved THE WORLD*, and how much his thoughts and plans were above their own.

Christian people generally believe that God's blessings are all and only for the selected Church, but now we begin to see that God's plan is wider than we had supposed, and that though he has given the Church "exceeding great and

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precious promises," he has also made bountiful provision for the world which he so loved as to redeem. The Jews made a very similar mistake in supposing that all the promises of God were to and for them alone; but when the "due time" came and the Gentiles were favored, the remnant of Israel, whose hearts were large enough to rejoice in this wider evidence of God's grace, shared that increased favor, while the rest were blinded by prejudice and human tradition. Let those of the Church who now see the dawning light of the Millennial age, with its gracious advantages for all the world, take heed lest they be found in opposition to the advancing light, and so for a time be blinded to its glory and blessings.

How different is this glorious plan of God for the selection of a few now, in order to the blessing of the many hereafter, from the distortions of these truths, as represented by

the two opposing views--Calvinism and Arminianism. The former both denies the Bible doctrine of Free Grace and miserably distorts the glorious doctrine of Election; the latter denies the doctrine of Election and fails to comprehend the blessed fulness of God's Free Grace.

Calvinism says: God is all-wise; he knew the end from the beginning; and as all his purposes shall be accomplished, he never could have intended to save any but a few, the Church. These he elected and foreordained to be eternally saved; all others were equally foreordained and elected to go to eternal torment; for "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world."

This view has its good features. It recognizes God's omniscience. This would be our ideal of a *great* God, were it not that two essential qualities of greatness are lacking, namely, love and justice, neither of which is exemplified in bringing into the world one hundred and forty-two billions of creatures doomed to eternal torture before they were born, and

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mocked with protestations of his love. Since God is love, and justice is the foundation of his throne, such cannot be his character.

Arminianism says: Yes, God is love; and in bringing humanity into the world he meant them no harm--only good. But Satan succeeded in tempting the first pair, and thus sin entered into the world, and death by sin. And ever since, God has been doing all he can to deliver man from his enemy, even to the giving of his Son. And though now, six thousand years after, the gospel has reached only a very small proportion of mankind, yet we do hope and trust that within six thousand years more, through the energy and liberality of the church, God will so far have remedied the evil introduced by Satan that all then living may at least know of his love, and have an opportunity to believe and be saved.

While this view presents God as a being full of loving and benevolent designs for his creatures, it implies that he lacks ability and foreknowledge adequate to the accomplishment of his benevolent designs: that he is deficient in wisdom and power. From this view it would appear that while God was engaged in arranging and devising for the good of his newly-created children, Satan slipped in and by one master-stroke upset all God's plans to such an extent that, even by exhausting all his power, God must spend twelve thousand years to reinstate righteousness, even to

such a degree that the remainder of the race who still live will have an opportunity to choose good as readily as evil. But the one hundred and forty-two billions of the past six thousand years, and as many more of the next, are, according to this view, lost to all eternity, in spite of God's love for them, because Satan interfered with his plans. Thus Satan would get thousands into eternal torment to one that God saves to glory.

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This view must exalt men's ideas of the wisdom and power of Satan, and lower their estimation of these attributes in God, of whom the Psalmist to the contrary declares that, "He spake and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast." But no: God was not surprised nor overtaken by the adversary; neither has Satan in any measure thwarted his plans. God is, and always has been, perfect master of the situation, and in the end it will be seen that all has been working together to the accomplishment of his purposes.

While the doctrines of election and free grace, as taught by Calvinism and Arminianism, could never be harmonized with each other, with reason, or with the Bible, yet these two glorious Bible doctrines are perfectly harmonious and beautiful, seen from the standpoint of the plan of the ages.

Seeing, then, that so many of the great and glorious features of God's plan for human salvation from sin and death lie in the future, and that the second advent of our Lord Jesus is the designed first step in the accomplishment of those long promised and long expected blessings, shall we not even more earnestly long for the time of his second advent than the less informed Jew looked and longed for his first advent? Seeing that the time of evil, injustice and death is to be brought to an end by the dominion of power which he will then exercise, and that righteousness, truth and peace are to be universal, who should not rejoice to see his day? And who that is now suffering with Christ, inspired by the precious promise that "if we suffer with him we shall also reign with him," will not lift up his head and rejoice at any evidence of the approach of the Master, knowing thereby that our deliverance and our glorification with him draw nigh? Surely all in sympathy with his mission of blessing and his spirit of love will hail every evidence of his coming as the approach of the "great joy which shall be to all people."