

They that are Christ's at His Coming

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What a scene of indescribable glory that will be, when the Lord Himself will descend to gather His redeemed to the home He has prepared for them!

What a moment of supreme delight, when at the shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, His sleeping saints raised, and living saints changed, "shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall they ever be with the Lord!"

All the hosts of the redeemed will be marshalled there, in bodies of glory, instinct with divine life; the saints of old, who on the faith of a promise were worshippers, pilgrims, strangers; — those to whose faith dens and caves bore witness; "of whom the world was not worthy"; the elders and just men, who "died in faith, not having received the promise," will be there; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob"; "Noah, Daniel, and Job"; "Moses and Elias," will be there; Abel and the long line of martyrs; Aaron and the Lord's priests; Samuel and the Lord's prophets; David and the men of faith, who sat on his throne; all God's renowned ones, the perfected just, shall stand in that scene for which they in faith waited.

"The church of the first-born ones," as the bride prepared for her Lord, will take her place there; all down to the last reborn soul, who shall form the completion of the mystery. She, too, will recount, her worthies on that morning, the many who have stood forth in other days, and who stand forth in our own day, as the witnesses of God's truth, and the heralds of God's salvation, all shall ascend together, and swell the countless multitude of Christ's own — shall take their place in their respective glories — "every man in his own order" — star differing from star in glory, and each reflecting the image of Jesus.

There will be seats in the Kingdom; thrones for rulership over the tribes of Israel mansions in the Father's house; thrones around the throne of God; all shall be occupied by the redeemed, each invested with the insignia sovereign love has assigned him.

All will know even as they are known, each known to each — all known to all. What a season of unutterable joy! of holy intercourse! of uninterrupted communion! But the rapturous thought of each one of this innumerable company will be, they are Christ's. "I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me."

To be Christ's own will be a source of deep, unmixed pleasure then, and should it not be so now. The absorbing object of their heaven-inspired vision will be CHRIST; to be forever with Him, to behold Him; to cast their crowns at His feet, paying the heart's deep homage to Him in one united utterance of "Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood."

The power of Christ's resurrection will be applied to the bodies of His saints; they will be raised, because He has been raised, by virtue of having His life, and being indwelt with His Spirit, they will be presented in the perfection of that life, in its full triumph over death, and him who had the power of death; they are raised — not for judgment, that to them is passed, Christ bore it for them, but because they are Christ's — Christ's resurrection was the firstfruits, and the pledge of that abundant ingathering.

He was the first sheaf presented to the Lord, the sample and earnest of the harvest that shall then be gathered into the garner of God; they will be raised up, and presented in the glory with Him. He is the expression of the glory, and they stand in Him. The reunited dust shall be re-animated with divine

life; the weakness shall be transformed into power, corruption into incorruption. dishonour into glory, the natural body into a spiritual body; it will bear the impress of the heavenly, even as it has borne the image of the earthy. Where is the sting of death? Gone! Where is the grave's victory? Gone! Victory, full, complete, eternal is theirs, and Satan bruised under their feet for ever.

The saints will stand before the tribunal of Christ, to receive the rewards of the Kingdom, but they will appear there as glorified saints; no stain of sin shall be there, the last trace of the curse shall have been removed, the reproach of Egypt for ever rolled away; the death of the slain Lamb will be learnt in the light of glory, and in the presence of God.

Earth may move on still in its course and projects, as it did when its light was set in the darkness of the cross; its religion may go on too, quite compatible with its godless pursuits, until judgment breaks the spell of its delusion, and dissolves the dream; awakening men to the dread reality of falling into the hands of the living God.

The light, God's light, shall have been removed to its own proper sphere, there to reflect each its peculiar brightness, shining as the brightness of the firmament, and as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father; being with Him who is the sun and centre of that heavenly system, undimmed and unobscured by any clouds of unbelief or doubt. They are with Him as He moves on in the course of the counsels of God, whether relating to the heavens above, or the earth beneath. In the presence of His glory, they shall be presented faultless, with exceeding joy. Will He "take His great power, and reign," swaying the sceptre of righteous supremacy over a judged and renovated earth? They will be with Him there.

After the course of the Kingdom shall be complete, and he shall deliver up the Kingdom to the Father, He will be tabernacled in the home, the dwelling-place of righteousness, in the new heavens and new earth? They that are His will still be with Him. They are Christ's present and eternal portion, and their place is to be "for ever with the Lord." Whether in the Kingdom, or in the new heavens and new earth, they will enjoy the rest of God in its perfection, and bear witness to His glory in the exalted sphere in which grace has set them, and for which grace has adapted them.

The hope for which we wait is not judgment nor the Kingdom in power, not Israel's restoration or the deliverance of creation from its present bondage, which is all true in its place: but we wait for God's Son from heaven! He is coming not only to fulfil *prophecy*, but to fulfil *promise*: "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14: 3). Judgment waits for this! Also the restoration of Israel, and creation's deliverance, all waits suspended until the rapture of the saints shall have taken place. "They that are Christ's at His coming."

After the Lord Jesus has gathered His own to Himself in the heavens, He will make good the prophetic word in its bearing towards the earth, and deliver creation, bringing it into the liberty of redemption.

Well may the affections of the heart be moved at the prospect! Well may the sound of that well-known scripture reverberate in the inner man, "Behold, I come quickly!" Yes, He is coming, to appropriate to Himself that which He has purchased at His own personal cost; to whom He can say, "I have redeemed thee; thou art mine!" to surround Himself with the trophies of redeeming love.

The Father's Will will be fully accomplished in the resurrection and glorification of those who were the objects of it; for this, were they saved. Our necessities were not the first cause; God is glorified in the redemption He has wrought, and the objects of His love are prepared for the glory that awaits them. They shall stand in the clear, unclouded light of divine righteousness, and be *at home* there. The robe in which they are arrayed, is divinely righteous and meet for the occasion.

God, resting in the complacency of omnipotent love, will welcome them to Himself. His own immediate presence will be their rest. His unclouded glory, the sphere of their worship. God and the Lamb, their light and their temple: He will dwell in their midst; they be His people, and He their God.

What a prospect! Even the anticipation of such a hope lifts our spirits above the clouds and mists of earth; but we need purified hearts to be prepared to allow the rays of that glory to reach within, and shed its light abroad there. There should be nothing allowed discordant, with that holy scene, that would darken the vision, and confuse the affections. The Holy Spirit will then be leading us within, to look after the house, and rid it of its corruptions, and intrusions, instead of opening the windows of the heart to allow the light of a new heaven to fill and irradiate it with its illuminating glory.

Oh, that our constant position may be — as those who are "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God" — to wait for His Son from heaven, with the heart purified, and the eye single; with staff and girdle; ready to welcome the shout in the air, whenever it maybe uttered; ready with nothing to leave behind that would retard our upward flight, nothing that may clash with that oft-expressed desire —

"Amen! Even so, come Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22: 20).